



## Linda Burman-hall

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### Language

English

### Nationality

United States

### Country of Residence

United States

### Year of birth

1945

### Website Address

<http://scbaroque.org/about-the-festivals-founder-and-artistic-director/>

<http://music.ucsc.edu/faculty/linda-burman-hall>

### Year(s) in which you received lessons from Gustav Leonhardt

ca 1978 - 1988

## **The lessons were**

Individual private lessons

In public masterclasses as a player (participant)

In public masterclasses as a listener (auditor)

In summer courses as a player

In summer courses as a listener

## **How did you first come into contact with Gustav Leonhardt, and how did you get the opportunity to study with him? Did you have to wait before you could become his student?**

I initially came into contact with Gustav Leonhardt as a recording artist when I was an undergraduate student at UCLA. In the evenings, I would listen to his interpretations of Bach and hear repertoire I'd not known existed. I began to collect Leonhardt recordings and to want to hear him perform in person. I studied privately with Alan Curtis in Berkeley from 1970 in part because Alan had studied with Leonhardt. While I learned many things, I continued to want to have direct feedback from the master himself. Ultimately, I enrolled in masterclasses, both in Europe and closer to home at UC Berkeley and the San Francisco Conservatory. Once he knew my playing, it was possible for me to have private lessons in Amsterdam. With a dissertation in progress, and then completed, I did not seek to get formal credentials from a Conservatorium.

## **Briefly describe your level of musical education when you started lessons with Gustav Leonhardt. How many years had you studied an early keyboard instrument? What academic qualifications did you have, if any?**

I was about 28 years old when I began to study formally with Gustav Leonhardt. I had played keyboard my entire life, and organ from about age 15. I studied harpsichord at UCLA with Malcolm Hamilton as an undergraduate from age 17, but simply played Baroque and new harpsichord music concerts in graduate school at Princeton, because there was no master teacher for harpsichord on faculty. From the time I graduated from UCLA at age 20, I was already listening to Leonhardt recordings. I felt I was learning many things from him simply by hearing his interpretations. By the time I was finishing my doctorate back on the West Coast, I was able to study with Alan Curtis regularly. In 1972, I spent a half year in Amsterdam and went to various concerts of Leonhardt, the Kuijkens, Ton Koopman, and other performers associated with Leonhardt. I also sometimes went to the Nieuwe Kerk when I knew Leonhardt would play organ some Sundays, and to the Waalsekerk (Eglise Walonne), his personal church where he also played sometimes. I befriended the sacristan so I could practice several times a week on the very high pitched ( $\pm 462$  Hz) organ. It was thrilling to be able to play on that organ regularly, but (with perfect pitch) quite an adjustment for me! I enrolled in summer courses with Leonhardt in the mid 1970s, and after he knew my playing, he accepted me as a private student. I studied privately with

him for several years in Amsterdam in the late fall and winter, when he did not tour and the Sweelinck Conservatorium was closed. One year I lived on the Sarphatistraat near the large hospital for four months in Tony Bingham's lady's apartment. Another year I lived in the tiny cabin and nose of a boat on the Amstel River and had to take showers in the bathhouse a few blocks away. Other times I stayed with my friend, the used sheet music dealer Anke J. C. Kuijpers in the lively neighborhood called 'De Pijp'. In 1974 as I was completing my Music Theory doctorate at Princeton University, I started Santa Cruz Baroque Festival, now 47 years ago, so my first years directing the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival were punctuated by my study trips to Amsterdam. Heady times!

**What repertoire did you study with Gustav Leonhardt? You may answer along general lines or give a list.**

Always lots of J. S. Bach — suites, toccatas, other works. These composers are not in the order of my studies! - - William Kinloch, Fitzwilliam Virginal Book (William Byrd and contemporaries), Louis Couperin (préludes non mesurés, dances, character pieces), Johann Jakob Froberger, François Couperin, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Jacques Duphly, Antoine (?) and Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Forqueray

**Did you present each piece of music only once, or more often? Was this your own choice?**

I recall it as my own choice. But of course if a piece had been dismembered in our discussions, I would want to bring it back to see if I had reimagined and reanimated it in a convincing way the next week. I recall much of the Bach was brought back either the next week or a couple of weeks later. Same for the préludes non mesurés, it was good to play them again as well. I did not reiterate pieces in subsequent years.

