

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF CONCERT REVIEWS

*Reviews listed in chronological order
English translations by Jennifer Northup*

Concert #1 - 8 January 2010 in Lemgo, Germany

Baroque Trumpet Gala Met With Great Enthusiasm

Captivating playing by the American music professor Elisa Koehler and solo trumpeter Reinhard Ehritt in St. Nicolai

Lemgo. The audience could have stayed for many more hours. And at this point, the two trumpeters, Elisa Koehler and Reinhard Ehritt, had already given two encores. Now, they stood together on the "stage" of St. Nicolai for the first time, for Vivaldi's D major concerto. And the American beguiled everyone with her dreamlike trumpet playing.

"Dreamlike" does not mean only the incredible technical and musical level of the professor's playing; above all it means the sound that this musician was able to elicit from her instrument on Friday evening - an unimaginably delicate sound. The virtuoso demonstrated this sound - which may be unparalleled anywhere in the world - on the high B flat trumpet in Johann Sebastian Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2. For the Bach, she was not the soloist but stood as an equal with the flautist and oboist.

The oboe part was played by a student from the Detmold Music Academy. She was a member of an orchestra that Professor Joachim Harder had assembled from students especially for this small tour. The orchestra was well prepared for this concert. Nevertheless, it was unmistakable, if unsurprising, that, in terms of tonal transparency and dynamic balance, the orchestra was far from playing in the same league as its guest from the United States. With Reinhard Ehritt, an accompaniment was provided by yet another top-class musician, proven not least by his position as solo trumpeter with the WDR Orchestra. In Albinoni's B flat major concerto, Ehritt was able to give his instrument the very "proclamatory" charisma that Harder described as an essential feature of the instrument.

Harder had also dreamt up yet another difficult task for the orchestra. Between the baroque concertos by Albinoni, Hertel and Bach, the conductor had added Anton von Webern's own string orchestra arrangement of his Five Movements for String Quartet. However, the orchestra struck the romantic mood resonating through the delicateness of the "foreign tones" very clearly. Even so, Webern's melodious yet highly foreign language had to try hard to assert itself against the gripping language of the baroque era. In the concert's final work, the Bach cantata "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen", Cosima Henseler positioned herself next to Ehritt as a poised coloratura soprano, albeit one who could still gain humility in the face of the work and words. Quite rightly, however, she too was included in the rapturous applause of an enthusiastic audience.

Photo caption:

Tonal purity of the highest quality: *Elisa Koehler*

Lippische Landes-Zeitung (Kultur-Journal) – 11 January 2010

Concert #2 - 10 January 2010 in Bielefeld Bethel, Germany

Sparkling Virtuosity

BY MICHAEL BEUGHOLD

A Baroque Delight for the Ears: Trumpet Gala in the Zionskirche/Audience Highly Enamored

Bielefeld. A baroque trumpet gala - that makes one think of virtuoso concerts of bygone eras, with the masters André, Güttler or Friedrich as pre-Christmas patrons in the Oetkerhalle. However, the word "gala" is truly no exaggeration for this concert, organized by the trumpet guild of the Westfalen Evangelical Church.

With Elisa Koehler from the USA and Reinhard Ehritt, two high-caliber soloists inspired a full house at Zion, despite ice and snow. Throughout four works, their baroque virtuoso artistry sparkled in harmony like the still festively-adorned Christmas tree.

An excellent accompaniment (and more) was provided by a chamber orchestra made up of students from Detmold Music Academy. From the upbeat to Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, this group, under the animated baton of Joachim Harders, was able to demonstrate not only its style, precise momentum and delicate tone but also its soloistic skill.

This four-part concertino for flute, oboe, violin and trumpet captivated listeners with its perfect balance between the thematic solos passed between the instruments and contrapuntal tutti sections. With the exception of a few very slightly pinched notes in the third octave above middle C, Elisa Koehler played the high F trumpet part, feared by even the top professionals, with stupendous ease and artistry. The Baltimore musician then added a little musical diversity with her limber and polished rendition of the Schwerin court orchestra director Johann Wilhelm Hertel's already gallantly imbued Concerto in D major. Her performance was both expressive and concise, with between sensitivity and high spirits, aromatic largo tones and splendid enthusiasm in the vivace section.

