

## Idil Biret, Bach, and Mastery of The Well-Tempered Clavier

Naxos releases Bach keyboard concertos featuring pianist Idil Biret with Turkish soloists and Bilkent Symphony Orchestra. Collection showcases works for one to four keyboards.

*By Dietrich Wolf*

### **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Concertos for 1, 2, 3, and 4 Keyboards**

*Pianos: Idil Biret (1-4), Ayşegül Sarıca (2-4), Hande Dalkılıç (3-4), Erol Erdinç (4)*

*Bilkent Symphony Orchestra*

*Conductors: Güner Aykal (1), Erol Erdinç (3-4)*

Idil Biret was introduced very early to the music of Bach. At the age of three, she started to play by ear the preludes of Bach from The Well-Tempered Clavier, seated next to her mother at their upright piano, and drew his picture in her notebook. In her memoir, Idil's mother, Leman Biret, writes:

"After listening for a while to orchestral music on the radio, Idil would detect the main melody and then play it on the piano with one finger. Afterwards, when she reached the age of four, she would play these on the piano with two hands and with the correct harmony. Bach preludes and fugues from The Well-Tempered Clavier, for example, which even talented musicians took considerable time to study and memorize, were mastered by Idil in only a few days after listening once or twice, after which she would play these without a single wrong note."

Then, at the age of four, her teacher Mithat Fenmen played for Idil, on a 78 rpm record by Edwin Fischer, the Prelude and Fugue in F Minor from The Well-Tempered Clavier Book II. She says that Bach's music has been a part of her life ever since that day. In 1946, at the age of five, she played the D Minor Piano Concerto of Bach with a string quartet at the Ankara Radio, a work that would be a staple of her concert programs from then on.

The remarkable evening began with D Minor Piano Concerto of J.S. Bach. The concerto required, from the very first measure, agile, precise dexterity from the pianist. Idil Biret took the challenge with a ravishing pulse which carried one away. How this artist combines the strict discipline of the score with the capacity to build sovereign forms is exemplary. Energetically, she drove the flanking Allegro movements forward and dwelled on the song-like beauties of the Adagio with concentrated abandon.

—*Dietrich Wolf, Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*