

30 April 2013
Edition 4

B-A-C-H - STAGE NEWS & SOUNDS

Bach in the U.K.

Dear friends and Bach enthusiasts,

The week after Easter, I spent several hours (in instalments) listening to one of the most inspiring music programs I have ever heard: Bach Marathon Live from the Royal Albert Hall in London on BBC Radio Program 3, a nine-hour celebration of Bach's music by conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner, recorded on Easter Monday April 1, 2013.

This eclectic program of J S Bach's works started appropriately with 'Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied' (BWV 225). The world-famous Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists were conducted by Sir Eliot himself, of course.

This was followed by solo gems like 'Cello Suite No 6' (BWV 1012) by Alban Gerhardt, the 'Goldberg Variations' (BWV 988) by Joanna MacGregor, 'Partita No 2 in D minor' (BWV 1004) by Viktoria Mullova, and many wonderful organ pieces played by John Butt on the mighty organ of The Royal Albert Hall.

In between, John Eliot led the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists and the Royal Albert Hall audience in the Cantata for Easter Day, 'Christ lag in Todesbanden' (BWV 4), an early cantata which is remarkable for its extreme emotional intensity. Finally, a towering masterpiece of musical history, Bach's 'Mass in B Minor' (BWV 232) concluded the Bach Marathon.

Spread over the day were interviews and round-table discussions with specialists, including with specialist writers such as American Paul Elie (Re-Inventing Bach, 2012), John Eliot's personal reflections on 'Bach's Psychological Profile' and responses to answers such as 'What sort of man do you think Bach was?'

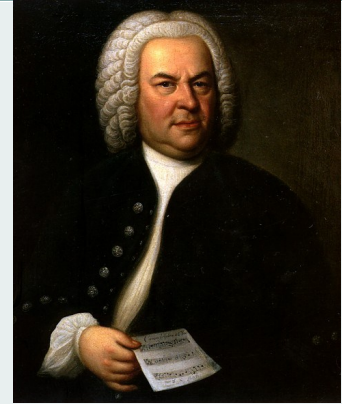
Sir John Eliot Gardiner celebrates his 70th birthday this month. Happy Birthday and best wishes for much more timeless Bach music!

I personally look forward to meeting this great maestro at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig where he will conduct Bach's 'St John Passion', a highlight of this year's Bachfest on Thursday 20 June 2013. More on this year's Bachfest Leipzig' on Page 5

Last but not least, have a look at our own website www.bach.org.au which will enable us to keep you informed much quicker and more extensively. Enjoy!

Hans Schroeder

President Australian Bach Society Inc.



THIS NEWSLETTER AND WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

CONCERTS, OTHER EVENTS &
NEWS FROM BACH AND HIS
MOTHER COUNTRY

WHO IS INVITED?

EVERYONE: NEWCOMERS &
BACH ENTHUSIASTS

WHY SHOULD YOU COME?

LISTEN TO THE GENIUS' MU-
SIC, NETWORK, LEARN AND
HAVE FUN

WHEN?

NEXT EVENT: 29 AUGUST,
7PM, TOORAK UNITING
CHURCH, 4 CENTURIES OF
FRENCH ORGAN MUSIC PER-
FORMED BY ROLAND VOIT &
MANY MORE EVENTS AS
LISTED ON PAGE 7

RECENT EVENTS/ HIGH- LIGHTS:

ON 30 MARCH, ONE OF GER-
MANY'S MOST FAMOUS
YOUTH BANDS FROM
NOERDLINGEN PERFORMED
AT FEDERATION SQUARE.

IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE OF GERMANY'S FAMOUS YOUTH BAND AT FEDERATION SQUARE

Live Music from Germany...

...could be heard on Easter Saturday at Federation Square and on the premises of Martin-Luther Homes in Boronia. 62 boys and young men in pre-Bach uniforms of their medieval city of Nördlingen (Bavaria) presented a colourful bouquet of post-Bach music. The Australian Bach Society was asked to assist in the organisation of this colourful event, see photo.

