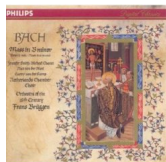


Johann Sebastian Bach - Mass In B Minor (Franz Brüggen)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 17 August 2012 18:45 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 August 2013 16:42

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Mass in B minor, for soloists, chorus & orchestra, BWV 232 (BC E1)

Disc: 1 1. 1. Missa. Kyrie. Coro a 5. Kyrie eleison 2. 1. Missa. Kyrie. Duetto. Christe eleison
3. 1. Missa. Kyrie. Coro a 4. Kyrie eleison 4. 1. Missa. Gloria. Coro a 5. Gloria in excelsis Deo
5. 1. Missa. Gloria. Coro a 5. Et in terra pax 6. 1. Missa. Gloria. Aria. Laudamus te 7. 1. Missa.
Gloria. Coro a 4. Gratias agimus tibi 8. 1. Missa. Gloria. Duetto. Domine Deus 9. 1. Missa.
Gloria. Coro a 4. Qui tollis peccata mundi 10. 1. Missa. Gloria. Aria. Qui sedes ad dexteram
Patris 11. 1. Missa. Gloria. Aria. Quoniam tu solus sanctus 12. 1. Missa. Gloria. Coro a 5. Cum
Sancto Spiritu Disc: 2 1. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Coro a 5. Credo in unum
Deum 2. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Coro a 4. (Credo in unum Deum). Pat 3. 2.
Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Duetto. Et in unum Dominum 4. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo).
Coro a 5. Et incarnatus est 5. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Coro a 4. Crucifixus 6. 2.
Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Coro a 5. Et resurrexit 7. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Aria.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum 8. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Coro a 5. Confiteor unum baptisma
9. 2. Symbolum Nicenum. (Credo). Coro a 5. Et expecto resurrectionem 10. 3. Sanctus. Coro a
6. Sanctus 11. 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei & Dona nobis pacem: Osanna, Bene 12. 4.
Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei & Dona nobis pacem: Osanna, Bene 13. 4. Osanna,
Benedictus, Agnus Dei & Dona nobis pacem: Osanna, Bene 14. 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus
Dei & Dona nobis pacem: Agnus Dei, D 15. 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei & Dona nobis
pacem: Agnus Dei, D Michael Chance (countertenor) Harry
van der Kamp(bass) Nico van der Meel (tenor) Jennifer Smith(soprano) Orchestra Of the 18th
Century The Netherlands Chamber Choir Frans Brüggen – conductor

The b minor mass is truly one of the cultural pillars of Western civilization. Whether it is a complete patchwork or put together from pieces of a design (most musicologists suggest the latter), this music is- certainly metaphorically and possibly literally- divine! Franz Brüggen chooses to use tempos, not even matched by Gardiner.

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The Netherlands Chamber Choir gets an amazing sound for a twenty-eight voice choir; the sopranos particularly are outstanding holding on to the high B's with a secure and vibrant tone quality. Bruggen uses soloists from the choir at the fugue section 'et terra pax', and slows the tempo down slightly when the whole choir comes in and after the exposition.

The soloists are splendid, and obviously very experienced in singing this genre of music. They are Jennifer Smith(soprano), Michael Chance (countertenor), Nico van der Meel (tenor) and Harry van der Kamp(bass). All four possess the attributes of a really great solo singer, that is, vibrant and resonant tone quality, a knowledge of Bach's phrasing and interpretation, flawless diction and a buoyant as well as an appropriately dramatic delivery reflecting the message of the song.

The sound and impact of this recording is excellent, and the beloved choruses: 'Kyrie', the 'Sanctus' and the 'Gloria' come through with opulence and splendour. The 'Symbolum Nicenun' as interpreted by Bruggen, becomes gripping drama-in the 'Sanctus' and 'Osanna', the choristers sound as if they really mean what they are singing. The 'Agnus Dei', sung by Michael Chance, is among the most moving on record! In the 'Gloria' section, the dance rhythms have a natural lift. In addition Bruggen uses tempo fluctuation to express feeling and underlying structure.

Bruggen attempts at all times to make the voices and instruments equal. Thus he shapes cadences subtly with a feeling for harmonic tension and resolution.

I was surprised at how much I enjoyed this recording of the b minor mass, having enjoyed for many years Gardiner's interpretation which I still will enjoy. They are simply two different approaches! But I find no fault with either one of them. --- George Peabody

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