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## Thursday 21st July - Twilight Recital



## KATERINA CHROBOKOVÁ

**9.30pm**

St Rumbald's Church, Stoke Doyle

*Concerto in the Italian Style*

*Partita No. 6 in E minor, BWV 830*

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

*Toccata; Allemanda; Corrente; Air; Sarabande;*

*Tempo di Gavotta; Gigue*

It was during Bach's earliest and busiest years in Leipzig that he embarked on the four volumes of harpsichord and organ music known as the 'Clavier-Übung' ('Keyboard Practice'), an ambitious undertaking intended to show his mastery of important styles; to this end he published six 'partitas' or suites.

The Toccata of No. 6 begins with one of Bach's most arresting ideas: chords decorated with sighing *appoggiaturas* suggesting question and answer. A 'walking' bass gives the next two movements an Italian flavour, whilst the Sarabande is a jewel in Bach's keyboard output. Dissonance and chromaticism appear in the Gigue, which provides an impressive ending.

Bach's contemporary Johann Mattheson, commented: 'Let a student of art compare [a simple aria] with a suite ... from Kapellmeister Bach's partitas, and he will easily find out the difference ... anyone who ventured to read them at sight would be undertaking something foolhardy... even if he were the arch-harpsichordist himself.'

*Plays for Harpsichord*

**Jiří Gemrot (b. 1957)**

Czech Jiří Gemrot's musical language fuses an adventurous modern vocabulary with accessible melodic and harmonic elements. A prolific composer, Gemrot is Music Director at Czech Radio and a professor at the Prague Conservatoire.

'Plays for Harpsichord' was commissioned by the Prague Spring Festival as a test piece for its 2005 young harpsichordists' competition. It exploits the rondo principle and is designed to sound as effective on a modern harpsichord as on a baroque copy instrument.

*Sonata A Major, (Kirkpatrick 113) Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)*

Born in the same year as Bach and Handel, Domenico Scarlatti gained an appointment as *mestre* of the Portuguese court in Lisbon. His duties included giving keyboard lessons to John V's daughter, Maria Barbara. When she married the Spanish crown prince in 1729, Scarlatti followed her to Seville and then Madrid, where he spent the rest of his life.

Scarlatti's fame rightly rests on the hundreds of keyboard sonatas in which he vented his imagination, stimulated by the colourful sights and customs of Iberia. He elevated to new heights such virtuosic devices as hand-crossing, rapid repeated notes and hazardous jumps in both hands, as shown in the Sonata played tonight.

*Concerto in the Italian Style, BWV 971*

**J S Bach**

*('Allegro' - unmarked); Andante; Presto*

Four years after the publication of J S Bach's harpsichord Partitas, a second volume appeared bearing the title page:

*Second part of the Keyboard Practice, consisting of a Concerto after the Italian Taste and an Overture after the French Manner, ... Composed for music lovers, to refresh their spirits, by Johann Sebastian Bach....*

Bach here demonstrated his skill in translating to the keyboard two of the most popular orchestral genres of the time. Writing for a two-manual harpsichord gave him the opportunity to distinguish between tutti (full orchestra) and solo passages, indicating them forte and piano.

The affirmative opening bars of the 'Italian Concerto' command attention and lead to virtuosic solo episodes. In the timeless Andante a rhapsodic melody of great beauty soars freely over a sequential bass ostinato. To conclude, Presto combines all his brilliance and high spirits.

**Katerina Chroboková**

Katerina was born in the Czech Republic in 1977. She studied at the Janáček Conservatory in Ostrava and the Janáček Academy of Music in Brno, graduating in 2002. Whilst there Katerina was awarded a scholarship at the Utrecht School of Arts, and continued her education as a postgraduate student in Leuven, Belgium. She has taken part in several international organ masterclasses with highly regarded teachers, including Jean Guillou and Lorenzo Ghielmi, and gives concerts regularly throughout Europe.