



July 2014  
Edition 7

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

### Melbourne Bach Forum 2014

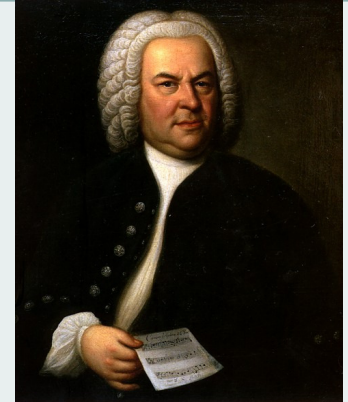
Dear friends and Bach enthusiasts,

Almost 8 years ago the idea of a 'Bach Centre' at The University of Melbourne was born following the visit of Thomaskantor Georg Christoph Biller to Melbourne as 2<sup>nd</sup> Visiting Music Director St Johns Southgate in August 2006. It was the first time I met Dr. Janice Stockigt. I was immediately struck by her enormous knowledge of and enthusiasm for 'all things Bach'. Now, many years later and after a successful symposium in September 2012 we are looking forward to a series of events: 20 presentations on the theme of 'Bach Studies in Australia', 3 concerts, a public lecture by Prof. Christoph Wolff and a panel discussion on the B-minor Mass.

On behalf of the Forum Organisers and the Australian Bach Society I would like to welcome our visitors from far and near to Melbourne. I am sure J.S. Bach will be smiling at us in the Southern Hemisphere...

*Hans Schroeder*

President Australian Bach Society Inc.



### Australian Bach Society Inc

Founded in 2011 as an initiative of the German Lutheran Trinity Church East Melbourne.

Our **mission** is to cultivate and disseminate a local appreciation of the music of J.S. Bach, his family and contemporaries, as well as sacred/classical music in general by arranging performances, lectures and other activities.



### J.S. Bach – Timeless!

#### Melbourne Bach Forum – Bach Studies in Australia

Admission free - More: [www.melbournebachforum.com](http://www.melbournebachforum.com)

#### Highlights include:

**'J.S. Bach in Leipzig'** Public Lecture by eminent Bach scholar Prof. Christoph Wolff (Harvard/Leipzig)

Melba Hall, University of Melbourne

Friday 25 July 2014 5:00 pm

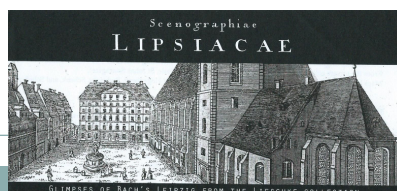


**'B Minor-Mass'** – Panel Discussion with a distinguished panel including The Very Rvd Dr. Andreas Löwe, Dean of Melbourne St. Paul's Cathedral and Barry Jones AO

St Johns Southgate Saturday 26 July 2014 5:00 pm



**'Scenographiae Lipsiacaе'** – Glimpses of Bach's Leipzig from Lieschke Collection, Exhibition 25 July – 10 August at St Johns Southgate



### Information & Contact

Australian Bach Society Inc.

22 Parliament Place

East Melbourne VIC 3002

[www.bach.org.au](http://www.bach.org.au)

[info@bach.org.au](mailto:info@bach.org.au)

**President:** Hans Schroeder

Mob. 0425 802 046

**Publicity:** Thomas Bell

Mob. 0432 227 563

## A BACH CELLO JOURNEY - by Richard Narrowway

After 5 years of studying in the United States at Northwestern University in Chicago and the renowned Juillard School in New York, **Australian cellist, Richard Narrowway**, will return to his homeland to complete a project revolving around the Bach cello suites. For four weeks in **May and June of 2015**, Narrowway will travel around Australia performing and presenting the **entire Bach Cello Suites** in all kinds of spaces - including concert venues, schools, public markets, churches, and shopping malls - in an effort to spread the music of Bach via performance and education. Traveling with him will be a team of highly qualified sound recordists and videographers, who will work with Richard to put together a high-quality video recording of the suites as well as a documentary-style production of the journey.



