

BACH NOTES

The Journal of the London Bach Society



Autumn 2019

LBS Bachfest "Ways to Bach"

Part 1 1-7 November 2019

Featuring

Bach Club's 10th Birthday with Art of Moog
Victoria & Albert's 200th: The Bach Connection with Rautio Piano Trio
Steinitz Bach Players Family Concert Rodolfo Richter & Carole Cerasi In Recital
Guest Emerging Artist, organist Ben Bloor



Annabel Knight Robin Bigwood Martin Perkins Steven Devine
Photo Credit Robert Piwko



Jane Gordon Victoria Simonsen Jan Rautio



Rodolfo Richter



Carole Cerasi



Ben Bloor

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LBS Bachfest is supported by the Foyle Foundation and British-German Association (BGA)
www.bachlive.co.uk



Backfest Preview

"Ways to Bach"

Bargain tickets too!

When and how did you first hear a piece of music by Bach? What was your initial reaction? Did you like it? Want to hear more? Never hear it again? (What put you off!) Bach's music is actually very central in our lives. We are almost bound to come across it whether we realise he wrote *'that special tune, you know the one...'* or not. Weddings, funerals and all occasions in between often mean turning to Bach, even today...from the majestic organ works to the beauty, sweetness and delicacy of his chamber music. However, there are numerous "Ways to Bach", different approaches and kinds of event that direct our travels towards the Master, a living cornucopia of experience, as our series theme suggests and shows.

The Bach Club's 10th (1 Nov)

These Club concerts are inspired by Bach's Friday night specials with his students that took place in Zimmermann's Coffee House at No 14 Katharinenstrasse, Leipzig. They were the forerunners of the modern public concert we enjoy today and reflected the fashion, taste and style of the 18th century coffee-house culture. Bach took great care over the programming and created a platform for his pupils and others to play new music including his own, revisit existing compositions, engage visiting musicians, get people talking.

Our 21st century version has been created in the same spirit and considerable ground has been covered over ten years, with the central purpose to introduce young people to Bach. Many who have joined us have never been anywhere near a classical music concert, let alone seen a violin in the flesh before...but they come. The concerts have always been very well-attended; tickets are free for 18-30s and the Club concerts take place in the informal surroundings of Voces8 Centre (formerly Gresham Centre) where we are warmly welcomed by Centre Director Jan Kerilis. We also know that our use of the venue enables Jan to add another East London school to her list to attend the various educational events she stages. Steinitz Bach Players, James Rhodes, Rodolfo Richter and James Johnstone, Satoko Doi-Luck and Mirjam-Luise Münzel, commissioned composer Robert Peate, students from the London Conservatoires, Musicians Company Yeomen Laura Snowden and the Magnard Ensemble have all appeared...and this year for the Club's 10th birthday we have a special, **Art of Moog** to play Bach on synthesizers. The group's director Robin Bigwood writes: *"In the 'day job' Art of Moog's musicians can be found playing with the very best period instrument and modern orchestras. But tonight, they swap harpsichord, organ, recorder and flute for cutting-edge synthesizers, samplers and vocoders, to cast new light on works by the great J S Bach in unlocked electronic arrangements."* We can promise a new and beautiful listening experience...so make a date to join us.

All are welcome.



Victoria & Albert's 200th : The Bach Connection

(4 Nov)

This famous photograph of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert is dated 1854, the year when Bach's St Matthew Passion was given its English première on 6 April in the Hanover Square

Rooms directed by British composer, conductor, educator and administrator William Sterndale Bennett¹. Both the Queen and the Prince were deeply interested in and moved by Music and the Arts; they played the piano together, brought up their children to sing chorales and motets together and hosted visits by their musical friends like the German Romantic composer Felix Mendelssohn², who gave recitals in their honour. Prince Albert, composer of a *Te Deum* and organist, introduced the Queen to the music of Handel and his two volumes of compositions held in the Royal Collection at Windsor are a testament to his love of Lieder and chorales, his Lutheran upbringing clearly evident. These two volumes reminded me of the volumes compiled by Bach for his second wife Anna Magdalena.

On his marriage to Queen Victoria, the multi-gifted Prince Albert brought with him traditions that defined his life. He taught us how to display public Art in Exhibitions so that the people could view the nation's treasures and was the architect of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Add to that his significant supporting role in the revival of Bach's music in 19th century Britain and we have an intriguing and engaging story to tell,



Prince Albert,
Prince Consort

complemented by some well-documented illustrations, and fabulous chamber music of the period to take your breath away. This presentation of music and words will be preceded by an organ recital in tribute to Bach's great German devotee Mendelssohn given by our organist Emerging Artist, **Ben Bloor** (London Oratory). As part of the Victoria and Albert 200th celebrations **London Bach Society** and **British-German Association** are coming together with our Narrators **Peter Smaill, Barry Sterndale Bennett** and myself, joined by the multi prizewinning **Rautio Piano Trio** to revisit the musical influences of Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha who was born and brought up a few miles from Bach's birthplace of Eisenach, in Lutheran Germany. A Bach evening with a difference certainly, but highlighting an important part of the composer's story. A glass of wine will follow.....how can you miss?

