

# BACH NOTES

The Journal of the London Bach Society  
(Online Edition – Spring 2019)



## Editorial

Welcome to the first online edition of our Journal, an update on news from the world of Bach. The Festival edition of Bach Notes will be printed and published in September.

### Michael Mietke harpsichord maker & social media hit

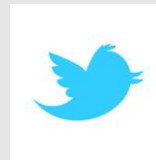
This year marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Berlin harpsichord maker Michael Mietke. Bach was known to have admired Mietke's work and travelled to Berlin to purchase an instrument for the Court at Cöthen where he was employed (1717-1723). The illustration is of one of the three surviving original instruments – this one is known as "the White Mietke" – and is housed at Schloss Charlottenburg in Berlin. There have been many instruments since made 'after Mietke'. Legendary harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt preferred them, and in the absence of an accessible original, we are pleased to say that we were able to provide one from British harpsichord supplier Mark Ransom for Leonhardt's recital in St Bartholomew-the-Great a few years ago.

**Marketing note: When posting this news item on Facebook and Twitter recently, they each attracted more hits than any we have posted so far..... running into the thousands.**



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### ON TV: "Janet Baker: In her own words"

Broadcast first on Sunday 14 April 2019, BBC Four at 9.00pm, this 1½ hour documentary can be viewed on BBC iPlayer.

The documentary is a personal reflection of her life and work including early influences that shaped it, her hectic performing schedule, then retirement from opera in 1982 and from the concert platform in 1989. The programme also features her life today with her husband of over 60 years, Keith Shelley.

Sadly, there is no Bach featured, but that does not detract from the sincerity and plain honesty with which this great artist expresses what are deeply personal emotions and recollections. There is much common ground to be found in what Dame Janet says and our experiences working with her in annual St Matthew Passions and Bach Cantata programmes from 1960-1989. **MS**

Dame Janet Baker, LBS Honorary Patron

## Book Review

**"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**



### Extract from the full Review:

This is a book that was just aching to be written. Originally in German, at last we have the long-awaited English edition of it that sheds considerable light on a great institution which, by its existence, had been a catalyst for and source of musical creativity that had acquired a significant standing throughout Germany long before Bach arrived on the scene in 1723.

This book is a closely documented and brilliantly compiled history of 'Bach's Famous Choir', the Thomanerchor and the Thomasschule (St Thomas School) from foundation in 1212 to the year 1804, 54 years after Bach's death. The author is Bach-Archive researcher and Leipzig Bachfest Artistic Director Professor Michael Maul (*pictured*), whose instincts and knowledge of his subject combined with a seemingly boundless enthusiasm, perspicacity and energy makes him one of the best in his field in the Bach world today. It was Michael who discovered the Aria "Alles mit Gott..." BWV 1127, in the Anna Amalia Library at Weimar in 2005, the first Bach work to be found for 70 years.

An essential on your Bach bookshelf, this 394pp very readable volume takes us on a journey through the musical, political and parochial ups and downs of life at the School over a period of 600 years. It tells how St Thomas' School began, became a Music School, dealt with crises and coped with the seemingly endless divergence of opinion down the ages as to how it should exist, School for scholars or 'Conservatory of Music?' **MS**

Use the link to access the full review <http://www.bachlive.co.uk/resource/books/>

### **Peter Hurford dies on 3 March 2019 aged 88**



For scholars of Bach's organ music, the three volumes written by Peter Williams (d. 21 March 2016) are still 'go to' books. For performers and the large audience that attended his public recitals of Bach's organ music, the name of Peter Hurford will be long remembered too. The two were also great friends; Williams was a regular guest at the St Albans International Organ Festival Hurford founded in 1963.

Peter was also an Honorary Patron of the London Bach Society, assiduously attending each Festival with his wife Patricia. He was also a friend and advisor always willing to share his own experiences establishing the organ competition that has consistently attracted entries from across the globe. Our tribute is on the LBS website.

