

BAROQUE AND BEYOND

WINTER 2022

TAFEL



WELCOME

Welcome to the Winter 2022 issue of *Tafel*, our magazine for the musically curious.

In this issue, we invite you on a journey outside Toronto and even North America. The world at large, including Tafelmusik, is slowly opening up, and we are thrilled to travel with you to the United Kingdom to explore the royal chocolate kitchen of Hampton Court Palace, and to Switzerland and Japan to speak with two of this season's international guest directors, violinist Leila Schayegh and conductor Masaaki Suzuki.

We hope you are inspired by the global perspectives we've brought together for this issue, and that you will join us this season as we continue our explorations of baroque and beyond.

Elisa Citterio
Music Director

Carol Kehoe
Executive Director



Masaaki Suzuki
photo by Marco Borggreve
background treatment by Puncture Design

SOUND BITES

Tafel × Healthcare Workers

Tafelmusik is thrilled to partner with Michael Garron Hospital and University Health Network in Toronto for the month of February to bring staff and physicians a watch party of four free Tafelmusik concerts to enjoy from home. We hope this collaboration can offer some comfort and joy during these trying months, and we join our fellow community members in thanking healthcare workers for their vital work keeping the city safe and healthy.

The Gull, the Raccoon, and the Last Maple

Our digital Winter Social, *The Gull, the Raccoon, and the Last Maple*, premieres over Family Day weekend in February 2022. Commissioned by Tafelmusik, with music by Abigail Richardson-Schulte and script by Alexis Diamond, *The Last Maple* is a contemporary fable for baroque orchestra and narrator (actor Amanda Cordner) inspired by such classics as Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Richardson-Schulte's own *The Hockey Sweater*. A reflection on climate change, this concert for all ages serves as an allegory for the need for collective action in the face of this unprecedented global crisis.

Tafel Talks Returns

Our digital series of thought-provoking conversations about the transformative role of music in our world returns this season with three unique Talks. The first talk, *Baroque Feast*, held November 10, welcomed moderator Patrick G. Jordan, food historian Laura M. Carlson, La Palma sous chef Samantha Medeiros, and pastry chef Farzam Fallah for a discussion about the parallels between the musical and culinary arts, and savouring the essence of all things baroque.

BMO

We are thrilled to welcome BMO as our 2021/22 Season Presenting Sponsor. Long-time corporate champions of Tafelmusik's artist training and concert programming, BMO continues to be a leading partner committed to supporting collaboration, learning, and innovation in the arts. Thank you, BMO!

For the latest information and updates, subscribe to our email newsletter at [tafelmusik.org](https://www.tafelmusik.org).

CHOCOLATE FIT FOR A KING



BIG PICTURE

Thomas Tosier and the royal chocolate kitchen at Hampton Court Palace

BY ANNIE GRAY

Chocolate, *theobroma cacao*, food of the gods. Chocolate, which for centuries was not a food but a drink. Chocolate, so prestigious that a king and queen of Britain once built a set of rooms in its honour. William III and Mary II aren't the best known of British rulers, but they were extremely important. Under their reign (1689–1702) came many milestones: the enactment of the Bill of Rights 1689, the founding of the Bank of England, and the steady popularization of chocolate in Britain.

The palaces William and Mary inherited when they came to power were dismal. So they rebuilt. At Hampton Court they added a grand baroque extension to the old-fashioned Tudor core, with all the latest modern conveniences—from a full enfilade (a suite of interconnected rooms whose doors are aligned) to an allegory-heavy entryway, and their very own privy (private) kitchen. In the eighteenth century, that kitchen was recorded on a plan as the Chocolate Kitchen, and it is known as that today.

For years, the chocolate kitchen was a storeroom, often filled with flowers for display. The discovery of the hitherto overlooked plan that stated its former use was a revelation. The kitchen must have been used for other cooking—it includes a (small) roasting range—but William, in particular, loved chocolate. He and Mary drank it as part of the *levée*, the intimate morning ceremony at which they dressed, surrounded by a select set of courtiers. William also quaffed chocolate throughout the day.

The couple even employed their own specialist chocolate maker, Solomon de la Faya. Later, when George I took over the throne, succeeding Mary's sister Anne, he inherited the kitchen and the chocolate room next door, where the specialist equipment was kept. He brought in Thomas Tosier as his chocolatier.

