

LBS 23rd BACHFEST "Around and about the St. Matthew Passion"

31 October – 8 November Programme on www.bachlive.co.uk

New Inspiration, New Music, New Talent, New Experience...and bargain-priced tickets



Sir David Tang, Bach Club 2 Nov

Last autumn we began a series entitled "About the St. Matthew Passion", a contextual survey of the work linked to a performance of Bach's early version¹, which we gave last March using the edition prepared for Bärenreiter by Professor Andreas Glöckner². We provided a 'preface' to it in our collaboration with the RCO London Organ Forum last November led by John

Butt and Robert Quinney entitled 'Hearing Bach's Voice: Organ, Chorale and Passion' that showed the different genres Bach used were not 'in isolation' but worked together. So far it has all been a revelatory experience. What is to come promises much as well. In November we shall complete our yearlong project inspired by the St. Matthew by moving on to the work's 19th century revival here, assessing its place in the 20th and 21st centuries and on going influence today. It is a fascinating journey and with the artists and personalities assembled as our 'tour guides', how can you possibly miss! The JSB Restored Study Day, the Bach Club and Bach Singers Prize all have the St. Matthew as their inspiration. Add to that John Scott's organ recital and our participation in CPE Bach's 300th anniversary celebrations³ on Bach's birthday in 2014 - What a feast!

New Music at the Bach Club on 2 November... inspired by Bach's example

Readers can be forgiven for thinking that 18th century Leipzigers spent most of their time in church; they certainly packed them on Sundays and Holy Days, but there was much more going on in the city. Leipzig was a hub for German publishing and translation, for radical thinking and festering revolutionary tendencies⁴. From 1723 to his death in 1750 Bach was part of it. Our Intern Ruth Mariner writing on the Bach Club WebPage tells us:

"Little Paris' was how Leipzig in the economic boom of the early 18th century was known. Coffee houses sprang up forming new social arenas; new fashions and social conventions were formulated, and, with the shift in perspective, a new and exciting platform for the arts was made, meaning NEW MUSIC."

Immersed in this environment, Bach's programmes for the weekly concerts with the students' musical society at Zimmermann's Coffee House⁵ contained new music⁶. For Bach these concerts were welcome relief from the constraints of the church, a new composing and performing opportunity, and an outlet for ideas, debate and controversy no doubt for everyone else. The LBS Bach Club follows in these footsteps to provide a similar hub for young people today.



Robert Peate

It is the chorale in Part 2 of the St. Matthew Passion that has inspired Robert Peate's new work "Wie wunderbarlich...". An imaginative and well-crafted piece, two of the composer's trademarks, and an LBS Commission this chamber work is scored for counter tenor, oboe, violin, viola, cello and harpsichord and safely entrusted for its world première at The Bach Club (2 Nov)

to Steinitz Bach Players and new Chinese counter tenor Meili Li.

SARAH POWER (Ireland) 2010 Bach Prize Winner and an "Emerging Artist" at Scottish Opera from 2014

"Winning the Bach Singers Prize has opened many doors for me in the world of baroque music. I have been asked to perform the music of J.S. Bach with prestigious organisations such as the RTE National Symphony Orchestra, the Bournemouth Bach Choir, the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme and the Leith Hill Musical Festival. The prize money enabled me to pay for coaching with top coaches on baroque repertoire."



Who will be the next Bach Prize winner? The 2013 competition goes public on 4th and 8th November in Handel's Parish Church of St. George's Hanover Square, complete with an absorbing Master Class given by Peter Harvey called "What makes singing Bach different?" We shall surely find out!



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¹ UK 'live' première, 15 March 2013 in St. John's Smith Square

² Of the Research Institute, Leipzig Bach-Archiv. Edition published 2004-6

³ CPE Bach, born 8 March 1714 at Weimar to Maria Barbara

⁴ To burst forth in 19th century...and also in 1989!

