

March 28, 2023 7:30pm Koerner Hall

# BACH

MASS IN B MINOR



# BACH MASS IN B MINOR

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor Toronto Mendelssohn Choir Baroque Orchestra Jacob Abrahamse, tenor
Neil Aronoff, bass
Julia Barber, mezzo-soprano
Lesley Emma Bouza, soprano
Rebecca Claborn, mezzo-soprano
Simon Honeyman, countertenor
Kieran Kane, bass
Rebecca McKay, soprano
Nicholas Nicolaidis, tenor
Sinéad White, soprano

This performance will run approximately 2 hours 20 minutes, including a 20 minute intermission.

For the enjoyment of your fellow patrons and the artists on stage, please







No flash photography



No noisy candy wrappers



Mute your cell phones

If you enjoyed this evening's performance, please consider making a donation in support of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

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# **PROGRAM**

#### MASS IN B MINOR, BWV 232

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

## **Kyrie**

- I. Kyrie eleison
- II. Christe eleison (Sinéad White, soprano & Simon Honeyman, countertenor)
- III. Kyrie eleison

#### Gloria

- I. Gloria in excelsis & Et in terra pax
- II. Laudamus te (Rebecca Claborn, mezzo-soprano)
- III. Gratias agimus tibi
- IV. Domine Deus (Rebecca McKay, soprano & Nicholas Nicolaidis, tenor)
- V. Qui tollis peccata mundi
- VI. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris (Julia Barber, mezzo-soprano)
- VII. Quoniam tu solus sanctus (Kieran Kane, bass)
- VIII. Cum Sancto Spiritu

#### - INTERMISSION -

## Symbolum Nicenum

- I. Credo in unum Deum
- II. Patrem omnipotentem
- III. Et in unum Dominum

(Lesley Emma Bouza, soprano & Simon Honeyman, countertenor)

- IV. Et incarnatus est
- V. Crucifixus
- VI. Et resurrexit
- VII. Et in Spiritum Sanctum (Neil Aronoff, bass)
- VIII. Confiteor
  - IX. Et expecto resurrectionem

#### Sanctus

Sanctus & Pleni sunt coeli

### Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei and Dona Nobis Pacem

- I. Osanna in excelsis
- II. Benedictus (Jacob Abrahamse, tenor)
- III. Osanna in excelsis
- IV. Agnus Dei (Simon Honeyman, countertenor)
- V. Dona nobis pacem



The TMChoir acknowledges that the land on which we perform is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are honoured to share our music across these lands.

# **PROGRAM NOTES**

Hailed by Bach expert Christoph Wolff as Bach's "musical and artistic creed," the *Mass in B Minor* is deservedly considered one of the most innovative and insightful works in the history of classical music. Yet in spite of its frequent performances and the extensive amount of time and attention music scholars, performers, conductors, and audiences have given to this work, it remains in many ways shrouded in mystery. Bach composed the mass over twenty–five years, amalgamating numerous musical styles and recycling many of his earlier compositions into it. Yet while *Mass in B Minor* was completed in 1749, shortly before Bach's death, the composition was kept relatively private within the Bach family; the score was not published until 1845, and the first known performance took place over a century later, in 1859.

The unclear nature of the work's origins invites any number of questions. How did Bach want the work to be performed? Why do we now call this piece Mass in B Minor when Bach himself never gave the work a title, and when his son Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach in fact referred to his father's work as the Great Catholic Mass (not to mention that only a small fraction of the work is written in the key of b minor)? Why did Bach, by all accounts a committed Lutheran, set the text of a Catholic mass? Why does Bach set the text of that mass at such length, creating a two-hour musical piece that would surely never be performed in the context of religious liturgy?

These questions really all just add up to one big question: What is Bach communicating through this work?

