

Forthcoming concerts

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

Johanne - I'm only dancing

Bach on recorder, violin, 'cello and harpsichord

Lincoln Drill Hall - Lincoln

www.LincolnDrillHall.com

01522 873894

October 2nd

Dante Ferrara 'Finery & Filth' comedy

Portico Café, Lincoln

October 3rd

Dante Ferrara concert (with guests)

Lastingham Church, N. Yorkshire

Wednesday - October 7th

Dante Ferrara

Yerevan, Armenia

November 28th

Dante Ferrara solo concert

St. Katherine's, Lincoln

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

Early Music in the church of
**S^t Margaret of
Antioch**

Saturday 18 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 Harwich 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 was 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.

The oldest chocolate pot in still in existence was made.

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 features 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

Bach, J S 1685 - 1750

Wedding Cantata

Written for soprano voice, oboe and string orchestra, we have adapted this in true baroque fashion for recorder, flute and harpsichord.

Georg Frideric Handel 1685 - 1759

Trio Sonata in F Major

Adagio, Allegro, Affetuoso, Vivace

This sonata follows the common baroque sonata form (slow, fast, slow, fast). It is played on two recorders with a harpsichord continuo part and is typical of the genre, giving ample scope for players to bring their own improvisation tastes to add to the music.

Anonymous; 13th C

Beata Viscera

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 possibly 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 .

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 French overture form based on a dance suite, in this case with six short movements, the middle two of which are played without a break. It also unusually includes a solo Aria - no! Helen hasn't got lost!

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 composer.