

# WIGMORE HALL 125

Thursday 18 September 2025  
7.30pm

## Bach B Minor Mass at St James's, Spanish Place

Lionel Meunier artistic director

Erika Tandiono soprano I <sup>1</sup>	William Shelton alto <sup>2</sup>
Tabea Mitterbauer soprano I <sup>2</sup>	Raphael Höhn tenor <sup>1,2</sup>
Sophia Faltas soprano II <sup>1</sup>	Sebastian Myrus bass <sup>2</sup>
Victoria Cassano alto <sup>1</sup>	Felix Schwandtke bass <sup>1</sup>

### Vox Luminis

Amelia Berridge, Hannah Ely, Erika Tandiono,  
Zsuzsi Tóth soprano I  
Kateřina Blížková, Victoria Cassano, Tabea  
Mitterbauer, Līga Zīriņa soprano II  
Iris Bouman, Sophia Faltas, William Shelton,  
Korneel Van Neste alto  
Christopher B Fischer, Philippe Froeliger,  
Raphael Höhn, João Moreira tenor  
Vincent De Soomer, Lionel Meunier, Sebastian  
Myrus, Felix Schwandtke bass

### Freiburg Baroque Orchestra

Daniela Lieb, Sophia Kind flute  
Katharina Arfken, Katharina Verhaar, Ann-Kathrin  
Brüggemann oboe  
Eyal Streett, Javier Sanchez Castillo bassoon  
Bart Aerbeydt French horn  
Jaroslav Roucek, Hannes Rux-Brachtendorf, Karel  
Mnuk trumpet  
Rizumu Sughishita timpani  
Péter Barczy (concertmaster), Hannah Visser,  
Kathrin Tröger, Sabine Stoffer violin I  
Éva Borhi, Brigitte Täubl, Christa Kittel, Beatrix  
Hülsemann violin II  
Werner Saller, Avishai Chameides, Corina Golomoz  
viola  
Daniel Rosin, Stefan Mühleisen cello  
Kinnon Church double bass  
Torsten Johann organ  
Sebastian Wienand harpsichord

<sup>1</sup>Kyrie to Gloria

<sup>2</sup>Credo to end

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Mass in B minor BWV232 (c.1747-9)  
*Interval after the Gloria*



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The first publisher of Bach's B minor Mass in 1818, Hans Nägeli, regarded this work as the 'greatest musical artwork of all times and peoples', an extremely bold judgement but one with which it is hard to disagree. Bach was unusual for his time in that he seemed to intend to compose a notable proportion of his music with an eye to posterity rather than simply for performance on any particular occasion. This is especially true of the B minor Mass as we have no record of a complete performance in his lifetime. Sections of it, such as the *Sanctus* and the *Kyrie* and *Gloria*, were certainly performed at various stages in his life, but it seems that completion of the entire Mass was something that preoccupied his final years without any specific performance in mind. Its sheer scale precluded it from inclusion in a service and yet concert performances of Mass settings were unheard of.

It seems that Bach wanted to produce a work that included as many styles and forms as possible and to this end he decided to spend time studying the *stile antico*, the polyphonic style of the 16th Century which in the 17th Century had become reserved for sacred music with the rise of the *stile moderno* for secular repertoire. It tells us a great deal about Bach's character and enquiring mind that, even after establishing himself as a musician of such high stature, he should want to continue to educate himself further.

The *Gratias* and *Dona nobis pacem* (which employ the same music), the second *Kyrie*, the opening section of the *Credo* and the *Confiteor* are all examples of his use of the *stile antico* and in the *Confiteor* a plainchant *cantus firmus* emerges from the surrounding counterpoint.

Bach scholars such as Joshua Rifkin and John Butt have come to the conclusion that almost all of the sections of the Mass are 'parodies', that is, they are adaptations of pre-existing compositions even though some of these compositions have been lost in their original form. It's likely that the 'Confiteor' section of the *Credo* is the only movement to be freshly composed in the 1740s. The number of corrections in Bach's autograph manuscript reveals that he was composing this movement as he was writing it, unlike many of the

other movements in which he is clearly either copying out or re-arranging a pre-existing version.

A more 'modern', galant style can be found in the *Domine Deus*. The music is light and dancing in character and this is helped by the fact that the bass line is marked *pizzicato*. This dance element was a fashion that had spread from France. Louis XIV had been a passionate devotee of the art of dancing and, having spent much of his reign at war with the rest of Europe, perhaps his real victory lay in the gradual spread of *La Belle Danse*, which he had espoused, across the Continent. At the courts of the German states the French language was spoken and dancing masters from France were imported to teach the upper classes how to deport themselves on the dance floor. Bach learned these dances as a student in Lüneburg near Hamburg during his mid-teenage years. It was a 'modern' conception to include this style of writing in a sacred work since dance music had previously been considered inappropriate for use in church.