Given Bach wrote the piece over a time span of twenty–five years, refining it through to the end of his life, it can easily be understood as a form of musical summation. The *Mass* offers a reflection on his career and on musical style that offers, to use Maestro Vallée's terms, an "encyclopedia" of Bach's compositional practice and of European music history more broadly. *Mass in B Minor* brings together the counterpoint, fugue, polyphony, and chorale writing that formed some of the hallmarks of Bach's compositional styles, but the Mass joins them together with numerous other influences, including chamber music and Italian and French operatic vocal and instrumental writing. As Daniel Melamed has observed in his extensive scholarship on Bach, it was not uncommon for church music in the eighteenth century to incorporate popular and secular styles. What is unique to Bach, however, is the composer's synthesis, his bringing together of "old-fashioned and fundamentally vocal" sixteenth– and seventeenth–century style church music together with "stylistic transplants from the chamber and the theater." Arguably, the resolving and reconciliation of these musical styles is part of what *Mass in B Minor* is about.

Yet there is still the mystery of the text itself, and the ways in which the richness, duration, diversity, and complexity of Bach's music seems to at times imply more meanings or interpretations than the relatively brief, standardized text of the Catholic mass allows. One might wonder if Bach is using the mass's words as a means of expressing something else, offering his listeners through his music some sort of statement or spiritual insight that isn't found in the text. I would argue that, just as Bach's music resolves musical styles, it tries to resolve the expression and the experience of faith itself. Or, put another way, perhaps Bach meant for his music to transcend the specificity of the text, sacred as it is, to instead

invoking and represent faith and divinity in ways that can't be comprehended in words.

While we can speculate and even try to make informed guesses as to Bach's meaning, there are, ultimately, no answers – at least not definitive ones – to the questions *Mass in B Minor* raises. But when I try to reflect on these questions, I keep coming to the same conclusion, if not an answer: as with any other sacred mystery, it's not fully for us to know. The reward isn't to be found in knowing, but rather in experiencing and sitting with the questions themselves, and all that they and Bach might have to teach us.

-Rena Roussin, Musicologist in Residence

Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Daniel R. Melamed, *Listening to Bach: The Mass in B Minor and the Christmas Oratorio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

## The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir is proud to be one of Canada's oldest, largest, and best-known choral organizations. The Choir presented its first concert on January 15, 1895, as part of Massey Hall's inaugural season, and has been a leader in choral music in Canada ever since, commissioning works by Canadian composers, and presenting world and Canadian premieres. The Choir also regularly performs and records with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In May 2021 Jean–Sébastien Vallée was named as Artistic Director, only the eighth conductor in TMChoir's 128–year history.

Through its performances, educational programs, and community engagement, TMChoir aspires to introduce its audiences to choral masterworks from the past and present — making both renowned and lesser-known pieces available, accessible, and inspirational to all.

The TMChoir includes 24 professional singers and over 100 auditioned and experienced volunteer choristers. Auditions are held in the spring and fall to welcome new members.

Our smaller professional ensemble, the Toronto Mendelssohn Singers (TMSingers) was created to deliver more intimate, nimble repertoire pieces in a variety of non-traditional venues, traversing the line between concert and experience and showcasing the individual expression of professional soloists.



#### Jean-Sébastien Vallée, Artistic Director

Named as TMChoir's 8th Artistic Director in June 2021 following an international search, Jean-Sébastien Vallée is an internationally recognized conductor, scholar, and pedagogue with a focus on vocal, choral and orchestral repertoires. Maestro Vallée has conducted ensembles throughout North America, Europe and Asia and has prepared choruses for leading orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, Montreal Symphony, and the National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa. In addition to his artistic leadership of the TMChoir, he is also Associate Professor of Music, Director of Choral Studies, and Coordinator of the Ensembles & Conducting Area at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. Recent and upcoming engagements include concerts at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, a tour with the National Youth Choir of Canada, and concerts with l'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec.

# The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir



#### Jacob Abrahamse, tenor

Jacob Abrahamse, B.Mus., M.A., has performed leading roles in Miracle Flight 571; Shot: The Story of D'Arcy McGee; H.M.S. Pinafore; Ruddigore; The Pirates of Penzance; Apollo et Hyacinthus; The Children's Crusade; and Il Giudizione di Pigmalione. He has performed at Moses Znaimer's Idea City and has won two civic awards from the City of Peterborough.



#### Neil Aronoff, bass

Montreal-born baritone, Neil Aronoff, is a graduate of McGill and active performer in choral ensembles in Toronto. In addition to the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, he performs regularly with Soundstreams Choir 21, enjoying bringing both choral masterpieces and challenging, contemporary works to the stage.



