

Tafelmusik

GET TO KNOW

This is part of a series of informal interviews with members of the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. This week we introduce you to *baritone* **Dennis Zimmer**, who joined the choir in 2000.

DENNIS ZIMMER



When did you take your first singing lesson?

I was 15 years old: I went into an audition for my high school's production of *Little Shop of Horrors* and I completely surprised my music and drama teachers. I knew I could sing, but I didn't think that it was that big of a deal. I was cast as Seymour and I spent the next four months singing to Audrey and a man-eating plant. Who knew! After my brief foray in musical theatre, I was urged to take singing lessons. Within the span of three long, yet wonderful years, my private teacher had worked with me to complete my conservatory harmony, grade 8 piano and grade 10 voice in preparation for my music degree at The University of Western Ontario.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the small but beautiful town of Aylmer, Ontario. My parents had met in the same high school that my older brother and I attended. I have 11 aunts and uncles on my father's side and none on my mother's side, as she is an only child. My older brother and I are complete opposites. He's into sports and the like, while I am into everything concerning the arts.

What else do you do besides sing with Tafelmusik?

After much deliberation concerning a “career,” I finally decided to go Teachers’ College two years ago. Upon graduating, I accepted a position at Erindale Secondary School as an instrumental music, vocal music and visual arts teacher.

Why do you like choral singing?

I love choral singing because of the music I get to sing. Choral singing allows one the opportunity to experience something too esoteric to explain. Simply put, choral music is amazing!

What’s it like singing with your fellow Tafelmusik choristers?

I have made such wonderful friends due to my involvement with this choir. There is so much talent and intelligence contained within the choir. I look forward to every rehearsal and concert we perform together.

What is your favourite Tafelmusik moment?

My favourite Tafelmusik moment is when Charles Daniels and Karina Gauvin performed Handel’s “As steals the morn upon the night” from *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, during a Handel pastiche concert including the choir and orchestra. I wish I had a recording of that concert run, because all other recordings fail in comparison.

Who is your favourite composer?

J. S. Bach, and yes, that’s my final answer.

What are your proudest moments?

My proudest moments, so far, have been walking across the stage to receive my Masters of Arts, in visual arts (art history), and every time I walk on the Tafelmusik stage.

What do you like to do when you are not making music?

I am quite passionate about collecting antiques and art. It’s not to the point of hoarding, but my partner sometimes thinks otherwise. Anyway, my collections are tastefully displayed rather than piled up in boxes and the like. I must admit, when I find something really good or rare, I now find myself thinking, “Where can I put this?” or “What needs to go in order to make room for this?”

What is your great ambition?

Although I have just started my new career as a teacher, my real, true desire is be involved with good antiques and art. I would LOVE to have my own antique shop – just like my Grandmother – or work in a good auction house like Sotheby’s or Christie’s. Who knows what the future holds. Maybe, one day, I’ll sell a Picasso from my own auction house floor.