**Please describe a typical lesson or various types of lessons you received. For example: the frequency, length and location of the lessons, the specific instruments used, the number of pieces you typically presented, how much discussion there was, how much Leonhardt played and at what point during the lesson, etc.**

In the Masterclasses, typically all students worked at their desk or instrument on particular pieces prior to having a selected workshop participant present his/her personal interpretation. Then we might hold our breath collectively as a different and better way to approach the evidence of the notation was explained. My private lessons were normally about 80-90 minutes long, sometimes a good deal longer, taking place in the Huis Bartolotti at 170-172 Herengracht. I normally presented ±15 minutes of music at a lesson. There was always quite a bit of discussion and playing. If Leonhardt thought it would be helpful in the discussion that followed my playing, he himself played to illustrate his points.

**Did Gustav Leonhardt discuss and/or demonstrate keyboard technique, fingerings, hand and arm position, etc.? If so, did he relate these aspects to different periods, traditions and/or national styles of early keyboard music?**

Yes, often he might have some technical comments or fingering comments. And sometimes I had questions about technique or fingering or articulation that led to a demonstration. I think in his Masterclasses he was always clear about the context of the music, but in the case of my lessons, I believe he assumed I knew this already.

**Did he discuss historical? ? performance practice or different types of historic instruments, refer to musicological research, performance treatises, ornament tables, etc.? If so, in what particular situations and musical contexts?**

At many junctures, he referred to historical performance practice or historic instruments or specific research, documents and treatises. It was rarely foregrounded in his conversation with students, but rather a reference in passing to an aspect that applied to a current situation: something that was being presented during his masterclass or by his individual student. Always just enough to clinch the argument (or prove his point)

**Did you notice that he commented at greater length or with more enthusiasm on particular pieces, composers, or types of repertoire? If so, which ones?**

Leonhardt had respect for J. S. Bach and his significant predecessors, and lots to say about Bach and the Northern world of the 17th and 18th centuries. He also had passion for most Italian and French music, and had clearly considered each generational style in the context of cultural history. By contrast, he had almost nothing to say about the Scottish virginalist William Kinloch (a musical servitor of Mary, Queen of Scots), whose music was clearly unfamiliar to him. Leonhardt seemed disinterested in the persona and also did not seem to respect Georg Friedrich Händel, but would only say that it was not worth as much as other music of its time.

**How did he engage with the works you presented? For example, did he offer stylistic considerations or make a formal analysis? Did he place the pieces within a larger context, musical or other? Did he use metaphors or make analogies when talking about the music?**

Leonhardt sometimes mentioned stylistic considerations, and sometimes showed an interesting detail that had eluded me. I do not recall his presenting a formal analysis outside the context of a Masterclass. Schenkerians will sometimes say, "only music comments on music". But instead of layered graphs, much of Leonhardt's commentary was casually played. Without recourse to formal structural analysis, Leonhardt liked to expose a detail or a couple of chords from a passage to reveal how the passage was engineered, the critical undergirding of its decorative surface architecture. He never needed to say more for those who understood what he meant. He sometimes did use an occasional metaphor, and very cleverly delivered these and many other

witticisms in English!

**Did he ask you to defend your interpretive choices? More generally, did he approach questions of personal autonomy and individuality as a performer during your studies? In what way?**

Leonhardt was always interested in why I had decided to play something as I had. We discussed my view of the piece after I had played it. While insistent at times on the correctness of his conclusions about stylistic matters in a particular piece, he saw various other options in interpretation as valid, and sometimes mentioned a range of options.

**What did you hope or expect to achieve from your lessons with Gustav Leonhardt?**

I wanted to play early keyboard music with his degree of insight, so that a performance can become a compelling window into another time, another dimension. With his perfect ear for the implications of progressions in historic temperaments, with his subtle understanding of nuances of timing and articulation, Leonhardt's interpretations seemed to pull motives apart just enough to let the light of cosmic reason shine down to illuminate the heart of the music. His phrases breathe and animate, his progressions have an imperative logic that we miss in the playing of lesser interpreters. Anyone who hears his finest work will understand why his students simply wanted to learn how to conjure the living past as he did (and his recordings still do).

