



Founder
Paul Steinitz† OBE, D. Mus
(1909-1988)

President
Sir David Tang KBE

Artistic Director
Margaret Steinitz

Our Purpose

“Introducing Mr Bach!”

The **London Bach Society** is a charitable company whose purpose is to foster and promote the understanding and appreciation of the music of **Johann Sebastian Bach**, his family and antecedents, and composers who have been inspired by Bach from the late 18th century to the present day. This includes the role British musicians and composers have played, especially those involved in the British Bach revival of the 19th & 20th centuries and Bach’s influence upon our musical environment today. The Society was founded in 1946 and its charity registration number is **1082788**.

The London Bach Society is performance-driven, dedicated to excellence in performance, promotes professional concerts and recitals engaging top-quality professional musicians alongside talented emerging artists and maintains its own professional period instrument orchestra.

The Bach Story is not merely confined to his life and times. We are all certain to turn to the composer’s music at some point in our lives, whether we know he wrote that ‘*memorable piece*’ or not. With the substantial 20th century revival of Bach’s vast corpus of works, especially played in period style on instruments with which the composer would have been familiar in particular – a revival in which the London Bach Society has played a seminal role in the UK – there is further scope for development in the 21st century as new discoveries about the composer’s life and work are made, there are new performing opportunities to create and new audiences to reach.

The LBS is now in its eighth decade of public music performances and serving the community. The mission is to stimulate, to challenge and inform, and to fire the imagination. We aim to open the door to Bach’s story, to delve a little deeper, have an eye to supporting the younger generation and to creating a bridge between the centuries, finding the common ground and the link with the music of today that is inspired by the composer – a modern London Bach Society with a national perspective.

The educational dimension

Cultural education is an important consideration when planning and promoting our annual programme of work and it is our long-term aim to develop the LBS to be a centre for Bach performance and study.

The 18-30 Bach Club, master classes, performance Prize competitions, workshops and lectures sit easily alongside concerts and recitals by leading artists at the annual autumn Bachfest to form a cohesive series presented in the festival spirit. They also enable us to play our part in encouraging the audiences of the future and enjoy the concert experience. The educational events also cater for those who wish to enhance their knowledge, examine Bach’s life and work in its social and historical context and explore new avenues in the light of the latest in modern Bach scholarship.

Our annual programme of work – what we do – is described on the following page

Our Website

www.bachlive.co.uk



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**Performances, Publications, Archive,
Library & Chamber Organ, Network of Support**

- **Bachfest:** An annual series of public events on a given theme. The series is usually presented between 31 October and 10 November. Building on Paul Steinitz's musical legacy and founded in 1990 to take the Society's work forward into a new century, the series is a mix of public recitals and concerts, lectures, master classes and community events (e.g. Singing Days) that also provide a participatory educational dimension. **The 18-30 Bach Club** for young performers and audience meets during Bachfest and fosters the same ethos as the Society. The whole series reflects four special areas of interest. These influence the kind of programmes we present and the opportunities we can create

The 'live' Bach experience, excellence in performance
The creation of opportunity, especially for young musicians
Cultural Education and Lifelong Learning – Bach in Context
Audience Development and Young People

Events Ahead & Forward Planning:

Bachfest 2017, Bachfest 2018 (Steinitz Bach Players 50th Anniversary)
LBS 75th Anniversary in 2021.

