

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday, December 3, 2020

1:15 pm

Streamed to YouTube, Facebook, and gemsny.org

Rebecca Pechefsky

Italian harpsichord

Antonio Soler (1729–1783):

Sonatas from the Morgan Library & Museum

Sonata in G Major, R. 82: Allegro assai

Sonata in G Minor, R. 87: Allegretto

Sonata in G Minor, R. 42: Allegro grazioso

Sonata in F Major, R. 76: Allegro

Sonata in B-flat Major, R. 176: Andantino

Sonata in B-flat Major, R. 177: Allegro

Sonata in E Minor, R. 184: Allegretto

Sonata in E Minor, R. 185: Allegro

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About the Artist

Well-known as a harpsichordist in the New York area, **Rebecca Pechefsky** is a founding member of Brooklyn Baroque. Among her recordings for Quill Classics are the complete harpsichord music of François d'Agincour; *Bach and His Circle*; Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier, Books 1 and 2*, and *Johann Ludwig Krebs @ 300*.

Rebecca's Notes on the Program

My fascination with Padre Antonio Soler (1729-1783) is fairly recent. Although I had played sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, it wasn't until five years ago, in preparation for the New York Early Music Celebration's Spanish music week, that I thought it was time to learn some keyboard works by Scarlatti's younger contemporary. After reading through two sonatas, I was hooked.

As I learned more of his work, I found that many of my favorite sonatas came from one particular manuscript, formerly in a private collection and now . . . where? A search turned up an auction record, and I eventually learned that this manuscript had been acquired by the Morgan Library & Museum, just a subway ride away. It is now known as Cary 712. But when I made an appointment to see it, then music curator Fran Barulich informed me that the Morgan also had another manuscript, Cary 703, with many newly discovered sonatas by Antonio Soler.

Of course, my first reaction was, "Really? How could I have missed this?" Sure enough, in 2012 (before I really even gave Soler the time of day), the Morgan had acquired a manuscript with sonatas by Scarlatti and Soler, as well as Alessandro Scarlatti and some unidentified composers. Of the 43 sonatas by Soler, 29 of them had never been seen before. The manuscript is dated 1756; if that date is accurate, Scarlatti was still alive, and Soler was still a young monk in his twenties, having only arrived at the monastery of El Escorial four years earlier. Some of the sonatas in this particular manuscript have passages that remind me strongly of parts of his other sonatas, and yet, rather than considering them ideas that he had used before, it seems likely that here might be the first presentation of what would later become his favorite compositional devices.

Sonatas by both Soler and Domenico Scarlatti are often arranged in the manuscripts in pairs, almost creating two-movement compositions, though the sonatas can hold their own as independent works. And some sonatas show up without their mates, or with a different one, in other manuscripts. For this program I've elected to consider R. 71 and R. 76 (from Cary 712) as stand-alone sonatas. R. 82 actually exists as an independent piece in Cary 712, so I've chosen to give it a partner from Cary 703 (R. 163), thereby bringing the two Morgan manuscripts together. The final two sonatas on the program, R. 184 & R. 185, which are two of the ones from Cary 703, really do seem to belong together, and you can even discern a tempo relationship between them.

NEXT WEEK: Quartet Salonnieres
Shadows of Haydn