



# Musicians of the Old Post Road

**“Old Post Road wows audience”**

—*Worcester Telegram & Gazette*



*photo by Susan Wilson*

Melissa Foster, General Manager  
318 Bear Hill Road, Suite 9, Waltham, MA 02451  
Phone: (781) 466-6694; Fax: (781) 487-7790  
E-mail: [musicians@oldpostroad.org](mailto:musicians@oldpostroad.org)  
Web Site: [www.oldpostroad.org](http://www.oldpostroad.org)

# MUSICIANS OF THE OLD POST ROAD



Described as “**one of the discoveries**” of the **2001 early music festival in Regensburg, Germany**, Musicians of the Old Post Road has been captivating audiences in the US and abroad with its exciting programming and virtuoso performances. As a chamber ensemble specializing in the period instrument performance of music from the Baroque, Classical, and early Romantic periods, the ensemble specializes in offering **a dynamic and diverse repertory that includes “redis-**

**covered” works** that have been lost to audiences for centuries. About the ensemble’s recent Handel concert, John Zeugner of the Worcester Telegram wrote, the group “served up a Handel feast that... [included] a well-worn favorite and three seldom-performed masterpieces—concluding with a mesmerizing, gorgeously convincing rendition of his cantata Apollo e Dafne.”

**Winner of the 1998 Noah Greenberg Award** from the American Musicological Society, Musicians of the Old Post Road has also received programming awards from Chamber Music America and the US–Mexico Fund for Culture. The ensemble has toured in Germany, Austria, Mexico, and has appeared at festivals and on concert series in the U.S., including the Boston Early Music Festival Concert Series, the Indianapolis Early Music Festival, the Castle Hill Festival, and the Artists Series at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. The ensemble was in residence at Dartmouth College in April, 2005. OPR has also been commissioned to create programs to complement exhibits at the Yale Museum for British Art and the MIT Museum.

The ensemble’s discography includes five **recordings that have each been praised in the US and abroad**. They include *The Virtuoso Double Bass* (Titanic, 1994), *Trios and Scottish Song Settings of J. N. Hummel* (Meridian, 1999), *Galant with an Attitude: Music of Juan and José Pla* (Meridian, 2000), *Quartets of Telemann and Bodinus* (Meridian, 2004), and *Feliz Navidad: Christmas from Spain and New Spain* (Meridian, 2009).

Programming is **distinguished by an exciting freshness, innovation, and the use of imaginative themes**. While offering audiences well-loved works of the most celebrated composers, Musicians of the Old Post Road is dedicated to rediscovering chamber pieces and arrangements that have been lost to audiences for centuries. As performers of a

variety of period wind, string, and keyboard instruments, the versatility of the ensemble members affords a broad spectrum of repertory with **rich coloristic possibilities provided by bountiful instrumental combinations**. Program notes are provided for every concert, and ensemble members are pleased to speak about the instruments and repertory if desired.

In addition to formal concerts, Musicians of the Old Post Road presents a **variety of educational programs**, including lecture demonstrations, workshops on Baroque improvisation and other topics, as well as masterclasses. The group has held mini-residencies at Berwick Academy in southern Maine and at the Roland Hayes Division of Music at Madison Park High School in Boston, and participated in a week long residency at Dartmouth College in the spring of 2005. The ensemble is available for residencies, masterclasses (individual instruments or chamber music), workshops on historical performance, lecture demonstrations, and educational performances for children.

The ensemble takes its name from its acclaimed concert series founded in 1989. The series brings period instrument performances to historical buildings along the route of the old Boston Post Road, the first “highway” linking Boston and New York City beginning in the 1670s. Concert sites include meetinghouses, churches, mansions, museums and public halls, and the repertory spans the period of the Old Post Road’s prominence, from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.



# THE ENSEMBLE



**DANIEL RYAN**, co-Artistic Director, cellist, has played with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Il Complesso Barocco (Venice and Innsbruck), the Camerata Academica of Salzburg, and many ensembles in the Greater Boston area, such as Boston Cecilia, Handel & Haydn Society, Renaissonics, and Favella Lyrica, with whom he was featured on the Bank of Boston Emerging Artists Celebrity Series in 1997. While attending Boston University, he studied cello with George Neikrug and pursued his interest in historical performance through course work at the Longy School of Music and masterclasses with Anner Bijlsma, the Kuijkens, and Hopkinson Smith. During the summers of 1986 and 1987 he studied with Christophe Coin at the Sommerakademie in Innsbruck. Also an accomplished player of keyboard instruments, Mr. Ryan has been awarded the Associate certificate of the American Guild of Organists, and is Organist-Choir Director at Church of the Holy Spirit in Wayland. He has recorded for Titanic, Meridian, and Koch.



