

## Tafelmusik Reviews

“That the musical performance, through it all, was of the highest order hardly needs saying ... the bursts of virtuosity were too widespread and numerous to list. But what was truly remarkable, for a band of 17 playing a kaleidoscopic variety of repertory, was that it was all done from memory ... This production, which has traveled to China and Malaysia, to Mexico and California, and is bound for Australia, the Netherlands and Spain, has yet to find its way to New York. That can't happen soon enough.”

New York Times, 2011

“Jeanne Lamon and the superb Tafelmusik players are ideal partners ... They listen acutely, they play with passion and refinement. They feel and breathe with the singer.”

The Globe and Mail, 2010

“Intonation approached a golden mean of perfection; styling, phrasing, bowing, color, articulation — all in superb focus — mined the full array of emotion and subtext that divines the repertoire ... The modern audience in attendance was forced to listen with an attentiveness seldom experienced outside of prayer — gratifying.”

Santa Barbara News Press, 2010

“The best element is ... Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, who bring out all the rich depth in the glorious, tuneful score ...”

2010

NOW Magazine,

“The musical performances were both splendid and highly effective in underscoring the gravity of the readings. The program was one of the best I've seen in years — a celebration of reason and imagination, whether in art, science or the world of ideas.”

2010

Kansas City Star,

“Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra ... brought their program *The Galileo Project: Music of the Spheres* to La Jolla, providing the most imaginative, engaging, and spontaneous-sounding early music program I can remember attending.”

2010

San Diego Arts,

“The *Brandenburg Concertos* have long been part of the repertoire at our city's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. The group's fine performances — both live and on disc — are one of the reasons they are recognized as one of the world's top period-performance orchestras.”

2009

Toronto Star,

“Tafelmusik offered a vigorous and well-paced interpretation, with stately, buoyant and crisply etched playing ... elegant phrasing and lithe clarity.”

New York Times, 2009

“Led by Tafelmusik music director Jeanne Lamon, the instrumentalists sounded fantastic as they teased every colourful fibre and texture from Bach's score.”

Toronto Star,

2009

“The orchestra, as expected, played fleetly, lightly, impeccably, with Jeanne Lamon as principal violin, and with an especially lovely obbligato flute in *On mighty wings*.”

The Globe and Mail,

2009

“... the Friday performance was one of the most majestic and brilliant realizations of the famous outdoor score I have heard lately.”

Montreal Gazette,

2009

“The Canadian orchestra —directed by Jeanne Lamon since 1981 — also interpreted, with delicate vitality, transparency and richness of the ancient sound, pieces by Handel, Bach, Purcell ...”

La Journada (Mexico),

2009

“Taurins and company, however, made Purcell's music sing and dance and fulfill the utmost potential of its beauty and variety. The sheer quantity of it was transformed into an iridescent experience of music-making.”

The Globe and Mail,

2009

“The choir, however, was the miracle ... each was clear-spoken, each vividly characterized, each radiantly but specifically sonorous. I doubt there's a better choir anywhere.”

The Globe and Mail,

2009

“The people at Toronto's period-instrument orchestra are never at a loss for inventive programming. But the orchestra's year-opening multimedia ode to Galileo and his telescope was truly out of this world. From the high-definition pictures of space, to the choreographed orchestra performing from memory, this was live performance with an edge of pure excitement.”

Toronto Star,

2009

“Tafelmusik need no introduction when it comes to transparency of articulation and balance. Here, however, they travel through Classical territory with remarkable precision, vitality and tonal focus. Beethoven benefits mightily from the silken strings, woody winds, clarion brasses and pinpoint timpani. After these ultra-fresh experiences, can we ever hear modern-instrument performances without feeling that something is missing? Possibly, but Weil and his players convince us that Beethoven can sound as radical in the 21st century as he must have done in the 19th.”

Gramophone Magazine,

2009

“... the choir was a model of precision and responsiveness, and the orchestra was able to highlight every subtle texture in the instrumental parts.”

Toronto Star,

2009

“Simply put, this is one of the best, most imaginative shows based on classical music seen here in years. Including intermission, these two hours pass as if they were 10 minutes. There isn't a single

dull moment or off note ... In the end, the audience is left with a true taste of the awe, wonder and optimism that people felt in the 17th and 18th centuries.”

Toronto Star, 2009

“Tafelmusik and their various collaborators have succeeded in teasing out thrilling links between artists and thinkers and providing new insights into these fine centuries-old works ... for the first time, I felt like I could actually hear the icy, brittle nuances of winter, or the lush, rich textures of summer. The achievement here is enough to make the stars weep.”