⁵ 1729-1741

⁶ Including the secular *Coffee Cantata* BWV 211 and "Pheobus & Pan" BWV 201



John Scott
Opening Bachfest on
Reformationsfest (31 Oct)

Clavierübung means keyboard practice⁷. Bach assigned the title 'Clavierübung' to four sets of keyboard pieces' with the third devoted to organ works and published at Leipzig in 1739. This is a very substantial collection and with it we mark the beginning of what became the final decade in Bach's life, a decade when he took stock of his vast corpus

of works and assembled some for publication, a task he set about with meticulous care. Flanked by the Prelude and Fugue in E flat BWV 552, *Clavierübung III* includes chorale settings of the German 'Missa', and the Catechism (two each for The Ten Commandments, The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Penitence and Communion) plus four duets. The exact purpose or occasion that inspired this assembly is unclear, except perhaps an eye to posterity, the education of the next generation and this 'well-regulated church music' he felt it was his purpose to provide.

An organ recitalist of international standing, John Scott is a former Director of Music at St. Paul's Cathedral and is now in post at St. Thomas' Church on Fifth Avenue, in New York City. He appears regularly at Leipzig, and John's performance on the new Richards, Fowkes organ at St. George's Hanover Square is an eagerly awaited treat for us all.

The recital is given in partnership between LBS and St. George's Hanover Square.

The Orgelbüchlein Project

The Orgelbüchlein Project is a major international composition project to complete the unfinished portion of J S Bach's collection known as *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book). The project has been conceived by the organist William Whitehead. The task for composers is this: if Bach were alive today, how might he elaborate on a well-known melody? Or to put it another way: how might we recast the *Affekts* and techniques seen in Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* preludes in contemporary terms? Using a large range of today's musical languages, composers will respond in their own fashion to this challenge. The eventual goal is publication and recording of the 'complete' *Orgelbüchlein*, a modern act of homage to Bach, containing 118 new pieces, covering the kaleidoscope of styles at the start of the 21st century, from beginner's level to recital standard.

RCO Medal to Peter Hurford, March 2013

Patricia Hurford's moving acceptance speech

It is sad that Peter is unable to be here to receive his medal in person; but he is comfortable and calm in a Home that is able to look after him properly. There are two things that I would like to say on his behalf, especially to all of you who have just received your ARCO or FRCO. He would want to congratulate you most warmly, and would be delighted that your musicianship and hard work have brought you thus far on the complex instrument that was foremost in his life and work. Secondly, he would want to say "Thank You" for the honour of being awarded the medal by his colleagues, and how pleased he is to be in company with John Butt and Mark Venning,.



Peter Hurford

To these two points I want to add one of my own. You will all have become such proficient organists for a variety of good reasons. To these I am going to add a further reason that you may not know about: Music, and organ playing in particular, are extremely good for your health, especially in later stages of life. Peter had a minor stroke when he was 67, and could not even lift his

left hand onto the keyboard unaided immediately after it. The physiotherapist who came to treat him at our home said, 'There is no exercise that I can give you that will help you nearly as much as playing the organ'. Peter was giving concerts again within 7 months of his stroke. The blind French organist Jean Langlais recovered even faster, and gave a recital just 3 months after his stroke.

Peter was diagnosed with Alzheimers disease - already quite advanced - early in 2008, but his playing was still superb. He gave his last public performance in 2009. By the end of 2011 his illness was much worse and there were all sorts of ordinary things he could no longer do; but he could still play Bach. For 18 months of the last two years Peter and I have been to weekly gatherings organised by the Alzheimer's Society called *Singing for the Brain*. Everybody there joined in with the singing, including some people who could no longer talk, yet they could sing words set to music. Thus music, and organ playing in particular, can make all sorts of otherwise unattainable things possible. So if you ever have a difficult or dreary practice session, as you come down from the organ loft you could mutter to yourself, 'Well, at least it did my brain some good'!

