

# Tureck lives up to legendary status

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By **HILLARY HAUSER**  
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

The greatest living interpreter of Bach came to Santa Barbara to give a lecture and piano master class over the weekend at UCSB, and what emerged was not only an eye-opener to the playing of that great composer, but an insight into the performance of all music.

Rosalyn Tureck, called "the high priestess of Bach" for her specialization and special affinity to that composer, is a marvel. During her Friday night lecture at Lotte Lehmann hall introduced by Bernice Geiringer as part of the Karl Geiringer lecture series, Tureck weaved wit and brilliance with gorgeous demonstrations at piano and harpsichord to show how the correct reading and interpretation of a score can make a difference.

What was fun to hear was her blasting of "Authentic Performance" principles a la Roger Norrington, Christopher Hogwood, et al that dictate that Baroque and Clas-

sical music be played on period instruments. Projecting a slide of a cartoon that showed surgeons standing around an operating table with the caption, "We're the London Consort of surgeons, and we perform authentic operations using period instruments," Tureck said her own extensive research indicated that Bach would never have insisted on his music being performed on period instruments.

"He worked and experimented with all available instrumental sonorities... he transferred all of his own music, and that of other composers, to other instruments and to other forms," Tureck explained. Having opened her lecture by playing Variation 13 from the "Goldberg Variations" on both piano and harpsichord, she asked her listeners, "Which was more dynamic? The Steinway, of course!"

In relation to instruments, the ongoing argument among musicologists as to "composer's intentions" is a divisive "wall that should come down," Tureck said. A

same composition of Bach can be played on harp or violin, viola or piano, harpsichord or guitar.

But where there is not such latitude for individual taste is in the notation, the printing of the written music, Tureck said. Bach's complex polyphonic writing, all those melodic lines that travel every which way, is too often lost by mistakes in editing, she said. Tureck has published her own Bach editions, based on her own scholarly research in Bach archives, to counteract the proliferation of these mistakes.

To illustrate how mistakes are made in the reproduction of Bach's embellishments, she projected slides of two different editions of a same page of Bach's "Italian Concerto." In one, her own edition, an embellishment is indicated as a "slide," and in the other, as a simple scale played more slowly. With both examples illustrated at the keyboard, it was obvious to the ear that the first (correct) way emphasized Bach's intended melody; the

other turned a slow-moving scale into an addition melody of its own.

To illustrate how mistakes are made in the printing of Bach's complex counterpoints, Tureck projected two more slides, also from the "Italian Concerto" — the opening page of the second movement where two melodic lines travel together a third apart. In the first slide (her edition), the note stems for the *legato* singing line are up, while the stems for the bass line are down. One could see and hear in the playing the separations of the two lines, even though the notes are played together.

In the other edition, however, these thirds had been joined by one note stem, indicating that they be played as connected thirds, rather than two melodic lines — a completely different effect than what Bach had in mind. "I always played this with two hands," Tureck said.

Tureck's playing lives up to her legendary status. She is a youthful 81, still giving performances all over the globe, both at the keyboard and as conductor. At both piano and harpsichord her playing on Friday night was hypnotic, done with a concentration reminiscent of how Horowitz contemplated each piano key as he played. However, at the keyboard there emerges from Rosalyn Tureck the deep richness of tone she is so noted for. At the end of her playing, one had to know that Bach would have loved hearing his "Goldberg Variations" played on a modern Steinway like the one onstage at Lotte Lehmann Hall.



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