Nördlingen will also be the first stop on the Australian Chamber Choir's tour to Europe in July this year. Follow their tour calendar and much more on www.auschoir.org. (See also page 5 for news on their latest CD).



TEARS AND TRANSCENDENCE: THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF MUSIC

Why is it that some music moves the spirit so powerfully? This question was at the heart of a forum broadcast on ABC Radio National as part of their 'Into the music' series, featuring the Archbishop of Brisbane, Mark Coleridge, conductor Graham Abbott, baritone Paul Whelan and Dr Samantha Owens from the University of Queensland. The discussion was centered on Bach's mighty St Matthew Passion, a work that is universally

recognised by Christians and non-Christians for its immense transformative power. By the way, Samantha in September 2012 had participated in a symposium about the St Matthew Passion, initiated by the Australian Bach Society (see Newsletter No. 3, 'The greatest of all the holiday gatherings': How the St Matthew Passion came to Australia).

The session was hosted by writer and broadcaster Martin Buzacott who was joined by members of the Camerata of St John's and Opera Queensland soloists, who presented excerpts (narrative, arias, choral music) from their stage version of the St Matthew Passion in March 2013 in Brisbane. Give it a listen! (www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/intothemusic/tears-and-transcendence---the-spiritual-power-of-music/4541032) Australian Bach Society is planning a similar event in Melbourne in 2014.

The Passion, re-telling of the suffering of Christ, has had monumental human implications throughout modern history. Christians and non-Christians alike consider JS Bach's St Matthew Passion the greatest work of its kind ever written, attaining truly sublime musical expressiveness. A moving combination of joy and grief, this powerful music drama shifts between chronicle and contemporary commentary, guided by the evangelist St Matthew.

'Opening up new horizons in the heart of the city'; extracts from an article published in *The Melbourne Anglican*, February 2013

The new Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, German-born historian, musician and Bach scholar Dr Andreas Loewe (pronounced Lerver), recently spoke to Roland Ashby about his faith, his plans for the cathedral and his love of Bach.

"[...] He also believes God's love can be expressed powerfully through music, not least in the music of JS Bach, about whose St John's Passion he has written a theological commentary, to be published later this year. In his book, he describes Bach as 'a preacher in sound'. He draws on the comments which Bach recorded in his own copy of the Bible in support of his thesis that Bach, a devout Lutheran, was theologically aware. The composer noted in his Bible that 'In sacred music, God is always present in his grace.' So what did Bach understand the purpose of sacred music to be?"

'Bach sees that there is a grace-filled presence wherever people make music to praise God, and that is something that very clearly comes out of the Lutheran tradition. Martin Luther himself was a very competent musician; he was a singer, a lute player and a music theorist. He was someone who also really appreciated the proclamatory, hermeneutical and homiletical dimension of music. Luther saw music, and hymns in particular, as a vehicle for making his reformation message known; a message of grace freely given. Therefore he deliberately fostered music education, of which Bach was a prime recipient. So it is no wonder that Bach stepped into this tradition where music is seen as an incredible channel for the word of God to be made known.

'Bach saw that music can be transformational, and that music that reflects on the love of God can bring others to ponder that love. That is made clear again and again in the words of his cantatas: that there is a personal response that is expected of us to this great act of love in Jesus Christ'



OVERSEAS HIGHLIGHTS: BACH FEST 2013 (14 - 23 JUNE) - MOTTO: 'VITA CHRISTI'

For the first time, an organiser has dared to draw theological, dramaturgical and compositional ley lines between Bach's great oratorical works in the programme of a festival. The Christmas Oratorio, the St. John Passion and the Easter and Ascension Oratorios form together a grand oratorio project which would have been a highlight in the musical life of Leipzig in 1734/1735. During three concert evenings, these scenes from the Vita Christi will be presented in Bach's unique musical realization. The oratorios will be directed by Trevor Pinnock and Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