CBC.ca, 2009

“The sound had an immediacy that's too often lacking in our concert halls. It felt as if these accomplished artists were truly creating something in the moment ... Quite simply, you're not likely to hear baroque music played any better anywhere else by people who give every indication of really wanting to be there for you. Let's have 30 more years of Tafelmusik, please.”

Toronto Star, 2008

“The first performance of Tafelmusik's sold-out run at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre last night was one of its best yet, with the 25-member Tafelmusik Chamber Choir tight, crisp and responsive, and Taurins in full artistic control of everything happening on the intimate stage.”

Toronto Star, 2008

“Jeanne Lamon has developed a crack ensemble which, in the main baroque and classical repertoires from Vivaldi, Telemann, Bach and Handel to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (with a few rarities to spell them off), can be counted upon to give superb, idiomatic performances.”

The Globe and Mail, 2008

“The orchestra, led by Lamon from her concertmaster's chair, made the score glow and vibrate with rare warmth. Most importantly, it made the music sound as fresh as if it were created on the spot. This is music at its most powerful – a living force, not a museum piece.”

Toronto Star, 2008

“Guest conductor Bruno Weil knows exactly how to mesh a brisk pace with meticulously shaped phrases and an unerring bounce to the rhythmic scaffolding. It's hard not to heap purple praise on this evening of magical music. One of the many thrills was realizing that hearing these two great, often-performed symphonies – both dating from 1812 – on period instruments is better than hearing them for the first time, because they are so familiar.”

Toronto Star, 2008

“As ever, Tafelmusik are a disciplined ensemble who play with verve but force neither pace nor tone, and indeed this recording's comfortably appointed yet lucid sound is one of its principal pleasures. The eight concertos here make rich fare when performed with this level of style and expertise”

Gramophone Magazine, 2008

“Three movements of the *Gloria* range from that glorious late Bach celebratory spirit to a more introspective meditation on God. Choir director Ivars Taurins helps the ensemble capture both with energetic thrusts and tight ensemble, while soloists Ann Monoyios and Colin Ainsworth are in sync in the duet on “Gloria patri”.

Gramophone Magazine, 2008

“Tafelmusik's 13 strings, impeccably in tune, create a taut ensemble while slow movements are treated to beautifully expressive playing ...”

BBC Music Magazine, 2008

“If last night's stunningly well-done effort was any indication, this should single-handedly do more for

Toronto's self-identity as a cultural meeting place than any other effort in recent memory."  
The Toronto Star, 2008

"No other Canadian orchestra spends so much time travelling or does so much to give Canada a profile in the international arena of music. And, increasingly these days, it is a profile constructed from top-flight engagements"  
Toronto Star, 2008

"Possibly the most remarkable feature of the Tafelmusik concerts is that the orchestra's members constantly refresh their initiatives and agendas with dramatic interest and lively musical ideas that work. They are always alert and alive, never complacent or hidebound."  
The Globe and Mail, 2008

"Three violinists from the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra — Christopher Verette, Aisslinn Nosky and Julia Wedman — proved themselves to be more than up to Biber's challenges as they made nine of the 15 sonatas bloom, sing and dance under their talented bows ..."  
Toronto Star, 2008

"I cannot remember a *Messiah* performance as uniformly "spot-on" as this year's by Ivars Taurins's Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra ... As for the choir, they, if anything, outdid the soloists in the crispness and brilliance of their coloratura. To sing some of those choruses as Taurins's speeds, with every note clear and in place, is an almost superhuman achievement ... one of the best *Messiahs* I have ever heard."  
The Globe and Mail, 2007

"Tafelmusik performs with the ease and assurance that we have come to expect of them, with bright, crisp tempi and a warm sonority full of a sense of space and light. All perform admirably, with excellent balance, unanimity of style and interpretation, and true ensemble playing throughout."  
WholeNote Magazine, 2007

"Bravo, meanwhile, to all the performers, including Taurins, who held the long, texturally complicated piece together expertly ..."  
The Globe and Mail, 2007

"The Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir ...have reached the stage where regular conductor Ivars Taurins can finesse even the smallest elements of the interpretation."  
Toronto Star. 2007

"Technically, the choir is unbeatable — ensemble, blend, balance, phrasing, diction and style are wonderful. The choral sound is light, but always focussed and concentrated. The light, agile, detailed singing ... gives me pins and needles."  
CBC Radio, *Sound Advice*, 2007

" ... the three violin soloists all showed signs of expressive brilliance."  
Chicago Sun-Times, 2007

"Most notable was the raw vigor of their reading. The blistering downward scales brought to mind a barely controlled tumble into the fiery depths ... Bach's Concerto for Three Violins in D Major resonated with textural lushness and melodic sophistication. Julia Wedman, Aisslinn Nosky and Christina Zacharias were the spirited and sensitive soloists."  
Chicago Tribune, 2007

“You could get the impression that Tafelmusik won’t settle for anything less than world domination.”