Bach did not give any movements specific dance titles, but the joyful opening of the *Gloria* and the 'Pleni sunt coeli' section of the *Sanctus* are clearly based on the light-hearted *passepied* and the *Crucifixus* is a sombre *passacaglia*. His choice of the proud polonaise for the *Quoniam* and the employment of a virtuoso horn part continued a relatively new tradition in Saxony where Bach lived and worked. The Elector of Saxony, Augustus II 'the Strong', and his son, Friedrich Augustus II, who succeeded him on his death in 1733, were both also elected as the King of Poland and both of them were keen huntsmen. Bach had sent a fair copy of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* (the 'Missa') to Friedrich Augustus in 1733 on his accession in the hope of receiving Court recognition. The text of the *Quoniam*, 'For you alone are the holy one, you alone are the Lord', magnified the Almighty, and, by association with the divine, also flattered the elector-king himself and the composer finally received the title he desired three years later.

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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Mass in B minor BWV232 (c.1747-9)

Liturgical text

Kyrie	Kyrie
Coro Kyrie eleison.	Chorus Lord, have mercy.
Aria (Duetto) Christe eleison.	Aria (Duet) Christ, have mercy.
Coro Kyrie eleison.	Chorus Lord, have mercy.
Gloria	Gloria
Coro Gloria in excelsis Deo.	Chorus Glory be to God in the highest.
Coro Et in terra pax Hominibus bonae voluntatis.	Chorus And in earth peace to men of good will.
Aria Laudamus te, benedicimus te, Adoramus te, glorificamus te.	Aria We praise thee; we bless thee; we worship thee; we glorify thee.
Coro Gratias agimus tibi Propter magnam gloriam tuam.	Chorus We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.
Aria (Duetto) Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens, Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe altissime, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.	Aria (Duet) O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son. Jesus Christ most high. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Coro Qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere nobis, Qui tollis peccata mundi, Suscipe deprecationem nostram.	Chorus 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.
Aria Qui sedes ad dextram Patris, Miserere nobis.	Aria Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

Aria Quoniam tu solus sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, Tu solus altissimus Jesu Christe.	Aria For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.
Coro Cum Sancto Spiritu In gloria Dei Patris. Amen.	Chorus Together with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Interval

Symbolum Nicenum	Symbolum Nicenum
Coro Credo in unum Deum.	Chorus I believe in one God.
Coro Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, Factorem coeli et terrae, Visibilium omnium et invisibilium.	Chorus I believe in one God; the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
Aria (Duetto) 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 coelis.	Aria (Duet) 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, true God of true 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 descended from heaven.
Coro Et incarnatus est De Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, Et homo factus est.	Chorus And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
Coro Crucifixus etiam pro nobis Sub Pontio Pilato, Passus et sepultus est.	Chorus He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried.

Work continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

*Coro*  
Et resurrexit tertia  
die  
Secundum scripturas,  
Et ascendit in coelum,  
Sedet ad dextram Dei  
Patris,  
Et iterum venturus  
est  
Cum gloria judicare vivos et  
mortuos,  
Cuius regni non erit  
finis.

*Aria*  
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.

*Coro*  
Confiteor unum baptisma  
In remissionem peccatorum.

*Coro*  
Et expecto resurrectionem  
mortuorum  
Et vitam venturi saeculi.  
Amen.

### **Sanctus**

*Coro*  
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra  
gloria eius.

*Coro*  
Osanna in excelsis.

*Aria*  
Benedictus qui venit  
In nomine Domini.

*Coro*  
Osanna in excelsis.

*Chorus*  
And on the third day he  
rose again  
according to the Scriptures:  
and ascended into heaven.  
He sitteth at the right  
hand of the Father;  
and he shall come again  
with glory  
to judge the living and the  
dead;  
and his kingdom shall  
have no end.

*Aria*  
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;  
as it was told by the  
Prophets.  
And I believe in one holy  
catholic and apostolic  
Church.

*Chorus*  
I acknowledge one baptism  
for the remission of sins.

*Chorus*  
And I await the resurrection  
of the dead  
and the life of the world to  
come. Amen.

### **Sanctus**

*Chorus*  
Holy, Holy, Holy,  
Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full  
of thy glory.

*Chorus*  
Hosanna in the highest.

*Aria*  
Blessed is he that cometh  
in the name of the Lord.

*Chorus*  
Hosanna in the highest.

### **Agnus Dei**

*Aria*  
Agnus Dei  
Qui tollis peccata  
mundi,  
Miserere nobis.

*Coro*  
Dona nobis pacem.

### **Agnus Dei**

*Aria*  
Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins  
of the world,  
have mercy upon us.

*Chorus*  
Grant us peace.