

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Scarlatti and Kurtág: A Case Study in Creative Programming

A research paper presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master
of
Music

at Massey University, Wellington
New Zealand

Emma Sayers

2004

Abstract

This research paper explores developing trends in programming recitals by way of a case study that juxtaposes keyboard works of composers Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757) and György Kurtág (b.1926). It studies the preparation and performance of a recital of works by these two composers within the context of similar performances by artists of international standing.

This paper places the piano recital within an historical context and explores some of the changes that have occurred in the presentation of instrumental music to the present day, including the growing trend towards concerts that alternate elements in order to create links between them.

Research into possible links between Domenico Scarlatti and György Kurtág covers both biographical information and compositional techniques used in the works being examined. The paper documents the process of developing a programme which specifically seeks to establish audible connections between juxtaposed works by the two composers and details both subjective and external responses to the performance.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Donald Maurice, for ongoing encouragement and supervision. Dr. Richard Hardie and Simon Tipping, for additional revisions and many wise suggestions. Dan Poynton, Pepe Becker, Richard Mapp and András Schiff, for extra input and for sharing their ideas with me. Finally, heartfelt thanks to Rita Wagner, Professor of Piano at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, for helping me to understand this music and coming up with the whole idea.

Contents

<u>Prologue</u>	1
A personal experience	1
<u>Introduction</u>	4
The development of the piano recital	4
Programming trends in the 20 th century	7
Recitals in the 21 st century	8
<u>Connections</u>	10
Concatenation	10
‘Alternating’ programmes	11
Contrast	14
Context	15
Summary	18
<u>Scarlatti and Kurtág</u>	19
Domenico Scarlatti	20
The sonatas	22
The sonatas on the piano	26
György Kurtág	29
Játékok (Games)	31
Composed programmes	34
Scarlatti and Kurtág	35
Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti	38

<u>The Programme</u>	43
Creating the trial programme	43
Timing and composition	44
Choosing the pieces	
- contrast and complement	45
Programme outline and rationale	46
Performer's impressions	53
Reviews and comments	56
Possibilities for further study	59
<u>Conclusion</u>	60
<u>Appendices</u>	61
1. Graphic notation used in <i>Játékok</i> (Games) by György Kurtág	61
2. Programme notes for WCMS Concert	64
3. A note about Scarlatti and Kurtág	66
3. Concert Review – Lindis Taylor	68
4. Concert Review – Laurence Jenkins	69
5. Examiner's Report by Csaba Erdélyi	70
6. Examiner's Report by Richard Mapp	71
<u>Bibliography</u>	73

Prologue

A personal experience

In May 1995 I gave a piano recital in the *Kisterem* (Small Concert Hall) of the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. On the suggestion of Rita Wágner, Professor of Piano at the Academy, the first half of the programme alternated between keyboard sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757) and short pieces by Hungarian composer György Kurtág (b.1926).

At the time I was particularly intrigued by the world of Scarlatti while also working on pieces by other composers including Kurtág, who I had recently seen teaching at the Bartók Seminar in Szombathely, Hungary. I wanted to include both these composers, as well as works by J.S. Bach, Schumann and Granados, in a solo recital and began sketching a programme that moved in a 'normal' manner from one composer to another. In the course of discussing the programme order, Rita Wágner suggested putting the Kurtág pieces in between the Scarlatti works and extending the selection to cover the entire first half of the concert without any break for applause between the individual pieces. We hadn't discussed the concert as an opportunity to experiment with innovative programming (and at that stage I was unaware of similar programmes such as those discussed later in this report) but we both felt instinctively that this combination would work well. I toyed with this idea in a number of permutations and settled on an approximately 50-minute selection of Scarlatti/Kurtág, followed after an interval by the Bach, Schumann and Granados works.

The first half of the concert was surprisingly effective. As a performer, I found the transitions between Scarlatti and Kurtág both refreshing and helpful for my concentration and I felt inspired to approach the individual pieces differently from the way I had experimented with them in isolation. The audience feedback was also positive about the combination, with many

comments to the effect that something new and different was audible in the sonatas when heard in this way, and that each composer seemed to shed new light on the other.

The rewarding experience of putting together and performing this programme, combined with my continuing affection for these particular composers, remained in the back of my mind. We had stumbled on this idea more-or-less by accident but I felt convinced that it was an interesting and worthwhile experiment, both in itself, and as a possible trial for other combinations. I decided to take the opportunity to trial this alternation of Scarlatti and Kurtág once again as part of a solo recital for the Wellington Chamber Music Society Sunday Series in 2001 (which was also assessed as part of a Master of Music degree). The programme that resulted, and the processes involved in its creation, form the main focus of this report.

For the 2001 concert I needed to serve both the interests of my experiment and those of the promoter of the series. Once again I developed a Scarlatti/Kurtág selection for the first half of the concert but with the addition of two pieces by Isaac Albéniz before the interval. As well as being popular pieces with an audience, I wanted to see if the juxtaposition of *Evocación* and *El Puerto* from Albéniz's *Iberia* cycle with the Scarlatti sonatas could draw attention to the presence of Iberian folk elements in Scarlatti. To maintain the unity of the Scarlatti/Kurtág selection I decided to leave the stage before performing the Albéniz. I felt, however, that the inclusion of the Spanish pieces continued and complemented the idea of juxtaposition being explored in the preceding section. Following the interval, the programme continued with the *Sonata in A D 959* by Franz Schubert, in keeping with the promoter's request for a single extended work to balance the many shorter pieces.

In recreating the initial 1995 experiment, by developing another programme involving Scarlatti and Kurtág, I sought to clarify some of the factors

involved in making such a programme successful. I wanted to look at recital programming to see if other performers had experimented with similar concepts and whether this was a new idea or part of a developing trend. My intention was to look generally at the backgrounds and musical languages of both composers and to examine any possible links between the two that might help explain their compatibility. I also wanted to document the process of designing an alternating programme that was well balanced, containing enough variety to maintain audience interest and sufficient continuity to avoid fragmented concentration. By working through some of the factors involved in assembling a cohesive whole out of disparate parts, such as key relationships and mood changes, I hoped to become more aware of the creative possibilities of links between pieces in programmes generally. My final intention was to detail some of the feedback I received about the worth, or otherwise, of this particular concept of alternating Scarlatti and Kurtág, and to draw any relevant conclusions about the wider possibilities of programming in this way.

Introduction

“I have ventured to give a series of concerts all by myself, affecting the style of Louis XIV and saying cavalierly to the public: *Le concert, c'est moi!*”¹

Franz Liszt

The development of the piano recital

Although Cristofori invented the early pianoforte around 1700, it was not until the latter part of the 18th century that the new hammered keyboard instrument worked its way into both court and public concert life.² A major factor was that the concept of a public concert was in itself a developing social phenomenon. By the beginning of the 19th century the piano had become an indispensable part of the entertainments of the day. Up until the middle of the century these were most commonly variety concerts, if not actual multi-media events. Nancy Reich, in her biography of the pianist Clara Schumann (née Wieck), records a rather delightful example of the type of situation in which pianists found themselves:

In small cities, such programs were truly a hodgepodge of events, musical and non-musical. In Altenburg, for example, on May 18, 1831, Clara Wieck shared a program with a Dr. Langenschwarz, an “improviser”. Members of the public submitted topics - historical, philosophical, epic - on which the doctor would speak. His share of the evening included an improvisation in honor of the ladies of Altenburg and closed with a recitation in comic Austrian dialect. Between

¹ From Liszt's letter of 1839 to the Princess Belgiojoso, referring to a concert series that he had recently given entirely on his own. Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt Vol 1 -The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.356.

² Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655-1732) created the “Arpicembalo...di nuova inventione, che fa' il piano, e il forte” which was first produced in Florence around 1700. Early hammered instruments were called by a number of different names, most commonly ‘fortepiano’ in Europe, and ‘pianoforte’ in the United Kingdom. James Parakilas (ed.), *Piano Roles – 300 Years of life with the Piano* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1999), p.9.

Langenschwarz's numbers, Clara played a concerto by Pixis and her own Variations on a Theme by Bellini.³

Throughout the 1830s the piano experienced a huge rise in popularity and pianists increasingly toured Europe to further their careers. Among them could be found such names as Sigismond Thalberg, Ignaz Moscheles, Clara Schumann, John Field and Frédéric Chopin.⁴ The most celebrated of all these touring virtuosi was the great Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt (1811-1886), who is widely credited with the invention of the modern piano recital.⁵ His fame culminated in a wave of 'Lisztomania' after 1842 that elicited memorably hysterical behaviour from his admirers and disdain from more reserved musical personalities such as Chopin, Schumann and Mendelssohn.⁶ It took a superstar of his stature to venture to give entire piano concerts on his own -- a practice that was only slowly taken up by other pianists from the 1850s onwards. He was hugely influential in the dramatic changes to the role of the pianist in public musical life that took place in the mid-19th century. The modern placement of the piano on stage, the practice of performing from memory, the renewed enthusiasm for the 'historical' pieces of the late-Baroque as well as those of the new romantic school, the gradual shift away from the use of 'assisting artists' and even the term 'recital' itself, all owe their debt to him. Liszt's performing career was relatively short as he retired at the age of thirty-five. His impact on the public role of the piano, however, was enormous.

Liszt performed a wide repertoire and was responsible for introducing numerous works by composers such as J.S. Bach, Domenico Scarlatti, Beethoven, Schumann and Chopin, as well as works of his own, into the

³ Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann - The Artist and the Woman* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.259.

⁴ Parakilas et al., p.244.

⁵ Walker, pp.285-6.

⁶ See Walker, pp.289-90.

public domain.⁷ He was not always credited with the highest standards of programming, however, and has often been accused of pandering to the public taste for "...pyrotechnics and an endless stream of such trifles as his operatic paraphrases, 'reminiscences,' and popular arrangements."⁸ If Liszt was the father of the modern recital, then the mother of the modern recital programme might be said to be Clara Schumann (1819-1896). Her extraordinarily long career on the concert stage and her standing as a musician of the highest repute placed her in a unique position to influence public expectation of recital repertoire.

Clara Schumann took some time to follow Liszt's example by consistently giving entire recitals on her own, but her leaning towards 'serious' programming showed itself early on. Married to Robert Schumann, editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and "crusading against superficiality and 'philistinism'",⁹ she eventually developed a strong antipathy to Liszt in spite of his unwavering kindness and courtesy towards both her and Robert. At the beginning of her career she performed the type of showpieces expected by the public; variations, concertos and fantasies. As her place among the leading performers of the day became assured, however, she turned increasingly towards more unified and serious fare. Clara saw herself in particular as the champion of her husband's music and was largely responsible for bringing it to the public notice. Liszt also championed pieces by his Romantic contemporaries but was less influential in their introduction into the repertoire due to the brevity of his performing career. The establishment of the familiar recital format of "...a work by Bach or Scarlatti, a major opus such as a Beethoven sonata followed by groups of

⁷ Walker, p.256. Liszt was apparently instrumental in the creation of the first "complete" edition of Scarlatti sonatas edited by Czerny.

⁸ Walker, p.291. Walker mentions that Liszt often allowed others to choose the programme he would perform.

⁹ Reich, p.262.

shorter pieces by Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn", which can be still observed in present-day recitals, has been attributed to Clara Schumann.¹⁰

Programming trends in the 20th century

The 19th century instigated the most established patterns of piano recital programming followed in the 20th century. Bach, Beethoven and the Romantics still form the 'hard core' of a pianist's expected repertoire today, augmented by works from the early 20th century (if not music actually contemporary to the performer) and most commonly presented in recital in chronological order. This parallels the most common orchestral programme: that of an overture, followed by a soloist performing a concerto, and after the interval continuing with a symphony or other extended work from the 19th or early 20th centuries.¹¹

Pianists Alfred Brendel and Artur Schnabel have both written extensively about recital programming and refer to another standard programme scheme. Brendel describes it as: "starter (or soup) and main course, followed by various salads and puddings, and topped by omelette flambée."¹² This can be translated as a warm-up piece (eg. Scarlatti or Mozart) not intended to be taken too seriously but serving to set the scene for the main item on the menu which would follow (eg. a Beethoven sonata). After the interval, various 'light' show-pieces, probably of a virtuoso nature and not of particularly high musical quality, would round off the evening.

¹⁰ Reich, p.265. Stephen Zank also refers to this type of programme as the 'conservatory model' ie. the type of programme presented in music conservatory examinations. Parakilas et al., p.247.

¹¹ The NY Philharmonic's Dec 2001 programme with violinist Midori is a typical example of this type of programme: Glinka's *Ruslan & Ludmilla Overture*, the Glazounov Violin Concerto and Dvořák's popular *New World Symphony*. (Listed in the New York Times, Sun 23 Dec 2001, AR p.34.) At least five concerts following this well-worn structure could be heard at the Royal Festival Hall in London during the month of April 2000. (Listed in BBC Music Magazine, April 2000). Other examples can be seen in the 2002 series of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

¹² Brendel refers to this type of programme as 'the old-fashioned one'. Alfred Brendel, *Music Sounded Out* (London: Robson Books, 1990), pp.208-9. See also Artur Schnabel, *Music and the Line of Most Resistance* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1942), pp.65-76, for Schnabel's earlier tirade against poor programming.

This is distinguished from the 'Clara Schumann' or 'Conservatory' model described above primarily in the inconsistency of the quality of material presented, the concept of a 'warm-up' piece and the lack of any coherent scheme relating the pieces to one another. Both Brendel and Schnabel -- musicians that have given a great deal of thought to the composition of their recitals -- appear to have found the persistence of such 'menu' programmes a cause for intense irritation.

Another popular recital format, that of the concert or concert series devoted entirely to the works of a single composer, also had its genesis in the 19th century. The German pianist Karl Halle, later Sir Charles Hallé, gave all-Beethoven recitals in London during the 1850s.¹³ By the end of the 19th century the complete cycle of Beethoven sonatas had been performed at least three times.¹⁴ Programmes built around a single composer are still common in piano recitals as well as in chamber music and orchestral concerts.

Recitals in the 21st century

There is no doubt that the present-day climate is a challenging one for the arts. An increasing range of events, individuals and organisations compete for the public and arts funding dollar. Classical music faces an interesting paradox: on the one hand, it is often considered an outdated dinosaur intended for a rapidly decreasing musically educated elite; on the other hand, the proliferation of budget CD labels means that the main classical repertory has never been so accessible, so cheaply, to so many. The current competitive economic and social climate, with the attendant pressure to attract new audiences while retaining old ones, has the potential

¹³ Reich, p.265.

¹⁴ Brendel, p.213.

to encourage both conservative and innovative responses from organisers and performers.

While the programme schemes outlined above still represent the most common and conservative arrangement of recital programmes at the turn of the new millennium, an increasing number of concerts are being presented that do not conform to these established patterns. This is true not only of piano recitals, but of classical music concerts in general. A full survey of developing trends in the live presentation of classical music is beyond the scope of this study but the impression is of a state of flux similar to that experienced in the mid-19th century.

This research paper is primarily concerned with the growing number of piano recitals and chamber music concerts that use the medium of public performance to actively demonstrate or highlight relationships between individual works or composers in a programme. It looks first at the concept of concatenation and at performers who are actively seeking to create links between the pieces they programme. It explores the interaction of two composers from different periods and countries by way of a case study involving keyboard works by Domenico Scarlatti and György Kurtág. This study first places these composers in an historical context and outlines the basic features of each composer's compositional style. It follows the development of a programme that alternates between the two composers' works with the intention of illuminating the essentially subjective decision-making process involved in programme-building. It examines some of the equally subjective effects on both the listener and the performer that may result from the juxtaposition of contrasting material. Finally, it hopes to draw some conclusion about the effectiveness or otherwise of this programme, and to suggest possibilities of further areas of study.

Connections

"Good programmes are based on sufficient contrast. But they usually also reveal connections."¹⁵

"It is amazing to what degree works (and composers) can be shown, by the context in which they appear, in a new light."¹⁶

Alfred Brendel

Concatenation

Concatenation can be described as the creation of links or connections between individual, possibly disparate, elements.¹⁷ While not principally a music-related term, concatenation is an effective expression to describe the process of creating connections between pieces in a musical programme.¹⁸ Programmes that show a high degree of concatenation are designed to educate as well as to entertain. They differ from other programmes which may be arranged according to links apparent to the performer in that the audience is supposed to perceive the internal connections which are being made.

