JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Bloomington

*Two Hundred Eighty-First Program of the 2009-10 Season*

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**Mass in B Minor, BWV 232**
**Johann Sebastian Bach**
(1685-1750)
William Jon Gray, *Conductor*

## Pro Arte Singers

*Soloists:*

Jessica Beebe • Arwen Myers • Christine Papania • Hannah Stephens, *Sopranos*
Judy Bowers • Lindsey Lang • Julia Snowden • Laura Thoreson, *Mezzo-Sopranos*
Samuel Green • Michael Porter, *Tenors*
Steven Eddy, *Baritone* • Thomas Florio, *Bass-Baritone*

*Vocal Concertists:*

Shin-Yeong Noh, *Soprano* • Julie Wyma, *Soprano*
Lindsey Lang, *Mezzo-Soprano* • Laura Thoreson, *Mezzo-Soprano*
Daniel Rakita, *Tenor* • Adam Ewing, *Baritone*

## Chamber Orchestra

*Soloists:*

Won-Hee Lee, *Violin*
James Romeo, *Flute*
Lindsay Flowers • Angela Hsieh, *Oboe d'amore*
Rebecca McLaughlin, *Horn*

*Basso Continuo:*

Teresa Easwaran, *Violoncello*
Joyce Fleck • Christina Feigel, *Bassoon*
Danielle Meier, *Contrabass*
Bernard Gordillo, *Harpsichord*
Alice Baldwin, *Organ*

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Auer Concert Hall
Wednesday Evening
November Eleventh
Eight O'Clock

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
6050 North Meridan Street
Indianapolis
Friday Evening
November Thirteenth
Seven-Thirty O'Clock

Auer Concert Hall
Saturday Evening
November Fourteenth
Eight O'Clock

**music.indiana.edu**

**I. MISSA**

**Kyrie**

1. Kyrie eleison (Chorus à 5)
2. Christe eleison (Duetto: Soprano I and II with Violin I/II all'unisono)
Jessica Beebe, *Soprano* ♦ Lindsey Lang, *Mezzo-Soprano*
3. Kyrie eleison (Chorus à 4)

**Gloria**

4. Gloria in excelsis Deo (Chorus à 5)
5. Et in terra pax (Chorus à 5)
6. Laudamus te (Aria: Soprano II with Violin obbligato)
Hannah Stephens, *Soprano* ♦ Won-Hee Lee, *Violin*
7. Gratias agimus tibi (Chorus à 4)
8. Domine Deus (Duetto: Soprano I and Tenor with Flute obbligato)
Christine Papania, *Soprano* ♦ Michael Porter, *Tenor* ♦ James Romeo, *Flute*
9. Qui tollis peccata mundi (Chorus à 4)
10. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris (Aria: Alto with Oboe d'amore obbligato)
Judy Bowers, *Mezzo-Soprano* ♦ Lindsay Flowers, *Oboe d'amore*
11. Quoniam tu solus sanctus (Aria: Bass with Horn obbligato)
Thomas Florio, *Bass-Baritone* ♦ Rebecca McLaughlin, *Horn*
12. Cum Sancto Spiritu (Chorus à 5)

**Intermission**

**II. SYMBOLUM NICENUM (Nicene Creed)**

13. Credo in unum Deum (Chorus à 5)
14. Patrem omnipotentem (Chorus à 4)
15. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum (Duetto: Soprano I and Alto)
Arwen Myers, *Soprano* ♦ Laura Thoreson, *Mezzo-Soprano*
16. Et incarnatus est (Chorus à 5)
17. Crucifixus (Chorus à 4)
18. Et resurrexit (Chorus à 5)
19. Et in Spiritum Sanctum (Aria: Bass with Oboe d'amore I/II obbligato)
Steven Eddy, *Baritone* ♦ Lindsay Flowers, Angela Hsieh, *Oboe d'amore*
20. Confiteor unum baptisma (Chorus à 5)
21. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum (Chorus à 5)

**III. SANCTUS**

22. Sanctus (Chorus à 6)

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

23. Osanna in excelsis (Chorus I/II à 8)
24. Benedictus (Aria: Tenor with Flute obbligato)
Samuel Green, *Tenor* ♦ James Romeo, *Flute*
25. Osanna in excelsis (Chorus I/II à 8)
26. Agnus Dei (Aria: Alto with Violin I/II all'unisono)
Julia Snowden, *Mezzo-Soprano*
27. Dona nobis pacem (Chorus à 4)

## Notes on the Program

What kind of performance is this?
by Daniel R. Melamed

What kind of performance of Bach's Mass in B minor will be heard tonight? If experience is any guide, a good one. If you like emotional performances, maybe a moving one. If you are drawn to intellectually stimulating renditions, perhaps a thought-provoking one. But that is not really what I mean by the question. Rather I want to ask where this performance fits—in its choices of text, forces, and musical approach—in the broad range of possibilities open today. These choices guarantee that every performance reflects a particular musical point of view.