**SUZANNE STUMPF**, co-Artistic Director, flutist, has performed in the United States with numerous chamber and orchestral ensembles including the New York Bach Ensemble, Boston Cecilia, Handel & Haydn Society, and Boston Baroque, with whom she has appeared as soloist. She has toured in Germany and Austria with I Vari Flauti and Musicians of the Old Post Road, and has served as guest principal flutist for the Montreal Baroque Orchestra. An honors graduate of Wellesley College, where she was awarded several prizes, Ms. Stumpf studied historical performance in Vienna with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and in Zurich with Johann Sonnleitner, and has done graduate work at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Her principal flute instructors include Christopher Krueger, James Pappoutsakis, Lois Schaefer, and Nancy Joyce Roth. She is a faculty member of the New England Conservatory Extension Division and is on the faculty of Wellesley College, where she coaches chamber music and teaches modern and Baroque flutes. She may be heard on Titanic, Telarc, and Meridian.



**MICHAEL BAHMANN**, fortepianist, harpsichordist, performs extensively as a soloist and in ensembles throughout Europe and the United States. As the appointed harpsichordist for Music of the Baroque in Chicago, he has recorded many concertos of J. S. Bach for the Fine Arts Radio Network. In Europe, Mr. Bahmann has toured with Tempo Barocco Ensemble of Marseille, including appearances at Festival de Radio France and Le Printemps Musical Aix-en-Provence, and with the Slovakian period instrument orchestra Musica Aeterna. He is co-director of the Concerts-on-the-Common series in Little Compton, RI. With his first musical experiences as a chorister in the Hannover Boys' Choir, he subsequently studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Hannover, Germany, the San Francisco Conservatory, and the New England Conservatory, where he was awarded a Masters of Music with Distinction in Performance as a student of John Gibbons. He has recorded for Meridian Records with Musicians of the Old Post Road.



**MARCIA CASSIDY**, violist, has performed extensively in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Japan to critical acclaim as a member of the Franciscan String Quartet. Ms. Cassidy pursued her musical training at the University of Texas, University of New Mexico, New England Conservatory, San Francisco Conservatory, and with the Tokyo String Quartet at the Yale School of Music. Her principal teachers have included Geraldine Walther, Burton Fine, Leonard Felberg, and Doris Norton. She is a member of the Bella Rosa String Quartet, the New England Bach Festival Orchestra, and the faculty of Dartmouth College.



**SARAH DARLING**, violinist, has performed with the Boston Symphony, the Boston Pops, Boston Baroque, Handel & Haydn, the Portland and Rhode Island Symphonies, and BMOP, and is a founding member of the Rosetta Trio, the Conspiro Quartet, and the Arcturus Chamber Ensemble, which she directs. After a Bachelor's degree at Harvard and a year at the Juilliard School, she spent four years studying in Amsterdam and Freiburg as a recipient of grants from the Beebe, Paine, and DAAD foundations. Upon returning to Boston, Ms. Darling earned her Master's degree at New England Conservatory and is currently at work on a DMA there. Major teachers include Kim Kashkashian, Wolfram Christ, Nobuko Imai, Karen Tuttle, James Dunham, and Scott Woolweaver. She has performed in the Ravinia, Yellow Barn, Sarasota, Norfolk, Kronberg, Baden-Baden, Verbier, Saito-Kinen, and Lucerne festivals. Ms. Darling is the winner of the NEC, Harvard Bach Society, GBYSO, Arlington, Marlboro, and Freiburg concerto competitions. She has also performed Bach's 6th Brandenburg Concerto in Germany and California, with The Bach Ensemble and the Carmel Bach Festival Orchestra. She is concertmaster and assistant director of the Harvard Baroque Orchestra.