The programming of instrumental concerts in order to show connections between pieces is not a new concept. The single-composer concert or series mentioned earlier is the most common example of this idea of musical concatenation. A variation on this idea is a recital or series that

¹⁵ Brendel, p.210.

¹⁶ Brendel, p.212.

¹⁷ Concatenate is described in The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as "To chain together; to connect like the links of a chain, to link together". Hence 'catena': "a connected series", 'catenation': "a linking into a chain" and 'concatenation': union by linking together. C.T.Onions (ed.), *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary Vol 1* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

¹⁸ Richard Leppert concludes that "Liszt concatenates Art with self" in his statement at the beginning of the Introduction to this study: "Le concert, c'est moi!". Parakilas et al., p.254.

features two composers side-by-side.¹⁹ Anton Rubinstein's "historical concerts" of the 1870s and 1880s included an all-Beethoven concert and surveyed the complete repertoire for the piano as it stood at the time.²⁰ "Theme" concerts or cycles, such as those presenting music by composers from a single country, are another familiar manifestation. Brendel reports that "Busoni, in 1909, toyed with the idea of two entire dance programmes" and mentions that his own debut recital consisted of works containing fugues from the Baroque to the 20th century."²¹ German pianist Helmut Roloff gave interesting programmes in the 1950s that juxtaposed 20th century works with pieces from earlier periods written in the same form (eg. suites, sonatas and toccatas).²²

Programmes organised along the principle of concatenation have appeared since the early days of the piano recital. Apart from the relatively common single-composer programme, however, they have been the exception rather than the rule. Judging by the increasing occurrence of programmes such as those listed below, it appears that recently more piano and chamber music recitals are demonstrating this property.

'Alternating' programmes

One type of programme that exhibits the property of concatenation alternates contrasting material in order to manipulate the context in which

¹⁹ In this case the two composers are presented in separate halves of the concert. One such example is the Beethoven and Shostakovich chamber music series given by the Borodin String Quartet at the Wigmore Hall in 2001. Listed in BBC Music Magazine, March 2001, p.105. Also www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/asp/dataliteral

²⁰ Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (London: Gollancz, 1974), pp.259-260.

²¹ Brendel, p.210.

²² Reported in private correspondence with Rita Wágner (Professor of Piano at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music Teacher Training Institute) and Ferenc Rados (former Professor of Piano and Chamber Music at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest). The programme reported was: Bach – English Suite No 3; Schoenberg – Suite Op. 25; Haydn – Sonata No 25 in F; Hindemith – Sonata No 2; Schumann – Toccata Op. 7; Prokofieff – Toccata Op. 11. Wágner and Rados suggest this was done with the intention to show connections in type or character between works written in different periods of music history.

the music is heard and to draw attention to connections between the juxtaposed elements. A feature of such programmes is the inclusion of a number of works by a single composer (or composer-group) interspersed with other music to which a connection is being made. The main composer in such a concert serves as a point of reference for the entire programme. If only two composers are alternated throughout the whole programme, they may act as a point of reference for each other.

The concept of alternating composers in a programme builds on the natural tendency of a listener to make connections and associations between things that are heard close together. Because alternation involves repetition -- at least one composer is heard more than once -- these connections are amplified and have the potential to make audible to the listener certain aspects of a composer's style or composition that might not be so evident if a work was heard in isolation.

Just as it is easier to identify physical similarities and differences shared by members of a family when they are standing next to each other, so can the common characteristics of different pieces of music be emphasised when they are performed consecutively. This is the case in any programme, but returning to a composer time and again could be described as the aural equivalent of flicking your eye from one picture to the other to spot the similarities.

Hungarian pianist András Schiff has given a number of recitals which have alternated composers, including a series incorporating Haydn sonatas and keyboard works of Bartók. Along similar lines, his 2001 recital in Wellington interspersed the *Szabadban* (Out of Doors) suite by Bartók and Beethoven's *Sonata in E* Op.109 between three *English Suites* by J.S. Bach.²³ This programme firmly established J.S. Bach as a point of

²³ András Schiff (piano), Town Hall, Wellington, 30 August 2001.

reference for the other two composers as they were both preceded by, and followed by, substantial works of his. By returning to Bach each time, Schiff re-emphasised the connections between Bartók, Beethoven and the late-Baroque master.

Japanese pianist Noriko Ogawa alternated Takemitsu and Debussy on the same programme in her 2001 Wigmore Hall recital.²⁴ She spoke of the opportunity to explore the fascinating contrast between the two composers, and of understanding Takemitsu's comment that, in spite of his best intentions to incorporate Western sounds, his music always retained a distinctly Japanese flavour.

“Ironically, Takemitsu always wanted to sound as western as possible! He used to say to me “I want my music to smell like butter (this is a Japanese expression: ‘smell like butter’ means being very westernized), but it always becomes like *monk’s food!*” Takemitsu’s music is certainly based on western scales, but his use of rhythm is heavily influenced by Japanese timing, what we call ‘ma’.”²⁵

Alfred Brendel also talks of a possible programme that would alternate selections of late Liszt piano pieces with Schoenberg’s *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke* Op.19 or Bartók’s *Naenies*. He writes: “The juxtaposition with short twentieth-century works would underline Liszt’s modernity.”²⁶

These examples support the hypothesis that programming can affect the way in which an audience hears, and reacts to, a piece of music: Context is important.

²⁴ Noriko Ogawa (piano), Wigmore Hall, London, April 2001.

²⁵ Simon Renshaw, “Feast from the East,” *Piano*, March/April 2001, p.9.

²⁶ Brendel, p.211.

Contrast

Contrast plays a vital role in music based around the manipulation of tension and release. It has been a major structural principle in the majority of western classical music written in the last 250 years, but it applies to other musical genres as well. Swedish jazz pianist Esbjorn Svensson describes the importance of this process in his own music:

"We are really interested in contrasts – between different types of sound, and between different feelings. So in a piece like 'Dodge the Dodo', to be able to hear what's going on in those fast sections – to pick out the action from the chaos – you need some passages of calm, otherwise you won't be hungry to hear the more challenging sections."²⁷

The principle of tension and release suggests why the alternation of works by composers of different periods has been extremely successful as a programming technique for 20th and 21st century music. Pianist Joanna MacGregor, noted for her performances of contemporary works, says:

"Programme-building to incorporate new music is 80 percent of the battle in stirring audience appreciation. It's a matter of picking the right contemporary pieces and then building a programme around them. I'm after seamless continuity, so that a modern work won't stick out as the recital's one moment of pain!"²⁸

A chamber music series presented a few years ago at the Liszt Academy in Budapest offered an interesting response to the challenge of making new music attractive to audiences.²⁹ Organized by oboist and composer Heinz Holliger, the programmes alternated 20th century works with chamber music

²⁷ Alyn Shipton, "Svensational," *Piano*, May/June 2001, p.13.

²⁸ Andrew Green, "Great Briton," *Piano*, March/April 2001, p.21.

²⁹ Great Hall of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, December 1996.

by J.S. Bach. A similar concept was followed by Hungarian cellist Miklós Perényi in his three-concert series which sandwiched works by fellow-Hungarians Veress, Ligeti and Kurtág in between Bach solo cello suites.³⁰

This combination of early and 20th century or contemporary music appears in a number of programmes mentioned in this report. It may be that the contrast offered by this particular juxtaposition of styles is felt by performers to be especially effective in maintaining listener concentration and interest.

Context

András Keller, leader of the Hungarian Keller Quartet, spoke in an interview about a programme that takes the concept of alternation to an extreme, involving works by J.S. Bach and György Kurtág:

“You may be aware that we have a programme which amalgamates the two composers, and we’ve played it at many concerts. *The Art of Fugue* and the string quartets of Kurtág.... It’s like a ceremony, without any moving or applause: The excerpts from *The Art of Fugue* and the Kurtágs. I think it’s very interesting, and people are touched very much.”³¹

This combination has also been explored by Hungarian composer/pianist György Kurtág himself, who in concert with his wife Márta Kurtág, performs piano duet transcriptions of Bach among pieces from his *Játékok* (Games) series for solo and duet piano. In such a programme the relationship between the individual works presented becomes akin to that between movements in a sonata or suite, effectively creating a new multi-movement work out of the separate pieces performed. These extreme examples of concatenation in a concert programme seek to dramatically alter the context

³⁰ Corbridge Chamber Music Festival, August 2001.

³¹ Martin Anderson, “Every Note is a Statement: The Keller Quartet and the Art of Fugue,” *Fanfare*, March/April 1999, p.106.

in which we experience more familiar (ie. Bach's) and less familiar or new (ie. Kurtág's) music.³²

Another kind of alternating programme incorporates a theatrical element into a concert featuring the work of one composer or a group of related composers. One particularly successful way to create links with non-musical elements or ideas is by the introduction of a spoken text. The concert "Mail from Mozart" by the Netherlands Wind Ensemble in the 2002 NZ Festival of the Arts interspersed letters from W.A. Mozart to his father in between movements of his *Gran Partita* K361.³³ Mozart's rich character as displayed in his writing – his humour and wit, as well as his high ideals and expectations of both himself and others – encouraged perception of these same qualities in his music, merging Mozart the musician with Mozart the man.

Pianist Dan Poynton used a similar format in his performance *Silent Music*, which alternated performances of piano pieces by Federico Mompou with a dramatic monologue, incorporating speech and recorded sound, illustrating aspects of Mompou's life and work.³⁴ Connections were so clearly drawn in this context that the amalgamation of words and music achieved the educative goals of a dramatised lecture while at the same time capturing the communicative power of theatre. In such a context, the text can help the audience to know what it is they are being asked to hear in the music, simplifying the process of concatenation. For example, the text speaks of the sound of bells which are then heard as a recording that ultimately

³² Kurtág's music is widely known among new music enthusiasts in Europe but is likely to be unfamiliar to a non-specialised audience.

³³ Mail from Mozart: including *Haydn tr. Triebensee: Symphony No 92 in G "Oxford"*; *Mozart: Serenade No 10 in B flat, K361 'Gran Partita'*. Nederlands Blazers Ensemble, Wellington Town Hall, 9 March 2002.

³⁴ The concert was divided into two sections with an interval: *Silent Music - The quiet life of Federico Mompou* and *Resounding Silence - Music by Arvo Pärt, Federico Mompou, Erik Satie and Franz Liszt*. Performed as part of the Wellington Chamber Music Society Sunday Series. Dan Poynton (piano), Ilott Theatre, Wellington Town Hall, 8 September 2002.

blends with the live sound of the piano – now heard clearly as an imitation or evocation of the original bell.

The theatrical element in concert performance -- this time without the use of spoken text -- was also explored by Poynton in 1999, when he combined with NZ choir Baroque Voices (directed by Pepe Becker) to create *Close Encounters of the Gothic Kind*.³⁵ In this concert, Liszt's *Via Crucis* for chamber choir and piano was followed by Machaut's *La Messe de Nostre Dame*, interspersed with late piano pieces by Liszt. Poynton wrote of the similarity between the dark and 'archaic' languages of the Machaut pieces and the late music by Liszt. This led to the idea of creating a similar structure to the *Via Crucis* within the Machaut mass.

...because we felt the languages were so similar we came up with the idea of 'imitating' the *Via Crucis* (which was in the first half) by putting some of Liszt's late piano pieces in between the movements of the Machaut – if you know the *Via Crucis* you will know that it is mainly a sort of antiphony with the piano answering the choir with short little interludes (actually like little late Liszt pieces in themselves...) – so this is exactly what we did in the Machaut: the choir sang and then I answered them....to me the language and sequence (which we took quite a while deciding on) worked – it was like these two composers were talking to each other across 600 years – in such a dark but inspired way.³⁶

This is the same structure explored in the programme mentioned earlier involving *The Art of Fugue* and Kurtág pieces. In this concert, however, the theatrical elements of lighting and staging were also introduced to assist in the creation of a special atmosphere. By the use of candlelight, and by positioning the singers in a semi-circle around a grand piano with the lid

³⁵ Dan Poynton (piano) and Baroque Voices, directed by Pepe Becker, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Wellington, July 1999.

³⁶ Personal correspondence with Dan Poynton, 13 April 2003.

removed, the performers hoped to create an intimate context in which the musical, emotional and ultimately spiritual process of interchange between piano and choir, and between Liszt and Machaut, could be experienced.

Summary

All of these programmes constitute an exploration of the possibilities of concatenation – the conscious creation of links - through the media of contrast and alternation. It is a technique particularly, but not exclusively, associated with new or late-20th century music, and it has been used in a number of situations involving the music of György Kurtág. It is seen by the performing musicians who have used it to be a programming technique that allows the performer to influence (favourably) the experience of the listener.

It is within the context of these burgeoning trends in programming that this study is based. Starting from the premise that performing two composers together can show us something new about one or other of them, the intention has been to examine in more detail this particular combination of Scarlatti and Kurtág. Who are they, and just what is it that they can tell us about each other?

Scarlatti and Kurtág

"Domenico Scarlatti was without question the most original composer of his century..."³⁷

Ralph Kirkpatrick

"If you wish to steal a glimpse of the depths opened up by Kurtág's music, you must focus your attention on the communication of feelings, on the emotional freedom that controls the material order of music."³⁸

Péter Halász

The hypothesis being presented in this study is that the music of Scarlatti and Kurtág can work effectively together on the same programme, and that in such a programme the process of concatenation will take place. In order to explore this argument it is appropriate to examine briefly the life and works of the two composers. Given that the two composers are from such distinct periods in history, it can be assumed that there will be significant differences between their compositional styles. On the other hand, it is of interest to know whether, in fact, any similarities might exist in the compositional approaches or backgrounds of the two artists. This leads to the further question of whether any such similarities or contrasting features may be highlighted by performance of their works in an alternating programme.

³⁷ Ralph Kirkpatrick, ed., *Preface to Sixty Sonatas Vol 1, by Domenico Scarlatti* (New York/London: Schirmer, 1953).

³⁸ Péter Halász, "Kurtág-Fragments (Excerpts)," *Hungarian Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 7 No. 1-2, 1996, p.17.

Domenico Scarlatti

Writing on the tercentenary of Bach, Handel and Scarlatti in 1985, the eminent historian and Scarlatti biographer Malcolm Boyd commented in wry fashion: "...it almost seems as if Domenico Scarlatti employed a cover-up agent to remove all traces of his career and personality from the gaze of posterity."³⁹ A frustrating lack of primary information about Scarlatti continues to hamper researchers and to date only a single letter in the composer's hand and a few autograph manuscripts have come to light. Many important details remain obscure or disputed and not all the first-hand accounts we have of him can be considered reliable. He remains, as Kenneth Gilbert has commented, the most enigmatic figure of the 18th century.⁴⁰

Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples in 1685 and died in Madrid at the age of 71. He was the son of Alessandro Scarlatti, the most renowned Italian operatic composer of the day. The elder Scarlatti appears to have been a dominating influence on both the personal and professional life of his son, whose early career in Italy mirrored that of his father, if not quite matching his success.⁴¹ The positions Domenico held in Rome -- as maestro di cappella to the exiled Queen Maria Casimira of Poland and at the Cappella Giulia -- gave him ample opportunity for a wide variety both of secular and sacred composition.⁴² He was above all recognised, however, for his skills on the harpsichord, and was pitted against Handel in a

³⁹ Malcolm Boyd, "Nova Scarlattiana," *The Musical Times*, October 1985, p.589.

⁴⁰ Jane Clark, "His Own Worst Enemy," *Early Music*, November 1985, p.542.

⁴¹ A letter from Alessandro to Ferdinando de' Medici in 1705 describes the young Scarlatti as 'an eagle whose wings are grown; he must not remain idle in the nest, and I must not hinder his flight'. The 'Tufarelli Document' of 1717, in which the 32-year-old Domenico resorted to legal means to gain independence from his father's authority, suggests, however, that Alessandro kept an active involvement in many aspects of his son's life. Roberto Pagano, "Scarlatti, (Guiseppe) Domenico," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* Vol.22 (Macmillan, 2001), p.398.

