

# **James Strecker Reviews the Arts**

**JEANNE LAMON: BAROQUE VIOLINIST, CONCERTMASTER, CHAMBER MUSICIAN, TEACHER, AND MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITA WHOSE LEADERSHIP TOOK TAFELMUSIK TO INTERNATIONAL STATURE AS ONE OF THE BEST ENSEMBLES IN ITS FIELD, EXPLAINS “CREATIVE WORK IS EXTREMELY PERSONAL AND EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN WAY OF DOING IT. SO, YOU CAN’T REALLY POLICE MUSIC MAKING. EVERY MUSICIAN WORTH HIS OR HER SALT HAS A LOT INVESTED IN THEIR CREATIVE WORK. OTHERWISE WE’D ALL BE BANKERS!” A REVIEWER’S INTERVIEW WITH PEOPLE IN THE ARTS**

Posted on [April 26, 2018](#) by [strecker](#)



Photo credit Sian Richards.

Music Director Emerita Jeanne Lamon joins Tafelmusik as concertmaster for the final all-Beethoven program of the 2017/18 season featuring Bruno Weil as conductor, and Music Director Elisa Citterio as violin soloist. May 3 to 6, 2018 at Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning details at [Tafelmusik.org](#).

JAMES STRECKER: If you were asked for 50 words for an encyclopedia to summarize what you do, or have done, in the arts, what would you say?

JEANNE LAMON: Jeanne Lamon was largely responsible for the artistic development of the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, bringing it from its embryonic stage in 1981 to its maturity as one of the world's preeminent baroque orchestras today. Her leadership style is a collaborative one. She has put a strong individual mark on the Tafelmusik sound, which some describe as robust and energetic.

JS: What important beliefs do you express in or through your work?

JL: I hope that I express the joy that I feel in my music making. The act of making great music come alive with like-minded musicians has been extremely powerful for me. It brings me great joy which I hope I convey.

JS: Name two people, living or dead, whom you admire a great deal and tell us why for each one.

JL: Malala Yousafzai is the most courageous young woman I can imagine! The very fact that she survived the attack on her life, and dares go back to Pakistan to help other young girls get educated is amazing to me.

Barack Obama was truly a great leader and I have found few great leaders to emulate in my life. One of the most important parts of good leadership is being a good listener, which he is. Once one has assimilated the information, one can make a wise decision, convincing people along the way that they helped make that choice. Much like leading a Tafelmusik rehearsal!

JS: How have you changed since you began to do creative work?

JL: 4. Since I began to do creative work, I have become a lot more reasonable in my dealings with others! I understand now what I didn't understand well enough before. Creative work is extremely personal and everyone has their own way of doing it. So, you can't really police music making. Every musician worth his or her salt has a lot invested in their creative work. Otherwise we'd all be bankers! Balancing that knowledge with the need to create a coherent whole is the ultimate challenge of the music director.

JS: Please describe at least one major turning point in your life.

JL: My biggest challenge as a creative person has been to constantly find new challenges; to push boundaries, try new approaches, and tackle new repertoire. Also, it can be hard to incorporate all the ideas of my colleagues in the performance on the occasions when I really don't agree with their creative suggestions. The latter is a leadership challenge.

JS: Please describe at least one major turning point in your life.

JL: Hearing a concert with Leonhardt and his ensemble in Amsterdam as a student. That convinced me to be a baroque musician.

JS: What are the hardest things for an outsider to understand about what you do?

JL: That it's hard work and there are no "days off".

JS: How and why did you begin to do creative work in the first place?

JL: Music is fun. I've always enjoyed it, so I guess I've been doing it all my life, starting with singing songs as a young child.

JS: What haven't you attempted as yet that you would like to do and please tell us why?

JL: I haven't yet made arrangements of Rameau dances for a pop ensemble. I know they could be a big hit.

JS: What advice would you give a young person who would like to do what you do?

JL: Don't do it unless you can't NOT do it. It's hard work. But it's very gratifying too. Good luck and have fun!

JS: What do you ask of your audience?

JL: I ask of the audience that they be open with a "Do it to me" sort of vulnerability. That they put aside their day and just go along for the ride.

JS: What specifically would you change about what goes on in the world and the arts?

JL: All heads of government should sing songs together at the start of every meeting.

JS: If you could relive one experience from your creative life, what would it be and why would you do so?

JL: I'm happy to have many wonderful memories. I don't need to relive anything. Let the past be the past.

JS: Tell us what it feels like to be a figure who is presented somehow in the media. What effect does this presence have on you?

JL: When there is a lot of media about me, or when they name a concert hall after me, that's "someone else".

JS: Name two places you would like to visit, one you haven't been to and one to experience again and briefly tell us why

JL: I want to go back to Venice because it's a 17th and 18th century city with no cars, so it's quite well preserved and feels like you're back in the time.

JS: Please tell us about one or more projects that you have been working on, are preparing, or have recently completed. Why do they matter to you and why should they matter to us?

JL: I have been working on performing Mozart violin sonatas with a wonderful fortepianist named David Breitman. These pieces are too seldom heard. I'd love to do them all in the next few years!

JS: Let's talk about the state of the arts in today's society, including the forms in which you work. What specifically gives you hope and what specifically do you find depressing?

JL: The young upcoming generation of performers gives me great hope for the future of period performance. I find the general lack of respect for the relevance and importance of the arts in our society depressing.