

Westfield

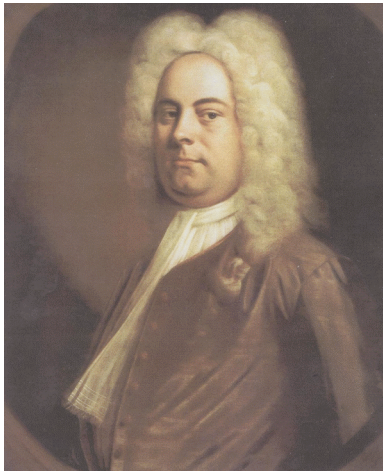
E-NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTFIELD CENTER, VOLUME XXI, No. 1

A National Resource for the Advancement of Keyboard music, serving Professionals and the Public since 1979

WINTER 2009

2009 is a watershed year in many respects. Musically, it is something of a “power” year, for we are commemorating the 250th anniversary of the death of **George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)**, the 200th anniversary of the passing of **Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)**, and 200th anniversary of the birth of **Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)**. As it happens, all three composers made significant contributions to the English oratorio, with Haydn and Mendelssohn naturally looking to Handel (for all intents and purposes the creator of the genre) for inspiration. However, it is of course as keyboard players and enthusiasts that we will celebrate these composers’ works.

While **Handel** is often associated less closely with keyboard music, there are many gems to be found in his *Suites de Pieces pour le Clavecin* from 1720. We know from Mozart’s letters that he



*Portrait of G.F. Handel by
Balthasar Denner, 1727*

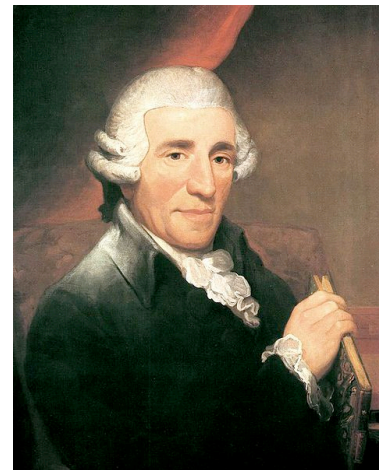
studied Handel’s keyboard works alongside those of J.S. Bach, and indeed, a comparison of Mozart’s Gigue in G major, K. 574, and the Gigue from Handel’s Suite in F minor reveals a striking similarity. True, Mozart wrote the work while visiting Leipzig, and the notes B-A-C-H are found in measures 22-23, but the theme’s contour and serpentine chromaticism seem to reference Handel’s work quite clearly. In addition, it is interesting to note that Johann Mattheson declared Handel the greatest organist of his time, comparable only with J.S. Bach. Having left his native Hamburg to spend most of his career in London where a very different organ culture prevailed, we have little written record of the kind of playing Mattheson would have heard from Handel; an echo is surely to be heard, however, in the Organ Concertos, whose vibrant musical language inspired the following praise from his contemporary Sir John Hawkins “A fine and delicate touch, a volant finger, and a ready delivery of passages the most difficult, are the praise of inferior artists: they were not noticed

in Handel, whose excellencies were of a far superior kind...”

Haydn's popular reputation rests rather with the symphony and string quartet than with his keyboard works. Yet Haydn did all his composing at the *clavier*, and his keyboard works (not just the solo works but his keyboard trios as well) are a treasure trove of everything one loves about Haydn: wit, poignancy, and the ingenious developments of single thematic ideas that spin out in kaleidoscopic fashion. Furthermore, the wide scope of instruments Haydn played during his lengthy career as a keyboard composer makes his oeuvre a fascinating landscape for any

early keyboard player to traverse – so many options! When we examine Haydn’s reaction to the English pianos he encountered during his London sojourns, which were so different from the Viennese pianos he was accustomed to, we see just how intrepid a composer he was as he gamely met these instruments on their own terms and wrote works that exploited their tonal qualities superbly.

At the tender age of twenty, **Mendelssohn** conducted the first full-scale performance of J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* since Bach’s lifetime. He thus almost single-handedly catapulted the percolating interest in Bach amongst a select few in Berlin into a formidable popular movement now referred to as the “Bach Revival.” By extension, this performance and the interest it generated in archival research is often cited as one of the harbingers of the early music movement. However, Mendelssohn was not just a conductor/composer, but also a



Portrait of Joseph Haydn by Thomas Hardy, 1791



Portrait of Mendelssohn by James Warren Child, 1839

virtuoso pianist and organist of the first order. His pianistic language is an intriguing mélange of the fiery Romantic brilliance of Weber, the contrapuntal mastery of Bach, and the transcendent splendor of Beethoven. His organ works, such as *The Six Organ Sonatas* op.65 (1845), with their masterful fugues and chorales, clearly reveal his study of Bach.

In closing, it seems appropriate to add three quotations from the composers themselves in order to hear their own voices, as it were. Here’s to a wonderful 2009, with all the musical celebrations and intriguing programming ideas it will hopefully inspire!

