

Benjamin Bagby

Web sites: www.sequentia.org & www.BagbyBeowulf.com

Full name: Benjamin Rock Bagby

Date of birth: 20 February, 1951

Place of birth: Evanston, Illinois (USA)

Citizenship: USA

Married to Katarina Livljanic since 2001

Education

Diplom für Musik des Mittelalters, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (Basel, Switzerland), 1977.

Bachelor of Music, Oberlin College Conservatory of Music (voice), 1974.

Bachelor of Arts, Oberlin College (German literature), 1974.

Professional Activities

- 1977 – present: Co-founder & co-director (since 1998 sole director), vocalist and harpist: Sequentia ensemble for medieval music. Bagby has created over 70 innovative concert programs of medieval music and music drama, giving performances in Western and Eastern Europe, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Japan, Korea, and Australia. Sequentia performs 15 to 30 concerts yearly, developing 1-2 new programs each year.
- 1978 – present: Numerous recordings with European radio and television, 1978-2005. The booklets which accompany these recordings are of the highest scholarly quality. Mr. Bagby has collaborated with such philologists as Peter Dronke, Pierre Bec, Ulrich Müller, Heimir Palsson and Laurence Moulinier, and with musicologists such as Leo Treitler, Edward Roesner, Hartmut Möller and Richard Crocker.
- 1981 – present: Recordings (LP and CD): over two dozen (see discography).
- 1984 – present: Bagby and Sequentia have been dedicated to teaching intensive summer courses in medieval music performance. The most important of these is the two-week course taught yearly at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Of the more than 200 students who have attended this advanced course over the years, more than 20 have gone on to become members of Sequentia or of other professional ensembles.
- 1988 – present: Founder, director and vocalist: Sons of Thunder, Sequentia's male vocal ensemble for the performance of medieval liturgical polyphony and chant.
- 1999 – present: Sequentia's recent CD releases, *Edda: Myths from Medieval Iceland*, *The Rheingold Curse*, *Lost Songs of a Rhineland Harper*, and *Fragments for the End of Time*, were based solely on the research of Benjamin Bagby, reflecting his interest in oral poetry and the use of traditional music in reconstructing ancient modal vocabularies.
- **Prior to the founding of Sequentia, during his student years, Bagby was the youngest member of two important early music ensembles in Europe and the USA:**
- 1975 – 1977: Solo vocalist, Studio der Frühen Musik (dir. Thomas Binkley). Participation in several recordings: *Ludi Sancti Nicholai*, *L'agonie de Languedoc*, and *Vox Humana*.
- 1972 – 1974: Solo Vocalist, instrumentalist, company tour manager and research assistant, New York Pro Musica Antiqua (dir. George Houle). Participation in recording: Marco da Gagliano, *La Daphne*.

Solo Performances

Since 1987, Benjamin Bagby has been actively involved in the reconstruction of medieval oral epics. He has performed in Old Icelandic, Old High German, and Anglo-Saxon, accompanying himself on a 6-string Germanic harp. His acclaimed bardic performance of *Beowulf*, with 10-20 performances yearly worldwide was created in 1990 and released as a DVD in 2007 (for details and press see www.BagbyBeowulf.com).

Sequentia Awards and Grants

Diapason d'Or (1995 and 1999)

Netherlands' Edison Awards (for Hildegard von Bingen, 1987 and 1998)

Disque d'Or (1996) for 100,000 copies of the disc *Canticles of Ecstasy* sold in France

Grammy Nomination for Best Choral Recording (Hildegard von Bingen, 1996)

Deutscher Schallplattenpreis (for *Vox Iberica*, 1993)

Innsbrucker Radiopreis (1981)

Research grants from the Siemens Foundation (Germany, 1980) for the recording project 'Spruchdichter'; and from the Volkswagen Foundation, in association with research and performance residencies at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel (Germany, 1978 and 1980).

Music Theatre Projects

The Rheingold Curse. A new Edda project premiered in 2001 with performances of the Eddic poems which formed the basis of the Rheingold Saga. For this project, commissioned by the Lincoln Center Festival and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Mr. Bagby collaborated with the NY stage director Ping Chong. Performances in Utrecht Early Music Festival and University of Maryland (2001), Perth Festival (Australia) and the Faroe Islands (2002), and further US tours in (2002 and 2003). Released worldwide as a double CD (2002): *The Rheingold Curse* (see www.aurel.de).

Edda Eins (performed as a theatrical production (1995-7) in Scandinavia, North America and Africa under the auspices of the Goethe Institute), staged by Franz-Josef Heumannskämper

Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum*: West German Television (1982), and tours in 1984, 1986, 1990, and 1998-9. 2 separate CD productions (1982 and 1997) for Deutsche Harmonia Mundi.

