

Wednesdays
at 5.55

6 October 1965

The Greater London Council presents

Marilyn Mason

in an Organ Recital

<i>Bach</i>	Trio-Sonata No. 1 in E \flat , BWV 525
<i>Schönberg</i>	Variations on a Recitative
<i>J. G. Walther</i>	Concerto del Signor Torelli
<i>Nielsen</i>	Commotio, Op. 58
<i>Bach</i>	Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

General Manager T. E. Bean, C.B.E.



Patrons are respectfully reminded that in an auditorium possessing the sensitive acoustic properties of the Royal Festival Hall the unstified coughing of only one or two people can mar the enjoyment of the whole audience.

Programme Notes by Felix Aprahamian
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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

TRIO-SONATA NO. 1 IN E FLAT (BWV 525)
Allegro Adagio Allegro

EVEN in the days of such large-scale modern works as Schönberg's *Variations* or Nielsen's *Commotio*, Bach's six trio-sonatas retain their place as the basis of an organ repertory and technique. All six are in the three-movement form which Bach derived from Italian models, and in their three-part writing—one voice for each hand and a third for the pedals—he was probably also influenced by the early French composers with whose music he was familiar.

Forkel states that the trio-sonatas were written for Bach's eldest son, though it has now been established that some were in existence when Wilhelm Friedemann was only five, and one movement was completed before he was born. But the set as a whole may well have been established as practising material some time prior to 1733, when the son and heir was appointed *Hof-organist* at Dresden. Although primarily intended for domestic use on a pedal-harpsichord with two manuals, the sonatas suggest that Bach was also thinking in terms of the organ in the sustained melodic style of some of the slow movements.

In the first sonata, the two Allegros enclose a slow movement in the relative minor and in a gentle *siciliano* rhythm. All three movements have themes that Bach inverts with delightful ease.

Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951)

VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE, Op. 40

VIENNA-BORN Arnold Schönberg, friend and disciple of Mahler, teacher of Berg and Webern, successor of Busoni at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin and a controversial figure in twentieth-century music, left Europe for the United States in 1933, and from 1936 was Professor of Music in the University of California at Los Angeles.

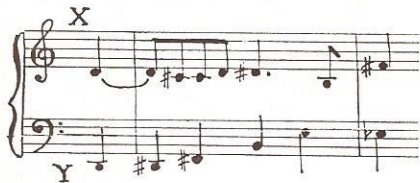
Schönberg completed this, his only organ work, in 1941, and it was first performed in March 1944 by Carl Weinrich for the United States section of the I.S.C.M. Ralph Downes gave the first English performance for the Organ Music Society in December 1948.

These Variations, like several of Schönberg's later works, are neither atonal nor twelve-tonal, but, although highly chromatic, have a definite tonal 'pull', in this case towards D minor. Broadly speaking, the piece is in the form of a Passacaglia—for the theme runs through each variation, always at the original pitch—Cadenza and Mirror-Fugue.

RECITATIVE:



VARIATION I immediately introduces two counter-subjects: X in the treble, Y in the bass, both engendered by motifs in the Recitative:



The main theme is enmeshed in the texture bounded by X and Y. A codetta, Z,



the melody of which recurs later, joins this to

II: Here the main theme is in the bass, and Y is used as the generating motif.

III introduces a new rhythm with the main theme again in the bass, transferring at the end to the treble, whilst X is used half-way through.

IV, in a slower tempo, seems to derive from X and conceals the main theme.

V: The pace quickens as fragments of the main theme are subjected to a 'mirror' treatment, each fragment being inverted in the second half of each bar.

VI is an *Andante* in the manner of a recitative. It derives from the first three notes of the main theme. The music rises to a climax, then reverts to the opening idea before

VII. Here the first four notes of the third phrase of the main theme (D sharp, F sharp, E natural, D natural) form a *dolcissimo* motif in semiquavers, which, in the sequence of the main theme, provides a bass accompaniment to a quaver sequence in the treble, derived from the opening fragment of X.

VIII is readily distinguishable by its gay and jig-like rhythm, its bare fifths and the main theme outlined in the bass.