- **Steinitz Bach Players** is the Society's professional, period instrument orchestra. It was founded by Paul Steinitz in 1968 to enhance modern Bach scholarship in 'live' performances and is resident at Bachfest. The orchestra accepts commissioned engagements, has broadcast and, to provide for flexibility and create opportunities in its musical direction, there is no permanent conductor. Our orchestral and concerts manager is **Philippa Brownsword**, who brings considerable experience to the position that she has held since 2001.
- **Bach Notes:** A printed Journal. The next issue (2017) will be upgraded and extended, and from this year will be published in September annually. The articles not only promote the London Bach Society, but also reflect what else is going on in the Bach world and beyond. It is distributed free.
E-Bach Notes: This is a bi-monthly supplement to the printed Journal that gives the latest LBS news, plus details of some interesting concerts and Bach events taking place elsewhere. It is sent by email to those on the Email List.
- **LBS Bach Orchestral Library:** The Society owns a large library of Bach orchestral material. All except the major works are made available for public use and loaned to organisations nationwide. The revenue derived is used to replace worn out sets and add new works.
- **Peter Collins pipe continuo organ:** A gift from a former Chairman, the specifications were devised by Paul Steinitz and the instrument was custom-built in 1988. The organ is available for hire, used by professional orchestras and period instrument ensembles, conservatoires and BBC among others, and derives additional income for the Society. Regularly updated by Peter Collins Organs and maintained by Malcolm Greenhalgh, the organ can be tuned to four different pitches A=392, A=415, A=440 and A=460/465, making it an ideal instrument for performing repertoire from Purcell to the present day.
- **LBS Archive:** The Society has an Archive of its past achievements, BBC broadcasts, programmes and other papers. The Library of books and scores owned by Dr. Steinitz is held in Trust for the Society.
- **LBS Network of Support:** The Society is financially supported in a variety of different ways, from Gift Aid donations by the **LBS Bach Friends, Public Grants** and **Grants from Charitable Trusts** to **private philanthropy and individual major donations**. Our fund-raising is on-going and is working to the development strategy **"Introducing Mr Bach!" 2017-2021**.

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Our significant achievements

Founded on 7 November 1946, the first LBS concerts were presented in the summer of 1947. The purpose was to begin a journey of musical discovery and perform '*Bach in its original form*'. Since foundation, the artistic policy has inspired public performances of Bach that have made musical history in the UK. This has also included the foundation of a professional orchestra, the pioneering of original instruments, generating a greatly enhanced public awareness of the composer's extant works. **Listed below are the significant events and performances that have made the LBS what it is today.**

- **1950**
The singing of Bach in German instead of English was begun as part of the Bach bi-centenary. It was a controversial move so soon after the end of WW2
- **March 22, 1952**
First performance in the UK of Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* in its complete and original German form (1736 score) was presented in the Priory Church of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, West Smithfield EC1.
- **December 11, 1956**
First UK performance of Stravinsky's '*Canticum Sacrum*' in the presence of the composer – guest conductor Robert Craft, organist Paul Steinitz. Commissions and premières feature from now on.
- **November 29, 1958 (to 12 December 1987)**
The first complete public cycle of Bach's extant church and secular cantatas in the UK using professional forces begins with Christmas Cantatas BWV 40, BWV 110 and BWV 63. The cycle was completed in December 1987 and contained 208 separate works.
- **July 12, 1962**
The first use in modern times of the natural trumpet took place at City of London Festival. Period instrument pioneering work began that later introduces the Cornett, sackbut and baroque flute and uses the violone as part of the continuo section
- **June 4 – 8, 1964**
Tour to the Bach Festival in Leipzig and Handel Festival in Halle. LBS is first western cultural group to cross the Berlin Wall into Eastern Germany

1968 - Foundation of Steinitz Bach Players

- **December 14, 1968**
Debut of Steinitz Bach Players, leader Alan Loveday
- **May 22 – 30, 1969**
London Bach Society Choir tour to Israel
- **April/May 1971 & October/November 1973**
London Bach Society Choir and Steinitz Bach Players tours to USA, the second one in 1973 included appearances in Carnegie Hall & Lincoln Center
- **May 19 – 31, 1975**
Choir and Orchestra tour to Italy (3 St. Matthew Passions and 4 Masses in B minor in ten days!)

Continued on following page...



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Our significant musical achievements...

- **November 1976 Steinitz Bach Players uses period instruments**
Steinitz Bach Players records the first series of Bach Cantatas for BBC Radio 3 using instruments with which the composer would have been familiar, played at the original pitch.
- **May 25 – 29, 1980**
Tour to Bulgaria – first performance there in modern times of Bach's Mass in B minor, British Council supported.
- **June 9 – 12, 1983**
Performances of Bach's Mass in B minor in St. Thomas's Leipzig for Martin Luther Year, with other engagements in East Berlin and at the Sanssouci Palace, Potsdam Festival.
Tour supported by the British Council
- **March 12 – 21, 1985**
Bach 300 Festival promoted – for the Bach ter-centenary, a model for the future
- **December 12, 1987**
LBS Bach cantata cycle begun in 1958 was completed on London's South Bank. The achievement of this first public cycle remains unique to the London Bach Society in the UK.

Founder-Conductor Dr. Paul Steinitz died on 21 April 1988.

