

2017/18
SEASON

MEDIA
RELEASE

Tafelmusik
Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir

Tafelmusik Reviews

"Tafelmusik's performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony reminds me why I fell in love with music in the first place." —The Globe and Mail, 2016

"I was immediately taken with the sheer ease with which the ensemble played to a virtuoso standard ... The refinement, flexibility, and enthusiasm of the ensemble were apparent ... as was the immense transparency of the inner voices and the easeful virtuosity." — Seen & Heard International, 2016

"The Tafelmusik players performed the entire lengthy program expertly and from memory -- a remarkable feat. ... With concert programmers continually searching for new ways to reach audiences, this enterprising concept could serve as a signpost ... entertaining, educational, musically rewarding and visually arresting." — Huffington Post, 2016

"It is easy to see why Tafelmusik has been called one of the world's greatest Baroque orchestras—each musician was flawless in their performance and moved in and out of solo and group compositions with expert fluidity." — VanCity Buzz, 2016

"Toronto has many fine choirs and Ivars Taurins over the years has made the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir one of the best." — Concerto.net, 2016

"A long list of 43 visual credits, combined with a massive amount of detailed historical research, illustrated the amount of effort that went into this project, again affirming the fusion of 'authentic' music-making and inspired scholarship that Tafelmusik has always stood for. I think it is unlikely that something like this could be better done than it was here." — Classical Music Vancouver, 2016

"... the Chamber Choir, which always sings to the highest of standards, navigated Zelenka's technical challenges with easy grace." — Musical Toronto, 2016

"In a visual age of rapidly changing images and soundbites, Tafelmusik's *House of Dreams* provided a beautiful and successful example of how outstanding musicianship, along with modern technology and creative staging, can serve to breathe new life into an otherwise antiquated concert experience." — The Daily Courier (Kelowna), 2016

"The clear rapport, the marvellously precise ensemble, the sense of communal music-making, lifts the playing to a different level." — Edmonton Journal, 2016

"...the sheer enjoyment shown by Tafelmusik's players in performing Bach's music from memory—their eyes on each other rather than on the printed page—gave a special zest to their playing." —American Record Guide, 2015

"It's the musicianship of Tafelmusik that really makes the program soar ... and the verve with which they deliver it ... They move freely around the stage as the piece demands, and this alone gives their playing a wonderful energy that's sorely lacking in most symphony orchestras." — Sydney Morning Herald, 2015

"The musicianship of Tafelmusik is exquisite without question, and all essential musical devices such as intonation, articulation, tone, dynamics, texture and technique are masterfully handled."

— The Clothesline (Australia), 2015

"They bring to everything they play an elegance, insight and nobility of tone and made this ... concert an event to cherish. I cannot readily recall experiencing so satisfying a presentation in a long time."

— The West Australian, 2015

"The musicianship was impeccable, the quality only too apparent when individual members could be heard just feet away, processing up the aisle ... Applause was spontaneous and vociferous; and, for the most substantial piece of the evening, fully deserved." —The New Zealand Herald, 2015

"It's hard to imagine music-making of greater exuberance, transcendence and sheer revelatory power being presented any time soon ..."

—The Globe and Mail, 2015

"...the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir sang behind the orchestra with a spry, glowing homogeneity that reached upward as if to pull the night stars into the hall." —Toronto Star, 2015

"... nothing short of magnificent ... a musical bounty in one evening that will not soon be forgotten."

— The Globe and Mail, 2015

"...absolute unison achieved - it's as if all 30 players had synchronized their breathing and heartbeats." — Concerto.net, 2014

"... I'm prepared to nominate the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir for a group Order of Canada after their work on this *Messiah*. They are a consummate and perfectly balanced ensemble, so complete in their execution, whose joy and beauty in performance often brought me and my companion ... to tears." — The Globe & Mail, 2014

"The precise and animated performances of the Tafelmusik musicians perfectly suited the upbeat mood of the program ... The well-deserved standing ovation at the end is certainly not the first, nor will it be the last, which this imaginative program has received." — KC Metropolis (Kansas City), 2014

"Tafelmusik is a very tight band, incredibly disciplined and energetic, but full of joy at the same time. There are no wasted musical gestures in this orchestra, no unnecessary extravagance, but that just means that every note is tuned toward maximum emotional expression." — The Globe & Mail, 2014

"Refined, gracious and elegant are words that come to mind." — Seen and Heard, 2014

"Tafelmusik, performed their multi-cultural four seasons with flair, and it is little wonder people keep coming back in droves to Tafelmusik each season." — Musical Toronto, 2014

"The ensemble members ... performed the entire concert from memory, their spirited, polished interpretations imbued with spontaneity and imaginative flair." — New York Times, 2013

"When it's at its best, Tafelmusik Orchestra can compete with any similar ensemble in the world. Its brisk tempi, precise, yet passionate attacks and joyous ensemble work take us back to an older musical world with sharp effectiveness ..."

