

**Harpsichord recital by Michele Benuzzi,**  
sponsored by Istituto Italiano di Cultura; St Patrick's  
Church, Sydney; 20/01/09.

This recital was announced at only a few days notice, but the EMA's email bulletin obviously did its job. Benuzzi is a relatively young practitioner, and already winning acclaim. His Sydney program comprised various sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, and one each by Pier Domenico Paradies, and Ferdinando Turini (1749-1812). Considering the heavy Italian influence - the performer, the composers, and the sponsor - I was surprised that Carey Beebe managed to sneak a French harpsichord across the border for the event.

One's impression is that Benuzzi is melodically focused and has a gift for Italian interpretation. Perhaps, lately, we have been subjected to the aggressive approach to Italian Baroque music, as promoted by Biondi, and visits by the ensemble, Il Giardino Armonico. By comparison, Benuzzi has a noticeably genteel attitude. His most lively presentation was the concluding Scarlatti Sonata in Re Maggiore, K436, but a completely unruffled visual appearance, and smooth, even finger-work tended to disguise the true aural intensity.

Noticeably pleasing was the consistency of Benuzzi's cascading phrases in the Scarlatti K46; his left and right hand integration in the K105; and the persistence with which he identified the theme in K262. This identification was also paramount in the Turini Sonata IV in Sol Minore (1772), which possessed a comfortable momentum in the Presto, and subtlety of character in the Allegretto affettuoso.

Benuzzi's opening work, Sonata IX in Fa Maggiore by Paradies, was *delightfully melodic and appealing*, His thoughtful interpretation accentuated the rippling and rumbling, yet maintained a perfect even-handedness, which well-served to introduce the performer's comfortable, stylistic appeal.