

YO TOMITA, ROBIN A. LEAVER AND JAN SMACZNY (EDS), *EXPLORING BACH'S B-MINOR MASS* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). ISBN 978-1-107-00790-1, xxix+314pp, £65.

There are few compositions in the western canon that enjoy the intellectual immanence and lustre of Johann Sebastian Bach's Mass in B minor (hereafter, BWV 232), even if it seems a characteristically western conceit to describe it as 'the Greatest Musical Work of Art of All Times and Nations' (Hans Georg Nägeli in 1818). The date of this 'astonishing assertion', as Christoph Wolff remarks in the opening essay of this collection (3), is all the more significant given the ascendancy of Mozart and Beethoven in European musical culture at that time, to say nothing of Bach's much more modest reception history during the same period. But if anything, this assertion seems less astonishing now than it once did, because the work itself has in the meantime acquired symbolic properties that far exceed the immediate circumstances of its aesthetic and cultural rehabilitation in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. The exegesis and commentary it has attracted (notably in the past seventy years) proclaim its iconic centrality to the whole enterprise and value of European art, musical or otherwise. *Exploring Bach's B-minor Mass* historicizes that centrality through a sequence of spectacularly intelligent meditations which privilege BWV 232 as an agent of musical, theological and cultural discourse, as a defining exemplar of structural intelligence in musical art, as an abiding challenge to the parameters of textual scholarship and criticism, and as a manifestation of musical reception history. There are fourteen essays in all (a number which salutes Bach himself), grouped under four headings: 'Historical Background and Contexts' (Christoph Wolff, Robin A. Leaver, Janice B. Stockigt, Szymon Paczkowski and Michael Maul); 'Structure and Proportion' (Ulrich Siegele, Melvin P. Unger and Ruth Tatlow); 'Sources' (Uwe Wolf and Tatiana Shabalina); and 'Reception' (Ulrich Leisinger, Anselm Hartinger, Katharine Pardee and Jan Smaczny).

In the seven years that elapsed between preparations for the symposium 'Understanding Bach's B-minor Mass' (which took place at Queen's University Belfast in November 2007) and the publication of this volume in 2013, several developments in Bach scholarship, especially in relation to BWV 232, materially influenced the scope and content of these essays. Two new editions of BWV 232 appeared: a colour facsimile of the autograph score issued by Bärenreiter in 2007 and Uwe Wolf's revised edition of the Mass for the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* in 2010. In addition, as the editors observe in their preface, studies of different aspects of BWV 232—its relationship to the German Enlightenment, Bach's absorption of Polish stylistic features, the musical style of the 'Crucifixus', the relationship between this work and the court and church musicians of Dresden, especially Jan Dismas Zelenka, and much else—significantly determined the topics addressed in this collection.

An abiding preoccupation of the book, especially in its first and third parts, is the remarkable genesis of BWV 232, which may be summarized here as the relationship between Bach's original *Missa* (*Kyrie* and *Gloria*) of 1733 and the remainder of the work (*Symbolum Nicenum*, 1748–9; *Sanctus*, 1724, revised 1748–9; and *Osanna*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*, including 'Dona nobis pacem', 1748–9). There is no doubt that the (partly) uncertain provenance and purpose of the work remain critical to its enduring afterlife in textual and historical scholarship (quite apart from its monumental aesthetic presence and expressive power). To date, BWV 232 seems to raise more questions than answers about its empirical status and function as a musical work: we don't even know whether Bach intended it for performance or not, and we are unable to identify the provenance of several movements that are more likely than otherwise to re-work previously existing material (a feature of BWV 232 that amounts to a principle of composition). Does it contain *any* newly composed music? Is the 'Et incarnatus', for instance, which was undoubtedly a late addition in the preparation of the 1748–9 autograph score, an original composition? Was the 1733 *Missa* actually performed in Dresden? If Bach gave the *Sanctus* in 1724 (on Christmas Day), was any other part of the work given piecemeal, so to speak, throughout its long gestation? Even the autograph itself, the more forensically it is examined, stubbornly perplexes and resists the scrutiny and expertise of scholars such as Uwe Wolf and Joshua Rifkin. And yet: the integrity, the holistic condition of BWV 232 as a unified composition, affirmed and argued throughout this volume, persists. It matters. The more speculative our apprehension of its genesis, textual history and reception becomes, the more imperative this sense of unity, this claim to the autonomy of the musical work itself, seems to be. (As an aside, one notices the decisive repudiation which this volume represents of Friedrich Smend's 1956 argument, long since discredited, that BWV 232 in fact represents four 'discrete' if related compositions.) Wolff sounds the keynote of this reading in his magisterial 'Past, present and future perspectives on Bach's B-Minor Mass':

