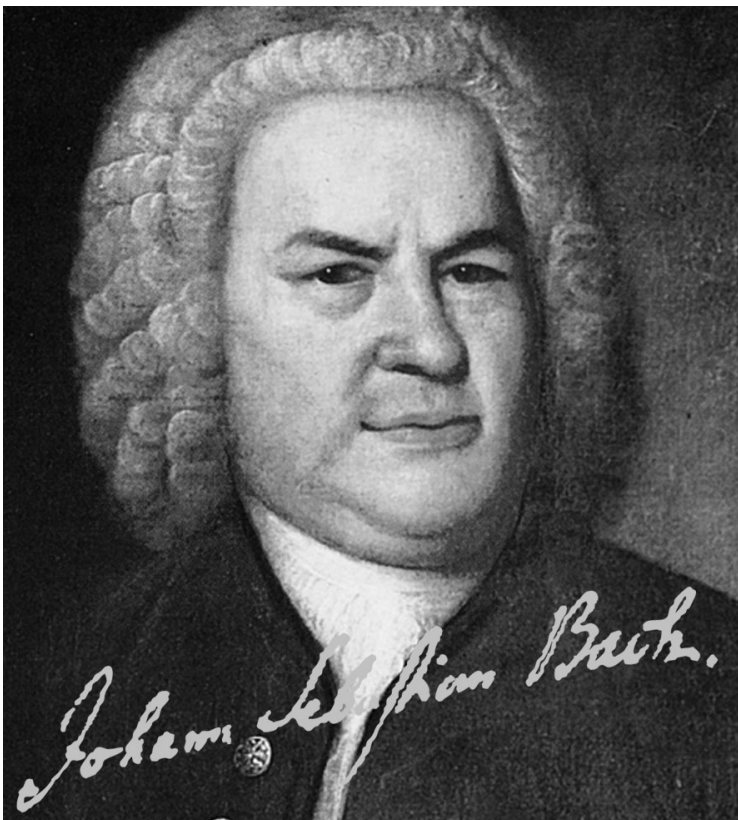




BACH EDITION







Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750

On 28 July in the year 2000, Johann Sebastian Bach, without doubt the greatest composer in music history, died exactly 250 years ago in Leipzig. Bach commemoration events will resound throughout the world. Countless concerts, festivals, new books and articles, and complete editions of his music on cd, will focus more attention on Bach than he ever enjoyed during his lifetime. What the 20th century has taught us about Bach will be the subject of reflection and appraisal.

The collected letters and documents covering Bach's life and work have recently been republished; the catalogue of his music has been critically examined and is now available in a new version: works which proved not to have been written by Bach have been scrapped, while other pieces have been added.

Forgotten and rediscovered

After Bach had almost been forgotten in the 19th century -except by a small group of Bach scholars- much has been made up for in the 20th century. In 1899 the famous conductor Willem Mengelberg initiated the now traditional annual Palm Sunday performance of the St Matthew Passion by the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. In 1900 the Neue Bachgesellschaft was founded, embarking on a new complete edition and propagating Bach and his music in Germany through festivals and the establishment of the Bach Museum in Eisenach, Bach's birthplace. The first Bach festival took place in Berlin in 1901. In 1904 publication of the Bach-Jahrbuch commenced, a series of books containing studies and articles which still appears annually. A year later a study of the performance of Bach's music was published by Wanda Landowska, the first pianist to play Bach in public on a harpsichord. In the same year the celebrated doctor, theologian and organist Albert Schweitzer published his authoritative work on Bach and his music. And precisely 200 years after Bach's death (1950), Wolfgang Schmieder's catalogue of Bach's works appeared. The classification and numbering of Bach's music which he introduced half a century ago is still internationally current: the so-called BWV numbers (Bach's Werke Verzeichnis, or index of Bach's works).

Bach and the European styles

Though considered old-fashioned and severe in his later years, as a young man Bach was most conscious of the musical fashions of his time. He was fond of all those strange sounds and colours, approaching and imitating them with his typically German solidity. In the course of his life he gathered together an enormous library, including not only countless works from bygone centuries but also the newest fashionable pieces by French, Italian and German composers. Thus we know today what he studied and arranged: Frescobaldi, Froberger, Lully, Corelli, Albinoni, Marcello, Couperin, Dieupart, Kuhnau and Vivaldi. And Bach had the ability to absorb all these different fashions and styles, to adapt them to his own purpose, and even to far surpass his examples.