It has not always been obvious that there are choices to be made. The revival of Bach's vocal/instrumental works took place in the middle of the 19th century and was led by large amateur choral societies. As a result, this repertory effectively became the property of choral ensembles, which came to share it with big orchestras and professional soloists, not necessarily for any historically informed reason but simply as the way things were done. Just as string quartets were self-evidently for four string players, the Mass was for large chorus, orchestra and soloists.

The approach has esthetic and interpretive consequences. Until about 40 years ago performances might vary in some respects, but essentially all were presented with these forces and were designed to be moving, devout and monumental in keeping with the shared understanding of the Mass. This is a generalization, of course, but is documented by the legacy of recordings of the work beginning in the late 1920s, even those that began to experiment in the 1950s with smaller ensembles. The Mass was a major choral/orchestral piece calling for large groups of singers and instrumentalists, and this implied a monumentality that is still valued today. That is made clear by the promotion of a recent DVD of the Mass: "Live at Notre Dame Cathedral! Vast acoustics/surroundings!" Apparently it goes without saying that vastness is appropriate to the Mass, and to one degree or another this has been considered true from the time the work entered the concert repertory.

But things do not look so self-evident now, or so uniform. We have moved beyond the point of universal agreement (reassuring though it might have been) on performances of the Mass in B minor and how they should sound; there is now a range of possibilities open to performers. We know a great deal, for example, about the execution of vocal/instrumental music in Bach's time and under his direction, and can be guided by that information if we wish. Or we can turn to the long tradition of modern-era performances, including those representing various theories about style and about the use of forces.

Whatever we do, each performance makes choices and represents an interpretation; there is no longer such thing as an unmarked, ideologically neutral performance. That Notre Dame recording chose to project the Mass foremost as powerful and awesome, and that represents an interpretation, not some self-evident truth about the piece. (Or at least its publicists did—the recording itself does not consistently come across

that way.) Fifty years ago this would simply have been a recording of the Mass in B minor; now we are more likely to recognize it as reflecting conscious choices in the presentation of the work.

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The choices in interpreting and performing the Mass begin with its musical text, and in most respects they are not difficult. In his last years—perhaps even his last months—Bach assembled a score that gives us a very good picture of the work. Nonetheless, there are a few decisions we do have to make. For example, in the Credo the composer changed his mind about the number of movements and distribution of the text. He extracted the words "Et incarnatus est," which had originally appeared at the end of the duet "Et in unum Dominum," and inserted a new choral movement to present them. We should probably choose either one version (all the text in the duet, without the chorus) or the other (shortened text in the duet, with it). The most influential modern edition made a curious decision on this point by including the words "Et incarnatus est" both in the duet and in the following chorus, and the piece is sometimes heard with this duplicate text. One can choose to present the Mass this way, and doing so represents an interpretation (though it is unlikely that this is what Bach had in mind).

In fact there are relatively few such problems in the Mass in B minor compared to some other works by Bach. Where things get more ambiguous (and where the real choices begin) is in the realization of the score in performance. In some movements Bach's score does not provide much guidance, especially about instrumentation. For example, the five vocal lines of the "Confiteor" appear without labels. The clefs make the voice assignments (SSATB) clear, but what about instruments? We know that in movements like the "Confiteor" (in old-style counterpoint with no independent role for instruments) Bach typically paired woodwinds or strings (or both) with each vocal line. We have testimony from contemporary writers that this was a usual practice tied to the musical style of the movement, but we have no explicit instructions from Bach for the "Confiteor." Performers who add instruments here base their decision on their reading of the piece, deeming it stylistically appropriate for doubling, and we need to remember that this represents an interpretation. What is more, there are several possible ways to distribute the instruments depending on what assumptions one makes about the size and composition of the work's forces in the first place, or even on one's taste in orchestration.

One might even choose to dispense with doubling instruments in the "Confiteor," given that they are not specified in the score. In some ways this sounds like a careful, minimally interpretive approach—just do what the score says, adding nothing that isn't by Bach. But in fact this strategy, seemingly respectful, arguably draws on a 19th-century ideal of old-style counterpoint as pure vocal music unsullied by instrumental participation. It's a little like classical Greek and Roman sculpture, admired since the Renaissance for the purity of its expression in white marble. We now know that these figures were brightly painted in their own time; the whiteness is an accident of time,

and the esthetic of cool chasteness we have come to love is a product of the modern era. An interpretation of the "Confiteor" without instruments—in pure white, perhaps?—that literally follows Bach's score might actually lead to a strongly ideological reading just as much as one that chooses a particular instrumentation.

