



October 2014  
Edition 8

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

### Melbourne Bach Forum 2014 (2)

Dear friends and Bach enthusiasts,

'I am sure J.S. Bach will be smiling at us in the Southern Hemisphere... - with these words I concluded my welcome message in the last Newsletter. And certainly J.S. Bach was smiling at us.

Here are some of many comments: *'I hear the weekend was a stunning success'* and , *"it was a most enjoyable experience with great music, stimulating talks and opportunities to meet like-minded Bach lovers. It was particularly interesting to have Christoph Wolff there. His contributions sealed the ultimate success of the various sessions.'*

And Prof. Christoph Wolff remarked: *'I felt well in Melbourne amongst old and new-found friends. You can count on my support to foster the ABS' growth.'*

Thanks to your support we will continue to fulfil our mission: *to cultivate and disseminate a local appreciation of the music of J.S. Bach .*

*Hans Schroeder*

President Australian Bach Society Inc.

### Not to be missed:

The '**Weihnachtsoratorium**' (Christmas Oratorio) was written by J.S. Bach for the Christmas season of 1734/35 and performed at St. Nicholas in Leipzig. The next performance was not until 17 December 1857 in Berlin. Today it is one of the essentials on the Christmas Concert calendar in Germany.

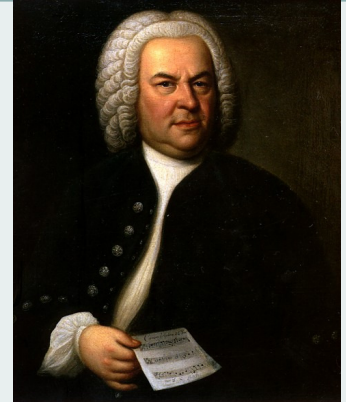
The oratorio is in six parts telling the Nativity story through texts of the apostles Matthew and Luke, as well as through traditional or newly written texts. Bach is credited with shaping the text and selecting the Biblical passage in such a way that the work unfolds logically. This gives the piece a musically dramatic and compelling text unity that ensures its timeless appeal.

The Australian Bach Society is proud to present this rarely performed work in Australia in the historic **German Church East Melbourne**, performed by the **Melbourne Chamber Choir**, Children and a hand-picked instrumental ensemble, conducted by Dr. David Kram.

**Saturday 6 December, 3 – 5:00 pm** German Church East Melbourne VIC 3002

Tickets: \$ 40, \$ 30 (concession), children (under the age of 10): \$ 10

Bookings: [www.trybooking.com/ESUI](http://www.trybooking.com/ESUI) - Info: [www.bach.org.au](http://www.bach.org.au)



### 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.



### Information & Contact

Australian Bach Society Inc.  
22 Parliament Place  
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[www.bach.org.au](http://www.bach.org.au)

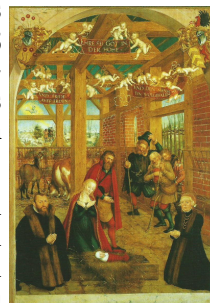
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## Grand goals for Melbourne’s newest chamber choir

*Polyphonic Voices is set to close its inaugural year on the highest of notes with Magnificat!, a performance of J.S. Bach’s Magnificat (BWV 243a). But what makes this group stand out from the other choirs in and around Melbourne?*



Drawing predominantly from the wealth of talent in the College and Church choirs of Melbourne, **Polyphonic Voices** aims to perform the finest choral music at the highest standard. It’s a professional-quality group, made up of 20 seasoned choristers who know all the ins and outs of the standard repertoire and are seeking to work at the next level.

The name Polyphonic Voices stems from the word ‘polyphony’, denoting the music of intricately interweaved melodies that one associates with the great composers of the Baroque period. *Thomas Bland*, president of the committee, notes that, “The name is a symbol for the talented individuals who have combined to make this exceptional choir.”

Under Artistic Director Mr *Michael Fulcher*, the group performed to packed houses at both its major concerts this year. Furthermore, with each set of new repertoire the committee of Polyphonic Voices seeks to create a real event – something more than your average concert. “We’ve finished our planning for 2015 and are really excited about what we’re putting on offer,” says Tom.

An important part of the group’s work is taking the best music of the Anglican choral tradition and performing it in a new setting. However they do not so limit themselves. “The passion and precision that have become synonymous with College Choirs can be applied to choral music of any style and era,” says Tom. Indeed, the group’s 2014 concert, **A Midwinter Christmas**, featured a medley by The Idea of North as well as several jazz arrangements of Irving Berlin classics – one of *Michael Fulcher’s* former incarnations was as a jazz pianist. “Audiences should be able to expect the highest quality of performance, regardless of the repertoire.”

Polyphonic Voices’ final concert for the year gives the group an opportunity to live up to its name. “Bach’s *Magnificat* is a true masterpiece,” says Tom. “To perform it at this Melbourne landmark alongside such talented musicians will be a one-off experience.”