Bordesholmer Marienklage: West German TV (1992); CD released on Deutsche Harmonia Mundi (1992)

Heinrich von Meissen's *Frauenleich*: Frankfurter Feste (1987), concert performances in 1994, and CD recording, (1990, released in 1999).

Cividale *Planctus Marie*: West German Radio (1985); Boston Early Music Festival (1987).

Publications

Researching and writing more than 70 Sequentia programs for festivals and concert series.

Writing (sometimes co-authoring, with Barbara Thornton) more than two dozen CD booklets totalling almost 1700 pages.

[in preparation, 2009] 'Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum*'. Article for *Grove Online*.

'Der Klang des mittelalterlichen Gesangs'. Contribution to *Forum Alte Musik Köln: 10 Jahre*. (Köln, Musik+Konzepte, 2008).

Contributions to the journals *Early Music America* (summer, 2002 and summer 2008), *Early Music* (1987), the Polish early music quarterly *Canor* (2003), the Spanish/French early music magazine *Goldberg* (1998) and the Medieval Academy *Newsletter* (2005).

‘*Beowulf*, the *Edda*, and the Performance of Medieval Epic: Notes from the Workshop of a Reconstructed ‘Singer of Tales’’. Contribution to *Performing Medieval Narrative*, eds. Evelyn Birge Vitz, Nancy Freeman Regalado, and Marilyn Lawrence (Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2005).

‘*Beowulf*, die *Edda* und die Aufführung mittelalterlichen Epik. Anmerkungen aus der Werkstatt eines rekonstruierend rekonstruierten „Geschichten-Sängers“’, in *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 2002.

“Imagining the Early Medieval Harp”. Contribution to a book of essays on medieval music performance practice, *A Performer’s Guide to Medieval Music*, edited by Ross W. Duffin (Indiana University Press, 2000).

Teaching (as guest lecturer or professor) and jury membership

Current employment:

2005 – present: Université Paris -- Sorbonne, Paris IV, UFR de musique et de musicologie. Part-time associate professor (PAST) in the Master’s program for performance practice of medieval music.

Guest Lecturer, professor, jury member:

University of Maynooth, Dublin, Ireland: jury member (with Katarina Livljanic, 2008)

Festival d’Amboynay, France (with Katarina Livljanic, 2007)

Internationale Musik-Akademie Ochsenhausen, Germany (2007)

Summer Medieval Music Course, Vancouver, Canada (yearly, 1984-2002 and 2007)

Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA: Cornille Distinguished Visiting Professor (with Katarina Livljanic, 2007)

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Basel, Switzerland: teaching (2006, with Katarina Livljanic) and also jury member (1987)

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR: Trotter Guest Professor (2004-5)

University of Chicago, guest lecturer in Early Music Program (2004)

Rennes, Centre d’art polyphonique: (with Katarina Livljanic, 2004)

Vassar College, NY (2004)

Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris: jury member for Gregorian chant exams (2003, 2004)

Harvard University, Music Department and Center for the Study of World Religions: guest researcher and performer (with Katarina Livljanic, 2003)

University of Texas at Austin (1987 and 2003)

University of Limerick, Ireland, Center for Chant and Ritual Song (2003)

Royaumont Foundation, France (2002)

Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington, IN: Patten Lecturer (2001)

Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL: May Term guest lecturer (2001)

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH: Krieger Fellow (2000)

New York University, Medieval & Renaissance Studies Lecturer (2000)

Amherst Early Music, Amherst College & Tufts University, MA: (1987 and 1999)

Jaroslav Early Music Festival, Poland: lecturer (1999 and 2009)

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (1997)

prior to 1997:

Autunno Musicale, (Como, Italy)

Bodky Award (Boston): jury member

Modus Centrum (Oslo, Norway)

New England Conservatory of Music (Boston)

Sarah Lawrence College (Bronxville, NY)

St. John's College (Santa Fe, NM)

University of Illinois (Champagne/Urbana, IL)

Tilburgs Konservatorium (Tilburg, NL) jury member

Duke University (Raleigh, NC)

Stanford University (Palo Alto, CA)

Studio Alte Musik (Berlin)

University of California (Santa Barbara, CA)

Royal Conservatory (Copenhagen)

Stary Sacz Early Music Festival (Poland)

Awards and Teaching/Research Fellowships

Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA: Cornille Distinguished Visiting Professor (with Katarina Livljanic, 2007)

- University of Oregon School of Music, Trotter Visiting Professor, 2004-5
- Harvard University: Center for the Study of World Religions (Fortieth Anniversary Fellowship), together with Katarina Livljanic [director of Dialogos]: 2003
- Indiana University School of Music (Bloomington, IN) Patten Lecturer, 2001
- University of Michigan Humanities Fellowship, 2001
- Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland) Krieger Fellow, 2000
- Thomas J. Watson Foundation Fellowship (for the study of medieval song performance in Europe and the Middle East) 1974-75

Discography: see www.sequentia.org > Discography for a complete, annotated discography.