Tosier was already well known in London, so this was not a lowly cook's position, but one whereby

George showed he had his finger on the pulse by employing a highly fashionable chef, and Tosier gained enormous prestige. His wife, Grace, ran their Greenwich chocolate shop while Tosier was at court. When Thomas died and she remarried, she kept the Tosier name. Grace took the business to new heights, becoming a true celebrity.

So, what was royal chocolate like? The beans were probably roasted and ground before they got to the palace, and made into cakes of pure cocoa liquor. Good sourcing was crucial—the beans tainted easily. Tosier would have melted the blocks down with water or milk, sugar, and flavours such as orange flower water, cinnamon, cloves, and chili. He would then have poured the mixture into a special chocolate pot, a vessel shaped like a coffee pot but with a hole in the top to contain the moulinet (or swizzle stick). In the royal bedchamber, he would have agitated the wooden stick to froth the chocolate before pouring it into tulip-shaped cups with deep saucers to hold them securely.

You can find [recipes](#) for Georgian chocolate [online](#), including [videos](#) from the team at Hampton Court. They are well worth watching—and trying. After all, who wouldn't want to drink chocolate fit for a king? ♦

British food historian Annie Gray works as a writer, broadcaster, and consultant. She's the author of various books, including The Greedy Queen: Eating with Victoria; Victory in the Kitchen: The Life of Churchill's Cook; and At Christmas We Feast: Festive Food through the Ages. She's also a panellist on BBC Radio 4's The Kitchen Cabinet (available as a podcast). Annie used to work in Stuart costume at Hampton Court, and she keeps a jar of spice specifically for flavouring seventeenth-century chocolate in her cupboard at all times.

IN CONVERSATION WITH



LEILA SCHAYEGH

Photo by Mona Lisa Fiedler

Known for her “ravishing legato cantabile” (The Strad), violinist Leila Schayegh makes her Tafelmusik debut as guest director in April 2022. Regarded as one of the world’s leading period violinists, Schayegh is a captivating performer whose expressiveness and energy draws audiences in. She has been a professor at the renowned Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland since 2010.

We recently caught up with Schayegh for a chat.

How did music first enter your life?

Music was part of my life from the very start. We often listened to recordings and sang together at home when I was a child, and my mother used to play the recorder. When my older brother started playing the cello, I wanted to play that instrument as well, but fell in love with the violin very quickly. I started playing at the age of five.

You studied with the great baroque violinist Chiara Banchini. What was the most important thing she taught you?

The most important was to put your own ego aside and put the music in front. It was Chiara who taught me to think about the composer’s intention, the time in which they lived, to reflect on the text, and

most importantly, on what you can’t find in the text but rather in the treatises of the time. Above all, she encouraged me to not forget my own personality.

As professor of baroque violin at the famous Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, you are an important mentor and role model for a generation of young musicians. What do you hope to pass along to your students?

What Chiara told me became my own credo. In addition to this, I work a great deal on technique with my students, because without good technique we can’t express what we have in mind. And I encourage them to be strong and flexible, and to be quick learners, to survive in a world where it’s likely that their only professional option will be freelancing.

After years of playing baroque music, in 2018 you released a beautiful recording of Brahms violin sonatas with pianist Jan Schultz. What inspired you to expand your repertoire to include music by classical and romantic composers?

In the years before that recording, my harpsichord partner and good friend Jörg Halubek and I had studied, played, and recorded the most important eighteenth-century repertoire for violin and obbligato harpsichord. It felt natural to extend the repertoire, and we decided to jump directly to Brahms. In the end, it was a bit too far for Jörg, so Jan Schultz jumped in. I was ready to explore romantic repertoire in a “new/old” way and have not regretted the work it required.

truth probably lies somewhere in the middle. I like to mention big names like violinist Isabelle Faust or fortepianist Kristian Bezuidenhout, but also the English horn player Anneke Scott or the French flute player Alexis Kossenko.

How do you prepare for the technical and interpretive demands of romantic music?

On the technical side, I mark the fingerings [position change indications] at those places where one needs to hear the change as a slide from one note to the other. Also very important is how to make the instrument sound: searching for a common, rich, lively but rather steady sound, which is brought to life

“Historically oriented performances bring more colours, more opportunities, and more freedom. It’s not a restriction, it’s an enrichment.”

Leila Schayegh

What do you say to people who are skeptical about historically informed performances of romantic repertoire?