Inspired by the spiritual essence of the **Aboriginal “walkabout”**, Narrowway considers this journey a unique endeavor - one that will offer an unprecedented opportunity to further build his relationship with the suites whilst at the same time allowing him to share the music with communities and schools around his home country through free masterclasses, presentations and outreach projects around Australia. In addition, he will perform the complete suites in a series of concerts to be held in each city of his tour.

Richard’s team will start in **Darwin** with a concert and masterclass at the Charles Darwin University in collaboration with the CDU Centre for Youth and Community Music. En route to Melbourne, they will stop in **Alice Springs** and her surrounding areas, where his focus will be on Aboriginal communities, as well as in **Adelaide** where he will gear his presentations toward youth orchestras and schools. In **Melbourne**, the Australian Bach Society will organize similar events. Finally Richard will end his journey in his ‘home town’ **Sydney**, a final concert featuring the entire suites at the St. Andrew’s Cathedral in the CBD.

Please visit his website for regular updates on the project: [www.richardnarrowway.com](http://www.richardnarrowway.com)

### Special thanks to:

**Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult Christoph Wolff** is Professor at Harvard University and until most recently served as Director of Bach-Archiv Leipzig. Born and educated in Germany he studied organ and historical keyboard instruments, musicology and art history. Prof. Wolff is recipient of various international prizes and several honorary degrees. He has published widely on the history of music from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. *‘Johann Sebastian Bach – The Learned Musician’* (New York 2000 – translated into ten languages) is the most prominent of his recent books.



**Prof. Kerry Murphy** is Head of Musicology, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. Her research interests focus chiefly on 19<sup>th</sup>-century French music and music criticism, and colonial Australian music history. She has a particular interest in opera and in reception studies. She has been productive in attracting international scholars to the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (through a number of grant schemes); this has enriched the scholarly and research climate for staff and postgraduate students. She is currently researching the impact of travelling European musicians on Australian musical life in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Dr. Janice (Jan) Stockigt** is a Principal Fellow at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne. There, she supervises post graduate students and continues researching Catholic music and its performance during the reigns of the Saxon Electors as Kings of Poland: August II (‘der Starke’) and August III. Several publications include her prize-winning monograph on the life and music of Dresden court composer Jan Dismas Zelenka and a chapter in *Exploring Bach’s B-Minor Mass. In association with Samantha Owens and Barbara Reul she recently edited and contributed a chapter to the widely-acclaimed Music at German Courts 1715–1760.*



## A CAPITAL BACH JOURNEY— by Garth Mansfield OAM Hon FGCM

A visit to Leipzig and Bach towns is a sure trigger for a greatly enhanced appreciation of JS Bach and his music. My wife and I were privileged to join a Martin Randall tour to the 2008 Bachfest in Leipzig and to arrange self-organised visits to towns in Saxony and Thuringia as well as Dresden.

It wasn't long before I felt I just had to share the rich experience with University of the Third Age (U3A) friends in Canberra where I was Director of the Wesley Music Centre. In 2009 I ran two 10 week courses with sessions of 2 hours each (plus morning tea) on "In the steps of JS Bach". These involved about 70 minutes of music from CDs and DVDs with the balance of the time used for speaking about highlights in Bach's life journey and his works, plus questions and discussion.

To date there have been 11 courses and 100 sessions. They have covered virtually every category of Bach's music including keyboard, instrumental ensemble, solo instrumental and choral works. The last two courses focussed on the Leipzig Collegium Musicum years 1729 to 1741 and the hectic period of composition of church cantatas and passions from 1723 to 1728.



The first course began with 25 members. The numbers grew rapidly as members networked their friends about the inspirational Bach music. For the last course 80 members were registered.

During the last course I conducted a brief survey of opinions about Bach's music and its impact. They tend to confirm the experience of many people who have come to know and love Bach from the wonderful recordings now available, broadcasts of ABC Classic FM radio and concert performances.

Readers may be interested in a brief summary of the thoughts of 41 folks who completed the survey.