Bach ... was aware that he was dealing with the oldest multi-movement genre in the history of music. He had studied premier examples of Masses composed by Palestrina, Lotti and others. Therefore, an acute sense of timelessness prevailed in his overall conception of the work and propelled his intention of going deliberately beyond previous models. As is the case with *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, *The Art of Fugue* and so many other projects, with the B-minor Mass Bach consciously established a new musical paradigm for vocal polyphony. (12–13)

There is little doubt that such a reading belongs to that wider interpretation of Bach's late works as a stupendous and singular ingathering that in each individual case exhausted the genre to which it belonged (the St Matthew Passion, the canonic variations on 'Vom Himmel hoch', *The Musical Offering*, and so on).

But given this assent to the fundamental unity of BWV 232 as a musical work, it is the plural vigour and scruple of these essays—especially in their engagement with aging and/or newly discovered sources, the cultural memory of the Mass as a presence in the development of European music after 1800, the relationship between Bach's stylistic inferences and the possible circumstances of performance (especially in relation to the *Missa* of 1733), and historically alert modes of analysis answerable to the structure and design of the work—that binds them into a compelling whole. To take the last of these topics first, we might instance two remarkable essays by Ulrich Siegele ('Some observations on the formal design of Bach's B-minor Mass') and Ruth Tatlow ('Parallel proportions, numerical structures and *Harmonie* in Bach's autograph score'), which complement each other in their purposeful scrutiny of bar numbers as an agency of duration, unity and proportion in Bach's autograph, and thereby in the work itself.

Siegele's essay, which has as its historical foundation a relationship between temporal duration and the number of bars in a given composition established in 1754 by Lorenz Christoph Mizler,<sup>1</sup> extrapolates a corresponding relationship between the number of bars in BWV 232 and its duration, beginning with the *Missa* as follows:

The *Missa*, which forms the first part of the original score, comprises twelve movements, three comprising the *Kyrie* and nine the *Gloria*. The three movements of the *Kyrie* respectively have 126, 85 and 59 bars, amounting to a total of 270 bars ... In splitting these values into their components, I relate the bar numbers of the *Kyrie* to multiples of the unit 27, reading 126 as  $5 \times 27 - 9$ , 85 as  $3 \times 27 + 4$ , 59 as  $2 \times 27 + 5$  and 270 as  $10 \times 27 \pm 0$ . Obviously, small, pragmatic modifications are balanced within the *Kyrie*.

The numbers by which the unit 27 was multiplied require further consideration. Their series of 5, 3 and 2 may be understood as  $3 + 2$ ,  $3 \pm 0$  and  $3 - 1$ . If the addition of 2 in the first position is read as  $1 + 1$ , one of the two digits may be perceived as a balance of the subtraction that occurs in the last position, the other digit as a structural modification which has an effect on the sum as well. If the balancing exchange and the structural modification are set aside, the basic value of the *Kyrie* consists of three movements, each containing three units of 27 bars, making 81 bars. (112–13)

Complicated as this may seem, the symmetry and proportion which Siegele demonstrates in the *Kyrie* are borne out by simple mathematics: the three movements ('Kyrie' I, 'Christe' and 'Kyrie' II) are respectively 126 bars ( $= 5 \times 27 - 9$ ), 85 bars ( $= 3 \times 27 + 4$ ) and 59 bars ( $= 2 \times 27 + 5$ ) in length, giving a grand total of 270 bars resolved into three basic units of 81 bars, plus or minus additional bars as each case discloses). Although it