Given on 9 March at Southwark Cathedral, 2013 RCO Awards. Reproduced by kind permission of Patricia Hurford, and the RCO. First published in RCO News, June 2013

⁷ See also Clavierübung I, II & IV Leipzig 1726-1741

Yo Tomita reviews the 2013 series

Bachfest Leipzig 2013 took place from 14 to 23 June. The theme of this year was *'Vita Christi'* (the life of Christ), which had an intriguing effect in the festival experience. The highlight was to listen to a full liturgical cycle of oratorios Bach composed for Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension Day. It was widely felt as a special treat that one can reflect on what Bach achieved compositionally by hearing them being performed by some of the finest musicians of our time in the venue where Bach himself worked as Thomaskantor. Knowing that behind these masterpieces were Bach's artistic choices to depict the life of Christ, various issues that must have influenced Bach to conceive his works—historical, theological, dramaturgical and compositional—were perceived more persuasively than ever, which somehow seemed all marvellously interconnected. There was indeed a prevailing sense of an unbroken chain of Christian tradition throughout the ten-day festival.

It was a distinct feature this year that the above-mentioned concerts were staged by English musicians: Trevor Pinnock with the Tenebrae Choir and the Gewandhausorchester kicked off with the Christmas Oratorio on the 3rd day, and John Eliot Gardiner with the Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists took the rest in two concerts; St John Passion on the 7th day, and the Easter and Ascension Oratorios on the 9th day of the festival. A great marriage of imaginative structuring and technical security, both conductors admirably succeeded in recreating the power of Bach's persuasive musical language.

The diversity of offerings in Bachfest 2013 was as impressive as ever. Among the total of 115 events, some of the most memorable were the local talents. The first slot for the late-night concert was taken by three professors at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig, Robert Ehrlich (recorder), Susanne Scholz (violin) and Nicholas Parle (harpsichord) who enchanted the audience with their lively, flexible and inspirational ensemble, performing the sonatas by Hotteterre (op.3, no.4), Handel (HWV 377), Corelli (op.5, nos. 7 and 4), Telemann (TWV 42: a1) and Bach (BWV 1021). Another professor of violin at Leipzig, Carolin Widmann, appeared at lunchtime on the 3rd day. Starting powerfully with the solo sonatas by Bartók (SZ 117) and Ysaÿe (op.27, no.2) that respectively have reference to Bach's solos (BWV 1001) and (BWV 1006), her sparkling energy reached its climax with Bach's D-minor Partita (BWV 1004).

Yet the most refreshing and heart-warming came on the 4th day, a remarkable solo recital by Ditta Rohmann (pictured), the 2nd-prize winner of the Leipzig Bach Competition 2012. Performing the Cello Suite No.1 (BWV 1007), Benjamin Britten's Suite No.3 (which has reference to



BWV 1007), and Cello Suite No.4 (BWV 1010), she amply demonstrated her talent in her deeply internalised, colourful and resourceful performance, making the most of this opportunity. We will certainly hear her more often in the future. Next year's Bachfest Leipzig takes place from 13 - 22 June 2014 with the theme *'The True Art'*, commemorating the 300th anniversary of C.P.E Bach.

Prof. Dr. Yo Tomita is Professor of Musicology at Queen's University, Belfast, Senior Fellow at the Leipzig Bach-Archiv; Member of the Advisory Council of Bach Network UK, writer and researcher on Bach.

CPE Bach:

Why he is important: A brief entrée to his 300th



CPE Bach

"He is the Father. We are the children"
(Mozart on CPE Bach)

It cannot have been easy being Bach's son can it?...but it's all in the genes! Carl Philipp Emanuel, the composer's second son and born to Maria Barbara on 8 March 1714 at Weimar, was held in the highest regard and made his own indelible mark on the musical landscape, especially in keyboard repertoire and technique. His formidable keyboard skills earned him a fine reputation throughout Europe. His famous treatise⁸ *"An Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments"* (Versuch über die wahre Art des Clavier zu spielen) and list of influential keyboard compositions as long as your arm served to confirm Emanuel's place at the forefront of music on the Continent. CPE's 300th is in 2014.

