

# ALLISON NELSON and HARRY NEAL

## Duo-Pianists

NELSON and NEAL, or Mr. and Mrs. Harry Neal, are unique among the duo-pianists of the day. Both have concertized extensively as soloists and the joining of their talents provides a singularly satisfying experience.

Allison Nelson, a former leading child prodigy of Australia, attracted the attention of Philadelphia Orchestra conductor Eugene Ormandy while he was fulfilling guest-conducting engagements in Sydney. Mr. Ormandy was so impressed with her talent that he arranged for a scholarship at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute, where she studied with Rudolf Serkin. Mr. Ormandy twice conducted the Sydney Symphony with Allison Nelson as soloist, in 1944. She had played in every major city and with every orchestra in Australia, and has since soloed twice with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Versatile Harry Lee Neal is also author, lecturer, and internationally known radio-TV commentator and producer, both here on CBS and NBC, and in Australia on ABC. Winning a world coveted award, he studied under the renowned Mme. Vengerova at the Curtis Institute. There he met and married Allison Nelson.

Mr. and Mrs. Neal presented an unprecedented year and a half television series over CBS-WCAU from Philadelphia, which was the only known TV program devoted entirely to classical music. Recently, they amassed the staggering total of 153 performances for a year's tour. In Australia they together completed over 100 broadcasts for the ABC network including a survey of two-piano literature from Scarlatti and Bach to the present day.

They are a thoroughly remarkable couple of broad accomplishments. Amazingly enough, this unique piano-duo not only performs with magnificent skill, but they find time to drive a specially-built truck, transporting their personally selected and matched Baldwin grand pianos.



# PROGRAM

## I FUGUE IN G MINOR (THE LITTLE) *J.S.Bach* (1685-1750)

Bach wrote two famous organ fugues in G minor which are known as "The Great" and "The Little." This fugue is called "The Little," but the title refers to its length, and not to its musical qualities. It is a masterpiece of contrapuntal writing. The work adapts itself well to two pianos, for they most easily duplicate the massive doublings of the organ.

## II ANDANTE AND VARIATIONS *Robert Schumann* (1810-1856)

The *Andante and Variations for Two Pianos* were written in 1848 and are said to have been first played by Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann. A charming work of simple and flowing melodies, it creates a great feeling of romantic freedom and spontaneity. Written in the strict style of a theme followed by variations, it nevertheless sounds at times like a freely improvised fantasy.

## III SONATA ----- *Francis Poulenc* (1899- )

*Prelude*

*Rustique*

*Final*

Written first in 1918 as a piano duet, this sonata was revised by Poulenc in 1939 so that it might be played on two pianos. This is actually a "capsule" sonata, consisting of three tiny and colorful movements. The vigorous and energetic *Prelude* is beautifully contrasted by the plaintive and wistful second movement, called *Rustique*. The last movement is quite fast and combines, with its own delightful themes, the musical ideas of the two previous movements.

## IV THREE ETUDES ----- *Victor Babin* (1908- )

These dazzling *Etudes* represent an important contribution to contemporary two-piano literature. Chosen from a set of six etudes by Victor Babin, these three display a stunning command of two-piano writing. The first etude is created around an idea of frightening metronomic rigidity. The second consists entirely of a haunting and almost unearthly melody. The final etude is a powerful virtuosic piece which features a melody sounding like a diabolical march.

INTERMISSION

V. FIVE HUNGARIAN DANCES    *Johannes Brahms* (1833-1897)

Few people realize that the *Hungarian Dances* of Brahms' were written originally as a piano duet, for today they are almost never heard as Brahms first wrote them. The *Book I* of the Dances consists of these five pieces, which are known and loved the world over. Brahms loved to walk through the gypsy camps at night and listen to their wild music and watch their firelight dancing. The magic of those scenes was captured for us, forever with the five Hungarian Dances.

VI SATURDAY NIGHT WALTZ } ----- *Aaron Copland* (1900- )  
HOEDOWN }

The *Saturday Night Waltz* and *Hoedown* are excerpts from Copland's ballet, "Rodeo." The subject of this western ballet is the "problem that has confronted all American women from the earliest times: how to get a suitable man." *Saturday Night Waltz* is just what the title implies, and the *Hoedown* has all the fun of an old-time square dance.

VII VARIATIONS ON YANKEE DOODLE.... *Mario Braggiotti*  
(1905- )

in the manner of

*Bach*

*Beethoven*

*Chopin*

*Debussy*

*Gershwin*

The theme of these variations is the familiar tune, *Yankee Doodle*. The variations themselves are simply a set of five individual pieces written in the styles of various well known composers, as they might have used the basic material of *Yankee Doodle*. The final effect wavers between completely serious and irresistibly amusing. The layman will be captivated by the droll settings of his familiar little melody, and the musician will find it hard to suppress a chuckle over Braggiotti's adroit handling of the various styles.

Nelson and Neal's tour of the Southeastern States is a presentation of and under the direction of the Alkahest Celebrity Bureau, 1222 Peachtree Street, N. E., Atlanta 5, Georgia.

All local concert committees ask for the same kind of program.

They want a program which is rewarding to the musically erudite, and which is still delightful and familiar enough to make a big hit with the musically inexperienced portion of their audience.

We believe this program conforms to the above demands. Parts of the concert can be classified as "fun", yet it is a program of the highest musical standards.

We invite your comparison of ALLISON NELSON and HARRY NEAL'S concert with that of any other duo piano team you may have heard in the past. It is our hope and thought that the comparison will be favorable to these young artists.

Sincerely,

ALKAHEST CELEBRITY BUREAU

Atlanta, Georgia