



2010 CARMEL BACH FESTIVAL LISTENER'S GUIDES

THE 18TH CENTURY: RECOMMENDED READING

Since its founding in 1935, the Carmel Bach Festival has always presented its music within a context of ideas and discussions. The development of all the arts in the 18th century mirrors and parallels the social, cultural and political developments of that century, and by placing the music into the continuum of human existence we can deepen our connection to it.

One of my happiest duties at the Carmel Bach Festival is researching and presenting the pre-concert lectures. In my informal talks I try to evoke a stronger sense of context and create a deeper understanding the human being who wrote the notes. What were the circumstances in which he lived and worked, who was he a person, and what brought about the creation of the music?

The following list includes books that have been helpful to me in recent years and also books I'm currently using to prepare for the 2010 Festival. I must emphasize that this is a very personal list. It is by definition not broad in scope, and is primarily related to recent and upcoming repertoire at the Carmel Bach Festival.

There are countless books about 18th Century music, culture and society. The present list is not intended as a definitive final word on the very best books about the 18th century, nor are these the most recent publications. Many fine volumes on my shelves are not on this list.

Rather, these are books which in recent years have helped me find a human connection to the personalities who created the music, and to the cultural, historical, and social context in which they lived and worked.

There are many more reading suggestions on the Carmel Bach Festival website (see below).

~ David Gordon, *Bach Festival Dramaturge*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

The New Bach Reader:

A Life of J. S. Bach in Documents and Letters

(1998, Norton, ISBN: 0-393-31956-3 pbk.)

A fascinating and invaluable anthology of Bach's letters, documents, and other source material from Bach's time, as well as some insightful essays by modern authors. This volume should be on every Bach-lover's bookshelf.

The True Life of J. S. Bach

Klaus Eidam

(1999, Basic Books / Piper Verlag, ISBN: 0-465-01861-0)

Eidam examines many preconceptions, myths, and assumptions about Bach, his life, and his personality. A very fascinating and thought-provoking book.

Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician

Christoph Wolff

(2000, Norton, ISBN: 0-393-04825-X)

This monumental and clearly written biography of JS Bach was a Pulitzer Prize Finalist in 2000.

Another must-have book for every music lover interested in the details of Bach's life, family, music, and everyday working conditions. Read it from cover to cover or use it as a reference book.

The Bach Family

(New Grove Series)

(1983, W. W. Norton ISBN: 0393-30354-3 pbk.)

From the monumental New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, this is a collection of all the Grove articles on every musical member of the Bach Family. Definitive essays - scholarly, thorough, and concise - in a bargain-priced little volume. Great reference book for the average Bach-lover. Valuable for professionals.

The World of the Bach Cantatas

Christoph Wolff (Editor)

(1997, W.W. Norton (hdbk) ISBN: 0393041069)

A collection of 14 essays focusing on the wider and deeper contexts of Bach's cantatas, written by Bach scholars but not aimed at a strictly scholarly audience. The best cantata reference book for general readers to date.

Comprehensive List of Bach-Related Websites

www.jsbach.org/web.html

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GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Handel

Christopher Hogwood
(2007, Thames & Hudson, London (Pbk. 312 pages)
ISBN-13: 978-0500286814)

This is excellent material, somewhat (esp. for amateurs) easier to read Christoph Wolff's biography of Johann Sebastian Bach. If you want to be thoroughly informed about Handel's life and doings, then buy this book!

The Cambridge Companion to Handel

Donald Burrows (Editor)
(1998, Cambridge University Press (Pbk. 368 pages)
ISBN-13: 978-0521456135)

Eminent Handel scholars make their expertise accessible to the interested general reader and music lover. Their wide-ranging essays cover topics ranging from Handel's composing methods to his treatment of the Italian language to matters of performance practice, considering all the genres in which the composer worked. 45 music examples. 12 photos.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

The New Grove Haydn

by Jens Peter Larson
(1983, Norton, ISBN 0-393-30359-4)

The entire Franz Joseph Haydn article and work list, from the 1980 edition of the New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Revised and updated for this reprint. This is the perfect small Haydn reference book.

The Cambridge Companion to Haydn

by Caryl Clark (Editor)
(2005, Cambridge University Press, 340 pages,
ISBN 0521541077)

A collection of 18 scholarly essays on the musical work and cultural world of Haydn.

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Vivaldi: Voice of the Baroque

H.C. Robbins Landon
(1996, University of Chicago ISBN: 0226468429 pbk.)

An entertaining book full of theatrical notices, correspondence, and history. The Italian musical world was quite different from that of Bach's northern Germany.

The Four Seasons: A Novel of Vivaldi's Venice

by Laurel Corona
(2008, VoicePress (Pbk. 400 pages) ISBN: 1401309267)
Complete with a pronunciation guide and glossary, this charming, exquisite, and poetic novel paints a vivid and detailed picture of the "Ospedale" where Vivaldi served as music master, the music students who inspired Vivaldi, and the city where they performed the great composer's works

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Beethoven

Maynard Solomon
(2001, Schirmer Trade Books (Pbk. 554 pages)
ISBN-13: 978-0825672682)

One of the most respected biographies, and the most recent.