### **Magnificat! the song of Mary**

St Paul’s Cathedral Melbourne 7:30pm Saturday 15 November 2014

Tickets from: [www.polyphonicvoices.com](http://www.polyphonicvoices.com)



Photo: © Andre Stefan White

## Melbourne Bach Forum 2014 - Impressions



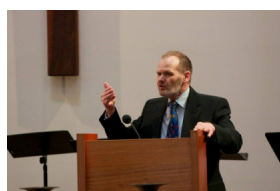
Lecture Prof. Christoph Wolff ‘J.S. Bach in Leipzig’



Vincenz Bittner admiring Lipsicidae exhibition



From left: Prof. Margaret Sheil, Provost University Melbourne, Michael Pearce SC, Honorary Consul General Melbourne, Mrs. and Mr. Josef Reichhardt, Deputy German Ambassador Canberra, Prof. Christoph Wolff, Hans Schroeder and Frauke Tyrrell, ABS



Graham Lieschke ‘Bach cantatas in Melbourne’



Front, from left: Janice Stockigt, MCM, Samantha Owens, UQ, Kerry Murphy, MCM. Behind: Prof. Christoph Wolff and Hans Schroeder

## HIP – Another buzzword in musical performance? – Interview with Rachael Beesley



*Rachael Beesley* is one of Australia's finest violinists and a highly sought after concertmaster, director and educator. Internationally known as a leader in Historically Informed Performance (HIP), she has worked with some of Europe's most distinguished ensembles. Since returning to Australia in 2009 she has been involved in a growing number of

projects, the most recent a very rare soloistic performance of J.S. Bach's '**Mass in B minor**' by The Song Company and chamber ensemble Ironwood combined featuring one voice per part vocal scoring. –

ABS Committee Member *Meredith Beardmore* spoke to Rachael.

### **What drew you to Historically Informed Performance?**

As a performing musician, I am constantly studying and researching composers and the performance practices of the times, as well as discovering and rediscovering repertoire on period instruments. By learning about and absorbing the history of the music, I enjoy the challenges this creates as well as the versatility this gives to me as a performer and the ultimate affect on audiences.

### **What are the differences in baroque and modern violins?**

Depending on the repertoire and requirements of the performance, there are many differences in the violins and bows as well as the setups and pitch, which affect the way in which the violin speaks. But it is worth noting that the changes in the design and setup of the instrument over the centuries wasn't so much a development, as it was an 'ideal' for each period of repertoire, created by the makers and players of the time, inspired by new compositional requirements.

### **How does this affect your approach to each instrument?**

Every period and style of music from the Baroque, Classical & Romantic repertoire requires great sensitivity of phrasing, attention to harmony and subtle use of the bow, to speak in the language of the composer. So the different instruments and bows greatly influence the tempi, articulation, dynamics, phrasing and expression of the music.

**The Historically Informed Performance movement has been going strong for several decades now and has been continually evolving.**

### **How do you think it has changed since you've started and where do you see it going?**

Recently we have lost many great pioneers in the field of Early Music with Leonhardt, Brügggen and Hogwood, so I am eternally grateful for the wonderful direction and support I was given by my teachers in Europe, Sigiswald Kuijken and Elizabeth Wallfisch and the wonderful musical path this has enabled me to follow. As a teacher myself, I now see what an amazing difference HIP has on young musicians and the broad musical path they can follow as a result of these pioneers.

### **How do you think this movement has affected the broader community of classical musicians?**

Greater awareness and appreciation of the repertoire, performance practices and sound worlds created on period instruments has enabled all classical musicians to make informed choices but continued HIP education is paramount to enable classical music to continue to flourish and enlighten audiences.

### **And how do you think Bach fits into this?**

JS Bach's music is the cornerstone of Baroque and Classical repertoire therefore extensive performance knowledge of the repertoire and performance practices before and during Bach's lifetime are essential to understanding his music. Bach's music is an inspirational art form, which continues to engage, invigorate and move both performer and listener.





### More about Rachael Beesley:

*In Australia Rachael performs as guest concertmaster with leading period ensembles including the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and for Pinchgut Opera, Opera Australia, Victorian Opera as well as the St John and St Matthew Passions presented by the Melbourne Recital Centre. Rachael is a member of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and regularly performs with the chamber music ensembles Ludovico's Band, Salut! Baroque and Quartz. As a guest director she regularly performs in New Zealand with NZ Barok. In 2006, Rachael co-founded the ensemble Ironwood and has recently co-launched orchestra seventeen88, both ensembles extending the HIP influence into the Classical and Romantic repertoire.*

*Alongside Rachael's impressive performance credentials, she is a passionate educator and teaches at the Sydney and Melbourne Conservatoriums of Music, the School of Music Monash University and is the Kate Buchdahl Distinguished Artist in Residence at the ANU School of Music, Canberra. Rachael was recently involved in the recent Melbourne Bach Forum, directing a concert at Melba Hall with students of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music: **Orchestral Music of the Bach Family** (Eisenach, Leipzig, Hamburg). (photo:right)*



The Australian Bach Society is very grateful to Rachael for this interview.

Some links: <http://www.rachaelbeesley.com> and [www.ironwoodchamberensemble.com](http://www.ironwoodchamberensemble.com)

## UPCOMING BACH EVENTS IN MELBOURNE

### **Magnificat! – the Song of Mary**

Including J.S. Bach 'Magnificat' in E-flat major BWV 243a

Polyphonic Voices, joined by Voices New Zealand and outstanding soloists and instrumentalists, conducted by Michael Fulcher

**Saturday 15 November 7:30 pm** St Paul's Cathedral

Bookings: [www.polyphonicvoices.com/magnificat/](http://www.polyphonicvoices.com/magnificat/)

### **Advent Festival Eucharist 'O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort' BWV 20**

For 3 soloists, chorus, strings, 3 oboes, trumpet and continuo

Choir of Newman College & Newman Baroque Orchestra, conducted by Gary Ekkel

**Sunday 30 November 9:00 am**, St Johns Southgate

Info: [www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au](http://www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au)

### **J.S. Bach Weihnachtsoratorium – Christmas Oratorio** BWV 248

The essential Christmas story, presented by the Australian Bach Society and performed by the Melbourne Bach Choir, Children and an Instrumental Ensemble, conducted by Dr. David Kram

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

Bookings: [www.trybooking.com/ESUI](http://www.trybooking.com/ESUI) - Info: [www.bach.org.au](http://www.bach.org.au)

**And: Sensational Vocal Ensemble Nobiles in Melbourne 6 - 10 March 2015**