

# BACH at LANGSTONE COURT

Saturday 7 October at 6.00pm



## **“At Home with Bach”**

**A private recital introduced and performed by**

**Steinitz Bach Players Chamber Ensemble**

**Elizabeth Walker & Christine Garrett flutes**

**Anthony Robson oboe & recorder**

**Andrew Skidmore cello, Alastair Ross harpsichord**

This recital is being given at the kind invitation of Richard Jones, Chairman of the London Bach Society’s Council of Trustees.

This year we are commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Martin Luther’s Reformation that began on 31 October 1517, when he nailed his 95 theses on the Castle Door at Wittenberg, a small and unimposing town in eastern Germany. It was in protest against numerous practices by the Catholic Church to which he was opposed. This simple but powerful act had far-reaching consequences, politically, socially, musically, as well as theologically, not only in Germany, but across Europe and eventually, due to 19<sup>th</sup> century German migration, to the USA. Luther was excommunicated by Rome in 1520 and his seismic advocacies eventually led to the foundation of the church that bears his name. Bach served the Lutheran church all his life, providing sacred and secular music that reflected Luther’s priorities well, from cantatas to Anna Magdalena’s NoteBook – music for his home as well as his church.

Music-making in the Bach family home was commonplace and an integral part of their Lutheran lives. In the historic surroundings of Langstone Court, the home of the Jones family since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, our recital focuses on this aspect of Lutheran family life in a programme specially curated by **Anthony Robson**, a re-imagined evening of chamber music by **Bach (1685-1750)** and his great friend the prolific composer **Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)** whose 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary falls this year, a celebration of friendship.

### **The Programme**

**Sonata in G major for two flutes & continuo** *Joh. Seb. Bach*

**Sonata in D minor for flute, oboe and continuo**  
*Georg Philipp Telemann*

**Movements from a cello Suite** *Joh. Seb. Bach*

**Pieces for solo Harpsichord** *Joh. Seb. Bach*

**Trio in D minor from Talefmusik II**  
**For recorder, 2 flutes and continuo** *Georg Philipp Telemann*

## Bach and Telemann, a lifelong friendship

Anniversaries enable us to revisit the lives and music of composers, especially if their music seemingly falls under the radar, yet on hearing is both uplifting and enchanting. Telemann was a prolific composer, providing works written for every genre – operas, passions, oratorios, cantatas, chamber music, instrumental.

Georg Philipp Telemann was born in Magdeburg on 14 March 1681 and enjoyed a long and active life as a composer, dying 250 years ago at the grand old age of 86 in Hamburg, where he was Director of Music. Bach thought very highly of Telemann's work and they became great personal friends. Their paths crossed often and first met while JSB was employed at Weimar (1708-1717). Later the Bachs invited their friend to become Godfather to their second surviving son Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, born at Weimar in March 1714 and in 1729 Bach succeeded Melchior Hoffman as Director of Music of the Leipzig students' musical society Telemann founded in 1702.

Bach's respect for Telemann, and indeed others, is also reflected in words quoted from a letter from CPE Bach to his Father's biographer J N Forkel

“In his last years, he (Bach) esteemed highly: Fux, Caldara, Kayser, Händel, both Grauns, Telemann, Zelenka...and in general everything that was worthy of esteem in Berlin and Dresden. Except for the first four, he knew the rest personally. In his younger years, he was often with Telemann, who also held me at my baptism.” *Oxford Composer Companions Ed. Malcolm Boyd.*

Interesting as confirmation also from his son that Bach did not know Handel personally. The musicians performing at this special Langstone Recital will have pleasure sharing their appreciation of Bach, Telemann and the gift of their friendship.

## Steinitz Bach Players

The SBP was founded by the late Bach conductor and scholar Paul Steinitz in 1968 to enhance modern Bach scholarship in 'live' performances. The orchestra has pioneered and fostered period style playing, novel at foundation, that has influenced how the composer's music is both played and sung today. This complemented the singing style of the Society's original choir (1947-1989) and together they completed the historic public Bach cantata cycle (1958-1987) directed by Dr Steinitz, an achievement that is still unique in this country. Today, the SBP is resident at the London Bach Society's annual Bachfest adding to its list of achievements that include the UK 'live' première of a newly discovered Bach aria in 2005 and later in 2013, the UK 'live' première of Bach St Matthew Passion in its early version. The latter was directed by Anthony Robson, the continuo were Andrew Skidmore *cello* and Alastair Ross *organ*, whom guests will be able to meet at the Langstone Recital.

Steinitz Bach Players celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Bachfest in autumn 2018.

## Langstone Court, Herefordshire

**Langstone Court** has belonged to the Jones family since 1794. The back of the house, with the farmhouse behind it, was an Elizabethan manor house in which the Gwilym family settled in the reign of Elizabeth I, though an exposed cruck beam shows that the core of the house is older. The William and Mary front was built in about 1700, by William Gwilym the younger, when J S Bach was 15. William Gwilym's grandson Robert married an Atherton heiress in 1738 and Robert's granddaughter, Henrietta Maria Atherton, sold the remaining Gwilym estates in Herefordshire to pay off debts. Revd Thomas Jones bought Langston-House, Langston Farm and Langston-Mill Farm. His eldest son, Revd John Jones, added the bow extension, in which this evening's concert takes place, in 1825.

Richard Hodgkinson, agent to Henrietta Maria Atherton and architect of the plan to sell off the Gwilym Herefordshire estates, muses about entertainment at Langston in his diary entry for 24 August 1795: “The spacious Hall & Parlour tell us that many a joyous Feast has here been held. That many a Bottle, & many a Cask of native Cyder, has here been quaffed, while, doubtless, Wit & Humour passed around.” (from *A Lancashire Gentleman: The Letters and Journals of Richard Hodgkinson 1763-1847*)

The harp in the 1825 bow extension dates from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, made by S & P Erard, London, and would have been played by the present owner's great grandmother, Emily Edith (Oakeley), who married Dr John Jones (son of the Revd John Jones above) in 1847 and died in 1906. Their eldest daughter Constance (who was Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge, from 1903-16) records that her mother “played the harp better than any amateur I have ever heard (she had been a pupil of Chatterton's)”: presumably John Balsler Chatterton, Professor of Harp at the Royal Academy of Music in 1827 and Harpist to Queen Victoria in 1842.

This evening's recital continues the new era of music-making in this house.

[www.langstone-court.org.uk](http://www.langstone-court.org.uk)

**London Bach Society's next Bachfest is 14 October – 10 November**  
**“Bach and Luther: Masters and Servants”**  
[www.bachlive.co.uk](http://www.bachlive.co.uk)