

PIANO RECITAL BY MARIE CLAIRE BELLIZZI AT THE
BRITISH COUNCIL, VALLETTA, 15 APRIL 1977

Programme Notes

PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN A MINOR, NO XX Bk I

BACH

Based on Werckmeister's new system of tuning keyboard instruments - known as 'Equal Temperament' - Bach wrote 'The Well-tempered Clavier' in two volumes. Each series includes preludes and fugues in all the twelve major and minor keys; the fugues marking the culmination of the arduous work of the two preceding centuries. They are rich in variety and expression and in each case the subject is alive with character.

SONATA IN C MINOR Op 10 No 1

BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio
Adagio molto
Prestissimo

This sonata belongs to the period 1797-1802, at the time when Beethoven's fame was beginning to grow and also when the first signs of deafness appeared. For four years he suffered in silence, but at last he confided his secret to his childhood friend Wegeler: ".....what is worse I distinguish sounds, not words... I have frequently cursed existence and the Creator. Plutarch has led me to resignation. I want to defy my fate....."

The sonata has abrupt changes of mood: the first movement alternates between the defiance of the first subject and a soothing second subject. The second movement - except for some flashes of despair - is almost a song of resignation, while the third is a fiery piece not without humour.

BARCAROLLE IN F SHARP Op 60

CHOPIN

Following close in the footsteps of the F Minor Ballade Op 52 and the B Minor Sonata Op 58, the Barcarolle stems from the peak of Chopin's artistic powers. The piece is very evocative: a brief introduction settles into an undulating accompaniment, over which the music serenades, whispers, laughs, entices.....before reaching an abandoned and impassioned climax.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF SCHUMANN Op 9

BRAHMS

The 15 Variations on a Theme of Schumann were published in 1854 when Brahms was 21. He had met Schumann in the autumn of 1853 and found in him both a friend and a patron. It was the enthusiasm of Schumann and an article 'New Paths' which he wrote, which brought Brahms into wider notice, and the friendship of Robert and Clara Schumann was one of the most precious that entered the composer's life.

There is an obvious similarity of thought and feeling between the works of Brahms and Schumann, but in the latter the literary and pictorial element is often predominant and the instinct for form and proportion is not so marked.

PRELUDES Op 23 Nos 7,10,5

RACHMANINOFF

The preludes of Opus 23 are dedicated to Alexander Siloti, who was a favourite pupil of Liszt's and one of Rachmaninoff's teachers at the Moscow Conservatory.

The prelude has its origins in the old classical 'suites' and developed through Bach, achieving great importance with Chopin who so named his set of twenty-four piano compositions. Many composers have taken the title from Chopin: Rachmaninoff composing those of Op 23, Op 32 and 'the' Prelude in C sharp minor, which, incidentally, was introduced to the world by Siloti.

(Programme notes by Marie Claire Bellizzi)

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Marie Claire Bellizzi

Marie Claire Bellizzi sat for her LRSM in 1974 and was awarded a Scholarship by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music to study in London for three years. She has recently obtained her LRAM Diploma and will be returning to London shortly to continue her course of studies.

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