At home or at Zimmermann's (5 Nov)

In **Rodolfo Richter** we not only have an outstanding violinist, but an enquiring mind and extensive knowledge of the Bach repertoire. His incisive direction of the SBP's concerts has become a hallmark. For our Bach Chamber Recital, he will be joined by one of today's foremost harpsichordists on the concert platform and on disc **Carole Cerasi**, in a delicious programme of some Bach Violin Sonatas, a Toccata for solo harpsichord and a Sonata by the 18th century virtuoso violinist in post at Dresden, Joh. Georg Pisendel. These works could easily have been played informally at home or more formally at Zimmermann's. We shall be in Handel's Parish Church... and no doubt he will be looking over us. More hospitality beckons...

¹ 1816-1875, founder of 19th century Bach Society (not LBS)

² 3 Feb 1809-4 Nov 1847

Bachfest Preview...

Bach is cool! 7 Nov at 4pm

A chance invitation from the Director of Music at St George's Hanover Square **Simon Williams** to participate in a Bach project with St George's Church of England Primary School was just too good to miss. Here, the children will learn about "Bach, the Organist", explore the magnificent instrument at the church, pull the stops, see the workings, hear the different sounds....and learn a Bach chorale for performance with Steinitz Bach Players in our first Family Concert. The work sessions will take place in October, with the chorale rehearsed in school in the days prior to the concert day. The children will also rehearse with the SBP and experience what it's like to prepare for a public concert. We are naturally delighted to have such enthusiastic support from the School Head and Deputy Head, and hope that the door to Bach and his music will be opened through this project...another "Way to Bach".

Margaret Steinitz

Bachfest Leipzig 2019 – A report

By Yo Tomita

The Bachfest Leipzig 2019 ran from 14 to 23 June with the theme "Hof-Compositeur" Bach' (Bach, Court Composer) featuring the works that are associated with the courts where J. S. Bach either worked (Weimar and Cöthen) or was a visitor (Weißenfels, Dresden and Berlin). Following the success of the 'Leipzig Ring of Cantatas' last year, this year's theme seems to have been chosen as a necessary counter to readjust the image of Bach it had depicted by exploring many other sides of the composer who also engaged excellently with wherever and whoever he worked for or with, including his family and friends.



During the ten days of the festival, 158 events were staged altogether, which were presented in 33 venues across the town. Several events ran concurrently. While I was only able to attend 38 events, it pretty much covered most of the concerts and lectures on the theme that I

wanted to experience, in addition to the well-established flagship events that are not tied up with the theme, such as the Opening Concert (Ullrich Böhme performing BWV 572 followed by Thomanerchor Leipzig and Freiburger Barockorchester, directed by Gotthold Schwarz (pictured) performing Charpentier's Te Deum, Suite No 3 in D BWV 1068 and Cantata BWV 110), one of Bach's Passions (this time St John Passion, the 1725 version) performed admirably by Solomon's Knot, a late-night slot for the Goldberg Variations (performed by Pierre Hantai) and the Mass in B minor BWV 232 at the Closing Concert (performed by Tölzer Knabenchor and Opera Fuoco directed by David Stern). Outside of these frameworks there were also noteworthy gems: 11.30am slots called 'Ausgezeichnet' (Excellent) during the weekends are reserved for promising young musicians, and both Maria Włoszczowska (violin) and Juliana Koch (oboe) made a great impact, while at the opposite end of career, Sir Andrés Schiff returned to Leipzig to continue his masterly exploration of Bach's *Clavierübung* series on the modern piano, this time performing all Six Partitas in Haus Leipzig on 19 June. Turning to the concert experience, I particularly enjoyed those assembled under the series 'Bach and Weimar' which gave me precious opportunities to reflect how Bach's greatness and ingenuity developed. The programme entitled 'Bach meets Vivaldi' on 17 June at Thomaskirche was a good example at which La Cetra Barockorchester Basel presented

Bach's concerto transcriptions of the works by Vivaldi (BWV 594, 593 and 596) alongside their original (RV 208, RV 522 and RV 565), prompting the listeners to think what Bach might have considered when working on transcription. A more actively involved presentation was Rudolf Lutz's lecture recital 'Die Gemeinde confundiren' (confounding the congregation) on 22 June at Paulinum (the auditorium and university church of St. Paul). Interacting with his moderator Michael Maul, Rutz eloquently demonstrated the essence of Bach's organ chorales (BWV 599, 661, 715, 622, 610, mostly from the *Orgelbüchlein*) and even offered his own reconstruction of 'Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr' that Bach planned to include in the *Orgelbüchlein* initially, but did not compose in the end - what an edifying experience it all was!