The Bible stories of the life of Jesus Christ inspired many composers to write original works. In this context, the audience will also be hearing works by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Haydn, Schubert and Beethoven. All the musical services are dedicated to the motto 'Vita Christi': Every day, cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach will be performed that illustrate the life of Christ.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

14 June 2013

J. S. Bach: Fantasie G-Dur, BWV 572 · G. F. Händel: Messiah (Part I), HWV 56, edited by W. A. Mozart · J. S. Bach: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 140; Organist of St Thomas Ullrich Böhme, Soloist of the St Thomas Boys' Choir (Sopran), Matthias Rexroth (Altus), Martin Petzold (Tenor), Markus Flaig (Bass), St Thomas Boys' Choir, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig – directed by Cantor of St Thomas Georg Christoph Biller

16 June 2013

J. S. Bach: Weihnachts-Oratorium, BWV 248 (Kantaten 1–6); Malin Christensson (Sopran), Christine Rice (Mezzosopran), Daniel Johannsen (Tenor), Johannes Weisser (Bariton), Tenebrae Choir, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig – directed by Trevor Pinnock

Comment: This is 'Christmas in June' - they have probably copied an Australian concept!

17 June 2013

J. S. Bach: Jesu, der du meine Seele, BWV 78 · L. van Beethoven: Christus am Ölberge, op. 85 · F. Schubert: Stabat mater, D 383 (Jesus Christus schwebet am Kreuze!); Soloists, Monteverdi-Chor Hamburg, Mitteldeutsches Kammerorchester – directed by Gothart Stier

18 June 2013

F. Schubert: Lazarus oder Die Feier der Auferstehung, D 689 · J. S. Bach: Christ lag in Todes Banden, BWV 4; Sarah Wegener (Sopran – Maria), Johanna Winkel (Sopran – Martha), Sophie Harmsen (Mezzosopran – Jemina), Andreas Weller (Tenor – Lazarus), Tilman Lichdi (Tenor – Nathanael), Tobias Berndt (Bass – Simon), Kammerchor Stuttgart, Hofkapelle Stuttgart – directed by Frieder Bernius

20 June 2013

J. S. Bach: Johannes-Passion, BWV 245; Soloists, The Monteverdi Choir, The English Baroque Soloists - directed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner



MORE ABOUT BACHFEST....

Tried and tested concert series such as ‘Excellent’ (young musicians), ‘BACHmosphere’ (Bach’s legacy in Leipzig subculture, clubs and outdoor concerts), ‘Bach out and about’ (a visit program of baroque churches including demonstrations of their organs), and the programme for children, young people and families, offer all kinds of reasons to spend some time in Leipzig with its authentic historic Bach places.

For more information see www.bachfestleipzig.de

AUSTRALIAN BACH ENTHUSIASTS IN GERMANY

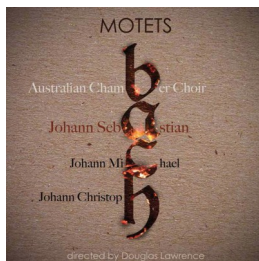
Thomaskantor Georg Christoph Biller was and still is the ‘Godfather’ of the Australian Bach Society, an idea he floated when the St. Thomas Boys’ Choir visited Australia on their historic first visit in 2009. In November 2012 Leipzig celebrated Biller’s 20th anniversary as Thomaskantor following in the footsteps of his most famous predecessor, J.S. Bach. This prompted the famous conductor Kurt Masur to publicly congratulate him with these words: “*You are a very worthy successor of J.S. Bach*”.

We, of course, congratulate as well and will do this personally when our President, Hans Schroeder, visits Leipzig and Christoph Biller for this year’s Bachfest. And more visitors from Melbourne will be performing.



Friends Made in Melbourne 2009: From left: Anthony Halliday, Georg Christoph Biller, Hans Schroeder

As part of the Leipzig Bach Orgel Festival (Bach Organ Festival), **Anthony Halliday** will perform at St. Thomas on 13 July 2013.



