Exploring Bach’s B-minor Mass

The B-minor Mass has always represented a fascinating challenge to musical scholarship. Composed over the course of Johann Sebastian Bach’s life, it is considered by many to be the composer’s greatest and most complex work. The fourteen essays assembled in this volume originate from the international symposium ‘Understanding Bach’s B-minor Mass’ at which scholars from eighteen countries gathered to debate the latest topics in the field. In revised and updated form, they comprise a thorough and systematic study of Bach’s \textit{opus ultimum}, including a wide range of discussions relating to the Mass’s historical background and contexts, structure and proportion, sources and editions, and the reception of the work in the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. In the light of important new developments in the study of the piece, this collection demonstrates the innovation and rigour for which Bach scholarship has become known.

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Exploring Bach’s B-minor Mass

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and JAN SMACZNY
In Memory of Anne Leahy
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Preface

In November 2007 Queen’s University Belfast hosted the international symposium ‘Understanding Bach’s B-minor Mass’, which attracted over seventy Bach scholars from eighteen countries.¹ The present volume is one of the early fruits of this event. The choice of the word ‘exploring’ (instead of ‘understanding’) for the title seemed a genuine and more appropriate response to the character of the symposium: there was an overwhelming feeling that we had travelled a long way from where we were as little as five years before. We came to realise that there is still much to be researched before we can begin to ‘understand’ the work. As Hans-Joachim Schulze predicted in 1985, the B-minor Mass indeed continues to be the ‘perpetual touchstone’ for Bach research.²

The symposium had its roots in a two-day event that Yo Tomita organised at Queen’s University in November 2004, with Joshua Rifkin and Anne Leahy as guests. However, the concrete discussion concerning hosting a more major event did not actually begin until May 2006, when Leahy declared at a dinner during the American Bach Society’s biennial meeting in Leipzig that it was time to have ‘another Irish Bach conference’.³ Together with Robin A. Leaver, Leahy and Tomita formulated a detailed plan and began to consult with many colleagues to solicit their ideas. We knew that it was exactly fifty years since Friedrich Smend had published the Kritischer Bericht of the Mass in the Neue Bach-Ausgabe,⁴ a work that not only offered a wealth of new information about the origin and transmission of the Mass but also posed many important questions for later scholars to address. It took only a few years for some of Smend’s evidence and conclusions to be seriously challenged by Georg von Dadelsen.⁵ In the five decades that followed, many new issues concerning the composition and reception of the

¹ For a detailed review of the event, see Eighteenth-Century Music, 5/2 (September 2008), 271–3.
⁴ The edition was published in 1954, but the accompanying KB did not appear until 1956.
⁵ Dadelsen C.
Mass have been raised and often intensely debated by scholars. In the last two decades, several noteworthy new editions have also appeared to replace Friedrich Smend’s publication: Christoph Wolff (C. F. Peters, 1997) and Uwe Wolf (the ‘1733 Missa’ as well as several early sources of the B-minor Mass as separate works as NBA II/1a, Bärenreiter, 2005).

Most crucial with regard to the timing of Leahy’s suggestion concerning the symposium was the imminent appearance of Joshua Rifkin’s long-awaited new edition of the Mass, published by Breitkopf & Härtel (it was in fact published in late November 2006). In a lecture given at Queen’s University Belfast in November 2004 entitled ‘Whose Mass in B minor? Text, Performance, and Identity’, Rifkin aptly outlined the significance of his recent work, spelling out in detail how many of the revised readings in Bach’s autograph score were in fact the work of his second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, who inherited the score and performed the work. Rifkin’s colossal efforts in distinguishing the differences between the handwritings of father and son(s),6 in order to attempt to decipher near-impossible readings in Bach’s autograph score and to reconstruct Bach’s final version of the B-minor Mass as presented in his autograph score of 1748–9, was a very significant achievement, as Uwe Wolf acknowledges here in his chapter. Besides that, there was a widespread feeling among scholars that good progress was being made in many other areas of research concerning the wider historical context of the B-minor Mass, such as the political influence of the Saxon electors and that of the German Enlightenment,7 the significance of Polish style in the works of Bach and his contemporaries,8 the musical style of the ‘Crucifixus’ as examined from the perspective of a