⁴² Malcolm Boyd suggests that Scarlatti's vocal works have been underrated by previous scholars such as Ralph Kirkpatrick, author of the first major biography. Malcolm Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti – Master of Music*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), p.80.

celebrated keyboard duel during the latter's travels in Italy.⁴³ It is primarily due to the series of approximately 550 keyboard sonatas that Domenico Scarlatti owes his place in music history.⁴⁴

The creation of such an extensive series of keyboard works is linked to Scarlatti's long employment in the Portuguese and Spanish Royal Courts after 1719.⁴⁵ His duties at the Royal Court in Lisbon included the musical instruction of the King's brother, Don Antonio, and later, that of the exceptionally talented infanta, Maria Barbara. Many of the sonatas appear to have been written with the musical education of his pupils in mind.⁴⁶ While in Lisbon, Scarlatti also became acquainted with the young Portuguese composer Carlos Seixas, who may have been responsible for introducing Scarlatti to folk music of the region and the possibilities of incorporating it into his own composition.⁴⁷

Scarlatti followed Maria Barbara to Spain after her wedding to the Spanish infante, Ferdinando, in 1729, and remained in her service until the end of her life. Surprisingly, given his early experience in the operatic field, Scarlatti appears not to have been involved in the lavish operatic productions that epitomised the reign of Ferdinando and Maria Barbara after their accession to the throne in 1746. These were overseen by the

⁴³ There are various accounts of the competition organised by Cardinal Ottoboni in Rome. Most scholars report that Scarlatti conceded Handel the winner on the organ, and that they were judged equals on the harpsichord. Handel is credited with the following description of the Italian: "besides his great talents as an artist he had the sweetest temper, and the genteelest behaviour." Pagano, p.399.

⁴⁴ The authenticity of some of the 555 sonatas catalogued by Kirkpatrick is now questioned, while a number of other sonatas have come to light that may also be by Scarlatti. Both Boyd and Pagano publish lists of works cross-referencing the numbering systems of Kirkpatrick, Emilia Fadini and Longo, and indicating the works of uncertain authenticity. Boyd, pp.264-275; Pagano, pp.408-416.

⁴⁵ In spite of speculation that Domenico left Italy to go to London, it now seems most likely that he went straight to Lisbon; a theory which is supported by documents unearthed recently by Gerhard Doderer. Pagano, p.400.

⁴⁶ Pagano, p.403.

⁴⁷ Pagano, p.400.

famous castrato, Farinelli, and Scarlatti's role within the Spanish Court remained an essentially private one.⁴⁸

Without entirely abandoning his work in other genres, the majority of Scarlatti's creative energies in Spain appear to have been centred on the harpsichord.⁴⁹ His later years saw the production of a double series of manuscripts of over 500 sonatas, apparently compiled for the use of Maria Barbara and inherited by the castrato Farinelli after her death.⁵⁰ The only edition of keyboard works that Scarlatti himself published -- the thirty *Essercizi* (1738) -- were the sole basis on which Scarlatti's reputation rested during his own lifetime.⁵¹

The sonatas

Perhaps the most frustrating area of uncertainty in Scarlatti research surrounds the difficulty of establishing a chronology for the keyboard sonatas. Not a single autograph manuscript of these works has survived, making the double set of volumes copied for Maria Barbara the primary reference source. Initially, Ralph Kirkpatrick proposed that the ordering of sonatas in these volumes was more-or-less chronological, and that they were written down close to the time they were composed. This led Kirkpatrick to conclude that the majority of them were composed in the last

⁴⁸ See Patrick Barbier, *Farinelli, le castrat des lumières* (Paris: Grasset, 1995) for an in-depth study of Farinelli and his era. Also Boyd, p.136.

⁴⁹ A number of late cantatas have recently come to light and his last work is reported to be a setting of the Salve Regina for soprano, strings and continuo. See *Love's Thrall: Domenico Scarlatti - Late Cantatas Vol. 3*, Musica Fiammante and Kate Eckersley (soprano). Unicorn-Kanchana Records DKP 9119, Compact disc, 1992.

⁵⁰ Pagano refers to the possibility that Antonio Soler may have been the scribe who assisted Scarlatti in this massive task and he also repeats the charming, if suspect, legend that they were written down in return for Maria Barbara and Farinelli paying off the composer's gambling debts. Pagano, p.401.

⁵¹ The official edition was dedicated to King João V of Portugal. Roseingrave issued a pirated edition in London which helped fuel enthusiasm for Scarlatti's works in England.

few years of Scarlatti's life - when he was in his sixties.⁵² This theory is now widely questioned, although scholars generally agree on the relative maturity of later volumes in the collection.⁵³ Research by Jane Clark into specific elements of Iberian folk music present in particular sonatas has raised the suggestion that those sonatas showing specifically Andalusian characteristics may have been written much earlier than Kirkpatrick would have dated them, while the court was in Seville.⁵⁴ Other attempts have also been made to date the sonatas, but the absence of primary source material makes a definitive chronology unlikely.

A related issue is the arrangement of a great number of the sonatas in the main manuscript sources into key-related pairs, or occasionally, triptychs. In certain cases there are specific indications that Scarlatti intended two sonatas to be played together, such as K.99 in C minor and K.100 in C major, where the indication 'volti subito' is given at the end of the first sonata.⁵⁵ Whether or not it was always Scarlatti's intention to have pairs of sonatas played together, the sonatas arranged in this way often form an attractive unit. Performers today seem to arrange programmes of either single sonatas or sonata pairs with equal frequency.

Scarlatti's keyboard works seem in general to draw and expand on the model common to dance movements in the Baroque suite, consisting of a binary structure with two repeated sections. As Boyd has pointed out, 'sonata' is a misleading term for these pieces, and should not be confused with either the Baroque sonatas for solo instrument and continuo, or the later sonatas by Classical period composers.⁵⁶ There are some notable exceptions to this format, however. Among the 550 or so keyboard works by Scarlatti there are eight pieces definitely intended for performance by a solo

⁵² Ralph Kirkpatrick, preface to *Sixty Sonatas* Vol. 1, by Domenico Scarlatti (London: Schirmer, 1953), p.v.

⁵³ See Pagano, p.400-403, or Boyd, pp.160-1.

⁵⁴ Jane Clark, "Domenico Scarlatti and Spanish Folk Music," *Early Music*, Jan 1976, pp.19-21.

⁵⁵ Boyd, pp.163-6.

⁵⁶ Boyd, pp.166-7. In England, this type of keyboard piece was commonly called a 'lesson'.

instrument with continuo; other exceptions include a single set of variations, transcriptions of polyphonic motets, pieces containing indications for performance on the organ and fragments of actual dance suites.⁵⁷

Malcolm Boyd represents the basic structure of the simple binary movement (*forma bipartita*) most commonly used by Scarlatti as:

$$A1 (a^1 - b^2) \text{ :} \text{ :} A2 (a^2 - b^1)$$

where A1 and A2 refer to the two major sections, 'a' and 'b' refer to two different types of material, and the superscript numbers refer to the tonic key⁽¹⁾ and a related key⁽²⁾.⁵⁸

In the later volumes of the collection, which are generally considered to represent Scarlatti's more mature style, the basic model tends to be more complex and is represented by Boyd as:⁵⁹

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{themes: } A \text{ -----} B \text{ -----} (\text{codetta}) \text{ :} \text{ :} (C) \text{ -----} B \text{ -----} (\text{codetta}) \\ \text{keys: } T \text{ } \wedge \wedge \wedge \text{ R} \text{ -----} \text{ :} \text{ :} ? \text{ } \wedge \wedge \wedge \text{ T} \text{ -----} \\ \text{(T=tonic key; R=related key)} \end{array}$$

The sonatas considered to represent Scarlatti's mature style differ from supposed earlier works in the diversity and range of the harmonic scheme.⁶⁰ In particular, new material (C) may be introduced after the double bar line of the first section, at which point harmonically almost anything can happen.

⁵⁷ For references to specific sonatas see Pagano, p.402.

⁵⁸ Boyd, p.167.

⁵⁹ Boyd, p.169.

⁶⁰ Pagano refers to "...the evident maturity of the final collections" of the thirteen volumes compiled for Maria Barbara and quotes Kirkpatrick's reference to the eighth volume as heralding "the final glorious period." Pagano, p.403.

As the structure and harmonic workings of the sonatas have been extremely well examined elsewhere, as has the influence of Iberian folk music on Scarlatti's style, only a summary of the most common features of Scarlatti's mature keyboard style is given below:⁶¹

General Features of Scarlatti's Mature Sonatas⁶²

- Use of new material not heard in the first section after the bar line
- Sudden changes in character
- Major climax of piece taking place before the final cadence
- Repetition of material from end of first section in the tonic at the end of the piece
- Free use of counterpoint including localized part-writing (eg. temporary inclusion of a third part in a two-part texture)
- Repetition of phrases, often many times
- Doubling notes at the 8ve, particularly in the LH
- Irregular phrase lengths
- Imitation of sounds of other instruments, especially Iberian folk instruments
- Variety of textures and material within one sonata

Harmonic features

- Sudden and unprepared shifts to distant keys
- Use of added-note chords, particularly in the bass, and many other dissonances
- Sudden shifts of tonality between major and minor
- Use of pedal notes (drones)
- Repetition of phrases

⁶¹ In particular: Ralph Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968). Also Clark, pp.19-21.

⁶² Compiled with reference to the following editions. Domenico Scarlatti, *Sixty Sonatas* Vol 1, Ralph Kirkpatrick (ed.) (New York/London: Schirmer, 1953). Domenico Scarlatti, *200 Sonate per clavicembalo (pianoforte) in 4 Volumes*, György Balla (ed). (Budapest, Hungary: Editio Music Budapest, 1968).

- Harmonically static sections
- Sequential passages which move by step or in 3rds
- Use of open 5ths and 4ths

Melodic Features

- Primarily vocal inspiration
- Use of modal scales
- Use of wide intervals in melodic lines
- Use of florid ornamentation
- Use of crushed notes (acciaccatura)
- Use of repeated notes
- Doubling melody lines in 3rds and 6ths

Rhythmic Features

- Use of cross-rhythms and syncopation
- Use of dance rhythms (especially Spanish)
- Use of dotted rhythms
- Changes of metre within a sonata

Many of the surprising features heard in the sonatas can be traced to the sounds of Spanish and Portuguese folk music, such as the dissonant chords in the bass evoking the flamenco guitar.⁶³ It is not so much the presence of such features, but Scarlatti's seemingly endless creativity in this form that is so unique.

The sonatas on the piano

Scarlatti's harpsichord sonatas have long been appropriated by pianists. Since Franz Liszt's re-introduction of Scarlatti to 19th-century audiences,

⁶³ E.g. K212, b.78-83. Scarlatti/Balla (ed.), Vol.2, p.56.

during the early years of the solo piano recital and when the rage for 'historical' music was getting underway, sonatas have appeared in recitals by pianists. The place of Domenico Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas in the piano recital programme has, however, been largely a peripheral one. A small number of Scarlatti's more obviously virtuoso sonatas (particularly from the early *Essercizi*) have found their way into the mainstream repertory. The vast majority of works, however, have until quite recently remained comparatively unknown.

As evidenced by the number of CD recordings on both modern piano and harpsichord, Scarlatti has in recent years received more serious attention from a wider range of performers and audiences. The award-winning double CD by Russian pianist Mikhail Pletnev, released by Virgin Classics in 1995 and widely broadcast both in NZ and elsewhere, raised Scarlatti's late 20th-century profile considerably.⁶⁴ Pletnev's blatantly pianistic approach to the sonatas, exploiting the dynamic range and sustaining possibilities of the modern piano, did much to draw attention to the more outrageous aspects of Scarlatti's compositional style. In utilising the full resources of the instrument, Pletnev takes the approach that performance of these works on the modern piano is akin to the process of transcription. In this, Pletnev seems to focus on catching the essence of Scarlatti's writing, which in itself uses or "transcribes" many sounds of Iberian folk music.

Other pianists besides Pletnev who have recently recorded all-Scarlatti CDs include András Schiff,⁶⁵ Ivo Pogorelich,⁶⁶ Dubravka Tomsic,⁶⁷ and Mark Swartzentruber.⁶⁸ Earlier recordings by Vladimir Horowitz (long recognised

⁶⁴ Domenico Scarlatti, *Keyboard Sonatas*. Mikhail Pletnev (piano). Virgin Classics VCD 5 45123 2. Compact disc. 1995. This CD won the Gramophone Magazine Instrumental Award in 1996.

⁶⁵ Domenico Scarlatti, *Keyboard Sonatas*. András Schiff (piano). Decca 421 422.

⁶⁶ Domenico Scarlatti, *Scarlatti: Sonaten*. Ivo Pogorelich (piano). DG 435 855.

⁶⁷ Domenico Scarlatti, *Sonaten*. Dubravka Tomsic (piano). Masters Classic CLS 4206.

⁶⁸ Domenico Scarlatti, *Scarlatti: Sonatas*. Mark Swartzentruber (piano). Solo Records SLR 1.

for his performances of Scarlatti) have been re-issued,⁶⁹ and Murray Perahia has recorded a CD of Handel and Scarlatti.⁷⁰ All these performers seem to have been influenced by the words of the late Ralph Kirkpatrick, who wrote of the purist attitude towards eighteenth-century music prevalent in post-1920 Germany:

“...’expressiveness’ and flexibility in ‘old music’, among those circles fresh from the debauches of Wagner and Reger, were looked upon with the same fascinated fear with which an ex-alcoholic regards a glass of whiskey. There is no nobler mission for a harpsichordist or for a player of Scarlatti than to frighten such people to death!”⁷¹

Kirkpatrick belongs to the genre of musicians that advocates the equal importance of both intellectual and emotional qualities in performance. In his celebrated biography of Scarlatti he wrote:

“I would like to have demonstrated the simultaneous possibility not only of a completely hard-headed workman’s analytical and technical approach to music, but also of a warm, imaginative, and even romantic willingness to transcend syntax and literal meaning, to move humbly and fearlessly in the realm of the unexplainable.”⁷²

It is in the spirit of this sentiment that the juxtaposition of Scarlatti and Kurtág is being considered.

The life and keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti have been briefly examined to allow the possibility of comparison between the two composers. We will now take a similar look at the life and music of György Kurtág.

⁶⁹ Domenico Scarlatti. *Horowitz plays Scarlatti*. Vladimir Horowitz (piano). CBS Records MK 42410. 1987 (recorded 1962, 1964 & 1968)

⁷⁰ Murray Perahia, piano. *Murray Perahia plays Handel and Scarlatti*. Sony SK 62785.

⁷¹ Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti*, p.280.

⁷² Kirkpatrick, p.323.

György Kurtág

György Kurtág was born in Lugoi, Romania, on 19 February 1926, to parents belonging to the large ethnic Hungarian population inhabiting this region of Transylvania. He spoke Hungarian at home and Romanian at school, later adding the other four or five languages in which he is also fluent. His early introduction to music, which included popular dances as well as classical music, was through his mother.⁷³

He studied piano and composition in Timișoara, then, following a rumour that Béla Bartók was due to return to Budapest in 1945, made his way to the Hungarian capital only to find that Bartók had just died in New York. Kurtág continued his studies at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest where Bartók had both studied and taught. Kurtág graduated in piano, chamber music and composition, but, like Bartók, was recognised primarily as a pianist during his time at the Liszt Academy. He married the pianist Márta Kinsker in 1947 and their son György was born in 1954.

At the Liszt Academy Kurtág became friends with fellow composer György Ligeti who had also come from Romania to study in Budapest. Through Ligeti, Kurtág was introduced to recordings of the Second Viennese School and Stravinsky not readily available in communist Hungary at this time. Hungarian musicologist Péter Halász records Kurtág's comment, given in a rare interview: "I was led by Ligeti for a long time, for a life-time. No, I must immediately correct myself: he was followed by me."⁷⁴ Halász notes certain striking differences between the two: Ligeti is very comfortable in the public eye while Kurtág is intensely private and rarely gives interviews; Ligeti "... often writes more notes in a single bar than Kurtág in a whole piece"; compositionally they have adopted very different techniques and written for

73 "...it was lovely to dance with her (each tango or waltz had its individuality for me), and it was lovely to play four-hand piano works with her." Halász, p.18.

