

Bizarre or baRock

Elizabeth
Anderson



move

'BAROCK' is a German word, which originally meant 'bizarre'. The word 'rock', incidentally, was used early in the 20th century as a euphemism for sexual congress, and later became a generic musical term.

It was not until early in the 20th century that the word 'Barock' was used in Germany to describe the music of Bach's time.

When Sir Charles Burney first used it in his German Tour diary (1733), he explained that it meant 'coarse and uncouth', much as writers then used the word 'Gothic'. In architecture, the word 'Barock' was applied from about 1667 to the highly-decorated style of the 17th and 18th centuries in Austria and Germany.

Therefore, to apply the term Baroque (French/English spelling) with all its shades of meaning is to extend the boundaries of Baroque music far beyond the dates which have traditionally been set for it.

This CD explores Baroque harpsichord music across four centuries: it ranges from Conceição's raw 17th century battle piece, through traditional Baroque repertoire by Bach, Handel and Scarlatti, to Gershwin and the Beatles.

Willard Palmer wrote the **Blues** for American harpsichordist, Igor Kipnis. In the eight bars leading to the final re-statement of the opening theme, the performer's improvisation is inspired by the sound of an electric lead guitar, building to a climax using distortion and overload effects.

Ragtime 1 and **Blues 2** are included in an educational anthology of piano compositions by Palmer, entitled A Contemporary Album for the Young (Alfred).

Donald Angle's arrangements for harpsichord of popular tunes are the result of his dual passions for the harpsichord and for jazz. In his youth, Angle earned his pocket money playing the piano in bars. When he began working for the William Dowd harpsichord firm in Boston in 1962, he began to experiment with playing popular music on this instrument. He now devotes his time entirely to composing and performing modern harpsichord music.

Scarborough Fair 3 is the first of three Angle arrangements on this CD, whilst the stride piece, **Chocolate Bunnies 10** is an original composition.

Isaac Albéniz, like Angle, earned an income from an early age playing the piano. Having astounded audiences in his concert debut in Barcelona at the age of four, he ran away from home at 9, giving concerts all over Spain. When he was 12, he stowed away on a ship bound for Puerto Rico, Uruguay, on

which he gave performances to pay for his passage. He visited Argentina, Brazil and the USA, before returning to Europe a year later. By the age of 30, Albéniz had lost interest in playing the piano, and preferred to compose for it, studying composition in Paris with d'Indy and Ducas.

Leyenda 4, or Legend is one of 10 movements published under the title Recuerdos de viaje – Memories of travels (1887). Albéniz was one of the first Spanish composers to give elements of his country's folk music a recognizable place in his compositions. This piece is rich in guitar-like sonorities, which can so aptly be imitated on the plucked string mechanism of the harpsichord. It seems a pity that Albéniz lived during the century when the harpsichord was out of favour. Had he lived on into the 1920s, he would have witnessed the resurgence of the harpsichord in Europe: such an adventurous composer, who had so completely internalised the rhythms and harmonies of Spanish guitar music would surely have been fascinated by this guitar-like keyboard instrument.

It seems only a small hop across the distance of a century from Albéniz to Bach, so much does the **Small Prelude 5** of Bach share with Albéniz' Leyenda. If Albéniz was imitating the guitar, Bach was conjuring up the sounds of the lute: Bach played and composed for the lute, and this Prelude is one that he very well may have played on this instrument. Certainly, in the 20th century, this

Prelude has often been played on the guitar.

Jean François Dandrieu, a contemporary of Bach has the harpsichord disguised not as a guitar, but a lyre. **The Lyre of Orpheus** **6** refers to the ancient Greek myth: Orpheus, desperate to see his dead lover Eurydice again, goes with his lyre, a small harp-like instrument, to the Valley of the Blest. His gentle and sonorous playing persuades the Shades who are the guardians of the gates to let him pass.

Louis Claude Daquin **7**, like his compatriot Dandrieu indulges in the French Art de Paraître – the art of appearance. Of his many compositions for harpsichord, this pastoral cameo, with its regular cuckoo calls, is the most charming.

