

1964 SHAKESPEARE
ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

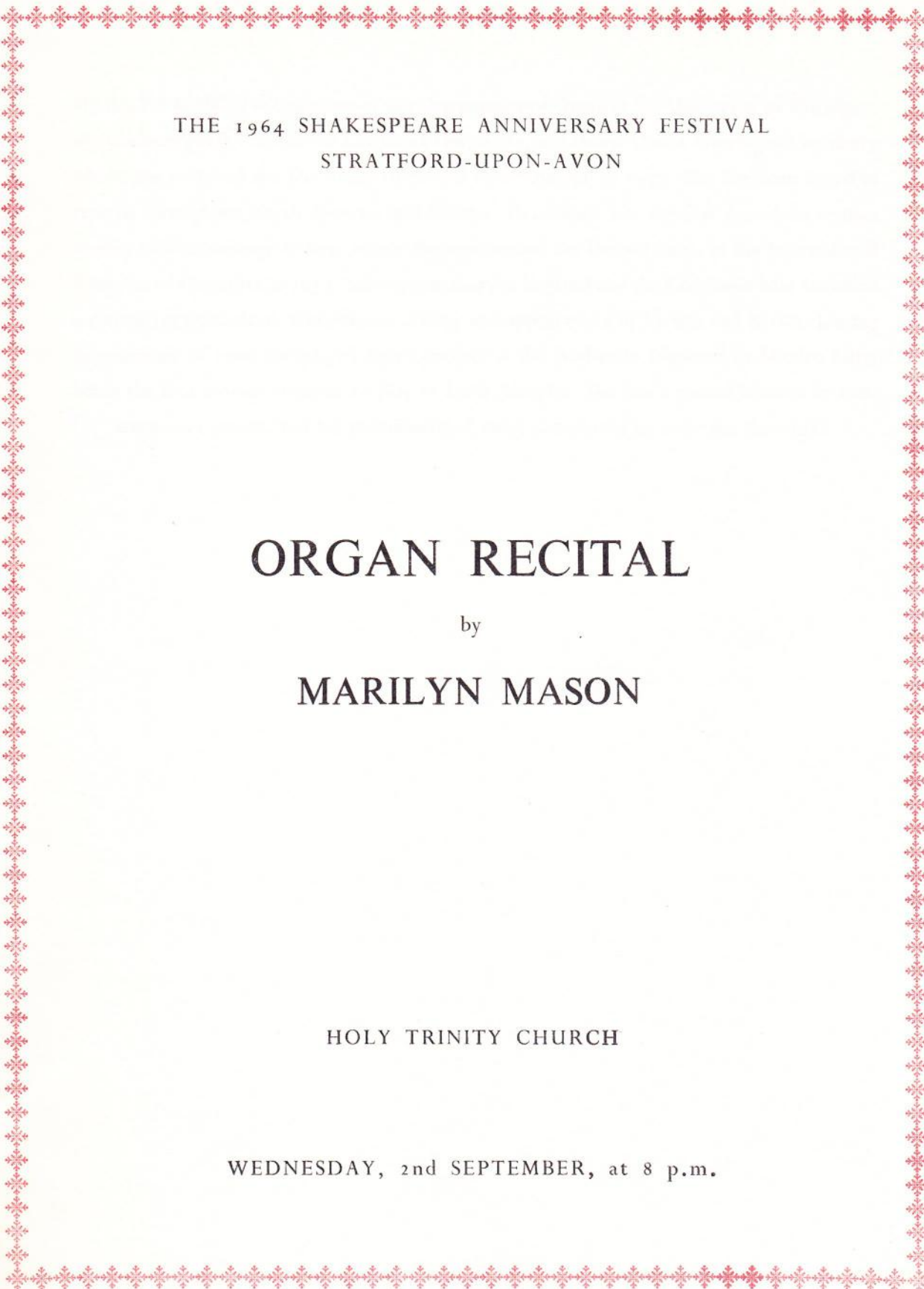
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
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Wednesday, 2nd September at 8 p.m.

ORGAN RECITAL
by
MARILYN MASON
(United States of America)

The programme will include
works by Bach, Bull, Reger and modern
American composers

Tickets at 6s. available from
the Festival Box Office, Henley Street
(Stratford 4093)



THE 1964 SHAKESPEARE ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL
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ORGAN RECITAL

by

MARILYN MASON

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

WEDNESDAY, 2nd SEPTEMBER, at 8 p.m.

MARILYN MASON is Chairman of the Department of Organ at the University of Michigan. She has been guest Professor at Columbia University, and also at Union Theological Seminary where she received the Doctorate of Sacred Music degree in 1954. She has been heard in recitals throughout North America and Europe. Dr. Mason was the first American woman to play in Westminster Abbey, where she represented the United States at the International Congress of Organists in 1957. Subsequent tours of England and the Continent have included a return engagement at Westminster Abbey and appearances in Vienna and Berlin. During the summer of 1960 she played four concerts at the Auditorio Nacional in Mexico City, being the first woman organist to play in Latin America. She has a special interest in contemporary music, and has commissioned many composers to write for the organ.

