

Michigan State University
Thirteenth Annual Church Music Workshop

MARILYN MASON
Organist

Peoples Church, East Lansing, Michigan, July 10, 1967 at 8:15 o'clock

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| Voluntary in D Major | Stanley |
| Six Settings of the Chorale | Bach |
| <u>Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'</u> | |
| From the Clavierübung, Part III | |
| a 3. Canto fermo in Alto, BWV 675 | |
| a 2 Clavier e Pedale, BWV 676 | |
| Fughetta, Manualiter, BWV 677 | |
| From the Eighteen Chorales | |
| a 2 Clavier e Pedale. Canto fermo in Soprano, BWV 662 | |
| a 2 Clavier e Pedale. Canto fermo in Tenore, BWV 663 | |
| Trio, a 2 Clavier e Pedale, BWV 664 | |
| *Etude de Concert (1963) | Anthon van der Horst |
| Intermission | |
| *Sinfonia Brevis (1965) | Leo Sowerby |
| At a solemn pace (Passacaglia) | |
| Slowly, boldly . . . Fairly fast | |
| Stately (Fugue) | |
| Meditation (Meditations on Communion Hymns, 1942) | Sowerby |
| *Bright, blithe and brisk (1965) | Sowerby |
| (Dedicated to Marilyn Mason) | |
| *Verset, pour la Fête de la Dédicace (1961) | Olivier Messiaen |
| *Concert Variations on the Austrian Hymn, Op. 3 (1860) | John Knowled Paine |

*First performance in East Lansing

After the recital those who wish may greet Dr. Mason at the chancel steps.

Crab meat Soufflé

prepare crab meat salad

make sandwiches
about 6 whole
Trim crusts



Scald 2 cups milk

add 4 beaten eggs

season To taste ; worcestershire

Layer : sandwiches

N.Y. state cheddar grated

sandwiches

finally : milk mixture over all. Leave overnight.
Bake covered, moderate oven 350 for one hour,

OKRA

chop okra

mixture of flour + corn meal $\frac{1}{2}$ c of each
put in bag, shake

cook in hot fat ; cover, stir approximately
40 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

by

Marilyn Mason

The contemporary music selected for this recital is a cross-section of organ literature by living composers. Two Americans are represented, as well as a Dutch and a French composer. Each has his own general style of writing: American nationalist, Dutch expressionist, and French impressionist. At the same time, each indulges in his own unique manner of composition for the organ. All of them, being organists themselves, have a special and intimate knowledge of the instrument.

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The Dutch composer, Anthon van der Horst, was born in Amsterdam on June 20, 1899. His early training was on the organ and in composition at the Toonkunst Conservatory in Amsterdam. He has served as conductor of two of the leading choral societies in Holland. His compositions include choral works, concertos for various instruments, solo songs, and organ music. The work heard today is Opus 104. Written in 1963, the Concert Etude is a composition which is based on a rhythmic ostinato. Throughout the work the pedals tend to dominate, with either constant triplet motion, or with the ostinato figure itself. The piece is cast in a tri-partite form. The opening theme, first in chords in the manuals, then in the pedals, projects a feeling of intensity and drama. The second section presents a quiet, arabesque-like mood, in which the constant figuration in the hands accompanies a sustained pedal theme. The concluding part is similar to the first, though somewhat extended, and ends in an abrupt climax.

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Leo Sowerby was born May 1, 1895, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His father was English and his mother Canadian. He graduated from the American Conservatory in Chicago in 1918, and was the first American composer to be awarded the Prix de Rome, spending three years (1921-1924) in the Italian capital. For many years he was on the faculty of his alma mater and was also Organist and Choirmaster at Saint James' Episcopal Church in Chicago. At the present time he is Director of the College of the Church Musicians, attached to the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

No one will doubt that Dr. Sowerby is the dean of American composers for the organ, not only because of his prolific output, but also because of the influence on and teaching of his students.

His style is highly individual although he is committed to the European tradition. His choice of forms, exemplified in the Sinfonia Brevis, reflects his acknowledgment of formal design: the first movement is a passacaglia with twenty variations; the second is in sonata form; the third is a stately fugue. Comparing this work of 1965 to his Symphony in G Major (1930), we find many similarities: in the latter, a passacaglia, with thirty-three variations, is chosen as the form for the final movement; in the Sinfonia Brevis a passacaglia of twenty variations, is the first movement. Both works contain modal writing, the passacaglia of the G Major Symphony being in the Mixolydian mode, while that of the Sinfonia Brevis is in the Phrygian mode.

The second movement, which was written first, was originally intended to be a single work. Dr. Sowerby says: "It's a piece in sonata form preceded by an

introduction marked 'slowly; boldly.' This subsides and the main movement begins, 'fairly fast,' to reach a big climax towards its finish, and after a pause the material of the introduction, now used differently, appears a short coda, which has its own lesser climax, then it all dies away. The whole thing is built on the same thematic material."

The third movement, a fugue, was written later, and finally the passacaglia, now the first movement. Each was developed from the thematic material of the second movement, so that the whole Sinfonia is cyclic.

The traditional influence is felt not only in Dr. Sowerby's selection of formal design and modal writing, but also in his use of ostinato and his classical procedures of thematic development. Although he is a tonal composer, his music is marked by an improvisatory nature; the music comes out of a basically harmonic conception and this is underlined with strong pedal points. Excitement is achieved through vital and dramatic rhythms handled in a variety of ways. Massive sonorities at times impart a special flavor to the music, and the frequent ostinatos bolster the texture to one of sheer rhetoric. The over-all effect of the Sinfonia Brevis is one of brilliance and majesty.

On the occasion of the celebration of the composer's seventieth birthday, the writer was invited to play an all-Sowerby program, including the G Major Symphony, for the Minneapolis chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The composer was present. In 1965 she played the first European performance of the Sinfonia Brevis in Hamburg for the International Congress of Organists, and, in 1966, the first London performance at Westminster Abbey in connection with the 900th anniversary celebrations of the Abbey. The writer has also played first performances of the Sinfonia in fifteen American cities, including New York, Pittsburg, Grand Rapids, and at the Air Force Academy.

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Olivier Messiaen was born in Avignon, France, on December 10, 1908. His father was a professor of literature and his mother the poetess Cécile Sauvage. He received his musical education at the Paris Conservatory, which he entered in 1919, when he was only eleven years old. Among his teachers were Marcel Dupré and Paul Dukas. During his scholastic career he won six prizes at the Conservatory in various areas of music. In 1931 he was appointed organist at the Trinité in Paris, where he still plays today. He has written a treatise, in two volumes, entitled "Technique of my Musical Language" (1944). The second volume contains the musical examples, mostly his own, of which he speaks in the first.

The work heard today, "Verset, for the Feast of the Dedication" was written in December, 1960. It is one of his most recent works for the organ. It employs, as one would surmise, his highly personal idiom: striking melodic and rhythmic innovations, impressionistic harmonies, and novel registration directions. The shape is that of a ritornelle. The composition opens with the plain song heard in the color of the cromorne and the nazard. It is repeated in the pedal, at 4-foot pitch, with rich harmonies above. A second section, the bird song, presents unique rhythmic progressions; Messiaen's direction for sound is the flute 4, tierce 1 3/5 with sub and super octave couplers. He indicates that this is a grive musicienne or thrush. After this, comes a return to the opening chant, treated first alone, and then in the pedals. A full middle section is entitled "la supplication." The bird song returns, greatly changed in motivation and rhythm. It is followed by the same chant, and then the final three measures, labeled "extatique", appear over a single sustained chord.