



LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN  
CATHEDRAL OF  
CHRIST THE KING

ORGAN RECITAL BY

**MARILYN MASON**

(UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, USA)

WEDNESDAY 30th OCTOBER 1968

CONCERTO IN F

Tomaso Albinoni  
(1671-1750)

Johann Gottfried Walther  
(1684-1748)

Allegro - Adagio - Allegro

In its original form, this Concerto appears in G major as the fourth of six three-movement concertos for strings comprised in Albinoni's Opus 2, a set of Sinfonie e Concerti a cinque, published in Venice in 1700. The composer, a native of that city, had his own niche in musical history, for this very work may be regarded as one of the earliest precursors of the violin concerto. Here already the solo violin detaches itself from the main body of strings and plays a concertante role in contrast to the tutti with which it alternates in the opening Allegro, and in the second of the two repeated sections of the final Allegro in twelve-eight time. The brief Adagio - nine bars in all - offers a moment of rhythmic, if not harmonic, repose between the two lively movements.

Johann Gottfried Walther was a relative and almost exact contemporary of Bach's, as well as being his close friend in Weimar. His transcribed and transposed "Concerto del Sigr. Tomaso Albinoni, appropriato all'Organo" is the first of a set of six adaptations, and is comparable to Bach's similar work in this field.

TWO CHORALE PRELUDES FROM 'THE EIGHTEEN'

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

- i) Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele (BWV 654)
- ii) Herr Jesus Christ, dich zu uns wend (BWV 655)

In the last years of his life, Bach selected, revised, and, in some instances, composed a group of eighteen preludes which represent the summit of the art of chorale-prelude writing.

i) is the fourth of the "Achtzehn Choräle". The music to Johann Franck's Communion Hymn "Adorn thyself, Beloved Soul" is by Johann Crüger. Here the chorale-melody, slightly ornamented, is presented line by line in the treble over a quietly happy three-part texture in one of the most intimate and serenely beautiful of all Bach's chorale-preludes.

Schumann once wrote to Mendelssohn: 'You played, Felix Meritis, a prelude upon one of those figured chorales: "Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele" was the text; the melody seemed twined with garlands of gold, and the work breathed forth such happiness that you inspired in me this avowal: 'Were life deprived of all trust, of all faith, this simple chorale would restore all to me.' I fell into a reverie; then almost unconsciously, I found myself in the cemetery, and I felt poignant grief at not being able to cover with flowers the grave of the great Bach.'

ii) is the fifth of the "Achtzehn Choräle", and one of Bach's four organ settings of the anonymous tune. "Lord Jesus Christ, turn Thou to us" was the first hymn to which it was attached, and this was reputed to be by Duke William II of Saxe-Weimar (grandfather of one of Bach's employers) and published in a Lutheran Hymn Book of 1648. Sanford Terry suggests that each of Bach's four settings, which are widely contrasted in style, comments on one of the hymn's four stanzas. The cheerful mood of this one accords well with that of verse three:

Till we with angels join to sing  
Eternal praise to Thee our King;  
Till we behold thy face most bright,  
In joy and everlasting light.

The prelude takes the form of a trio-movement in G major, in which the hymn-tune is presented line by line in the pedals, but not until after the two manuals, aided by the pedals, have developed a theme based upon its opening phrase.

TOCCATA, ADAGIO AND FUGUE IN C (BWV 564)  
Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach wrote this work at Weimar, where he was in the ducal employ from 1708-1717, first as court organist and later as concert-master of the orchestra. His duties there must have made him familiar with Italian chamber music, for themes borrowed from Albinoni, Corelli and Legrenzi find their way into works he composed at this time. This one is of unusual interest, not only for its hybrid tripartite form, but also because it combines the North German and Italian styles.

The Toccata opens with flourishes for the manuals, consisting mostly of scale passages in demi-semiquavers, punctuated three times by the lowest pedal C. This section is followed by a long pedal cadenza, which must rank amongst the finest music ever written for feet alone. The flamboyant, prelude music up to this point is in the style of Bach's German predecessors and contemporaries. In the Allegro section which follows, Gothic fantasia gives way to the concerto style of the Italian masters of the time. This Allegro is built on two distinct subjects, both already heard in the pedal solo.

In the first, semiquavers jerk quavers up an ascending scale. The second is a descending sequence of broken thirds. By thematically linking two sections which derive from two separate musical styles, Bach imposes an artistic unity upon them.

The quiet Adagio in A minor consist of a long ornamented Cantabile aria, accompanied simply on a second manual, and with a rhythmic ostinato in the pedals. Although this solo-with-accompaniment style may be found in other organ music of the time - in the chorale preludes of Georg Böhm, for example, where the chorale melody in a highly embellished form is given to the upper part - this Adagio has a closer affinity to chamber music. Once again, Bach's model seems to be Italian rather than German, for this movement more nearly resembles an Italian Arioso than any other of his.

A few notes of recitative linked to the last chord of the Adagio lead to a Grave of massive chords that form out of each other by slowly clashing and resolving. Here the music reverts to a more traditional style - the austere polyphony of Buxtehude and the North German masters.

After the solemn grandeur of the last few bars, the cheerful, almost humorous fugue-subject in six-eight time comes as a complete contrast. Its gaiety owes something to the rests between the three-fold delivery of the opening figure. These rests become a feature of the part writing: aerating it, they give the texture a lightness that is rare among Bach's organ fugues.

## TROIS DANSES

Jehan Alain  
(1911-1940)

### Joies - Deuils - Luttes

Jehan Alain, son of the organist Albert Alain, and brother of Marie-Claire Alain, was born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the birth-place also of Claude Debussy. There he was playing the organ at the age of eleven. Later, at the Paris Conservatoire, he gained Premier Prix in Harmony, Fugue, Organ and Improvisation. His teachers were Paul Ducas and Roger Ducasse for composition, and Marcel Dupre for organ.