Mary Mageau **8**, born in the USA and now an Australian citizen has written a number of works for harpsichord, of which this one represents a digression from her usual style. The performer plays simultaneously on harpsichord and wind chimes, painting a picture of a peaceful Winter landscape, in a style probably more akin to New Age music than anything else. The composer takes as her point of departure the following anonymous poem:

*Poet nightingale,
Will I hear your later verses
In the vale of death?*

Lawrence Whiffin's **Cycles I** **9** for harpsichord was given its first

performance by Elizabeth Anderson in the New Audience Series at the University of Melbourne in 1981. This followed her debut at the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord in 1980. Cycles I is based on a five-note rhythmic motif, which appears in the right hand half way through the piece. The pitches of these five notes, and their inversion, outline a scale which governs the pitch content of the work, whilst the durations of the five notes determine the length of its sections.

Hungarian Rock **11** is the result of Ligeti's discussions with his composition class in Hamburg. It represents a marriage between popular and classical elements. The rhythm of the recurrent left hand theme is one used in Balkan folk music, and also in Carribean music. Because of the Carribean link, this ostinato theme reminds us of commercial jazz. In the right hand, a display of fireworks is unleashed, based on various subdivisions of nine, and displacements of nine across barlines. It imitates with brilliance and irony the jazz practice of alternating solo and chorus, and even includes the conventional 'break' at the end.

The Hungarian Rock is really a passacaglia, as is the piece which follows it, Henry Purcell's **A New Ground** **12**. Many of the popular pieces on this recording are 'borrowed' from the vocal repertoire. Here, Purcell 'borrows' a favourite Aria from his Ode, Welcome to all the Pleasures, written

for the Festival of St Cecilia, the Patron Saint of Music:

*Here the Deities approve the God of
Musick, and of Love;
all the Talents they have lent you,
all the Blessings they have sent you;
pleas'd to see what they bestow,
live and thrive so well below,
While Joys Celestial their bright Souls
invade
to find what great improvement you
have made.*

The Harmonious Blacksmith **13** is an Air and Variations from Handel's Fifth Harpsichord Suite, to which Handel gave no fancy title whatsoever. The piece, and stories surrounding its provenance have become legend. One story tells that Handel heard the Air sung by a black-smith at Edgware, near London, and that the said blacksmith beat time with his anvil as he sang. The story goes on to mention that a portion of this Air was inscribed on the blacksmith's tombstone in a graveyard at Edgware. (Richard Clark: Reminiscences of Handel, 1836). William Chapel, in the first edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music (1889) set the record straight, explaining that 'the harmonious blacksmith' was a nickname given to a music seller named Lintern in Bath, who had been brought up as a blacksmith. Lintern was constantly asked to play Handel's Air and Variations, and as a result it acquired his nickname. Lintern claimed to have taken financial advantage of the popularity of the piece by publishing it as sheet music,

although no copies of this publication survive.

Eleanor Rigby **14** is the third and last track on this CD representing British composers. Whilst Purcell and Handel were each very famous in their time, the Beatles, to quote John Lennon were 'more famous than Jesus Christ', thanks to television and the media. Eleanor Rigby first appeared on the album Revolver. The original was scored by George Martin for double string quartet and vocals, and was one of the first songs in which the Beatles used classical instrumentation. Interestingly, when the album was released in 1966, the music critic at Melbourne's Herald newspaper had this to say 'And there are touches of baroque (Eleanor Rigby in particular)'.

William Albright's **Danza Ostinata** **15** is one of Four Fancies for Harpsichord. The composer states that this wild dance 'owes its existence to several predecessors: near Eastern music, boogie-woogie, and the Spanish composer, Soler'. Perhaps Albright has in mind Soler's fiery Flamenco-style Fandango *. 'The harpsichord is a superb rhythm instrument because of its strongly accented timbre. For this reason the harpsichord sounds best when it is made to dance'. In this performance, the 'dance' often has more in common with heavy metal than with boogie woogie.

