

AMERICAN
BACH
SOLOISTS



JEFFREY THOMAS
music director

support materials for our recording of

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750): MASS IN B MINOR, BWV 232
Julianne Baird, Judith Nelson, Nancy Zylstra *sopranos*
Jennifer Lane, Zoila Muñoz *altos* – Steven Rickards *countertenor*
Patrick Romano, Jeffrey Thomas *tenors* – William Sharp *baritone* – James Weaver *bass*
AMERICAN BACH SOLOISTS • AMERICAN BACH CHOIR
Jeffrey Thomas *conductor*

PERFORMANCE NOTES

by Jeffrey Thomas

Since we believe that the compilation of works known today as the Mass in B Minor was never performed as a single work during Bach's lifetime, we are set free from the responsibilities (and limitations) of producing a recreation of any one performance. In fact, even though most recent scholarship seems to indicate the use of one player or singer to each part, we enjoy the opportunity to enhance what might have been Bach's typical performing forces in ways that we believe would have been possible in Bach's time, and in ways that we feel present this work most successfully. Bach completed the new movements for the Mass between August 1748 and October 1749. In looking at the history of Bach's performances around that time, we have decided to employ several enhancements. For example, for the 1749 performance of the St. John Passion, additional parts for violin, viola, and continuo were prepared. Bach was apparently willing to use

these additional available forces. In following the numbers suggested by Bach in his 1730 letter to the Leipzig town council, we employ more than one singer to each part. In that document, he had asked for three to a part and since the double chorus Osanna is scored for eight independent voices, the use of 24 singers could be justified easily enough. Also, although at times the bassoons are indicated on separate staves, we otherwise include them in the continuo section. We have further decided to make use of the contrabassoon or bassono grosso, which was clearly used by Bach in the 1749 performance of the St. John Passion. Although the octave of this instrument (16-foot or 8-foot) is not documented, we use a 16-foot version; we also include 16-foot sonority in the Kyrie and Gloria sections, which otherwise do not specifically indicate its use. Finally it should be mentioned that no attempt has been made to conceal the mechanical noises made by the various wind instruments, since these intrinsic sounds are so much a part of any performance played on antique instruments or period-style replicas.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Kristi Brown-Montesano

The genesis of the Mass in B Minor—so admired for its colossal dimensions and encyclopedic stylistic variety—is actually a long history of separable parts. Although Bach compiled the music for this work in the last years of his life (1748-9), most of the movements had been composed long before or were reworked from earlier pieces. The origins of the Mass date back to Christmas day of 1724—the day on which the Sanctus was first performed. Indeed, it was entirely in keeping with Lutheran liturgical practice of this time to insert individual parts of the Latin Mass Ordinary into the predominantly vernacular liturgy.

Two other sections—the Kyrie and Gloria—anticipate the compilation of the Mass by a considerable amount of time. In 1733, Bach presented a manuscript of the Kyrie and Gloria (titled *Missa*) to the new Elector Friedrich August II in Dresden; he also attached to this an ingratiating petition for a titled position in the Elector's Hoffcapelle, which he hoped would give him additional stability in his post as Kantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Three years earlier, Bach had been threatened by the political machinations of the head Leipzig Burgermeister, Jakob Born, who tried to restore the original requisites for the position of Kantor and thus disqualify Bach

from his job. Although this initiative failed, Bach continued to be frustrated with the limited musical resources in Leipzig and with the behavior of the authorities. (In the end, Bach had to wait until 1736 to receive the requested court title, that—though it perhaps gave to him a measurable increase in rank—did not dispel the difficulties that persisted in his career at the Thomaskirche.) As John Butt notes in the *Cambridge Music Handbook on the Mass in B Minor*, Bach seems to have composed the Kyrie and Gloria especially to suit the taste of the Dresden court, in that they demonstrate several style characteristics typical of mass settings at Dresden: the writing for two soprano parts, the setting of the "*Christe eleison*" as a duet, the absence of da capo arias, and the use of independent instrumental parts. (This invaluable guide examines the Mass from a variety of perspectives and provides an overview of the latest scholarly discoveries.) It is unknown whether these two sections were performed around the time of their presentation. The music for the Gloria, however, shows up again in the mid-1740s, appearing in Bach's Latin cantata *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, BWV 191.

