

Presents a Faculty Recital:

CRAIG SHEPPARD, *PIANO*

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

**THE WELL TEMPERED CLAVIER
BOOK II (1740-44)**

7:30 PM
April 23, 2008
MEANY THEATER

PROGRAM

Part I

- 1) Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 870
- 2) Prelude and Fugue in c minor, BWV 871
- 3) Prelude and Fugue in C sharp Major, BWV 872
- 4) Prelude and Fugue in c sharp minor, BWV 873
- 5) Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV 874
- 6) Prelude and Fugue in d minor, BWV 875
- 7) Prelude and Fugue in E flat Major, BWV 876
- 8) Prelude and Fugue in d sharp minor, BWV 877
- 9) Prelude and Fugue in E Major, BWV 878
- 10) Prelude and Fugue in e minor, BWV 879
- 11) Prelude and Fugue in F Major, BWV 880
- 12) Prelude and Fugue in f minor, BWV 881

INTERMISSION

Part II

- 13) Prelude and Fugue in F sharp Major, BWV 882
- 14) Prelude and Fugue in f sharp minor, BWV 883
 - 15) Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 884
 - 16) Prelude and Fugue in g minor, BWV 885
- 17) Prelude and Fugue in A flat Major, BWV 886
- 18) Prelude and Fugue in g sharp minor, BWV 887
 - 19) Prelude and Fugue in A Major, BWV 888
 - 20) Prelude and Fugue in a minor, BWV 889
- 21) Prelude and Fugue in B flat Major, BWV 890
- 22) Prelude and Fugue in b flat minor, BWV 891
 - 23) Prelude and Fugue in B Major, BWV 892
 - 24) Prelude and Fugue in b minor, BWV 893

Book II of *The Well Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach

A Short Introduction

The second volume of *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* presents many more problems for the performer than does Book I, because the provenance is not nearly as straightforward. Book I, written over several years, was one of the audition pieces Bach submitted in 1722 for his eventual job as Cantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, a position he would occupy for the remaining twenty-seven years of his life. The works in Book II, on the other hand, appear to have been composed over many years, and come down to us in two distinct copies, there being no extant manuscript in Bach's hand. The first copy, written out most likely by Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, stems from 1739 and 1740. It is complete, with the exception of the preludes in c sharp minor, D Major and f minor, and resides today in the British Museum. A second, complete version appeared in 1744, written out by Bach's future son-in-law, Johann Christoph Altnickol. It resides in the German State Library in Berlin. Both copies, in turn, spawned myriad other versions with differences in articulation and ornamentation, not to mention the actual notes, all further complicating the picture.

One egregious difference is the addition of fifteen extra bars to the Fugue in e minor in the Altnickol version. This ending underscores one of the characteristics differentiating this volume from Book I. Unlike Book I, the vast majority of the works in Book II end abruptly, the last chord sometimes not even filling out the entire bar. Eleven of the preludes are in binary form, requiring repeats, which makes this volume a full half hour longer than Book I. Furthermore, these binary pieces manifest the distinct beginnings of sonata form. A development and recapitulation are easily discernable in a number of them (among which, those in d sharp minor, f minor, F sharp Major, g sharp minor, A flat Major and B flat Major). Early manifestations of classical homophony are also apparent in the f minor and B Major Preludes. These observations alone could point to an advancement in style over Book I, until we take into account that many of the pieces in Book II were written in all probability many years previously, even as early as the Weimar years of 1708-1717, and even predating nearly all those in

Book I. For sure, the ‘later’ pieces were reworked and added to – but this was nothing new, Bach constantly revised his works throughout his lifetime.

One of the great surprises in Book II is the lack of those wonderful, slow, ruminative and often tragic fugues that we have in Book I (here, I’m thinking of the c sharp minor, d sharp minor, f minor, f sharp minor, b flat minor, and b minor fugues). Bach was composing Book I about the time that he lost his first wife, Maria Barbara, and no doubt much of his anguish and pain were poured into these great fugues. In particular, the key of f minor has always struck me as being associated with this tragedy – think of the Sinfonia (three-part Invention) in f minor, the prelude and fugue in f minor from the first book, and even the prelude in f minor in this book. Yet the exuberance of the f minor fugue in the present volume would have been unthinkable in Book I. It is as if Lazarus has come back from the dead and is dancing on his own grave. What a reaffirmation of life! Indeed, what we now have in Book II are more assertive fugues on a massive scale. During the second half of the book, no less than seven of the twelve fugues fall into this category. The concepts are gargantuan, the sound world no less impressive. Like many of Bach’s greatest works, they build to an inexorable and powerful conclusion. Certainly the fugues in g minor, A flat Major, b flat minor, and B Major fall into this category, and one could easily imagine hearing them on a great organ in a major cathedral. The earlier Fugue in E Major brings a similar picture to mind, a great hymn, albeit on a decidedly smaller scale. The prelude in a minor presents us with a different dilemma. The Altnickol version provides a type of chromaticism in bar 24 that should raise many eyebrows. My theory is that either Altnickol, and/or Bach, wrote this in an intoxicated moment, as the harmony seems more attuned to the twentieth century than to the eighteenth. Bach was known to love his beer and wine (indeed, these were part of his yearly provisions in his contract with the Thomaskirche, and they were sizable). I prefer the more sober version in Anna Magdalena’s copy. And, once again, Bach proves in the broad silences of the a minor fugue that he can provide humor in the minor key, perhaps the only composer (that I know of) who is capable of such.