⁷⁴ Halász, p.20.

different media; Ligeti has taught composition extensively while Kurtág, like Bartók, believes composition cannot be taught and is instead renowned for his teaching of chamber music and piano.⁷⁵

Ligeti left Budapest after the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and soon gained international recognition. Kurtág's career followed a very different path, strongly influenced by his decision to remain in Hungary at this time. A year spent studying in Paris with Milhaud and Messiaen during 1957-58 was particularly important because of the contact he made with art psychologist Marianne Stein. Her advice to concentrate on very simple tasks such as the connection between two notes led Kurtág to a new compositional direction typified by extremely concentrated means of expression. During this period Kurtág was also exposed to contemporary compositions not available in Hungary, and in particular studied and copied out all the major works of Webern. Rachel Beckles Willson notes features of Webern's opp. 5 and 9 in Kurtág's 1959 String Quartet op.1 and also comments on the debt to Bartók apparent in this and other earlier works.⁷⁶ This first mature compositional period culminated in *Bornemisza Péter mondasai* (The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza), Op.7, for soprano and piano; a mammoth 40-minute song cycle written in 1963-8 which places extreme challenges on both performers.

Apart from the period in Paris and a year-long scholarship to study in West Berlin in 1971, Kurtág remained in Budapest until 1993. He worked as a répétiteur of soloists at the National Philharmonia (1960-1968) and as professor of piano, then chamber music, at the Liszt Academy (from 1967). Kurtág resumed performing in 1985, developing a programme with his wife Márta that combined *Játékok* (Games) pieces for piano solo and 4 hands

⁷⁵ Halász, p.20.

⁷⁶ Rachel Beckles Willson, "Kurtág, György," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online* (2001). Hungarian musicologist András Wilhelm has also drawn attention to the fact that both Bartók's last work, and Kurtág's most significant early work – his 1953-4 graduation composition – were for viola and orchestra. András Wilhelm, lecture given at Centre Acanthes, Ville-neuve les Avignon, July 1995.

with his transcriptions of Bach for piano duet. International interest and recognition was fuelled by these performances and his own compositional output gained momentum.

Since leaving Budapest in 1993, Kurtág has held various residencies and positions in Berlin, Vienna, Amsterdam and Paris, and been awarded some of the most important Hungarian and international prizes available to musicians (including the prestigious Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in 1998).

Játékok (Games)

The idea of composing "Games" was suggested by children playing spontaneously, children for whom the piano still means a toy....

Pleasure in playing, the joy of movement - daring and if need be fast movement over the entire keyboard right from the first lessons instead of clumsy groping for keys and the counting of rhythms - all these rather vague ideas lay at the outset of the creation of this collection.

Playing - is just playing. It requires a great deal of freedom and initiative from the performer. On no account should the written image be taken seriously but the written image must be taken extremely seriously as regards the musical process, the quality of sound and silence. We should trust the picture of the printed notes and let it exert its influence upon us.... We should make use of all that we know and remember of free declamation, folk-music parlando-rubato, of Gregorian chant and of all that improvisational musical practice has ever brought forth.

Let us tackle bravely even the most difficult task without being afraid of making mistakes: we should try to create valid

proportions, unity and continuity out of the long and short values - just for our own pleasure!⁷⁷

So begins the introduction to the first series of *Játékok* (Games) written in the 1970s. An invitation by the Hungarian pedagogue Marianne Teöke to write pieces for children enabled Kurtág to move forward after a five-year period of writer's block following the completion of *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza* in 1968. First *Elő-játék* (Pre-Games) and then the first books of *Games* were the result. Seeking to inspire and liberate young performers proved to be liberating for the composer as well, and he began a collection of pieces that have been intrinsic to his entire output ever since.

Games makes use of a graphic notation that aims to give the performer freedom to experiment rather than tying them down with intellectual details.⁷⁸ As such, Kurtág re-introduces the concept of “play” into “playing the piano”, which has the same dual meaning in Hungarian as in English. In certain pieces, particularly in the earlier volumes, a number of decisions must be made by the performer which may include specific choices of pitches in clusters and the exact duration of notes (notated only as comparatively longer or shorter values). Volume One introduces the basic elements of the language, including clusters (played with the palm, side of hand, forearm or fist), approximate pitches, overtones, glissandi and relative note lengths - all of which can also be used as the basis of improvisational and compositional exercises.⁷⁹

In the *Games* Kurtág's language is one of gesture, and the relationship between physical movement and resulting sound is firmly established. Bold physical movement is encouraged right from the start, with fearlessness

⁷⁷ György Kurtág, Introduction to *Játékok*, Vol 1, (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1979).

⁷⁸ See Appendix 1. György Kurtág, “Key to the Signs Used,” *Játékok*, Vol 1.

⁷⁹ One example is *The Bunny and the Fox* by 6-year-old Krisztina Takács, published in the same volume.

explicitly demanded in such pieces as *Melléütni szabad/Wrong Notes Allowed* (Vol.1).⁸⁰ At the same time, his belief that a great deal can be expressed with very little, demands that the performer experiment with the full range of possibilities presented by limited material and explore all the subtleties of sound and silence the instrument can offer.⁸¹

Alongside the initial pedagogical intent, *Games* has also served as a kind of personal diary for the composer and is loaded with messages and dedications to friends and colleagues. The many homages and musical references offer the opportunity to explore and “play with” the ideas of others, sometimes with a wry sense of fun such as in *A megvadult lenhajú lány/The enraged girl with the flaxen hair* (Vol.5) or *Hommage à Nancy Sinatra* (built on the descending line of Sinatra’s *These Boots Were Made For Walking*, Vol.2). At other times the *Games* serve as a means of processing major life events and a number of pieces contain explicit or hidden references to the deaths of people important to the composer. This personal aspect of Kurtág’s approach extends to the relationships built up with individual performers such as pianist Zoltán Kocsis (hence the performance indication “*marcatissimo di Kocsis*” in “...*quasi una fantasia*...” op.27 no.1), violinist András Keller and soprano Adrienne Csengery (who premièred all seven of Kurtág’s song cycles from op.12 to op.26).

Kurtág draws constantly on an encyclopaedic knowledge of musical literature that ranges from Gregorian chant to the compositions of his contemporaries. The re-use and re-arrangement of earlier material is also a common feature and ideas found in the *Games* often surface in other Kurtág compositions. One example is *Virág az ember* (“Man” - ie. a person – “is a flower”, translated in *Games* Vol.1 as “Flowers we are”). This fragmentary piece first appeared in *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza* and

⁸⁰ As the *Játékok* series is without opus number, the individual pieces are referred to here by title and volume number.

⁸¹“I keep coming back to the realization that one note is almost enough”. Quoted in Rachel Beckles Willson, “The Mind is a Free Creature,” *Central Europe Review*, 27 March 2000, p.1. Some of Kurtág’s compositions consist of only a single line of music.

has since seeded so many variations in the *Games* that it has become a musical reference in its own right, hence *Virág - Garzó Gabinak/A Flower for Gabriella Garzo* (Vol.5) or *Bogánacs és virág W.S.-nak/Thistle and Flower for S.W.* (Vol.5).

Composed programmes

Aligned with Kurtág's flexible approach to the use of material are his 'composed programmes'. One example of this concept is *Rückblick: Hommage to Stockhausen* (1993), which re-arranges extracts of earlier works into a new extended work; a kind of retrospective as the title suggests. The performances given by Kurtág and his wife Marta from 1985 onwards, of solo and duet *Games* pieces combined with the composer's transcriptions of Bach for piano duet, are another example. In 2002 a major festival of Kurtág's music - *Signs, Games, Messages* - was held in London that made a feature of the composer's interest in programming. With his involvement, the festival included a number of concerts that showcased his music alongside that of other composers important to him, both living and dead.

A review of an earlier Kurtág festival that included similar programming ideas commented that "...András Schiff's performance...of the *Hammerklavier* sonata after *The Sayings (of Péter Bornemisza)* made classical music seem a much more intelligent complement to a Kurtág work than yet more Kurtág."⁸² Whether this is considered a fair comment or not, a number of precedents have already been set for the performance of Kurtág's music alongside that of earlier composers - most notably, by Kurtág himself.

⁸² Keith Potter, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 131 No. 1763, January 1990, p.45.

Scarlatti and Kurtág

Why should we think that the music of Scarlatti and Kurtág might work together on the same programme?

Having examined each of the composers individually it is possible to find certain points of contact, even before the experiment of sounding them next to each other. Both composers were noted keyboard performers who only later achieved recognition for their writing and who appear to have been significantly more prolific later in life (bearing in mind the uncertainty over the dating of the *Sonatas*). Both needed time and effort to liberate themselves from the inhibiting shadow of an earlier great composer; in Scarlatti's case, that of his father Alessandro, and in Kurtág's, that of Béla Bartók. There is also a similarity in the context in which many of the *Sonatas/Essercizi* and *Games* were initiated: as pedagogical pieces of shorter duration, often intended for specific performers known to the composer and not likely to be performed on the public stage.

Both the *Sonatas* and *Games* are central to each composer's output, conceived over a period of many years and providing the primary output for their creative ideas (In the case of Kurtág, often serving as initial material for later and more extended compositions). The spirit of playfulness is also strongly present in both sets of pieces, particularly the idea of 'playing with' the possibilities of the instrument (harpsichord or piano), and many pieces demand physical boldness on the part of the performer. Both Scarlatti and Kurtág showed an innovative approach to their instrument, whether it be Scarlatti's use of changing fingers on repeated notes (fig.1) or Kurtág's use of the side of the palm for an entire piece (fig.2).

*Mutandi i detti**
3 2 1

Figure 1. Domenico Scarlatti, Sonata in A K.211 b.23-25, with instructions to “change the fingers”.

Hommage à Bartók

*tenyerelel i VI B oldal
*mit der Handkante siehe S. 33 B
*with the edge of the palm: see p. VI B

Pesante con moto

senza Ped.

Figure 2. György Kurtág, *Hommage à Bartók* line 1, showing instructions to play with the edge of the palm. From *Games Vol.2*

Another common feature is the use of folk music. Both composers make use of direct transcription as well as drawing freely on rhythmic, melodic and harmonic elements of the folk music which they heard; Scarlatti in Iberia and Kurtág in Central Europe. In both, the element of gesture is strongly present, used to evoke extra-musical images, sounds, and, particularly in the case of Kurtág, emotions.⁸³

In spite of obvious differences, a similarity can also be found in the choice of harmonic language. While both composers can employ exotic sound worlds which differentiate them from their contemporaries, the overall harmonic framework or processes used by both Kurtág and Scarlatti are often very straightforward, such as the extraordinarily rich harmonic

⁸³ "...in one important respect Kurtág has all his life been something of a visionary transcriber. For it is his uncanny ability to capture and to notate the ephemerality of musical gesture, expressive of unspoken emotional extremes, that gives his work its extraordinary quality of suppressed drama - of an underlying tension that seems often on the verge of a scream. Kurtág's hard-won skill in notating what is made to seem more like gestural transcription than composition has then to be taken from the printed page and reinterpreted into the gesture of performance." Susan Bradshaw, "Only believe," *The Musical Times* Vol.137 No.1840, June 1996, p.34.

progressions of K.409 that are nevertheless anchored by simple stepwise bass lines (fig.3) or the faint sounds of *Virág az ember...*(Illés Árpád emlékére) made from the notes of a descending chromatic scale (fig.4).

Figure 3. Chord progressions from Domenico Scarlatti, Sonata in D K.409 b.71-143

Virág az ember... (Illés Árpád emlékére)

Nagyon lassan, alig hallhatóan*

* Sehr langsam, kaum hörbar / Very slow, scarcely audible

Figure 4. György Kurtág, "Man is a flower...(in memorium Árpád Illés)." From Games Vol.5

The use of widely spaced intervals is also a common factor, with Scarlatti often leaping acrobatically an octave or more (fig.5) while Kurtág gently disperses his melodies over the entire keyboard (fig.6).



Figure 5. Domenico Scarlatti, Sonata K.182 b.21-23, showing wide leaps over the keyboard

Virág az ember... (1b)

Blumen die Menschen, nur Blumen... (1b) Flowers We Are, Frail Flowers... (1b)

Figure 6. György Kurtág, Virág az ember...1b, showing wide melodic intervals. From Games Vol.1

While not wanting to exaggerate the connection between these two very disparate composers, these points of contact may contribute towards understanding the apparent compatibility of Kurtág and Scarlatti.

Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti

The 2001 programme that juxtaposed music by Scarlatti and Kurtág opened with *Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti* from *Games Vol.3*. This short piece by Kurtág offers an interesting perspective that is relevant to this study: Scarlatti, seen through the eyes of Kurtág. The existence of this work doesn't in itself imply a particularly special relationship between the two composers, as there are a multitude of homages to musical figures among the *Games* pieces (approximately a dozen other composers are mentioned specifically in the same volume alone). It deserves detailed attention,

however, because in it can be seen the workings of both Scarlatti and Kurtág.

Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti shows Scarlatti's musical world in microcosm. Many of Scarlatti's most striking characteristics are present somewhere in the four lines of Kurtág. The piece has four sections corresponding to A₁ B₁ A₂ B₂, following the standard binary structure used, and varied, by Scarlatti in his sonatas. 'A' and 'B' sections are differentiated by tempo indications and character, mirroring Scarlatti's fondness for sudden changes of character that may even involve changes of time signature.

The 'A' sections, marked *Con slancio* ('with a rush' or 'with thrust') [*tempo 1*], feature a dance-like figure which explores the vigorous interplay between downward and upward gestures so prevalent in the sonatas. The strong, detached upbeat which opens the 'A₁' section (fig.7) gives the following downbeat additional emphasis: this rhythmic idea is used in a number of permutations throughout the piece. In the first group of, the downbeat is a note of extended value that makes a *crescendo* towards its release on an upbeat. This moves directly into an ornament-like figure that terminates on the next downbeat, effectively creating a *crescendo onto* the downbeat rather than *away* from it, as in the first bar. The final gesture of this section (bar.3) reflects the shape of the preceding two groups but suggests a change in mood due to the use of single notes, legato phrasing throughout the group and the unemphasised termination of the phrase.

Besides strong upward and downward dance gestures, other stylistic features of the Scarlatti sonatas can be identified in this opening statement by Kurtág. The clusters within the range of a minor third reflect Scarlatti's own frequent use of the interval of a third, and could also be seen as an exaggeration of Scarlatti's practice of adding dissonant notes to chords.

Other elements include the use of wide intervals, crossing of hands, frequent pauses and sudden changes in material, texture and mood.

In terms of harmony, the 'A₁' section reflects Kurtág's processes more than Scarlatti's. Each gesture moves around a group of adjacent notes of the chromatic scale displaced over the keyboard -- a technique that appears frequently in Kurtág's music. The first clusters sit on F-E-D#, the second on C-B-A# (played in the order B-C-A#), with the last group of four single notes (F#-F-E-D# - played F-E-F#-D#) possibly a variation on the first group, in which the F# forms the upper range of the cluster on D#.



Figure 7. Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti, section A₁

A breath-length pause precedes the 'B₁' section, somewhat confusingly marked *Vivacissimo [tempo 2]* given the material that follows: longer note values with indications to play *piano / più piano, dolce, sonore* (fig.8). This is similar to contradictory tempo markings in the sonatas.⁸⁴ If this section is played in a quicker tempo, as instructed, the dance character becomes evident, with hints of dotted rhythms similar to those used by Scarlatti in the Sonata in C major K 502 (fig. 9).

The 'B₁' section is based harmonically around the tonality of G and features open 5ths such as those heard in K.247 b.49-53. The rhythmic patterns start on the beat, rather than with an upbeat as is the case in the 'A' section. The radically change in character, the use of a different tempo, the

⁸⁴ Kirkpatrick refers to this type of apparent contradiction between material and tempo indications in the sonatas: "Scarlatti's role of sprightly buffoon has been so long established that one is tempted to demand ...whether of not his more expressive pieces were not produced *sub rosa* and concealed under the inoffensive markings of Allegro, Andante, and Presto." Kirkpatrick, p.281.

movement into a distant key, and the unexpected modulation at the end of the line with an ambiguous Bflat - F fifth sounding over the 'tonic' G, are all typical of the more outrageous elements of Scarlatti's compositional style.