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<sup>1</sup> Lorenz Christoph Mizler, *Musikalische Bibliothek, oder Gründliche Nachricht nebst unpartheyischem Urtheil von alten und neuen musikalischen Schriften und Büchern*, 4 vols (Leipzig: Mizlerischer Bücher-Verlag, 1754), iv, 108–9. A familiar figure in Bach scholarship, Mizler translated Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum* into German.

remains unclear to me as to how these symmetries relate to the tonal structure of the *Missa* (and indeed of the whole Mass)—notwithstanding the intelligibility of Siegele’s observations about the b–D–f# triad outlined in the key structure of the ‘Kyrie’ I–‘Christe’–‘Kyrie’ II of the *Missa* (and thereby BWV 232)—his ultimate conclusion that ‘the general standard value of 81 bars per movement [throughout the whole Mass] acts as both a unifying element and a structural backbone’ and that ‘the bar numbers produce consistent evidence: Bach designed the B-minor Mass as a whole; in fact he conceived it as a single work’ (124) seems to me irrefutable. Bach’s own preoccupation with number and proportion is by now well-attested, but to find this preoccupation translated, as it were, into a structural principle which unifies BWV 232 is a remarkable discovery.

No less remarkable is Ruth Tatlow’s theory of ‘proportional parallelism’ in relation to the structure and design of BWV 232, which allows her to demonstrate how ‘extraordinarily important’ the creation of perfect proportions (either 1:1 or 1:2) were to Bach not only in this work but throughout ‘all of Bach’s publications and fair copies’ (142). As with Siegele (who acknowledges Tatlow as having drawn his attention to the Mizler source mentioned above), Tatlow establishes the historical significance of proportion, and its theological ramifications, as an expression of musical perfection in the early eighteenth century, so that, as Bach’s cousin Johann Gottfried Walther wrote in 1732, ‘the closer a proportion is to the unity or equality, the more perfect it is’ (143). For the purposes of this review, one might suggest a comparison between Table 8.1 of Tatlow’s essay (149), in which she lists the parallel proportions of the individual movements of the 1733 *Missa*, and Table 6.2 in Siegele’s essay (114), in which he lists the number of bars and their disposition in the *Missa*, because such a comparison affirms durational (Siegele) and proportional (Tatlow) principles of composition that both authors consistently and compellingly derive from the same material. Thus in Table 8.1 Tatlow shows that the total of 370 bars contained in the first four movements of the *Missa* (‘Kyrie’ I, ‘Christe’, ‘Kyrie’ II and ‘Gloria’) expresses a ‘double 1:1 proportion ... 2:2 movements with 185:185 bars’, adding that ‘There is evidence on the score that Bach had not originally planned to open the *Missa* with the four first bars. This double 1:1 proportion gives a numerical explanation for Bach’s four-bar addition’ (149). Tatlow’s analysis of these proportions across the whole work, in which she presents alternative readings based on two different systems of bar-counting (one with the *stile antico* movements counted at the breve, and the other with the same movements counted at the semibreve and acknowledging the threefold occurrence of a time signature in the autograph as a barline substitute), yields a mesmerizing sequence of perfect parallel proportions that must now be admitted as part of Bach’s structural design. ‘Although the perfect parallel proportions were hidden and silent, he [Bach] believed that their *Harmonie* would delight God and inspire man to greater devotion’ (162).