## ASSISTING GUEST ARTISTS



**AARON ENGBRETH**, baritone, maintains an active solo career in opera, oratorio, and recital, and has devoted himself considerably to the performance of new music. He has appeared as guest soloist with groups and at venues such as the Tanglewood Music Festival, Ravinia Music Festival, Opera Boston, Terezin Chamber Music Foundation, Monadnock Music Festival, the Portland Chamber Music Festival, and the San Diego and Charlotte Symphony Orchestras. He is a frequent soloist with many of the country's finest early music organizations including the American Bach Soloists, Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Early Music Festival, Miami Bach Society, Boston Baroque, San Francisco Bach Choir, Columbus Bach Ensemble, Boston Camerata, Santa Fe Pro Musica, Musicians of the Old Post Road, and Boston Cecilia. Mr. Engebretth also sings regularly on the cantata series with Emmanuel Music and was a national finalist and place-winner in the 2002 American Bach Society/Bethlehem Bach Competition. While on the music faculty of Tufts University, he was twice awarded faculty grants to study music of the French Baroque in Paris. Mr. Engebretth has also served on the music faculty of the Boston Conservatory and is an artistic director of the Florestan Recital Project.



**PAMELA DELLAL**, mezzo-soprano, has sung under Seiji Ozawa, Christopher Hogwood, and William Christie, making her Lincoln Center debut under the latter with the Handel & Haydn Society at Avery Fisher Hall. Other ensembles which have presented Ms. Dellal include the Tokyo Oratorio Society, the Lydian String Quartet, Boston Baroque, the Boston Early Music Festival, Aston Magna, the Dallas Bach Society, and the National Chamber Orchestra. She has been featured by opera companies throughout the region and is a frequent guest of Boston's many fine choral ensembles. She has an active career as a recitalist and chamber musician, including her affiliation since 1997 with Musicians of the Old Post Road. She is also a founding member of Favella Lyrica. Ms. Dellal has toured three continents and made numerous recordings of the music of Hildegard von Bingen as a member and Acting Director of Sequentia's women's ensemble Vox Feminae. She has been alto soloist in the renowned Bach Cantata series presented by Emmanuel Music since 1984. She has recorded for Arabesque, Artona, BMG, CRI, Dorian, Meridian, and Koch.

# PROGRAM OFFERINGS



## Bach's Brandenburg 5, Plus Four

*"Old music played with high artistry"*  
— Worcester Telegram

One of Bach's most beloved works, along with four more lively chamber concertos by Georg Philipp Telemann, Antonio Vivaldi, Michel Corrette, and Johann Stoezel.

## The Flair of the French Concerto

Brilliant and stylish concertos for flute, violin, cello and chamber ensemble by some of the first composers in France to write in the genre. Works include the Concerto in A Minor for flute and strings by Michel Blavet, the Cello Concerto in D Major by J. Boismortier, and selections from Michel Corrette's *Concertos Comiques*.



## Baroque Dazzle: Quartets of Telemann, Bodinus, and Quantz

Spirited quartets of G. P. Telemann along with newly rediscovered quartets of Johann Joachim Quantz and Sebastian Bodinus. Colorful interplay and engaging dialogue abound in these delightful works!

## The Humanity and Humor of Mozart and Haydn

A program exploring the extraordinary emotional range and depth of these Classical masters. The program includes two of Haydn's most sprightly and ingenious chamber works: the Flute Quartet in D Major, op. 5, no. 1, and the Piano Trio no. 12 in D Major. Two major chamber works by Mozart will be included: the eloquent Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, K.493, and the Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 145, in Mozart's own chamber arrangement.



## Rameau and the Fabulous French Baroque

Selections from Rameau's beloved *Pièces de clavecin en concert*, his chamber cantata *Aquilon et Orithie*, along with a sonata for flute and continuo by the virtuoso flutist and composer Michel Blavet, and the exquisite *Les Femmes* by Andre Campra.

With guest baritone Aaron Engbreth



## Music from Monticello

Chamber works played and collected by Thomas Jefferson and his family including a violin sonata by Corelli, a trio sonata by Campioni, a flute sonata by Tessarini, harpsichord pieces by Balbastre, and songs by Maria Cosway and Francis Hopkinson

With guest mezzo-soprano Pamela Dellal

## Bach and His Virtuosi

*“played with freshness and wit”*  
—*Worcester Telegram*

Vocal and instrumental works by outstanding musicians in the milieu of Johann Sebastian Bach, as well as a work composed by Bach that called upon the talents of virtuoso musicians in his circle. The program will include the cantata *Quel vago seno* of J.A. Hasse, the Concerto in D Major for flute, strings and continuo by Heinichen, a violin concerto by Pisendel, and J. S. Bach's Concerto in D Minor for harpsichord and strings

with guest mezzo-soprano Pamela Dellal



## Haydn, Mozart, and the Gypsy Style

This colorful program will explore the influence of exotic folk and Gypsy themes upon the impeccable Classical writing of the two great masters. Works include Haydn’s Piano Trio in G Major with its famous “Gypsy Rondo,” Mozart’s String Quartet, K. 590, Franz Danzi’s Trio in E minor for flute and strings, plus Hungarian dances by Csermák and other Hungarian and Gypsy composers.