The **Australian Chamber Choir** will follow Anthony one week later. As part of its regular international schedule, the choir under the baton of Douglas Lawrence will perform in Berlin and Hamburg, at the cathedrals of Meissen, Freiberg and Ribe, and at five festivals in Denmark and Poland. They will also return to the most beloved of choral venues, St. Thomas Church, on 21 July 2013. As in recent years, our friends will doubtlessly impress during their 17 concerts. About their recent **CD ‘Bach Motets’** Hans Schroeder wrote to Douglas Lawrence: “*Last night I listened to your new CD intensely. As a result the CD jumped to the top of my favourite Bach CD chart! The ACC has developed a distinctive sound and the German is impeccable. Well done!*” - Available for \$ 25 plus shipping cost online via www.auschoir.org

UPCOMING EVENTS AUGUST– DECEMBER 2013

organised by the Australian Bach Society

Thursday 29 August 7:00 PM **French Organ Music in Four Centuries**

Ten Great Composers - Ten Wonderful Pieces

Roland Voit (Hagen, Germany) – Toorak Uniting Church



Saturday 31 August 3:00 PM **Chaconne and More**

Miwako Abe (violin) and Elizabeth Anderson (harpsichord) – J.S. Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Violin and Harpsichord (including the famous chaconne played on Miwako's precious 1776 Guadagnini violin) - Labassa Caulfield



Saturday 19 October 3:00 PM **Bach - Beethoven - Brahms**

Iconic church, iconic music! Includes Bach's *Lutheran Mass in F*, Beethoven's *A Calm Sea* and *Elegischer Gesang*, Brahms' *An die Heimat* and *Nänie*

A Reformation Concert at the German Church East Melbourne

Melbourne Chamber Choir (Faye Dumont Singers) Conductor: David Kram



Tuesday 22 October 7:00 PM **Brilliant Baroque and Classic from Germany**

Chamber Orchestra CAMERATA NOVESIA Conductor: Joachim Neugart)

Soloists: Stefanie Sassenrath (oboe), Martin Börner (viola) - St. Paul's Cathedral



December: **Classical German Christmas Concert**

Organ and trumpets at the German Church East Melbourne

More detailed information coming soon!

WHAT'S ON IN MELBOURNE AND SURROUNDINGS...

5 May – 2 :00 p.m. - Toorak Uniting Church:

World Organ Day 2013, Jennifer Chou playing works by Balbastre, Cochereau, Daquin, Viernes and Bach

9 May - 7:30 p.m. - St Johns Southgate (www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au):

St Johns Bach Choir and Orchestra directed by Rick Erickson (Cantor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New York City – 4th St Johns Visiting Music Director): Vespers - Ascension Day: Wer da gläubet und getauft wird (BWV 37) for 4 soloists, chorus, strings, 2 oboes d'amore and continuo.

12 May—3:00 p.m.

Bach and Beyond, ABC Iwaki Auditorium, Melbourne, for ABC Classic FM Sunday Live

Ironwood Ensemble with Alex Bellamy - oboe & Charlotte Betts-Dean - soprano

JS Bach Cantata BWV84 Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke

Kevin March New Work for viola da gamba and harpsichord - 2012

JS Bach Cantata BWV 199 Mein Herz schwimmt im Blut

<http://www.ironwoodchamberensemble.com/concerts.html>

18 May—08:00 p.m.—Hamer Hall

Bach and Schubert Masterpieces, Douglas Boyd conductor / Simone Dinnerstein piano

Bach Chorale Prelude 'Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ' arr. Busoni, Bach Keyboard Concerto in F minor,

Bach Chorale Prelude 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring' arr. Hess, Bach Keyboard Concerto in D minor, Schubert

Symphony No.9 Great

19 May – 3.30 p.m. – TarraWarra Estate (near Healesville), as part of TarraWarra Festival on 18 and 19 May:

Abstraction: Richard Tognetti (Violin): Bach Concerto for two violins in D minor (BWV 1043) and much more (Sculthorpe, Greenwood, Meale, Weill, Schubert, Prokofiev, Dvorak) ...