Youth

Bach probably underwent his very first musical experience in 1685 in the womb of his mother Elisabeth, who came from a musical family. His father too, Johann Ambrosius, like generations of the Bach family before him, was employed as a town piper, violinist and trumpeter in Eisenach, the small town in east-German Thuringia where Bach was born on 21 March 1685. There the young Sebastian attended the same school as the church reformer Martin Luther 190 years earlier. Hardly ten years old, Bach lost both parents within a short time and was taken in by his eldest brother Johann Christoph, organist in Ohrdruf and probably Bach's first organ and harpsichord teacher. About five years later Johann Christoph was no longer able to maintain his young brother, and in 1700 Sebastian, with his school friend Georg Erdmann, set out for Lüneburg. There they attended the gymnasium free of charge, in return for which they were obliged to sing daily in the choir of St Michael's church. Like an insatiable sponge the young Bach absorbed the great musical tradition of St Michael's school in Lüneburg and made his way through the contents of its celebrated library of church music.

The French style and the Netherlands art of variation

In Lüneburg Bach became acquainted not only with German choral music, but also with the French language, French culture and French music. For St Michael's school also boasted a 'Ritteracademie', a school for the sons of wealthy nobility where French was spoken and French customs and etiquette were practiced. Concerts of French music were given there frequently by the duke's French orchestra from nearby Celle. Bach was probably taught in Lüneburg by the organist Georg Böhm, a French orientated composer who, like Bach, originated from Thuringia. In the summer holidays Bach sometimes walked 48 kilometres northwards to hear the celebrated organist Reinken play in Hamburg. At the age of 78 this Deventer-born organist and representative of the Amsterdam organ school of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck was still filling St Catherine's church in Hamburg with his breathtaking improvisations. Bach absorbed all these impressions and brought them to fruition in his own organ playing and compositions.

Organist in Arnstadt and Mühlhausen

In 1703 Bach accepted his first real appointment, as organist of the New Church in Arnstadt on his native Thuringian ground. Bach was truly obsessed by the organ at the time, and resolutely refused to rehearse with the boys' choir. The conflict with his employers escalated in 1705 when Bach walked 200 kilometres to Lübeck and stayed there two months longer than agreed to listen to the organ playing and church music of the organist Dietrich Buxtehude. Upon his return to Arnstadt Bach demonstrated his new virtuosic playing during the service, throwing the entire congregation into confusion and making his position in Arnstadt untenable. Moreover, Bach was accused of creeping into the wine cellar during sermons and making music in the church with 'a strange maiden', probably his niece Maria Barbara. After his departure from Arnstadt Bach became organist of St Blasius' church in Mühlhausen in 1707, where he composed organ



works and cantatas, married his niece Maria Barbara, and set off again after only one year; in this year Bach, with his quickly growing reputation as an organ virtuoso and self-willed composer, had outgrown the limited scope of Mühlhausen. The world-famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565 was written during the Mühlhausen period. The piece seems to begin with a flash of lightning, followed by a terrific burst of thunder in the full organ chords; further on too it is so exciting that it has become and remained Bach's most famous organ work. In the year 1708 Bach's career planning took an important step forwards. In both financial and artistic terms he doubled his prospects by accepting a post in Weimar as court organist, chamber musician and concert master at the court of Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Sachsen-Weimar.