**After your period of study, did you have further contacts with Gustav Leonhardt that contributed to your development as a musician?**

I enjoyed a continuing friendship with some visits to his residence on my return visits to Amsterdam, since I sometimes played concerts with Anner Bylsma and Max van Egmond. As I continued to record as an early keyboardist and teach early keyboards at the University of California, I maintained my interest in the creative work of his circle and the development of his other students.

**Did his approach to teaching influence the approach you have taken with your own students? If so, how?**

Perhaps unconsciously, I have taken the path with my students that he took with me when I studied. I try to listen and consider how each of my students has a unique view on what they are performing, so that their interpretations will differ from my own. I try to give my students readings and other resources to grasp the period that interests them, and to calibrate their approach to the composer's intentions.

**Has your perspective on your lessons with Gustav Leonhardt changed over the years? In what way?**

In lessons there's always some intermittent mental dialogue between oneself and one's idealized instrument, possibly reflecting one's teacher's (imagined) dialogue with his or her own ideal instrument. At times memory may conjure up certain exceptional instruments that have influenced us. Though perhaps only imaginary, these perceived flashes of connection with great antique instruments - as well as with the profound composers and the master interpreters we most admire - are essential, because they awaken our innermost feelings about the music even as we are mindfully interpreting it. Something that fortunately will not change for me is that I can always access my sense of Leonhardt listening when I play Bach or other music that interested him. What has changed is that I realize more and more how very lucky I was to have known him, and to have studied for several weeks of quite a few consecutive years with him, as a means of absorbing some of his tastes and viewpoints.

**What are the most important things Gustav Leonhardt taught you, or the ways he most influenced you as a musician?**

Perhaps the most important thing that Gustav Leonhardt taught me as a harpsichordist was what any listener who hears tonal music with complete recognition of pitches and harmonies and a solid understanding of musical style can still gain from his recordings: to absorb the implications of his musical rhetoric, which let the micro-rhythms of his presentation sculpt a dynamic and muscular surface that moved with deep understanding of tonal structure. Ultimately his every performance was a nuanced transmission of a carefully scripted, emotional manifesto from a composer to contemporaries and to posterity. I never sensed the presence of his personal ego, only that he took great pains to achieve exactly what the music required of him. In effect, Leonhardt's masterful use of historical evidence about what composers expected and players did in various times and places, combined with his own willingness to take risks and to be spontaneous, has set a high standard for other players. Listening to him I'm always reminded to return to sources, to be deeply thoughtful about the possibilities of pieces, to consider context, to experiment, to refresh, to re-set everything from time to time, and to look to my colleagues who care as deeply about a particular part of the repertoire as I do.

**In this area, you can describe your lessons with Gustav Leonhardt in any way you wish.**

A moment to consider the broad context of his teaching and my own teaching. Leonhardt taught students performing professionally and teaching harpsichord at university level, or at least headed in that direction. If someone had another goal, they probably did not get lessons. Since every lesson he taught impacted his own rehearsal and concert schedule, he was selective. By necessity, teaching in an undergraduate university liberal arts program rather than a conservatory, I've had a broader filter for my students. Sometimes my undergraduate harpsichord students were headed to a graduate program in musicology or conducting with a specialty in early music, but surprisingly often, they have been composition students who want to write new music for the harpsichord. Sometimes I've taught superbly talented keyboardists who want to be journeymen keyboardists capable of playing modern piano, harpsichord, organ, but who actually head for the concert stage

on conventional piano. Only a couple of times have I coached a student who would qualify and succeed in Leonhardt's studio. But Leonhardt taught so much more than just interpretation at the historic keyboard. He also taught a deep understanding of Baroque music (as well as earlier and later repertoires), and thereby an understanding of the role of instruments and performers in mediating emotion. As time has passed since my studies with Leonhardt, I've realized that a teacher never can know the limits of his or her impact on students. Leonhardt has had a colossal impact on my life primarily through the purity of his focus; and that has given me a wish to share a comparable concentration with each of my students such as they may require. My hope is that they in turn may connect with their chosen activity and repertoire at the deepest level, and radiate this grounding outward into their musicology, conducting, composition or performance. The personality, the energy, the uniqueness, the insight, the dedication that characterized Gustav Leonhardt has not, and will not, vanish. "Find it, own it, use it, hand it on . . ."