— Sylvia Berry

“My Lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wished to make them better.”
— **George Frideric Handel**, in response to Lord Kinnoul who praised "the noble entertainment" of *The Messiah*.

“I know that God has favored me, but the world may as well know that I have been no useless member of society, and that one can do good by means of music.”
— **Joseph Haydn**

“Art and life are not two different things.” — **Felix Mendelssohn**



A Report by Emanuele Battisti, 2007-08 Westfield Concert Scholar

I have been asked to write a brief report about my experience as the 2007-08 Westfield Center Concert Scholar. I am glad for the request. Among the many aspects that deserve mention in such an account, I have chosen to highlight two: the wonderful instruments I was invited to give recitals on, and the rich personal experiences I shared with the people I met along the way.



Battisti at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco

The three recitals were organized as a mini-tour, crossing the country from Boston to San Francisco with an intermediate stop in Goshen, Indiana. It all started on a frozen January night when I arrived at the Boston airport on a delayed flight from Chicago. There waiting for me, I found the First Lutheran Church organist Balint Karosi, and my host Chris Muskopf. When these two approached, I immediately relaxed into the informal atmosphere they created. My days in Boston were terrific. First, I had a chance to play on one of the highest achievements in American organ building today, the Richards, Fowkes & Co. organ op. 10. With no exaggeration, working on that instrument for a couple of days opened up for me a new world of expressive possibilities. This was also my first trip to Boston and I loved it. Since science and technology, together with music, are the great passions of my life, crossing the MIT *Infinite Corridor* was an unforgettable moment.

I played a program that featured German and Italian early-baroque music. As a student in Italy I have had access to many historical instruments, but here I felt it would be an interesting challenge to experiment with the performance of Italian music on an instrument built according to the North-German baroque style. I think this juxtaposition worked quite well, underlining some of the compositional connections between the German and Italian repertoires. Among the most successful pieces in the program, however, were the three transcriptions that I played from *Musica Ricercata* by Ligeti — music that explored different stylistic dialectics, in relation to the timbral treatment of the instrument in different historical periods. This concert demonstrated for me the fact that coherence in a program need not necessarily depend on uniformity in musical choices. In fact, a program based on an open dialogue between styles and ages, when built around a strong central idea, can be very effective in kindling the interest of an audience.

The second recital was at Goshen College, Indiana, another experience that was highly rewarding on both professional and personal levels. Goshen College has a wonderful organ by Taylor & Boody, Op. 41, which is also based upon 18th century North German models. Here I was received and wonderfully supported by the Executive Director of the Music Center, Brian Wiebe, who was eager to tell me about the Mennonite tradition that he belongs to. He and organ professor Christine Thögerson assisted me with the recital and I played for a truly enthusiastic audience. In addition to this gratifying musical experience, while driving back and forth from the

concert hall to the house in the woods where I was staying, it was fascinating to encounter several Amish people riding in their ox carts — quite an interesting cultural experience for me!

The third recital of the series took place in San Francisco in late April. It is easy to imagine the pleasure I felt arriving during the warm Californian spring from the long and cold Illinois winter! As with the other two instruments, the Taylor & Boody at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Op. 37, left a strong impression on me, with its perfect balance and rich variety of tonal colors. And once again – I risk repeating myself – before, during and after the concert, I was surrounded by very friendly people, including Bay Area musicians with whom it was interesting to share anecdotes about musical experiences. During the concert I was assisted by the interim organist at St. Mark's, David Auerbach, and also by David Hatt. (I must say here that in each place I played people were very generous with their time, helping me to prepare my recitals and thus allowing me to perform with the best possible conditions. Some pieces, the Ligeti in particular, had some very tricky register changes which required two assistants.) At the end of the recital I had the opportunity to talk with Ken Kauffman of the John Ernest Foundation, which gives the logistical support that makes the Westfield Concert Scholar tour possible. I was glad to be able to tell Ken in person what a pleasant and valuable experience it had been for me to be an “ambassador” for the Westfield Center in this way. To that end, a great thanks goes also to Prof. Carole Terry, who organized the events.

To conclude, I would like to express the deepest gratitude to Prof. Dana Robinson, my organ teacher at the University of Illinois, who had a tremendous impact on my musical growth, and who has always been supportive and encouraging. I also extend my best wishes to the people at the Westfield Center for their invaluable activity on behalf of keyboard music. Last, but not least: Good luck to the next Concert Scholar!



Westfield Center Membership 2009

A Message from the Executive Director

Warmest thanks to all who have already renewed their Westfield membership for the calendar year 2009. For those who still have to renew or rejoin, please don't hesitate! You'll find the membership form on the last page of this Newsletter. We rely on your participation for all our activities, from the Concert Scholar program, to our conferences and our publications. Westfield's work in promoting keyboard culture across instruments and centuries, and in fostering scholarship, performance and instrument-making in the United States and internationally, would not be possible without you.

