

FAMILY ALBUM  
Norman Dello Joio



DEBRA TOROK AND MARYLÈNE DOSSE, PIANISTS

**COMPLETE WORKS FOR PIANO**

VOLUME 3

## Norman Dello Joio

The distinguished professional musical career of Norman Dello Joio began for him at age fourteen when he became a church organist and choir director of the Star of the Sea Church on City Island, New York. A descendant of Italian church organists, he was born January 24, 1913 in New York. His father was an organist, pianist, singer, and vocal coach. Dello Joio recalls that his father was working with singers from the Metropolitan Opera who used to arrive in their Rolls Royces, and that his childhood was surrounded with music and musicians at home. Dello Joio's father taught him the piano at age four, and in his teens he began studying organ with his godfather, Pietro Yon, organist at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. In 1939, he was accepted as a scholarship student at the Juilliard School, and studied composition with Bernard Wagenaar.

As a graduate student at Juilliard, he arrived at the conclusion that he did not want to spend his life in a church choir loft, as composition began to envelop all of his interest. In 1941, at Tanglewood and Yale, he began studies with Paul Hindemith, the man who profoundly influenced his compositional style. It was Hindemith who told Dello Joio, "Your music is lyrical by nature, don't ever forget that." Dello Joio states that, although he did not completely understand at the time, he now knows what he meant: "Don't sacrifice necessarily to a system, go to yourself, what you hear. If it's valid, and it's good, put it down in your mind. Don't say I have to do this because the system tells me to. No, that's a mistake."

In the latter part of the forties, Dello Joio was considered one of America's leading composers, and by the fifties had gained international recognition. He received numerous awards and grants including the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Award, the Town Hall Composition Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, and a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He won the New York Music Critics' Circle Award in 1948, and again in 1962. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1957 for *Meditations on Ecclesiastes* for string orchestra and an Emmy Award for his music in the television special, *Scenes from the Louvre*. In 1958, CBS featured him in a one-hour television special, "Profile of a Composer."

Dello Joio taught at Sarah Lawrence College, the Mannes College of Music, and was Professor of Music and Dean of the Fine and Applied Arts School of Boston University. From 1959 until 1973, he

highly recommended CDs belong in all piano recording collections.”

Debra Torok first spoke with Norman Dello Joio about this recording project, the first complete recordings of the composer's piano works, in the beginning of May 1997. Their initial meeting had been anticipated by Torok who, through research and performance, saw a need to make the public aware of these pieces. They began working together on interpretation and accuracy of the scores. During this time, Dello Joio continued to compose, giving her a rare glimpse into the composer and his works in progress. New pieces include *Songs Without Words*, premiered on volume one of the recording series, and *Simple Sketches* premiered on this CD. Additionally, a newly published complete edition of his piano works will be released, compiled and edited by Dr. Torok.

In addition to performing and recording, Dr. Torok presents workshops, master classes and lectures, and is currently teaching at Moravian College and Lehigh University. She has also been featured on National Public Radio and PBS.

### **Marylène Dosse**

Identified by Vienna's *Die Zeitung* as a "superior talent" and praised by the *Cincinnati Enquirer* as "an outstanding musician, a thorough delight, an adventure, a discovery," Marylène Dosse is an artist of international stature. She has performed extensively in France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic, England, Switzerland, Greece, Luxembourg, Mexico, South America, Africa and in most major cities in the United States. After a series of recitals at Lincoln Center, Raymond Ericson of the *New York Times* said, "She plays with ease, showing marked concern for color, and rhythmic and melodic finesse." Dosse has also presented a series of concerts and master classes in Japan, and toured China for three weeks, giving concerts that were televised via satellite throughout the nation. She has made numerous live television appearances in Europe and the United States.

Dosse has released over twenty recordings on the Vox and Pantheon labels, performances which have been broadcast over major radio stations worldwide. Included are recordings of the complete piano works of Saint-Saens and Granados. The latter was chosen as best recording by *High Fidelity Magazine*. Her discography also includes rarely heard concertos by Massenet, Saint-Saens, Debussy, Gounod, Lalo, Pierre, Mendelssohn and F.X. Mozart, as well as many solo works of the French repertoire from Chabrier to Poulenc.

## Stage Parodies

*Stage Parodies, a Piano Suite for Young Players*, consists of four works for one piano, four hands. Of this composition Dello Joio writes in his "Note" on the score: "This work, written in the Spring of 1974, was conceived for developing young pianists. Of medium difficulty, each piece is a satiric portrait of various theatrical types." The set begins with *The Actor* and is followed by *The Writer*. *The Singer* starts boisterous and *fortissimo* with the accompaniment figures resembling those in *Ich Grolle Nicht* from Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. The final piece, *The Dancer*, with its lively interaction between the two pianists, builds in momentum to its climactic *glissando* ending.

## Suite for the Young

The *Suite for the Young* has been delighting piano students and their teachers since it was published in 1964. Written for solo piano, it consists of ten short and simple descriptive pieces for the young pianist. Each title serves the purpose the composer intended: to simply help the student interpret each work without having to depend on a teacher's assistance. Pedagogical dimensions include legato, staccato, balance, rhythmic patterns, echo effects, articulation, ostinato, and jazzy syncopations. The final piece, *Chorale Chant*, is a setting of the *Lord's Prayer*. Directions in the score tell the player: "To discover how the words inspired the composer, write or sing them to the music."

