

The Boston Clavichord Society Newsletter

Number 15, Fall, 2003

A Seventeenth Century Clavichord-Song by Johann Krieger

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In the 13th (fall, 2002) issue of the *Boston Clavichord Society Newsletter* a clavichord-song by Hans Adolf Friedrich von Eschstruth was discussed. It is one of two songs of this



Courtesy Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA*

type in which the clavichord is explicitly mentioned. The second example follows in this issue of the newsletter: "It is in my Nature/ String Playing Suits Me Well," composed in 1684 by Johann Krieger on a text by Christian Weise (1642-1708). ["String playing" here refers to playing stringed keyboard instruments.] To my knowledge, it is the oldest clavichord poem that was set to music. The remaining poems of this sort and

*Jan Sanders van Hemessen (c. 1500-1575?). Young Woman Playing a Clavichord

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The BCS Presence at BEMF

During the 2003 Boston Early Music Festival and Exhibition, the BCS hosted a symposium and two concerts programmed to recognize the 250th anniversary of the publication of the first part of the *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.

The symposium was organized by BCS board member David Schulenberg, chair of the music department at Wagner College. Presented in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, it took place in two sessions held in the Remis Auditorium at the MFA on Wednesday, June 11 and Thursday, June 12, 2003.

Wednesday morning's event, 10:30-12:30, began with a paper by Annette Richards (Cornell University) on **The Clavichord Lied in Eighteenth-Century Culture**. Drawing on song texts, contemporary descriptions, and iconography, Professor Richards showed how the clavichord in the eighteenth century functioned often as a private domestic instrument, played at home by a non-expert, who regarded the clavichord as an intimate confidante. For these players, there evolved a repertory of songs for personal introspection; often expressions of unrequited love. Frequently the clavichord itself was praised for its ability to mirror the feelings of the performer. Her talk was accompanied by a hand-out of pictures and scores that most delightfully supported her claim that to these domestic performers, the clavichord could indeed soothe the pains of heartbreak.

Next, Robert Zappulla (Claremont Graduate University) spoke on **The Clavichord as an Accompanying Instrument**. Sources testify that the clavichord was used as an ensemble instrument in the right circumstances, and the introduction to the *Versuch* suggests the pianoforte and clavichord provide the best support for accompaniment. There is literary and iconographic evidence, though mostly from Germany and only rarely

from France, to suggest the clavichord was suitable to accompany. On this basis, Professor Zappulla provided a summary of practical accompaniment techniques and performance practice issues gleaned from the French accompaniment treatises.

The morning session ended with a concert presented by mezzo-soprano Pamela Dellal and clavichordist Peter Sykes, who



Pedal clavichord by Joel Speerstra and John Barnes

performed lieder and keyboard works of C.P.E. Bach. Mr. Sykes played Allan Winkler's copy of the MFA's 1796 Schiedmayer, which carried very well in Remis Auditorium, and balanced beautifully with the vocal part. This thoroughly enjoyable concert was enthusiastically applauded by the rather large audience.

[For a report on the recital Wednesday afternoon of featured solo performer Miklós Spányi, brought to

BEMF from Finland by the BCS, see Peter Sykes' report on p 6.]

Thursday's session, 10:00-1:00, was also well-attended. Again chaired by David Schulenberg, the session began with papers dealing with the *Versuch* and the *Probestücke* (study pieces) published in conjunction with the essay. The first paper of the morning, presented by Tobias Plebuech (Stanford University), was entitled **Varied Repeats, Reasonable Deceptions: Editorial Decisions in C.P.E. Bach's Essay on Keyboard Playing**. Professor Plebuech is currently working on a new revised edition of Bach's essay as part of the Packard Humanities Institute's project of publishing the complete works of C.P.E. Bach. He recounted the *Versuch's* checkered publishing history and provided the audience with a list of its many editions. These include the 18th century original editions, the 19th century "modernizations," the

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20th Century restorations, and the various translations. Plebuch pointed out that there was no "perfect edition" either during Bach's lifetime or afterward and that the various editions often present the reader with incomplete text, misinterpretations, mistranslations, omissions, and editorial modifications.