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Linda Burman-Hall, performer and cultural musicologist, is active in research on performance practices, improvisation and in the history of music. As a scholar-performer and Professor Emerita at the University of California, Santa Cruz, she relates regional styles and fashions in music to cultural context, and describes, analyzes, and performs historically- and culturally- informed realizations of musical materials. EDUCATION B.A. with Honors, Music, University of California, Los Angeles M.F.A., Music (Theory and Musicology), Princeton University Ph.D., Music (Theory and Musicology), Princeton University Postdoctoral research, Institute of Ethnomusicology, University of Amsterdam PERFORMANCE Although she is perhaps best known as Artistic Director of the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival, Linda Burman-Hall has performed a wide range of music, from works of the medieval mystic Hildegard of Bingen to world premieres of multi-cultural, experimental and computer music. In early music, following studies with the Dutch scholar-performer Gustav Leonhardt she has specialized in solo and ensemble music for 17th and 18th century keyboards (harpsichord, organ, and fortepiano). She has performed and recorded with Judith Nelson, Max van Egmond, Jeffrey Thomas, Julianne Baird and Randall Wong, and instrumentalists Monica Huggett, Elizabeth Blumenstock, Marja Gaynor and Anner Bylisma, and appeared with groups such as Philharmonia Baroque, Chanticleer, American Baroque Ensemble, Musica Pacifica and Espressivo Orchestra. She founded and directed the nationally recognized American early music ensemble Lux Musica. Her festival appearances include the Carmel Bach Festival, E. Nakamichi Baroque Festival, Berkeley Early Music Festival, Aston Magna, and the American Musicological Society. She has also been featured in solo and ensemble concerts at the Getty, de Young, Huntington, and the Smithsonian Museums, and has played throughout the United States and in Canada, with regular broadcasts on NPR and occasional concerts in Europe and Asia. In contemporary music, Linda Burman-Hall has performed with artists as diverse as Steve Reich and Meredith Monk, and has commissioned, premiered and recorded new music by contemporary Indonesian composers and by her composer colleagues at UC-Santa Cruz. For performance research and recordings, she has also received individual and team grants from National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and University of California. Her recordings are available on Centaur, Helicon,

Kleos, Wildboar, GoldenHorn, MSR, East Meets West Music, Gourd and Koustic labels. Her early music releases feature works by Jacques Hardel, Étienne Richard, Joseph Bodin de Boismortier, Antonio Vivaldi, Heinrich Schütz, J.S. Bach, and Josef Haydn. She has directed the early instrument ensemble Lux Musica in the highly acclaimed 'Haydn & The Gypsies', 'Classical Cats' (2001, Kleos), 'Cantemir: Music in Istanbul and Ottoman Europe around 1700' (2004, GoldenHorn), 'Celtic Caravans' (2001, MSR), and 'Raga & Raj, North Indian Music' (2013, East Meets West Music). Solo recordings include contemporary keyboard works by Lou Harrison (2002, New Albion), an all J. S. Bach harpsichord album, 'Two Faces of Genius' (2003, MSR), and 'Erik Satie: Visions', played on a 1875 Érard Grand Piano (2004, MSR). She performs Swedish traditional music on a 2018 CD 'Notebook' with cellist Barry Phillips (Koustic Music). Her ongoing contemporary music project is 'Pacific Pluck', duets in which she plays harpsichord with Asian zithers (koto, zheng, kacapi). Recently, UCSC Emeriti Associates appointed her Edward A Dickson Emerita Professor for 2019-2020, an honor that will result in a free-to-the-public concert of Celtic music October 11, 2020 at UC Santa Cruz Music Department, featuring music of Irish harpist-composer Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738) on his 350th birthday. Audio recordings are widely available on YouTube and the Baroque Festival website, [SCBAROQUE.ORG](http://SCBAROQUE.ORG)