Figure 8. Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti, section B₁



Figure 9. Domenico Scarlatti, Sonata in C major K.502 b.115-9, showing dotted dance rhythms.

The second *Tempo 1* ('A₂') section (fig.10) continues the harmonic processes of the first, this time with three clear chromatic groups: C#-D-D# (played C#-D#-D), E-F-F# and G-G#-A (played G-A-G#). The first two groups mirror the gestures of the opening section in reverse. The third group (marked *rinforzando*) introduces a new idea with an isolated figure in dotted dance rhythm. The leaping *più forte* figures that follow are a fine example of Scarlatti's tendency to introduce new and unexpected material in the second half of a sonata. This musical idea may derive, in part, from the four-note figure in the first line, and continues the upbeat/downbeat idea of the earlier material in this section, while at the same time introducing the new element of cross-rhythm. Again, such wide leaps, crossing hands, use of a strong dance rhythm in three and momentary use of part-writing, are common Scarlattian features.



Figure 10. Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti, section A₂

The final *Tempo 2* (section B₂ - fig.11) is much shorter than the first, reflecting Scarlatti's liking for varying repeated sections, and closes the piece on an F#-G# dissonance which could be seen as evocative of a final ornament. Kurtág presents this as a faint echo of the previous 'B₁' section, with the marking to play *ppp, lontano* (very softly, in the distance) – an idea that appears in a number of other *Games* pieces.

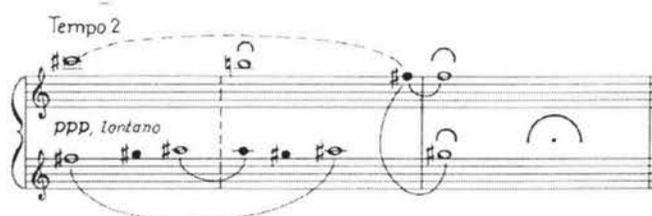


Figure 11. Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti, section B₂

Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti has been examined in some detail as it demonstrates some basic elements of Kurtág's musical language and the way in which he allows himself to be inspired by other composers. The multitude of references to other music, whether explicit references to specific composers or more generalized influences of a genre such as folk music or Gregorian chant, may be one reason why his music seems particularly amenable to inclusion in alternating programmes of the type being discussed. Perhaps Kurtág's compositions can stand the intimacy of such an arrangement because they already have so much in common with so many other composers and sounds in the world.

The Programme

"...a programme is a balancing act. The balancing is done mainly by instinct, helped by experience. More often than not, programmes explain, or justify, themselves only in retrospect."⁸⁵

Alfred Brendel

Creating the trial programme

In developing any programme, pieces are chosen according to links. Sometimes these are clear to the audience, while in other cases they are apparent only to the performer. More often than not, choices are made instinctively, or a nexus of a couple of pieces (ie. by composers from a single country) leads to an entire programme built around them. Key relationships may play a factor and the tendency is to get sharper rather than flatter through a performance. Particularly jarring tonality clashes between adjacent Baroque, Classical and Romantic period pieces tend to be avoided or 'tamed' by a brief pause in the performance (ie. leaving the stage) unless such striking contrast is explicitly desired.

In addition to considering the compatibility of the individual pieces, a programme must contain adequate variety and contrast in mood, tempo and rhythm. Most concerts today tend to be a similar length: 40-50 minutes for either a lunchtime recital or for each half of a full afternoon / evening recital.

The considerations mentioned above came into play when building the Scarlatti/Kurtág section of the 2001 programme. The aim was to design a programme that would best maintain audience concentration and interest from beginning to end. To do this, a range of each composer's work should be heard in order to portray something of the depth of their musical

⁸⁵ Brendel, p.216.

personalities. For example, I wanted to show Scarlatti not only as a composer of fast, virtuoso sonatas but also as a composer of expressive capabilities. I also sought to allow them to interact on a number of levels, thus avoiding the stereotype of 'fast, energetic Scarlatti' and 'slow, dreamy Kurtág'. Each composer's music should be allowed to speak in its own right, meaning that, in particular, enough of the very short *Games* should be grouped together to allow time for the listener to adjust to the different sound world and re-focus attention. Smooth transitions and abrupt changes could be used to create a balance between unpredictability and natural flow. Too many sudden changes, however, could actually disrupt or undermine real attention to the music, and too much of the same style of music could become dull. The intention, therefore, was also to find pieces that complemented rather than negated each other. Finally, the selection should be long enough to allow enough of each composer's work to be presented and for a relationship to be established between the two, while being short enough to maintain listener interest throughout.

Timing and composition

The time limit for the 2001 Scarlatti/Kurtág selection was established at the beginning as being approximately 35-40 minutes. This would allow time for two pieces from the *Iberia* cycle by Albéniz, lasting approximately 10 minutes each to be included at the end of the first half of the programme. This would still make the Scarlatti/Kurtág selection long enough to stand on its own as either a lunchtime concert or complete half of a concert. The 1995 concert had been approximately 50-55 minutes long, which had felt both to me and some members of the audience as slightly longer than necessary; 35-40 minutes seemed a reasonable length of time to allow maximum audience concentration. The *Iberia* pieces were included initially to be attractive to an audience that might potentially be deterred by the unfamiliar programme format. As the programme developed, however, the possibilities

for building on the juxtaposition of Scarlatti and Albéniz, as an extension of the experiment with Scarlatti and Kurtág, became apparent and influenced the choice and arrangement of the sonatas in the programme.

Given the time-frame I realized this would allow time for five or six Scarlatti Sonatas (c. 30 minutes), possibly with some repeats of sections omitted in longer sonatas, and approximately 10 minutes of Kurtág's *Játékok*.

Choosing the pieces - contrast and complement

As mentioned above, this particular programme was designed to deliberately engage the audience. To this end a variety of music from each composer was chosen, covering a range of moods or characters. The intention was to develop a programme that constantly alternated between pieces by Scarlatti or Kurtág that demonstrated each composer's musical breadth so that the audience's attention should continue to be engaged by new aspects of each composer's style.

The process of selecting the actual pieces began with the task of finding a representative choice of Scarlatti sonatas. From a starting sample of approximately 150 Sonatas I made a short list of 30 sonatas that particularly appealed to me; some for their melodic beauty, others for their use of original and unusual features such as those clearly inspired by folk music. These were categorized according to general characteristics of mood, key and metre (i.e. slow melodic sonatas, quick dances in triple time, sonatas that change time signatures, sonatas with a particularly strong folk influence etc.). Eliminating pieces that displayed similar characteristics shortened the list further.

I decided that two compatible sonatas together were an ideal unit, in line with the previously mentioned aim of allowing time for each composer's

music to have an impression on the audience. I decided not to be restricted by Kirkpatrick's sonata pairs in order to present as wide a range of sonatas as possible in the time available. More pieces were discarded as they didn't fit the developing pattern of sharp keys, such as K.202 in B flat. The list was refined almost up until the last day the programme could go to print, as I continued to experiment with combinations. The final selection of five sonatas was arranged in two pairs plus a single sonata, and consisted of the following:

Sonata in C major K.502

Sonata in C# minor K.247

Sonata in E major K.216

Sonata in D major K.491

Sonata in D major K.492

The Kurtág *Games* were woven around these pieces to consciously facilitate the transition from one group to the other and traverse a section of Kurtág's world along the way. The choice of *Sonatas* was not completely finalized before the Kurtág pieces were chosen and many different arrangements and pieces were experimented with before settling on the programme outlined below.

Programme outline and rationale

The programme outlined below was performed for the Wellington Chamber Music Society at 3pm on Sunday 22 July 2001 in the Ilott Concert Chamber, Wellington and recorded live by Concert FM. It attempts to clarify both the subjective and objective reasoning behind the final choice of these pieces for the programme.

Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti

This piece was chosen to open the programme as it establishes an immediate link between the two composers and, as already demonstrated, introduces characteristics of their respective musical languages in a short space of time. It is quick-moving and attention-grabbing, making a bold statement to start. I had also experimented with very quiet pieces such as *Virág az ember* as an opening, which set up a very effective mood of intimacy right from the beginning. I decided, however, to use *Hommage* as it has the very powerful advantage of making the intention of the programme - to link the two composers - very clear to the audience. Its alter-ego 'Tempo 2' section becomes slightly obscure at the finish with a 'ppp, *lontano*' around the tonality of F#, preparing both the tonality and mood change into the next piece.

Hommage à Christian Wolff - Half-asleep (Félálomban)

This piece established the kind of intimacy mentioned above in relation to *Virág az ember*. It picks up on the change of mood at the end of the previous piece and builds on it, helping to give the impression that Scarlatti, as evoked by the previous piece, had himself had drifted off to sleep. The tonal transition is smooth -- the left hand opens with the same pitches as those that close *Hommage* -- while the right hand floats over white-note groups. This gentle bi-tonality creates a mist of sound rather than harsh clashes, and is intended to lull the audience into a comfortable state like the 'half-asleep' of the title. The final overlapping chords resolve into C major (hiding a lingering 'D') which prepares harmonically for the transition into Scarlatti's K.502.

Sonata in C major K.502

Here, the music and the audience wake up. I found that after *Half-asleep* I didn't want the change of mood to be too jarring and opted to play the beginning in a quiet but very alert way, with well-articulated staccato thirds in the right hand. (When playing this piece in other situations I often started

much more boldly). I also found that in this context I tended to play at a slower tempo than when playing the piece in isolation and was more interested in presenting its quirky side than its passages of sparkling virtuosity. This was one sonata I decided early on to include in the programme as it contains many of Scarlatti's more outrageous and adventurous features that particularly appeal to me. Due to its tonality and comparative length I opted to let this piece stand on its own in the programme. This sonata communicates a freshness and vitality with its skipping dotted rhythms and triplet semiquaver motifs, as well as its slightly gauche left hand octaves, and leaves me with a feeling of playfulness.

Tumbling (Hempergös)

This piece suggested itself quite naturally as an appropriate follow-on from K.502. It echoes both the playful character of the previous work and also its tonality, as it begins with the notes of a C major scale tumbling down. My intention was that the playful mood established in K.502 should help to suggest the idea that Kurtág is also being playful in this piece, which to me portrays children playing roly-poly down a hill. A harmonic link also facilitates the next transition, as the final two open fifths of *Tumbling* (C-G and B-F) turn into the first two chords (B-D-F and C-E-G) of the next piece.

Hommage à Borsody László (Harmonica)

This piece shows another side of Kurtág -- his evocation of other instruments through the exploration of the sound capabilities of the keyboard. As mentioned earlier, this kind of transcription is something Kurtág and Scarlatti have in common. *Harmonica* balances the boisterousness of *Tumbling*, once again inviting the listener to tune in to soft sounds which in this case seem to call up the faint ghost of a harmonica.

Beszélgetés (Dialogue)

The transition into this piece continues the stepwise movement from chords on C and D at the end of *Harmonica*, beginning with a whole-tone cluster

built on E that has the taste of an E major chord (E-F#-G#). This piece is different to any of the other Kurtág pieces heard up to this point, calling on the sound of folk music *parlando* to communicate the sense of a conversation. It not only prepares the tonality of the following Scarlatti sonata, trailing off into an unresolved upward scale that finishes on C#, but anticipates the sense of dialogue in the part-writing that opens the Sonata in C# minor K.247.

Sonata in C# minor K.247

This begins with an imitative opening that is typical of Scarlatti, where the left hand initially answers the right hand statement but immediately continues on its own path. The texture moves freely between two and three parts without any attempt at continuity in each voice. In my opinion, performing this piece after *Dialogue* throws the conversational aspect of this type of writing into sharper relief. In this situation the analogy could be to a person musing to themselves (hence the sporadic introduction of a third voice) rather than a conversation between two distinct entities. The prevailing mood of this piece is rather sombre, enhanced by the stark sound of the open fifths, and seems to be a deepening of the mood of uncertainty I feel in the final bar of *Beszélgetés*, which trails off inconclusively when the conflict of consonance and dissonance is unresolved.

Sonata in E K.216

This sonata, in the relative major of the previous piece, re-introduces a lighter mood as it changes character in Jekyll and Hyde fashion from bouncing major sections to fretful, multi-voice minor ones. I found that my approach to performing this piece after K.247 was similar to that I observed in performing the C major sonata after *Half-asleep*; I didn't want to disturb the calmer mood of the previous piece too violently. This meant that I saved a more exuberant interpretation of the opening passage for the repeat of this section. The initial opening does, in fact, bear some resemblance to the C major sonata but the material soon becomes quite different. The second

section in particular indulges some extremely rich harmonies that on the piano sound as if they could have come from the 19th Century (on the harpsichord the effect would be more biting), before erupting in joyful semiquaver flourishes to finish.

Hommage à Farkas Ferenc (3) - Petruska idézése (evocation of Petrushka)

After the previous substantial selection of Scarlatti it seemed I would need to balance this with a proportionately significant group of Kurtág. *Evocation of Petrushka*, one of a number of Kurtág's homages to earlier Hungarian composer Ferenc Farkas, bears some resemblance to *Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti* in that two distinct sections alternate in different tonalities and tempi. The vigorous opening makes a strong statement, emphasising the sudden transition from the previous Scarlatti sonata back to the world of Kurtág. I felt this transition worked well in that the energy of this piece grabs the attention in the manner of something unexpected. At the same time it was related to, even prepared by, the final buoyant gestures of the previous work. (Had I played this piece after K.247, for example, it might have destroyed something of Scarlatti's inward-looking atmosphere). *Petrushka* fades out into the upper registers of the piano, as if his ghost has evaporated, leading us back into the intimate Kurtág world of *Tollrajz*.

Tollrajz, búcsúzóul Schaár Erzsébetnek (Pen Drawing, Valediction to Erzsébet Schaár)

This is similar to *Dialogue* performed earlier in the programme in its use of *parlando* speech patterns. The word 'búcsúzóul' translates literally as 'in the manner of a farewell', and with the indications '*Calmo, sereno, parlando, con duolo*' the type of speech intended here is of a personal and expressive nature. The final high 'white note' passages of *Petrushka* lead easily into this piece with its re-iterated 'F' functioning as a tonal centre; the same 'F' sounding after other harmonically contradictory motifs at the end of *Tollrajz* makes the connection to *Útvesztő Dé*. I feel a strong connection between

this kind of *parlando* writing in Kurtág and similarly vocally-inspired melodic passages in Scarlatti. The juxtaposition of Kurtág pieces like *Petrushka* and *Tollrajz* echoes the sudden changes within Scarlatti sonatas, which skip easily from boisterous extrovert material to introverted and melodically expressive sections.

Útvesztő Dé (Labyrinthine D)

This is number three of a set of twelve short pieces written around each note of the chromatic scale called *12 új mikrolúdium* (12 new microludes). 'Útvesztő Dé' means literally 'the D which has lost its way', and this piece stops and starts in slightly bemused fashion, never seeming to find its way out of the labyrinth. As such, the work offers another clear mood change from the previous piece, but is linked to it by the harmonic compatibility of the pedal tone 'F' in *Tollrajz* and the 'D' tonal centre in this piece. Within the calm and personal expression of the two pieces surrounding the rather frantic 'D', this piece seems to have stumbled by mistake into an unfamiliar situation, a little like a minor character in a film that interrupts the main action briefly before leaving the scene, never to re-appear. I hoped that the clearly expressive intent of the outer pieces would also suggest the evocative intent of the stop-start movement here.

Hommage à Kurtág Márta

This is another piece where Kurtág operates in a very intimate mode. This homage to his wife is built around an open C-G fifth and calls for an unusual technique that bounces on these notes and then immediately re-takes them, capturing the fundamental tone and related pitches as harmonics. The stability of this interval with its associated harmonics seems to resolve the tonal ambiguity at the end of *Útvesztő Dé*, and when the fifth is re-sounded at the end, establishes a clear harmonic link to the next piece.

