

**200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert Notes**  
**August 1, 2009 – 7pm, Emmitsburg, Maryland**

Good Evening – My name is Sister Alice Ann O’Neill. I am a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati. Welcome to our concert!

Most of us have come to know Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton as wife, mother, widow, convert, and founder. Tonight, as part of our 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, we will come to know her as pianist, music lover and teacher. The selections in tonight’s concert represent aspects of Elizabeth’s life, and most are pieces she very likely heard while living in New York between 1789 and 1808. As we listen to the music and the quotes from Elizabeth’s writings, we can reflect and learn about the Music in the Life of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton. Listen and imagine!

#1- Hail Columbia.....P. Phile (1734-1793)  
Lyrics by J. Hopkinson (1770-1842)

George Washington’s 1789 inauguration on the steps of Federal Hall in New York City, then our capital, included the premier of a song composed by Philip Phile with words by lawyer, Joseph Hopkinson, son of Francis Hopkinson who signed the Declaration of Independence. Titled “Hail Columbia – The President’s March,” it was originally performed by a Mr. Fox. “Hail Columbia” was thereafter unofficially recognized as our national anthem, until 1931 when the Star Spangled Banner was given this designation. Today, Hail Columbia is played when the Vice-President of the United States, in a ceremonial capacity, enters an event.

Young Betty Bayley was 15 years old and living in her father’s home very near Federal Hall at the time of the inauguration. Everyone in New York was no doubt there to witness this historic event and to celebrate the beginning of the new America. Did Betty Bayley hear Mr. Fox sing the premier of this song? She certainly knew the song well since once she described her young son, Billy, as “[able to sing] **Hail Columbia as well as I can.**” (I: 111) A few years later, upon her arrival at Leghorn, Italy, she wrote:

**“my poor William being ill...must go with his Baggage to the Lazzaretto – at this moment the band of music that welcomes strangers came under our cabin windows and played Hail Columbia – and all those little tunes that set the darlings singing and dancing at Home.” (I: 251)<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> *Elizabeth Bayley Seton: Collected Writings*, Regina Bechtle, S.C. and Judith Metz, S.C., eds., Ellin M. Kelly, ms. ed. (New City Press: Hyde Park, New York) vol. 1, 2000, vol. 2, 2002, vol. 3a and 3b, 2006.

#2 – Piano Sonata in A Major, K.113.....D. Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Betty Bayley studied the piano from a very young age. Her father, who supervised most of her education, felt the study of music and French were essential for proper young ladies. Betty loved playing the piano and she practiced many hours by herself, especially when she stayed at her Uncle William's in New Rochelle. Music was the salve for her soul throughout her teenage years. In her words:

**“I have so often shared the cheerfulness of a blazing fire [in the parlour], and the *feeling tones* of my sweet *Piano*. I could not help falling on my knees the moment I entered the dear scene of past happiness and shed tears...Abundantly.” (I: 52)**

This sonata has long been played by younger pianists. Scarlatti composed 555 keyboard pieces in a wide variety of keys. He taught piano to a young Princess Maria Barbara in Lisbon and followed her to Spain when she married in 1729. Scarlatti remained in Madrid through the end of his life as the master musician at court and piano teacher of the Queen's children. This particular sonata has a Spanish character with a courtly demeanor no doubt reflecting Scarlatti's environment and circumstances.

#3 – Sonata for Cello and Piano in E Major.....F. Francoeur (1698-1787)

*Largo*

*Gigue*

Elizabeth Bayley loved to dance. Most of us are aware that among the few personal possessions she kept close to her heart were her dancing shoes with the letter “S” monogrammed over the toes. These shoes are on display in the Seton Shrine Museum. Perhaps these shoes were a gift from William Magee Seton who began courting Elizabeth in 1793 when she was 19. Elizabeth and her Dear Will often attended balls while out in New York society. Most dances in which Elizabeth participated were formal affairs with partners - a man and woman - within a group formation.

