

Celebrating Franklin with Concerts at the University of New Hampshire and Franklin (MA) High School

— by Professor Christopher R. Kies —

On the 7th and 8th of April, 2006, The University of New Hampshire Music Department and music students and teachers from Franklin High School in Franklin, MA, collaborated in producing two concerts (first in Franklin and then in Durham, N.H.) celebrating the tercentenary of Benjamin Franklin's birth year. The first half of each concert began with performances by the UNH Chamber Singers, conducted by Dr. William Kempster, and they sang works by William Billings, an American contemporary of Franklin's, Pierre de la Rue, Joseph Haydn and others. The concerts continued with a lecture and performances by Alisa Nakashian-Holsberg, Treasurer of Glass Music International. Her lecture was entitled "Ben Franklin's Glass Armonica, *From Invention to Revival*". Ms. Nakashian-Holsberg then performed solo works by Mozart and Schultz as well as two Scottish folk songs, and she was joined by UNH students in performances of a Chorale by J.S. Bach, *Ave Maria* by Bach-Gounod, and a French folk song, *Auprès de ma Blonde*.

The Concerts concluded with the premiere performances of *Franklin Portrait (2006)* by University of New Hampshire Professor, Christopher Kies. *Franklin Portrait* is a ten movement work scored for narrator, wind ensemble, string orchestra, and double chorus. In the performances, 130 student musicians from Franklin High School were joined

by 45 singers and instrumentalists from UNH. The conducting duties of this relatively large ensemble were shared by Leighanne Cullen, Band and Orchestra Director at F.H.S., Amanda Hammond, Choral Director at F.H.S., and Professor William Kempster, Director of Choral Activities at UNH. Professor Kies was inspired to compose a work for this group of performers in recognition of his many friends and former UNH students who either hail from Franklin, MA, or are currently teaching in the Franklin public schools or both!

Nearly half of *Franklin Portrait* consists of the narration of various of Franklin's more humorous texts, including *One Pile a Fidler*, *Letter of the Drum*, *A Drinker's Dictionary*, *On Censure or Backbiting*, *Dialogue Between the Gout and Mr. Franklin*, and quotes from *Poor Richard's Almanack*. The narration was given by John-Michael Albert of the UNH Music Department.

The audiences, especially in Franklin, MA, whose citizens are understandably proud that their town was the first in America to name itself after Ben Franklin in 1778, received both concerts enthusiastically. The concerts were sponsored by the UNH Vice President of Research and Public Service, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts of UNH, and the music departments of UNH and Franklin High School.

Celebrating Franklin and Mozart All Around the World

— by Thomas Bloch —

Here are some concerts that celebrate together the Mozart (250th anniversary) and Franklin (300th anniversary).

Thomas Bloch has about 150 concerts this year, all around the world. Of course, there is a lot of Mozart's *Adagio and Rondo K.617* to play. One major project is several concerts in Paris at the Theatre des Champs Elysees, salle Gaveau, salle Cortot, and at the Opera House where I will play in the Opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* with soprano Natalie Dessay. I will also premiere "Wheeps and ghosts" in Reykjavik, Iceland. This is a new work composed for me by the Norwegian composer Jan-Erik Mikalsen. He composed this for glass harmonica and string quartet.

Then I will perform at the Pablo Casals Festival in Prades (one of the oldest chamber music festivals in France) and will play a new work by an Israeli composer (not known yet) for the opening of the Tel Aviv Festival in Israel this summer. concert in Kuhmo Festival (Finland), Tallin (Estonia), Riga (Lettonia), Los Angeles (from the middle of April until the middle of June - 60 performances of "The Black Rider" by Tom Waits and Bob Wilson), Valencia (Spain - a new work

for glass harmonica and orchestra by Gregory Fritze, Chair of Composition Berklee College of Music with whom Vera Meyer worked a few years ago in Boston), Bruges (with Il Gardinello baroque ensemble), Liege (with Philharmonic Orchestra), Brussels, and Hamburg.

Also, I have a tour in Spain with flutist Marc Grauwels and Salzburger Solisten, Marseille, Genova, Nice, Colmar and several other places in duet with Jacques Dupriez, violin-barytone and viola, and sometimes Michel Deneuve (cristal Baschet) will join us. Then in Angers with Jean-Pierre Leguay, organist of Paris Notre Dame cathedral, Stresa, Basel, Bratislava, Geneva, and Tokyo.

I will also be on tour with the Lille National Orchestra, in La Roche Guyon (France) in Mrs de la Rochefoucauld's castle. Mrs. de la Rochefoucauld's ancestor was a friend of Ben Franklin and he spent time at that castle. This concert is for the Franklin 300th Committee from the U.S. who will be coming to visit her this summer. I will also have many other projects (concerts, movie music recordings, and song recordings with various artists) this year.