(csendes beszélgetés az ördöggel) (quiet talk with the devil)

This final Kurtág piece in the programme rests on a very quiet G in the bass of the piano that provides an undertone to the more overtly expressive writing in the upper voice. The tenor of this piece is most definitely one of menace punctuated with moments of drama, and the characterisation of motifs is clearly drawn.

Sonata in D K.491 and Sonata in D K.492

These two sonatas were intended to dispel all the darkness of the final Kurtág piece and leave the audience with the most joyful mood Scarlatti's music can induce. K.491 and K.492 are listed together as they form part of a rare triptych of sonatas with a particularly evident Iberian folk influence. These are the only sonatas in the programme to be heard in their original groupings, albeit without the preceding sonata, K.490, which is in the form of a 'saeta' or Spanish Holy Week processional. K.491 also has the feeling of a march or procession in steady triple time and imitates the sounds of drums and wind instruments. This piece appealed to me for its completely unprepared modulations into unrelated keys (eg. from an open A-E fifth, functioning as the dominant of D major, into C major, then later from the same A-E cadence jumping into F major!).

K.492 complements K.491 in that it shares its optimistic key but explores it in a different fashion. A *presto* in 6/8, it has a distinctly flamenco flavour with crunching dissonances in the bass imitating the sound of a guitar. This piece seemed a suitable finish for a number of reasons: it ended the Scarlatti/Kurtág section on a high note being a wild, energetic and, at times, virtuoso piece, and it contained the strong flavour of flamenco.

K.491 and K.492 prepared the larger transition into the next section of the programme -- the two pieces from *Iberia* by the Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz. I hoped that by this stage in the programme the audience would be accustomed to making connections between neighbouring pieces and that

the common elements of Iberian folk sounds in the Scarlatti and Albéniz pieces would be evident.

I left the stage at this point to allow the Scarlatti/Kurtág section to stand as a complete unit, and to give the audience time to relax their concentration, before returning to play *Evocación* and *El Puerto* by Albéniz.

Performer's impressions

Some of my own impressions regarding the experience of performing this programme have been touched on in the programme outline above. By not stopping for applause, but continuing seamlessly between Scarlatti and Kurtág sections, I became acutely aware of the transitions between pieces in general. These transitions formed an important part of the performance. I was also extremely aware of my own internal preparation in moving from one piece to the next. This differed from the process of 're-focusing' which occurs after standing up to acknowledge applause (therefore directing the attention towards the audience) and then resettling one's attention on the next piece to come. Instead, I felt involved in a process of metamorphosis as one piece evolved into another.

In this way my experience was similar to the experience of performing a cycle of shorter pieces such as the *Davidsbündlertänze* by Schumann, where individual works which are complete within themselves also serve as part of a greater whole with its own collective identity. My impression was both of Scarlatti and Kurtág as distinct units within the programme, and of a larger Scarlatti-Kurtág entity which contained elements of each composer. When looking at the *Davidsbündlertänze* in its entirety we see the rounded nature of Schumann the composer, yet a close-up of each piece shows us the contradictory/complementary characters of Florestan and Eusebius to whom Schumann attributed each individual 'dance'. Similarly, I believe this

alternating programme of Scarlatti and Kurtág effectively created a 'new' work out of the individual contributing pieces.

As a result of this performance I was able to identify specific instances when I felt the programme itself affected my interpretation. For example, the slightly slower and more tongue-in-cheek side of K.502 that suggested itself after performing *Half-asleep*, rather than the more boisterous interpretation I had originally experimented with. I didn't have the sense that the presence of the Scarlatti sonatas actively altered my interpretation of the Kurtág pieces, but it certainly influenced my choice of pieces and their order in the programme. I was also conscious of the effect of performing two sonatas together, such as K.247 and K.216, or of the juxtaposition of particular Kurtág pieces.

Having a very strong feeling that performing these pieces in this programme is different from performing them in a programme that separates them, the challenge is to say exactly what is changed by this situation. My strongest general impression of the effect Scarlatti and Kurtág have on one another in close proximity is that Scarlatti sounds more modern than when the sonatas are performed in other contexts. Specifically, Scarlatti's dissonances, and the tendency to sudden and frequent changes of texture, character and tonality, appear to be highlighted by the presence of the Kurtág pieces. As explored at the beginning of this study, the possibility of composers exerting this type of influence on one another is not an original idea but has been expressed in writing and practice by musicians such as Alfred Brendel.⁸⁶ I believe that the searching inventiveness of both composers is clearer in this pairing.

An audience that is presented with an unfamiliar piece of music naturally takes some time to form an opinion of the piece and the musical intent of

⁸⁶ "The juxtaposition with short twentieth-century works would underline Liszt's modernity." Brendel, p.211.

the composer. This is even more likely to be the case when the composer is also entirely new to the listener. Preconceptions and expectations, similar to those that may be present when meeting someone for the first time, naturally arise when faced with a new listening experience. One example could be the preconception that “contemporary music is often serious and difficult to listen to” – a view often expressed by my father! If this appeared likely with any given audience, then it could be advantageous to engineer the context specifically to counter this supposition in order to draw attention to other, perhaps less obvious, aspects of a composer’s style or work.

I believe that the Scarlatti/Kurtág programme acted in this way. Kurtág is in fact often extremely serious, but his music can also be very playful. I believe this aspect of his musical language is communicated more easily to a new audience when pieces displaying this characteristic are heard alongside Scarlatti being similarly - and unequivocally - playful. Another similarity between the two composers that can be seen more clearly - even exaggerated - in this context is the common use of appropriated sounds or transcription. Kurtág’s clear imitation of non-piano sounds (eg. the sound of the harmonica in *Hommage à Borsody László*) may highlight that fact that Scarlatti is also using the sounds of other instruments in the sonatas (eg. the sounds of drums and wind instruments in K.491 or the sounds of the flamenco guitar in K.492). Other compositional similarities have been discussed earlier in this report, such as the common use of innovative performance techniques, widely spaced intervals, use of folk music sounds and implied rubato, the strong gestural element, the colouring of simple harmonies with added-note dissonances/clusters and the wide use of the resources of the keyboard. All these elements seemed to be exaggerated in the context of this programme, perhaps making these two composers sound more closely connected than they really are.

Besides the effect of amplifying the similarities between Scarlatti and Kurtág, I was able to make the observation that I found it particularly easy to

concentrate during the performance of this programme. I believe this is due to primarily to the element of contrast between the two composers. It would be an interesting further study to see if a basis for such impressions could be detected in physiological or neurological activity - perhaps playing Scarlatti uses a different part of the brain to Kurtág!

Reviews and comments

The main sources of formal feedback for the Scarlatti-Kurtág programme are the two newspaper reviews and the reports written by assessors for the 22 July 2002 concert. The reviewers were Laurence Jenkins (organist, and music critic for former Wellington paper *The Dominion*) and Lindis Taylor (music critic for former Wellington paper *The Evening Post*). The examination assessors were Csaba Erdélyi (Hungarian violist and Professor at Butler University, Indianapolis, USA) and Richard Mapp (NZ pianist and senior lecturer in piano at Massey University, Wellington).

Members of the audience were given a certain amount of background information about the music being performed and the reasons for the combination. The programme notes which I wrote for the Scarlatti and Kurtág section of the concert provided basic biographical information about each composer, a few personal thoughts on their music, and a sentence or two on each piece as I saw it.⁸⁷ This was supplemented by a display in the foyer that could be viewed before the concert and during the interval, consisting of an article by Rachel Beckles-Willson on Kurtág,⁸⁸ the score of *Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti*,⁸⁹ and a personal note about the inspiration

⁸⁷ See Appendix 2. Programme notes for other pieces in the concert were written by Lindis Taylor. A typographical error seems to have led to a sentence of Scarlatti's biography being truncated, and research conducted since I wrote this in July 2001 suggests: a) that Kurtág was in Paris in 1957-8 (not 1956); and: b) that Scarlatti may have written more of the sonatas in earlier life than was previously thought.

⁸⁸ Beckles Willson, "The Mind is a Free Creature". Displayed with the kind permission of the author.

⁸⁹ György Kurtág. *Játékok*, Vol.3, p.40.

for the programme.⁹⁰ This last 'note' outlined many of the background ideas mentioned in the Prologue to this report; those members of the audience who read it would have had their attention drawn to the idea that hearing the composers in this way might say something new about their music.

Lindis Taylor's review mentioned the effect he felt the Scarlatti pieces had on Kurtág's music. Having commented on my intention to find correspondences between the two composers, he appears to have felt that in this programme Kurtág seemed more strongly connected with the music of his predecessors than he might appear in another situation. He wrote:

"...the striking thing was having one's attention drawn to the similarity in turn of mind of the two. The Scarlatti presence seemed to bring Kurtág's Games closer to, say, Beethoven's bagatelles."⁹¹

Laurence Jenkins' review also concentrated on both the influence of the Scarlatti sonatas on the other pieces in the programme and on my own performing style.⁹² He not only commented on the "intended resonances" between the Scarlatti and Kurtág pieces, but extended this to write: "In the course of the afternoon...we began to hear Scarlatti everywhere". He noted the link between the Spanish sounds of the final sonatas and the Albéniz pieces that followed, writing:

"The Spanish mode having been established, Scarlatti's stylistic flourishes were then apparent in the two opening movements of Albeniz's monumental *Iberia*..."

⁹⁰ See Appendix 3. Emma Sayers, "A Note about Scarlatti and Kurtág."

⁹¹ See Appendix 4. Lindis Taylor, "Scarlatti throws a new light on Kurtág," *The Evening Post*, Monday 23 July 2001, p.17.

⁹² See Appendix 5. Laurence Jenkins, "Sparks fly from Scarlatti," *The Dominion*, Thursday 26 July 2001.

This suggests that the pairing of Scarlatti and Albéniz (or other Iberian composers) might be another interesting one to pursue. He even noted that he heard the sound world of Scarlatti intruding into the way I played the Schubert sonata in the second half, which gave me food for thought as this was an influence I was not aware of and had not intended.

Professor Csaba Erdélyi's comments in his report confirmed my belief that this programme was valuable in terms of understanding better the music presented. He wrote:

"...I was deeply moved by the pianist's original idea to mix some masterly miniatures of contemporary composer, Kurtág in between the Scarlatti pieces. The mixture worked perfectly as a natural rainbow bridging the great music of past and present. As a result, both composers became better understood through this inspired juxtaposition by Miss Sayers."⁹³

This was valuable feedback in light of Professor Erdélyi's knowledge of Kurtág's music.

Richard Mapp, when asked to comment specifically on the composition of the programme, made the following remarks:

"I was interested how 'modern' the Scarlatti Sonatas sounded in this context, ie. juxtaposed with the Kurtag pieces. To what extent this element is already in the music, or to what extent certain elements of the harmonies and textures in the Scarlatti were highlighted by the presence of the Kurtag, it is difficult to say."⁹⁴

This provokes the possibility of further comparative studies of the type mentioned below.

⁹³ See Appendix 6. Master of Music Examiner's Report by Csaba Erdélyi. 22 July 2001.

⁹⁴ See Appendix 7. Master of Music Examiner's Report by Richard Mapp. 22 July 2001.

Other comments from members of the audience and the Wellington Chamber Music Society itself reflected the sentiment that the originality of the idea was in itself an appealing aspect and that the experience of hearing something a little different added to the success of the programme. Could this also be a backhanded warning that this type of programme could become less effective if repeated too often?

Possibilities for further study

The comments mentioned above appear to confirm my own experience that this combination of Scarlatti and Kurtág resulted in a successful programme that provoked audience members to think in new ways about the music they heard. Having gained further evidence to support the theory that this particular programme does change something about the way we hear both Scarlatti and Kurtág in this situation, the way seems open for further experimentation into the influence of context on the listening experience. The comparison for both listener and performer of, for example, a pure Scarlatti programme with a Scarlatti-Kurtág programme could explore the questions raised in Richard Mapp's comments about Scarlatti sounding modern and whether this aspect of his compositional style can be enhanced by programming. Any number of composers in any number of permutations could be combined to see if and how they affect each other, to help refine our understanding of effective programming. Besides studies such as these, which examine necessarily subjective responses to aural situations, there is also the interesting possibility of attempting to assess the physical process of listening and to note the way that context can affect concentration.

While my current feeling is that musical perception and response is inherently subjective and prone to an unquantifiable range of influences, the present study convinces me that this is an area worthy of further exploration.

Conclusion

While opening up a number of further possibilities for exploration, the present study supports my initial hypothesis that performance of keyboard music by composers György Kurtág and Domenico Scarlatti in an alternating programme changes the way that their music is perceived by an audience and that therefore the process of concatenation may be said to take place. The response to this study suggests that this programme is found by members of the audience to be an effective and interesting listening experience. Certain similarities between the composers have been identified in the course of this study that may help to explain their particular compatibility. The process of designing a programme with many small pieces has been documented, including the possibilities presented by careful use of key relationships and mood changes. Certain specific aspects of each composer have also been identified as being accentuated by performance in this context, supporting the idea that context influences the way in which music is heard.

Finally the idea has been presented that this study takes place within a developing international trend of experimenting with programmes that juxtapose particular composers or styles, and it is hoped that this case study may serve as useful material for further experimentation in this field.

Appendix 1: Graphic notation used in *Játékok* (Games) by György Kurtág.⁹⁵

Key to the Signs Used

I. Signs indicating value

1. Sound values

White (○) signs indicate generally longer, black (●) signs shorter values. Each sign indicating value is relative in proportion to the chosen tempo of the individual piece.

 = very long

 = long

 = short

 = like an appoggiatura

 = quasi in brackets: to be performed quickly or as if incidentally, sometimes with melodic importance

1a) Signs affecting the duration (over notes or rests)

 = very long prolongation

 = long prolongation

 = shortened

1b) The range of sound values, in decreasing order:



2. Signs indicating pauses

 = very long (fermata)

 = long

 = short

) = rest of caesura value and its modifications:  = longer,  = shorter,  = uneven

⌘ = rest of appoggiatura value

II. Accidentals

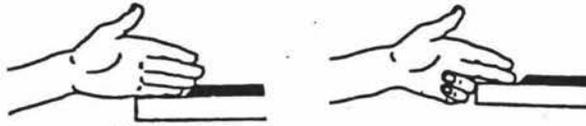
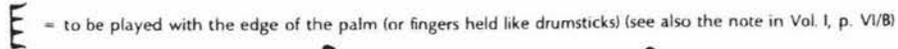
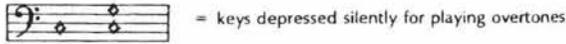
Accidentals (# b ♯) apply only to the notes which they precede. In case of repetitions the accidental before the first note is valid throughout. Natural signs have often been inserted for the sake of easier reading. Signs written before, over or under a cluster, glissando or group of notes apply to all their notes. ♯ indicate white keys, while # or b black ones.

 = Accidentals written larger than usual indicate that all notes in that staff should be treated as sharps, flats or naturals

⁹⁵ Taken from György Kurtág, Introduction to *Játékok* Vol.1 (Budapest, Hungary: Editio Musica Budapest, 1979), pp.9-12.

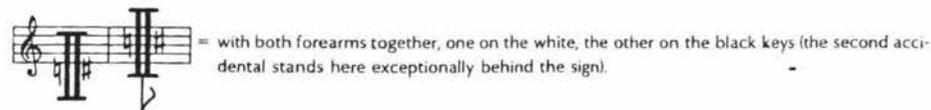
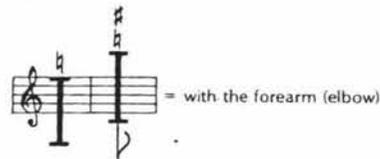
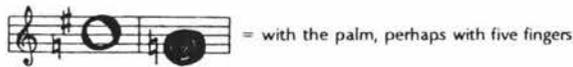
III. Signs for the different manners of performance

1. Single notes

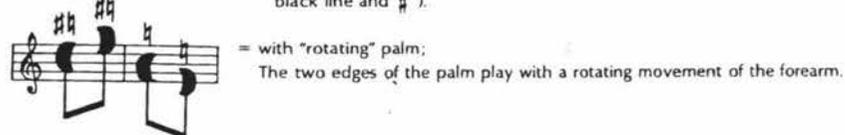
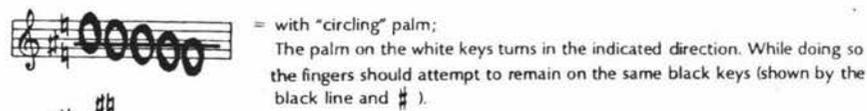


2. Clusters

a) with an approximative range;
the sign refers to the manner of performance, the range of cluster is indicated by accidentals. (The range of any cluster without accidental may be freely chosen.)