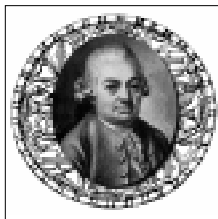
David Schulenberg (Wagner College), presented a paper entitled **Printing the Probestücke: C.P.E. Bach's Revisions Before and After Publication**. Referring to his recent research on the *Probestücke*, Professor Schulenberg disclosed that the twenty copper plates from which the *Probestücke* were printed were engraved in a two-step process (perhaps as a result of the density of the indications for fingering and ornaments), with numerous additions and corrections made by a second engraver prior to publication. These alterations, which have not been previously reported, affected slurs, fingerings, and other performance markings, but rarely if ever notes. A much smaller number of changes took place after publication with the addition of several ornament signs and slurs in three movements.

Professor Schulenberg noted that the work underwent a fourth stage of production when, after acquiring the plates from Bach in 1780, the publisher Schwickert had the last page of the *Probestücke* reengraved to replace a broken plate. The presence of minor errors on the new plate suggests that by this point C.P. E. Bach was not actively involved in its production. But the extraordinary attention to detail and the high level of accuracy evident in the original publication indicate the significance that Bach attached to it.

The third paper of the day, by Richard Kramer (Graduate Center, City University of New York), was entitled **Probestück**, the *Probestück* in question being the acclaimed C-minor Fantasia, the last of the eighteen *Probestücke* that accompany the *Versuch*. Professor Kramer's paper explored the complex tonal plot of the eighteen *Probestücke*, in his words "less a rational deployment of the total chromatic than an *empfindsame* journey to the extremes of tonal consciousness." Bach's *Sprache der Empfindungen*, a language without words and beyond words, led paradoxically and perhaps inevitably to the "cun-

ning experiment" of the poet Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg to accompany the music of the final Fantasia with imagined words of Socrates and Hamlet spoken at extreme junctures.

There followed two papers on clavichord performance issues. Joel Speerstra (Göteborg University) spoke on **The Bach Family and the Pedal Clavichord: Repertoire and Performance Practice**. The trio sonatas of J.S. Bach have long been rumored to have been written with the pedal clavichord in mind. Speerstra presented a paper that looked at this rumor from the 18th century to the present.



The talk was followed by a performance of the adagio movement of Trio Sonata no. 5, played on a copy of the Johan David Gerstenberg clavichord, made by Speerstra and John Barnes in 2001 and generously loaned for the event by Elizabeth Harrison. This instrument, with two manuals and independent pedal with 8' and 16', has a clear voluminous tone which projected very well, with an especially full sound from the pedal division.

The final paper of the day, **Türk and His Clavichord Sonatas**, was presented by Joyce Lindorff (Temple University) with an assist from several of her graduate students. Under discussion was Türk's *Klavierschule*, in which he advocated study of the clavichord even though it was being eclipsed by the fortepiano. The treatise discusses a number of musical details, including the use of dynamic markings with respect to dissonance and the use of strong and weak beats in meter. The points under discussion were illustrated by performances of some movements from Türk's sonatas by Jeffrey Mayer, Candy Stanislavskaya, and Charity Wicks.

The BCS presence at the festival also included a display in one of the exhibition rooms at the Park Plaza Hotel during the festival week. The room was shared with clavichord builders Gary Blaise, Jack Peters and Owen Daly. Various instrument demonstrations took place there during the week, and a reception given by the BCS in honor of Miklós Spányi was held there on June 13.

Another report on the BCS symposium at BEMF, written by Paul Corneilson of the Packard Humanities Institute, will appear sometime next year in the new journal *Eighteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge University Press).

Benefit Concert Features Oleskiewicz-Schulenberg Duo

On Saturday evening, March 15, 2003, the Boston Clavichord Society held a benefit concert and reception at the home of board members Paul Monsky and Beverly Woodward. BCS President Peter Sykes outlined plans for the upcoming Boston Early Music Festival and thanked the attendees for their continued support. The Oleskiewicz-Schulenberg Duo, a husband and wife performing team, then gave a program of works by Johann Joachim Quantz, J. S. and C. P. E. Bach, and Johann Friedrich Kleinknecht. Clavichordist David Schulenberg is a BCS board member and chair of the music department at Wagner College; flutist Mary Oleskiewicz is a member of the music faculty of the University of Massachusetts in Boston. The performances were characterful and strong; and the blend achieved between clavichord and flute was remarkable, giving strong evidence for the suitability of the clavichord as an accompanying instrument. Instrument and performer were beautifully expressive as well in the solo clavichord works. The reception following gave the performers and audience a chance to mingle and comment on the joys of experiencing chamber music performed in intimate surroundings.

