

No. 118
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Eileen Swanson
in a
Harpichord Recital

Studio Theater, Meany Hall
Monday, November 22, 1976
8:00 P.M.

Tape No. 1-8260

A. Scarlatti 3:07 Toccata No. 9 in G Major CH 12-18-76.
(1660-1725)

Byrd 7:08 The Bells CH 12-18-76.
(1543-1623)

Handel 5:15 Air and Five Variations from Suite No. 5 in
(1685-1759) E Major ("The Harmonious Blacksmith")
CH 12-4-76.

Farkas 5:46 Hybrids CH 12-18-76.
(b. 1905)

- Soggetto
- Marcietta
- Notturmo
- Tarantella
- Cadenza

J. S. Bach 12:56 Concerto in the Italian Style CH 12-18-76.
(1685-1750)

- Without tempo indication*
- Andante
- Presto

Intermission

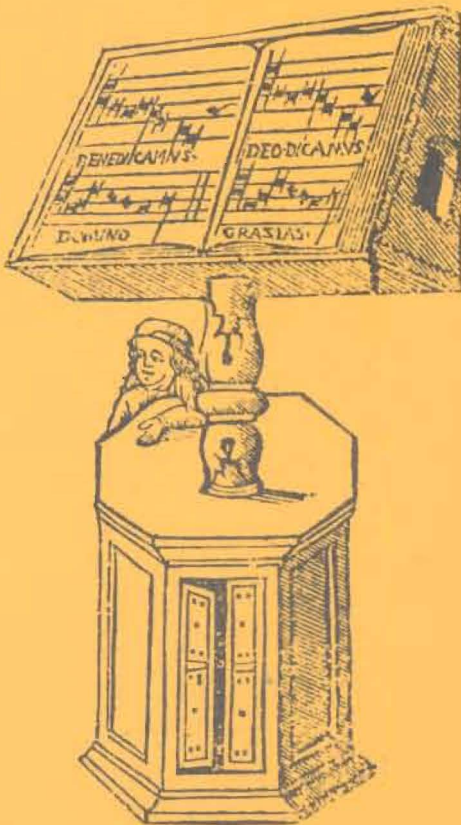
Tape No. 2-8261

J. S. Bach 16:15 French Suite No. 6 in E Major CH 12-4-76.

- Allemande
- Courante
- Sarabande
- Gavotte
- Polonaise
- Bouree
- Menuet
- Gigue

Rameau 6:45 Gavotte and Six Doubles in A Minor
(1683-1764)

CH 12-4-76,



Eileen Swanson is a student of
Silvia Kind.

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music.

The harpsichord, at last, has fully awakened from its "beauty sleep of a hundred years," as my teacher is fond of saying. It is valued for its own special qualities of timbre, tone colors, clear articulation: different, but not therefore inferior to the piano. All of the pieces on this program except the Farkas were written for harpsichord. When the young Mendelssohn played his all-Bach-and-Handel programs, the possibility of using a harpsichord was not even a consideration. How fortunate (and ironic) it is in this age of plastics and instant replay that we have witnessed also the rebirth of the harpsichord.

Alessandro Scarlatti has the misfortune of being remembered more for having fathered Domenico than for his own considerable musical output. This example of his keyboard music, however, shows a flair for keyboard writing which was no doubt absorbed by the more famous son. Written in the classic toccata form, it opens in free improvisational style (in this case, solid chords which the performer is expected to arpeggiate) contrasted with stricter, imitative style.

The Bells is one of the masterpieces to come out of the school of virginalists active in England at the opening of the 16th century. Composers exploited the idiomatic possibilities of the keyboard, attaining new heights of virtuosity. Constructed entirely on the ostinato formed by the first two notes, the piece gradually builds to a climax, adding faster note values and contrasting triple meter over the ostinato, then, in a kind of epilogue, returns to the stately character of the opening.

Alas! the "Harmonious Blacksmith" variations were not the result of Handel's hearing the blacksmith William Powell of Whitchurch at work. So much for legend; still, the strong, vital character of the theme makes it easy to see how such a story was invented. The variations begin simply and build, adding triplets in the right hand in the third, and in the left hand in the fourth, and scalar runs for both hands in the fifth, after which the theme is repeated.

The Hungarian composer Ferenc Farkas is not well known in this country, but has produced a large variety of musical works and literary works on music. Hybrids dates from 1957. The title is apt, for Farkas produces these miniatures by a combination of serialism, Prokofiev-like tonality, and short repetition forms. One can clearly hear the 12-tone row laid out in the Soggetto.

The Italian concerto is one of the most popular of Bach's works, and justifiably so. Bach notes in the title page that it (and the French Overture published with it) were "composed for music lovers, to refresh their spirits." The title page also states specifically that the two pieces were composed for a harpsichord with two manuals. A contemporary review of the work, by one Johann Adolph Scheibe, from December, 1739, pronounces it the "perfect model of a well-designed solo concerto," and gives us a good definition of that term: "In such pieces the basic structure is kept the same as in concertos for many instruments. The bass and the middle voices, which are added now and then to fill out the texture, must represent the subordinate parts. And those passages which above all form the essence of the concerto must be most clearly differentiated from the rest. This can very well be done if, after the principal idea of a fast or slow movement is concluded with a cadence, new and distinct ideas enter and these in turn give way to the principal idea in varying keys. By such means, a piece of this sort for one instrument becomes quite similar to one for many instruments." In one of the few such instances, Bach gives "forte" and "piano" indications, differentiating solo and tutti registrations.

The keyboard suites of Bach are the culmination of the association of different dance movements in the same key begun in the 16th century with the association of dance pairs. By the time of Froberger (ca. 1650), the Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue were organized into suites, with the Sarabande in last place. By 1700 the scheme A-C-S-G-O was found ("O" for other, optional dances), J. S. Bach seemingly the first to place the optional group before the concluding Gigue. Of the French suites in particular, Forkel noted that "the composer is here less learned than in his other suites, and has mostly used a pleasing, more predominant melody."

Rameau is the musical connection to the French Enlightenment, and his music combines that more middle class spirit with the aristocratic style of his great countryman and contemporary, François Couperin. The Gavotte theme, Rameau notes, is to be played slower than is usual for that dance movement. The first two variations are paired, with scalar passages in the right hand in the first, and in the left hand in the second. The third, more languid variation, has a running obbligato part between the melody and bass parts. The fourth features rapidly repeated notes, and the last two take up that idea first in the right hand and then in the left, but adding brilliant skips around the repeated notes.

--EES

I wish the taxpayers to know that the program and these notes were "not printed at government expense." I would also like to extend my gratitude for their help to: Silvia Kind, my teacher; Dr. Henry Leland Clarke, my academic adviser; Mea Hartman and Betty Wangerin of Meany Hall; Donald Galt, the University's keyboard technician, and, finally, my family.