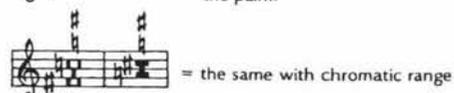
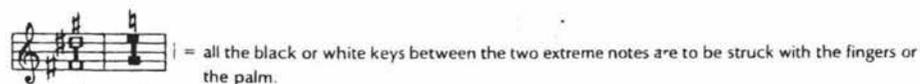


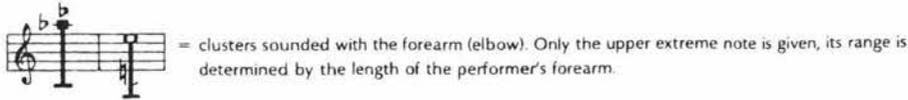
The above-mentioned six manners of performance as well as the range of the cluster ($\sharp\sharp\flat$) may be freely interchanged in the course of practice and improvisation.



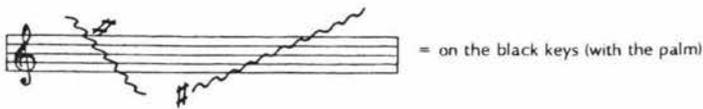
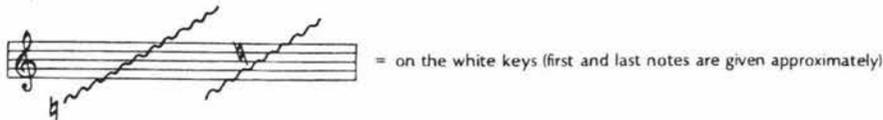
b) with a definite range;

the extreme notes are indicated with square note heads and the range is indicated by accidentals above, under or before the clusters.



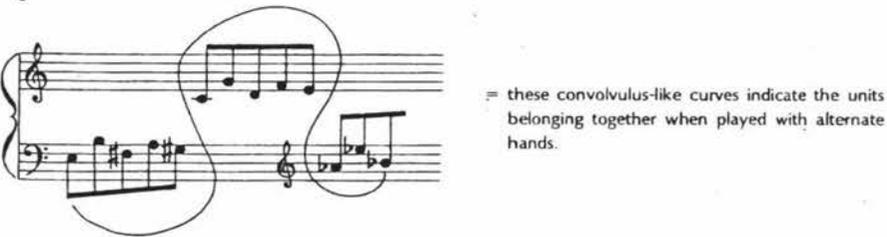
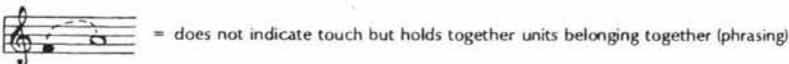
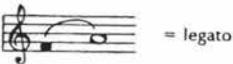
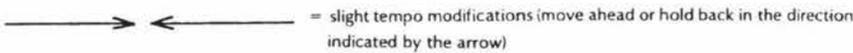


3. Glissandos

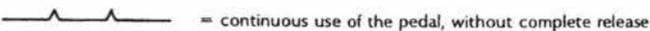


If no other instructions are given the glissando is played upwards by the right hand and downwards by the left, or they may be played in both directions with the thumb. The mastery of its technique should be acquired first silently over the entire keyboard, then practised by wearing gloves and sounding the notes.

IV. Other signs



"con Ped." = calls for very subtle, colourful use of the pedal. Harmony must be created from the melodic succession of notes but this must not happen at the expense of phrasing. Thus the pedal should be used as required from simple echo-production (c. $\frac{1}{8}$ Ped.) to the creation of full resonance, while constantly being controlled by the ear. Particular attention should be given at the phrase endings to the nuances/shadings of releases and redepressions ($\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, etc. Ped.). All this is valid even for the "sempre con Ped." The pedal kept depressed deeply all the way leads to chaotic sound effects and the superfluous accumulation of dynamics. In pieces without pedal markings the pedal may be used according to the foregoing (except, of course, where "senza Ped." is indicated.)



Appendix 2: Programme notes for WCMS Concert

3pm, Sunday 22 July 2001, Ilott Concert Chamber

Programme Notes

The following notes about the pieces by Kurtág and Scarlatti are by Emma Sayers

György Kurtág (b. 1926 Lugoi, Romania)

György Kurtág was born in the Romanian village of Lugos (Lugoi), a region acquired from Hungary after WW2. Like fellow-Transylvanian György Ligeti he travelled to Budapest in 1945 in the hope of studying with Bartók who was expected to return from America, but arrived at the Liszt Academy to the news that the great composer had just died in New York. Hungary was completely shut off from the majority of the 20th Century's musical developments until the late 50s, and combined with Bartók's overwhelming legacy this made for a rather stagnant time in composition. Kurtág concentrated instead on piano studies. In 1956, after the Hungarian uprising, Kurtág was able to spend a year in Paris. This experience had an enormous influence on him, and working with Darius Milhaud, Olivier Messiaen and perhaps most importantly, with the art psychologist Marianne Stein, he was able to begin to find his own musical language.

The Games (*Játékok*) for piano grew out of this process, and began life in response to a request for teaching material for children. What has since evolved are at least 8 volumes of short pieces, many written for and about friends and colleagues; a sort of musical notebook or diary. Kurtág's language of gesture tries to get to the heart of things, whether that be the essence of a person, or an object in everyday life, and to express it in as few words as possible. A profound seriousness and a constant quest for the truth underlie Kurtág's writing, and an intense economy of means can lead to pieces with only a handful of notes. "I keep coming back to the realisation that one note is almost enough."

Kurtág remained based in Hungary teaching piano and chamber music at the Liszt Academy until 1993. It is only in the last decade that his music has reached the rest of the world, making him today one of the most important figures in contemporary music.

For more information on Kurtág read Rachel Beckles-Willson's article in the foyer.

Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

While Kurtág struggled with the overwhelming influence of Bartók and of the regime under which he lived, Domenico Scarlatti struggled with the equally suffocating influence of his father, the renowned operatic composer Alessandro Scarlatti. It was not until Domenico entered the service of the Infanta Maria Barbara that his musical language found its feet. Scarlatti was very fortunate that Maria Barbara was such an accomplished musician, as well as reportedly being of a wonderful disposition, and his 550-or-so harpsichord sonatas were written for her pleasure and edification.

It is a great encouragement to all late-starters that this huge body of wildly creative work was achieved in the last eighteen years of his life; the majority of them appear to have been written when Scarlatti was in his 60's.

Scarlatti the person is rather an elusive character in history, and there is very little written directly about or by him which has survived to the present day. Celebrated as one of the greatest keyboardists of the day, with the famous duel between him and Handel carrying varying reports of "who won"

The inventiveness of Scarlatti's sonatas for harpsichord, full of sounds of the Iberian peninsula and so daring in their juxtaposition of wildly differing ideas, make them very attractive to performers of the modern-day piano, as they have been to many transcribers and

orchestrators. Performance of these pieces on the piano is probably akin to an arrangement or orchestration, much in the way that Scarlatti used Iberian folk music. His vocally-inspired works sit well with the cantabile sound of the instrument, his extreme contrasts invite dynamic and tonal exploration, and many sounds taken from Iberian folk music, such as drums and pipes, can be portrayed effectively using the resources of the piano (including the sustaining pedal). Often it is simply the strong dance rhythm which is so infectious. Overall it is music that by its own spirit of exploration seems to invite us to do the same.

Notes on the Music

Part I: Kurtág punctuated with Scarlatti

Hommage à Domenico Scarlatti Scarlatti's fondness for dissonant chords, thirds, hand crossings, wide leaps and contrasts, all find their way into this piece.

Half-asleep (Hommage à Christian Wolff) Is this half-asleep or half-awake? Which half wins?

Sonata in C, K 502 Like an absent-minded professor, this piece is not afraid to get side-tracked, or even to change time signatures when it suits.

Tumbling 'Summer is golden, Summer is green. The freshly cut grass. Down, down, down we go from the peak of the hill, ROLLING.' (Gillian Sellers, age 9, from a book of children's verse)

Harmonica (Hommage a Borsody László) Like Scarlatti, Kurtág imitates the sounds of other instruments on the keyboard.

Dialogue The two hands have a conversation, not entirely without friction.

Sonata in C#minor, K 247 Unusual sounds of open 5ths appear amongst beautiful melodies.

Sonata in E, K 216 A little nervous, this sonata can't decide whether to laugh or cry, and indulges itself in some blatantly romantic harmonies.

Evocation of Petrushka (Hommage à Farkas Ferenc) Kurtág captures Stravinsky's sound-world.

Pen Drawing, Valediction to Erzsébet Schaár Calmo, sereno, parlando, con duolo.

D, lost Hopelessly lost, D tries to find its way – without much luck.

Hommage à Kurtág Márta Both being extremely fine pianists, György and Márta Kurtág often perform together in concert.

(quiet talk with the devil) A menacing confrontation.

Sonata in D, K 491; Sonata in D, K 492 These two sonatas, together with K 490, form a rare trio of sonatas that seem to have been intended for performance together. The sounds of a celebration or parade are heard in the first, and the second romps from major to minor with abandon, picking up a flamenco guitar on the way and adding a few glissando scales for colour.

(Emma Sayers)

Appendix 3: A Note about Scarlatti and Kurtág Additional notes for WCMS Concert, 22 July 2001

While I was studying in Budapest a 4-volume edition of 200 Scarlatti sonatas was issued by EMB. Scores were cheap in Hungary so I couldn't help myself.... Over the Xmas break I started to read them through; first one, then another, would have me shrieking with laughter, exclaiming "But, you can't do that!" or "This is completely crazy!" out loud as each new sonata seemed to me to be The Best So Far. I went along to my first lesson of the New Year ready to share my excitement, but before I could open my mouth my teacher, Rita Wagner, said "Emma, you have to play Scarlatti."

In 6 years I haven't stopped being delightfully outraged by Scarlatti's audacity. I still catch myself muttering "impossible!" out loud, even when playing sonatas I know well. Besides the wackiness of his compositional style (the uncompromising lurches from one tonality to another, the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated materials, the blatant imitation of Iberian sounds and dissonances), I am drawn equally to the simple beauty of these pieces, and to the joy they are capable of expressing. Playing Scarlatti is like being in Wellington harbour on a clear winter's day when the colours dance sharp and bright, and the sun fills you with a sense of well-being that tickles your stomach and makes you want to laugh.

The idea to put Scarlatti sonatas together with pieces by Hungarian composer György Kurtág (born 1926 in Lugoj, Romania) came from Rita. I was working on the sonatas and Kurtág's series *Games* at the same time, and equally excited by the two worlds that seemed to be having so much serious fun with music and ideas, albeit in such different ways.

We tried alternating the pieces as an experiment, and the result was surprising. The two composers heard in proximity seemed to throw new light on each other, to offer a new perspective, and the change from one to the other seemed to keep the ears “fresh”, avoiding the desensitization that can come with hearing too much of the same thing for too long.

In retrospect it is possible to see why these composers should fit well. Both deal in condensed forms, both experiment widely, both use sounds (musical and non-musical) taken from everyday life, both often use comparatively simple harmonic structures as building blocks, both seem to be able to delight in small things, both compose for people they know rather than the anonymous performer. Neither sets of pieces were written initially for the concert hall; Scarlatti wrote the sonatas exclusively for the infanta (later Queen of Spain) Maria Barbara to play, and Kurtág began the (currently 7 volume) *Games* as pedagogical pieces, with many pieces written for and about friends and colleagues.

This is not presented as a historically “authentic” performance. Scarlatti did not write his sonatas for the piano, he wrote for the harpsichord, and he most probably composed the majority of his sonatas to be played in pairs. He certainly did not intend to have the *Games* played amongst them! But if a justification is needed, I take it from his own spirit of exploration, his answer to criticism that he was breaking all the rules – “Ah, yes, but isn’t it beautiful?”.

Appendix 4: Concert Review – Lindis Taylor

Published in The Evening Post, Monday 23 July 2001

The Evening Post, Monday, July, 23, 2001 17

Arts, theatre, music**Scarlatti throws a
new light on Kurtag**

What: Wellington Chamber Music Society: Emma Sayers (piano) Games by Kurtag, interspersed with sonatas by Scarlatti; Evocacion and El Puerto from Iberia Suite (Albeniz); Sonata in A, D 959 (Schubert)

Where: Hott Concert Chamber, Sunday afternoon

Reviewed by: Lindis Taylor

MUSIC

The Scarlatti presence seemed to bring Kurtag's Games closer to, say, Beethoven's bagatelles. Emma Sayers played the Scarlatti – few of which are very familiar – with such penetrating insight as can only come from one who's been in pretty deep.

The first half ended with two of the marvellous pieces from the Suite Iberia by Albeniz; her playing of the atmospheric Evocacion and the kaleidoscopic El Puerto demonstrated a flair approaching that of the inimitable Alicia de Larrocha. And her second half was one of the last three sonatas by Schubert. Warm-toned, imaginatively paced, richly lyrical, she invested every modulation, change of speed, hesitation, with interest. The fugitive arpeggios that ended the first movement were magical; and the fragments of earlier themes in the final section were like moment-of-death images recalled from one's entire life.

Emma apologised for offering an encore after that: she needed a partner to play a transcription by Kurtag of Bach's Cantata Gottes Zeit Ist Die Allerbeste Zeit, and Richard Mapp happened to be on hand. A delight!

Considering the weather, it was a reasonable audience – but those absent missed a treat.

Emma Sayers gave her audience the benefit of her study at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by playing a number of pieces by Gyorgy Kurtag, born in 1926.

They were from a series called Games: fanciful, intuitive, surprising, comical little dramatic vignettes. She showed her flair with a programme by putting together a half-hour pastiche in which they were set among several sonatas by Scarlatti.

The idea came, obviously, from one of the Kurtag pieces which was a homage to Scarlatti, and it led her to find correspondences between the Kurtag and the 500 or so sonatas of Scarlatti.

I confess to arriving out of the terrible weather a few minutes late, and became lost in the list of Kurtag pieces, many of which were quite short. Not that there was any mistaking the one composer for the other, but the striking thing was having one's attention drawn to the similarity in turn of mind of the two.

Appendix 5: Concert Review – Laurence Jenkins

Published in The Dominion, Thursday 26 July 2001

REVIEW

The Dominion
Thurs, July 26, 2001

Sparks fly from Scarlatti

Emma Sayers, piano
Ilott Chamber, July 22, as part of the Sunday
Concerts 2001
Wellington Chamber Music Society
Reviewed by Laurence Jenkins

USING Domenico Scarlatti's enormously important sonatas as a springboard, Emma Sayers's concert on Sunday afternoon laid bare some influences on other composers and on her personal approach to performing of which even she may not have been aware.

In the course of the afternoon, with the sonatas in mind, and they were interspersed among the short works by Kurtag in which there were intended resonances, we began to hear Scarlatti everywhere.

Part of that effect is the result of a style of pianism which is rather like an electric current. When it hits the mark, sparks fly, but sometimes its ferocity strikes where it is perhaps not intended.

In Scarlatti, this style is exciting as opposed to lyrical; full of tension rather than like, say, the Scarlatti of a Horowitz or a Michelangeli, all beautiful sound and control.

Personally, the crackling power of Sayers appealed to me, especially in the sonatas she chose: *K502 in C*, *K247 in C sharp minor*, *K216 in E* (markedly, in this sonata) and the two *D majors K491* and *492*. There are others in the catalogue which would not wear this intensity.

The Spanish mode having been established, Scarlatti's stylistic flourishes were then apparent in the two opening movements of Albeniz's monumental *Iberia*, and I longed to hear more. This is music ideally suited to Sayers's intellect and technique, and she convinced in these performances that the lyricism in her storehouse, allied to that aforementioned voltage, is preferable to a laconic approach, though a bit more breadth would not have gone amiss.

