

# Friends of Florilegium

President ~ Dame Emma Kirkby OBE

Honorary Vice Presidents ~ David Hill and Sir David Lumsden

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thur 4 Oct	Royal College of Music, London 18th century coaching session
Thur 18 Oct	Royal College of Music, London 18th century coaching session
Thur 25 Oct	<b>Wigmore Hall, London</b> Frederick the Great anniversary Concert Benda, CPE Bach, Quantz, Graun (Elin Manahan Thomas, soprano)
Fri 26 Oct	Royal College of Music, London 18th century coaching session
Thur 1 Nov	Royal College of Music, London 18th century coaching session
Fri 9 Nov	Royal College of Music, London 18th century coaching session
Thur 29 Nov	Imperial College, London (13.00) The English Muse
Fri 30 Nov	Artrix, Bromsgrove The English Muse
Sun 30 Dec	<b>Kings Place, London (15.00)</b> Bach Unwrapped Cantatas BWV 151, 171, Oboe d'amore Concerto, flute Partita (Ashley Solomon, Director/flute, Alexandra Bellamy, oboe; singers: Elin Manahan Thomas, Sally Bruce-Payne, James Oxley, Jimmy Holliday)
Mon 8 Jan 2013	<b>Wigmore Hall, London</b> Handel Deutsche Arien, Trio Sonatas (Gillian Keith, soprano)

For further details please visit  
[www.florilegium.org.uk](http://www.florilegium.org.uk)

## Ashley joins RCM Council

Congratulations to Ashley Solomon on being invited to join the Council of the Royal College of Music. A position for which one cannot apply, Ashley was voted unanimously by RCM professors and staff to serve for a 3 year term of office from October 2012.

### Florilegium

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**AUTUMN 2012**

## Arakaendar Bolivia Choir's first UK tour: a retrospective report by Ashley Solomon

In December 2005 Ashley Solomon formed Arakaendar Bolivia Choir to work with Florilegium in the Bolivian Baroque choral music which was coming to light under Dr Piotr Nawrot, the Polish priest who, having gradually gained the trust of the native Indians, is reconstructing these manuscripts from the Mission archives.

Together with Arakaendar Bolivia Choir, Florilegium have recorded two best-selling CDs as well as performing in Bolivia, The Netherlands and one concert in London in 2008. To end Florilegium's 20th anniversary season Ashley planned the first extensive tour of the UK for the group and Choir.

The tour by Arakaendar Bolivia Choir was made possible by the generosity of Association Pro Art y Culture (APAC) in Bolivia, and Florilegium was delighted that Piotr Nawrot, Artistic Director of APAC's International Festival of Renaissance and Baroque music, and Ana Luisa Arce, member of the Board of APAC, both accompanied the tour.

Here Ashley Solomon reports on this unforgettable period:

It began on Monday 18th June. That was the day arranged by the University of York for me to rehearse their chamber choir in the repertoire they were to perform with the Arakaendar Bolivia Choir, and to give a talk about this project. 200 miles away, my Administrator, Jacky, was at Heathrow Airport to meet the choir. As I spoke I kept an eye on my phone for the text to say they had arrived and successfully come through immigration. With great relief, midway through my talk, I was able to include this report.

While I spent the Tuesday in Versailles for the Royal College of Music, an amazing Bolivian woman, Annie Copponex, who has lived in London for over 20 years, took the choir sightseeing. Despite being a 'senior citizen' with a bad knee, she walked them round London for 9 hours!

On Wednesday, with me back in London, rehearsals started at the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall at the RCM. They went without a hitch, once the youngest of the singers was found, having got lost inside the Science Museum! Following the second day of rehearsals at Holy Trinity, the church nearby, the choir (without Florilegium) gave a short recital to the guests of the Bolivian Embassy.

At last concerts started. The first one was given on Friday 22nd June as part of the Spitalfields Festival at St Leonard's Church,



Rehearsal at Holy Trinity church

Shoreditch. It was preceded by a pre-concert talk by Piotr and me and we were told there would probably be about four or five rows taken. In fact the church was almost full, which augured well for the rest of the tour. The ensuing concert ended late but, nevertheless, all the choir managed to assemble at Victoria station the next morning at 7.00am, and Jacky and I accompanied them to Gatwick to check-in for their flight to Aberdeen. Once they were checked-in, I jumped into a coach to Heathrow airport for my flights to Kirkwall. I arrived mid-afternoon, but the choir, having reached Aberdeen, then caught the ferry to Kirkwall, in which it was also planned they would sing. On reflection, maybe it wasn't the best plan to have 16 youngsters from a land-locked South American country, most of whom had never been on a boat before, perform on board a North Sea ferry. However,

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## Please support Florilegium; become a Friend!

Florilegium is acclaimed worldwide for its performances and recordings. However the group receives no public funding; its finite resources comprise ticket revenue and the committed generosity of its loyal supporters.

We are very grateful to our Friends and hope you will consider joining them. From £30 per annum – roughly the cost of a concert ticket – you could become a Friend of Florilegium.

Florilegium prides itself on a close relationship with its audiences, expressed through Friends of Florilegium. Friends' benefits and privileges include:

- A free copy of Florilegium's limited edition compilation CD
- A regular Newsletter
- Priority booking for certain concerts promoted by Florilegium
- Complimentary or discounted CDs as they are released
- Social events providing opportunities to meet the members of Florilegium



### Director's Circle members

- receive up to 3 free CDs a year
- are acknowledged in Florilegium's concert programmes
- are invited to attend rehearsals

## Arakaendar Bolivia Choir's tour

*Continued..*

they took sea-sickness pills and "the show went on"! I met them at 11.00pm when they docked and saw them to their accommodation.

