

TAFELMUSIK BAROQUE ORCHESTRA AND CHAMBER CHOIR: BIOGRAPHY

Tafelmusik, Canada's award-winning orchestra on period instruments, has become an internationally recognized ensemble lauded by *Gramophone Magazine* as "one of the world's top baroque orchestras." Founded in 1979 by Kenneth Solway and Susan Graves, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra has been under the inspired leadership of Music Director Jeanne Lamon since 1981. With its artist-focused mandate and commitment to excellence and innovation, Tafelmusik is actively creating new contexts for the performance of baroque and classical music.

Delighting audiences worldwide for more than three decades, Toronto-based Tafelmusik now reaches millions of people through its extensive touring, critically-acclaimed recordings, broadcasts, new media, and artistic/community partnerships. The vitality of Tafelmusik's vision clearly resonates with its audiences; the orchestra performs more than 50 concerts every year for a passionate and dedicated following.

At the heart of Tafelmusik is a group of seventeen remarkably talented, enthusiastic and dynamic permanent members, each of whom is a specialist in historical performance practice. Their collaboration results in a delightful transparency, vitality and richness of sound, which has garnered them acclaim around the world. The musicians participate on many levels, whether as core members, soloists, or contributors to the exceptionally creative programming ideas that bring Tafelmusik concerts to life and make them fully relevant in a 21st-century context.

The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in baroque and classical performance practice and vocal technique, was formed in 1981 to complement the orchestra. Under the direction of Ivars Taurins, the choir has been praised for its clarity and brilliance and has been described as "the best period-performance choir anywhere in the world..." (*The Globe and Mail*). In 1991 the choir was awarded the Healey Willan Prize "for its consistently high level of artistic achievement and for its unique contribution to choral art in Canada." In 2000, the Choir's *Bach Motets* CD on CBC Records was released to critical acclaim, followed by its first *a capella* CD, also on CBC Records, in 2003. This compilation disk features 19th- and 20th-century French choral music by Fauré, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc and Messiaen. Its fifth CD, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, was released on CBC Records in 2007 in celebration of the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir's 25th anniversary season. Tafelmusik's annual performances of the *Messiah* and *Sing-Along Messiah*, featuring the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, have become an established part of Toronto's holiday tradition, and the choir's performance of this work has been described as "an almost superhuman achievement ... one of the best *Messiahs* I have ever heard." (*The Globe and Mail*). In December 2010, a live performance of Tafelmusik's **Sing-Along Messiah** will be broadcast nationally on Bravo! Canada. Directed by **Dave Russell**, produced by **Stuart Coxe** and executive produced by **Gordon Henderson** of 90th Parallel Productions, *Sing-Along Messiah* will also be available on DVD in 2011.

Tafelmusik has become a major force on the international scene, with a rigorous touring schedule that sees the orchestra on the road for seven to twelve weeks each year. In February 2009, the orchestra made its debut at the legendary Carnegie Hall with two sold-out performances, which were praised by the *New York Times* for "stately, buoyant and crisply etched playing ... elegant phrasing and lithe clarity."

Regular tours in Canada, the United States and Europe are complemented with ambitious tours to destinations like Asia, where Tafelmusik recently undertook an extensive itinerary that included engagements in Macau, Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Seoul. The orchestra has toured in Asia since 1990, performing in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. In October 2010, Tafelmusik takes *The Galileo Project* on the road to the Beijing International Music Festival, Suzhou Science & Cultural Centre in China, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, and Seoul, Korea.

Tafelmusik has been invited to perform in Europe's most prestigious concert halls, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Musikverein in Vienna, Symphony Hall in Birmingham, and the Barbican Centre in London. Since 1984 Tafelmusik has also performed in Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Latvia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Mexico, The Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Venezuela, and from coast to coast in the United States and Canada. Tafelmusik made its debut at the Reate Festival in Rieti, Italy by invitation from the Festival's Artistic Director Kent Nagano in 2009, and has been invited to return in August 2010.

