

# Ann Arbor Summer Festival International Organ Series

Lisa Byers

Presented July 11, 18, and 25, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival's International Organ Series included performances by Marilyn Mason with soprano Brenda Wimberly; David Troiano with Finnish violinist Tapani Yrjola; and Horst Buchholz with soprano Meeae Cecilia Nam. The series was coordinated by University Organist Marilyn Mason and all concerts were given in the Blanche Anderson Moore Hall in the E. V. Moore Building at the University of Michigan. The hall features the Fisk mechanical-action organ, built in the style of Silbermann, closely resembling the instrument in the Georgenkirche in Rotha, Germany.

## July 11

The first recital was presented by **Marilyn Mason** and soprano **Brenda Wimberly**, professor of voice at Grambling State University and an alumna of Michigan. The first work for organ alone, *Variations, Heil Dir im Siegeskranz* by Johann C. H. Rinck, based on the tune AMERICA, featured various stop combinations, making each of the eight variations distinctive. Ms. Wimberly then provided the alternate verses for the Le Clerc *Magnificat du Huitième Ton en Sol Majeur*. The score was obtained from the British Museum and edited for performance by Dr. Mason.

The duo next offered *Ave Maria* by Bach/Gounod and *The Lord Is My Light* by Allitsen. Wimberly's voice was rich and robust as well as gentle when necessary in the upper registers. In *O Divine Redeemer* by Gounod, organist and vocalist produced a nice sense of ensemble. The program closed with three spirituals for organ by Calvin Taylor. Wimberly sang the melodies for "Steal Away," "This Little Light of Mine," and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," each followed by the organ settings that were commissioned by Mason, a long-time supporter of contemporary music. This duo has performed together for several years and was met with enthusiastic approval by audience, who applauded until an encore was performed.

## July 18

The second program was offered by Finnish violinist **Tapani Yrjola** and the



Soprano Meeae Cecilia Nam and organist Horst Buchholz

musically versatile **David Troiano**, organist, lyric tenor soloist, and choral conductor. Both have their doctorates in performance from the University of Michigan, have received numerous awards, and enjoy active international careers.

The opening *Sonata Prima* by Veracini featured several dance movements. Troiano then played three Neumeister Chorales by Bach: *Allein zu dir, Herr Jesus Christ*, BWV 1100; *Erhalt uns, Herr bei deinem Wort*, BWV 1103; and *O Herre Gott, dein gottlich Wort*, BWV 1110, aptly performed and registered. Next was Handel's *Sonata in D*, op. 1, no. 13, for the duo. In this work and throughout the recital, Troiano always kept in mind the timbre and volume of his accompaniment, so as not to overshadow the violin.

Marcello's *Sonata di Organo* is a charming piece, and proved to be a fun, somewhat pianistic fanfare. The "Allemanda" from Bach's *Partita in B Minor* for violin solo was sensitively performed. *Variations on a Finnish Chorale* for organ solo by Sulo Salonen featured canonic and dramatic passages. The concluding three brief pieces were by Finnish composers: *Chanson sans paroles* by Toivo Kuula, *Berceuse* by Armas



Fisk organ, University of Michigan

Jarnefelt, and *Rondino* by Jean Sibelius. All three works were originally written for violin and piano, but here transcribed for violin and organ by Troiano. Both artists showed great poise and were well rewarded by the audience, who insisted on an encore.

## July 25

The final concert of the series featured soprano **Meeae Cecilia Nam** and organist **Horst Buchholz**. Originally from South Korea, Dr. Nam is currently professor of voice at Eastern Michigan University and has performed extensively with Dr. Buchholz, who is organist/choirmaster at Cleveland's Trinity Cathedral and on the faculty at Cleveland State University.

One could easily tell from Buchholz's opening work, *Voluntary in C Major* by John Stanley, that his European background and experiences made him at home on this German-style instrument. Ms. Nam gave a convincing and stylish rendition in impeccable German of two

sacred concerti by Schütz: *Ich will den Herren loben allezeit* and *O süßter, o feundlicher, o gütiger Herr Jesu Christe*. Buchholz then followed with Bach's chorale prelude, *Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit*, BWV 669, played with great clarity and accuracy. Psalm 99 *Jubilate Deo* for soprano and organ by French Baroque composer André Campra showed Nam's vocal agility and expressiveness in the multi-movement cantata.

In Pachelbel's partita *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*, the organist offered colorful registrations. Pergolesi's *Salve Regina*, originally for soprano and string orchestra, worked very well on the Fisk, with Pergolesi's highly expressive melodies and suspended harmonies. Buchholz played his own most interesting arrangement of the famous *Fantaisie in D Minor*, K. 397, by Mozart. His transcription seemed to fit naturally on the organ, with beautiful stop changes for the various sections.

Dr. Nam's voice was full of warmth and depth, and was also crystal clear in the demanding coloraturas of Mozart's beautiful aria *Dulcissimum convivium*. The closing work by Carlo Morena, *Versetzi per il Gloria sopra la musica di Mozart*, displayed good contrast in registrations and appropriate excitement. The audience insisted on an encore. ■

Lisa Byers, a native of Virginia, holds a B.A. from Westhampton College, University of Richmond, Virginia, a master's in music education, and a master's in organ performance, both from the University of Michigan. She earned a J.D. from the University of Toledo, Ohio.

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