François Francoeur was a court composer and violinist for the French Kings Louis the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Francoeur also managed the Paris Opéra between the years 1757-1775. He composed chamber pieces and many operas and ballets. This E Major sonata with Baroque style dances includes a Largo and a Gigue. These dances are similar to what Will and Elizabeth would have enjoyed at their parties. Later in life Elizabeth remembered these Society balls to her daughter Kit:

**“I never found any effect from dancing but the most innocent cheerfulness both in public and private. [S]o much much time lost in it, and my trouble at being unable to say my prayers seeing always my partner instead of my God. [I recall] my vexation at the time it took to prepare dresses for balls...and if you must be [out] in company, I find [dancing] preferable to private chit chat.”**  
(IIIa: 492)

#### #4 – Organ Music

Elizabeth Seton was a mother of three small children, and soon to be a mother again, when a new preacher, John Henry Hobart, arrived at Trinity Episcopal Church in New York City. Hobart was a young minister who renewed Elizabeth's devotion and set her soul on fire with his charismatic preaching style. Over the next few years, Hobart became a trusted spiritual advisor and family friend to the Setons. Elizabeth's enthusiasm for H.H., one of her nicknames for Hobart, was shared by her sister-in-law Rebecca Seton to whom she wrote from her father's hospital on Staten Island:

**“we are 9 miles distant...[it will be] hard indeed for us to meet [at Trinity tomorrow] for my poor [Father] has 100 patients to provide and visit everyday...Give H.H. a *look* and a *sigh* for me, such as you will for yourself. But Mercy is everywhere – and my temple is a large one. [But dearest,] remember to tell me the text [which he recites].”** (I: 162)

Elizabeth's admiration of Henry Hobart's teaching and preaching lasted through her life. She expressed to her friend, Julia Scott, her admiration of Hobart:

**“There are various kinds of attachments in this world... some of esteem for virtues which we can neither approach nor assimilate to our own natures, and some – the unbounded veneration, Affection, Esteem, and tribute of [a] Heart Sincere - [these virtues] H.H. possesses *in full*.”** (I: 201)

#5 – Anima Christi.....G. Valentini (1730-1804)  
Prayer - Pope John XXII (1249-1334)

Elizabeth Seton was drawn to the Sacrament of the Eucharist even while a young protestant. She and Rebecca Seton often attended multiple chapels for services on Communion Sunday. (I: 297) While in the Italian Lazaretto with her Will, Elizabeth shared a Eucharistic experience:

**“Christmas day is began – the day of our dear Redeemers birth  
- Will said, ‘and how I wish we could have the Sacrament.’ Well,  
we must do all we can, and putting a little wine in a glass I said  
different portions of Psalms and Prayers...and we took the cup of  
Thanksgiving, setting aside the sorrow of time, in the views of the  
joys of Eternity.” (I: 273)**

Composed in the medieval period, the *Anima Christi* prayer was passed along generations of Catholics and remained part of the Anglican/Episcopal Book of Common Prayer after the Protestant Reformation. The edition heard in our concert, though in English not Latin, is very similar to the tune Elizabeth knew. *Anima Christi* was one of Elizabeth’s favorite prayers and she copied a version of it into her prayer book, which now resides in the archives of the University of Notre Dame in Indiana:

**“Soul of Jesus, sanctify me; Blood of Jesus, wash me;  
Heart of Jesus, receive me.”**

#6 – Piano Sonata in A Major, K.331.....W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)  
*Andante Grazioso*  
*Alla Turca - Allegretto*

Elizabeth spent many evenings playing the piano with her Beloved Will often for her family and friends. She wrote about her father, Dr. Bayley:

**“in offices of Humanity he never wearied every rising Sun found him already 2 and 3 hours engaged in them – [he never rested] except for the indulgence of an hour by the side of my Piano.”** (IIIa: 21-2)

Elizabeth became an accomplished pianist who taught piano to her daughters, her Seton sisters-in-law, and eventually, the sisters and students at St. Joseph’s Academy in Emmitsburg. Elizabeth once advised Cecilia Seton in a note:

**“am delighted with your musical fancy – "soft remembrances" was quite a favorite with my W[illiam] Magee. [M]ind the E flat – before you begin to play any thing examine every note and make yourself sure of the flats and sharps.”** (I: 442)

Elizabeth’s repertoire would have certainly included compositions by prolific composer and famous pianist, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who died in 1791, when Elizabeth was 17. Mozart’s solo piano pieces were popularly termed ‘parlor pieces’ since most performances occurred in private homes.

#7 – Passacaglia.....H.I.F. von Biber (1644-1704)

Will Seton was a violinist. He travelled to Italy to study on several occasions and to apprentice with business associates of his father. On one of these trips, Will purchased a Stradivarius violin. He loved playing the violin – it was part of his relaxation especially in the evenings for family entertainment. Elizabeth was writing a letter to a friend one evening and remarked:

**“At this moment William is playing [songs] as fast as the violin can sound them in rotation...so you may suppose my thoughts [in your letter] have a great deal of consistence.” (I: 8)**

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber was a composer and violinist who spent most of his musical life in Salzburg, Austria, just north of Italy. This Passacaglia is the last piece in a collection of 16 compositions known as the “Rosary Sonatas.” A passacaglia is a musical form that takes a few bass notes and transforms them into variations. This passacaglia is for solo violin and has four descending step-wise notes as its basis (G-F-Eflat-D) from a German song called Hymn to the Guardian Angel.

