

BENNINGTON COLLEGE MUSIC DIVISION

Presents

PETER BENVENUTO CALABRO, pianist

Monday  
April 15, 1985

8:15 p.m.  
Greenwall Music Workshop

"The Goldberg Variations", Aria with 30 variations      J.S. BACH

Peter Benvenuto Calabro, piano

PAUSE

\* 4 Hands in the Yucatan (1985)  
A hemispheric fantasy  
for piano four hands

LOUIS CALABRO

Peter Benvenuto Calabro, piano  
Elizabeth Wright, piano

\* First performance

This Concert is being presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree.

## GOLDBERG VARIATIONS PROGRAM NOTES

The first question usually asked about this work is, "Why are they called the Goldberg Variations?" the answer involves an interesting and personal bit of history.

There was a Count Kaiserling who, as the Russian Ambassador to the court of Saxony, often visited Leipzig, Germany, where J.S. Bach was engaged as Chief Court Musician. The Count himself employed a musician by the name of Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. When visiting Leipzig, the Count often took Goldberg, who was a harpsichordist, to Bach for music lessons.

Now, the Count had a special problem. He was an insomniac and would often awaken Goldberg so that Goldberg might play for the Count on his otherwise sleepless night. During one of his visits to see Bach, it occurred to Count Kaiserling to ask Bach to compose some pieces for Goldberg to play when the Count was unable to sleep.

Bach had composed a melody 15 years earlier for his wife's music lessons, and based the entire work of 30 variations on a Sarabande theme. The Count, delighted with the work called them "his" variations. But, because the harpsichordist was the one who played it, the piece came to be known as the Goldberg Variations.

Each of the 30 variations has a character and mood of its own, and taken as a whole, fall into three categories: there are nine canons (or rounds); thirteen duets "for two keyboards" (because the work was originally written for a harpsichord, which actually has two keyboards); the remaining eight variations are based on dance forms from Bach's time, arias, and one French overture.

These variations can be thought of in groups of three. Every third one being a canon. The canons are Nos. 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, and 27. Preceding every canon are the duets and other variations. There are only three minor-key variations. The last variation, No. 30, is a combination of two folk tunes and is called "Quodlibet", meaning "what you wish" in Latin.

After Variation No. 30, the same aria that announces the work is repeated, quietly ending the Goldberg Variations.

## GOLDBERG VARIATIONS J.S. BACH

### Aria: Sarabande

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Two-part Invention       | 16. French Overture          |
| 2. Italian Trio Sonata      | 17. Duet for Two Keyboards   |
| 3. Canon at the Unison      | 18. Canon at the Sixth       |
| 4. Italian Corrente         | 19. Pastorale                |
| 5. Duet for Two Keyboards   | 20. Duet for Two Keyboards   |
| 6. Canon at the Second      | 21. Canon at the Seventh     |
| 7. French Gigue             | 22. Ricercar                 |
| 8. Duet for Two Keyboards   | 23. Duet for Three Keyboards |
| 9. Canon at the Third       | 24. Canon at the Eighth      |
| 10. Fughetta                | 25. Tragic Chromatic Aria    |
| 11. Duet for Two Keyboards  | 26. Duet for Two Keyboards   |
| 12. Canon at the Fourth     | 27. Canon at the Ninth       |
| 13. Italian Coloratura Aria | 28. Aria di Bravura          |
| 14. Duet for Two Keyboards  | 29. Toccata                  |
| 15. Canon at the Fifth      | 30. Quodlibet                |
|                             | Aria da Capo                 |