#### Julia Barber, mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Julia Barber is an avid soloist and ensemble singer. Recent concert performances include Reich's *Drumming* with Soundstreams, Copland's *In the Beginning* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Steffani's *Stabat Mater* and Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Sheppard* with the Elora Singers.



#### Lesley Emma Bouza, soprano

Lesley initially completed a degree in saxophone performance, and then went on to study voice at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama before returning to Canada to become an active Toronto based musician. She delights in taking every opportunity to use her eclectic skill-set performing jazz, pop, musical theatre and classical genres.



#### Rebecca Claborn, mezzo-soprano

In demand as a soloist, chorister, and teacher, mezzo-soprano Rebecca Claborn appears regularly with many of Canada's finest vocal ensembles, including the Toronto Consort, Opus 8, the Elora Singers, and the Theatre of Early Music. Upcoming engagements include the Praetorius *Christmas Vespers* with the Toronto Consort, and *Bach's Mass in B Minor* with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

## The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir



#### Simon Honeyman, countertenor

Countertenor Simon Honeyman performs regularly with professional choral ensembles in Toronto and across Canada, including the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Tafelmusik, The Elora Singers, La Chapelle de Québec, Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, and others. Simon is also a production editor for the University of Toronto Press.



#### Kieran Kane, bass

Kieran has sung with a number of ensembles across Canada including Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, The Elora Singers, and The Canadian Chamber Choir. Solo projects include Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has also worked as music director on productions including *The Gondoliers* and *The Drowsy Chaperone*.



#### Rebecca McKay, soprano

Rebecca McKay, soprano, was recently featured with Spiritus Ensemble, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and Guelph Chamber Choir. She frequently performs with Elora Singers, and is a core member of St John's Parish Choir in Flora.



#### Nicholas Nicolaidis, tenor

Nicholas Nicolaidis is an accomplished chorister, soloist, conductor and vocal pedagogue. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Nicholas began his vocal studies at the world famous Drakensberg Boys' Choir School, has a BMus Degree from Wits University, studied singing in London, UK, and conducting in Stellenbosch. He specializes in oratorio, lieder and jazz standards.



#### Sinéad White, soprano

Sinéad has recently performed as a soloist with the Toronto Bach Festival, Victoria Baroque, Early Music Vancouver, Nota Bene Players, Kamloops Symphony, Boston Early Music Festival and recently released Duo Oriana's debut album *How Like a Golden Dream* with Leaf Music. She is pursuing a doctorate at the University of Toronto and obtained her BMus/ MMus at McGill University.

# Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

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Marlo Alcock Renée Ardiente Julia Barber \* Frances Chan Rebecca Claborn \* Kristin Crawford Adrienne Eastwood Kirsten Fielding \* Ruxandra Filip Manda Fischer Gillian Grant Simon Honeyman \* Marilyn Isaac Stewart Sue Kim Alison Massam Rvan McDonald \* Heather McGrath Bethany Jo Mikelait Annie Odom Yara Rubb Jan Szot Jennifer Ujimoto Kilev Venables Patti Vipond Tarquin Wongkee Susan Worthington Virginia Wright

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Jacob Abrahamse \* Mitch Aldrich \* Rafael Avila Sam Broverman Thomas Burton \* Karel Cantelar Ramos Chris Church Peter DeRoche Omar Flores John Gladwell Nathan Gritter \* Alejandro Guerrero Clement Kam Robert Kinar \* Eric Lee Walter Mahabir \* Michelangelo Masangkay Timothy McPhail Daniel Meeks Nicholas Nicolaidis \* Neil Payne Christopher Wenman

#### Bass

Neil Aronoff \* Jeffrev Baker Dan Bevan-Baker \* Hernan Botero Matthew Conte Scott Crocker Steven Foster Kieran Kane \* John Lemke Matt Lozinski Joseph McGowan IV Magnus Mee Paul Oros \* David Peer Tillmann Peter David B. Powell Milovan Prelevic Seymour Stern Chia-An (Victor) Tung Sean van Wyk Jonah Wall Eric Yang Isaiah Yankech David Yung \* Bruce Yungblut

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Bassoon

Dominic Teresi François Viault Trumpet

Robinson Pyle Norman Engel Shawn Spicer

Horn

Scott Wevers

**Timpani** Ed Reifel

## **Text & Translations**

#### MASS IN B MINOR - Johann Sebastian Bach

#### I. MISSA

#### **Kyrie**

Kyrie eleison Christe eleison Kyrie eleison Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

#### Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Domine Deus, rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe, altissime. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Qui sedes ad dextram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe

Cum Sancto Spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris, Amen. Glory be to God on high. And on earth peace to men of good will.