The Vivaldi fashion

In Weimar Bach made his first acquaintance with the new Italian concertos by Vivaldi and others. We now know that the duke's nephew Prince Johann Ernst, who studied in Utrecht, purchased large quantities of new music in Amsterdam, particularly concertos by Vivaldi, and unleashed a real Vivaldi rage upon his return to Weimar. Bach was also prompted to arrange Vivaldi concertos for harpsichord solo and to compose his own concertos according to Vivaldi's example. Without ever setting foot in Italy, Bach allowed himself to be carried along by this Vivaldi fashion. The well-known Brandenburg concertos owe their existence largely to Bach's familiarity with Vivaldi's music. And the Violin Concerto in E major bears witness not only to his fascination with Vivaldi but also to his love of the violin, an instrument which he played himself, as well as the organ, harpsichord and clavichord. In this concerto Bach has already left his example Vivaldi far behind him. Beside organ works Bach composed cantatas and concertos in the Italian style in Weimar. From his marriage to Maria Barbara two sons were born in Weimar who were later to become composers: Wilhelm Friedemann (1710) and Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714). Once again, Bach became involved in a conflict with his employer, this time Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Sachsen-Weimar. And again this struggle concerned Bach's artistic freedom, since he also worked for one of the duke's rivals and refused to stop doing so. Bach refused to be ordered around, applied for a position as chapelmaster in Cöthen, but was imprisoned for a month by the duke. Thereafter, in 1717, he was allowed to leave for Cöthen. And so one of the most creative episodes in western music history came to an unbelievable end.

Cöthen

Bach's move to Cöthen brought him more personal and artistic freedom. He became chapelmaster of the court orchestra of Prince Leopold von Anhalt-Cöthen, a fanatical music lover of only 23 years of age. However Calvinist the court may have been, and however strong-willed Leopold's mother, the prince reserved no less than a quarter of the court's expenditure for his orchestra. He frequently joined in on the violin, viola da gamba or harpsichord, playing along with the best virtuosi whom he had bribed away from Berlin or elsewhere. And now he had even managed to contract the phenomenon Bach. The prince would probably be completely forgotten by now, were it not that in Cöthen Bach wrote unforgettable works including the Brandenburg Concertos, the Well-Tempered Clavier part 1, the Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, the Suites



for solo cello, the French and English Suites for the harpsichord, the lute works and lots of other chamber music. His first wife Maria Barbara died there in 1720, leaving the 35-year-old Bach with four children: Catharina Dorothea (aged 12), Wilhelm Friedemann (10), Carl Philipp Emanuel (6) and Johann Gottfried Bernhard (5). Just over a year later Bach married the talented 20-year-old soprano Anna Magdalena Wülcken, with whom he had often made music. Meanwhile he applied for other positions as organist in Hamburg, chapelmaster in Berlin and, as third choice, cantor in Leipzig. This fact is often explained by the cooled musical passion of Prince Leopold after his marriage to the 'unmusical' Princess Friederika Henrietta von Anhalt-Bernburg. More likely is that Bach longed for the big town, for yet more musical challenge and prestige, and for good schools and universities for his intelligent and musical sons.

Leipzig

Our most familiar impression of Bach is that of the cantor of St Thomas' church in Leipzig. For no less than 27 years he was responsible for the church music on Sundays and Feastsdays in the four main churches of Leipzig: St Thomas', St Nicholas', St Peter's and the New Church. Here he composed his many cantatas, his now world-famous St John and St Matthew Passions and the motets. To perform them Bach selected the best chorists from the pupils of the neighbouring St Thomas' school, and students of Leipzig University. Choir practices were held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while on Saturdays there were rehearsals for choir, soloists and orchestra for the cantata services on Sundays. Often, however, there was hardly time to rehearse, and much to Bach's exasperation performances left much to be desired. The enormous number of cantatas which he wrote in Leipzig (probably about 250), and their outstanding quality, forms one of the most remarkable creative outbursts in the history of music. In 1729, the year in which the St Matthew Passion was first performed, Bach became director of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, a company of students and professional musicians founded by Georg Philipp Telemann in 1702. With this group Bach gave weekly concerts on Friday evenings in Zimmermann's coffee shop, performing much chamber music which is now lost, as well as the harpsichord concertos, often with his eldest sons Friedemann and Emanuel, and cantatas. Of the latter the best known is the Coffee Cantata, a sort of musical advertisement for Zimmermann's coffee shop. Moreover, Bach was appointed composer to the court of the Elector of Sachsen in Dresden, for which he composed parts of the B Minor Mass. In the meantime he became the focal point of a growing group of pupils, including Mizler, Kimberger and Agricola, who devoted themselves to theoretical and historical aspects of music. His work with these pupils and with his two eldest sons, the composers Friedemann and Emanuel, exercised a strong influence on later works such as the Goldberg Variations, the Musical Offering, the Well-Tempered Clavier part 2 and the Art of Fugue. These works are severe and old-fashioned, but at the same time free, fantastical and modern. In 1749 the Lutheran church musician Bach completed his impressive B Minor Mass, a Mass in the Roman Catholic tradition. At that time he was probably no longer active as cantor, since the Leipzig authorities were already making moves to appoint a successor. Bach was very nearly blind, probably as a result of cataracts, and was unsuccessfully treated by the English eye-surgeon Taylor. He died on 28 July 1750 after a stroke.