Neu Augustusburg
& Market Square, Weißenfels

Our Weimar experience was firmly sealed with a series of four concerts devoted to Weimar cantatas gathered in the second weekend, which was the highlight of the festival for me. Particularly impressive were the second concert on 22 June at the Castle Chapel in Neu Augustusburg, Weißenfels (pictured), where Cantatas BWV 199, 155, 185, 162 and 165 were performed with great clarity by Ricercar Consort directed by Philippe Pierlot with Hannah Morrison (soprano), Leandro Marziotte (countertenor), Hans Jörg Mammel (tenor), Matthias Vieweg (bass), and the fourth on 23 June at the Michaeliskirche where Cantatas BWV 182, 18, 161 and 12 were performed by Vox Luminis, leaving their audience totally intoxicated.

Next year, Bachfest Leipzig will run from 11 to 21 June 2020 with the theme 'Bach - We are family'. www.bachleipzig.de

Book Reviews

"Bach's Famous Choir" The Saint Thomas School in Leipzig, 1212-1804 by Michael Maul, translated by Richard Howe. The Boydell Press (2018) ISBN 978 1 78327 169 6 Price £55

This is a book that was just aching to be written. Originally written in German, at last we have the long-awaited English edition that sheds considerable light on a great institution which, by its existence, had been a catalyst for musical creativity that had acquired a significant standing throughout Germany long before Bach arrived on the scene in 1723. The five meticulously compiled chapters that trace the development of the School are backed up by a substantial introductory section that includes the Author's note on the English Edition and the Translator's note - American English reflected throughout. The verb to 'relativize' is new to me and Thesaurus couldn't help either! The verb to 'justify' might serve better? At the end of the book, Appendices that document the Cantors and Rectors of the St Thomas School from the Reformation to 1810, Cantors of the School from 1810 to the present day, plus the Income and Expenses of the School and other relevant historical information, complement the central chapters. The precise and voluminous End Notes will keep the reader engaged for life following up all the sources, plus the German Bibliography and 20-page Index of Persons.

More overleaf...



Michael Maul, Artistic Director of
Leipzig Bachfest

**Sir Henry Wood Champion of
Bach's Music by Hannah French
Published September 2019
The Boydell Press (2019)
ISBN 978 1 78327 385 0 Price £55**



Dr. Hannah French

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sir Henry Wood, co-founder with Robert Newman of The Proms. He was a towering and indomitable musical figure in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to whom we owe much, the Proms a legacy that has continued to inspire an annual contemporary celebration of Wood's musical priorities that have equal relevance today.

Wood saw himself chiefly as an educator and it is in this spirit that he approached his work, whether as an arranger, conductor or concert planner. However, little is known about his devotion to Bach's music and his deeply held wish to make it better known here. That is... until now. The timely publication of Hannah French's well documented, researched and carefully compiled account removes all doubts as to Wood's commitment. The five parts/chapters that chart Wood's journey with Bach are fairly comprehensive, recalling his role in the English Bach revival, his programming, approach to interpretation and his influence. These are complemented by detailed footnotes, tables, a bibliography and no less than nine very interesting Appendices. So, for readers who enjoy books about British musical history that set in context and address curiosities, this book hits the spot. For me, it is the numerous illustration plates that show Wood's markings, his arrangements and realisations that are the most revealing, for he was known for his meticulous attention to detail. A good purchase and a good read. MS

Editor: Full reviews of these two books are published on the website www.bachlive.co.uk/resource/books/

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www.bachlive.co.uk/bach-friends/
OR
Call 01883 717372 and have your card handy.
Welcome to LBS... and thank you!**

This book is altogether a piece of work to praise unreservedly. Let's hope that Volume 2 will follow to bring the remarkable story of the Thomaner and Thomasschule into the present, including the documentation of life and survival under Nazi and Communist rule in the last century. **MS**

A Lunchtime Bach Cantata concert

Thursday 26 September 2019 at 1.05pm
St. Bartholomew-the-Great, W. Smithfield EC1
The Musicians Company Consort
Adrian Butterfield *director/violin*
Charlotte Bowden *soprano* Annabel Kennedy *alto*
Andrew Brown *tenor* Hugo Herman-Wilson

Joh. Seb. Bach

Three joyous Cantatas BWV 77, BWV 137 and BWV 171
Admission to the concert is FREE.

Please be seated by 12.50pm

Supported by the Musicians Company

Part of the City Music Society lunchtime series.

Which movement from which of the cantatas above did Bach later rework and include in his Mass in B minor?

A Medal of Honour

LBS Artistic Director Margaret Steinitz has been awarded the 2019 Medal of Honour of the British German Association by HRH the Duke of Kent, Patron. The award was given in respect of her work with the London Bach Society and for forging links with Leipzig. The ceremony took place on 17 July in St James's Palace



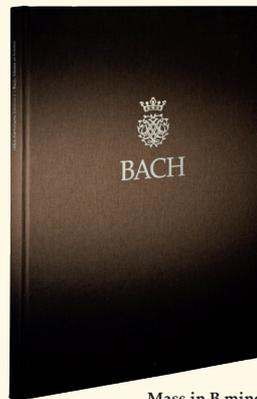
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