Programme

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, B.W.V. 542

J. S. Bach

Probably less well-known than the Chromatic Fantasy, but strongly recalling it both in construction and mood, the G minor Fantasia combines features of opera and polyphonic instrumental music within the loose framework of the Italian keyboard fantasy, seen at its finest in Frescobaldi and extended in scope and concept by Buxtehude and the North German organ school. The initial sense of unplanned freedom of movement and modulation is deceptive; the whole piece, even down to the astonishing key-shifts, is tightly organised and can be divided into its four main elements—the opening *roulades*, the subsequent four-part writing (whose key and melodic outline suggest the *Agnus Dei* sung by the contralto at the end of the B minor Mass), the following recitative, punctuated by cadential chords, and the rising and falling chromatic scales.

This wonderful free narrative is worthily matched by its companion fugue. The theme of this derives ultimately from one by the Hamburg organist, Johann Reinken, whose work Bach admired and copied out, and in its original form was known to the Hamburg composer and critic, Johann Mattheson, who in 1725 used it as a test piece for organ improvisation. Writing about the occasion in his "General-Bass Schule", Mattheson states merely that he knew who had previously worked out this subject with great skill. From all this, it is generally assumed that Bach played the fugue in Hamburg during his visit in 1720 and possibly even wrote it with that end in view.

Fantasia

John Bull (1563-1628)

A Battle and No Battle (Phrygian Music)

In 1613, "John Bull, Doctor of Musicke, went beyond the seas without licence and was admitted into the Archduke's service, and entered into paie there about Michaelmas . . ." Bull's flight to Belgium for rather mysterious political reasons forced him to make a second career in the Low Countries. Considering he was a foreigner, he managed this with surprising success, becoming in 1617 organist of Antwerp Cathedral, a post he held till his death. Both report and his music prove him to have been an outstanding virtuoso on the organ and the virginals.

This battle is no more valuable as music than other essays in the style, but some interest attaches to its being set as a duet, probably for Bull's pupil, Prince Henry, who was much given to military exercises. The fighting done, in a persistent F major over a repeated ground bass (now aptly transferred to the organ pedal), a funeral knell is sounded ten times, *accelerando*, and the bells of Osney rung twenty times, "very quick".

Variations on "John Come Kisse Me Now"

William Byrd (1543-1623)

The Goldberg Variations are a constant reminder that the simpler the material to be varied, the greater the variety possible. The Elizabethan popular song, "John Come Kisse Me Now", could hardly be less complex; four short equal phrases and a harmonic scheme that only once deviates from the classic three chords of tonic, dominant and subdominant. But this lack of commitment provokes a wonderful series of responses from Byrd; with the exception of Bull's immense "Walsingham" set, these variations are the most ingeniously varied of all the virginals literature. Usually the tune can be heard in the top voice, as the left-hand figuration assumes many shapes and colours; at times, however, Byrd hides it completely in the alto or tenor and adds fresh counterpoints above.

The Queen's Commende

Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)

Fantasia for Double Organ

Gibbons was organist of the Chapel Royal from 1605 until his death in 1625. Two years previously he had secured an additional top-ranking post, when he succeeded John Parsons at Westminster Abbey. He was much admired as a virtuoso performer and would undoubtedly have been Bull's most serious rival in this field, if the latter had remained in England, but little of this element shows in the two pieces to be played tonight. "The Queen's Commende" consists of two variations on a jig tune, whose second section points to its being better suited for instruments than voices, while the grave and magnificent fantasia evidences Gibbons' much greater interest in contrapuntal and rhythmic complexities than in dazzling fingerwork. "Double organ" refers to an instrument with two manuals, called in the original score "tenor" and "base", rather than "Choir" and "Great".

Flourish and Fugue (1959)

John Cook

John Cook, formerly organist in Stratford-upon-Avon, is now organist and choirmaster of the Church of the Advent in Boston and composer for the Stratford Festival in Ontario. This work was commissioned by Marilyn Mason and is dedicated to her.

Carol-prelude on "Greensleeves" (1951)

Searle Wright

The composer is organist of St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, in New York.

Suite for Organ (1947)

Edmund Haines

The composer is a member of the Music Faculty at Sarah Lawrence College, New York. This suite was commissioned by Marilyn Mason and is dedicated to her. It has three movements, Promenade, Air and Toccata.

Variations on the National Anthem

Max Reger (1873-1916)

From 1907 until his death, Reger was Professor of Composition at the Leipzig Conservatoire. His vast output is heavily uneven, and much of his work deserves the expected epithet—"academic", although he also wrote a number of really beautiful and memorable pieces. The British National Anthem is short and uncomplicated enough to have encouraged more than one composer to embroider it; Reger's attempt consists of a brief introduction, followed by two variations, the first with the tune in the treble, the second in the bass, and a concluding fugue. The tune's long association with reverence and royalty may make it hard for pious British ears to accept Reger's chromatically ingenious rethinking of the traditional harmonies, but this may be only another case of musical Death and Transfiguration.

Programme notes by Colin Tilney