2008 was a year of energetic activity, whose results included the very successful Westfield Center conference on 'J. S. Bach and the Organ' at the EROI festival in October, publication of Volume 1 of our new Yearbook, *Keyboard Perspectives*, and the continuing success of our concert scholar program (generously supported by the John Ernest Foundation), with performances by organist Emanuele Battisti (the 2007-08 concert scholar) and fortepianist Frédéric Lacroix (the 2008-09 concert scholar).

Work continues on the next two conferences (focusing on the early 19th-century piano and on the organ respectively) and on Keyboard Perspectives 2. New information on the concert scholar program will follow shortly!

As ever, the Westfield Center relies not only on membership subscriptions, but also on member donations. Please consider making a gift to Westfield, as you renew, rejoin, and encourage your friends, colleagues and students to join.

--Annette Richards



KEYBOARD MUSIC AND COLONIAL PHILADELPHIA

Joint Meeting of the
Southeastern And Midwestern
Historical Keyboard Societies

March 12-14, 2009

Boyer College of Music and Dance
Temple University, Philadelphia



George Heap, "The East Prospect of the City of Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania" London Magazine, 1761

Keyboard Music and Colonial Philadelphia, the joint conference of the Southeastern and Midwestern Historical Keyboard Societies, will be held in **Philadelphia, March 12-14, 2009**. Hosted by Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance, the program is packed with concerts, lecture-recitals, discussions, and wonderful opportunities to meet colleagues and friends in one of America's most historically important cities. In addition to Carpenter's Hall and Independence Hall, it is rich with 18th century landmarks in the Old City district such as Elfreth's Alley (the oldest continually inhabited street in the country), Powel House, City Tavern, Christ Church (founded in 1695), St. Peter's Church (see below), and Betsy Ross House.

A wide range of repertoire will be performed and discussed, including works of J.S. Bach, Haydn, Rameau, Fevrier, Schobert, Reinagle, Hopkinson, Czerny, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Schumann. Papers include: "A new source for French Post-Classical organ registration," "Keyboard music from the colonial and independence period in Argentina," "A Philadelphia survivor: America's only harpsichord," and "Handel's original keyboard arrangements vs. the source opera arias: What Use to the Singer?"

On Friday night, there will be an evensong concert in **St. Peter's Church**. Built in 1761, St. Peter's served as a place of worship for many of the Founding Fathers during the period of the Continental Congresses; George Washington was a regular worshiper here. On Saturday afternoon there will be a **Special Tribute to William Dowd, Don Angle, Margaret Hood and Ben Bechtel**, and Saturday night's concert - **An Evening of Keyboard Music from Early Philadelphia** will feature works by Benjamin Carr, Anthony Philip Heinrich, Francis Hopkinson, Alexander Reinagle, and Raynor Taylor performed by Joyce Lindorff, Gail Olszewski, Andrew Willis, and Max Yount with Paul Miller, violin, and Christopher White, cello.

In addition to the scheduled conference activities, three very special 'fringe' events have been added on Thursday the 12th and Sunday the 15th, so everyone is encouraged to come early and stay late! Participants will get the chance to enrich their Philadelphia experience with custom made historical tours led by **Ed Mauger**, well loved for his "Philadelphia on Foot," adventures, with tours on Thursday afternoon (3 pm: "Colonial High Life") and Sunday morning (10 am: "Ben Franklin's Musical Philadelphia"). Advance and last-minute sign-ups are available. Read more about Ed on his website: <http://www.ushistory.org/more/mauger/index.htm>

Also on Sunday afternoon, harpsichordist and collector **Karen Flint** has invited attendees for an exciting afternoon visit to **The Barn at Flintwoods**, an hour from Philadelphia. Karen's exquisite collection of beautifully restored antique harpsichords includes a **1635 Ioannes Ruckers**; **1707 Nicholas Dumont**; 17th-century Italian harpsichord, possibly by Pisarenis; 18th-century anonymous Spanish harpsichord; and an 18th-century German clavichord. Others that may be playable by then include a **1779 Abraham & Jacobus Kirckmann** and a **1627 Ioannes Ruckers**. The cost of this outing includes round-trip transportation plus dinner at the excellent Corner Bistro in Wilmington (www.mybistro.com). Return to Philadelphia is scheduled for 9:00 P.M.

Early registration is appreciated, but not necessary. After March 5, please do not send checks by mail. Registration and payment may be made upon arrival. **Conference registration** includes Saturday luncheon and all events Thursday evening through Saturday evening.

For further information:

www.sehks.org

Tel: 215-204-5527 (Boyer College office)

Email: Joyce.Lindorff@gmail.com



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Keyboard Perspectives I (2007-2008)

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This group of Westfield Center supporters is uniquely dedicated to keyboard music. Membership dues are not sufficient to fund all of Westfield's programs; additional donations are essential to continue the Westfield Concert Scholars, *Keyboard Perspectives*, conferences and other Westfield programs.

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