World wonder

In the meantime complete libraries have been filled with books about Bach, and many will follow on this the greatest of musical geniuses of western culture. For we now know: without Bach history would have told an entirely different story. No composer of name in the 19th or 20th century did not devote himself to Bach or feel him breathing down his neck when composing. His two eldest sons, Friedemann and Emanuel, sensed that they could hardly equal the genius of their father. The first acquaintance with Bach's music was a real shock for Haydn and Mozart. Rather late in their careers these Viennese classics were influenced by Bach and adapted their manner of composing. Whilst Bach had been dead for thirty years. Without Bach, Haydn's late string quartets and Mozart's latest symphonies and Requiem would have sounded quite different. Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Debussy, Reger and Hindemith too played and unravelled Bach's works, nourishing their own style and feeling very small next to Bach. Carl Maria von Weber considered Bach's music to be so new and perfect that everything before him lost its significance. Brahms claimed that, if he had had to compose Bach's Chaconne for solo violin, he would have become so shocked and wound up that he would have gone mad. The pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow believed that if all classical music would be lost and only Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier would survive, all music could be built up again from it: 'the Well-Tempered Clavier is the Old Testament and the Piano Sonatas of Beethoven the New, we must believe in both'. And Debussy said: 'Bach is Our Dear Lord of music. Every composer would do well to pray to him before commencing work'. For many composers and musicians the motto has indeed been 'not a day without Bach'. The last project completed by Claude Debussy before he died of lung cancer in 1918 was an arrangement of Bach's Sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord. The world-famous cellist Pablo Casals began each day with a piece from the Well-Tempered Clavier in order to imbibe, to absorb something of Bach's genius. Now, nearly 250 years after his death, Bach has an audience of millions. In Holland alone thousands of singers and musicians are involved in dozens of performances of the St Matthew Passion in Holy Week. And hundreds of thousands listen in churches and concert halls, or gathered around the radio, to what has been called 'the gospel according to Bach'. These CD's offers a resounding impression of this great spirit of our western culture, Johann Sebastian Bach, the severe Baroque craftsman and the expressive Romantic.

Clemens Romijn



BIOGRAPHIES

Amsterdam Bach Soloists

The members of the Amsterdam Bach Soloists are drawn primarily from the leading ranks of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra with additional musicians coming from Frans Brüggen's Orchestra of the 18th Century. The philosophy of Nikolaus Harnoncourt, the renowned interpreter of early music and frequent visitor to the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, has greatly influenced the group. Using modern instruments, the Amsterdam Bach Soloists are dedicated to the recreation of authentic, historically accurate Baroque performance practices. Their tireless pursuit of stylistic purity coupled with minute attention to detail has resulted in distinguished critical acclaim.

Anton Heiller

Anton Heiller (1923-1979) was one of the great keyboard artists of his time. Born in Vienna, he studied composition and keyboard performance at the Vienna Conservatory and in 1945 became professor of organ at the Vienna Academy. He was renowned for his brilliant technique, and improvisational and interpretive artistry on both the organ and the harpsichord. He assembled and supervised the excellent complement of harpsichordists heard here, all of whom were distinguished musicians in their own right.

Antonio Janigro

Antonio Janigro (1918-1989), world famous cellist and conductor, was born in Milan. He studied music first in his native city and then in Paris. Janigro formed I Solisti di Zagreb in 1953 while he was teaching at the Zagreb Conservatory. He led the group in numerous recordings and on tours throughout Europe, the USA, South America and the Soviet Union. He was frequent guest conductor of the major orchestras in Europe and the USA.

Bob van Asperen

Bob van Asperen was born in 1947 in Amsterdam and studied with Gustav Leonhardt. Nowadays he counts as one of the leading musicians in the field of Early Music, playing the harpsichord, clavichord and organ.

He also gained his spurs as a conductor and musicologist.