The following day, Sunday, saw the Choir participate in the St Magnus Festival's cathedral service then – from the sublime to the ridiculous – that evening they gave a concert of folk music in the packed Festival Club. In the interim, Piotr and I gave a talk, and the rest of Florilegium arrived. On Monday, the choir and ensemble gave a concert of mainly sacred music and on the Tuesday a concert of mainly villancicos. The choir's return was almost as exciting as their arrival, but this time they flew to the mainland, and caught a sleeper back to London.

Having flown home the previous day, I met the choir at Euston on the Thursday, with a 17-seater minibus and, after hiring a car for Piotr to drive Ana Luisa, we set off in convoy towards the West Country. We had previously booked accommodation for that night near Stonehenge, and we met up with Jacky there who had hastily organised an additional room and towels so they could shower, before driving to Beaminster, Dorset. Here, in the beautiful setting of St Mary's church, with Florilegium, we performed to another packed audience, reviewed in the local paper as "one of the gems of the festival".



Receiving applause, St Mary's Church, Beaminster (photo: Petrina Hughes)

Back to Stonehenge, and following the briefest site visit the next morning, we drove to Gatwick for a flight to Spain. OK, as nothing was simple in this tour, I admit I then had to drive back to Heathrow and drop the minibus before returning to Gatwick! The flight to Spain was delayed three hours and, when we eventually arrived, the expected three hour coach drive turned out to be a six hour drive, but we arrived at our destination at 5.30 the following morning. So, without Florilegium, I had five days with the Choir performing in Masses followed by short concerts to delighted local audiences.

The very early flight back to London was uneventful – although it had meant not going to bed (again!) the previous night. On arrival at Gatwick the Choir caught a train to St Pancras, and after a couple of hours' wait, caught their train from adjacent Kings Cross to York. They were accompanied on the train by Florilegium keyboard player, Terence Charlston, who that evening took a combined rehearsal of Arakaendar and the University of York chamber choir. I stayed in London that

night to attend the final performance of my eldest daughter's school play. With Terence playing and me directing, the following lunchtime, Friday 6th July, saw this concert, which proved to be a unique experience for both choirs. The reviewer from *The Guardian* wrote "the Arakaendars have developed in little over five years into one of the most remarkable choirs in the world".



In performance, St Michael le Belfry church, York

On Saturday, following the now customary talk given by Piotr and myself, we were joined by the rest of Florilegium for a performance in front of a capacity audience in St Michael le Belfry church, recorded by BBC Radio 3 for *The Early Music Show*. We started this concert with the choir singing a beautiful introit, which I had rehearsed with them in Spain, which set-up the sacred works perfectly. This was in contrast to the fourth encore(!), when the choir, by this time singing folk music, managed to get the audience to clap along. Jacky was informed by the Concert Manager, who had worked for the York Early Music Festival for many years that she had never seen a YEMF audience ever clap along.

Following a well-earned party at the house of Peter Seymour (Director of Music at York University) and his wife, the singer Yvonne Seymour, we all caught a train the next morning to Cheltenham for the Sunday afternoon concert, Florilegium's final concert in the tour.

The next day, Monday 9th July, the Choir assembled at the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, the venue where it had all started three weeks before. Following a rehearsal, Terence and I took the choir to Broadcasting House to sing live on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*, as they had done in 2008. The final concert was another sell-out (which, again, followed a talk by Piotr and me) and the evening ended with a farewell Reception in the Director's office, hosted by the Bolivian Embassy and so the farewells started.



Ashley and the Choir in York

After a final day off in London, I checked-in the choir at Heathrow on Wednesday 11th July. The following day, with Florilegium, I started rehearsing Bach...

In retrospect, this landmark tour has placed Arakaendar Bolivia Choir among the elite choirs and I intend to tour with them, not necessarily with Florilegium, annually. I have interest from Chile for 2013; and dream of bringing them back to the UK in 2014. Watch the Newsletter for advance warning.

## Bach Unwrapped: Kings Place – ticket offer

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, Florilegium are performing three concerts in Kings Place's 2013 Bach Unwrapped series. The dates are

**Sunday 30 December 2012** (at 15.00),  
**Saturday 4 May 2013**(at 19.30) and  
**Wednesday 12 June** (at 19.30).

Tickets are now on sale, and they are offering discounts on two or three of these concerts:  
Florilegium Multi Buy Offer: Book 2 concerts Save 25%, Book 3 concerts Save 30% - valid performances 30.12.12, 4.5.13, 12.6.13  
Available by calling the Box Office direct on 020 7520 1490 – subject to availability; not available online (above discounts apply to online prices)

## RECORDING NEWS

Florilegium's latest recording, of members of the group's own arrangements of Bach Organ Trio Sonatas was released in August.



Before the CD was in the shops, The Sunday Times reviewed it: *The instrumentation is inspired. This entrancing disc is a team effort, unreservedly recommended.*

**CD of the Week** (Aug 2012)

As this Newsletter was being prepared, it was reviewed on BBC Radio 3's CD Review: *Wonderful variety of colour, beautiful types of sounds across the arrangements and they work wonderfully. It is delicious; there's a wonderful, affectionate quality of music making. They do it just beautifully.*

(Sept 2012)

Later reviews will appear in the next Newsletter.