For most of the parts of the Mass, Bach borrowed music from his own compositions. Aria, duets, instrumental concertos, and cantata choruses all provide possible sources for the various movements. Some of the sections—such as the breathtaking aria "*Agnus Dei*"—represent the third version

of a musical model; the music for the chorus, "*Et expecto*", appears in at least three other settings.

Bach gathered the parts of the Mass in B Minor into four discreet manuscripts, to which he assigned a numerical order. Part I consists of the Kyrie/Gloria Missa of 1733; Part II the Symbolum Nicenum or Credo; Part III the Sanctus; and Part IV the Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, and Dona nobis pacem. Unlike the Missa and Sanctus, the Symbolum Nicenum seems not to have existed before the final compilation. This section also contains the only newly composed parts of the Mass. In fact, only the "*Confiteor*" is regarded without doubt to be an original composition; Bach's alterations in the autograph of the opening fugue subject give evidence that

no previous manuscript could have existed. Moreover, like the first "*Credo*" section, the "*Confiteor*" features a plainchant cantus firmus that corresponds to the specific text. The "*Et incarnatus est*" was added to the Symbolum Nicenum during the compilation and may also represent a new composition.

There is no record of a performance of the complete Mass in B Minor in Bach's lifetime. Long after his father's death, C.P.E. Bach conducted a performance in 1786 of the Symbolum Nicenum in a concert that included works by himself and Handel. Performances in the first part of the 19th century followed this example, presenting only extracts of the Mass. Only in the latter half of the century did the work see performance as an integral composition.

COMPACT DISC ONE

I. MISSA

KYRIE

[1] Coro / Chorus

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

[2] Duetto / Duet (Soprano I, Soprano II)

Julianne Baird, Judith Nelson

Christe eleison.

Christ, have mercy.

[3] Coro / Chorus

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA

[4] Coro / Chorus

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Glory be to God in the highest.

[5] Coro / Chorus

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

And in earth peace to men of good will.

[6] Aria / Aria (Soprano II)

Judith Nelson; Elizabeth Blumenstock, violino

Laudamus te; benedicimus te; adoramus te; glorificamus te.

We praise thee; we bless thee, we worship thee; we glorify thee.

[7] Coro / Chorus

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.

[8] Duetto / Duet (Soprano I, Tenore)

Nancy Zylstra, Patrick Romano; Sandra Miller, flauto traverso

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe altissime: Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris:

Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ most high: Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father:

[9] Coro / Chorus

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis: Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram:

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us: Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer:

[10] Aria / Aria (Alto)

Zoila Muñoz; John Abberger, oboe

Qui sedes ad dextram Patris, miserere nobis:

Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us:

[11] Aria / Aria (Basso)

James Weaver; Derek Conrod, corno da caccia (MB, TS, LO, SL, EM)

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe:

For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ:

[12] Coro / Chorus

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

II. SYMBOLUM NICENUM

1 Coro / Chorus

Credo in unum Deum.
I believe in one God.

2 Coro / Chorus

Patrem omnipotentem, Creator coeli et terrae, visibilia omnium et invisibilia:
the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

3 Duetto / Duet (Soprano I, Alto)

Julianne Baird, Steven Rickards

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula: Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, Genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt: Qui Propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds: God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten not made; being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven:

4 Coro / Chorus

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est.
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary, and was made man.

5 Coro / Chorus

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est.
He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, he suffered and was buried.

6 Coro / Chorus

Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum scripturas: Et ascendit in caelum. Sedet ad dextram Dei Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus regni non erit finis.

And the third day he rose again according to the scriptures; and ascended into heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

7 Aria / Aria (Basso)

William Sharp (JA, GR, MB, SL, EM)

Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit: Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam.

And in the Holy Ghost the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets. And in one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

8 Coro / Chorus

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins,

9 Coro / Chorus

Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.
and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

III. SANCTUS

10 Coro / Chorus

Sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria ejus.
Holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of his glory.

IV. OSANNA, BENEDICTUS, AGNUS DEI et DONA NOBIS PACEM

11 Coro / Chorus

Osanna in excelsis.
Hosanna in the highest.