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6 As Peter Wollny has recently argued, there is also evidence of interventions by Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach in the autograph score, which suggest that the B-minor Mass was being considered for dissemination before December 1749. See Wollny A.,


broader historical context,9 the socio-historical background of Leipzig musicians10 and Bach’s relationship with the musicians of Dresden as seen through the study of the life and work of Zelenka,11 to name only five. Likewise, Bach studies in the last decade have seen a great increase of interest in the reception of Bach’s works and how this influenced later generations, particularly with regard to ways of appreciating and engaging with the music.12 Recognising the cross-currents of Bach scholarship, which sometimes seem to be proceeding in opposite directions, and also the backlog of unanswered questions, the triumvirate came to the conclusion that the time was right for scholars to meet and discuss such issues in a holistic and systematic manner. The hope was that such a gathering of leading authorities would lead to a better understanding of a work that with good reason has frequently been claimed to be the greatest musical work of all time. In pursuit of this goal, Leahy, Leaver and Tomita planned the symposium to be held at Queen’s University Belfast, with the generous assistance of colleagues, especially Jan Smaczny.

During the preparation stage of the symposium, several major developments occurred. Early in 2007, there was exciting news about a new high-quality colour facsimile edition of Bach’s autograph score of the B-minor Mass; it appeared in May from Bärenreiter. One reviewer commented that it is ‘a model for the presentation of musical sources, both in appearance and in documentation’,13 and that ‘because of their extraordinary quality, Rifkin’s edition and Wolff’s facsimile will serve as foundational tools’.14 Back in March 2007, we were informed that Michael Maul would examine the archival material of church music at the courts of Count Franz Anton von Sporck at Kuks and Count Johann Adam von Questenberg at Jaroměřice (both today in the Czech Republic), with a view to finding out more about the relationships between Bach and the two Catholic aristocrats,

13 D. Boomhower, review of critical editions and facsimile, Notes, 65/2 (December 2008), 385–9, at 386.
14 Ibid., p. 389.
particularly in relation to the genesis and early reception of the B-minor Mass. Also in March 2007, it emerged that Uwe Wolf was appointed to produce a revised edition of the B-minor Mass for the NBA, at the time when many of us were still digesting the significance of Rifkin’s new edition, which had appeared only four months earlier. Unlike Rifkin, who conducted his research by conventional means, Wolf was to use high-tech equipment to conduct micro X-ray fluorescence analysis of Bach’s autograph score of the B-minor Mass. No one knew at the time of the planning of the symposium that research in this area would progress at such speed and in such magnitude.

The symposium was held from Friday 2 to Sunday 4 November 2007. During the three-day meeting, the delegates heard twenty-four papers presented by some of today’s most distinguished Bach scholars on wide-ranging themes, including the historical background of the Mass, its composition and meaning, its theological background, its sources and editions, performance issues and the reception history of the Mass in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The fourteen papers assembled here were chosen primarily in order to create a coherent volume. In revised and updated form, these chapters demonstrate the depth and rigour for which Bach scholarship has been known.

There were many obstacles to overcome during the preparations for this project, but none was greater or more devastating than the loss of our colleague Anne Leahy, who had fallen seriously ill at the beginning of 2007 and lost her brave battle only a month before the symposium. It was her vision and passion that provided the momentum for us to guide the course of this project, and we wish to dedicate this book to her memory.

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Queen’s University Belfast
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Abbreviations and conventions

Voice types and instruments

A  alto
B  bass
bc  basso continuo
bsn  bassoon
cr  corno da caccia
fl  flute
ob  oboe
org  organ
S  soprano
T  tenor
ti  timpani
tr  trumpet
va  viola
vc  violoncello
vn  violin
vne  violone

Library sigla

A-GÖ  Benediktinerabtei, Musikarchiv, Stift Göttweig, Austria
A-Wgm  Archiv, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, Vienna, Austria
A-Wn  Musiksammlung, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Austria
A-Wsa  Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Vienna, Austria
A-Wst  Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Vienna, Austria
CH-Zz  Musikabteilung, Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Switzerland
CZ-Pak  Archiv Pražského Hradu, Knihovna Metropolitní Kapituly, Hudební Sborka Katedrály Svatého Víta – Hudební sbírka Kaple sv. Kříže Katedrály, Prague, Czech Republic
CZ-Pnm  Národní Muzeum, České Muzeum Hudby, Hudebně-Historické Oddělení, Prague, Czech Republic
Manuscript sources of the B-minor Mass

