

The Burney Travelogue



Weihnachten: the composers

From the well-known to the long-lost, The Burney Ensemble's 'Weihnachten' features the work of several different German composers:

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1750)

Johann Philipp Kirnberger
(1721-1783)

Johann Samuel Beyer
(1669-1744)

Johann Philipp Krieger
(1649-1725)

Liebhold
(fl. early 18th century)

Christoph Graupner
(1683-1760)

and finally, that extremely prolific, but far too modest composer we all know and love:

Anonymous
(fl. 18th century)

“The Ensemble... makes its way around this music with complete ease and finesse proving that sometimes one doesn't need to go too far to discover world-class talent.”

Chris Sklar,
reviewing our CD 'bach circle' in
FluteNotes, The Magic Flute newsletter

Weihnachten

Friday, December 6 at 8 pm

Sunday, December 8 at 8 pm

St. Mark's-Trinity Church, 1805 Larch Street at West 2nd

It's that time of year again. The days are getting shorter, the nights are getting colder, and bit by bit, we're losing sight of our mountain tops. Winter is approaching, and with it, the magic of Christmas.

If you could go back in time to celebrate Christmas, where would you go? What would you want to hear and who would you like to share it with?

We asked ourselves those very questions last year as we planned our 2002/2003 season.

We decided to go to early eighteenth century Germany. But we couldn't decide which composer we would visit: would we wander the university streets of Leipzig, winding our way towards the Thomaskirche to experience one of Johann Sebastian Bach's sublime cantatas, or would we go to the merchant city of Hamburg, stopping in at Georg Philipp Telemann's house before heading out to listen to one of his 2000 fine cantatas? Or would we go somewhere completely different, joining a small community in a candlelight cathedral for a very personal and intimate Christmas celebration?

It was impossible to decide! We wanted to have our cake and eat it too – we wanted to be in all of those places and we wanted to sample everything that was on offer. Most importantly, we wanted to share Christmas past with you.

So we've planned 'Weihnachten,' an oratorio created and compiled from the works of several German Baroque composers, our way of offering the 'best of the Baroque' in one magical evening; from Bach's Leipzig to Telemann's Hamburg and everything in between!

We wanted to hear the musical 'voices'

of some of Germany's lesser-known composers, and we've prowled libraries both near and far in our search.

Apart from arias and choruses by Bach and Telemann, we've included works by Christoph Graupner (the second choice, after Telemann, but ahead of J.S. Bach, for the kantor position at Leipzig's Thomaskirche), the well-traveled Johann Philipp Krieger (who traveled from his birthplace in Nuremberg to Copenhagen, Bayreuth, Venice, Rome, Vienna, Frankfurt, Kassel, Halle and finally Weissenfels!), and Johann Georg Reichard (who, like many in his time, studied law in Leipzig, before taking up positions in Schleiz and Reuss).

Quantz, Kirnberger and Krieger all contribute instrumental works to this production, and the eighteenth century church composer Liebhold and his contemporary 'Anonymous' each offer a motet.

The Burney Ensemble welcomes singers Katherine Goheen (soprano), Liz Hamel (alto), Jonathan Quick (tenor), and Ray Nurse (bass), all active members of Vancouver's vibrant choral community.

Jonathan Quick sang Bach and Telemann with us in our second season, and the multi-faceted Ray Nurse joined us as a lutenist last season. Alto Liz Hamel is also a fabulous recorder player, and produced our CD! A member of the Vancouver Chamber Choir and *musica intima*, soprano Katherine Goheen joins us for the first time.

'Weihnachten' will be performed by candlelight on December 6 and 8, 2002. We hope you can join us.

Musical Offering

Saturday, February 8, 2003 at 8 pm
St. Mark's-Trinity Church, Larch and West 2nd

On February 8, 2003, The Burney Ensemble presents one of the most sublime works in the trio sonata repertoire. Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental 'Musical Offering' towers over the early music performer, beckoning and inviting adventure, but still a massive work requiring not only technical dexterity, but a deep understanding of the art of counterpoint at its most advanced.