From 1973 till 1988 he taught harpsichord at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. Today he teaches at the Amsterdam Conservatory, to students from all over the world.





His phenomenal knowledge of the keyboard repertoire of the 17-th and 18-th century puts its stamp on his concert programmes. He regularly tours the European countries, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and Russia. His extensive discography includes the first complete performance of C.P.E. Bach's "Hamburg" Harpsichord Concertos. In this recording Bob van Asperen conducts his own ensemble "Melante Amsterdam". He records for such distinguished labels as EMI, Teldec, Sony and Astrée. For his recordings he received prestigious awards such as Edison prize, Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik and the Cecilia Prize.

Burkhard Glaetzner

Burkhard Glaetzner was born in Posen and studied the oboe with Prof. Hans Werner Wätzig in Berlin. Between 1966 and 1982 he was principal oboe of the Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra. Since 1992 he has been teaching at the College of Arts in Berlin. Since 1987 he has been the director of the Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum Leipzig, with whom he has performed in Europe, Asia and America, and has made many award-winning recordings.

Christiane Wuyts

Christiane Wuyts was born in Antwerp, the town of the harpsichord, and of the Ruckers, a family of great instrument-maker.

She was a pupil of masters of the harpsichord in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, and went into organ music in just as much depth, alternating with concerts and recordings for Belgian radio and Dutch television. Her study of baroque music and her research into its performance made her a well-known specialist of 17th and 18th century works, especially renowned for her renditions on ancient instruments. In 1968 Christiane Wuyts, co-founder of the baroque ensemble Camerata Belgica, undertook several concert tours throughout Europe. As a soloist, she performed in over 400 concerts.

Subsequently, her brief absence from the concert halls allowed her the time to devote herself to an in-depth study of one of the least well-known periods of the life and works of Bach, the missing link: the early works.

During these years of research, Christiane Wuyts lived with the constant concern for accuracy, subjecting each score, each manuscript, each bar or note to meticulous analysis. Then, aided by her formidable and outstanding instrumental technique she applied this same conscientiousness to the performance of these twenty-nine unrecorded works.



The Consort of London, Robert Haydon Clark

The Consort of London, whose players are amongst the most highly regarded musicians in the UK, specialise in repertoire of the late Baroque and early classical period. Their Director is Robert Haydon Clark, who at sixteen won a scholarship to study violin with Yfrah Neaman at the Guildhall School of Music in London. He also studied baroque music with Prof. Thurston-Dart and quartets with William Pleeth. Whilst there he won several prizes and an A.G.S.M. diploma with distinction. After college he became a principal player in the Menuhin Festival Orchestra and played as a soloist with Yehudi Menuhin.

Christine Schornsheim

After attending a school for musically gifted children in Berlin from 1969 till 1976 she studied at the Hans Eisler College of Music in Berlin from 1976 till 1982. She continued to study the harpsichord with Walter Heinz Bernstein in Leipzig. She attended masterclasses by Gustav Leonhardt, Ton Koopman, Johann Sonnleitner and Andreas Staier. Prof. Christine Schornsheim teaches harpsichord at the Leipzig College of Music. She regularly appears with the Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum, and is a member of the Akademie für Alte Musik in Berlin, I Solisti Instrumentali in Leipzig and the Kammerorchester C.P.E. Bach.

Emmy Verhey

Emmy Verhey studied with Oskar Back, Herman Krebbers, Wolfgang Schneiderhan and David Oistrach. In 1966 she was the youngest prizewinner of the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. She was first-prize winner of the Oskar Back Competition and the Tromp Competition. Emmy Verhey played in all important venues of Europe, the USA and worked with conductors like Bernstein, Chailly, Dorati, Haitink, Järvi, Marriner, Mata, Menuhin, Tennstedt and Vonk. She played with such distinguished soloists as Yehudi Menuhin, David and Igor Oistrach, Mischa Maisky and Antonio Meneses. She made many CD recordings. She founded the chamber orchestra Camerata Antonio Lucio, with whom she gives concerts and makes recordings.