IX begins in a mood of *bravura* with the 'mirror' treatment of each beat, and ends with the first re-statement of Z in a lengthened form.

X: *Adagio*. X in inverted counterpoint supports the main theme. A heightening of tension breaks into the Cadenza. This leads to the final Mirror-Fugue on the main theme in close association with the two counter-subjects X and Y. The first episode is based on the *dolcissimo* motif of Variation VII. It is joined by Y, and then X in its entirety. There ensues the combination with X and Y of the main theme in true and inverted form.

The coda is based on Z and on the powerful interval of a fifth with which this complex work so simply began. There is no mistaking the final chord of D major.

Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748)

CONCERTO DEL SIGNOR TORELLI

A NATIVE of Erfurt, Walther was a kinsman and friend of Bach's as well as his nearly exact contemporary. He achieved distinction as a composer and also as a musical lexicographer, but the rather cool notice of Bach in his famous *Lexicon* (1732) shows that the former intimacy between the two composers did not last. It was at its height during Bach's residence at Weimar (1708-14) where Walther became town organist in 1707 and where he died. To this 'Weimar' period belong Bach's sixteen Vivaldi concerto arrangements and Walther's organ arrangement of thirteen concertos by Italian and German composers. These comprise two by Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709), the Italian violinist-composer who, for a time, led the band of the Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach.

Walther's *Concerto del Signor Torelli, appropriato all'Organo* in D minor is an Allegro movement, of which the original is Torelli's violin concerto in that key found in his Op. 8. The tutti theme is presented fugally over a recurrent, chaconne-like theme which descends chromatically after an octave leap.

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)
COMMOTIO, Op. 58

SINCE the first known London performance of this posthumous work (by Gotthard Arner, for the Organ Music Society, on June 17th, 1948), the music of Carl Nielsen has been heard much more frequently in England than before that date. This year, the centenary of his birth is being marked in many musical centres alongside that of Jan Sibelius. Ostensibly Denmark's greatest composer, Carl Nielsen, in the words of Sibelius, 'was a born composer of symphonies, although his work embraced all forms of music. . . . The principles he followed, such as the reaction against romanticism, are actual at this moment (*viz.* 1953). Therefore his music exercises a strong appeal in our day.'

Carl Nielsen turned to organ music only at the very end of his life, following *Twenty-nine Small Preludes* (1929), 'for organ or harmonium', with the much vaster canvas of *Commotio*, dated 27th February, 1931, eight months before his death. Composed for Emilius Bangert, the organist of Roskilde Cathedral, *Commotio* was edited for its posthumous publication by Carl Nielsen's son-in-law, the violinist Emil Telmanyi.

In his monograph on the composer, Dr. Robert Simpson quotes a note Nielsen sent to Bangert about the piece: 'I should not like to have anything about "improvising" in it. The work is so strict in form and counterpoint that I'm not able to make it firmer The Latin word *Commotio* really applies to all music, but is here especially used as an expression for self-objectivization. In an extended work for that mighty instrument called the organ, whose sounds are derived from the natural element called air, the composer must try to repress all personal and lyrical feelings. The task becomes great and strenuous and demands a kind of severity instead of sentiment, and must rather be judged by the ear than seized upon by the heart.'

'The work is supported by two fugues, on to which introduction, linking movements and coda cling like creepers to the trunks of a forest; but the composer thinks that further analysis is superfluous.'

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

FANTASIA AND FUGUE IN G MINOR (BWV 542)

MARILYN MASON

Marilyn Mason is Chairman of the Organ Department at The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She has been guest Professor at Columbia University, and also at Union Theological Seminary, where she received the Doctor of Sacred Music degree in 1954. Dr. Mason has been heard in recitals in Mexico and throughout North America and Europe. Because of her interest in contemporary music, she has commissioned numerous composers to write for the organ and has given many première performances.

Next Recital in this series

13 October 1965 at 5.55 p.m. JIRI ROPEK (Prague)

The right is reserved to make alterations in the programme if necessary

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- (ii) All gangways, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction; and
- (iii) Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways.

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