Keep an open spirit! Historically oriented performances (HIP) bring more colours, more opportunities, and more freedom. It’s not a restriction, it’s an enrichment. If you don’t like it, that’s fine, but give it a chance. Think about it like food or wine: you need time and sometimes several tries to develop your taste. The most important thing is that you are moved and touched in many ways.

Are there other musicians pursuing a HIP approach to nineteenth-century repertoire that we should know about?

Oh, there are so many! What is interesting is that nineteenth-century repertoire is the new meeting point between the “historical” and the “modern” musician. Depending on which side we come from, the result is often very, very different. The

by the bow. On the musical side, I search for a warm, rich interpretation that shows, as much as possible, the many different characteristics of the piece.

What activities do you enjoy when you are not teaching, rehearsing, or performing?

I am very fond of cooking, and when there is enough time, I like to make things from scratch, with my own pizza dough and pasta. But I grew up with my father’s Persian cooking, so my heart lies in the Eastern kitchen. To give all that a good counterweight, I am quite sporty and try to find time each day for a workout. ♦

Leila Schayegh guest directs Tafelmusik meets Dvorak premiering online April 7, 2022, at 8pm ET.



A FINE BALANCE

Conductor Masaaki Suzuki finds hope
in the music of J.S. Bach

By Luisa Trisi

It's a Monday night, 9 PM Tokyo time, when Masaaki Suzuki joins our Zoom call. Gracious and quick to smile, he deflects apologies for the relatively late hour. Widely recognized as one of the world's leading interpreters of the music of J.S. Bach, the Japanese conductor, organist, and harpsichordist is revered as a pioneer who helped established period performance practice in his home country.

Our conversation quickly turns to the composer's uncanny ability to connect deeply with listeners and lift them out of despair. "Bach's music is offering us how to see inside ourselves. Once you concentrate, once you go deeper inside the music, you can forget everything else," he says.

Despite his superstar status, Suzuki comes across as humble yet direct. On the concert stage, "he continues to expunge the extraneous in performances that have the quality of a refreshing purification rite" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Following his studies in Amsterdam with Ton Koopman and Piet Kee, Suzuki returned to Japan, and in 1990 founded the period ensemble Bach Collegium Japan (BCJ). Under Suzuki's direction, the ensemble developed a formidable international reputation.

BCJ has recorded all of Bach's 200-plus cantatas — something only a handful of ensembles worldwide have accomplished. The recordings are part of a massive discography on the BIS Records label, which includes most of Bach's major choral and orchestral works. Suzuki's "extraordinarily vital, human, and emotional" recording of *St Matthew Passion* won *Gramophone* magazine's 2020 Choral Award.

In fact, it was *St Matthew Passion* that Suzuki directed at his 2019 Tafelmusik debut in Toronto.

Over four nights in March of that year, more than 2,900 people packed into Jeanne Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul's Centre for performances that crystallized as a watershed moment for Tafelmusik audiences and performers alike. Members of Tafelmusik Chamber Choir spoke zealously about Suzuki's laser focus on the importance of the sacred text, while music blogger Leslie Barcza observed that "his contrasts are razor sharp, the moments when the chorus erupts, totally volcanic in energy and precision but especially in the commitment of every singer and player."

Fast-forward to March 2020, when Suzuki and his BCJ choir and orchestra embarked on a European tour to celebrate the ensemble's thirtieth anniversary. They landed in Germany just as the world was shutting down due to the realities of the global pandemic. Although the remainder of BCJ's tour was cancelled, the ensemble's Cologne presenter announced that the March 15 performance of Bach's *St John Passion* would be recorded in the empty concert hall and broadcast online, free of charge.

Suzuki later commented on social media, "Never had such a situation. No audience, but the music is there! We all felt so special, as if Bach spoke to us individually, but at the very end we were so sure that

“Bach’s music is offering us how to see inside ourselves. Once you concentrate, once you go deeper inside the music, you can forget everything else.”

Masaaki Suzuki

Masaaki Suzuki, photo by Marco Borggreve



everyone watching was there with us. This is evidence that we are connected to each other through this music! Whatever happens, our hope is there.”

As the pandemic dragged on and BCJ’s home concerts were cancelled, Suzuki had time on his hands. He decided to open his personal music studio to the world with weekly YouTube performances of Bach chorales on the organ. “We had no chance at all to perform publicly, so I thought it was very important to keep the connection with the people, with the audience,” he says.

