

Chicago Club of Women Organists

presents

MARILYN MASON

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH
655 Fullerton Parkway
Chicago

Sunday, November 4, 1973 — 3:30 o'clock

Program

Four Sonatas

1. LIDON Sonata de 1° tono para organo con trompeta real

Jose Lidon (1752-1827) was a Spanish organist and composer. In 1787 he became organist of the royal chapel in Madrid. He composed much music for the church.

2. PERGOLESI Sonata per Organo

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) was an Italian composer. During his brief lifetime he wrote fifteen operas, twelve cantatas, much sacred music and one organ sonata, which we are hearing today.

3. KUHNNAU Sonata IV from *Biblical Histories*

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722) was one of the notable German clavier composers before Bach. He became organist of St. Thomas' in Leipzig in 1684, founded a series of concerts in 1688 and became musical director of the University in 1700. He composed sacred and clavier works, including a set of six sonatas based on subjects from the Bible.

Kuhnau, writing about this Sonata, says "The Sonata shows

(1) The saddened heart of King Ezechias at the message of (his impending) death, and the longing prayer for his recovery in a *Lament*, with the verse "Heal Thou me, dearest Master" from the chorale "O Lord, this wretched sinner."

(2) His confidence that God has heard his prayer and that He surely will restore his health and give him peace from his enemies, in the verse "Out, all ye evil-doers, for I have been restored," from the aforementioned chorale.

(3) His joy at his recovery, in the course of which he at times thinks of his previous misery, but soon forgets it again."

4. SOLER Sonata de Clarines

Padre Antonio Soler (1729-1783) was a Spanish organist and composer who received his basic musical training in the choir of Montserrat Abbey. He called himself a disciple of Domenico Scarlatti, who lived in Madrid from 1729 to 1757, and his sonatas for harpsichord (of which about 65 are extant) show the influence of Scarlatti. After a period as choirmaster of Lerida Cathedral, he became organist at the royal palace-abbey-mausoleum of St. Laurence of the Escorial. In the transepts of its cathedral-sized church are two fine organs, for which Soler wrote his Six Concerti for two organs.

He also composed much church music, incidental music for plays, and chamber music.

LE CLERC Magnificat de 8. em ton en sol Majeur

The *Magnificat* (Hymn of the Virgin Mary) comes from St. Luke's gospel. Although it was usually sung, the practice of performing alternate verses with the organ began in the 17th century. Because there were twelve verses in the *Magnificat*, composers would write six verses for organ alone. Here Le Clerc utilizes the 8th tone as his melodic source. The work was obtained from the British Museum and edited for performance by Miss Mason.

V My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;

O For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

V For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

O For He that is mighty hath magnified me; and Holy is His name.

V And His mercy is on them that fear Him throughout all generations.

O He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

V He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek.

O He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.

V He remembering His mercy hath holpen His servant Israel; as He hath promised to our forefather, Abraham, and his seed forever.

J. S. BACH Einige Canonische Veränderungen über das Weihnachtslied
(1685-1750) "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her"

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| I. In Canone all'Ottava | IV. In Canone all'Ottava per
augmentationem |
| II. Alio modo in Canone alla quinta | V. L'altra sorte del Canone rovescio: |
| III. In Canone alla Settima | 1. alla Sesta 3. alla Seconda |
| | 2. alla Terza 4. alla Nona |

In 1747 Bach was invited to become a member of the Mizler Society, an organization founded by a Leipzig musician of the same name. This Society devoted itself to the study of music in its various scientific aspects. Each new member was asked to submit a self portrait in oils and an original composition. We owe to this requirement one of the last portraits of Bach as well as one of his most esoteric compositions.

— INTERMISSION —

MAX REGER Fantasy on "Ein Feste' Burg", Op. 20
(1873-1916) Played in honor of the centenary of the composer's birth.

ALDEN ASHFORTH *Sailing To Byzantium (1973)

This work was commissioned by Marilyn Mason and is dedicated to her. It was given its premiere at Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., June 18, 1973, for the Eastern Regional Convention of The American Guild of Organists.

The composer writes: "Yeats' poem *Sailing to Byzantium* expresses a desire to leave behind the transient temporal sensual world and retreat to the eternal world of the spirit, of art and of intellect: "the artifice of eternity." His image of this unaging realm, "the holy city of Byzantium," was inspired by reading that in the Byzantine Emperor's palace there was a tree of singing birds entirely wrought of silver and gold. The notion of a voyage from nature to art, from the world of reality to an artificial world existing outside of real time, struck me as a provocative musical scenario.

The piece is in four sections. The opening section, suggesting the temporal world of the senses, includes such real sounds as brooks and birds and a melody hummed by a lyric tenor (Dennis Heath). In the second section, where both organ and tape are in transition to a different sort of world, the electronic sounds are constituted of materials created by encephalo-electronic (bio-feedback) means, whereby such dimensions as pitch, attack, and vibrato were produced by controlling electronic synthesizers directly by my own brain waves (amplified up to a million times). In the third section the organ and tape achieve a condition of melodic and harmonic balance and stasis. The organ solo of the final section, transforming the opening melody through variation techniques, is ultimately joined by "birds" that are entirely artificially wrought.

The subjective process of psychological and spiritual transformation is the intended essence of this aural migration."

LEO SOWERBY *Pageant (1931)
(1895-1968)

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 as well as the Organist and Choirmaster at Saint James' Episcopal Church in Chicago. Later and until his death in 1968, he was Director of the College of Church Musicians, attached to the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Because of his prolific writings and his influence on his many students, Dr. Sowerby may be considered the dean of American composers for the organ.

*First performance in Chicago.

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. 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.

Lilian Murtagh Concert Management Box 272 Canaan, Conn. 06018

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This concert is made possible by the kind co-operation of St. Paul's Church, the Rev. Frederick Trost, pastor, and Sam Hill, organist.