

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2012

Concerts at The University

Friday 10 February 2012

1.10pm

St Cecilia's Hall

Heather Slade-Lipkin · harpsichord

Programme of works by **MARTINU, RAMEAU,
J.S. BACH and SCARLATTI.**



Two Impromptus

Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959)

Martinu was born in Bohemia. He became a violinist in the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, and taught music in his home town. In 1923 Martinu left Czechoslovakia for Paris, and deliberately withdrew from the Romantic style in which he had been trained. In the 1930s he experimented with expressionism and constructivism, and became an admirer of current European technical developments, exemplified by his orchestral works. He also adopted jazz idioms and of the post-war avant-garde styles, neo-classicism influenced him the most. He continued to use Czech and Moravian folk melodies throughout his career.

He emigrated to the United States in 1941, fleeing the German invasion of France. Although as a composer he was successful in America, receiving many commissions, he became homesick for Czechoslovakia. However, he never returned to his native country, and died in Switzerland. He wrote these two Impromptus in the final year of his life and they were published posthumously.

Les Soupirs

Les Cyclopes

Jean -Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Rameau was born in Dijon. In his time he was the leading French composer and theorist, an important innovator in harmonic theory. His father was the organist at St Etienne. He studied from the age of seventeen in Milan and Paris having been dismissed from school for spending all his time singing and composing. Rameau was beginning to write at the end of the Louis XIV reign and was looking backwards in the form but forwards harmonically. In these two pieces in D major and D minor Rameau is writing some of the 18th century's finest descriptive and idiomatic harpsichord music. Les Soupirs (Sighs) evokes a mood or state of mind whilst Les Cyclopes shows a breadth of sweep and fullness of harmony created by the working together of both the hands. This was one of Rameau's later descriptive pieces and the Cyclopes were, in Greek legend, one-eyed cannibal Giants who lived a pastoral life in distant lands.

Toccatà in D major, BWV 912

Johann Sebastian Bach (1683-1750)

Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany, into a large and distinguished family of professional musicians. His father, named Johann Ambrosius Bach, was a violinist and trumpeter, employed by the city of Eisenach. His uncles were church organists, court musicians and composers. His mother and father died before Bach was 10. As an orphan, he moved in with his eldest brother, J. C. Bach, an organist and composer, under whose tutelage Bach studied organ music as well as the construction and maintenance of the organ. Bach fathered a total of 20 children with his two wives. Several of his sons became famous composers in their own right.

Among the works that Bach wrote for keyboard in his early years, the seven harpsichord Toccatas hold a prominent place. The term Toccata was the name given in the 17th century to keyboard compositions, in which the touch of the performer is exhibited in the imaginative interlacing of running passages and full chords with fugal sections.

This Toccata starts with a Presto, followed by a contrapuntal Allegro. The next Adagio section is followed by a three-voiced fugue and then a free episodic section links this to the final dance-like fugue in compound duple time.

Sonata in D Major K119

Sonata in C Major K133

Sonata in A minor K 175

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Scarlatti provides proof positive that, even in the field of music, great and successful late developers really do exist. Born in Naples on 26 October 1685, he spent the first half of his life under the shadow of his father, the more famous Alessandro Scarlatti, writing operas, cantatas and church music, but did so in a style which, though generally competent, lacked the flair of his father's work.

In 1719 he left Italy to take up the post of chapel-master to the King of Portugal and with that appointment came the job, which changed his life, that of musical master to the young and gifted Princess Maria Barbara. Nearly ten years later, in 1729, his pupil married the heir to the Spanish throne and Domenico moved to Spain, where he lived out the rest of his days.

Domenico's surviving musical legacy includes 555 harpsichord sonatas, most of which were written for Maria Barbara. The sonatas are one-movement pieces that can be played individually, as today, or linked together to make 2 or 3 movement sets. The two outer sonatas are lively in character and, particularly in the case of the A minor infused with Spanish characteristics.

All available evidence points to the fact that more than half of these sonatas were composed between the ages of 67 and 72, a five-year period of feverish creative activity and in a constantly developing style.

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Heather Slade-Lipkin was born into a musical family and by the age of six had already begun formal piano lessons with her mother, who was herself a disciple of Artur Schnabel. Heather was soon winning many 1st Prizes at music festivals and aged 12 made her concerto debut with Mozart's Concerto in A major and Bach's D minor Concerto to critical acclaim.

She gained her ARCM performer's diploma whilst still at school and by the age of 16 she had won 1st prize in the National Piano Competition thus coming to the attention of the celebrated piano professor Gordon Green, with whom she then studied at the RNCM. She also studied piano accompaniment with Clifton Helliwell and later won scholarships to study with Kenneth Gilbert and Huguette Dreyfus in Paris. On graduation she was appointed to the RNCM staff as a piano lecturer, official college accompanist and repetiteur and in addition was appointed professor of piano at Chetham's in 1970.

Heather Slade-Lipkin, building on her earlier success in the National Piano Competition, won 1st Prize in the 1974 National Harpsichord Competition and, in addition to her critically acclaimed London debut at the Purcell Room, sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Musicians, gained universal recognition as a Finalist in the 1978 Paris International Fortepiano Competition.

Heather went on to perform extensively as a soloist in Belgium, France, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the USA. She was invited to appear as a soloist with the CBSO under Sir Simon Rattle and has made various radio and television programmes for the BBC. Heather's extensive repertoire spanning the 16th to 21st centuries is reflected in her critically acclaimed commercial recordings which includes her Brahms-Ravel-Rossini-Britten Contrasts CD (BDS), Jean-Philippe Rameau's Pièces de Clavecin, and Les Oeuvres de Louis Couperin a 4-CD set.