



*Emma Levine, keyboards*  
*A senior lecture-recital in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts in Music*

**April 30, 2010**

**Friday, 7:30 p.m.**

**Davidson Music Center**

**Room 218**

**CAL POLY**  
SAN LUIS OBISPO

Sponsored by the Cal Poly Music Department & College of Liberal Arts



*Program*  
“From ‘Plucked’ to ‘Struck’”

A Senior Lecture-Recital by  
Emma Levine, harpsichord, forte-piano, and piano

*Suite I in D minor* (Book II)..... Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre  
Courante (1665-1729)  
Rigaudon I  
Rigaudon II  
Rigaudon I  
Chaconne

*Sonata in D*, Op. 6 .....Ludwig van Beethoven  
Allegro molto (1770-1827)  
Rondo: Moderato

**Paula Womble, primo**

*Excursions*, Op. 20 .....Samuel Barber  
IV. Allegro molto (1910-1981)

## Program Notes

### Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre

*Suite I in D minor* (Book II)

It seems only fitting that the young relative of the man who was largely responsible for the non-transposing, expressive two-manual harpsichord would grow up to be one of the most sought after composers *and* performers in France during the Baroque Era – despite the fact that she was a woman! Unlike the experience of the great composer and keyboardist, Johann Sebastian Bach, Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre's career brought her considerable wealth and fortune during her lifetime. She published her *Pièces de Clavecin* in 1707, during one of the most productive periods in the history of French harpsichord music. This suite is a greatly expanded example of a baroque keyboard suite, due to the length and complexity of each individual movement, as well as the number of dances (three of these dances are followed by a *double*, or variation, of equal length).

Jacquet de La Guerre's "Courante" is the longest courante in all French harpsichord music of the early 1700s. The courante is in triple meter (like a waltz), and it is in binary form with repetitions of both the A and B sections (AABB). Although the mode is minor, the opening of the "Courante" features a beautiful D major passage within the first four measures of the piece. Both the A and B sections begin with imitation, a technique employed by many Baroque composers, but this contrapuntal writing soon is abandoned and replaced with bouncy dotted rhythms, syncopation (unexpected accentuations), and exploration of unusual chords.

Elisabeth was one of only two composers to include a "Rigaudon" in a harpsichord publication in the first decade of the eighteenth century. A rigaudon is a lively and spirited folk dance that is performed in a quick duple meter. In this suite, the first "Rigaudon" is in D minor and has a thin texture. The second "Rigaudon," also in a quick duple meter, seems cheerier since it is in D major. It is performed on the second manual of the harpsichord, usually with the lute stop, but its melodies are more varied and are more disjunct, meaning there are large leaps between pitches. The first "Rigaudon" is repeated once more, resulting in an overall ternary form (ABA).

Unlike the "Rigaudon," the "Chaconne" had been well established as a standard component of the French harpsichord suite by the 1650s. This stately dance is the only movement of the suite that is truly in D major. It follows a pattern of alternating couplets with the primary couplet, or refrain, returning between each presentation of new thematic material. The refrain itself keeps with the established tradition of using the lower register of the keyboard. Each of the succeeding couplets exhibits contrasting meters, modes, rhythms, tempos, and themes. It is by far the longest movement of Jacquet de La Guerre's suite and brings the whole work to a close by touching on elements of each preceding movement.

## Ludwig van Beethoven

### *Sonata in D*, Op. 6

Imagine what it would be like to give your first major public musical performance as a seven-year-old. This was a reality for Ludwig van Beethoven, whose father was adamant about creating the next Mozart. He published his first composition at the age of 12 and was appointed as a court organist at the age of 14. Beethoven traveled to Vienna in 1787 to study with Mozart; however, he was quickly forced to return home after receiving word his mother was ill. She passed away shortly after and Beethoven was left to care for his two younger brothers (his father couldn't support the family as a result of his alcoholism). Five years later, in 1792, Beethoven finally returned to Vienna and began lessons with Joseph Haydn. Around 1798 Beethoven began to notice he was losing his hearing. He initially withdrew from friends and family and eventually became completely deaf. Although many of his most popular works were composed after his hearing began to deteriorate, his earlier works are still equally celebrated.

Beethoven's *Sonata in D*, Op. 6, for piano duet, is among the shortest that Beethoven published himself. The first movement, marked "Allegro molto," is in sonata form. The exposition begins with both parts introducing Beethoven's famous short-short-short-long motif in the key of D major. The primo part presents the theme, which the secondo part imitates three measures later. This texture, called imitative polyphony, appears again with the arrival of the second theme. This time, however, the theme is played first by the secondo player, and then echoed by the primo player. A more melody-based "homophonic" section follows each of these polyphonic sections. Beethoven goes back and forth in this movement, sometimes having both parts interact in a dialogue, and sometimes asking one part carry out an accompaniment while the other plays the melody.

In the second movement, Beethoven crafts a rondo form (ABACA), which features a recurring refrain (A) – but he makes the accompaniment more complex each time the refrain returns. In between the refrains are two episodes (B and C), that each contrast with the refrain in different ways. The first episode (B) switches to minor mode and calls for the primo and secondo players to execute a three-against-four pattern. The second episode (C) is a simple exchange of ideas back and forth, and the two pianists rarely play simultaneously. Beethoven wraps up the movement with a short coda, or concluding musical section, by giving the secondo player a few seconds to shine.

## Samuel Barber

*Excursions*, Op. 20 (IV. Allegro molto)

Samuel Osborne Barber always knew he wanted to be a composer. After beginning piano and cello lessons at the age of six, his mother helped him write down his first composition, *Sadness*. He then composed his first opera at the age of ten to a libretto by Annie Sullivan Noble, the family's cook. As head of the West Chester school board, Barber's father pulled some strings so his son could take lessons at the Curtis Institute of Music, go to their weekly concerts, and still attend high school. Most of his family was supportive of his musical dream. He visited his aunt and uncle, both prominent musicians, during the summers, and they encouraged his efforts in composition. They often wrote him letters full of advice during the year, and his aunt would include many of his compositions on her recital programs. Like most parents of composers, Barber's father wished his son would attend Princeton and study medicine, but like most composers, Barber had no interest in doing anything other than music.

Samuel Barber composed his four *Excursions*, Op. 20, in 1944, and the first three were premiered by Vladimir Horowitz in 1945. Jeanne Behrend, a close friend of Barber, had been pressing him for years to write something for piano that she could perform on one of her programs of American music. She premiered the *Excursions* in their entirety during her Concert of American Piano Music in December of 1948 at New York Times Hall. Each of the four excursions was meant to convey a popular type of American music. The first (Un poco allegro) imitates the boogie-woogie style of the early 1900s with its eight-note repetitive pattern in the left hand and its elaborations in the right hand. The second excursion (In slow blues tempo) is reminiscent of the blues with its extended chords and slow tempo. The third excursion (Allegretto) is a set of variations of a folk-like melody.

The fourth excursion (Allegro molto), featured in this lecture-recital, is meant to evoke images of a barn dance, where the initial chords imitate a harmonica and the repeated sixteenth-note patterns resemble fiddle-playing. The piece includes swinging patterns, ostinato patterns, syncopation, and lots of hand-crossing. The tempo is fast and the themes change just as quickly. This excursion is in F major; the melodies are brilliant and even the 'unusual' chords sound like they belong. It's the final excursion of the set and the most exciting of the four.

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