There is a further problem of realization special to the Mass in B minor. We know a lot about Bach's performance of church music, particularly in Leipzig where he was employed from 1723 until his death in 1750 and where he compiled the work. But it is unlikely that the Mass was designed for liturgical performance in Leipzig, so we need to be careful about applying Bach's practices there to this composition. In fact, the work defies attempts to place it in a historical performance context—that is, to identify when, where and by whom it would have been presented and thus (to the extent that we have evidence) to deduce how it would have been sung and played. This is paradoxical because Bach originally composed almost all of the music in the Mass for other purposes, then incorporated it movement by movement into the new work with Latin text. We know about the forces he most likely used to perform much of the music in its original form, but once again context is everything: Just because we can deduce a movement's staffing in its original form does not mean that we can say what Bach had in mind for its reworking in the Mass.

An example: The "Osanna in excelsis" is an adaptation of a movement Bach used in two earlier secular cantatas. In the original version at least four of the eight vocal lines in this piece were almost certainly sung by one singer each. (They are named characters in a drama and each would have been represented by an individual musician.) That was a typical performance practice of the time and makes musical and stylistic sense, but can we be sure that the movement would have been realized in this way in the Mass? We can repeat this exercise for many movements and come up with plausible 18th-century realizations for most of the work, but they are not definitive views of the B-minor Mass. They are analogies, open to interpretation.

For at least one portion of the Mass we would seem to have better evidence. The Kyrie and Gloria are mostly reworkings of older music, too, but their transformation into Mass movements dates to 1733 when Bach presented them to the court in Dresden, preparing a complete set of performing materials. It is the nature of vocal and instrumental parts that they give excellent evidence about the forces for which they were designed. There has been some debate about the exact disposition implied by these 1733 materials, but it is clear that they were designed for an ensemble that many would consider very small today, probably five individual voices and a small complement of strings (3 violins in all), woodwinds, brass and basso continuo.

So we would appear to have Bach's own specifications for the performance of the Kyrie and Gloria, but these performing parts are not actually part of the Mass in B minor. Our only source of that complete work is Bach's late autograph score. The Dresden parts show one way Bach chose to realize some of this music, but this was neither the only possibility nor necessarily what he had in mind for the complete Mass. There is every reason to think, of course, that the music of the Mass was meant to be heard along the usual lines of 18th-century performances, and the Dresden parts

do represent that. But they document only one possible realization, and not, strictly speaking, of the B-minor Mass.

As if all this were not uncertain enough, there is a more fundamental question in some people's minds: Is the Mass in B minor a practical work meant to be realized in a particular way at all, or is it an abstract composition designed to demonstrate the possibilities of musical style? (The lack of a Lutheran context for a complete setting of the Mass Ordinary lends some support to this possibility.) If it is an abstract work, how concerned should we be about its exact presentation in performance? And if we are merely realizing an abstract work, are concepts like "historical performance practice" relevant?

There is even a school of thought that suggests that the Mass in B minor is not a piece—that the supposed score of the complete work is really just a collection of loosely related movements and that there is no such thing as the Mass in B minor. The title page of the most-used modern edition announces (at the insistence of its influential editor) that the volume contains the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei and Dona nobis pacem, all "known as" (in small type) the Mass in B minor—with the clear implication that the title is a misnomer. This is not a popular theory these days but it makes one wonder how we might find the appropriate performance practice for a work that that may not exist.

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So, what kind of performance is heard tonight? It clearly regards the B-minor Mass as an integral work—the publicity and program say so. Its performers have made a series of decisions (presumably well informed) about the musical text, and brought to bear ideas about the stylish singing and playing of mid-18th century music. The use of a chorus, distinct soloists and an instrumental ensemble with substantial string sections—well outside 18th-century practice for this sort of music in almost every respect—puts it squarely in the tradition of choral/orchestral performances inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries.

I would guess that these choices are largely a consequence of the decision to use particular standing ensembles, and the main reason for that, in turn, is probably pedagogical. Performances of this sort give student singers and players the opportunity of learning this music from the inside. The rehearsal and performance of the Mass in B minor is exactly the kind of experience that a university ensemble is meant to offer. So the resemblance of this performance to the inherited choral/orchestral tradition is, perhaps, partly an accident of the structure of the institution. But not entirely—the very conception of the performance, from its earliest planning, reflects an interpretive point of view, a belief that this is music of a particular kind appropriately heard in a certain way. (Of course the existence of the ensembles themselves owes a lot to the inherited tradition, too.)

