

Forthcoming concerts

Saturday - 18th July - 7:30 pm

1685

Early music in a beautiful setting

Waddingworth Church

(It's between Wragby and Horncastle! "Waddingworth, Lincolnshire" in Google Maps will find it, along with a beautiful photograph of the church)

Tickets on the door

Light refreshments available

14th-31st August

Lincoln International Chamber Music Festival

www.LICMF.org.uk or

www.LincolnDrillHall.com

01522 873894

Sunday - August 16th - 7:30 pm

Red Priest - Piers Adams

Bach on recorder, violin, 'cello and harpsichord

Lincoln Drill Hall - Lincoln

www.LincolnDrillHall.com

01522 873894

Wednesday - October 7th

Dante Ferrara - Yerevan, Armenia

If you would like to book 1685 for a concert or for weddings or corporate events, please contact Helen Mason: Helen@LEMF.org

You will soon be able to catch up with 1685 on the LEMF web site:

www.LEMF.org

Early music and classical music is performed at

Lincoln Drill Hall:

01522 873894

www.LincolnDrillHall.com

Dante Ferrara's web site is:

www.danteferrara.co.uk

Sixteen Eighty Five

with

Dante Ferrara
baroque Hurdy Gurdy

Early Music in the
Wren Library

The Wren Library
Lincoln Cathedral
Friday, 12th July, 2009

1685

We take our name - Sixteen Eighty Five - from the year in which Bach, Handel and Domenico Scarlatti were born. In 1685 the move away from the complex interwoven texture of renaissance music was well under way. In time it yielded to the ornate decoration of the baroque music which followed. The change was brought to its logical conclusion by the 1685 composers, Bach, Handel and Scarlatti.

We attempt to catch the mood of this musical development by offering both renaissance and baroque music in our concerts.

2009 sees two anniversaries which relate to our musical tastes. It is the 350th anniversary of Purcell's birth and the 250th of Handel's death. How could we not play music by these composers tonight?

The members of 1685 are delighted to invite Dante Ferrara to add the baroque hurdy gurdy to our more conventional instrumental line-up.

Members of 1685 are:

Helen Mason: recorders, flutes, viol
Helen is a librarian at the Trinity College of Music in Greenwich, and is Director of the Lincoln Early Music Festival.

Richard Still: recorders
Richard is Duty Manager at Lincoln's art centre, Lincoln Drill Hall, and was co-founder of the Lincoln Early Music Festival.

Jane Stubbs: recorders, harpsichord
Jane is a peripatetic woodwind teacher and plays and sings with several other ensembles in Lincolnshire.

Dante Ferrara: hurdy gurdy
Dante has been performing professionally since 1984 specialising in historical stringed instruments. He has recorded three solo CDs.

Starting life as a church instrument in the 12th century, the hurdy gurdy has since had a chequered existence - sharing platforms with aristocracy, beggars and present day exponents on electric varieties. Tonight you will hear music on this rare antique instrument from its peak period.

Dante's web site is at:
www.danteferrara.co.uk

What happened in 1685?

Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to design and build an observatory and naval college in Greenwich.

Marin Marais, composer and viol player, joined the French Royal Orchestra.

The head of Oliver Cromwell was removed from its spike above Westminster Hall, where it had resided since 1661.

Recorder maker Peter Bressan was born in France. He worked mainly in London, where he made some of the most prized instruments. He is regarded by many as being the 'father' of English recorder making.

The Duke of Monmouth was executed by England's worst executioner – Jack Ketch. Ketch needed at least eight strokes to remove the Duke's head. (Inspiration for J K Rowlings' nearly headless Nick?).

John Gay - writer of "The Beggars' Opera", was born.

Samuel Pepys, then aged 52, was elected MP for Hawich and helped carry the canopy at the coronation of James II. Pepys was an amateur musician who played, among other instruments, the recorder.

Sir Isaac Newton was aged 43, and was halfway through the writing of his 'Principia', one of the most influential treatise ever on mathematics and physics.

Ignazio Albertini (composer and violinist) was murdered on 22 September.

The fourth Folio Edition of Shakespeare's work is printed, including six plays believed to be by others.

Stradivarius (1644 - 1737) was building his renowned violins.

Alice Molland was hanged for witchcraft (some reports say 1684). She was the last person in England to be executed for witchcraft.

Oh yes!, Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Friderik Handel and Domenico Scarlatti were born.

A note about tuning and pitch

Audience members suffering from 'perfect' pitch may find our pitches and tunings unusual at first. The baroque period was the first time that pitch began to be standardised. John Shore – a lutenist and trumpeter to the English Royal Court and liked by Handel - invented the tuning fork in 1711. Handel's tuning fork (or pitch fork as they were known) is still in existence, giving a useful indication of baroque pitch.

Even during the eighteenth century pitch had not settled down, but the nearest approximation we have is about a semitone lower than modern pitch. We play both at modern pitch (A = 440 Hz) and so called 'baroque' pitch (A = 415Hz). The earlier lower pitch produces a warmer and smoother sound.

Art and science don't agree on tuning. Imagine starting at the bass end of a piano and tuning a series of octaves to be perfectly in tune, then starting from the same bass note and tuning a series of fifths, also to be perfectly in tune. By the time the top of the keyboard is reached (six octaves later) the final note, reached once by a series of octaves and once by a series of fifths, will not actually be the same note. The difference or error is called the "comma". Pythagorus in 550 bc writes about this.

There are many schemes of tuning to deal with this error, all of which have different advantages and problems. These schemes are described as 'tempering' the scale, and various notes are put slightly out of tune as far as the physics is concerned, producing a more pleasant sound as far as the art of music is concerned.