Reinhard Ehritt, solo trumpeter with the WDR Radio Orchestra, countered with an Albinoni concerto in B flat of highly-baroque Italian character. His tonal flexibility and dynamic gradation were phenomenal, as were the depth of nuance, heartfelt brilliance and, not least, the depth of feeling with which he stretched out, remodeled and musically enlivened the middle movement, atypically for a trumpet concerto, as a single cantilena. Ehritt was also the star of Bach's Cantata no. 51, "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen", in which trumpet and soprano attempt to outdo one another in the opening aria and final hallelujah with their virtuoso zest for coloratura. Detmold's gifted Cosima Henseler sang the five movements technically flawlessly and eloquently in the Bach Affetto.

Orchestra director Joachim Harder joined up the program whimsically but intuitively with the greatest imaginable contrast to the magnificent baroque trumpet works, Anton Webern's "Five Movements for String Quartet", op. 5, in the string orchestra arrangement from 1928.

With exemplary intonation and beautiful sounding, these atonal movements opened the ears with their extreme density and expressive intimacy, and prevented our ears from becoming oversaturated in our enjoyment of the baroque masterpieces. Two grand double concerto encores rounded off the trumpet gala to high public acclaim.

Concert #3 - 12 January 2010 in Paderborn, Germany

Dazzling Trumpet Gala in Abdinghof

Exquisite baroque music with Elisa Koehler, Reinhard Ehritt and Cosima Henseler

BY GUNTHER GENSCH

Paderborn. There has been no shortage of spiritual music for the new year in the cathedral city, and the season is now being brought to its festive close in the sold-out Abdinghofkirche with a brilliant trumpet gala, organized by the evangelical church's trumpet guild on the initiative of and with personal involvement from Kurt Oberschäfer, a retired priest and friend of ecclesiastical wind music.

Two top soloists will play Bach trumpet: Elisa Koehler from the United States, a professor of trumpet performance, and solo trumpeter from WDR Cologne, Reinhard Ehritt. They will perform virtuoso trumpet concerti by Bach, Albinoni and Johann Wilhelm Hertel, supported by a chamber orchestra made up of students from Detmold Music Academy under the baton of Joachim Harder.

How the Bach trumpet got its name

After a greeting from Mayor Heinz Paus, Elisa Koehler began the concert with Bach's bravura Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 (1720) in F major, a must for any musician with a piccolo trumpet. The piccolo trumpet was developed at the turn of the 20th century as a small-valve trumpet to enable players to play the high parts of baroque music, which gave rise to its popular name: Bach trumpet. In Bach's day, however, this instrument was as yet unknown and the "baroque trumpet" was played, which had no valves and is used today in historical performance practice.

Elisa Koehler comes in animatedly, the pure and natural sound of her trumpet filling the entire sanctuary. Even the delicate harpsichord carries right to the back. Bach's composition contrasts four high instruments with the string orchestra, thereby achieving a strikingly bright sound. The recorder and trumpet engage in exciting interplay before the second movement in D minor. Due to the reduced range, the baroque trumpet has to remain silent here. The violin, recorder and oboe present a sighing motif before the allegro assai, in which all instruments head towards the thematic close at full lung power.

Bach's contemporary Tomaso Albinoni (1671-1751) wrote the Concerto in B flat major for trumpet, which is played with rich contrasts by Reinhard Ehritt, with a sostenuto middle movement and beautiful echo effects. Between the baroque sounds, Anton von Webern's "Five Pieces for String Orchestra" op. 5 (1905) adds interest to the program. Conductor Joachim Harder provides explanations for the new, structure-oriented composition style of musical expressionism. Expressive tone intervals without any recognizable thematic form are followed by brief pizzicato melodies made up of six notes gradually becoming clearer, very slow and trickling turning to very lively, played at a gallop.

The rich program ends with Bach's Cantata no. 51, "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen", with soprano Cosima Henseler as the evening's real surprise. With a strong, young voice, she held her own against Reinhard Ehritt's trumpet, with soprano and Bach trumpet in truly dazzling form. Thunderous applause was heard for excellent performances by the orchestra and soloists. But the big coup was yet to come as an encore, when magnificent baroque music for two trumpets - with Elisa Koehler on the left and Reinhard Ehritt on the right - radiated through the church hall in a glorious duet.

[Photo caption]

Delighted with the rapturous applause: Elisa Koehler and Reinhard Ehritt with orchestra director Joachim Harder (front) and the chamber orchestra of Detmold Music Academy. PHOTO: GUNTHER GENSCH

Neue Westfälische Paderborner Kreiszeitung – 14 January 2010

Concert #3 - 12 January 2010 in Paderborn, Germany

Trumpet playing with the deepest sensitivity

Top soloists play baroque concert

By Andrea Auffenberg

Paderborn (WV). A special concert series made a stop in Paderborn's Abdinghofkirche on Tuesday evening. It featured performances by two outstanding guest trumpeters: Dr. Elisa Koehler from Baltimore, USA, and Reinhard Ehritt, solo trumpeter with the WDR Radio Orchestra.

