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Music *in the* Pavilion



Piffaro: The Renaissance Band

September 23, 2016

Back before Bach

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Back before Bach

A Musical Journey

German Popular Tunes

Hildebranntslied/Es taget/Zart lied Anonymous, German, 16th c.
Bagpipes, recorder, guitar, percussion

Christ ist erstanden

Chant traditional, 11th c.
Setting à 3 *Glogauer Liederbuch*, c. 1480
Setting à 4 Heinrich Isaac (1450-1515)
Setting à 5 Stephen Mahu (c.1490 – c.1591)
Setting à 3 “auf Bergreihenweis” Johann Walther (1527-1578)
Setting à 4 “ad aequales” J. Walther
Chorale à 4 Michael Praetorius (1571 – 1621)
Chorale BWV 276 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)
Shawms, schalmei, sackbuts, dulcians

A Jolly Song & Two Dances from Terpsichore

Zu Regensburg Anonymous
Philou & Ho Herders M. Praetorius
Bagpipes, guitar, krumphorns, percussion

A solis ortus/Christum wir sollen loben schon

A solis ortus Anonymous, late 15th c.
Motet: Christum wir sollen loben schon à 4 J. Walther
Hymnus: Christum wir sollen loben schon à 5 J. Walther
Chorale: A solis ortus à 4 M. Praetorius
Canzona: A solis ortus à 4 Samuel Scheidt (1587 – 1684)
Chorale: Christum wir sollen loben schon à 4 J.S. Bach
Recorders, harp

Dances from Terpsichore

Passameze à 6 M. Praetorius
Allemande S. Scheidt
Volta M. Praetorius
Shawms, sackbuts, dulcian, percussion

Intermission

The World of Chromaticism

Musica, Dei donum optimi Orlande de Lassus (c.1532 – 1594)
Carmina chromatico: Prologue de Lassus
Mirabile mysterium Jakob Handl (1550 – 1591)
Steht auf, ihr liebe Kinderlein Kile Smith (b. 1956)
Shawms, sackbuts, dulcians

A Song from Andernach along the Rhine

Tander naken Jakob Obrecht (1450 – 1505)
Tanndernac Antoine Brumel (c. 1460 – 1512 or 1513)
Tandernack Quatuor Ludwig Senfl (c.1486 – 1543)
Recorders, lute, harp

Suite of Flemish Dances Tylman Susato (publ. 1551)
Passe e medio/Reprise
Three Gaillards
La Morisque
Bagpipes, shawms, sackbuts, dulcians, percussion

Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

Joan Kimball & Bob Wiemken, Artistic Co-Directors

Greg Ingles – sackbut, recorder, krumhorn, percussion
Grant Herreid – lute, guitar, shawm, recorders, krumhorn, percussion
Priscilla Herreid – shawm, schalmei, recorders, krumhorn
Joan Kimball – shawm, schalmei, recorders, bagpipes, dulcian, krumhorn
Christa Patton – shawm, harp, bagpipes, recorder, percussion
Bob Wiemken – dulcian, recorders, krumhorn, percussion

With guests:

Erik Schmalz – sackbut, recorder

Charles Wines – bagpipes, shawm, recorders, dulcian

Back before Bach

A Musical Journey

It's perhaps an inescapable truism—but one worth mentioning in the context of this program—that no composer can truly write *de novo*, that he or she is but one link in the long chain of compositional history, a product of centuries of practice, innovation and experimentation, all of which finds its voice ineluctably and perceptibly in each new work. Even the most innovative composer, who may try to steer his/her own course against the flow of received tradition, must wrestle with the weight of preceding years. There will always be a “back before” that illuminates any present and traces the path of a fascinating journey, time travel through layers of individuality applied to temporal contexts.

This program attempts just such a journey, trekking through some, but by no means all, of the influences, the musical strata that are brought to bear on the formation, the creativity and imagination of one of the Baroque period's most fascinating, adventuresome and individual composers, Johann Sebastian Bach.