Holland Boys Choir

Holland Boys Choir was founded in 1984 by Pieter Jan Leusink, who has been its conductor ever since. For its musical home the choir has the medieval St. Nicholaschurch in the almost eight centuries old little city of Elburg. Thanks to the intensity of the rehearsals and the numerous concerts, Holland Boys Choir has acquired a unique status, both nationally and internationally. Besides making concert trips, among others to England (Great Cathedrals Tour and St. Martin-in-the-Fields), France (Paris, Notre Dame) and Latvia (Riga Dom), the choir was also given the honour to perform for Her Majesty Queen Beatrix. The many integral performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion and the CD recordings of this majestic works resulted in a strong affinity with the great composer, which has led up to the largest and indeed greatest project in the history of this unique choir, the integral recordings of all the Sacred Cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach.



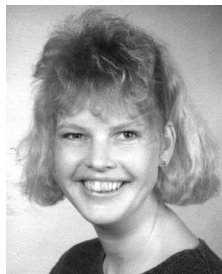


Ruth Holton, soprano

studied at Clare College, Cambridge. With John Eliot Gardiner, she made CD recordings of Bach's St. John Passion. As a soloist, she has sung at major European festivals, including those of Flanders, Cheltenham and Bath. Ruth Holton has performed with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Gustav Leonardt in Rome and Vienna, and with Fretwork in Finland and Germany.

Marjon Strijk, soprano

studied with Jeanne Compagnen and Eugene Ditetweg. As a soloist, she has contributed to famous oratorios. Besides she has appeared in many concerts and has made several CD-and TV-recordings. Marjon Strijk has given various recitals of songs and lieder. With Pieter Jan Leusink she recorded Willem de Fesch's Missa Paschalis as well as the Mozart Requiem.



Sytse Buwalda, countertenor / alto

studied at the Sweelinck School of Music in Amsterdam. He has made musical appearances all over Europe and worked with conductors such as Frans Brüggen, Gustav Leonhardt, Sigiswald Kuijken and Sir David Willcocks. With Max van Egmond, he made a tour of Japan, singing Bach solocantatas in Tokyo under the famous Japanese conductors Maasaki Suzuki and Yoshio Watanabe.

Knuth Schoch, tenor

studied at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg and received the prestigious Maselfield Stipendium. He has performed throughout Europe and Japan with Sigiswald Kuijken and Ivor Bolton. Knut Schoch was invited to renowned music festivals like the Händelfestspiele in Göttingen, Les Fêtes d' Automne in Paris and the Wiener Festwochen.





Nico van der Meel, tenor

studied at the Rotterdam Conservatory.

He made two CD recordings of Bach's St. John Passion, one conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken and the other with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, conducted by Frans Brüggen. With the latter, he also recorded Bach's St. Matthew Passion, singing the Evangelist. He has worked with distinguished conductors such as Harnoncourt, Leonhardt and Gardiner.

Marcel Beekman, tenor

The Dutch tenor Marcel Beekman studied singing at the Conservatory in Zwolle, The Netherlands.

He developed into a much sought after soloist, particularly in the concert and oratorio repertoire. Marcel Beekman worked with the Berliner Symphoniker, the Orchestra of the 18th Century and Musica antiqua Köln.

Moreover Marcel Beekman gives recitals especially of contemporary music.



Bas Ramselaar, bass

studied at the Utrecht Conservatory. He has developed into an often invited soloist and on the European stages, among which the Festivals of Berlin and Bruges. He also gave performances in San Antonio, Texas and worked with such conductors as Roy Goodman, Uwe Gronostay, Reinbert de Leeuw and Robert King.



Pieter Jan Leusink, conductor

studied at the Zwolle Conservatory and followed masterclasses with Sir David Willcocks.

With Holland Boys Choir he built up an international reputation, partly on account of many CD recordings, like St. Matthew Passion - J.S. Bach, Messiah - G.F. Handel, Requiem - W.A. Mozart, Requiem - G. Fauré, Gloria - A. Vivaldi and Stabat Mater - G.B. Pergolesi.

As a live conductor he created great enthusiasm at festivals in Wales, Italy, Latvia, England and France.

His predilection for J.S. Bach's compositions also originates from the frequent performances of the St. Matthew Passion under his baton.

His unique approach of recording CD's warrants a bright, dynamic interpretation of Bach's Cantatas.



