

THOUGHTS ON BACHANALIA from performers and audience:

I saw quite a few very excited young children escorted by one parent who were clearly there to observe the second parent performing. And it occurred to me that Bachanalia offers the perfect--and maybe the only realistic--venue for little kids to see their parents perform. With relatively short performances, free admission, and an informal atmosphere, it's the perfect occasion for the toddler and grade-school set to see their musician parent in action. One family I saw was waving at mommy on the stage, and the little girl was looking back at me to make sure I noticed it was her mommy playing. Then Daddy took her and little brother home, saying mommy would hang around a while to perform again...

MARY MORGAN –usher

I don't know where to begin. I had some of the greatest moments of recent years Friday night. Watching Parker play at 5:00, sitting in the pew next to my old high-school choir teacher, it was hard to tell who was prouder and happier at that moment. Looking down from the balcony during our hour, I saw the faces of performers and audience alike: parents with little children, teenagers who had never sat in the room with Bach performed live, Robert Benson with his ponytail, old friends and new faces, all gathered together to share in this wonderful music. A number of the trombonists (in BONE THERAPY) were 'first-timers'. They were nervous during warm-up. When we assembled in the balcony, and they looked out over the church for the first time, there was a bit of the 'deer-in-the-headlights' reaction. As the hour progressed, though, they relaxed and entered into the spirit of the event. It was a different group that walked back downstairs; quieter, more thoughtful, and smiling ear-to-ear. I hope we gave to the event as much as it gave to us. Playing with these 'amateurs' has helped cure years of jaded 'professionalism', and Friday night was particularly moving for me.

WES RAMSAY - member of BONE THERAPY & father of Parker Ramsay, harpist

Although I only heard the first couple of hours, (BACHanalia) was just marvelous...absolutely marvelous. What an effort on your part... and what gifts on the contributing artists' parts. Again I just loved the unusual combinations of things...harps, for goodness sake, and a saxophone quartet, and that splendid brass group doing the big Passacaglia and Fugue (which I hadn't heard in forever, and, of course, always on an organ). And I'd never heard the Coffee Cantata. But to me the revelation was the Brandenburg No. 3...which, with everyone else in the world, I know by heart. But to SEE it! That was the amazing thing. I had never known (and I asked the performers afterwards...it was in the original score, they said) that each individual instrument among the nine (well, at least each of the violins and violas and a cello) had an individual solo part. You can't hear that with ears alone, but you can sure see it. And then to SEE the sweep of the music from one side of the group to the other and back, well, it was so exciting I practically jumped up and down...the experience was one I'll treasure...until next year. Please, please do it again. OK? Christ Church and the city are lucky to have you and to have all that Bachy talent willing to give itself.

JOHN COMPTON – member of the audience