The New Grove Beethoven

by Joseph Kerman and Alan Tyson
(1983, Norton, ISBN 0-393-01687-0)

The entire Beethoven article and work list, from the 1980 edition of the New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians. This is the perfect small Haydn reference book.

Beethoven: The Man And The Artist: As Revealed In His Own Words

edited by Tom Tomas
(2009, CreateSpace (Pbk. 96 pages)
ISBN-13: 978-1442105041)

A smaller collection than the previous book, but a different concept. Very short quotes, mostly 1-5 sentences, arranged in chapters by theme or subject matter such as "On Composing", "On Art", "Religion", "On Performing", "On Education", "On His Own Character".

Beethoven Letters Journals and Conversations

Michael Hamburger
(1992, Thames & Hudson, London (Pbk 288 pages)
ISBN-13: 978-0500273241)

A selection of letters from and to Beethoven, passages from his journals, and letters about Beethoven sent between third parties. Arranged chronologically. Includes the entire "Heiligenstadt Testament" and other major documents.

Beethoven's Letters 1790-1826, Volume 1&2

(2000, Echo Library, Cirencester, UK (Pbk. 260 pages)
ISBN-13: 978-1846379604)

A more complete collection, Beethoven's own letters only, no journal entries or conversation books. A valuable low-price re-issue of a collection originally published in the mid-19th century.

BEETHOVEN ONLINE:

BeethovenHaus Museum, Bonn

www.beethoven-haus-bonn.de/

Beethoven the Immortal

lucare.com/immortal/

All About Beethoven

www.all-about-beethoven.com/

Beethoven Depot

www.edepot.com/beethoven.html

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OTHER 18TH CENTURY SUBJECTS

English Society in the 18th Century

Roy Porter
(1990, Penguin Books (Pbk. 420 pages) ISBN-13: 978-0-140-13819-1)

I love books like this: "Daily life in[fill in the blank]." This one is brilliant and readable, and presents a vivid picture of life in eighteenth-century England. It covers a wide-ranging list of areas: thought, politics, work, wages, culture, cities, villages, churches, clothing, government, festivals, diet, housing, and much more. Very witty and entertaining. Really first rate.

Evening in the Palace of Reason

James R. Gaines
(2006, Harper Perennial (Pbk. 368 pages) ISBN-13: 978-0007156610)

"Old Bach" made a well-documented visit to King Frederick the Great in the 1740s, and wrote "A Musical Offering" for him. This book examines that encounter and through that lens explores the changes in mid-18th century thought.

Frederick the Great

Nancy Mitford
(1995, Penguin USA (pbk) ISBN: 0140036539)

An important figure in 18th Century German culture and music, Frederick was the musician-king, the flute player. His court harpsichordist was Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, one of J.S. Bach's sons. This is an excellent general info book on Frederick, his court and followers. Great pics and graphics.

Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Hans Mersman, M. M. Bozman (Editors)
(1972, Dover Press (pbk) ISBN: 0486228592)

Mozart was a prodigious letter writer, and they provide a wonderful insight into Mozart's mind and private life.

OUT OF PRINT BUT AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Girl in Rose

(*highly recommended)

Peter Hobday
(2004, Orion Books, ISBN 0-297-84747-3)

This is at the top of my recommendation list. Fascinating portrait of a remarkable woman whom Haydn met in London. They had a relationship and he wrote music for her. Wonderful insight into London life and society in the 1790s. **A Social**

History of Music:

Middle Ages to Beethoven

Music and Society: since 1815

Henry Raynor (*highly recommended)
(1976, Taplinger (Pbk. 500 pages) ISBN 0-8008-7238-X)
(both titles published in one volume)

I discovered this book recently, and it is a superb reference guide and a great read. It follows the history of music by focusing on the developing relationship between composer, his patrons or audiences, the performers expected to perform the music, and the means the composer had to get his music before the public. The book describes the world the performers lived in, socially and economically, rather than analyzing the development of musical styles.

London Life in the Eighteenth Century

M. Dorothy George
(Harper, New York, 1964)

A fabulous compilation of data and quotes describing the social conditions in London in the 18th century. Drier than the Porter book (above) but a fine companion to it. Of course Porter's book looked at life throughout England and George's study is just London itself.

TWO WEBSITES WITH COPIOUS LINKS TO MUSIC RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET.

Carmel Bach Festival Website

www.bachfestival.org

In addition to complete information about the Bach Festival, and a long reading list and artist discography, the Festival site also includes basic list of informative and entertaining links.
(Click the "Education" link in the banner at the top of any page.)

David Gordon's SpiritSound website

www.spiritsound.com

Here you will find hundreds of links to music around the world. Bach and Baroque resources, serious research, fun stuff. The spiritsound website is more than 500 pages. Take time to explore. There is much useful and interesting material on the site.

(On the opening page, click on the "Music Resources" link.)

YOUR SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME!

This booklist is always a work in progress. Do you have a favorite book about 18th century culture or music? Please send the title and your comments to David Gordon (david@bachfestival.org)