In these videos, Suzuki is always impeccably dressed and speaks to viewers in Japanese before sitting down at a small pipe organ. While the first garnered a few thousand views, the final instalment, featuring Bach’s famous chorale *Wachet auf* (Sleepers Awake), has accumulated more than 14,500 views to date—unheard of for a four-minute organ recital. As he plays, the camera pans the room to reveal a harpsichord, a bookcase, and lace curtains on the windows. The viewer is invited into the intimacy of Suzuki’s inner sanctum to share a few moments of communion. For thousands of music lovers around the world, his unassuming home videos created a virtual comfort zone during a grim time.

Suzuki is fascinated by the dichotomy between the public and the private in Bach’s sacred music, in particular the B-Minor Mass. “The music itself was composed for an official, public purpose, but Bach always gives us the chance to examine the personal connection between the music and ourselves, between our public and personal sides,” he says.

“With the B-Minor Mass, Bach took elements of the cantatas he composed much earlier to create this huge work. That was quite an important process of reflection for him, to remember his youth and also to reuse the music for these official, sacred texts,” he says. “Each element of the music he composed earlier was a way to depict his own life. So these kinds of private, personal aspects are connected to each other, and I think that’s very interesting.”

For all of his rigour and gravitas on the podium, Suzuki is no stick-in-the-mud when it comes to social interaction. His eyes sparkle with humour and he laughs frequently. At the Toronto rehearsals in 2019, he gleefully wore a “Less Talk, More Bach” T-shirt gifted to him by Tafelmusik. And for such an esteemed maestro, Suzuki has an online persona that conveys a surprising lightness and agility. He frequently offers bite-sized commentary on Bach’s music with images from facsimile scores in the composer’s own hand,



Masaaki Suzuki at a 2019 Tafelmusik rehearsal, photo by Mark Blinch

and is not above sharing photos of restaurant meals on Twitter, where he comments on everything from the latest movies to a [Bach-themed spoof](#) from *The Onion*.

Suzuki also gently sends up fellow music nerds with a photo compilation showing a page from a Beethoven score next to a slice of nodoguro (sea perch) sushi, tweeting, “This week, we plan to take a deeper look at the relationship between nodoguro and Beethoven in Kanazawa, the town with the largest number of sushi restaurants per capita.”

How does Suzuki feel about BCJ’s thirtieth anniversary milestone? “Well you know, one thing for sure is that we are all much older! We all have a lot of experiences and memories,” he says. “But still, I think it’s very important to keep the freshness we had at the very beginning.”

Suzuki’s son Masato was recently appointed principal conductor of BCJ, ensuring the ensemble’s

artistic continuity while allowing for another perspective. Like a handful of other period orchestras, including Tafelmusik, BCJ and Masaaki Suzuki are eager to explore repertoire composed beyond 1750. “Now that we have completed our recordings of the Bach cantatas, we are going to perform more Mozart, more Beethoven, more Mendelssohn—a little later music, which is new for us. But rest assured, we will still play Bach! The value of his music never changes.”

Masaaki Suzuki directs Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir in Bach’s B-Minor Mass at Massey Hall, premiering online May 6, 2022, at 8pm ET. ♦

Luisa Trisi is the founder of Big Picture Communications, a Toronto-based company specializing in strategic communications.

2021/22 DIGITAL CONCERTS

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2021



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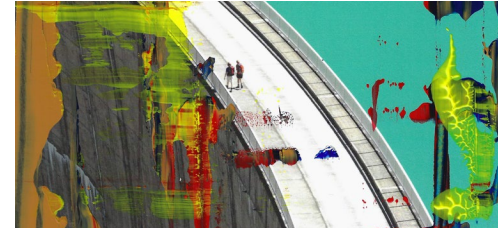
2022



Haydn & Friends

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Bach B-Minor Mass

Online premiere May 6 at 8pm ET

Masaaki Suzuki directs Bach's profound work of transcendent spirituality at Massey Hall.

Masaaki Suzuki, guest director; **Joanne Lunn**, soprano; **Tim Mead**, countertenor; **Thomas Hobbs**, tenor; **Jonathon Adams**, baritone; **Tafelmusik Chamber Choir**



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Leila Schayegh, guest director



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