

## V - THE CONCERTS

As has been noted earlier, the first season of concerts was an ambitious one. Five different concerts were given, on four days. The last two programs were presented on the same day: the first was in the afternoon, on Sunday, March 27, 1977, at the Woman's Club Building, and the second was given in the evening at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Both were in Denton.

The most typical season has consisted of four concerts. Repeat performances have occurred, but only infrequently. On one occasion, however, the Bach Choir managed to give two performances on the same day in separate cities. It happened on December 7, 1980, when the choir, together with the North Texas State University Collegium Musicum, presented "A Continental Christmas" program at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Denton at 4:00 PM, and immediately thereafter rushed to St. John Episcopal Church in Dallas for a 7:30 PM performance of the same program.

There have been eighty-seven concerts in the twenty seasons, and the Denton Bach Choir has performed in all but two of these. The Denton Bach Orchestra has played in thirty-nine.

The Denton Bach Society has sponsored two additional, special programs of solo performances, featuring early classical music, but not involving the Denton Bach Choir or Orchestra. In the first of these two concerts, in April, 1978, Stephan Bardas, artist-in-residence at the North Texas State University School of Music, played the *Well-Tempered Clavier, Part I*, in Recital Hall at NTSU. And, the penultimate program of the 20th season, March, 1996, featured tenor Bruce Fithian, a specialist in early vocal music, and harpsichordist Lenora McCrosky. Mr. Fithian was accompanied by Lenora McCrosky, and by Ty Young, cello, Kristin Van Cleve, violin, and David Heywood, recorder.

A substantial number of the eighty-seven concerts have been collaborative enterprises with various musical groups in Denton and in the Metropolitan area. These programs reflect the established status of the Bach Society in Denton and the Metroplex, and the extent to which the Society has been integrated into the musical and cultural fabric of the community. These co-operative endeavors merit some detailed reference.

One of the first of these ventures was in October, 1978. The Children's Choirs from St. Andrew Presbyterian and First Christian church under the direction of Dr. Froehlich joined with the Bach Choir in the presentation of the *Chorale Motet* (BWV 231). One year later, the Denton County Music Association and the Denton Bach Society performed portions of Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* with orchestra. The 30-member Denton Community Band with conductor Carol Lynn Mizell, one of the charter members of the Executive Board of the Bach

Society, played a five-movement Suite arranged from Handel's *Water Music*. And in May, 1991, the Denton Chamber Orchestra joined the Bach Society in the first collaboration of these two Denton ensembles, in a performance of Mozart's *Requiem*, KV. 626.

A program, An Hispanic Christmas Festival, was presented in December, 1991, in collaboration with Ballet Folklórico de Denton, Mariachi Ensemble and Children's Chorus, all of Denton. And the Denton Bach Choir joined with the Denton Light Opera Company and the Denton Community Orchestra to put on two performances of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in January, 1993.

There have been numerous collaborations with groups from the School of Music, at the University of North Texas. The Collegium Musicum under the direction of Dr. Cecil Adkins has performed with the Bach Society in three Christmas programs, and in April, 1992, the two groups joined in presenting Haydn's *Missa in Tempore Belli*.

Another group under Dr. Adkins' direction at UNT, Les Petites Violons, also has performed with the Denton Bach Choir in four Christmas programs. On another occasion, in October, 1989, the two combined in an all-Bach program to "address the question of authenticity of Baroque instruments"--a lively controversy in the field.

Other groups from the University of North Texas School of Music that have performed in association with the Bach organization include: the A Cappella Choir; the Women's Chorus, Debbie Simpkin King, Director, (this was a concert celebrating the 300th anniversary of Johann Sebastian Bach's birth); and Director Gibbons' group at North Texas, Canticum Novum.

On April 4 and 6, 1987, *Verdi's Requiem* was presented at NTSU Concert Hall. The North Texas State University Symphony Orchestra, directed by Serge Zehnacker, the NTSU Grand Chorus, and the Denton Bach Choir, under the direction of Henry Gibbons, combined for this occasion.

In November, 1983, Mr. Gibbons presented a program in the afternoon at NTSU, entitled "Luther and Music: A Pre-Concert Discussion." This was part of a six-day celebration of the Quincentennial Commemoration of Martin Luther's birth. That evening the Denton Bach Choir sang two sacred cantatas (BWV 125 and BWV 80) by Johann Sebastian Bach based on chorales by Martin Luther.

Yet another Bach musical program given in collaboration with NTSU took place on March 27, 1987. According to the Society's newsletter, *Vivace!*, "the third program of our season is being presented under the auspices of South Central Society for 18th-Century Studies, which is holding its annual meeting this year at NTSU. Accordingly we have decided to let the eminent eighteenth-century British music historian, Charles Burney, choose the repertoire

for this concert, and provide commentary on the music and the composers..."  
The program was presented in Recital Hall, NTSU School of Music, with Mr. Gibbons taking the role of Charles Burney.

In 1981, two joint concerts were given with the Texas Baroque Ensemble under the direction of gambist Charles Lang and harpsichordist Susan Ferre. One of these was in March of the 1980-81 season, and the other in November of the 1981-82 season.

Three more collaborations worthy of note with groups in the metroplex were Benjamin Britten's *Nove's Fludde* with the Texas Boys Choir of Fort Worth; Handel's *Messiah, Parts II and III* in collaboration with Fort Worth Early Music; and Haydn's *The Creation* performed with the Arlington Choral Society.

The Denton Bach Choir (or contingents thereof) has also sung in several informal programs in Denton, quite from the formal, seasonal engagements. They have sung at weddings, the Denton Arts Festival, Christmas on the Square Festival of Lights, private parties, and on other occasions. These performances are not included in this historical discussion of the Denton Bach Society.