Autograph score
D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 180. For colour facsimile, see Wolff 2007; also available in high-resolution scans in Bach Digital (www.bach-digital.de)

Dresden parts

P, St
The Bach sources in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (D-B) with shelfmarks prefixed ‘Mus. mus. Bach P’ and ‘Mus. mus. Bach St’ are abbreviated throughout the volume as P (Partitur = score) and St (Stimmen = parts) respectively

Books, journals, articles and editions

AMZ  
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung [1st series] (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1798–1848)

Bach  
BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute Baldwin-Wallace College

BC I/4  

BDok I  
Bärenreiter, 1963); references to individual documents in the form BDok I/1

BDok II

W. Neumann and H.-J. Schulze (eds.), *Fremdschriftliche und gedruckte Dokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs 1685–1750*, Bach-Dokumente, II (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1969); references to individual documents in the form BDok II/1

BDok III

H.-J. Schulze (ed.), *Dokumente zum Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs 1750–1800*, Bach-Dokumente, III (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972); references to individual documents in the form BDok III/1

BDok V


BDok VI

A. Glöckner, A. Hartinger and K. Lehmann (eds.), *Ausgewählte Dokumente zum Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs 1801–1850*, Bach-Dokumente, VI (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2007); references to individual documents in the form BDok VI/A 1

Belfast 2007


BG


BF

*Bach-Jahrbuch* (1904–)

Butt A


Butt B


BWV

Abbreviations and conventions

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der von Wolfgang Schmieder vorgelegten 2. Ausgabe
(Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1998)

Dadelsen A
G. von Dadelsen, Bemerkungen zur Handschrift Johann Sebastian Bachs, seiner Familie und seines Kreises,
Tübinger Bach-Studien, 1 (Trossingen: Hohner Verlag, 1957)

Dadelsen B
G. von Dadelsen, Beiträge zur Chronologie der Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs, Tübinger Bach-Studien, 4–5
(Trossingen: Hohner Verlag, 1958)

Dadelsen C
G. von Dadelsen, 'Friedrich Smends Ausgabe der h-Moll-Messe von J. S. Bach', Die Musikforschung, 12/3
(July–September 1959), 315–34

Dadelsen CET

Dürr
A. Dürr, Zur Chronologie der Leipziger Vokalwerke J. S. Bachs: Mit Anmerkungen und Nachträgen versehener
Nachdruck aus Bach-Jahrbuch 1957 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1976)

Henge and Houten
Eduard van Hengel and Kees van Houten, "Et incarnatus": An Afterthought? Against the "Revisionist" View of Bach’s

HStCal
Königlich-Polnischer und Churfürstlich-Sächsischer Hoff- [from 1733 Hof-] und Staats-Calendar (Leipzig,
1728–, except 1730, 1734, 1758–64)

Kobayashi A
und Kirche, 57/1 (1987), 12–15

Kobayashi B
Y. Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs: Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit
von 1736 bis 1750’, BJ, 74 (1988), 7–72

MGG²
Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, 2nd edn (Kassel: Bärenreiter,
1994–2005)

NBA
[Neue Bach-Ausgabe] Johann Sebastian Bach: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke (Kassel: Bärenreiter,
1954–2008); references to series and vol. in the form I/1

NBA KB
Kritischer Bericht (critical report) of NBA

NBA²
### Abbreviations and conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NBR</strong></td>
<td>H. T. David and A. Mendel (eds.), <em>The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents</em>, rev. and enlarged C. Wolff (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998); references to individual documents in the form NBR/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Abbreviations and conventions**

- **ZWV**: W. Reich, *Jan Dismas Zelenka: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke (ZWV)* (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1985)

**Conventions used in references to sections and movements**

Bach’s own divisions of the Mass are shown in *italic*, and the names of individual movements are in roman type and single quotation marks in text (and in roman type only, without quotation marks, in parentheses and tables unless more than one movement is listed). For a full list of movements, see Table 1.1 on p. 10.