

Bach – Mass in B Minor BWV 232 (Suzuki)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 26 February 2011 09:47 - Last Updated Thursday, 08 March 2012 10:39

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CD1

1. Part 1. Missa. Kyrie. No. 1. Kyrie eleison
2. Part 1. Missa. Kyrie. No. 2. Christe eleison
3. Part 1. Missa. Kyrie. No. 3. Kyrie eleison [play](#)
4. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 4. Gloria in excelsis Deo
5. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 5. Et in terra pax
6. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 6. Laudamus te
7. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 7. Gratias agimus tibi [play](#)
8. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 8. Domine Deus
9. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 9. Qui tollis peccata mundi
10. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 10. Qui sedes ad dextram Patris
11. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 11. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
12. Part 1. Missa. Gloria. No. 12. Cum Sancto Spiritu

CD2

1. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 13. Credo in unum Deum
2. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 14. Patrem omnipotentem
3. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 15. Et in unum Dominum Jesu
4. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 16. Et incarnatus est
5. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 17. Crucifixus [play](#)
6. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 18. Et resurrexit
7. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 19. Et in Spiritum sanctum
8. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 20. Confiteor unum baptisma
9. Part 2. Symbolum Nicenum (Credo). No. 21. Et exspecto resurrectionem
10. Part 3. Sanctus. No. 22. Sanctus
11. Part 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem. No. 23
12. Part 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem. No. 24 [play](#)
13. 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem. No. 25
14. Part 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem. No. 26
15. Part 4. Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem. No. 27

Carolyn Sampson – soprano

Rachel Nicholls – soprano

Robin Blaze - alto

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Gerd Türk - tenor
Peter Kooij - bass

Bach Collegium Japan Orchestra
Masaaki Suzuki – conductor

The B Minor Mass is a parody, in the finest sense of the word. Much of the music is derived from Bach's cantatas. However, this is no mere cut and paste job - with typical genius, Bach fitted it all together into a homogeneous, harmonious whole, and the result is one of the towering masterpieces of music. Having done such a magnificent job in the BIS cantata series, one would expect Masaaki Suzuki and his Bach Collegium Japan also to deliver the goods on the B Minor. And so he does. Suzuki's B Minor is as a B Minor should be, a gloriously uplifting experience, deeply felt and beautifully realised. Suzuki realises, as did Gardiner in his excellent cantata series, that Bach's devout Lutheranism is at the very core of his being as both man and musician, and seeks to let these qualities shine out. He succeeds wonderfully well and produces something that is more than just playing the notes. He encourages sterling performances from his soloists (both singers and instrumental), choir and orchestra. Indeed the only errors I noticed were a few slightly fluffed trumpet passages, but then these passages are wickedly difficult for the natural valveless instrument. All in all, a splendid performance, one of the best I've heard, with what seem to me to be well-judged tempi throughout. Unusually, Suzuki has gone for a cast of non-Japanese solo singers (there is usually at least one Japanese solo singer in the cantata recordings). How does it compare with others? Gardiner's recording was a trailblazer - as a critic put it, before Gardiner, people talked of original instrument B Minors and modern instrument B Minors, after Gardiner, it didn't matter any more, so high did Gardiner set the bar. Without having actively compared the two, this version seems fully Gardiner's equal. –*Teemacs*

Since its release in 1985, John Eliot Gardiner's recording of the Mass in B Minor has been my favorite and one of the most highly recommended. This 2007 performance led by Masaaki Suzuki narrowly nudges Gardiner from first place. Although Suzuki employs somewhat smaller forces than Gardiner, this is nothing like a one-voice-per-part performance. Suzuki gains clarity without sacrificing grandeur. He lets Bach's masterpiece unfold at an ideal pace, whereas Gardiner seems slightly forced or rushed at spots. Suzuki's soloists and instrumentalists are more polished, and the SACD sound is first rate. --*Paul Van de Water*

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When the work was about to be published around 1820, Hans Georg Nägeli announced it as “the greatest musical work of art of all times and all peoples”. Publisher Nägeli may have aimed more at boosting subscriptions rather than trying to divine the true ramification of the rediscovery of the Mass in B-minor – but unwittingly or not, he was pretty close. I am hardly alone in thinking the B-minor Mass, along with the St. Matthew Passion, as one of the cultural pillars of Western Civilization. Whether it is a complete patch work or put together from pieces with a design in mind (most musicologists strongly suggest the latter), this music is – certainly metaphorically and possibly literally – divine. ---*J. Laurson*

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