When discussing rhythm in music, the **Batalha** **16** by 17th century Portuguese composer Conceição provides an

interesting curiosity. This piece is interrupted several times by the kind of rhythm that would have been absorbed into Portuguese folk music through exchange with the African continent.

In the preface to his **Nine Rarebits** **17**, Earle Brown explains that each of the three pages of the score demonstrates the harpsichord in a different textural guise. Each page contains three of the so-called 'Rarebits', and Brown suggests that these can be played in any order by one or two players, either as a 'fixed' version, or in a version arrived at spontaneously in performance. In this performance, the elements of the piece have been assembled by multiple tracking, so that Anderson plays a duet with herself. The work opens with both harpsichords playing Rarebit 2.1, in such a way that one instrument follows the other in canon. The work is assembled as follows, with harpsichords 1 and 2 playing simultaneously:

Harpsichord 1 plays

2.1 2.2 2.3 3.1 3.2 3.3

Harpsichord 2 plays

2.1 3.1 3.2 1.1 1.2 1.3

Scarlatti's sonatas must certainly be amongst the most popular pieces of the traditional harpsichord repertoire, and Scarlatti must have been at home writing in this form, as he composed 555 of these single-movement, bi-partite pieces. Only a handful of Scarlatti's sonatas were slow, as he obviously favoured the vitality of fast tempos. The **Sonata in d minor** **18** is

marked 'extremely fast', and through its perpetually driving quaver movement, achieves a continuous building of tension and excitement. The **Sonata in a minor** **19** is rich in the sounds of the Flamenco guitar: Though he spent most of his life in Italy, Scarlatti's love of the folk guitar music of his native Spain shines through many of his compositions.

In this exploration of harpsichord music from the 17th to the 20th centuries, a recurring theme has emerged: the use of rhythm to create excitement is something that baroque composers understood just as well as Gershwin or the Beatles. So it is apt to end this somewhat bizarre collection with Donald Angle's arrangement of Gershwin's **I got rhythm** **20**. All the more apt, since Gershwin was hailed as the first major link between jazz and so-called classical music, when his Rhapsody in Blue for piano and orchestra was first performed in 1923. The song **I Got Rhythm** first appeared in the musical, Girl Crazy (1930), and features the well-known refrain:

I got rhythm, I got music,

I got my man

- Who could ask for anything more?



The audience at the Nagoya Arts Centre in Japan applauded loud and long the third encore, played by **Elizabeth Anderson**: Willard Palmer's Blues for Harpsichord. Such encore items proved so popular, that Anderson's agent suggested that she create an entire concert programme from them. A new all-20th century programme was well-received at the 1996 Adelaide Festival. That year, Anderson gave her tenth European concert tour, playing solo recitals and four-hands organ concerts with husband, Douglas Lawrence. She received standing ovations for a popular programme at the Brandenburg Cathedral as well as in Hamburg.

It was in the same year that her CD, of Bach's monumental Goldberg Variations received critical acclaim in the Australian press. Numerous orchestral engagements followed, including 28 concerto performances with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland



Philharmonic, the State Orchestra of Victoria and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra.

This series of concertos added to Anderson's already considerable experience playing continuo and concertos with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and with historical instrument ensembles, such as the Australian Baroque Ensemble, the Festival Orchestra (MIFOH) and the Elysium Ensemble.

In 1992, the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord commissioned a harpsichord concerto from Philip Nunn, which was dedicated to her, and first performed by her in the 1993 Festival closing concert with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

Eleven international concert tours have taken her to Japan and Singapore, as well as throughout most of Western Europe. She has been a soloist in such concert series as Symphony Hall, Osaka, Nagoya Arts Centre, Italy's Concerti in Ville; King Frederick's Castle, Berlin; St Germain, Geneva, Frederiksborg Castle, Denmark and the Leeds

and Aberdeen Town Halls. Major music festivals have included the Glasgow Mayfest, Dublin Early Music Festival, Brandenburg Summer Festival and the Dornburg Festival, Germany, the Haarlem Summer Academy, Holland, the Vendsyssel Festival, Denmark and the Carouge Spring Festival, Switzerland.

