

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark, strapless dress, sitting and playing a harp. She is resting her chin on her right hand and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The harp is a large, ornate instrument with many strings. The background is dark and out of focus.

Godelieve
Schrama
Scarlatti
sonatas

About the program

Undoubtedly the complete keyboard oeuvre of both J. S. Bach (1685-1750) and (Giuseppe) Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) must be reckoned to the essential heritage of any serious keyboard performer nowadays, irrespective of the discussion about the performance of these pieces on the harpsichord, piano, or even electronic instruments. The music from both collections is vast (Scarlatti alone composed more than 500 Sonatas !) and although composed during the same period of the Age of Enlightenment each oeuvre could not differ more from each other in the way form, melody and harmony are used. Yet remarkably, pieces from both collections have been known and performed by all keyboard performers since the time of Mozart right up to Duke Ellington and beyond. The endless variety of form and musical expression inherent in these works, the universal truth and appeal of these pieces to people from all walks of life, must be seen as an extraordinary proof of their innate quality and timelessness.

But the very appeal and universality of these pieces is the same force that literally pushes them outside the confines of the original instrumental conception, as is particularly the case with Scarlatti's music: although the Sonatas were originally conceived for the harpsichord (and perhaps some pieces for fortepiano), the music is filled with the quotes, allusions and suggestions of guitars, harps, castanets, dancers, drums, choirs, trumpets and a host of other instruments too numerous to mention here. Certainly a good performer on any instrument is able to recall the atmosphere and content of these allusions in a subtle fashion and bring them across to the listener. But the Sonatas can also become part of other musical traditions by being 'adopted' by other instrumentalists through transcribing them

for a different instrument. For this reason it is not surprising to find the music of Scarlatti performed today on a great variety of instruments: on one or more guitars, lutes, harmonica, synthesizer, piano, accordion, organ, harpsichord, clavichord, banjo, marimba and even orchestra, string quartet and woodwind band.

This idea of performing music written for one instrument on a different instrument (transcribing) is by no means a modern practice, it is actually a technique which was typical of musical tradition during the entire 18th century. Virtually every composer from this period transcribed existing pieces for varying instrumentation, often even borrowing a work (from another composer or oneself!) several times over. Domenico's famous contemporary J.S. Bach was in this way typical for his time in his treatment of one of his own compositions, the Partita in E major, BWV 1006. Probably as a result of his admiration and contact with the famous lutenist S. L. Weiss, he reworked the complete partita for the lute (BWV 1006a) and in addition took the same prelude from this partita and orchestrated it for the sinfonia of the cantata BWV 29 in D major for orchestra with organ, oboes, trumpets and tympani. Part of this same prelude was also used for a movement of the unfinished cantata BWV 120a. These prominent examples are important for us because they clearly illustrate that the art of transcribing in the 18th century was not viewed as an act of desecration, but rather as an act of enrichment. Musical transcriptions are clearly a source of musical evolution in the existence of musical literature and not some kind of weak exercise in ersatz composition. The choice of Godelieve Schrama to perform Scarlatti on the harp fits in perfectly with this 18th century philosophy, and more importantly, her choice provides us with a totally new view of this remarkable music.

Performing pieces originally written for one instrument on another instrument is not always as simple as might at first appear. We are not discussing of course the

subtle problems that arise when for instance one plays a harpsichord piece on an organ or piano, going from keyboard instrument to keyboard instrument, which cannot be called transcription. This is simply a question of musical taste and requires subtle adaptation of the performer to a different keyboard and mechanical action (which in itself is not always an easy feat). When working in real transcription however, one must deal with the sometimes dissimilar and highly specific strengths and weaknesses of each individual instrument. This requires searching for musical solutions to differences in character and even working around the purely physical limitations and technical demands of each instrument. This can require the development of new performance techniques to make certain musical details executable and often requires the rewriting of certain musical passages or harmonies to fit for instance the available number of strings (or even fingers !) that can be utilized at any given moment. This certainly applies when transcribing harpsichord literature for the harp.

In terms of expressive potential, the harp, as the harpsichord, is a plucked stringed instrument, and both instruments have at least that particular basis of sound production in common. But beyond this point the differences of character diverge appreciably. The harp for instance creates legato phrasing by its very nature, since the strings do not have a damping mechanism as does the piano or harpsichord. The harpsichord is the master of subtlety when it comes to the typical and myriad filigree gradations of articulation common to Baroque music, but a harpsichordist must work harder to create a legato phrasing. Trills and complicated ornaments which are simple and everyday on a keyboard, are much less easy to perform on the harp and require new special techniques and fingerings. And perhaps the major difference between the harpsichord and harp is the ability of the harp to perform dynamics such as crescendo and decrescendo, and all levels between loud en soft. The harpsichord is confined to plateau dynamics and the illusions it can suggest of dynamic level.