For more information see the web page of the Australian Chamber Orchestra on: www.aco.com.au/whats_on/event_detail/2013-TarraWarraFestival

26 May – 2:00 p.m.—Toorak Uniting Church

Organ Reinauguration—Concert with Douglas Lawrence (organ) and Jacob Lawrence (tenor)

Works by Buxtehude, Bach, Mendelssohn, Faure and Old Italian Masters

23 June – 9:00 a.m. - St Johns Southgate

St Johns Bach Choir and Orchestra directed by Graham Lieschke: Eucharist - 5th Sunday after Pentecost:

Jesu, nun sei gepreiset (BWV 41) for 4 soloists, chorus, strings, 3 oboes, 3 trumpets, timpani and continuo.

Celebrating 'The 100th different Bach cantata in the St Johns series'!

14 July – 2:00 pm—Toorak Uniting Church

Rising Stars Showcase—Concert by Suzuki Organ students from NSW with David Clark

21 July – 2:30 p.m. and 22 July 8:00 p.m. – Hamer Hall

Barefoot Fiddler: Australian Chamber Orchestra - Patricia Kopatchinskaja Guest Director & Violin:

Bach Concerto for three violins (BWV1064), Mozart Adagio and Fugue, Ginastera Concerto for strings, Mendelssohn Concerto in D Minor

J.S. BACH AND GOTTFRIED SILBERMANN – TWO GIANTS IN THE WORLD OF ORGAN MUSIC

Johann Sebastian Bach worked for more than 25 years in Leipzig, one of the most significant cities for trade and commerce in Germany during his time. Gottfried Silbermann, who is without a doubt the most well-known organ maker of Bach's days, was born only a couple of years earlier than Bach. Silbermann spent more than 40 years of his life in the old mining town of Freiberg, 30km south-west of Dresden, the royal capital of Saxony. Freiberg's earlier fame, which was based on the discovery of silver in 1168 and the tremendous wealth that followed, had faded by Silbermann's time. Bach and Silbermann met only once during their lives, which is surprising considering these were two undoubted masters of their crafts, both with careers centred on man's largest musical instrument: the organ.

Born in 1683 not far from Freiberg, Gottfried Silbermann learnt his craft in Strasbourg from his brother, Andreas Silbermann, who is still recognised today as another accomplished organ maker. He returned to Saxony in 1710, where he was given the opportunity to build his first big organ for the Freiberg Cathedral thanks to a recommendation from Bach's



predecessor, Johann Kuhnau. Inaugurated in 1714, the organ with 44 stops and 3 manuals was to become his greatest masterpiece and marked the beginning of an unprecedented career in organ making. Prior to his death in 1753, Silbermann built 46 organs in his workshop in Freiberg, including those he built for the Hofkirche and the Frauenkirche in Dresden. Of the 32 organs still remaining today, most are located in small villages within the Erzgebirge region in Saxony, surrounded by gently-sloping hills, green meadows and dark pine forests. And so today, the fine craft of organ building and culture of classical music still find themselves at home in this unique natural environment. Due to its mines, Freiberg's supply of raw materials such as tin, lead and wood created ideal conditions for Silbermann's organ building. His craftsmanship and precision as well as his mastery of pipe tuning are still recognised and modelled today. Silbermann was famous and wealthy during his lifetime. Augustus II the Strong, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, appointed him as the honorary Saxon Court and State organ builder. This meant he could even afford to decline

requests from Copenhagen, Prague and the Russian tsar in St. Petersburg.