Family matters! Bach's father was a *stadtpeiffer* in the towns of Lubeck and Arnstadt. He played trumpet, surely also shawm, probably even recorder. Such were the job requirements for a wind player of that day, multi-instrumentalists *par excellence*, conversant in most genres of music, embellishing many a different occasion, fluent in the languages of both sacred and secular occasion. Even more, Bach's wife's father, Johann Caspar Wilcke, too was a trumpeter in Zeitz and Weissenfels. His godfather, Sebastian Nagel, was a *stadtpeiffer* in Gotha. The preponderance of familial evidence suggests that Johann Sebastian knew wind instruments, wind playing, wind tradition and repertoire intimately. As a young boy he heard the sounds of trumpets and shawms, sackbuts and dulcians ringing in his ears, that combination of reeds and brass, that from the early 15th century constituted the professional German bands, employed by most every city, court and cathedral of substance. Whether performing mass or motet, hymn or psalm, canzona or dance, these wind players maintained their lofty place in German music circles well through the 17th century, even when strings too had carved out a prominent niche for themselves in the professional musical circles of the time. These wind players, the *stadtpeiffer*, with their historical instruments, repertoire and style served as the plinth on which Bach erected his own column of compositional creativity.

So, back before Bach we go. The initial step of the journey is a familiar one, namely, a few good tunes. German repertoire throughout the medieval and renaissance periods is replete with singable, enduring, popular melodies that drove compositions of numerous varieties and forms. One of the more famous is the *Hildebrandslied*, a tale of heroic valor sung to a haunting melody, possibly of Flemish origin. Another is the lilting, dancelike *Es taget vor dem walde* (“It’s early morning in the woods”), a tune set many times by Ludwig Senfl and numerous other composers, clearly a favorite. The final tune in the set is the boisterous and cheerful *Zart lieb, wie süß dein anfang ist* (“Tender love, how sweet the beginning”) from the *Lochamer Liederbuch*, an extensive collection of German songs at the transition from the late Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It dates from about 1450 and is regarded as one of the most important surviving collections of music from fifteenth-century Germany.

The next leg of the journey takes us from 11th century Burgundy to 18th century Leipzig and Bach himself, the means of transport the well-known Easter hymn *Christ ist erstanden* (“Christ is risen”). The hymn is based on and derived from the original Latin Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes* (“Praises for the paschal victim”), attributed to Wipo of Burgundy in the 11th century, which was itself transformed into a *Leise* in the 12th century. The *Leise* was a devotional, German stanzaic song in the nature of a refrain, found particularly in the later Middle Ages, supposedly deriving its name from the words of the opening section of the Mass, ‘Kyrie eleison’, that often appeared repeated in the verses of the song. In the early stages of specifically German polyphony, beginning with the lost early 15th-century Strasbourg manuscript, *Leisen* were often transformed into multiple-voiced compositions.

The earliest known such polyphonic setting of the *Leise* on *Christ ist erstanden* to have survived is found in the *Glogauer Liederbuch*, dating from the 1480’s, a 3-voice version in late medieval style, with the melody lying uncharacteristically in the top voice and embellished in florid, improvisational style in the two lower voices. The subsequent setting by Heinrich Isaac expands to 4 voices and places the melody in the more usual tenor voice, though the opening phrase appears in imitation in all the voices. Isaac’s setting, however, maintains some of the florid counterpoint of the Glogauer version. In both of these settings the *Kyrie eleison* is replaced by the simple *Alleluia*.