We praise you; we bless you; we adore you; we glorify you.

We give you thanks for your great glory.

Lord God, heavenly King, God the almighty Father. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Most High Lord God, Lamb of God. Son of the Father.

You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. You who take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

You who sit at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

For you alone are the Holy One. You alone are the Lord. You, Jesus Christ, alone are the Most High.

With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father, Amen.

#### II. CREDO

Credo in unum Deum. Credo in unum Deum,

Patrem omnipotentem, factorum coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

I believe in one God. I believe in one God.

The Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum do Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sanctu ex Maria virgine et homo factus est.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est.

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas. Et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris, et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam.

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the onlybegotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds. God of God, Light of Light, very God of very 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 came down from heaven.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man.

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.

And on the third day he rose again according to the scriptures. And ascended into heaven. And sits at the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

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

#### III. SANCTUS

Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria ejus. Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

## IV. OSANNA, BENEDICTUS, AGNUS DEI AND DONA NOBIS PACEM

Osanna in excelsis

Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini

Osanna in excelsis

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Dona nobis pacem.

Hosanna in the highest

Blessed be he that comes in the name of the Lord

Hosanna in the highest

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Grant us peace.

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The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir gratefully acknowledges the support of our government partners, corporate and foundation sponsors, and individual donors who, through their financial support, make it possible for the TMChoir to present outstanding high-quality performances, community engagement programs, and education opportunities.

This list reflects donations from September 2021 to the present. We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list, however, if you notice an error or omission, please accept our apologies and contact Amy Saffer at amy.saffer@tmchoir.org.

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# LEGACY CIRCLE

We are grateful to the following individuals who have chosen to support the future of choral music with a legacy gift to the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

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Jamie Hillman

Director of Community Engagement

and Associate Conductor

Shireen Abu-Khader

Composer in Residence

Irene Gregorio

Collaborative Pianist and Musical Assistant

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We are grateful to our volunteer ushers for their support.

# Still to Come This Season



# Take the Podium Free Concert on May 5

To wrap up this year's Conducting Symposium, let us introduce you to the 6 emerging conductors mentored by TMChoir's Artistic Director Jean-Sébastien Vallée.

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church (Yonge & St. Clair)

# Don't miss our community singing workshops!



Saturday, April 29
Conducted by Artistic Director
Jean-Sébastien Vallée
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
(Yonge & St. Clair)



Saturday, May 20

Conducted by Composer-in-residence Shireen Abu-Khader

> Yorkminster Park Baptist Church (Yonge & St. Clair)

Get tickets & details at tmchoir.org

# HEAR THE PASSION

Join us for a new season of bold & audacious choral experiences



Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

ORFF

CARMINA BURANA



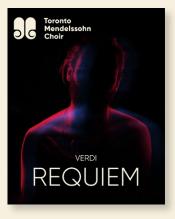
Sept 22 & 23, 2023 Jeanne Lamon Hall Trinity-St. Paul's Centre

Oct 26 & 27, 2023 Roy Thomson Hall

Dec 5 & 6, 2023 Yorkminster Park Baptist Church



March 16, 2024 Jeanne Lamon Hall Trinity-St. Paul's Centre



April 27 & 30, 2024
George Weston
Recital Hall
& Koerner Hall

# **Next Season with the TSO**



Continuing our long standing relationship with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the TMChoir is proud to be collaborating in these performances:

HANDEL MESSIAH

Dec 17–Dec 23, 2023

Roy Thomson Hall

MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 3

Jun 12-Jun 15, 2024
Roy Thomson Hall