#8 – Concerto for Trumpet in D, *Moderato*.....F.X. Richter (1709-1789)

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New York was one of three musical centers in our country including Boston and Philadelphia. As a young married woman, Elizabeth attended theatre, opera performances, and public concerts. Based on the dates in Elizabeth’s journals and researching concert programs from that period at the New York Historical Society, it is certain that Elizabeth Seton attended concerts that included works of Stamitz, Wagenseil, and other composers from the German Mannheim School such as Franz Xaver Richter. Richter was the first leader of the Mannheim composition movement and composed over 70 symphonies. The Mannheim school is credited with the extensive development of the symphony and concerto musical forms. Our trumpet concerto this evening is a fine example of the Mannheim musical style.

#9 – Trio in G Major, Hob. XV: 25.....F.J. Haydn (1732-1809)  
*Andante*  
*Rondo, in the Gipsies' style*

Public concerts through 1890 often included a varied collection of incomplete pieces and performers. The composers in this evening's concert - Scarlatti, Mozart, Richter, and Haydn – were popular and well-recognized at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century both in Europe and in America. Only highly exalted composer's pieces crossed borders or oceans. Franz Joseph Haydn was the head musician for the Austrian royal house of Ésterhazy for more than 30 years and was loved by all of his colleagues who affectionately called him Papa Haydn. In the 1760's, Haydn's prolific compositions of both sacred and secular music spread his fame widely enough for his royal patron to release him for engagements abroad. A contemporary of Haydn once declared of him that "the inexhaustible genius apparent in his masterworks is a source of wonder and admiration from Lisbon to St Petersburg and Moscow, beyond the ocean to the shores of the polar seas." Haydn was one of the first composer/musicians to become internationally famous in his lifetime.

This piano trio was probably written in London, England, when Haydn was in his 60's. It reflects a mature style of composition with a violin part that equals the piano, which had not been the style previously. The final movement of the trio is a Rondo written with sections in a Gypsy Hungarian style.

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Before our last selection, there are a few words of gratitude to share. We are most grateful to Mount St. Mary's University and Seminary, who has been a tremendous support to the Bicentennial Anniversary committee by supplying the audio and video equipment for this weekend and the beautiful piano you have been listening to tonight. We would especially like thank Dr. Andy Rosenfeld, head of the music department at Mount St. Mary's, and any other representatives from the university that are here tonight. Would you please stand so we can express our appreciation.

The Seton Collected Writings (gesture to book display) are such a gift to our community. I used the collected writings to help me research and write the narratives for this evening's concert. These volumes are the result of nearly 2 decades of research and work by Sisters of Charity Regina Bechtle and Judith Metz and their Seton Writings Committee of Sisters Kathleen Flanagan, Vivien Linkhauer and Betty Ann MacNeil, DC. Would all of you please stand so we can express our appreciation. Thank you!

Everyone here this evening, are devoted friends of Elizabeth Ann Seton so I encourage you to purchase these volumes through Vincentian Studies Institute in Chicago or the Basilica bookstore – read and study them, write plays or talks for your parishes or write an article. Use Elizabeth Seton's writings as an evangelization tool.

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#10 – Salve, Regina.....Hermannus Contractus (1013-1054)

When Elizabeth began to live in this beautiful valley as Mother Seton, founder of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, she no longer attended balls, public concerts or operas. But music remained a very important part of her life. She was given a piano, now in the White House, on which her three daughters and many students at St. Joseph studied and performed. Elizabeth heard many, many student recitals at the Academy.

Another important kind of music in Elizabeth's life in this valley was devotional hymns, many dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. From her time in Italy, Elizabeth had a great devotion to Mary, perhaps dating from her visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Montenero. When Elizabeth was confirmed as a Catholic, she added Mary to her name.

At St. Joseph's, devotion to Mary was part of the Sister's everyday life. In one of Elizabeth's talks to the Sisters, she instructed them about Mary:

***“Mary full of Grace! – Mother of Jesus – Mystical Rose of heaven  
- in all simplicity of love and innocence...her life a model for all  
conditions of life, her poverty, humility, purity, love – and sufferings  
- a heart of Mary for all duty – above all in communion –  
Mary[,] the first Sister of Charity on earth.”*** (IIIa: 463)