At the beginning of June 1940, he paid a brief visit to England, not as a musician, but as a private in the French armies evacuated from Belgium. On June 7th he was back in France. Thirteen days later he fell to a German bullet while defending Saumur and France lost a young composer of considerable achievement and even greater promise.

The Three Dances were composed in 1937/8. Alain conceived them for orchestra, and to be danced to, sketched them first in a piano score, and then wrote out an organ version, with detailed

registration. (He himself gave the first performance of 'Deuils' at the Sainte-Trinite in Paris in February 1938. The first performance of the complete triptych was given by Nöelie Pierront at Saint-Germain des Pres in March 1941, at a memorial concert of works by Alain.) Alain began writing the orchestral score in the summer of 1938, taking it up again in the first eight months of the war, but his manuscript was lost in Belgium. The Danses have since been performed orchestrally in a version by Raymond Gallois-Montbrun.

Joies (Joys) is based on two themes: the quiet woodwind fanfare heard at the beginning, and the agitated Allegro ostinato-figure which follows it. These alternate, then combine and rise to a climax. A diminuendo thins the texture, leaving only the ostinato-figure. This becomes simpler and simpler in outline before it initiates a counterpoint above it. This leads in turn to the fanfare theme and a long chordal trill for the tutti. But the final bars are hushed and plaintive, and the last chord is in the minor. A held dominant links the first dance to the second, Deuils (Mournings). Beneath it unfolds another ostinato-theme, soon a basis for harmonies moving in parallel above it. Bereft of harmonies, it introduces the fourth theme of the triptych: a quiet, mournful strain for the Voix Celestes. But the ostinato prevails, and, with its pungent dotted rhythms, leads to a climax dissolving into the sorrowful theme, and, finally, into a strange pianissimo metamorphosis of the ostinato-theme of the first dance. The Luttes (Struggles) of the third dance are between the four themes already exposed. They are short-lived and result in a wild, abrupt ending.

#### VERSET POUR LA FETE DE LA DEDICACE

Olivier Messiaen  
(b. 1908)

Since 1931 Olivier Messiaen has been organist at the Sainte-Trinite in Paris. He was a pupil of Paul Dukas and Marcel Dupre at the Paris Conservatoire, where he now himself is a professor. Immediately after the last war he sprang into prominence as the most original voice in French music since the death of Debussy. To organists he was known much earlier as a composer of some remarkable music for their instrument, beginning with *Le Banquet Celeste* (1928), the novel registration of which was already typical.

The *Verset*, Messiaen's most recent organ work, was composed in December 1960, as a test-piece for the Paris Conservatoire, and published in 1961. The use of plainchant, even if in a strange form, bird-song and characteristic chromatic harmony makes its provenance unmistakable. Among his extra-musical inspirations, Messiaen has admitted to "all that evokes stained-glass window and rainbow". This may help to explain one feature of the *Verset*. Designated for the festival of the Dedication of a

Church, it has a recurrent monodic theme which Messiaen labels 'Alleluia de la Dedicace', scored for a soft but piquant combination of Cromorne et Nazard. While this monody derives from the appropriate plainchant Alleluia, its drops and leaps, and reedy timbre suggest something observed through a prism, and accordingly coloured and distorted. The Verset unfolds as follows: The monodic Alleluia is rounded off by an undulating figure, then continued with a gentle Voix Celeste accompaniment, and concluded with a short consolatory phrase; an extended passage in the upper reaches of the manuals based on bird-song - that of the song thrush; slightly modified repeat of the monodic Alleluia with its appendages; the loud central section of the piece, La Supplication, as Messiaen marks it, which rises to a climax; return of bird-song; brief recapitulation of the Alleluia with an ecstatic concluding phrase.

### CONCERT VARIATIONS ON THE AUSTRIAN HYMN, Op. 3

John Knowles Paine  
(1839-1906)

The basis of these variations is the famous 'Emperor's Hymn' composed by Haydn in 1797, and adopted as the tune for the Austrian and German National Anthems.

Much less familiar in England is the composer of the variations, a kind of father-figure of American music. Paine was a native of Portland, Maine, who studied music in Germany after earlier musical instruction from a German at home. While in Germany, he gave organ recitals in several cities, and on returning to the United States he achieved distinction as performer, teacher and composer. In 1875, he was appointed Professor of Music at Harvard. In old age, he became the doyen of American composers, and known as the teacher of some whose work travelled farther afield, such as Daniel Gregory Mason, Frederick Converse and John Alden Carpenter. Paine's own compositions include an unperformed opera, as well as orchestral and chamber music, vocal and piano works and pieces for his own particular instrument - the organ.

(C) Felix Aprahamian 1968

MARILYN MASON is Chairman of the Department of Organ of 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 Europe and North America. Dr Mason was the first American woman to play in Westminster Abbey, when she represented the United States at the International Congress of Organists in 1957.

PROGRAMME      CHANGE

Unfortunately Mr Felix Aprahamian has supplied programme notes about the wrong piece by **Walther** (first on tonight's programme.)

The piece to be performed is:

CONCERTO In D minor

Johann Gottfried Walther

This concerto was arranged by Walther from a concerto by Torelli; and hence is known as the 'Concerto del Sgr. Torelli.' It is in one movement.

As this concerto is only one movement, and not three, long, as is the listed Concerto in F, Dr Mason will follow it with two trumpet pieces:

SONATA de CLARINES

Antonio Soler  
(1729-1783)

SONATA de 1<sup>o</sup> TONE

Jose Lidon  
(1752-1827)