12 Aria / Aria (Tenore)

Jeffrey Thomas; Sandra Miller, flauto traverso (LO, SL, EM)
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

13 Coro / Chorus

Osanna in excelsis.
Hosanna in the highest.

14 Aria / Aria (Alto)

Jennifer Lane
Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

15 Coro / Chorus

Dona nobis pacem.
Grant us peace.

THE MUSICIANS AND THEIR INSTRUMENTS

AMERICAN BACH SOLOISTS

VIOLINO I

Elizabeth Blumenstock, leader
Antonius Stradivarius, Cremona, 1687

Jörg-Michael Schwarz

Pieter Rombouts, Amsterdam, 1738

Jolianne von Einem

Mopf, Klingenthal, Germany, 18th century

VIOLINO II

Michael Sand

Santo Seraphim, Venice, circa 1720

Sandra Schwarz

Johannes Cuypers, The Hague, Holland, 1789

Sally Butt

Jacob Steiner, Germany, 17th century

VIOLA

Katherine Kyme

Anonymous, Germany, 19th century

Anthony Martin

Aegidius Kolz, Mittenwald, 1790

George Thomson

Otto Erdesz, New York, 1963; after Joseph Odoardi, Asculum, 1784

VIOLONCELLO

Elisabeth LeGuin

Giovanni Grancino, Milano, 1725

Loretta O'Sullivan

Peter Wamsley, London, 1731

VIOLONE

Steven Lehning

Hammond Ashley, Seattle, 1977; after 17th century models

FLAUTO TRAVERSO

Sandra Miller

Roderick Cameron, Mendocino California, 1986; after Cahusac, circa 1740

Kathleen Kraft

Folkers & Powell, New York, 1990; after T. Lot, Paris, circa 1737

OBOE

John Abberger

Harry Vas Dias, Decatur Georgia, 1983; after T. Stanesby, Sr., London, circa 1700

Gonzalo Ruiz

Philip Levin, Newfoundland New Jersey, 1991; after Saxon models, 1720s

Mark Maslow

T. Hasegawa, Holland, 1986; after P. Paulhahn, Germany, circa 1720.

OBOE D'AMORE

John Abberger

Harry Vas Dias, Decatur Georgia, 1984; after H. Eichentopf, Leipzig, circa 1720

Gonzalo Ruiz

Sand Dalton, Lopez Island Washington, 1986; after H. Eichentopf, Leipzig, 1720

FAGOTTO

Marilyn Boenau

Levin & Ross, Newfoundland New Jersey, 1991; after Eichentopf, Leipzig, circa 1725

Thomas Sefcovic

Phillip Levin, Newfoundland New Jersey, 1988; after Eichentopf, Leipzig, circa 1725

BASSONO GROSSO

Thomas Sefcovic

Paul White, Oxford England, 1989; after Tauber, Vienna, mid 18th century

CORNO DA CACCIA

Derek Conrod

Lowell Greer, Michigan, 1983; after I. C. G. Starck, Neukirchen bey Adorf, circa 1740

TROMBA

Fred Holmgren

Stephen Keavy & Robert Vanryne, London, 1989; after Haas, Germany, early 18th century

Barry Baugess

David Edwards, Surrey England, 1991; after Simon Beale, London, 1667

Adam Gordon

Stephen Keavy & Robert Vanryne, London, 1990; after Haas, Germany, early 18th century

TIMPANI

John Grimes

L. W. Hung, London, 1910; after early Classical style, Germany, late 18th century

ORGANO

Eric Milnes

Jürgen Ahrend, Germany, 1975

AMERICAN BACH CHOIR

SOPRANO I

Julianne Baird, Christine Earl, Ruth Escher, Lisa Mooyman, Nancy Zylstra

SOPRANO II

Jane Boothroyd, Alexandra Ivanoff, Claire Kelm, Judith Nelson, Magen Solomon

ALTO

Jennifer Lane, Linda Liebschutz, Zoila Muñoz, Steven Rickards

TENORE

Edward Betts, David Munderloh, Neal Rogers, Patrick Romano, John Rouse

BASSO

Charles Fidler, Tom Hart, Richard Morrison, William Sharp, James Weaver

CONDUCTED BY

Jeffrey Thomas

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:

americanbach.org