

BRISTOL CORPORATION  
CULTURAL COMMITTEE



## COLSTON HALL

(Entertainments Manager : F. K. Cowley, M.I.M.Ent.)

THE ENTERTAINMENTS DEPARTMENT

*presents an*

# Organ Recital

by  
MARILYN MASON

THURSDAY, 31st OCTOBER, 1968

PROGRAMME — ONE SHILLING

PROGRAMME

- Concerto del Signor Torelli . . . . . *J. C. Walther*  
Two Trumpet Pieces . . . . . *Soler*  
Two Chorale Preludes from the "Eighteen",  
"Schmücke dich" (BWV 654)  
"Herr Jesu Christ" (BWV 655)  
*J. S. Bach*  
Tocatta, Adagio and Fugue in C (BWV 564)  
*J. S. Bach*

INTERVAL

- Trois Danses . . . . . *Jehan Alain*  
Evocation a la Chappelle Sixtine . . . . . *Liszt*  
Verset pour la Fête de la Dedicace . . . . . *Messiaen*  
Concert Variations on the Austrian Hymn  
*John Knowles Paine*

MARILYN MASON

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 North America and Europe. 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. Subsequent tours of England and the Continent have included a return engagement at Westminster Abbey, and appearances in Vienna, and Berlin. In 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. Miss Mason last played in Colston Hall in September 1964.

# Programme Notes

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## Concerto del Signor Torelli

*J. G. Walther*  
(1684—1748)

From 1707 Walther was town organist at Weimar where he became a close friend of his greatest musical contemporary J. S. Bach. In fact the latter was godfather to his eldest son. Perhaps Walther's outstanding work was his dictionary which was the first to combine biography with musical subject matter and served as a model for many subsequent works of its kind. He was at the same time a composer of considerable distinction, described by his contemporary Matheson as "a second Pachelbel" — high praise indeed. In the arrangement and variation of chorales he ranks second only to Bach himself, witness the Partita on "Jesu meine Freude" by which he is best known.

Walther arranged a dozen or so concertos of various composers (chiefly Italians) for the organ. There were three, or at least parts of three, by Torelli, in D minor, B flat major and A minor. Each begins with the type of quick, ritornello movement that is common to all baroque concertos. In the case of the D minor that is all and the B flat only adds a short arioso-type *adagio* in F (the finale seems to have been lost). The A minor however is a complete concerto comprising *Vivace* (a ritornello movement) leading into a quasi-improvisatory *adagio* plus another ritornello movement headed *allegro*.

## Two Trumpet Pieces

*Soler*  
(1729—1783)

Padre Antonio Soler was born at Olot, Catalonia, and studied at the Escolania at Montserrat. He became chapel master at Lérida cathedral and, after being ordained, became organist at the Escorial where he died. He wrote a treatise as well as various compositions, chiefly sonatas and *tientos* (roughly the Spanish equivalent of the Italian *ricercar* or the English fancy) for harpsichord or organ.

## Two chorale preludes from the 'Eighteen'

*J. S. Bach*  
(1685—1750)

### "Schmücke dich" (BWV654)

The chorale is presented phrase by phrase in a somewhat elaborated version in the top part. The inner parts keep up a continuous flow of imitative counterpoint, working out figuration derived from the chorale itself while the pedals provide a supporting bass. An interesting and characteristic feature here is the spinning out of the final cadence while the last note of the chorale is sustained for five bars.

### "Herr Jesu Christ" (BWV655)

This is a three-part invention with a lively subject worked out imitatively on the manuals and supported by an equally rhythmic though rather less florid pedal part. It is this lowest part which, about three-quarters of the way through the piece is replaced by more or less consecutive statements of the phrases of the chorale.

## Tocatta, Adagio and Fugue in C (BWV564)

*J. S. Bach*

In 1705 Bach made his famous pilgrimage on foot from Arnstadt to Lübeck. Hearing Buxtehude there evidently fired his imagination and, although his fugue subjects during the next few years tend to be rather long-winded, there is a better sense of design than hitherto and a greater degree of conviction in the counterpoint. At this time too the young Bach developed a taste for impressive bravura and virtuosity. These two facts explain the characteristics of the C major Tocatta, which is assigned by Schmieder to the year 1709.

The fugue is hampered from the outset by one of the longest and dullest subjects imaginable. It can hardly stand up to sevenfold exposition and Bach has to rely on a great deal of fingerwork to keep it alive. This is a pity for the opening *allegro* is an imposing piece of virtuoso-writing — including an impressive pedal solo — and the *adagio*, in A minor until a short link at the end, is by no means without interest.

## Trois Danses

*Jehan Alain*  
(1911—1940)

Joies. Deuils. Luttes.

Alain received his early musical training on the organ from his father Albert Alain before entering the Paris Conservatoire in 1927. He studied there for some twelve years in all, his teachers including Dukas for composition and Dupré for organ. He won a number of prizes including a first for organ-playing in 1939 and the 'Prix des Amis de l'Orgue' for his "Introduction, Variations, Scherzo and Chorale". Meanwhile, in 1935, he had become organist at the Paris church of Sainte Nicolas de Maisons Lafitte, a post which he relinquished when he went to serve in the second world war in 1939. He was killed in action at the age of 29.

Alain left quite a large number of compositions, many of them remarkably mature and original, in which he seemed to combine an inherent spirituality with a penchant for the fantastic. His imagination produced many unusual titles for his small compositions as for instance the "Joys, Sorrows and Strifes" of the Three Dances. They were written in 1937-8 and exist also in an orchestral version scored by Gallois-Montbrun.

## Evocation a la Chapelle Sixtine (Miserere d'Allegrì et Ave Verum Corpus de Mozart)

*Liszt*  
(1811—1886)

A very large proportion of Liszt's musical output consists of transcriptions and paraphrases of the works of other composers. In 1862 he arranged for organ — also for piano solo, for piano duet and for orchestra — two pieces which were both connected with the Sistine Chapel and which in all probability Liszt had heard there. There is a further connection between the two pieces for it was the jealously guarded melismatic adornments of the seventeenth century composition that Mozart furtively jotted down when *he* heard it in the Sistine Chapel.

## Verset pour la Fête de la Dedicace

*Messiaen*  
(b. 1908)

It intrigues me to keep a record of the number of appearances made by various composers in organ recital programmes. Of the 21 programmes for which I have supplied notes Bach has been omitted only once, for an all-English concert some eighteen months ago. Of all other available composers Messiaen now moves into a clear second place with seven appearances ahead of Franck with six and Liszt with five. This confirms the view that Messiaen has produced one of the most, if not the most, significant collections of organ music since Bach himself.

Born the son of a Professor of Literature and a poetess, Messiaen studied with Dukas and Dupré at the Paris Conservatoire. But his private studies of bird-song and of oriental music have influenced his compositions at least as much as any formal tuition. Thus bird-song — accurately noted down in the field — and ostinato rhythmic figures have always been common features of his music. More recently such controlled patterning has been applied to all aspects of composition, notably for example in *Chronochromie* which dates from the same year as this "Verse for the Feast of the Dedication".

## Concert Variations on the Austrian Hymn

*John Knowles Paine*  
(1839—1906)

Though not widely known now, Paine was one of the first Americans to make any substantial name for himself as a composer. He was borne at Portland, Maine, and studied with the local organist before going to the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin in 1858. He became an instructor in music at the University of Harvard in 1862, assistant professor in 1872 and full professor in 1875. Not to be outdone the rival institution at Yale gave him an honorary D.Mus. in 1890. He died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, not very far from where he was born.

The Austrian Hymn is of course the tune by Haydn which serves that country for its National Anthem.