Pitch and tempering are not a feature of the natural physical world, but are chosen by musicians according to the tastes of the time. In Bach's time the equal tempered scale was emerging, enabling composers to write music in any key. This led to Bach writing his sets of music for 'the well tempered clavier', including pieces for all twenty four possible keys.

One great advantage of our electronic harpsichord is that it allows the player to easily choose (and alter) the temperament and pitch of the notes. In case you are interested, we use two pitches, A=440Hz and A=415 Hz (these are a semitone apart) and we use Vallotti temperament.

1685 - Our Instruments

Our instruments are mainly modern copies of sixteenth and seventeenth century instruments.

In the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the recorder was probably the foremost woodwind instrument, especially in England and Holland where it was held in high regard. The names of instruments change over time; when Bach or Handel, for example, call for a particular part to be played on a 'flute', this was actually a recorder. The instrument we today think of as a flute was called a 'traverso'. Our recorders are mainly modern copies of instruments now in museums.

Similarly, Helen's traversi (flutes) are modern copies of historical instruments and, like them, are wooden rather than the more modern metal versions.

The viol, although appearing to be similar to a 'cello or viola, has several important differences. Its construction is much lighter - even the bass can be easily lifted with one finger. It has six strings (later a seventh was added) and C shaped rather than F shaped soundholes. The back is lighter and is flat. It also carries frets - tied on gut rather than inset metal as on a guitar.

Our harpsichord is very anachronistic, being our only electronic instrument. It gives us a great advantage in being extremely portable, always in tune, easy to alter in pitch and temperament, and capable of sounding like a harpsichord or a small chamber organ.

We feel that the playing style is more important than the outward appearance of the instruments. We use little - if any - vibrato, and attempt to decorate and interpret the music in a style appropriate to the time of its composition. It may come as a surprise that there is a great deal known about performance styles in the baroque and even the renaissance, from tutors and instrument "methods" published at the time.

Both during the baroque period and in the earlier renaissance music the performer was expected to add improvisations and decorations to the written score. A player approaching Handel or Telemann, for example, who plays every note perfectly and does nothing else, is playing the music wrongly. Very different to the music of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Programme

Anonymous *medieval*
Pange, lingua, gloriosi Corporis mysterium
(Sing, tongue, the glory of the Mystery of The Body)
is a setting of St Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274)
Corpus Christi hymn. One of the seven great hymns
of the church, the rhythm is said to derive from one
of Caesar's legion's marching songs "Ecce, Caesar
nunc triumphat qui subegit Gallias". Our version of
the tune is taken from the English Hymnal.

Johann Sebastian Bach *1685 - 1750*
Trio Sonata, after BWV 1039, B b Major
Adagio, Allegro, Adagio, Presto
The origins of this piece are a little cloudy. It was
probably composed in 1720. Bach re-arranged it
some twenty years later – perhaps to improve the
balance of the instruments – for viola da gamba and
harpsichord by putting the top recorder line into the
right hand of the harpsichord.

Giulino Tiburtino *c1510 - 1569*
La Sol Fa Mi Fa Re La
Tiburtino's 3-part instrumental music, considered
to be better than his vocal music, was published in a
1549 collection. The pieces are unusual in that they
are based on short 6-note themes, rather than using
a different theme for each section, and show the
influence of Josquin Des Pres and indeed, this piece
derives from Josquin's *La Sol Fa Mi Re La* mass of
the same name. The Do, Re, Mi scale used today has
its origins in plainchant, although "Do" was originally
"Ut".

William Byrd *1540 - 1623*
Fantasia Number 1
How could we perform in this cathedral and NOT
play anything by Byrd? This Fantasia was conceived as
a keyboard piece and has been arranged by Helen for
recorders and viol.

Michel Corrette *1707 - 1795*
Suite 1
Pastorale, Badine, Trois menuets, Chaconne
Organist and composer Michel Corrette also wrote
and published methods - teaching material - for
numerous instruments including the hurdy gurdy in
1783. By this time the hurdy gurdy's popularity was
waning. This suite is taken from his method.

Interval

Jean Baptiste Loeillet *1680 - 1730*
Trio Sonata in F Major, op1, no 1
Grave, Allegro, Adagio, Gavotte, Aria, Allegro
This sonata follows the early sonata form form
based on a dance suite, in this case with six short
movements, the last two of which are played without
a break.

Gaspard Corrette *c. 1670–1733*
Pieces de Fun
Marche, Chaconne d'Arlequin, Rigaudon 'Les Sabottiers'
In this short suite of duets, originally for the musette
and hurdy gurdy, Gaspard Corrette captures the spirit
of playful and fashionable pieces. However, little is
known of this composer who was Michel's father.

Michel Corrette,
La Furstemberg
Again, from his method, this is one of several
arrangements of popular tunes. Despite its many
appearances in French books of the 18th century,
the tune first appears in Playford's 'English Dancing
Master' of 1698 entitled 'St. Martin's Lane'.

Henry Purcell *1659 - 1695*
Evening Hymn - Now that the sun hath veil'd
Published in 1688, the year of the birth of his first
surviving son, this piece, unlike much of Purcell's
church writing, is private and penitential.
Based on a 5-bar ground bass which modulates, it is
a wonderful example of Purcell's skill with this form
and amply deserves Playford's accolade that Purcell
was England's greatest composers.
Conceived by Purcell as a vocal piece, we feel that the
cool sound of the recorder perfectly suits this calm
and tranquil music.

Georg Friderik Handel *1685 - 1759*
Trio Sonata in F Major
Allegro, Grave, Allegro
The style of this four movement (slow, fast, slow, fast)
sonata lasted through to classical times and beyond.
This one, played on two recorders with a harpsichord
continuo part is typical of the genre, and gives ample
scope for players to bring their own improvisation
tastes to add to the music.