And so a performance comes to be. What kind? One that demonstrates just how complicated the question really is.

**William Jon Gray** teaches graduate-level conducting, choral literature, and score study.

He served for three seasons as associate conductor of the Carmel Bach Festival in California, where he prepared and performed major choral/orchestral works in collaboration with internationally renowned conductor Bruno Weil. He served as interim conductor of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, preparing the choir for performances with Raymond Leppard and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. As artistic director of the Bach Chorale Singers, Gray has received high praise for his performances of major choral/orchestral works. The Bach Chorale Singers' 1998 commercially released CD recording *In Praise of the Organ: Latin Choral and Organ Music of Zoltán Kodály,* under Gray's direction, received national attention and critical acclaim in the *American Record Guide* and the *American Organist*.

Gray served as artistic director of the Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra of Washington, D.C., from 1986 to 1993. He has been assistant conductor of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston and has appeared as guest conductor with the National Chamber Orchestra, the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, and the Handel and Haydn Society.

Gray studied at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, The Juilliard School, the New England Conservatory, and Boston University, and has studied conducting with Robert Porco, Thomas Dunn, and Richard Pittman. Gray worked and performed frequently with Robert Shaw and has appeared as a member of the Robert Shaw Festival Singers in recordings and concerts in France and in concerts at Carnegie Hall.

**About the Pro Arte Singers**

Now under the direction of William Jon Gray, the Pro Arte Singers is a chamber choir that performs medieval, renaissance, and baroque repertory. Founded in the 1960s by Fiora Contino and John Reeves White, Pro Arte evolved into a specialized performing organization under previous conductors Thomas Binkley, Paul Hillier, and John Poole. The ensemble has made critically acclaimed recordings on the Focus (IU Early Music Institute) label, including recently expanding its repertoire to include the music of contemporary composers Arvo Pärt and Giles Swayne to complement its stylish performances of early composers. In addition to choral concerts, the members perform early theatrical works and baroque opera, and, on a smaller scale, solo chamber music with other voices and instruments.

**About the Chamber Orchestra**

As one of six orchestral ensembles in the Jacobs School of Music, the Chamber Orchestra specializes in small- to medium-sized orchestral works. With talented students from around the globe, the orchestra is conducted by a variety of Jacobs School of Music conductors, including William Jon Gray, David Effron, Arthur Fagen, and Uriel Segal.

## Pro Arte Singers

William Jon Gray, *Conductor*
Gregory Geehern, *Associate Conductor*
Alice Baldwin, *Accompanist*

Soprano 1
Jessica Beebe
Wing Wun Ip
Jenny Ji-Sun Kim
Katelyn Lee
Elisabeth Marshall
Shin-Yeong Noh
Kimberly Redick

*Soprano 2*
Abigail Mitchell
Arwen Myers
Min-Gyung Oh
Christine Papania
Hannah Stephens
Julie Wyma

*Mezzo-Soprano/Countertenor*
Judy Bowers
Catherine Elliott
Lindsey Lang
Dominic Lim
Julia Snowden
Laura Thoreson
Megan Watson

*Tenor*
Colin DeJong
Gregory Geehern
Samuel Green
Michael Porter
Daniel Rakita
Matthew Wells
William White

*Baritone/Bass*
Joseph Beutel
Steven Eddy
Adam Ewing
Thomas Florio
Gavin James Hayes
Gabriel Lubell
Ryan Tibbetts
Max Wier
Juan Carlos Zamudio

## Chamber Orchestra

*Violin I*
Won-Hee Lee
Paul Casey
Hannah Linz
Alison Stewart

*Violin II*
John Sanderson
Miji Chae
Kamila Bydlowska
Amy Schlicher

*Viola*
Kaitlyn Flowers
James Woomert

*Cello*
Teresa Easwaran
Jeremy Shih

*Bass*
Danielle Meier

*Flute*
James Romeo
Caroline Wong

*Oboe/ Oboe d'amore*
Lindsay Flowers
Angela Hsieh
Kristen Perry

*Bassoon*
Joyce Fleck
Christina Feigel

*Horn*
Rebecca McLaughlin

*Trumpet*
Zachary Kingins
Justin Brookens
Sarah Guido

*Timpani*
Christopher Latournes

*Harpsichord*
Bernard Gordillo

*Organ*
Alice Baldwin

*Orchestra Manager*
Benjamin Huseby
Danielle Meier, *Assistant*

*Orchestra Setup*
Teresa Easwaran

*Librarian*
Mariel Johnson Stauff