In response to a question about their knowledge of Bach before attending the courses they said:

Negligible – 12%  
Limited – 69%  
Good – 17%  
Extensive – 2%

In answer to a question about aspects of particular interest, apart from Bach's music, they responded as follows:

The historical and social context – 85%  
Bach's life journey – 85%  
Music of contemporaries – 50%  
Music of the wider Bach family (ancestors, relations and sons) – 37%

In relation to particular features of Bach's music that impressed them most, 18 members gave a top ranking as follows:

The sheer beauty of melody, harmony and /or counterpoint – 44%  
Depth, richness, multi-layering and complexity – 22%  
Expressions of heart, mind or spirit and physical states – 11%  
Use of instruments in interplay with each other or voices – 11%

If we include all those unable to give rankings (23), the entire group of 41 ticked particular features as follows:

Depth, richness, multi-layering and/or complexity – 83%  
Liveliness, exuberance and jubilation contrasted with opposites of peace and quietness – 76%  
The sheer beauty of melody, harmony and/or counterpoint – 73%  
The use of instruments in interplay with each other or voices – 73%  
Expressions of heart, mind or spirit and physical states – 56%  
The inherent energy and rhythms – 54%  
The inherent creativity or innovation – 49%

Inspirational and challenging works for performers and listeners – 34%

In response to a question about general observations on Bach, the following are strongly representative of the sentiments:

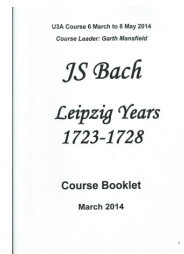
- “The more I listen to and understand Bach’s music, the more I want to hear and know”
- “Listening to Bach is very satisfying to the brain as well as the emotions”
- “Two hours per week of this gorgeous music has to be doing marvellous things for my brain and wellbeing”
- “Listening to Bach’s music gives a sense of the sublime washing over one – almost like going to Church without the sermon”
- “Travelled to Leipzig after being inspired to ‘do’ Bach tourism. Brilliant.”
- “Opened up a new musical experience for me”
- “Enriching our lives”

It is heartening to hear such deeply felt appreciation of the Bach experience. Many course members have been motivated to buy multiple CDs, DVDs, a selection of books published since 2000 and quite number have joined tours or self-organised trips to Leipzig and other Bach towns.

Some reactions have been somewhat surprising. I knew that people would be attracted by the beauty, energy and dance rhythms galore. I didn’t anticipate the growing interest in and love of works which are multi-layered or complex in a variety of ways, nor did I expect so much interest in the interplay between instruments and voices in the cantatas. Listeners who have heard little Bach in their lifetime have said they can relate to and indeed enjoy the complexities and creativity once they are given some pointers as to what to listen for.

In the last course we heard excerpts from 65 of the numerous cantatas composed between 1723 and 1728. This opened many ears for the first time to the amazing creations. No one said any of it was boring. On the contrary, no one disputed the claim that we were listening to the works of an unfathomable genius.

I hope our experience will inspire others to organise or participate in sessions that can lift the spirits and release the almost indescribable joy in travelling through the universe of Bach’s music. (May 2014)



**Garth Mansfield’s** musical interests began with studying the organ at age 11 at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In addition to careers in teaching, public service and private enterprise, he was successively organist and choir director at Canberra’s St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and Wesley Uniting Church for five decades. In 2002, his dream of establishing a centre for fine musical performance for the Canberra community was realised. As the inaugural Director of the Wesley Music Centre in a volunteer capacity, Garth has seen the Centre’s music room’s reputation cemented as a superb acoustic space and a place where aspiring young musicians are nurtured and supported.

## UPCOMING BACH EVENTS IN MELBOURNE

**J.S. Bach ‘Weihnachts-Oratorium’** (Christmas Oratorio) Melbourne Chamber Choir and Orchestra, conductor: Dr. David Kram

**Saturday 6 December 2014** 3:00 pm German Church East Melbourne

Bookings: [www.trybooking.com/ESUI](http://www.trybooking.com/ESUI)

### Vocal Ensemble Nobiles Leipzig

This sensational ensemble of five previous ‘Thomaner-boys’ will commence their Concert Tour 2015 in Melbourne (followed by Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney and New Zealand) presenting

**Eine Deutsche Messe ( A German Mass)** – works by Schubert, Josquin de Prez, Tallis, Biller and others **Sunday 8 March 2015 7:00 pm** German Church East Melbourne

**Leipziger Liedertafel Tuesday 10 March 2015, 7:00 pm** The Chapter House