Jacob Lindberg

Jacob Lindberg was born in Sweden and read music at Stockholm University. In 1972 he came to London to study lute and guitar at the Royal College of Music where he decided towards the end of his studies to devote himself to Renaissance and Baroque music. In 1985 Jakob Lindberg founded the Dowland Consort, an instrumental ensemble which he directs and specialises in 16th and 17th century music. He is now in great demand as a performer and has given recitals in Europe, Canada, the U.S.A. and in Japan. He also has made numerous recordings for solo lute, for lute with string ensemble (works by Vivaldi and Haydn) and for lute in consort. As an expert in continuo techniques Jakob Lindberg is often called upon to play lute and theorbo for baroque ensembles and has performed with most major early music groups in England. Jakob Lindberg was selected to succeed Diana Poulton as Professor of Lute at the Royal College of Music and he has held this post since 1979.



Johannette Zomer

The Dutch soprano Johannette Zomer began her studies at the Sweelinck Conservatorium Amsterdam in 1990 with Charles van Tassel, after having worked as a microbiology analyst for several years. In June '97 she was awarded her Performance Diploma.

Johannette regularly gives recitals with pianist Bart van de Roer and forte-piano specialist Arthur Schoonderwoerd and is also member of the Early Music groups Compania Vocale, La Primavera and Antequera.

As a soloist she participates regularly in concert and Cd recordings (with a.o. Bach's Mass in B minor and St. Matthew Passion) and she has worked with Baroque specialists such as Philippe Herreweghe, Paul McCreesh, Jos van Immerseel, Sigiswald Kuijken, Thomas Hengelbrock and René Jacobs. Johannette Zomer is also active in opera productions, such as Salomé (R. Strauss) with Gergiev, Ligeti's Le Grand Macabre with Reinbert de Leeuw and with Cantus Cölln in a staged performance of Monteverdi Madrigals. Under Ton Koopman she sings the role of Pamina.

Léon Berben

Léon Berben was born in 1970. He studied organ and harpsichord in Amsterdam and Den Haag with Gustav Leonhardt, Bob van Asperen, R. Jiskoot and Ton Koopman. He received solo diplomas for both instruments.

Léon Berben performs regularly with well known baroque orchestras/ensembles and soloists, such as The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra (Ton Koopman), Freiburger Barockorchester, La Real Camera (Barcelona), Gottfried von der Goltz, E. Gatti and E. Moreno. He performs both as a soloists and as a basso-continuo player in Europe and Japan. He made several radio and CD recordings (Hungaroton, Glossa, among others). He gave courses in Szombathely and Budapest.





Luis Otavio Santos

Luis Otavio Santos was born in Juiz de Fora, Brazil, and coming from a family of musicians started his studies at very early age, first the piano, and later the violin. His interest in early music and period instruments led him to The Netherlands, to study at the Royal Conservatory The Hague with Sigiswald Kuijken (baroque violin) and Jacques Ogg (harpsichord).

He was leader of the school baroque orchestra and he received his solo diploma in 1996, with the highest honours.

Luis Otavio Santos has an intense professional life in Europe, being a member of important groups in the early music field, such as La Petite Bande (as a leader and soloist), Ricercar Consort, Le Concert Francais, and De Nederlandse Bach Vereeniging. With these groups he made many radio and CD recordings, as well as TV recordings.

Luis Otavio Santos is since 1997 professor at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole, Italy and the Royal Conservatory of Brussels.



Menno van Delft

Menno van Delft, born in 1963 in Amsterdam, studied harpsichord, organ and musicology at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and at the University of Utrecht. Amongst his professors were Gustav Leonhardt, Bob van Asperen, Piet Kee, Jacques van Oortmerssen and Willem Elders.

In 1988 Menno van Delft won the clavichord prize at the C.Ph.E. Bach Competition in Hamburg and subsequently made his debut at the Holland Festival Early Music Utrecht. He gave concerts and masterclasses throughout Europe and the U.S.A. and made numerous recordings for radio and television.

As continuo player and soloist Menno van Delft performs with Pieter Wispelwey, Bart Schneemann and Jacques Zoon and with the Nederlandse Opera, Al Ayre Español, Combattimento Consort, Nederlands Blazersensemble, Koninklijk Concertgebouw Orkest, Nederlands





Kamerkoor, Nederlandse Bachvereniging and recorded for such labels as Globe, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Chandos, Channel Classics, Capriccio, EMI and Decca.