There followed a period of reconstruction within the Society to enable Dr. Steinitz's forward plans to be continued and developed. The 60-voice amateur choir was disbanded to be replaced by hand-picked, free-lance professional voices, small-scale, to balance the sound of the period instruments played by SBP and to enhance modern Bach scholarship.

- **October 15 – 29, 1990 First Bach Festival**
London Bach Festival founded, later renamed **Bachfest** – all professional, both singers and players. The Festival is to be promoted annually.
- **October 28 – November 4, 1994**
Following the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, LBS presents the first ever visit to Britain by the **Thomanerchor Leipzig**. In the 18th century Bach directed this choir and wrote most of his church music for it. The choir was originally founded in 1212 and the UK visit enabled the boys to perform a Bach Passion with an orchestra of period instruments for the first time since the 1700s. First concert was held in **Guildhall, City of London**, followed by **King's College Cambridge, Westminster Abbey, Birmingham Town Hall and Wells Cathedral. BBC recording & interviews**
- **October 26 – November 8 1996**
LBS GOLDEN JUBILEE - The Festival is opened by LBS Patron Sir John Tavener. Bach authority Gustav Leonhardt directed Bach Cantatas in St. Bartholomew-the-Great West Smithfield. BBC Radio 3 broadcast. **Bach Notes – the LBS Journal** launched.

1998: Sir David Tang is appointed President of the London Bach Society

- **2000: Bach 250th Anniversary Year.** "*Bach and China*" LBS Gala devised by Sir David Tang and held at St James' Palace in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales
- **October 28 – November 10, 2000 – The Festival is opened by Prof. Dr Christoph Wolff**
LBS Website launched www.bachlive.co.uk **10th Anniversary Festival** in Bach's 250th Anniversary Year. SBP appearances in Bruges and Cambridge Festivals.

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Our significant achievements

- **October 27 – November 6, 2002**
50th anniversary of 1952 première performance of *Matthäus-Passion* given in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra, LBS President Sir David Tang, H E the German Ambassador and the Lord Mayor of Westminster. This was a semi-staged performance with the solos and character parts sung by members of English Voices, a group of specially auditioned professional singers at the beginning of their careers.
- **29 Oct – 13 Nov 2005**
'Bach and the Dresden connection' including Education Programme with Royal College of Music to reflect **D Saxony UK 2005**. Steinitz Bach Players gives the UK 'live' première of a newly discovered Bach Aria "*Alles mit Gott...*" BWV 1127, the first Bach discovery for 70 years.
- **30 Oct – 12 Nov 2006**
LBS Diamond Jubilee including a guest appearance by the Leipzig Thomanerchor. "*Dance to Bach*" schools three-year Project with British-German Association's *Youthbridge* begins (to 2008)
- **25 October – 20 November 2009**
18-30 Bach Club founded, inspired by Bach's Leipzig Collegium concerts at Zimmermann's Coffee House in 1730s. LBS Club is 21st century version and an event at annual Bachfest.

A Special

Friday 15 March 2013 UK 'live' première of Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* BWV 244b (Early version-1727)

- **1-14 November 2014** *also CPE Bach 300th year*
Including a partnership with the RCO London Organ Forum "*Organ Music in Time of War and the link to Bach*" as part of the WW1 centenary commemoration. Gramophone award winner & harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani plays Book 1 "*Well-tempered Clavier*"
- **31 October – 13 November 2015**
25th Anniversary Bachfest (1990-2015). Student curators plan & organise Bach Club programme, mezzo-soprano Anna Harvey wins 5th LBS Bach Singers Prize, Bach Cantatas from 1726 (Third Cycle) performed as likely librettist is unveiled at Bach-Archiv Leipzig.
- **November 2016**
"Introducing Mr. Bach!", a special edition of Bachfest to mark the London Bach Society's 70th Anniversary. Organ Chorale Prelude commissioned from Diana Burrell for Orgelbüchlein Project, Bach Club at China Exchange, Six-month Exhibit of Archival material at Royal Academy of Music till February 2017.
- **October/November 2017**
Bachfest will be a series of concerts, recitals and presentations that reflects "*500 Jahre Reformation*" (1517-2017) and the Lutheran influence on the life and music of Bach. 6th Bach Singers Prize and Bach Club concert included among events.

These achievements have been made possible through the sustained support of public authorities (Arts Council, local authorities), private donors, charitable trusts, voluntary subscriptions & memberships and self-help.

Margaret Steinitz, Artistic Director

January 2017

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