Peter Sykes

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Submissions: This Newsletter is a forum for its readers. We welcome articles, letters, questions and other contributions. Copy can be submitted by mail, e-mail or diskette to the Editor. Please contact her about preferred format before making a submission. The copy deadlines are February 15 and September 1.

Es ist mir von Natur gegeben

Musik: Johann Krieger
Text: Christian Weise

1. Es ist mir von Na-tur ge - ge - ben/ das Sei - ten-Spiel ge -
fällt mir wol: Vor - aus ist das mein hal - bet Le - ben/
wenn ich was such - tes hö - ren sol. Drum lob ich auch mein
Ei - gen-thum/ das süs - se das süs - se Cla - vi - chor - - -
di - um. *piano*

The musical score is written for a single system with two staves: a treble clef staff for the vocal line and a bass clef staff for the lute accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of five systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef and a bass clef. The vocal line starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4. The lute accompaniment starts with a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note F#3, a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4. The second system continues the vocal line with a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4. The lute accompaniment continues with a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note F#3, a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4. The third system continues the vocal line with a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4. The lute accompaniment continues with a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note F#3, a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4. The fourth system continues the vocal line with a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4. The lute accompaniment continues with a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note F#3, a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4. The fifth system continues the vocal line with a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4. The lute accompaniment continues with a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, a quarter note F#3, a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, a quarter note C4.

It is in my nature/
playing keyboard strings suits me well:
really it is half my life
to hear something gentle.
Therefore I praise my possession/
the sweet clavichord.

There I sit quite melancholy/
with my head out of sorts
until, while playing, I sense in my fist/
that my sadness fades away.
Therefore you have always
my highest praise/
you gentle clavichord.

At certain times
one wants not to touch the organ/
but prefers to play on quiet strings
which offer tranquil joy.
Therefore I call you my very own/
You quiet clavichord.

I hear indeed the organ pipes/
regal, spinet and whatever:
which can wear one down/
of you alone I never have my fill.
Therefore I give you prolonged praise
you dear clavichord.

Should a string suddenly break/
the damage is easily repaired:
I need not bring a master/
who fixes one thing
and crushes another.
I care for you best myself/
my tender clavichord.

Now should God present me
with a child/
who will love me from the heart/
So may it nothing more desire/
than to be dear as my string-playing/
and to turn to me as sweetly/
as this clavichord.



Clavichord-Song, continued from p. 1

their musical settings come almost entirely from the second half of the 18th century.

Johann Krieger (born in Nuremberg, baptized January 1, 1652, died 1735 in Zittau) was a German composer and organist. His older brother was Johann Philipp Krieger. Johann Krieger began his musical education in his native city with Heinrich Schwemmer, music director of St. Sebaldus Church, where the young Krieger sang in the boys choir. He studied composition with his brother and followed him in 1672 to Bayreuth, where he became the court organist. Johann Philipp moved in 1677 to Halle; and Johann went in the same year to Greitz (near Halle). Here he took the position of music director for Count Heinrich I. Two years later, after the Count's death, Krieger became music director for Duke Christian in the nearby court in Eisenberg. In 1682, he took his final position as organist and choir director in Zittau. Here he remained until his death fifty-three years later.

Krieger's compositions include instrumental works (predominantly for organ and harpsichord), cantatas and other church music, operas (all lost), and various arias and songs. His works for keyboard instruments were highly praised by Johann Mattheson (*Foundation for a Triumphal Arch [Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte]*, 1740), above all in recognition of Krieger's facility in counterpoint. Georg Friedrich Händel also praised Krieger, particularly his music for organ. Two collections of his keyboard works were published in Nuremberg: *Six Musical Partitas* (1697) and *Delightful Keyboard Exercises* (1698).¹

Johann Krieger brought out another work before the keyboard collections: *New Musical Diversions, that is, various inventions which Mr. Christian Weise in Zittau² has put together from spiritual devotions, songs of political virtue and theatrical pieces* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1684). The three-part work contains songs for one to four voices with thoroughbass accompaniment. The first part contains simple strophic songs to religious texts, often with instrumental ritornelli. The songs in the second part are also strophic, but are based on secu-

lar texts. The melodies are somewhat more melismatic and freer than in the first part. Arias from musical dramas, performed in Zittau 1683-1684, comprise the third part.

The clavichord-song is No. XXII in the second part. The complete poem reads:

1. It is in my nature/
playing keyboard strings suits me well:
really it is half my life
to hear something gentle.
Therefore I praise my possession/
the sweet clavichord.
2. There I sit quite melancholy/
with my head out of sorts
until, while playing,
I sense in my fist/
that my sadness fades away.
Therefore you have always
my highest praise/
you gentle clavichord.

"Therefore you have always
my highest praise/
you gentle clavichord."

3. At certain times
one wants not to touch the organ/
but prefers to play on quiet strings
which offer tranquil joy.
Therefore I call you my very own/
You quiet clavichord.
4. I hear indeed the organ pipes/
regal, spinet and whatever:
which can wear one down/
of you alone I never have my fill.
Therefore I give you prolonged praise
you dear clavichord.
5. Should a string suddenly break/
the damage is easily repaired:
I need not bring a master/
who fixes one thing
and crushes another.
I care for you best myself/
my tender clavichord.
6. Now should God present me
with a child/
who will love me from the heart/
So may it nothing more desire/
than to be dear as my string-playing/
and to turn to me as sweetly/
as this clavichord.

In the text we read about the qualities of sound that have always made the

clavichord beloved—gentle, sweet, quiet, dear and tender; of the joy that playing a clavichord gives and how lasting it is; of the easing of melancholy through the clavichord, how it reflects a person's spiritual state and how it can heal; of the personal relationship with the instrument, e.g., one is best advised to fix one's own instrument; of the hope for a child as sweet as one's clavichord; and not least of the advantage of the clavichord over the organ, the regal and the spinet.

This strophic song has a somewhat unusual structure. The individual lines in the poem have varying numbers of measures in the music (2 1/2, 3 1/2, 2, 2, 2, 4 plus four measures ritornello). At the end of each text line, there is a shorter or longer melisma for the singer, where the melody can bloom. The high point of expression is—following the text—the final phrase. Here the words "sweet," "gentle," "quiet," and so forth, are twice sung on a seventh suspension before the song closes with a long lyrical figure on the word "clavichord."

Between the melody and the bass there is no imitation at the beginning of a phrase. Instead the bass runs along mostly in independent eighth notes. The figured bass numbers in the score are less complete than in a separate score for the continuo instrument (or for a second continuo instrument, e.g., a viola da gamba).

It is interesting to see that the clavichord already offered material for poets and composers in the 17th century. It was viewed as something special among instruments: the clavichord becomes a comrade for wonderful hours or a companion for personal feelings. This theme was taken up increasingly and intensively used in the clavier songs of the late 18th century at the time of the *Empfindsamkeit* movement among poets and composers.

Sally Fortino

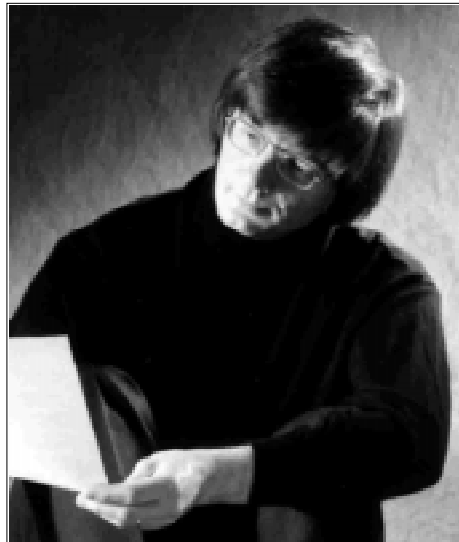
¹ It includes pieces that might also be discovered profitably by clavichord players.

² Weise lived in Zittau, where he became the rector of the gymnasium in 1678. He wrote several hundred dramatic works, as well as novels and poetry collections. He often worked together with Johann Krieger. Weise influenced the development of German literature, including the song, in the early 18th century. His style was uncomplicated, humorous, often satirical and made use of elements of vernacular language in a fresh and natural way.

Spányi Recital at BEMF

Clavichordist Miklós Spányi was the featured solo performer in the lineup of events produced by the Boston Clavichord Society for the 2003 Boston Early Music Festival. Spányi's recital was devoted solely to the works of C.P.E. Bach, in keeping with the theme of this year's BCS BEMF offerings. Spányi has been very active as a scholar in the field of C.P.E. Bach studies and is currently at work recording the entire keyboard works of C.P.E., so he was an especially appropriate choice for this program.