With Johannes Leertouwer and the Schönbrunn Ensemble he recorded Bach's six violin sonatas and the Musical Offering. He is taking part in a project with the complete keyboard works of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck.

In 1992 Menno van Delft founded "Das Zimmermannsche Caffee", an ensemble that focuses on orchestral and chamber music from the Rococo period. With his vocal ensemble "Jan van Ruusbroeck" he performs late renaissance music of composers like William Byrd, Peter Philips and Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. Together with Siebe Henstra he forms the clavichord duo "Der prallende Doppelschlag".

Menno van Delft teaches harpsichord and clavichord at the Conservatory of Amsterdam (formerly Sweelinck Conservatory).

Netherlands Bach Collegium

consists of the finest baroque specialists in Europe. With Pieter Jan Leusink conducting, the orchestra made many CD recordings, which got favourable reviews by both national and international music critics. The long experience in concert and recording practice of the various musicians with regard to baroque music, in particular Bach's compositions, guarantee a characteristic performance, marked by a great sense of authenticity. This performance of the Bach Cantatas gets an extra dimension by the integral use of period instruments.

VIOLIN John Wilson Meyer (concertmaster), Laura Johnson, Alida Schat, Annelies van der Vegt, Mimi Mitchel, Elin Eriksson, Judith Steenbrink, Rachael Beesley, Wanda Visser.

VIOLA Jan Willem Vis, Simon Murphy, Örzse Adam

VIOLONCELLO Frank Wakelkamp

DOUBLE-BASS Robert Franenberg, Maggie Urquhart, Jan Hollestelle

OBOE Peter Frankenberg, Ofer Frenkel, Eduard Wesley, Nico de Gier

BASSOON Trudy van der Wulp, Henriëtte Bakker

NATURAL TRUMPET Susan Williams

NATURAL HORN Teunis de Zwart

TRAVERSO Kate Clark, Marion Moonen

ORGAN Rien Voskuilen, Vaughan Schlepp, Bert Mooiman

CHURCH ORGAN Martin Mans



Pieter Dirksen

Pieter Dirksen (1961) performs as soloist on both organ and harpsichord and as continuo player with diverse chamber ensembles. He completed his musicological studies with honours in 1987. He has since then published a large number of essays and editions in the field of baroque keyboard music, edited "The Harpsichord and its Repertoire" (Utrecht, 1992) and wrote a monograph on Bach's "Kunst der Fuge" (Wilhelmshaven, 1994). In 1996 he received his doctorate "cum laude" with a dissertation on the keyboard music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck; in 1997 the book received the Dutch "Praemium Erasmianum". A member of Combattimento Consort, Capella Figuralis and the Utrecht Baroque Consort, he has also performed with the Nederlandse Bachvereniging, the Stuttgarter Baroque Orchestra and the Hamburg Telemann Orchestra. He appeared in most European countries, the United States and Canada, and regularly gives masterclasses in chamber music and keyboard playing. Pieter Dirksen teaches at the Göteborg Organ Summer Academy. As a soloist he specializes in the rich 17th century repertoire as well as in Bach's music.



Pieter-Jan Belder

Pieter-Jan Belder studied recorder with Ricardo Kanji at the Royal Conservatory at The Hague, and harpsichord with Bob van Asperen at the Amsterdam Sweelinck Conservatory, where he joined the staff between 1990 and 1995. He graduated in 1990 and has had a career since as a harpsichordist, clavichordist, organist and recorder player. He played at several international festivals, such as the Barcelona "Festival de Musica Antiga", and the Berlin "Tage für alte Musik". He plays regularly with such ensembles as the Radio Chamber Orchestra, Il Fondamento, De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, The Spanish ensemble "Ex Tempore", and his own Ensemble Amphion. He worked with conductors such as Frans Brüggen, Ton Koopman, Thomas Hengelbrock, Paul Dombrecht and René Jacobs, and made many radio, television and CD recordings. He recorded Bach's Goldberg Variations, Das musikalische Opfer and Das Wohltemperierte Clavier as well as as CD with harpsichord works of Sweelinck. Belder is organist of the Koepelkerk of Arnhem. In 1997 he was awarded third prize in the Hamburg NDR Music Prize harpsichord competition.