Elisa Koehler is rumored to play even the most difficult and demanding passages with the greatest of ease. She demonstrated this ability at the very start of the concert in Johann Sebastian Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No.2 in F major. The orchestra, made up of students from Detmold Music Academy, was initially slightly inconsistent in its intonation but grew during the second movement and competed with the soloists in a brilliant and powerful rivalry during the third movement, *allegro assai*, in which, however, the trumpet ultimately prevailed.

Reinhard Ehritt's performance of Tomaso Albinoni's Concerto in B flat major was an entirely different matter. As the soloist, he broke away from the orchestra at the very beginning and displayed a rich and pure trumpet sound with virtuoso passages, coloratura and well-pronounced dynamics.

Finally, in Johann Wilhelm Hertel's Concerto no. 3 in D major, Elisa Koehler demonstrated a modulation range on her instrument that is seldom heard in this way. In the "Allegro ma non troppo", legato passages with dotted rhythms and memorably-performed coloraturas alternated with both fortissimo and pianissimo sections. The soloist interpreted the beautiful "Largo" melody particularly sensitively and performed the dotted fanfares in the "Vivace" superbly. Her moving rendition was met with thunderous applause.

Deliberate contrast

The baroque works were interrupted by three pieces for string orchestra by Anton von Webern, a pupil of Arnold Schönberg. With their compactness, brevity and compressed format, the five pieces create a particularly vivid musical language due to the dissolution of conventional stylistic devices, which fascinates the listener.

Under Johann Harder, the chamber orchestra interpreted Webern's tonal language keenly, effectively and never too thickly, changing skillfully from "arco" to "pizzicato" and accomplishing a dynamic range from quadruple piano to triple forte. The work stands alone in terms of tonal language and should be considered fitting dialog for the baroque works.

Whether such an extreme program compilation as this was, ultimately, successfully and suitably selected remains to be seen - however there was no risk of the audience simply leaning back and relaxing amidst such a rapture of baroque trumpet music.

The Bach cantata "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen", performed expressively by soprano Cosima Henseler, ended the ninety-minute concert, from which the artists were released only after two encores.

Westfälisches Volksblatt – 14 January 2010

Concert #4 - 16 January 2010 in Leipzig, Germany

Thomaskirche

Resplendent, powerful trumpets

"No preacher has an effect like Bach," says Kurt Oberschäfer, organizer of the "Baroque trumpet gala", which, after concerts in Lemgo, Bielefeld and Paderborn, is concluding its tour in Leipzig's Thomaskirche. For Oberschäfer, an ardent Bach admirer, this is truly something special. Through music, he first alighted on Bach and then also on theology. He believes that "Music is the prophet spreading God's word". And he is proud that he was able to win over the renowned solo trumpeters Elisa Koehler and Reinhard Ehritt for his concert series.

Even before the concert began, Oberschäfer was gushing in his introduction of the two musicians, and spoke solemnly of the "proclamatory strength of God's message". Elisa Koehler's playing in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F major (Concerto II BW 1047) was both resplendent and powerful: her sound is formed smoothly and tenderly, supported by a competent and good-humored orchestra, composed of students from Detmold Music Academy. There was much applause for the soloist and the entire ensemble. However, this could not hide the fact that the Thomaskirche was distressingly empty. "I am very disappointed. In every other city we have had a full house, it is only in Leipzig that the venue is empty," said Oberschäfer, his gaze lowered.

He put a lot of work and dedication into the project. And it paid off: Under the baton of Joachim Harder, the chamber orchestra was also able to pull off Webern's string quartet op. 5 - fluid notes in the second movement and ecstatically-ascending passages in the third show that it is not only the ceremonious baroque sound of which the ensemble is capable.

Some listeners closed their eyes, contemplative and deep in thought, enjoying the moment. Reinhard Ehritt's playing was full of elegance and charisma. The solo trumpeter from the WDR Radio Orchestra shone in Tomaso Albinoni's Concerto in B flat major for trumpet, strings and basso continuo, with its expressive solos. In Bach's Cantata no. 51 "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen", he was also able to show off his mastery of dynamic subtlety. In the cantata, Cosima Henseler held sway against the orchestra with her brilliant, crystal-clear soprano, and gave a performance as smooth as velvet.

The applause was rapturous. There were two encores by Koehler and Ehritt, as well as deserved standing ovations for the soloists and ensemble.

Maren Winterfeld

Leipziger Volkszeitung – 19 January 2010