Solid education and golden opportunities

CPE Bach's musical education was given almost entirely under the tutelage of his Father. The young Bach entered Leipzig's Thomasschule at the age of ten and he was a member of the Thomaner, becoming steeped in the city's traditions and prosperous environment from a very early age. To ensure his social status a University education beckoned and Emanuel studied Jurisprudence⁹ at Leipzig, then Law at Frankfurt-am-Oder, gaining his degree in 1738 at the age of 24. Returning to music, he was then taken into the employ of Crown Prince Frederick¹⁰ at Berlin, becoming immersed in the rich cultural life of the city and enhancing his standing as a keyboard player.

Later in 1768, established and respected, Emanuel succeeded his Godfather, Telemann, as Director of Music at Hamburg with opportunities to add choral works to his composition folio. He died in the city on 14 December 1788 and is buried at the Michaeliskirche. www.cpebach.org

2014 is going to be a magnificent CPE revelation! More will be published in March Bach Notes. Join us also at St. John's Smith Square on 21 March next, to celebrate the Bachs: Father and Son. MS

⁸ Written by CPE when employed at Berlin (1738-1768)

⁹ Study and Theory of Law

¹⁰ Later Frederick the Great (1740)



Prof. Christoph Wolff, Director of the Bach-Archiv, to be succeeded on 1 January 2014 by Dr. Peter Wollny

Over fifty delegates assembled in hot, sunny Warsaw for what promised to be a totally absorbing series of Papers, Discussions and Concerts at Bach Network's *Sixth J S Bach Dialogue Meeting* (3-7 July) around the subject *Bach Looking East*. It turned out to be

much more than that; a welcome *restatement* that there is no room for working in the box in modern Bach Studies. The Bach community is global; the interest is worldwide, not merely European, and our responsibility even more now is to disseminate widely what we know and what is discovered, ultimately to enrich audiences with better-informed and therefore better-prepared performances of the composer's music.

Academic assemblies can be spectacularly tedious affairs, but in Warsaw here instead was an eclectic and congenial gathering of global Bach specialists that included a team from the pre-eminent Leipzig Bach-Archiv led by Christoph Wolff (*pictured*) who brought us the latest news in their on going research programme, and one from 'down under' representing the Universities of Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide and Sydney who each delivered papers about the Australian Reception of the St. Matthew Passion (1875-1950) - fabulous stuff.

Presented by BNUK in association with the Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw and the Fryderyk Chopin Institute Warsaw led by Drs. Szymon Paczkowski, Yo Tomita and Ruth Tatlow, the daily dialogue sessions were complemented by some delicious evening live music: Chopin and Bach played by Nelson Goerner in the Great Assembly Room, the Royal Castle (*pictured*) and a substantial Bach/Zelenka concert given at the University by Collegium 1704 Prague¹¹. Papers reflecting the presiding theme were interspersed with a Young Scholars' Forum and Burning Issues sessions. Coffee, tea and luncheon all arrived on time, even the projector equipment behaved well - at least most of the time. If Bach Academics were ever perceived at large to be dull, then the Gala Dinner (champagne reception, four courses, two wines, coffee) that ended our Dialogue would have consigned that completely to history! So glad to meet up with Peter Smaill, with Prof. Michael Marissen (Swarthmore Coll, US) and

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Prof. Daniel Melamed (Indiana Univ), whose books grace our LBS shelves, and the elegant Prof. Tatiana Shabelina (St. Petersburg). You will meet two more at the LBS Bachfest as we welcome Drs. Katharine Pardee (Oxford) and Bettina Varwig (King's Lond) to our Study Day. You won't want to miss out on that.. nor the next Dialogue Meeting planned for 2015. **Margaret Steinitz**

www.bachnetwork.co.uk

¹¹ including Cantatas BWV 4, 56 and 138