As with Book I, I remain very indebted to Professor Paul Badura-Skoda of Vienna for his groundbreaking tome, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, in which he discusses all matters of Baroque articulation, ornamentation, rhythm and dynamics thoroughly and convincingly. Any serious student of the Baroque should avail him/herself of this great book. Hermann Keller's book, *Die Klavierwerke Bachs*, gives invaluable historical background to many of the pieces. It is written with great sensitivity and clarity of thought. Not least, the *Kritischer Bericht* edited by Alfred Dürr and published by Bärenreiter has provided enormous assistance in working through the many slight variations between editions, and in coming to what I hope are intelligent and well-founded decisions in many matters.

Tonight's program is dedicated to my good friend, the Reverend Dave Gillespie of Seattle's First United Methodist Church. Dave's enthusiasm for the first prelude of Book II is infectious, and a performer can only be profoundly grateful to share in such moments.

[Program Notes © Craig Sheppard 2008.]

Craig Sheppard is the Donald E. Petersen Endowed Professor of Piano at the School of Music. He has made six trips to the Far East to teach and perform since mid-2002 — four to Japan and one each to Taiwan and Korea. In March of 2008, he visited New Zealand for the second time, performing Book II of *The Well Tempered Clavier* at Victoria University in Wellington. In May 2008, he will give solo recitals and master classes in four major Chinese cities, including Shanghai and Beijing.

In May 2004, Sheppard completed a seven-concert series in the University of Washington's Meany Theater devoted to a chronological traversal of the 32 Beethoven piano sonatas. Entitled *Beethoven: A Journey*, the cycle is available in a nine-CD boxed set through Sheppard's Web site, www.craigsheppard.net, as well as from Romeo Records (www.romeorecords.com) and major record stores. More recently, his recordings of Bach's *Six Keyboard Partitas*, the *Inventions and Sinfonias (Aufrichtige Anleitung)*, and Book I of *The Well Tempered Clavier*, all recorded live in Meany Theater, have been released on Romeo Records. The Beethoven cycle and all three Bach discs have met with unanimous praise in local, national, and international publications, including *Gramophone*, *International Piano*, *International Record Review* and *Fanfare*.

In 1996, Sheppard opened the Seattle Symphony's season as soloist in a series of concerts that also featured the violinist Midori. In 1999, he made his recital debut at the Berlin Philharmonic to great critical acclaim. *Die Welt* remarked: "The pianist revealed himself as an intimate connoisseur of Bach's soul, illuminating every facet of the thirty-two *Goldberg Variations*, constructing an inner line full of tension, playing however at the same time with complete naturalness and ease."

A graduate of both the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and the Juilliard School in New York City, Sheppard's teachers included Rudolf Serkin, Sir Clifford Curzon, Eleanor Sokoloff, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Peter Feuchtwanger, and Ilona Kabos.

Following his New York debut in 1972, Sheppard won the silver medal at the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in England. Moving there in 1973, he quickly established himself

through recording and frequent appearances on BBC radio and television as one of the preeminent pianists of his generation. Cycles of the complete solo piano works of Johannes Brahms and Bach's *Klavierübung* in London and other major capitals solidified his reputation as a probing and dynamic artist.

During his twenty years in England, Sheppard taught at the University of Lancaster, The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Yehudi Menuhin School for gifted children. He also gave numerous master classes at both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Sheppard has performed with all of the major orchestras in Great Britain, as well as those of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, among others, and with such conductors as Sir Georg Solti, Sir Charles Mackerras, James Levine, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Lord Yehudi Menuhin, Erich Leinsdorf, Aaron Copland, David Zinman, Gerard Schwarz, and Peter Erös.

Sheppard has also recorded on the EMI, Polygram (Philips), Sony, Chandos, Cirrus, and Tangermann/Berlin (at-label@gmx.de) labels. For further information, go to Sheppard's website at www.craigsheppard.net or www.cspiano.com.

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