## J. S. Bach’s Musical Offering

A complete performance of this monumental chamber work which includes a trio sonata, two ricercares for solo keyboard, and a variety of ingenious canons for instrumental ensemble, all based on Frederick the Great’s *Royal Theme*.

## Transatlantic Crossings: Chamber Music in Early America

A fascinating sampling of music that was composed and performed in colonial and early Federal America. The program will include a trio by America’s first native-born composer John Antes, a cello sonata by an important early Philadelphia composer and concert promoter Raynor Taylor, and a trio Joseph Gehot, who was a violinist active in Philadelphia and New York. The program will also include a violin sonata by Mozart, a flute quartet by J. C. Bach, and a period arrangement of Haydn’s Symphony no. 96 — works that were likely heard in the U.S. during the eighteenth century.



# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



## **Masterclasses** *Available for the following instruments/topics:*

Transverse Flutes • Harpsichord  
Violin • Viola • Cello • Fortepiano  
Chamber music

## **Workshops** *Available on the following topics:*

- 18th-century ornamentation
- Rehearsal technique and ensemble playing
- Performing Baroque and Classical music on modern instruments

## **Lecture Demonstrations**

“Chamber Music in Early America”  
“Music-making in the Household of Thomas Jefferson”  
“18th-century Ornamentation and Improvisation”

## **Children’s Concerts** *Available for every age level*

## **Residencies and Mini-residencies**

*Available to secondary schools and colleges.*

Programs are designed individually to meet the needs of each participating institution and include concerts, masterclasses and workshops.

# What the press has said

“Old Post Road wows audience”

—Worcester Telegram

“scintillating performances of sentiment and sparkle”

—BBC Music Magazine

“expressive and virtuosic”

—Online Musik Magazin

“The compositions selected proved to be captivating and were played with a palpable empathy and understanding. Best of all, they were played with impeccable musicianship”

—Worcester Telegram

“the repertoire is irresistible”

—American Record Guide

“superbly played”

—Early Music Review, England

“well crafted ideas were handled with spirit and vitality”

— Worcester Telegram

“the instruments carried energy and excitement”

—The Martha’s Vineyard Times

“superlative baroque specialists”

—The Worcester Phoenix

“engagingly impetuous”

—The Boston Globe

“crisp, vivacious and flawless”

—The Worcester Phoenix

# Musicians of the Old Post Road shine a brilliant light on Handel

By John Zeugner

TELEGRAM & GAZETTE REVIEWER

**WORCESTER** — The little eclipse of Georg Friedrich Handel's genius in this era of Mozart and Shostakovich anniversaries came to a magical end yesterday afternoon in the First Unitarian Church. The Musicians of the Old Post Road served up a Handel feast that ranged over early and mid-career compositions, a well-worn favorite and three seldom-performed masterpieces — concluding with a mesmerizing, gorgeously convincing rendition of his cantata "Apollo e Dafne."

As always, the Musicians of the Old Post Road (10 strong for this concert) performed on original or facsimile instruments, so that the authenticity of gut strings and precursor versions of flute, oboe and bassoon, the sounds of **traverso and violone, made it seem,**

in the words of veteran concertgoer Donald Berth, that "we had been transported to Hampton Court."

As if to build toward the cantata, the concert began with Handel's overture to "Rodrigo," which in his time was sometimes played as a kind of opener to "Apollo e Dafne." The wonderfully nimble solo interplay among violinist Christina Day Martinson, traverso player Suzanne Stumpf, bassoonist Judy Bedford, and the oboe pair of Geoffrey Burgess and Joyce Alper spread across several of the overture's brief movements and delighted the large crowd at the church.