Toronto Star, 2007

“The choir's founder and conductor, Ivars Taurins, has honed his ensemble to new heights of virtuosity, responsiveness and rhythmic finesse, and has enabled it to release astonishing reserves of power. Thursday it sang the many and varied choruses which are the backbone of this unique oratorio as you hardly dare hope they can be sung.”

The Globe and Mail, 2007

“The playing itself was fabulous, proving yet again why Tafelmusik is one of the world's finest period-performance orchestras. The technically challenging music was delivered with impeccable clarity, showing off Bach's unmatched ability to meld melody and counterpoint in imaginative ways.”

Toronto Star, 2007

“As is usually the case with Tafelmusik's programs, the performances were excellent last night. Violinist and music director Jeanne Lamon led the orchestra with verve, while Ivars Taurins shaped gorgeous textures and deep dynamic shifts with the balanced choir. The players used more of the performance space than usual, harnessing a fanfare and processional music to bring in the choir, and another trumpet blast to signal the start of intermission.”

Toronto Star,  
2007

“As the choir approaches its 25th anniversary under Taurins’s direction, and the orchestra a similar milestone with Jeanne Lamon, it is worth reminding ourselves of the treasure that hard work, commitment, and musical excellence has presented us in this city.”

The Globe and Mail, 2006

“...one is tempted to say that if Bach, who never heard the B Minor Mass in his lifetime, could choose a performance to listen to, this one by Tafelmusik would have been worth his while. Every aspect of the work was polished to rare perfection. Ivars Taurins, a man who deserves more praise for his orchestral as well as his choral conducting, shaped every phrase of the two-hour work superbly, controlling his forces, allowing the many internal voices to be heard clearly, letting the music loose when Bach's spirit called for it.”

The Globe and Mail, 2006

“Tafelmusik ranks among the world's top period ensembles, and its individual members are often the best you'll hear anywhere.”

Toronto Star, 2006

“...with Taurins' masterful shaping of the music and careful treatment of the text by the singers, and you have the best-possible kind of concert experience — one that is not likely to be bettered anywhere else.”

Toronto Star, 2006

“Tafelmusik has been performing Mozart during its European travels for years, and now we can hear what the rest of the world has been so enthusiastic about. This is Mozart made fresh, delivered in the spirit of his time. Paradoxically, he speaks to us in the 21st century all the more compellingly as a result.”

Toronto Star, 2006

“Although Tafelmusik wore modern concert dress in both venues, music director Jeanne Lamon and her colleagues played like an 18th century orchestra in those intimate, gilded spaces, packing as strong a punch as Mozart and his father could have wished. With Weil setting bracing tempi, even the

often trivialized serenade *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* lost its music box identity, emerging as a surprisingly dramatic score.”

Toronto Star, 2006

“Inventive programming and energetic playing are hallmarks of Tafelmusik. They always give you something to think about as well as a feast for the ear. It was an altogether glorious evening of some of the most vividly coloured Baroque music we have yet heard from this peerless ensemble.”

Halifax Chronicle Herald, 2006

“...with Taurins keeping everything under superb control, clear and lithely moving forward. His Tafelmusik Chamber Choir was at the top of its form.”

The Globe and Mail, 2006

“What we got was a beautifully nuanced, intricately textured and dynamically rich rendition using period instruments played with great precision.”

Toronto Star, 2006

“Words can rarely describe music adequately. And they are useless when confronted with the powerful beauty of J.S. Bach’s great Mass in B Minor – both in terms of the work itself and its current interpretation at the hands of the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Chamber Choir and soloists under the direction of Ivars Taurins.”

Toronto Star, 2006

“Glorious music ... the augmented Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra was on the mark, and the choir and its soloists are a gift of the gods.”

Classical 96.3 FM, 2005

“The [Tafelmusik] soloists ... played with such a keen sense of ensemble that the solos and accompaniments effectively became all of one piece.”