In Schubert's late sonatas, though, where in these long voyages with that composer one needs the anchors of both a singing tone and rhythmic stability, excessive drama is intrusive; and particularly the unwarranted rubato in the first movement interrupted the flow of what is essentially a beautiful strophic song. True, there is theatre in the *A major D 959*, and Schubert himself interrupts the flow with recitativo sections ruminating on his approaching death, but the performance would have been more enjoyable with Schubert unbound.

Appendix 6: Master of Music Examiner's Report by Csaba Erdélyi

To: Massey University
Conservatorium of Music, Wellington

Re: Piano recital by Emma Sayers
at 3pm. Sunday, 22nd July, 2001
Town Hall, Koff Theatre

Dear Sir/Madam,

I was asked by prof. Donald Maurice to be present as an independent evaluator at the concert mentioned above.

I have heard an extraordinary performance by a real artist who is already at a high international level. In addition to appreciating the lively and stylistic rendering of fine Sonatas by Scarlatti, I was deeply moved by the pianist's original idea to mix some masterly miniatures of contemporary composer, Kurtág in between the Scarlatti pieces. The mixture worked perfectly as a natural rainbow bridging the great music of past and present. As a result, both composers became better understood through this inspired juxtaposition by Miss Sayers. I admired her clarity of phrasing, freedom of characterizations and spontaneity. I trust that this true musician will bring much international recognition to the musical life in New Zealand. I myself am looking forward to the opportunity to play with her in the future.

Sincerely,

prof. Csaba Erdélyi
Butler University, Indianapolis, U.S.A.

Appendix 7: Master of Music Examiner's Report by Richard Mapp



Massey University

WELLINGTON CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC
MASTER OF MUSIC

EXAMINER'S REPORT

Name: Emma Sayers

Your characterisation of the various Kurtág pieces was always convincing, with excellent control of the dynamic extremes, always attention to detail, and a good feeling for the dramatic moments, some of which, in particular pauses in Hommage à R.S. & Tumbling, could have lasted longer. Dialogue could have stood even more rubato I think. Petrushka, and Quiet Talk with the devil were especially convincing and characterful.

These qualities also stood out in your performance of the Sonatas, where C# minor k 247 & D major k 492 were outstanding for their intimacy of expression, and virtuosity & leggihero sparkle respectively. In the E major k 216 I would have liked a few more clues - eg bars 19-30, & the first part of the second section, where I could not entirely follow the expressive logic; and I could quibble that in the D major k 491 there was not

Examiner Richard Mapp Date 22-7-07

always total clarity in piano rapid passages.



Massey University

WELLINGTON CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC
MASTER OF MUSIC

EXAMINER'S REPORT

Name: Emma Sayers

I found your playing of the Albeniz delightful and convincing. You found a good pace for the Evocación, as well as some beautiful sounds, and a lovely sense of the lines. There could have been even greater breadth at some points.

El puerto was dancey and buoyant with wonderful attack in the cross-rhythm sections.

I was interested how "modern" the Scarlatti Sonatas sounded in this context, i.e. juxtaposed with the Kurtag pieces. To what extent this element is already in the music, or to what extent certain elements of the harmonies and textures in the Scarlatti were highlighted by the presence of the Kurtag, it is difficult to say.

Examiner

Richard Mapp

Date

22/7/07

Bibliography

Books

Barbier, Patrick. *Farinelli, le castrat des lumieres*. Paris: Grasset, 1995.

Bogianckino, Massimo. *The harpsichord music of Domenico Scarlatti*. Trans. John Tickner. Roma: De Santis, 1967.

Boyd, Malcolm. *Domenico Scarlatti, Master of Music*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986.

Brendel, Alfred. *Music Sounded Out*. London: Robson Books, 1990.

Kirkpatrick, Ralph. *Domenico Scarlatti*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Onions, C.T. ed. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary Vol 1*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Parakilas, James, ed. *Piano Roles – 300 Years of Life with the Piano*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1999.

Reich, Nancy B. *Clara Schumann – The Artist and the Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Sadie, Stanley and Tyrrell, John, eds. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online*. London: Macmillan Reference ; New York : Grove's Dictionaries, 2001.

Samson, Jim, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Schnabel, Artur. *Music and the Line of Most Resistance*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1942.

Schonberg, Harold C. *The Great Pianists*. London: Gollancz, 1974.

Vidali, Carole F. *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti – A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993.

Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt Vol.1 --The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

Periodical Articles (including on-line journals) and CD notes

Anderson, Martin. "Every Note is a Statement -- The Keller Quartet and The Art of Fugue." *Fanfare* Vol. 22 No. 4 (Mar/Apr 1999): pp.105-108.

Anderson, Martin. "Kim Kashkashian on Bartók, Eötvös, Kurtág and the Viola." *Fanfare* Vol. 23 No. 6 (July/August 2000): pp.49-56.

Beckles-Willson, Rachel. "The Mind is a Free Creature: the music of György Kurtág." *Central Europe Review* Vol. 2 No 12 (27 March 2000): www.ce-review.org/00/12/willson12

Beckles-Willson, Rachel. "Kurtág, György." *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online* (2001): www.grovemusic.com

Boyd, Malcolm. Review of *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti- A Guide to Research*, by Carole F. Vidali. *Notes* (September 1994): pp.116-118.

Boyd, Malcolm. Review of *Bach, Handel and Scarlatti: Tercentenary Essays*, by Peter Williams (ed.). *Early Music* (Nov 1985): pp.571 – 2.

Boyd, Malcolm. "Nova Scarlattiana." *The Musical Times* (Oct 1985): pp.589-593.

Bradshaw, Susan. "Only believe." *The Musical Times* Vol. 137 No. 1840 (June 1996): pp.33–34.

Chase, Gilbert. "Barbieri and the Spanish Zarzuela" *Music and Letters* Vol. 20 (1939): pp.32–33.

Clark, Jane. "Domenico Scarlatti and Spanish Folk Music--a performer's re-appraisal." *Early Music* (Jan 1976): pp.19–21.

Clark, Jane. "His Own Worst Enemy – Scarlatti: Some Unanswered Questions." *Early Music* (Nov 1985): pp.542–547.

Dale, Kathleen. "Hours with Domenico Scarlatti." *Music and Letters* Vol. 22 (1941): pp.115–122.

Dobszay, László. "A Greeting to György Kurtág on his 70th Birthday." *Hungarian Music Quarterly* Vol. 7 Nos 1-2 (1996): pp.3-4.

Dumm, Robert. "The Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti." *Clavier* (April 1996): pp.20–27.

Eckersley, Kate. Programme notes to "Love's Thrall, Late Cantatas by Domenico Scarlatti Vol. 3." London, Unicorn-Kanchana Records, 1992.

- Green, Andrew. "Great Briton." *Piano* (March/April 2001): p.21.
- Halász, Péter. "Kurtág-Fragments: Excerpts." *Hungarian Music Quarterly* Vol. 7 Nos 1-2 (1996): pp.13-20.
- Halász, Péter. "Kurtág-Töredékek." *Holmi*, Vol. 7 No 2 (Feb 1995): pp.154-183.
- Halász, Péter. "Three Kurtág CDs on Hungaroton Classic." *Hungarian Music Quarterly* Vol. 7 Nos 1-2 (1996): pp.29-32.
- Kipnis, Igor. Review of *Domenico Scarlatti: Thematic Index of the Keyboard Sonatas According to the Kirkpatrick Catalogue*, by Laurence Goldberg, Patrice Matthews and William Glennon. *Clavier* (May/June 2000): p.44.
- Laki, Peter. Music Reviews: "György Kurtág: Op.13, Op.20, Op.24, Op.25, Op.27, Op.31/b." *Notes* Vol. 53 No. 4 (June 1997): pp.1305-1307.
- Lang, Paul Henry. "Scarlatti: 300 Years On." *The Musical Times* (Oct 1985): pp.584-589.
- McLay, Margaret. "Kurtág's 'Bornemisza' Concerto." *The Musical Times* Vol. 129 No. 1749 (Nov 1988): pp.580-583.
- Newton, Richard. "The English Cult of Domenico Scarlatti." *Music and Letters* Vol. 20 (1939): pp.138-156.
- Pascual, Beryl Kenyon de. "Domenico Scarlatti and his son Alexandro's inheritance." *Music and Letters* Vol. 69 No 1 (Jan 1988): pp.23-27.
- Pollens, Stewart. "The Early Portuguese Piano." *Early Music* (Nov 1985): pp.18-27.
- Potter, Keith. "A Kurtág Portrait." *The Musical Times* Vol. 131 No. 1763 (Jan 1990): pp.43-45.
- Ray, Mark. "Two's Company - Kurtág's Piano Duets." *MusicTeacher* Vol. 80 No. 4 (Apr 2001): pp.20-21.
- Renshaw, Simon. "Feast from the East." *Piano* (March/April 2001): p.9.
- Schott, Howard. "Report: Domenico Scarlatti Festival in Boston." *Early Music* (Nov 1998): pp.699-700.

Schott, Howard. "Early music for Harpsichord – 1." *Early Music* (Jan 1976): pp.27–29.

Schott, Howard. "From harpsichord to pianoforte: A chronology and commentary." *Early Music* (Feb 1985): pp.28–38.

Shipton, Alyn. "Svensational." *Piano* (May/June 2001): p.13.

Siepmann, Jeremy. Programme notes to "Pletnev plays Scarlatti." London, Virgin Classics, 1995.

Walsh, Stephen. "A brief office for György Kurtág." *The Musical Times* Vol. 130 No. 1759 (Sep 1989): pp.525-526.

Wood, Hugh. "20th Century Masterworks: György Kurtág." *BBC Music Magazine* (Nov 1999): p.19.

Websites

www.radio-france.fr/chaines/france-musiques/biographies/fiche.php?numero=369

www.rfh.org.uk/kurtag

www.ricordi.com/compositori_oggi/kurtag/kurtag

Music Scores

Scarlatti, Domenico. *Sixty Sonatas* Vol.1. Edited by Ralph Kirkpatrick. New York/London: Schirmer, 1953.

Scarlatti, Domenico. *200 Sonate per clavicembalo (pianoforte)* in 4 Volumes. Edited by, György Balla. Budapest, Hungary: Edition Music Budapest, 1968.

Kurtág, György. *Játékok (Games)* Vol, 1-6. Budapest, Hungary: Editio Musica Budapest, 1979 (Vol. 1-4), 1997 (Vol. 5-6).

Discography

Aimard, Pierre-Laurent, piano. *Pierre-Laurent Aimard at Carnegie Hall*. Warner Classics 0927-43088-2. Compact disc. 2002.

- Albero, Sebastià de. *Sonatas para Clavicordio*. Joseph Payne (harpichord). Grammofon AB BIS 629. Compact disc. 1993.
- Alessandrini, Rinaldo, harpsichord. *150 Anni di Musica Italiana Vol 1*. Opus 111 Op2 30-118. Compact disc. 1994.
- Argerich, Martha, piano. *Martha Argerich - Live from the Concertgebouw, 1978 & 1979*. EMI Records 5 56975 2. Compact disc. 2000.
- Kashkashian, Kim, viola. *Bartók / Eötvös / Kurtág*. Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra. Peter Eötvös (conductor). ECM Records. 2000. Compact disc.
- Michelangeli, Arturo Benedetti, piano. *Beethoven/Scarlatti/Galuppi*. Decca 417 772. Compact disc. 1988 (1965).
- Gould, Glenn, piano. *Great Pianists of the 20th Century - Glenn Gould*. Philips 456 808. Compact disc. 1998.
- Perahia, Murray, piano. *Murray Perahia plays Handel and Scarlatti*. Sony SK 62785. Compact disc. 1996.
- Hess, Myra, piano. *Great Pianists of the 20th Century - Myra Hess*. Philips 456 832. Compact disc. 1999.
- Horowitz, Vladimir, piano. *Horowitz Live At Carnegie Hall*. CBS Records. Compact disc. 1988 (1965, 1966 & 1968).
- Kurtág, György. *Játékok*. Márta and György Kurtág (piano). ECM Records 1619. Compact disc. 1997.
- Kurtág, György. *Kafka fragmente*. Anu Komsí (soprano) and Sakari Oramo (violin). Ondine Inc. Compact disc. 1996.
- Kurtág, György. *György Kurtág - Portraitkonzert 10.8.1993 Mozarteum Salzburg*. Various artists. Col Legno WWE 31870. Compact disc. 1994.
- Rachmaninoff, Sergie. *Sergei Rachmaninoff - The Complete Recordings*. Sergei Rachmaninoff (piano). BMG, RCA 09026-61265. Compact disc. 1992.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Sonaten*. Dubravka Tomsic (piano). Masters Classic CLS 4206. Compact disc.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Scarlatti: Sonatas*. Mark Swartzentruber (piano). Solo Records SLR 1. Compact disc. 1999.

- Scarlatti, Domenico. *14 Sonate per Clavicembalo*. Gustav Leonhardt (harpsichord). RCA GD 71955. Compact disc. 1978.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Domenico Scarlatti: Sonatas for Harpsichord*. Trevor Pinnock (harpsichord). CRD Records 3368. compact disc. 1981.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Keyboard Sonatas*. András Schiff (piano). Decca 421 422. Compact disc. 1989.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Horowitz plays Scarlatti*. Vladimir Horowitz (piano). CBS Records MK 42410. Compact disc. 1987 (recorded 1962, 1964 & 1968)
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Love's Sweet Torment, Late Cantatas*. Penelope Rapon, dir. Fiori Musicali. Kate Eckersley (soprano). Unicorn-Kanchana Records DKP 9095. Compact disc. 1990.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Love's Fire and Passion, Late Cantatas Vol 2*. Penelope Rapon, dir. Fiori Musicali. Kate Eckersley (soprano). Unicorn-Kanchana Records DKP 9119. Compact disc. 1992.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Love's Thrall, Late Cantatas Vol 3*. Musica Fiammante. Kate Eckersley (soprano). Unicorn-Kanchana Records DKP 9124. Compact disc. 1992.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Scarlatti: Keyboard Sonatas*. Mikhail Pletnev (piano). Virgin Classics VCD 5 45123 2. Compact disc. 1995.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Scarlatti: Sonaten*. Ivo Pogorelich (piano). Deutsche Grammophon DG 435 855. Compact disc. 1992.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Scarlatti: Sonatas*. Wanda Landowska (harpsichord). EMI Records CDH 7 64934. Compact disc. 1993 (1949).
- Scarlatti, Domenico et al. *Musica Napoletana - Pergolesi, Durante, Leo, Scarlatti*. Concerto Köln. Andrea Keller (solo violin). Werner Matzke (solo cello). Gerald Hambitzer (harpsichord). CAPRICIO10 378. Compact disc. 1993.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Stabat Mater / Salve Regina / Sonatas for Organ*. Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Timothy Byram-Wigfield (organ). Hyperion Records. Compact disc. 1986.
- Scarlatti, Domenico. *Stabat Mater*. The Sixteen. Harry Christophers (cond.). Collins Classics 15042. Compact disc. 1997.

Scarlatti, Domenico. *Stabat Mater, Salve Regina*. Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford. Francis Grier (dir.). Hyperion Records CDA 66182. Compact disc. 1986.

Scarlatti, Domenico et al. *Scarlatti / Hasse : Salve Regina, Cantatas & Motets*. The King's Consort. Robert King (dir.). Deborah York (soprano). James Bowman (countertenor). Crispian Steele-Perkins (trumpet). Hyperion Records CDA 66875. Compact disc. 1996.

Seixas, Carlos. *Seixas: Concerto, Sinfonias, Sonatas*. Norwegian Baroque Orchestra. Ketil Haugsand (harpsichord, dir.). Virgin Classics VC 5 45114. Compact disc. 1995.

Soler, Antonio. *Soler - Keyboard Sonatas*. Maggie Cole (fortepiano, harpsichord). Virgin Classics VC 7 91172. Compact disc. 1991.

Yates, Sophie, harpsichord. *Fandango: Scarlatti in Iberia*. Chandos Records Chan 0635. Compact disc. 1998.