— The Globe & Mail, 2013

"It was a brilliant exhibition from this great Age of Reason...a perhaps too perfect illumination of well-balanced art, well-balanced narration, oddities of information, and, above everything else, 16 musicians who stood, sat, danced, strummed, strolled and played their instruments with stunning accuracy." — Concerto.net (New York), 2013

"... Tafelmusik played with a bracing fission and fervor that unified this collection ...They also projected powerfully into this hall for a period performance band; their sound is brighter and fuller than others that have passed through here." — American Record Guide, 2013 (review of concert in Walt Disney Hall, Los Angeles)

“... simply takes ones breath away ... The whole ensemble plays this standing and by memory, the result being that they all relate to one another constantly throughout. The result is a set of sonic acrobatics that would put the Cirque du Soleil to shame.” — Concerto.net, 2013

“For Tafelmusik, Baroque music and period instruments are no gimmick – they are a means of expression so ingrained, these musicians seem to breathe it. They bring the same attitude to the use of technology and multimedia. It makes no show of itself; it serves the art. Thus the old and the new coexist on stage like two good friends – Friends who improve each other.” - Violinist.com (Los Angeles), 2013

“This is an example of the kind of committed, passionate music-making that guarantees a concert that people remember for a long time, regardless of genre.” — Musical Toronto, 2013

“Tafelmusik, led since 1981 by violinist Jeanne Lamon, sounded terrific. Seventeen-strong here, the group played the music with a wonderful ease and vitality. Sometimes it seemed as if the players were jamming together, so friendly was the give and take, so lively were the rhythms.” – Orange County Register, 2013

“But Thursday night’s audience just stayed put, unwilling or unable to leave ... I’ve never quite seen anything like it. I can’t imagine a more glowing testament to the evening of fine music-making that we had just witnessed.” - The Globe & Mail, 2013

“The music-making was outstanding. Tafelmusik is an ensemble of 17 virtuosos, and their individual and collective excellence makes the program work... It was intense; it was exhilarating.” – St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 2013

“If a hall is the orchestra’s instrument, Tafelmusik has just traded the violin that your mom bought you for an Amati, if not a Stradivarius.”- The Globe and Mail, 2013

“Weil, through incredibly detailed work with the players, teased out all the texture and colour, inner dialogue as well as dramatic contrast necessary to add zest to this music. It sounded fresh, as if being born in the spur of the moment.” - Toronto Star, 2013

“Further pleasure comes from the playing of Tafelmusik, an uplifting mixture as ever of ensemble excellence and open generosity of spirit.” — Gramophone, 2012

“...the sparkling, radical way of playing these pieces is a breath of fresh air ... and provides a wake-up call of a particularly enjoyable kind ... Silvery strings, magnificent woodwinds, alert dynamics, very quick tempi, cracking accents. We feel to be present at the birth of two of the 19th century’s most significant works.” — Crescendo, 2012 (translated from German)

“This was a performance of the highest quality ... It is a rare delight to hear an orchestra of period instruments ... played with such subtlety, mastery and commitment. Through subtle drama, physical gesture and sheer musicianship, Tafelmusik capture the energy, emotion and joyful spirit of the baroque.” — The Australian, 2012

“...imbued with a classical elegance ... This album [Beethoven - Mendelssohn] is a perfect opportunity to rediscover these symphonic masterpieces with fresh ears; every hearing offers a glimpse back to classical music’s golden past.” — “Album of the Week”, Classic FM (UK), 2012

“... exceptional. Music Director Jeanne Lamon ... picks tempos carefully, balances instruments even more carefully, and propels the music with a superb sense of its underlying dance rhythms as well as a deep-seated understanding of the conventions of ornamentation, double-dotting and instrumental balance.” — Transcentury Blog, 2012

“The 24-member Tafelmusik Chamber Choir gives the choruses a transparency that highlights Taurins’ detailed and astute work with phrasing and dynamics.” — Musical Toronto, 2012

“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 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." — Kansas City Star, 2010

"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." — San Diego Arts, 2010

"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." — Toronto Star, 2009

"Tafelmusik offered a vigorous and well-paced interpretation, with stately, buoyant and crisply etched playing ... elegant phrasing and lithe clarity." — New York Times, 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

"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 ... 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

"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

"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

"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

"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

"Tafelmusik's 13 strings, impeccably in tune, create a taut ensemble while slow movements are treated to beautifully expressive playing ..." — BBC Music 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

"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

"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

"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 at 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

"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

"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." — 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 ...”
— 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.” — Toronto Star, 2007

“As the choir approaches its 25th anniversary under Taurins' 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

“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

“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

“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

“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

“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

“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

“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