Toronto Star, 2004

“Jeanne Lamon has kept the focus on period integrity, crafting a sound with sheen and zest. Excellence extends to the vocals; under Ivars Taurins, the chamber choir exemplifies baroque virtues of clarity, transparency and vigour.”

Toronto Life, 2004

“The ensemble offered a vivace full of interesting textures ... a largo of exquisite grace and somberness ... an allegro in which contrapuntal lines were woven a fine and seamless whole, a vivace with a sense of courtly dance and a sprightly concluding allegro notable for the cohesion of the strings.”

The Peace Arch News, 2004

“Chamber Choir founder Ivars Taurins vigorously conducted the ensemble, snaring every opportunity to illuminate the dramatic text ... striking a magnificent balance between intense expressiveness and the unfolding of volatile narrative ...”

Toronto Star, 2004

“For 25 years, Ms. Lamon and Tafelmusik have earned high marks ... the music’s greatness might not be so obvious but for Tafelmusik’s fine period style, with robust yet disciplined strings, focused brasses and mellifluous woodwinds.”

The New York Times, 2004

“Suddenly everything in the piece made sense; suddenly the scrumptious colours, which one never

hears in a modern orchestra, emerged from the score like those of a lovingly restored painting.”

The National Post, 2003

“Pungent natural horns, soft-edged woodwinds, and the fragile earthiness that comes from gut strings tuned to a lower-than-modern pitch made Tafelmusik’s spirited readings feel like a tour of so many secret gardens.”

The Globe and Mail, 2003

“To this music Lamon and her players brought a lovely, meaningful amplitude, rare in period-instrument performance, and an authority that compelled you to listen and heed.”

The Globe and Mail, 2003

“The Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra is closing its season in a brilliant blaze of stringed glory this week. This is such a blinding blaze that it rocks one’s musical world ...”

The Globe and Mail, 2003

“These performances [on A Baroque Feast] are ‘to die for’ – but first ‘to live with’. I have already played this new one so many times that if it were on an LP it would now be worn out! I leave it to you to decide how badly you want to acquire a disc that is high-quality throughout and with some sublime performances.”

Gramophone Magazine, 2002

“Tafelmusik has maintained one of the highest profiles among period instrument ensembles for over 20 years, and the vitality and finesse of the playing on [A Baroque Feast] fully justifies an elevated position in the current league table.”

BBC Music Magazine, 2002

“Watching Lamon play is part of the joy of a Tafelmusik concert. She is constantly in motion, partly to lead her group, partly moved by the music itself, but always full of the emotional depth of the works she is performing.”

The Globe and Mail, 2001

“Tafelmusik is one of the most consistently pleasing ensembles in Toronto, having given us more than two decades of solid period performance, but Thursday night the group outdid even itself, with a clever program that was well balanced, impeccably performed and full of joy and energy.”

The Globe and Mail, 2001

“The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra ended their season in top form in Thursday night in Toronto, and when Tafelmusik Chamber Choir is at the top of their game, there are few similar ensembles on Earth that can touch them.”

The Globe and Mail, 2001

“The best items were clearly the motets, delivered by 25 singers under conductor Ivars Taurins with a seductive sparkle that was really a champagne performance, outstanding examples of the choral art.”

Toronto Star, 2001

“Tafelmusik made Handel’s Concerto Grosso in F Major, Op. 3, No. 4 an example of clear, shining music. It was like an iridescent bubble from the past floated before us: the sights and sounds of another era were created as if by magic, then bursting into nothingness the moment the last note faded away.”

Hyde Park Herald, 2000

More and more, the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir is looking like the best period-performance choir anywhere in the world. I strongly doubt that anyone will soon surpass their efforts on this beautiful album of the six choral motets of J.S. Bach...A truly great recording.

The Globe and Mail, 2000

Director Jeanne Lamon and the rest of the orchestra seem to have had an invigorating summer, and Bach's dance music moved in smiling sympathy with the energy they've brought back to their new season. It's a joy to have them back.

Toronto Star, 2000

Tafelmusik, under their Music Director Jeanne Lamon, proved vividly expressive accompanists...the ensemble gave us a performance of Bach's Suite No. 1 which was perfectly judged in its profundity and ebullience.

The Guardian, 2000

The same goes for these performances by one of the world's top baroque orchestras, exemplary in every way from their generous but clear-voiced sound to their nicely judged responses to the music's many details...A perfect Telemann release.

Gramophone Magazine, 2000

"The Tafelmusik orchestra has built, in its special field, a reputation as solid as those of the New York or Berlin philharmonics."

The Washington Post, 1999