The setting by Stephan Mahu bridges the gap between late medieval and early renaissance compositional styles. Mahu’s works consist chiefly of a few contrapuntal settings à 4 and 5 of German songs, both sacred and secular. His 5-part *Christ ist erstanden* setting is unusual for its scoring of virtually 4 tenor and 1 bass range voices, containing the tessitura in a tightly-knit aural spectrum

resulting in a dense texture. From the text of one of his sacred songs, *Lobt Gott ihr Christen all* (“Praise God, all you Christians”), a fierce diatribe against the abuses of the Roman church, as well as from the fact that Mahu contributed a setting à 5 of Martin Luther’s *Ein’ feste Burg* (“A mighty Fortress”), to Georg Rhau’s *Geistliche Gesänge* (“Sacred Songs”) of 1544, we might conclude that Mahu was more Lutheran in his sympathies than Roman.

A major bend in the road occurred with the founding of the Reformation in Germany in 1517 under the leadership of Martin Luther. Though he jettisoned some of the excess baggage the Roman Church had amassed over the centuries, Luther nevertheless maintained many of its musical and liturgical traditions. Under his influence, and with the help of his close friend and colleague, Johann Walther, the *Leise* on *Christ ist erstanden* was transformed into a liturgical hymn for congregational use. In so doing, elements of the original Easter sequence melody were reinstated, as well as, most notably, the *Kyrie eleison* of the early *Leise* traditions. Walther was himself a prolific and accomplished composer who supplied the emerging Reformed, i.e. Lutheran, church with a wealth of musical treasures, in both hymn and polyphonic motet styles.

Walther’s contributions to the emerging Lutheran church were matched and even exceeded by the more well-known Michael Praetorius, composer, publisher, theorist and arranger, whose respect for Walther’s works led him to include many in his own publications. Praetorius provided numerous chorale-based settings of various hymn tunes that served the church’s pedagogical aims and needs. His chorale setting of *Christ ist erstanden* is a characteristic 17th century marker on the road to those of Bach himself.

Praetorius is also well known, and well appreciated, for his famous collection of dances, the *Terpsichore* of 1612. Dance stands as yet another, significant leg of the journey to Bach, for a commonplace of current scholarly opinion holds that Baroque music is heavily imbued with elements of dance, as certainly is that of the Renaissance, not just specific dance forms themselves, such as the passameze, the allemande, the bourree, the gigue, the gavotte, the ballet, and more, but the rhythms, figures and gestures of dance music in general. Curiously, little German dance music in ensemble settings survives that might be dated before this publication by Praetorius. His collection, however, is international in scope, preserving not only German dance forms but also much from the French, Flemish, English and Italian traditions as well, both courtly and rustic.

Consequently, this leg of our journey makes a couple of appropriate stops at the *Terpsichore* station. The *Philou* and *Ho Herders* (“Yo, shepherds!”) represent the rustic side of German dance, appropriately set to bagpipes and krumphorns,

near cousins to the bagpipes, with the driving rhythmic energy of the guitar and percussion as well. The second set including the Passameze, Allemande and Volta display the more courtly side of German, and international, dance and are thus set to the shawms, sackbuts and dulcians that constituted the major instruments of the professional court bands in Praetorius' day.

Another major trajectory in this musical journey to Bach lies in the well known early Christian hymn *A solis ortus cardine* ("From the point of the sun's rising"). Attributed to Coelius Sedelius (d. 450), the text narrates the life of Christ from birth to resurrection in 23 verses, each one starting with a consecutive letter of the Latin alphabet, a technique called *abecedarius* or "alphabet song". The first seven verses related the events of the birth and thus became in the Middle Ages a separate Christmas hymn in the Roman liturgical calendar. Subsequently, Martin Luther translated this hymn for use in the Reformed church, giving it the title *Christum wir sollen loben schon* ("We should now praise Christ..."), which became the principle Lutheran Christmas hymn until recently when the publication of the 1955 *Evangelisches Gesangbuch* left it out.