The second selection, Handel's Trio Sonata in B Minor, written later than his prodigy period ("Apollo e Dafne" was written when he was 21, conceding nothing to Mozart's juvenile genius, and, in fact, quite able to match the Salzburg's phenomenon's quickness: "The Messiah" allegedly was composed in 28 days, for example), was a deeper piece, restricted to Stumpf on traverso, Daniel Ryan, cello, Michael Bahmann, harpsichord, and Martinson, violin. Handel's extraordinary melodic ingratiation pervaded the four movements and the musicians were absolutely solid, sure-footed in trading, enfolding, developing his themes. The first half concluded with some very familiar excerpts from Handel's "Water Music," but the vintage instruments gave a very beguiling edge and rasp to that familiarity.

After the intermission, what had been a memorable concert spiraled into a really extraordinary musical experience. As the protagonists of "Apollo e Dafne," soprano Jane West and baritone Aaron



Engbreth were in wonderful voice: full-toned, robust, confident, pure, resonant, and so emotionally into the music as to make the frustrated romance between the god and mortal perfectly poignant, and utterly convincing. Dafne's first aria, "Felicissima quest alma," is the best-known piece from the cantata and often sung separately in concert (there is a free version available on Rhapsody.com), but this reviewer has not heard a sweeter, fuller or more captivating rendition than West's. And Engbreth's voice was so rich and authoritative that he easily commanded the parts originally written for a bass and so dominated the recitatives, incorporating them magically into the chemistry of Apollo's chase and ultimate thwarting. His duets with West were pure musical gold.

The singers' mastery seemed to enthuse the accompanying musicians, who brought a new "old" edge to their weavings among wind instruments, strings and golden voices. Two messages from this truly "super Sunday" offering: First, make a CD of these performances, and second, take up the Handel mantle and continue to mine his genius for future concerts of this stunning caliber.

April, 2002

**BBC**  
**music**  
**MAGAZINE**

“scintillating performances of sentiment and sparkle”

**JB & J PLA**

**Flute Trios, Dolcet III:2a, 3, 6, 16 & 17; El concierto favorito, Dolcet IV:I**

Musicians of the Old Post Road,  
La Fontegara, etc  
Meridian CDE 84419 70:52 mins £££

The brothers Juan Bautista and José Pla were itinerant oboe virtuosi of the mid-18th century, renowned for their playing throughout Continental Europe – and in London, where they had several of their compositions published. Though long forgotten save in their native Catalonia (Roberto Gerhard edited at least one Pla trio sonata), this delightful disc deserves to restore them to some celebrity. Both Plas composed: the tendency has been to assign most of the music to Juan (as on the 1995 Sony CD which is the only alternative I know for some of these pieces). But since they performed as a duo the presumption is that they often collaborated, giving themselves

the treble roles, with plenty of opportunities for interaction and rivalry. The lively rhythmic invention, the swooning chromaticisms, the formal inventiveness are very seductive; the music spans a stylistic gamut from an elegant and sophisticated full *galant* idiom to an earthy and even ‘folky’ Spanish one with evocations of flamenco and guitar-strumming; the scale ranges from the pithy, epigrammatic E minor Sonata to the relatively expansive forms of the *Favourite Concerto*. The Boston-based Musicians of the Old Post Road and the Mexican trio La Fontegara (all kitted out in Mafia-type shades to emphasise that the Plas are ‘*Galant with an Attitude*’) collaborate in scintillating performances of sentiment and sparkle, beautifully recorded. *Calum MacDonald*

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★★

**SOUND**

★★★★★

# Musicians rediscover old gems

Musicians/From Page E1

been to use reproductions and period instruments to re-create the authentic sound of the music they play — usually composed between the 17th and early 19th centuries — and to unite performances of classical music to intimate historical buildings that are appropriate to the music. The Old Post Road was the primary route for travel and commerce between Boston and New York from the late 1680s through 1849.

Stumpf (flute) is a full-time member of the music faculty of Wellesley College, while Ryan (keyboards and cello) is choir director and organist at the Church of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal) in Wayland. The couple live in South Natick. Member Michael Bahmann (harpsichord) is from Rhode Island. The group often brings in guest musicians and vocalists, mostly from the Greater Boston area. Also performing tomorrow will be violinists Sarah Darling and Abigail Kerr, soprano Kristen Watson, and mezzo-soprano Deborah Rentz-Moore.

This season the ensemble's destinations have or will include Sudbury, Wayland, Weston and Emmanuel Church in Boston, in addition to Worcester. In their 20 years they have performed more than 175 concerts in 20 locations across Massachusetts and into Connecticut. Tomorrow will be their first stop in Worcester for 2008-09. The group will return here for an "In Celebration of Handel" concert March 27 in First Unitarian Church.