The only Canadian orchestra to hold an annual international residency, Tafelmusik has been orchestra-in-residence at the *Klang und Raum* Festival in Irsee, Germany since 1993. In September 2010, the festival's Artistic Director, the renowned German conductor Bruno Weil, will lead Tafelmusik in works by Pergolesi, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert.

An integral part of Tafelmusik's success worldwide has been its recordings, with a discography of more than 75 baroque and classical discs on the Analekta, CBC Records, Sony Classical, Collegium, Hyperion and BMG Classics labels. In 2006, Tafelmusik was honoured with the orchestra's 8th and 9th JUNO Awards for their recordings of *Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6* (Analekta/Sony BMG in Europe) and *Baroque Adventure: The Quest for Arundo Donax* (Analekta). Tafelmusik's recording of *Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8* was released in the in 2008 and was nominated for a 2009 JUNO Award. This CD package also includes a DVD of concert footage and musician interviews. The orchestra's recent recording of Vivaldi's *L'estro armonico* with world-renowned violinist Elizabeth Wallfisch garnered much acclaim and recognition, including a JUNO Award nomination, *BBC Music Magazine's* Orchestral Recording of the Month (January 2008) and *Gramophone Magazine UK* Editor's Choice (February 2008).

Tafelmusik's reach has extended to television and film, with performance documentaries *Le Mozart Noir* and *The Four Seasons Mosaic*. Produced by Media Headquarters, *Le Mozart Noir* is a documentary on Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges, a French Black composer and contemporary of Mozart. Originally broadcast on CBC, BBC, PBS, TV5, and ARTV, the DVD was released in 2005. *The Four Seasons Mosaic*, also produced by Media Headquarters, is a cross-cultural arts special which reinvents Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* to include a Chinese pipa, Indian sarangi and Inuit throat-singing. *The Four Seasons Mosaic* premiered on CBC Television's "Opening Night" in 2005, and the DVD is paired with Tafelmusik's *L'estro armonico* CD. A live performance of Tafelmusik's **Sing-Along Messiah** will be released on DVD in 2011, and the "breathtaking" (CBC.ca) *Galileo Project* will reach thousands of music lovers when a film version of the concert experience becomes available on YouTube and DVD in late 2010.

At home in Toronto Tafelmusik performs over 50 concerts each season at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, a historic church in the Annex neighbourhood of Toronto, as well as a series of performances at George Weston Recital Hall in the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Selected concerts at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre

are recorded for broadcast on CBC Radio Two programmes, and are also heard on National Public Radio in the United States.

Tafelmusik's two-and-a-half decade-long collaboration with Opera Atelier has helped establish Toronto as an important North American centre for baroque and classical opera performance. The two organizations collaborate on two productions per season, including the forthcoming 25th anniversary season with performances of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in the fall of 2010 and Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* in the spring of 2011.

Working towards its vision of becoming an international centre of musical excellence, Tafelmusik has invested much energy and many resources into ongoing music education and outreach programs for music-lovers of all ages. In 2000, the orchestra and choir founded the Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute (TBSI), held at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. TBSI offers advanced students, pre-professional and professional musicians an in-depth course of study of baroque repertoire and performance practice through masterclasses, lectures, orchestral and choral training, and chamber ensembles. TBSI is held at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto, where Tafelmusik is the baroque orchestra-in-residence.

Tafelmusik continues its commitment to a Master of Music in Period Performance (Instrumental) programme that was introduced in 2008. This two-year graduate program is an intensive immersion in baroque performance on period instruments, with private lessons and coaching by Tafelmusik musicians. It complements the existing one-year Advanced Certificate in Baroque Performance program.

Tafelmusik's vision for music education also includes a programme for students in grades 6 through 12 featuring free outreach concerts, a musician in the classroom programme, an annual family matinee, multi-disciplinary projects with area schools, and education events on tour including university residencies, children's concerts and school visits in Canada and the United States. As part of an ongoing commitment to music education, Tafelmusik is providing permanent music education classroom materials to the school groups they meet on tour, including curriculum-based study guides and Tafelmusik CDs.

For more information, please visit: www.tafelmusik.org