<http://www.bachlive.co.uk/tributes/dr-peter-hurford-obe/>

*Image Credit: St. Albans International Organ Festival*

## **NEW from Bärenreiter**

**Johann Sebastian Bach Concerto for Violin, Strings and Basso Continuo G minor, reconstructed from BWV 1056** BÄRENREITER URTEXT BA 5146-90 violin and piano reduction £ 10.50 ISM 979-0-006-56539-9

**Johann Sebastian Bach Organ Works, Volume 1 Little Organ Book / Six Chorales "von verschiedener Art" (Schübler-Chorales) / Chorale-Partitas** BÄRENREITER URTEXT BA 5261 £ 23.50 ISMN 979-0-006-52608-5 (*replaces BA 5171*)

## **CONCERT PROFILE:** The Significance of the Coffee-House concerts at Zimmermann's

On **1 June** we are giving another recital in our biennial series at Langstone Court in Herefordshire, hosted and supported by the LBS Council Chairman Richard Jones. Tickets (£47) include reception, recital and supper from [www.langstone-court.org.uk](http://www.langstone-court.org.uk) where more details can be found. Booking is open.

**Rodolfo Richter** (vln) and **Carole Cerasi** (harpsichord) will perform Sonatas by Bach and Pachelbel given in the spirit of the famous Leipzig Collegium Musicum concerts (students musical society) founded by Telemann in 1702 and held in Zimmermann's Coffee House on Friday evenings at Leipzig during winter.....but in his garden on the outskirts of the city during the summer. We shall gather in the garden at Langstone for our Reception and then make our way to the Recital Room for a programme of music that would be equally at home in of Bach's Collegium concerts.

We know so much more about these concerts now, and although exact programmes have not survived, there is evidence to suggest that the music played ranged from intimate solo works, to keyboard works and concertos, chamber music by Handel and Telemann for example to Bach's satirical Coffee Cantata BWV 211 and his swipe at his critics as depicted in "*Pheobus and Pan*" BWV 201, the latter each requiring solo singers as well as players.



**Rodolfo Richter**



**Carole Cerasi**

### **Breitkopf & Härtel 300<sup>th</sup>**

Founded at Leipzig in 1719 by Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, Breitkopf & Härtel is the world's oldest publishing house. Gottfried Härtel took over the company in 1759 and a decade later started manufacturing pianos as well that were much admired by Liszt and Clara Schumann. 19<sup>th</sup> century Leipzig was a hub for music and publishing, with Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn and others vociferous in the revival of Bach's works, the St Matthew Passion receiving its revival in the city in 1841. Breitkopf & Härtel remains a major publisher of Bach's music, amongst a vast catalogue of composers and works. [www.breitkopf.com](http://www.breitkopf.com)

### **LBS Factfile – The Broadcasts**

Still a fledgling Society yet to begin performing Bach sung in German or undertake with its founder-conductor Paul Steinitz the ground-breaking Bach projects that defined the Society's activities, the London Bach Society choir began broadcasting for BBC 70 years ago in 1949, a set of hymns for use on the Home Service's (now Radio 4) "*Five to Ten*". Special segments like this quickly grew to recordings of public concerts, series of studio recordings, and broadcasts almost yearly of the St Matthew Passion, complemented by Steinitz studio talks and interviews that enhanced the LBS's national profile.

## **MARK THE DATES**

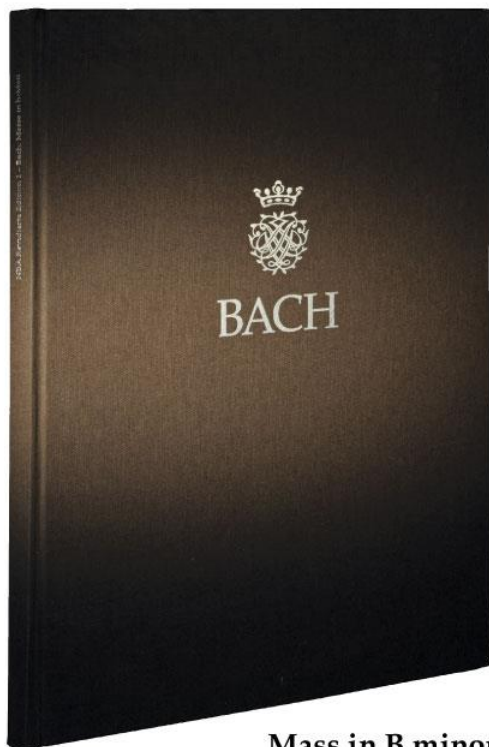
**31 OCTOBER – 10 NOVEMBER 2019**  
**LBS 29<sup>th</sup> BACHFEST "Ways to Bach"**  
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Edited by Margaret Steinitz

Email: [lbs@lonbachsoc.demon.co.uk](mailto:lbs@lonbachsoc.demon.co.uk)

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