

Summary

This dissertation is primarily a biography of Eta Harich-Schneider. Why did I write about her? What makes her life more interesting and exciting than some of the other great harpsichordists of the 20th century? Part of the answer can be found in her inquisitive personality and quest for knowledge, which was as much scientific as artistic.

After obtaining a degree in piano, she studied harpsichord in Berlin with Wanda Landowska and conducted extensive research in early music. This research culminated in a book about the art of playing the harpsichord (*Die Kunst des Cembalospiels*, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1939.). After that — because of historical and political circumstances — she left for Japan. She studied the language and was the first European allowed by the Japanese court to research old Japanese music, publishing a book on this subject as well. As the first harpsichordist in Japan, her artistic work exposed the Japanese to the original baroque keyboard instrument and its literature, particularly that of J. S. Bach. In 1977 she was awarded the highest medal of the Japanese court.

Through her life we meet all of the famous musicians of that time, and we can follow how the interest and study of early music spread throughout Europe and then the world; all of this taking place during one of the most interesting and tragic periods of our history.

In this dissertation you will also find an unpublished interview with Harich-Schneider, as well as examples from her recordings on the enclosed CD.