

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

Organ Recital

by

André Marchal

THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1948
at 6.45 p.m.

sixpence

Programme

(Notes by FELIX APRAHAMIAN)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Prelude and Fugue in C minor [Peters II, No. 6]

Chorale-Preludes from the Clavierübung, Part III
[Peters VII, No. 39 a, b, c]

Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit (C.F. in Sop., a 2 clav. e Ped.)

Christe, alle Welt Trost (C.F. in Tenore a 2 clav. e Ped.)

Kyrie, Gott, Heiliger Geist (a 5, C.F. in Basso, con organo pleno)

Fantasia in G major [Peters IV, No. 2]

LOUIS VIERNE (1870-1937)

Toccata (Op. 53)

For thirty-seven years VIERNE was organist at Notre-Dame de Paris. He had been in turn the pupil of Franck, Widor and Guilmant and was, at the time of his death at the keyboard of his beloved organ, the undisputed leader of the French school of organist-composers. Although he left some excellent music in other forms, it is as a composer of organ music that he is best known. There are six organ symphonies, one of which was highly praised by no less a critic than Debussy, and about sixty smaller pieces contained in a number of suites.

The Toccata comes from the second suite of "Pièces de Fantaisie." Its unflagging rhythm is assisted by the grinding pungency of a chromaticism which is characteristic of Vierne's music.

JEAN LANGLAIS (b. 1907)

Chant de Paix

JEAN LANGLAIS is the blind organist of the Church of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris where his predecessors have been Ermend Bonnal, Charles Tournemire, Gabriel Pierné and

César Franck. In his work he shows himself worthy of such a succession. His masters have been Paul Dukas for composition and André Marchal and Marcel Dupré for organ.

The "Chant de Paix" is third of a set of nine pieces for organ. Written during the dark days of 1943, the peace it sings is of the inner life, the unruffled calm of contemplation.

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (b. 1908)

Majesté du Christ demandant sa gloire à son Père ("L'Ascension")

Controversy rages over the music of Messiaen. It lacks neither its detractors nor its equally ardent devotees, but an indifferent attitude seems impossible. A pupil, like Langlais, of Paul Dukas and Marcel Dupré, organist at the Sainte-Trinité in Paris, Professor of Harmony at the Conservatoire and a devout Catholic, Messiaen is a world-famous composer at forty. He is at present working on a symphony commissioned by Koussevitzky for the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Although written in 1933, before Messiaen declared his musical ends and means in a manifesto, "L'Ascension" contains certain elements which are still characteristic of his style: a fondness for slow, sustained movements, a rich chromatic harmony and unusual colour effects. The work consists of four "symphonic meditations" of which the first is to be heard this evening. It is inspired by a passage from Saint John's Gospel: "Father, the hour is come: glorify thy son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."

JEHAN ALAIN (1911-1940)

Litanies

When JEHAN ALAIN fell before Saumur, France lost a young composer of fine achievement and even greater promise. He, too, had studied with Dukas and Dupré and had distinguished himself at the Paris Conservatoire. "Litanies" was completed in August, 1937, and first performed by the composer at a recital given at the Sainte-Trinité in 1938. A clue to the proper understanding of the piece, with its seemingly obstinate repetitions of the fragment of melody heard at the outset, is held in the suggestive lines with which Alain prefaced the score: "When the Christian soul in its distress finds no new words with which to implore God's mercy, it repeats unceasingly the same invocation with vehement faith. Reason attains its limit. Only Faith continues its ascent."

IMPROVISATION

ON A THEME TO BE SUBMITTED BY DR. HERBERT HOWELLS

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

Organ Recitals

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, at 6.45

Ralph Downes

Organist of Brompton Oratory

Works by

SWEELINCK, GUILAIN, PURCELL, DURUFLE,
FRESCOBALDI, WESLEY, WAGENAAR, REGER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, at 6.45

George Malcolm

Organist of Westminster Cathedral

Works by

BACH, FRANCK, WIDOR.

SILVER COLLECTION