The first 4-voice polyphonic treatment of this early 5th century monophonic hymn appears to be the anonymous setting from the late 15th century on this program. It preserves the contour of the original melody, distributing the opening, stepwise rising fifth, D to A, in slow note values throughout the voices, vividly depicting the sun's gradual emergence over the horizon. The original chant melody appears in the tenor voice, as was a customary style of the time, with elaboration in the remaining three parts. Johann Walther's 4-voice setting of the Lutheran hymn maintains this treatment in late medieval style while altering the melody of the anonymous setting slightly, but significantly. Whereas the original chant melody opens with a stepwise rising pattern, Walther's rendering bypasses the E in the sequence and thus opens with an initial leap of a minor third, D to F, which appears in all the parts. In addition, he further embellishes the melody, particularly in the alto and bass lines with appropriately florid counterpoint. His 5-part setting represents a step toward the more equal-voiced style of the early Renaissance polyphonic practice, much in the manner of Heinrich Finck. The melody still lies in the tenor voice, yet snippets of the melody sound from all the voices in this overlapping, imitative texture, providing the compositional framework for the whole.

The chorale setting by Michael Praetorius reverts to the Latin text, *A solis ortus cardine*, and moves the melody to the top voice, as regularly occurred throughout later 16th century treatments of earlier material. The writing is much more chordal and homorhythmic, and thus more singable for a congregation of untrained voices, as was Luther's desire. Yet, he maintains the

opening leap of a minor third that first appears in the Walther settings, and harmonizes the melody in an up-to-date, “modern” style for his time.

A strikingly imaginative treatment of this hymn tune is the canzona-like setting by the renowned organist and composer, Samuel Scheidt, a younger contemporary and colleague of Praetorius. From his collection of organ works, the *Tablatura Nova* published in 1619, this setting pares down to 4 voices once again and maintains the opening minor third leap in all the previous Lutheran settings. In addition, he alters the opening rhythm of equal rising notes to an opening dactyl, or long-short-short figure, which puts this treatment squarely in the long-standing canzona tradition. Melody no longer predominates or even prescribes. Instead, Scheidt allows himself to enjoy flights of fancy based on the ostinato of the opening rising figure from the original chant, a feature that drives the entire composition. Only in the last 5 bars does his whimsical playfulness give way to a more declamatory, and traditional, glide into the final chord.

Finally, Bach himself drew upon the Lutheran hymn to compose an entire cantata with Luther’s German text reinstated. The concluding chorale of this cantata is emblematic of Bach’s creative genius, and a fitting culmination to this part of our musical journey. Notably, he also reinstates the note “E” in the opening, ascending figure between the D and the F, as in the original chant, but treats both the D and E in short note values as though a pickup to the F—a small feature but distinctly his own. In addition, his harmonizations, replete with chromatic adventures, bear witness to his unique vision, even though he preserves the modal beginning, Dorian, and ending, Phrygian, of the original chant.

Before completing this journey to Bach, it is imperative that we travel the route that carries us through the history of chromaticism in late renaissance composition, for one can not imagine the works of Bach without the first adventurous, striking and even courageous explorations outside the strictures of medieval and Renaissance theory at the hands of such composers as the Flemish masters Adrian Willaert and Cipriano de Rore, the Neapolitan organist Giovanni Maria Trabaci and most notably, Carlo Gesualdo. The most prominent German composer to venture this path was Orlande de Lassus. While serving Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria and his son William V in Munich for most of his career, Lassus achieved international acclaim as one of the most gifted purveyors of imitative polyphony of his generation. His *Musica, Dei donum optimi* (“Music, gift of the most high God”) not only evinces his love and devotion to his profession, but also displays his near perfection of the genre. With Lassus, and his contemporaries Palestrina, Victoria and Guerrero, the international language of sacred mass and motet reached a pinnacle in

compositional success. Little more remained to be achieved within the style. There was need for something new and one of those new elements lay in the bold use of notes outside the gamut, or range of acceptable notes.