Gottfried Silbermann was also a gifted maker of other musical instruments, including harpsichords and clavichords. In addition, he developed the so-called 'Cembal d'Amour', a clavichord with fuller sonority, which was played by striking the double-length strings in the middle. He borrowed the technique of piano making from Bartolomeo Cristofori of Florence, developed it further and built the first pianoforte north of the Alps. Frederick II had a collection of pianos at the royal court in Potsdam, where he played Bach the theme of the 'Musical Offering' in 1747.

Bach and Silbermann didn't meet face-to-face until 1746 at the inspection of Zacharias Hildebrandt's organ in Naumburg, Saxony-Anhalt. Although Silbermann's method of construction would have aligned with Bach's requirements for "really big and really attractive" organs, Bach never really acquired a taste for Silbermann's instruments. For tuning, Silbermann frequently used the conservative mean-tone temperament; however, Bach found the well-tempered tuning system much easier on his ears.

Today, the Silbermann brand is a significant cultural icon in Germany. Tens of thousands of people attend concerts performed on Silbermann's organs each year. With four organs from between 1714 and 1735 still in their original condition, Freiberg remains the focal point of Silbermann's legacy. Two of these organs are located in St. Mary's Cathedral, an impressive late Gothic building from 1484 with origins dating back to around 1190. The larger of Silbermann's organs is considered one of the most significant and best-maintained Baroque organs in the world. During a visit in 1841, Robert Schumann described it as the "superb Silbermann organ".

Weekly concerts take place between May and October and the organ is also played during church services as well as during many guided tours of the cathedral. With its headquarters located in Silbermann's old home and workshop, the Gottfried Silbermann Society was founded in 1991.

J.S. Bach and Gottfried Silbermann—continued



Albrecht Koch explaining organs during a Fireside Chat at the German church in Melbourne in September 2010

The society offers musical projects for children and adolescents, organises concerts and organ study visits, publishes the 'Freiberg Studies of Organs', organises the renowned Gottfried Silbermann organ competition and is the centre of knowledge and contact point for organ enthusiasts from all over the world.

First established in 1978, the society also organises a high-class music festival every second year called 'the Gottfried Silbermann Days'. In September 2013, stars such as Andreas Staier, Michael Radulescu, Hans Fagius, Jan Vogler, Celine Frisch and Amsterdam's 'Gesualdo Consort' will travel to Freiberg and the Erzgebirge region in Saxony in order to perform concerts in the region's small churches. The festival ends on 15 September in the Freiberg Cathedral where the St. Thomas Choir of Leipzig will make a guest appearance and allow Bach and Silbermann to come together once again.

Albrecht Koch

Cathedral Organist and President of the Gottfried Silbermann Society

Translated by Corrinne McKenzie

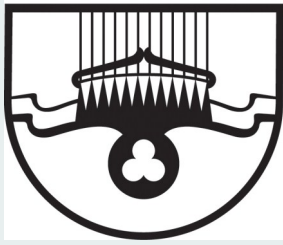
www.silbermann.org
www.freiberger-dom.de
www.facebook.com/GottfriedSilbermann

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AUSTRALIAN BACH SOCIETY



Australian Bach Society

Australian Bach Society was officially founded during an inaugural meeting at the German Lutheran Church East Melbourne on 8 November 2011. Board Committee members were appointed as follows:

President:

Hans Schroeder

Vice President:

Frauke Tyrrell

Treasurer:

Peter Wabenhorst

Secretary:

Regina Gramer

Other Board Members:

Pastor Matthias Kunze

Silke Zurlinden

Dr. Hendrik Zurlinden

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PURPOSES OF AUSTRALIAN BACH SOCIETY ARE:

- to increase the appreciation and knowledge of J.S. Bach and his music
- to arrange performances, concerts, lectures, or other activities to promote an interest and appreciation in J.S. Bach, other classical composers and organ and sacred music in Australia
- to encourage young musicians and young people with an interest in classical music without limitation, arranging of performance opportunities, assisting in musical education, and providing tickets for events and scholarships

INTERESTED?

PLEASE CONTACT HANS SCHROEDER:

info@bach.org.au

or mob. 04 2580 2046

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