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ANGELA HEWITT

PIANIST

FEBRUARY 17, 2012

About Angela Hewitt



Pianist Angela Hewitt has established herself at the highest level, not least through her superb, award-winning recordings for Hyperion. Completed in 2005, her eleven-year project to record all the major keyboard works of Bach has won her both critical acclaim and a large following. Her wide-ranging discography also includes Granados, Beethoven, Schumann, Rameau, Chabrier, Olivier Messiaen, the complete solo works of Ravel, the complete Chopin Nocturnes and Impromptus, and three discs devoted to the music of Couperin.

In 2011-12, Ms. Hewitt's performances include appearances with the Montreal Symphony, National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, the Finnish Radio Symphony, the Tampere Symphony, and recital tours throughout North America, Asia, and Europe. She is also appearing as soloist with the Sao Paulo Symphony, the Philharmonia, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Oslo Philharmonic, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Born into a musical family, [her father was organist at the Cathedral in Ottawa] Angela Hewitt began piano studies at the age of three, performed in public at four and at nine she gave her first recital at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music. Her advanced study was with French pianist Jean-Paul Sévilla at the University of Ottawa..

Angela Hewitt was named Gramophone Artist of the Year in 2006, and was recipient of the first ever BBC Radio 3 Listener's Award. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and an Officer of the British Empire. She lives in London and also has homes in Ottawa, Canada and Umbria, Italy.

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Programme Notes (continued)

Ravel: Sonatine

In 1904 Ravel wrote the first movement of this Sonatine as the sole entrant in an international competition that went bankrupt before the prizes could be awarded. A year later he added two more movements to complete the work. Only in the final section did he allow technique to dominate, instructing that it be played 'without prudence or mercy'.

Ravel: Le Tombeau de Couperin

Ravel's last set of piano pieces was the suite Le Tombeau de Couperin, conceived as a Suite française in memory of his many young friends who died in the trenches of World War I. The work begins with a digitally challenging Prélude, then follows a Fugue and a Forlane, replete with some of his most acidic harmonies. After the Rigaudon, whose implacable outer sections enclose a dreamier central one, the Menuet is a miracle of elegance and poise. Ravel described the brilliant closing Toccata as 'pure Saint-Saëns'— from him, a compliment to a fellow master of excellent workmanship.

Freely condensed and adapted from Hyperion Record liner notes, as written by Angela Hewitt

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Programme Notes

The rhythms of the dance have always provided composers with a vital source of inspiration. Bach was no exception, and much of his music is related to the dance. Perhaps this is what gives it that marvelous vitality and spirit, and why it is so immediately appealing. Bach's music was never meant to be used for actual dancing, and indeed many of the dances, with time, developed into keyboard compositions quite far removed from their origins.

English Suite No 2 in A minor, BWV807

This suite assumes concerto-like proportions, even though the Prelude begins as a two-part invention. This is followed by a lyrical Allemande and a seamless and unhurried Courante. The Sarabande is noble and eloquent. The first Bourrée, for me, should not begin too loudly, otherwise the spell is broken too suddenly. The second Bourrée is a musette in the major key, imitating the drone of a bagpipe. It is the only truly carefree moment in the whole suite. The final Gigue is a tour de force in taratella style.

Toccatà in D major BWV912

This is no doubt the most popular of all of Bach's Toccatas. The brilliant opening contains a tremolo figure that reappears later on. The following allegro happily exchanges motifs between treble and bass. After its final flourish, Bach introduces an adagio in recitative style - the melody being interrupted by the tremolo figure, now heard as a distant murmur rather than a brilliant rattle. Bach ends with a truly virtuoso passage - or at least almost, - as he returns to the improvised adagio for the final cadence.

French Suite No 1 in d minor, BWV 812

The six French Suites contain some of Bach's most attractive keyboard writing. Like the other five, this one begins with an Allemande, a Courante and a Sarabande, and concludes with a Gigue. In between the last two movements, Bach has inserted a pair of fashionable galanteries, in this case two contrasting Minuets. In the French Suites, [perhaps so named, twelve years after Bach's death, to distinguish them from the English suites which had been composed several years earlier] Bach absorbed the styles of both the then currently popular French and Italian schools, combining them with his own gifts for counterpoint and keyboard virtuosity.



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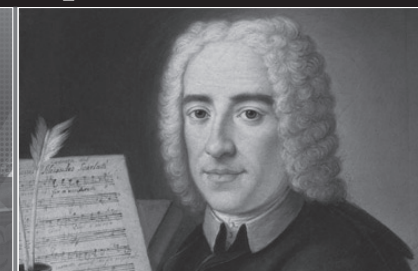
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J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
French Suite No. 1 in D minor, BWV 812
 Allemande
 Courante
 Sarabande
 Menuet I
 Menuet II
 Gigue

Tocatta in D Major, BWV 912

English Suite No. 2 in A minor, BWV 807
 Prelude
 Allemande
 Courante
 Sarabande
 Bourrée I & II
 Gigue

INTERMISSION

Maurice Ravel (1885 - 1937)

Sonatine
 Modéré
 Mouvement de Menuet
 Animé

Le Tombeau de Couperin
 Prélude
 Fugue
 Forlane
 Rigaudon
 Menuet
 Toccat

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