In 1747, J.S. Bach went to visit his son Carl Philipp Emanuel in Berlin, where he was employed as principal keyboardist to Frederick the Great of Prussia. The King, aware of Papa Bach's prowess in counterpoint, offered him a theme, upon which Bach wove several impromptu

variations. Later, after returning home to Leipzig, Bach composed his monumental 'Musikalisches Opfer,' a set of canons, fugues and a trio sonata based entirely on Frederick's Royal Theme, and dedicated to the King himself.

The Burney Ensemble presents Bach's masterpiece together with the world premiere of a work by Vancouver composer Jocelyn Morlock, based on the same royal theme. The ensemble's first commission, a 'royal gift' of sorts to the public and to the ensemble on its fifth birthday, is paired together with Bach's work, presenting a unique perspective on the ever-changing, but still eternal, art of composition, spanning some 255 years.

Dr. Burney Goes to New Brunswick!

We're headed off to New Brunswick in May 2003 for a bilingual, thirty-concert, three-week tour of New Brunswick schools.

"Bilingual? Schools? New Brunswick?" you ask. It's a long story.

Last spring, we were approached by the Director of the Festival international de musique baroque de Lamèque (phew, that's a mouthful!) He was interested in our children's programs, as The Burney Ensemble is one of the only Canadian early music ensembles involved in children's programming.

And so he became our most far flung audience member, traveling over 8 hours by plane just to hear our 2002 children's concert 'Dr. Burney Goes to the Zoo!'

Our 'Zoo' programme, created around the wealth of animal-inspired music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, featured animal sounds ranging from birds through to donkeys and frogs by a variety of composers including Caix d'Hervelois, Biber, and Handel. The programme also featured a fable by Jean de la Fontaine.

Dear Dr. Burney

Dear Dr. Burney:

I really enjoy the music of Telemann, but I can't figure out what the 'Paris Quartets' are. Can you help me out?

Yours, Telemann Fanatic

Dear TF:

Telemann's 'Paris Quartets' consist of multi-movement suites for the combination of flute, violin, viola da gamba and basso continuo. Unlike the more common trio sonata, which features three voices (flute, violin, basso continuo), the quartets feature four voices, as the gamba takes on a solo role of its own.

Telemann was a cosmopolitan, widely traveled man who often incorporated elements from the music of other cultures

into his own compositions. In 1737, he undertook a journey to Paris to prevent unauthorised printings of his music and to visit with Parisian musicians. The quartets arose from this happy musical encounter, and Telemann was later to remark "if only words could describe the wonderful way the Quartets were played by Herren Blavet, Guignon, Forcroy the Son and Edouard." The 'Nouveaux Quatuors' were published in 1738, and feature characteristically French colours, textures, and movement titles, including 'Distrain,' 'Tendrement,' and 'Gracieusement.' These quartets, together with an earlier set dating from 1730, are now popularly known as the 'Paris Quartets.' **Yours, C.B.**

Composer Profile

Our series of composer profiles journeys into the twenty-first century, with a profile of the Vancouver composer Jocelyn Morlock, whose work will receive its world premiere at The Burney Ensemble's February concert "Musical Offering."

Jocelyn Morlock (b. 1969)

Manitoba native Jocelyn Morlock arrived in Vancouver in 1995 to begin a Master's degree in composition at UBC. Now, seven years later, Ms. Morlock has become Dr. Morlock, graduating from the UBC School of Music in the Spring of 2002. During her time at UBC her compositions have been performed and recorded by a variety of ensembles, including Toronto's Continuum Ensemble, the Vancouver New Music Ensemble, New Music Manitoba, and, closer to our usual early music home, Vancouver's Pacific Baroque Orchestra. She is currently working on a commission for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Jocelyn's work has also been performed abroad: 'Lacrimosa' (2000) represented Canada at the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers 2002 in Paris, and 'Bird in the Tangled Sky' (1997), influenced by the sight of birds perched on the tangle of electric and bus cables in downtown Vancouver, was played at the ISCM World Music Days in Romania.

Jocelyn's compositions tend to explore unusual timbres made possible by extended playing techniques, at times in combination with relatively tonal or modal idioms.

Jocelyn resides in Kitsilano with a clear view of the ocean. We are delighted that she has agreed to write a piece just for us.

The Burney Ensemble

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