The intimate yet resonant Gordon Chapel of Old South Church in Copley Square was an ideal venue for this recital on June 11, one of the first solo recitals of the Festival. Spányi's program included three sonatas — W 62/20 in C major, W 65/5 in e minor, W 53/5 in C major — as well as a sonatina in D major (W 64/5), the andantino



in d minor (W 116/18) and two character pieces, La Caroline (W 117/39) and La Philippine (W 117/34). Although not inclusive of all the styles in which C.P.E. wrote, the

program offered a well-planned introduction to the solo keyboard compositions of this master. Spányi's masterful performance was distinguished by an effortless control of the instrument together with a strong sense of projection, so that the large audience could hear without strain the wide range of dynamics and tone color that he brought forth from the clavichord, a 1908 Dolmetsch/Chickering instrument supplied from the collection of Peter Sykes.

A well-attended reception in honor of Spányi was held two days later in the BCS exhibition room at the Park Plaza Hotel. A number of his recordings of music by C.P.E. on the BIS label were available for purchase. (The U.S. agent for BIS is Qualiton Imports: 718, 937-8515; www.qualiton.com)

Peter Sykes

Lebedinsky Plays Iberian Program

Henry Lebedinsky's recital on April 27, 2003 was the final event of the Boston Clavichord Society's 2002-3 concert series. The performance took place at Brandeis University's Harlan Chapel in Waltham. Its slightly austere stone-and-glass architecture gives it very favorable acoustics for solo clavichord music.

Lebedinsky's program consisted chiefly of music either written by Iberian composers or, in the case of Domenico Scarlatti, probably composed in Portugal or Spain. One Iberian-inspired offering was not written at all; the second half opened with Lebedinsky's improvisation on *La Folia*, the tune or "ground" made famous by Corelli's setting for violin and continuo (also the basis of variations by C. P. E. Bach, among others).

Four sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti

formed the core of the program. Among them were the well-known K. 380 in E major as well as the less familiar K. 41 in d minor, a four-part fugue. Grouped around these were two sonatas by Soler as well as two works by a Portuguese composer so obscure he is unknown to *The New Grove*: Manuel de Santo Elias, described in the program as "1750" although to my ear his music seemed rather later, reminiscent of Haydn's sonatas of perhaps the 1760s or 1770s. An anonymous *Cantabile* from a Montserrat manuscript as well as a sonata by the Valencian organist Francisco Cabo (1768-1832) rounded out the program. All of the sonatas were of the one-movement type typical of eighteenth-century Iberia, save for the opening work by Santo Elias, in the more usual three movements.

It was a delight to hear all of this Mediterranean music, composed by musicians

blissfully unaware of Bach, and, except in the case of Soler, probably of Handel and Mozart as well. Occasionally the novelty of an idea wears out after too many repetitions, but even this is perhaps an expression of a certain Iberian intensity also evident in older repertory from the region. Much of this music surely was played on clavichords, perhaps into the nineteenth century in the monasteries and palaces of Spain, Portugal, and their American colonies. The instrument used on this occasion, a historic Dolmetsch/Chickering, certainly met the challenge of projecting this often colorful music in Lebedinsky's energetic performance. Lebedinsky plays with great panache but also with solid control and deep musical understanding, a combination of qualities especially appropriate in this sometimes ebullient, sometimes introspective repertory.

David Schulenberg

New Recording by Bernard Brauchli

Bernard Brauchli, member of the BCS Board of Artistic Advisors and one of the best-known exponents of the clavichord, has issued a most interesting new recording devoted to the very earliest works of Mozart on the Stravidarius label (STR 33547). Going all the way back to K.1a (1761),

these charming miniatures come from a notebook kept by Mozart's father for his sister Nannerl's use; the collection has thus come to be called *Nannerl's Notebook* much like Bach's *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*. Mozart contributed his earliest compositional efforts to this notebook, which is here recorded on both a clavichord and a square piano, instruments which would

have been familiar to the young genius. The instruments (both originals in pristine condition) sound well, the performance is ingratiating, there are good program notes in the booklet, and the music shows that the five-year-old composer certainly had quite a future ahead of him.

Peter Sykes