## Simple Sketches

*Simple Sketches* for solo piano is the most recent piano composition of Norman Dello Joio. Begun in the fall of 1999 (it was in progress at the time of the interview with the composer which follows these program notes) it was published in 2001. When Dello Joio first conceived the work, he thought it may have been appropriate for children, but as he began to develop the three pieces in the set, it became more apparent that they "could maybe be played by a talented youngster." The set of pieces, dedicated "to my Barbara," consists of thematic material that the composer also intended to use for various string groups.

idea of writing for children because I began to see the problems of a little hand, which I had never encountered before. I started making a bit more advanced music for them and, to my great surprise, the publishers of these works were delighted because there seemed to be a great market for this, which had never occurred to me from the point of view of sales. But, they're still selling an enormous amount of music for children. It's something I've had no difficulty writing. It was so simple and I enjoyed it, and they did too.

*How do you feel about communicating with the young?*

Well, really the only young people were my children. In terms of young people, I've always dealt with college age because of the various trips I would make for interviews and visitations to various colleges. But that was very different from the children's music.

*This CD is called Family Album. Was the idea that members of a family could listen to, or sit at one piano, to play some of this music? Was this concept behind what you were doing?*

Well, yes. It was very cute because I would get fan letters from children. One very amusing letter from a little girl stands out in my mind. I had written a jazzy little piece and she wrote, "I play this music with my grandmother, and I like it but she doesn't." That is the kind of wonderful attitude they have. I can't think off-hand of how many pieces I did, but I wrote a good quantity of work for children. Now that they're all grown up, I stopped doing it for children.

*What about your grandchildren? How old are they now?*

Two of my youngest son's, the girl is about twelve and the boy is about ten. They are taking music in school. She plays the clarinet. She tried playing for me during a visit, and I was as encouraging as I could be. The boy has no interest in music at all. Now my other son has a daughter about three. Her father is a musician, and she shows an aptitude for music, but he's the one in charge.

*Is there anything you would want to say just generally to people listening to this CD?*

Well, often children don't like their teachers because many of them, from the children's point of view, are very dull. They keep talking to them about things that they are very disinterested in. I just titled the pieces so that when they are playing them, they would have that title in mind and that would be enough to see a relationship between the title and the music they were playing. And that was enough. I always left it up to the children. I also never forced my children to take music. If that's

professional baseball player was something that I just thought about. Within myself I knew that I wouldn't make the big time.

Another thing was that I was constantly around churches and priests. I had a very wealthy "Prince of the Church" who took an interest in me and wanted me to write for the church. He said that he would send me to Rome to become a priest, but he would expect me to be writing music for the church all of the time. That was held out to me as a way of life. I remember thinking that over with my father. I was getting to be about sixteen or seventeen, and I remember saying to the monsignor that I appreciated his offer to do this but I was afraid the vows I would have to take would not be something I could follow because I was really starting to like girls. So those were the only things, and I fell back on the inevitable music.

*And you're happy about it?*

Content, I would say. Happy? Sometimes not, sometimes I am. So, now at my advanced age I'm still writing and had a work for orchestra premiered only last year. It was an unusual work because it featured the orchestral players in the orchestra itself. It was a work where a member from each of the sections would come forward and play part of the work and then go back and be part of the orchestra, then another, and so on. I wrote a work in which the orchestral player would come out front and play because very often it seems the conductor monopolizes all of the applause. I say he wouldn't be anywhere without those people, and they should be given some credit. You never read about individual players in an orchestra, their views, or anything else, very rarely. So that was something I always wanted to do. It's going to be published soon.

**For an audio excerpt of this interview visit the Official Norman Dello Joio Web Site at <http://www.dellojoio.com>**

Yamaha CFIIIS Concert Grand Pianos  
*Family Album, Five Images, Christmas Music, Suite  
for the Young, Simple Sketches and Lyric Pieces for  
the Young* are published by Edward B. Marks Music.  
*Stage Parodies* is published by Associated Music.  
*Aria and Toccata* is published by Carl Fischer.

Front Cover: Norman Dello Joio with children  
Norman II and Victoria  
Photographs: Don Hunstein

Additional thanks to: Susan Mamer at Yamaha  
Artist Services, New York; Brenda Rundle and  
Francine Torok-Williams



Debra Torok and Marylène Dosse

TROY468

**Albany**  
RECORDS

ALBANY RECORDS U.S.  
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207  
TEL: 518.436.8814 FAX: 518.436.0643 WWW.ALBANYRECORDS.COM  
ALBANY RECORDS U.K.  
BOX 12, WARTON, CARNFORTH, LANCASHIRE LA5 9PD  
TEL: 01524 735873 FAX: 01524 736448

WARNING: COPYRIGHT SUBSISTS IN ALL RECORDINGS ISSUED UNDER THIS LABEL.

© 2001 DEBRA TOROK  
MADE IN THE USA

DDD

COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO