

Bach Beat

The Newsletter of the Bach Cantata Choir



October 2013

www.bachcantatachoir.org

Vol.7, No.1

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The Bach Cantata Choir is a legally organized non-profit corporation under Oregon law, and is a registered 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS. Donations to the choir are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law and regulation.

Newsletter

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The BachBeat newsletter is published cyclically by the Bach Cantata Choir.

Henry Purcell

By Lorin Wilkerson—Bass

Henry Purcell (1659-1695/96) is today popularly remembered as the last great English-born composer until Edward Elgar (1857-1934). Some may dispute that, but certainly no other English composer between Purcell and Elgar approached their fame or reputation internationally. (Handel, although a naturalized Englishman, was in fact German.)

Much of Purcell's short life seemed to revolve around Westminster Abbey; his family lived just a few hundred yards away for all of Purcell's life, and Purcell attended Westminster School and was appointed copyist at the Abbey when he was 17. As a boy he sang in the Chapel Royal; he was admitted due to the influence of his uncle who was a gentleman of the chapel, but Purcell's innate musicality must have shone through because he sang there until his voice broke.

He was precocious as a composer, though nothing can be attributed to him with certainty before 1678. There are a number of earlier compositions that are thought to be his, including a 3-part song that he probably wrote by the time he was 9. He studied organ with the famous John Blow, who resigned his post as organist at

Westminster so that young Purcell could succeed him.

Purcell, who had been composing theater music, spent the next six years focusing mostly on sacred music, though he did manage to write incidental music for seven plays between 1680 and 1688. Although his landmark opera *Dido and Aeneas* was dated 1689, it was most likely composed much earlier during this period.



After Purcell married in 1682 he was also appointed organist to the Chapel Royal while continuing in this position at Westminster. In 1687 he returned to writing for the theater regularly. In a professional career spanning less than 20 years he wrote voluminously; the quality, scope and number of his operas, incidental music for the theater, cantatas, sacred music, songs and keyboard music were truly astounding for a man whose life was cut short at the age of 36 or so. He died rather unexpectedly from an unknown illness.

His passing was met with great sadness; his former teacher John Blow composed music in honor of his funeral. Though it was many years before another English composer would attain his stature, Purcell was not forgotten in his native land. His setting of "Thou Knowest Lord" has been sung at every British state funeral since the early 1700s, and a Purcell

Club was founded in 1836, at a time in Europe during which the music of the great baroque masters began to be rediscovered.

Purcell influenced many composers of his generation and the one immediately following, and no less than the great Benjamin Britten was profoundly influenced by Purcell, composing variations on some of his themes and staging *Dido and Aeneas* at one point. New music is still being discovered by Purcell; in the late 1990s, an original keyboard manuscript was discovered in an attic in an old English farmhouse containing several brand-new pieces as well as revisions of other Purcell works previously known.

The BCC will sing Purcell's "Thy Word is a Lantern" at the October 27, 2013 concert.

Biographical information adapted from Wikipedia.

Silent Auction Follows Concert

We encourage everyone to show up early, stay late, and bid generously on October 27th on some of these wonderful items (a more complete catalog will be available on our website the week before the auction):

- Estate and/or financial planning packages.
- Fine wines, restaurant gift certificates and custom, home-baked pies.
- Tickets to some of the best performances in town including Portland Baroque Orchestra, Oregon Symphony and Portland Center Stage.

New this year! Buy music from the musicians... we'll be having a (mostly) used CD sale.



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**Don't miss our
next concert!**

Sunday, October 27, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.
Rose City Park Presbyterian Church

Tickets for our Christmas Concert
on Friday, December 20, 2013
will also be available for purchase.

2013-2014 Schedule

Sunday, October 27, 2013 2pm—Reformation Sunday

Silent Auction Follows Concert

Palestrina: Tu est Petrus

Josquin: Kyrie and Gloria from "Missa Pange Lingua"

Purcell: Thy Word is a Lantern

J.S. Bach: Cantata #76 "Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes"

Friday, December 20 2013 7:30pm—Christmas Concert

Tickets Required (\$25 general & \$20 students/seniors)

Johann Kuhnau: Cantata: "Uns ist ein Kind geboren" (attributed to Bach as Cantata #142)

J.S. Bach: Cantata #110 "Unser Mund sei voll Lachens"

Vivaldi: Gloria RV 589

Sunday, February 2, 2014 2pm—SuperBach Sunday

Carl Heinrich Graun: Motet: "Machet die Tore weit"

Handel: Coronation Anthem #2 "The King Shall Rejoice"

J.S. Bach: Cantata #119 "Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn"

Sunday, March 16, 2014 2pm - Lenten and Purim Concert

John Tavener: "Svyati" (based on Russian Orthodox Chant) for choir and solo cello

J.S. Bach: Cantata No. 55 "Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht"

Handel: Oratorio "Esther," Part 3

Sunday, May 4, 2014 2pm - Season Finale

Hans Leo Hassler: Missa Secundo

C.P.E Bach: Heilig

J.S. Bach: Cantata #39 "Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot"

Handel: Organ Concerto "13 "Cuckoo and the Nightingale"

*Any updates to the schedule will be published online at
www.bachcantatachoir.org*