Lassus' chief contributions to this new direction lay in his collection entitled *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* ("Prophecies of the Sybils"), an extraordinary collection of twelve songs with a prologue. The Sibylline Prophecies of the title are the work of 2nd century authors apocryphally attributed to the legendary Sibyls, ancient Greek prophetesses. The texts, which purport to foretell the birth of Christ, were accepted as genuine by Saint Augustine and other early Christian thinkers, giving the Sibyls a status equal to that of Old Testament prophets. Michelangelo painted five of the Sibyls onto the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican in 1508 – 1512. The Prologue, the *Carmina Chromatico*, whose text may have been written by Lassus himself, reads in translation: "Polyphonic songs which you hear with a chromatic tenor/these are they in which our twice-six sibyls once sang with fearless mouth the secrets of salvation." Fearless, indeed! Lassus responded immediately to the idea of "chromaticism" with a series of jarring, yet successful, progressions. Within the opening nine measures of this prologue, he uses all twelve chromatic pitches of the octave and builds triads on ten different roots, bursting the bounds of the traditional gamut beyond recognition.

Following hot on the heels of Lassus' extraordinary effort, lies the justly famous *Mirabile mysterium* ("Wondrous mystery") of the Slovenian composer, Jacob Handl, or Jacobus Gallus in the Latinized version of his name that he himself preferred. Handl, or Gallus, represented the Bohemian Counter-Reformation in his musical career, writing almost exclusively on sacred Latin texts for the Catholic tradition. His style was essentially wide-ranging and eclectic, blending archaism with the latest elements of modernity. He displayed fluent mastery of the Franco-Flemish style of imitative polyphony and successfully braved the waters of chromaticism as well. His motet *Mirabile mysterium* foreshadows the eccentricities of Carlo Gesualdo, while at the same time pays close attention to text and its message.

Founded on these early, essential steps, Bach's use of chromaticism shows a clear sophistication and easy familiarity with the practice. His chorale settings on the melodies of *Christ ist erstanden* and *Christum wir sollen loben schon* are just two of many examples. His chromatic ventures are less jarring and shocking than these earlier, renaissance experiments, which nevertheless paved the way to a fully chromatic scale. He weaves his chromaticism deftly and smoothly into the full fabric of the polyphonic texture.

One last, and highly necessary, stop on this musical journey involves the practice of florid, improvisatory instrumental display. It was common practice in the medieval and renaissance periods for performers to embellish compositions with ornaments, as they were called, or diminutions, sequences of small note values in swift melodic flow in place of larger notes. Some were even capable of improvising whole lines of such quick display, often to a fixed melody or tenor. Some examples of this improvisatory treatment survive in written form, giving us a transparent window into the practice. One of the most popular melodies to receive this treatment was the song entitled “Tandernaken”, a sad love song the events of which occurred near the Dutch town of Andernach along the Rhine river. For some reason the melody of this popular song pricked the imagination of composers and performers alike, leaving a small treasure trove of ingenious creations.

The settings of this song on this program are a small sampling of the many that have survived in written form, and presumably of the many more that never did. Obrecht’s 3-part composition keeps the melody intact in the tenor, embellishing it with somewhat restrained virtuosic display in the upper and lower voices. Brumel’s setting, also in three parts, keeps the melody unembellished in the tenor, but gives the other two lines many more notes to play in more rhythmic variety than does Obrecht, which in the words of one scholar “seem[s] to represent a conscious effort to push professional instrumental virtuosity to its limits”. Ludwig Senfl’s 4-part setting is notable for its treatment of the melody in close imitation in the tenor and bass voices together. These provide a framework for delightful embellishment in the top two voices, until the last few bars give all the voices a concerted run into the final chord.

This practice of improvisatory display, much in the manner of Jazz musicians of our day, continues throughout the 16th century and is codified in treatises by Silvestro Ganassi in Italy (1535) and Diego Ortiz, a Spaniard working in Rome (1550’s). Gradually, however, composers worked such instrumental displays into the fabric of their own compositions, usurping the performers prerogative very likely for the purpose of gaining more control over the performances of their own works. The results of this trend lead directly to the written embellishments that are ubiquitous in all the works of baroque composers, most notably of Bach himself.

