

# Understanding BACH

## Editorial

Bach's birthday coincided with Good Friday only once in his lifetime; 21 March 1704, exactly 204 years ago today. Apart from the fact that the nineteen-year-old was employed as organist in Arnstadt at that time, we know very little else about his social life and compositional activities. But times are changing. New research is constantly illuminating the dark areas of Bach's life, and I am delighted to be able to include in this volume many articles which illustrate the successful documentary treasure hunt. Peter Wollny and Michael Maul, whose well-known archival searches continue to lead to groundbreaking discoveries, have contributed an article on Bach's earliest autographs. Research into the reception history of Bach's music is also leading to the discovery of many hitherto unknown sources and interpretations, as can be seen in the articles by Robin A. Leaver, Alison Dunlop, Tanja Kovačević and Ian Mills. New contexts for Bach's music are discussed by Stephen Rose on the musician-novels, and Burkhard Schwalbach on the Leipzig coffee-houses, while Richard D. P. Jones, Elise Crean and Dalia Cohen contribute to a re-evaluation of various aspects of Bach's creativity. The relationship between notation and performance is tackled by Rachel Baldock, and the application of forensic document examination techniques to Bach studies by Martin W. B. Jarvis. For the first time, the journal includes a section for continuing doctoral research (pp. 75–108). This is a direct result of the stimulating Young Scholars' Forum session held at the Third Dialogue meeting in January 2008, an account of which can be read below (p. 109 f).

Just six weeks before the Third Dialogue Meeting in Oxford, many BNUK members met in Belfast at the International Symposium: Understanding Bach's *B-minor Mass*, presented in association with Bach Network UK and hosted by the School of Music and Sonic Arts, Queen's University Belfast. BNUK trustee Yo Tomita organised what must be the most thorough reflection of the *B-minor Mass* ever undertaken. Copies of the two volumes of

conference papers are still available. The conference programme can be read on: <http://www.mu.qub.ac.uk/tomita/bachbib/conferences/Belfast-Nov2007/>

Among the many positive activities last year, there was one negative blow which struck to the heart of BNUK and which only time will heal: the death of our great friend and colleague Anne Leahy (1961–2007). Anne was an active member of BNUK from the beginning, contributing to the first Dialogue meeting, and acting as respondent in the second. She was planning to write an article for this volume on the current state of theological Bach studies, and she was also to become a Trustee of Bach Network UK, but it was not to be. Tributes by Robin A. Leaver and Mary Dalton Greer capturing Anne's vibrant personality and infectious humour are published in *Bach Notes* No. 8 (Fall 2007) and can be read on <http://www.americanbachsociety.org/bachnotes.html>.

Activities planned for 2008 under the auspices of Bach Network UK include an extensive tripartite study session at the Thirteenth Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music, entitled Bach Network UK: New Perspectives on Bach Sources: Discovery Contextualisation and Interpretation ([http://www.leeds.ac.uk/music/research/conf\\_baroque.shtml](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/music/research/conf_baroque.shtml)). The conference will be held in Leeds in July, and six doctoral students will be speaking together with Yo Tomita, Robin Leaver and myself on Friday 4 July, at what promises to be a fruitful session in a stimulating environment.

The structure of Bach Network UK continues as before with five executive trustees, although our work this year has had the welcome boost of generous financial gifts from sponsors and a growing number of Friends. We are a charity, and contributions of any denomination are invaluable to the growth and development of our activities.

On behalf of the trustees of Bach Network UK, it is my pleasure to present this third volume of *Understanding Bach*, in the hope that the articles will enrich and deepen your experience of Bach, his world and his music.

Ruth Tatlow  
Good Friday, 21 March 2008  
Stockholm