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Guest Artist: Susan Toman, harpsichord

Susan Toman

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VISITING ARTISTS SERIES 2008-9

Susan Toman, harpsichord

Robert A. Iger Lecture Hall
Friday, April 3, 2009
8:15 p.m.
PROGRAM

Six suites de clavessin, 1700

Charles Dieupart
(c.1667-1740)

Cinquième suite
Ouverture
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gavotte
Gigue

Cinquième suite
Ouverture
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gavotte
Gigue

Suite No. 2 in D

Georg Böhm
(1661-1733)

Chaconne

Georg Böhm
(1661-1733)

Sonata in d, BWV 964

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Adagio
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Fuga in C

Johann Pachelbel
(1653-1706)

Musicalische Vorstellung

Johann Kuhnau
(1660-1722)
einiger biblischer Historien, 1700

Il lament di Hiskia
La di lui confidenza in Iddio
L’allegrezza del Rè convalescente

Johann Kuhnau
(1660-1722)

Sonata quarta: The mortally ill then restored Hezekiah

Praludium,

Johann Sebastian Bach
Fuge und Allegro Es-Dur für Laute oder Cembalo, BWV 998

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Canadian harpsichordist Susan Toman holds this year's fourth prize from the Brugge International Harpsichord Competition. She has been featured at the Bloomington Early Music Festival, the London Early Music Festival, and is the harpsichordist with Montreal-based ensembles Tarantella and Dionysos, the latter of which won second prize at the 2007 Montreal Baroque Competition. Currently finishing a Doctorate in Harpsichord Performance at McGill University, Montreal, she focuses on French music of the eighteenth century.

Ms. Toman holds a Masters degree from the University of Michigan in Keyboard Instruments where she specialized in harpsichord, piano, and fortepiano. She has worked primarily with harpsichordists Edward Parmentier, Luc Beausejour, and Hank Knox. Attendance at early music workshops, such as the Baroque Performance Institute of Oberlin, Tafelmusik's Institute in Toronto, and an early music course in Portugal, have given a broad spectrum to her training and have allowed her to work with musicians from around the world.

Ms. Toman is also the recipient of several grants, including one from the Canada Council. Her most recent project, just completed in Germany, was a recording of Rameau's Nouvelles suites de clavecin, which is to be released by Centaur Records in September 2008.

**Program Notes**

Charles Dieupart was a French harpsichordist, violinist, and composer who spent most of his life in England. Dieupart's *Six suites* (1701) are dedicated to the Countess of Sandwich, daughter of the Earl of Rochester – likely a student of Dieupart's. J.S. Bach is known to have copied these pieces out by hand and seems to have been influenced by some of Dieupart's material, particularly in the English suites. Dieupart's suites were published with two performing versions – solo harpsichord, and treble instrument with basso continuo – and display a cosmopolitan style of writing.

Georg Böhm spent the greater part of his life in Lüneburg, Germany, where he served as organist at the Johanniskirche. Among his colleagues were Kusser, Reincken, and Buxtehude. In 1775, C.P.E. Bach told Forkel that his father "loved and studied the works of the Lüneburg organist Georg Böhm." Böhm’s suites combine French and German writing styles; this chaconne, especially, was likely influenced by the French operas Böhm attended while in Hamburg.
J. S. Bach's *Sonata in d*, BWV 964, is a transcription of the Violin Sonata in a minor, BWV 1003. It is unclear whether Bach or one of his pupils made this arrangement, though it succeeds brilliantly in capturing the dramatic gestures, echo effects, and virtuosic moments of the original version. The fugue (second movement) is filled out to provide two and three-part counterpoint throughout, which would be impossible on the violin.

**Johann Pachelbel** lived in various cities, including Regensburg, Vienna, Eisenach, Stuttgart, and Nuremberg. During his years in Thuringia at Eisenach and Erfurt, he became acquainted with the Bach family. Ambrosius, Johann Sebastian's father, asked him to be godfather to his daughter, and to teach music to his son Johann Christoph—who later taught his younger brother. Johann Sebastian had access to Pachelbel's works in his brother's music library, including his fugues, motets, suites, ricercars, fantasias, and chorales. I included this 'fuga' on the program because it exemplifies the type of piece J.S. may have studied when writing his first fugues as a boy. It has a particularly bubbly and persistent character, and ends in a rather humorous way.

**Johann Kuhnau's** *Biblische Historien* consist of six multi-movement sonatas, each prefaced by a prose description of a particular incident from the Old Testament: *The Fight between David and Goliath; Saul cured by David through Music; Jacob's Wedding; Hezekiah, Sick unto Death and Restored to Health; Gideon, Saviour of Israel; Jacob's Death and Burial*. The first movement of *Hezekiah, Sick unto Death and Restored to Health* shows the saddened heart of King Hezekiah who has just learnt of his impending death; he prays for a recovery in this lament. The second movement shows his confidence that God has heard his prayer and will restore his health. The third movement expresses great joy at his recovery, during the course of which he remembers his previous misery, but soon forgets it. Kuhnau was the first to compose sonatas for a solo keyboard instrument.

**J. S. Bach's** *Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro*, BWV 998, is an unusual piece for several reasons. First, an 'allegro' is added to the more traditional pairing of prelude & fugue, creating a type of sonata form. Also, the title claims that it can be played on either lute or harpsichord. It is particularly interesting to note that Bach possessed two lautenwerk (lute-harpsichords) – hybrid instruments that were strung in gut and had no dampers. Much of the piece uses a low range, allowing the lute to ring and the harpsichord to sound particularly lush and dark.

*by Susan Toman*

Source: *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com