At journey’s end, then, one can’t help but be awestruck by the wealth, the richness, the variety and depth of musical history that lay in the couple of centuries or more “back before Bach”.

Bob Wiemken

Piffaro, The Renaissance Band

Joan Kimball, Bob Wiemken, Artistic Co-Directors

“Widely regarded as North America’s masters of music for Renaissance wind band” (*St Paul Pioneer Press*), **Piffaro** has delighted audiences throughout the United States, Europe, Canada and South America since its founding in 1980. Piffaro recreates the rustic music of the peasantry and the elegant sounds of the official wind bands of the late Medieval and Renaissance periods. Its ever-expanding instrumentarium includes shawms, dulcians, sackbuts, recorders, krumphorns, bagpipes, lutes, guitars, harps, and a variety of percussion—all careful reconstructions of instruments from the period.

Under the direction of Artistic Directors Joan Kimball and Bob Wiemken, Piffaro concertizes extensively, both close to home with its four-concert season in Philadelphia, as well as nationally and internationally. The ensemble debuted at Tage Alter Musik in Regensburg, Germany in 1993, and has returned to Europe frequently since then, most recently in June 2014, performing at major festivals in Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and The Czech Republic. They have traveled to South America, including a memorable tour in Bolivia under the auspices of that country’s bi-annual International Renaissance & Baroque Festival. Piffaro has performed at the major Early Music festivals throughout the US, including Boston, Berkeley, Indianapolis, and Madison, as well as on Early Music series, chamber music series, and college series, both in the US and Canada. Through Piffaro’s many recordings on Newport Classics, Deutsche Grammophon Arkiv Produktion, Dorian Recordings, PARMA/Navona, and its own house label, and through radio and internet broadcasts, its music has reached listeners as far away as Siberia.

Piffaro has been active in the field of education since its inception, and has been honored twice for its work by Early Music America, receiving the “Early Music Brings History Alive” award in 2003, and the Laurette Goldberg “Lifetime Achievement Award in Early Music Outreach” in 2011. Its National Recorder Competition for Young Players attracts talented competitors from around the country to Philadelphia every two years. The ensemble was honored in 2015 by The American Recorder Society with its “Distinguished Artist Award”.

Music *in the* Pavilion

The University of Pennsylvania's Music Department and the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts are proud to present a jointly sponsored music series for the 2016-2017 year. The series showcases an array of professional and international musicians, performing not only gems from standard concert repertoires, such as the piano works of Chopin, but also premiering works found only in the wealth of materials—print and manuscript—held in the Kislak Center's collection.

UPCOMING CONCERT SCHEDULE

All concerts will be held in the Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, sixth floor on Fridays at 7pm and are free of charge. Join us at 6:15pm for a discussion led by Penn faculty and graduate students prior to the concerts.

Daedalus Quartet

December 9, 2016: "Music as Translation"

Les Canards Chantants

February 10, 2017: "Sex, Drugs, and Madrigals"

Matthew Bengtson

April 7, 2017: "A Music Salon in Nineteenth-Century Paris"

http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/music_series.html

Music, Word, and Art in the Age of Cervantes

Saturday, October 8, 2:00-5:30 PM

Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, sixth floor

As part of *The Musical World of Don Quixote*, a mini-festival of performances and events organized by Piffaro, the Renaissance band, the Kislak Center will host a symposium featuring Edith Grossman, whose 2003 translation of *Don Quixote* is considered one of the finest in the English language, along with a panel of international experts on the music, visual art, literary culture, and politics of Golden Age Spain. Free but registration requested. *The Musical World of Don Quixote* has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

For more information and registration: www.piffaro.org/don-quixote/