If the sonatas of Scarlatti could be compared to a diamond with many facets, then it is exactly these inherent differences between instruments that enables us to view areas and depths of musical form and expression from directions that would otherwise remain hidden from view. In this sense Godelieve Schrama's performance on this CD should not only be seen for the technical tour de force that it is. View it as a new musical adventure with an old and trusted friend. A friend who is still full of surprises after more than 300 years !

© 1998 T.A. Diehl

Das Program

Sowohl die vollständigen Werke für Tasteninstrument von J.S. Bach (1685-1750) als auch die von (Giuseppe) Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) gehören heute - unabhängig davon, ob die Stücke auf dem Cembalo, dem Klavier oder gar auf elektronischen Tasteninstrumenten gespielt werden - zum unentbehrlichen Repertoire jedes ernstzunehmenden Interpreten. Beide Komponisten haben ein umfangreiches Oeuvre für Tasteninstrumente hinterlassen (Scarlatti komponierte mehr als 500 Sonaten!), und obwohl beide im Zeitalter der Aufklärung tätig waren, könnten die Unterschiede in bezug auf Form, Melodie und Harmonie kaum größer sein. Erstaunlich ist, daß von Mozarts Zeitalter bis Duke Ellington Werke beider Komponisten bekannt waren und aufgeführt wurden. Die unendliche Vielfalt von Form und musikalischem Ausdruck in diesen Werken, die allgemeingültige Wahrheit und die Anziehungskraft, die sie auf Menschen aus den verschiedensten gesellschaftlichen Gruppierungen ausübt, all das muß als schlagender Beweis für die ihr innewohnende Qualität und Zeitlosigkeit gewertet werden.

Godelieve Schrama

Godelieve Schrama (b.1969), who was awarded the Netherlands Music Prize 1995, studied at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. In 1990 she took the certificate Performing Musician with distinction. After studying for four years with Gemaine Lorenzini in Lyon, she made her international debut in 1991 in the London Purcell Room. In 1994 she was awarded the Philip Morris Finest Selection Award and won the third prize at the International Harp Competition in Tel Aviv, Israël. In 1996 she was given a first prize during the EBU's International Rostrum for Young Interpreters in Lisbon. She performed soloconcertos with orchestras such as the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, Nieuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam, the Israël Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. Godelieve Schrama not only performs as a soloist, but also with her own Ensemble Amadé, which plays varied chamber music repertoire. Her repertoire comprises three centuries and steadily extends itself with pieces that are written for her. In the Summer of 1998 she will be participating in Isabelle van Keulen's Delft Chamber Music Festival. Godelieve Schrama teaches at the Conservatory of Rotterdam.



Dear music lover,

Vanguard Classics hopes you have enjoyed this recording. If you would like to be informed about new releases on the Vanguard Classics label or if you would like to receive a Vanguard Classics catalogue, we invite you to write to:

Vanguard Classics - P.O. box 1860- 1110 CD Diemen - The Netherlands

Vanguard Classics can also be reached by E-mail: Vanguard.Classics@tip.nl

Executive Producer:	Marcel Schopman
Production:	Kompas CD Multimedia bv, Zeewolde NL
Recording Producer:	Ted Diehl
Engineering & Editing	Bert van der Wolf & Oscar Meijer
Recording Date:	May 5-7, 1997
Recording Location:	Nederlands Hervormde Kerk, Renswoude NL
Instrument:	Wurlitzer ca. 1900; with special thanks to Susan Rycus
Photos:	Camilla van Zuylen
Design:	Edith van de Giessen
Technical Realisation:	Two Rivers bv, Haarlem NL

Domenico Scarlatti (1685 - 1757)
Scarlatti Sonatas

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 1. | Sonata in G major, K. 124 (L. 232) | Allegro | 6'10 |
| 2. | Sonata in G major, K. 125 (L. 487) | Vivo | 3'10 |
| 3. | Sonata in B minor, K. 27 (L. 449) | Allegro | 4'25 |
| 4. | Sonata in A major, K. 208 (L. 238) | Adagio e cantabile | 3'50 |
| 5. | Sonata in A major, K. 209 (L. 428) | Allegro | 5'00 |
| 6. | Sonata in D minor, K. 9 (L. 413) | Allegro | 4'00 |
| 7. | Sonata in C major, K. 420 (L. S2) | Allegro | 6'00 |
| 8. | Sonata in C major, K. 421 (L. 252) | Allegro | 5'00 |
| 9. | Sonata in E minor, K. 402 (L. 427) | Andante | 8'45 |
| 10. | Sonata in E major, K. 403 (L. 470) | Allegro | 3'50 |
| 11. | Sonata in D major, K. 511 (L. 314) | Allegro | 3'00 |
| 12. | Sonata in D major, K. 512 (L. 339) | Allegro | 3'40 |
| 13. | Sonata in D minor, K. 213 (L. 108) | Andante | 8'10 |
| 14. | Sonata in D major, K. 214 (L. 165) | Allegro vivo | 4'20 |

Total time: 70'10

Godelieve Schrama, harp