She has made many appearances in major Australian festivals, such as the Adelaide Festival, the Barossa International Music Festival, the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, the Castlemaine State Festival, Port Fairy Festival and the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord.

As well as maintaining a busy performing schedule, Elizabeth Anderson enjoys teaching. She is on the staff at several institutions, including the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts, and is a regular guest lecturer and performer at universities and music schools throughout Australia.

This is her fifth CD on the Move label.

Kylie Davies completed a Bachelor of Music (Hons) degree in Double Bass at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1996. Whilst still a student, she performed with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the State Orchestra of Victoria and the Academy of Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. She has played with well-known jazz personalities, Tony Gould and Mark Murphy, and

works regularly with Danny Fischer in the Jazz Quartet, Billie's Bounce. Based in Melbourne, she continues to enjoy a career that takes in orchestral playing, chamber music and jazz.

Danny Fischer was a student of Improvisation at the Victorian College of the Arts from 1994 to 1996. He turned professional in 1995, and since then has worked with such prominent artists as singer Mark Murphy (USA), legendary Motown record producer/arranger Gil Askey (USA), Los Angeles tenor sax player Gordon Brisker, and Australians Steve Brien, Keith Hounslow, Cathy Harley, Bob Bertles, Chuck Yates, and Graeme Norris to name a few. At home in Melbourne, he works with the Tony Gould Trio, Delecca-Rex Quintet and Ruby Carter. He has recorded with guitarist Alain Valodze and tenor saxophonist, Tim Hopkins.

During their student years, Danny Fischer, Kylie Davies and Elizabeth Anderson all attended improvisation classes with Tony Gould, who has been a mentor to so many of Australia's new generation of jazz musicians.

* Fandango Move MD 3078

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from about 1600 to 1700.

barock (German); **barocco** (Italian);

barroco (Portuguese);

baroque (French, English) [baRok]

adj Bizarre, coarse, uncouth, in corrupt taste, gothic, a musical term.

baroscope [baRokOs] *n*

Elizabeth Anderson:

harpsichord

Kylie Davies: *double bass*

Danny Fischer: *drums*

- 1 Willard Palmer (born 1917) **Ragtime** (1977) 1'29"
- 2 Willard Palmer **Blues for harpsichord** (1977)
with improvisation Anderson 2'09"
- 3 Traditional **Scarborough Fair** (arranged Donald Angle, 1995) 3'17"
- 4 Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) **Leyenda: Asturias**
(arranged Anderson, 1995) 6'59"
- 5 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Small Prelude in c minor (BWV 999) 1'27"
- 6 Jean François Dandrieu (1684-1740) **The Lyre of Orpheus** 3'04"
- 7 Louis Claude Daquin (1694-1772) **The Cuckoo** 2'21"
- 8 Mary Mageau (born 1934) **Winter's Shadow**
for harpsichord and wind chimes (Brisbane, 1984) 3'44"
- 9 Lawrence Whiffin (born 1930) **Cycles I** for harpsichord (Melbourne, 1978) 3'59"
- 10 Donald Angle (born 1943) **Chocolate Bunnies** (1995) 2'27"
- 11 György Ligeti (born 1923) **Hungarian Rock** (1978) 5'56"
- 12 Henry Purcell (1659-95) **A New Ground** (1689) 3'04"
- 13 Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1757) **The Harmonious Blacksmith** (1720) 4'47"
- 14 John Lennon (1940-80) / Paul McCartney (born 1942)
Eleanor Rigby (arranged Donald Angle, 1995) 2'48"
- 15 William Albright (born 1944) **Fancy No. IV** for harpsichord:
Danza Ostinata (1979) 5'25"
- 16 Diego da Conceição (16??-17??) **Batalha** (1695) 4'30"
- 17 Earle Brown (born 1926) **Nine Rarebits** for 1 or 2 harpsichords (1965) 3'05"
- 18 Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1759)
Sonata in d minor Prestissimo K 517 2'49"
- 19 Domenico Scarlatti **Sonata in a minor** Allegro K 175 2'56"
- 20 George Gershwin (1898-1937) **I got Rhythm** (arranged Angle, 1995) 2'29"