Stumpf said it feels like 20 years of performing in the nicest possible way.

"It feels like 20 years because of the richness of the experience we've had," she said.

"Looking at the programming, what we've done is remarkable," Ryan added.

Baroque music in particular has been a treasure trove. "I think we have a running body of work that we've been looking at really and rediscovering over the years," Stumpf said. Often at rehearsals, musicians are playing a piece for the first time. "It makes rehearsals very exciting," she said.

Asked if Worcester has been a supportive road stop for the Musicians of the Old Post Road, Stumpf said, "Absolutely. There's a core group of following that's been expanding the past couple of decades."

The ensemble often tries to organize its concerts around a theme, and seems to have had a particularly good time with its holiday concerts. One year it put on "An Italian Baroque Christmas." Last year saw "Feliz Navidad: Christmas from Spain and New Spain" featuring rarely performed but beautiful compositions by Antonio de Liteses, Ignacio de Jerúsalem, Juan Francés de Iribarren and José de Torres y Martínez Bravo.

The concerts were very successful, and on the strength of the audience reaction the program has become the basis for the ensemble's latest CD, Stumpf said. The newly released recording will be on sale at tomorrow's concert.

The "Christmas in Baroque Europe" program is broader in scope than just focusing on one country and shows that audiences had distinct tastes, Ryan said. "They (the compositions) are different from each but lovely," he said.

And maybe not always so totally unfamiliar. The French noels will have tunes that the audience will be likely to instantly recognize, Stumpf said.

Despite having a core audience, Stumpf said, the ensemble faces the ongoing challenge facing many classical groups of getting people into a concert hall. One innovative approach has been to let in children ages 7 to 17 free if accompanied by an adult. "That's been very helpful, but we still need to work on getting the word out on it."

But the musicians see themselves still on the road for some time to come.

✦ "Oh yes, we're excited about all the music left to be explored with all our audiences," Stumpf said.

# Living | Arts

THE BOSTON GLOBE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2001

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2001

## 'Baroque Noel' offers a holiday from cliché

By Richard Buell  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Anyone putting on a Christmas concert who takes special pains to avoid the overfamiliar, the clichéd, and the cloying should get a respectful hearing. Extra marks to Musicians of

### Music Review

the Old Post Road this year for bringing it to people's attention that the much-played, much-recorded "Messe de minuit pour Noel" wasn't the only Christmas music that the great Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1645-1704) composed.

At Faneuil Hall on Thursday night, the above-named FM-drive-time favorite was replaced by what seemed like nothing less than a masterpiece. "In nativitate Domini canticum" is the name of this compact, beguiling, and often moving little oratorio (which bears the number H. 416 in the catalog of Charpentier's works).

One of its beguilements is the sure, even, subtle, and quiet manner in which it lays open its riches. Melodically, Charpentier had a way with him, whether he was appropriating familiar tunes of the day for liturgical uses or meeting the stringent demands of the grand operatic manner. The "Midnight Mass" above is notoriously hummable. At the start, there was a hint this oratorio might merely be the same effect by other means.

But no — the Chorus of the Just, voicing a none too confident hope in the redemption that might or might not be at hand, struck a chilling note of anxiety. A

### A French Baroque Noel

A concert by Musicians of the Old Post Road

At: Faneuil Hall, Thursday night.  
Repeats tonight at the First Baptist Church, Worcester

ments alone, "Night," with its lightly brushed-in chromaticisms and dissonances, was even more amazing. If you listened carefully, you could hear, mostly concealed by the shifting moods around it, a lullaby slowly taking shape. And that's how the events in this oratorio proceed — the thing is crazily oblique if you care to look at it that way, but once known, would you want to change a single word or note of it? An example being those great gulfs of silence that break into the March of the Shepherds section — if you know the finale of the Sibelius Fifth Symphony, you'll get the idea.

Earlier on, there was a pair of collections — one by Michel Corrette, the other by Charpentier — of French Christmas tunes, performed by a sort of string quartet (bass violin replacing the cello) with lute and harpsichord additions; and an earlier Charpentier oratorio (same name, different opus number) that barely hinted at the marvels to come.

Throughout, you sensed that all the performers were realizing more and more, every moment, just what it was they had in their keeping.

There is a repeat performance tonight at 8 at the First Baptist Church, Worcester.



# Musicians of the Old Post Road