It is a striking feature of this analysis that it depends on a close reading of the autograph (at least insofar as Bach's intentionality of design is concerned), a fact which underlines how the primary sources of BWV 232 can reveal structural and stylistic aspects of the work that remain resistant to editorial recension. As Uwe Wolf remarks at the outset of his superb essay on the problem of editing BWV 232 ('Many problems, various solutions: editing Bach's B-minor Mass'), 'Plans to publish an edition of Bach's B-minor Mass have seldom run smoothly' (165). This mild beginning is a (charming) ploy: what follows is, by contrast, an intricate reflection on the editorial principles which have determined the transmission of this work since the middle of the last century, in which the state of the original sources—in particular, the relationship between the Dresden parts of the 1733 *Missa*, the autograph of BWV 232, copies of the autograph made by Johann Friedrich Hering and an unknown copyist in the early and late 1760s respectively, and the interventions and corrections in the autograph by C. P. E. Bach both before and after these copies were made—is a constant consideration. Wolf devotes considerable space to the differences in approach between his 2010 edition of BWV 232 and Joshua Rifkin's 2006 edition, partly as a result of Rifkin's critique of the 2010 edition in an article published in *Eighteenth-Century Music*.<sup>2</sup>

Although these differences are impossible to resolve and endlessly vulnerable to dispute and spiralling commentary—even a Bach specialist might yearn in such instances for the editorial equivalent of 'Reader, I married him'—they genuinely illuminate larger problems about the status and authority of the autograph as a reliable expression of the musical work itself. The following passage, among many, throws such problems into sharp relief. It concerns a single note in bar 47 (soprano II) of the 'Confiteor' which 'someone has changed ... from *c#*" to *b*' and back to *c#*"—or from *b*' to *c#*" and back to *b*" (181). What concerns Wolf here is whether or not 'stylistic' evidence (Rifkin) should be preferred to 'scientific' analysis of the material text (as in the 'micro X-ray fluorescence analysis' of ink which Wolf used to determine 'who wrote what' (179) in certain problematic instances in the autograph):

The early copies all have *b*'. ... Rifkin believes that the first of them was written before C. P. E. Bach had started to rework the autograph. Thus it seems that he follows the copies believing that they transmit the original reading. He then attempts to support his view analytically, but the question is: which method should one choose? By analysing the compositional structure of the 'Confiteor' we can, if successful, provide an answer to the question as to which is the 'better' reading; and indeed the *b*' seems to be the better one. But can we also identify the scribe by analysing a fugue? Does the better reading automatically mean that the reviser is always Johann

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<sup>2</sup> Joshua Rifkin, 'Blinding us with Science? Man, Machine and the Mass in B Minor', *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 8/1 (March 2011), 77–91.

Sebastian? What the composer *should* have written and what he actually wrote are not always the same. Conversely we have indeed more than one reading in the autograph of the B-minor Mass where the judgement of the son seems to have been the better one. Because at most of these points there is no doubt about the scribe, neither Rifkin's edition nor the revised *NBA* has an apparently better reading than the original one by the father. (181)

This argument would seem to imply that Wolf's ultimate editorial principle (in which he is in agreement with Rifkin) is *quod scripsit, scripsit*, at least when it can be shown that the scribe is Johann Sebastian Bach. The errors in such cases stand (as in the inadvertence of parallel octaves or fifths at one time corrected by C. P. E. Bach or nineteenth-century editors) because identification of the scribe, when this leads to Johann Sebastian, takes precedence over the principle of 'silent' corrections (which in any case are hardly tolerable in contemporary Bach scholarship). The 'better' reading remains ultimately irrelevant to the 'better' edition. The problem is that this kind of textual fidelity conflicts with the scruple and nuance of Bach's own preoccupations with grammar, proportion, numerical symbolism, voice-leading and any number of other resources in which correction, as a *compositional* axiom, took clear precedence. If Bach's exactitudes in style and structure (as in the essays by Siegele and Tatlow above) extend to proportion and the number of bars in each movement, it is difficult to entertain the possibility that he would have deliberately passed over blatant errors in voice-leading and grammar, especially if he had committed these himself. But as it is, the autograph remains impervious to any final reading, irrespective of such difficulties. And likewise the editions differ amongst themselves: as Wolf observes in a demure footnote on page 181, even the number of movements in BWV 232 is differently calculated from one edition to the next (as in the Rifkin, Wolf and earlier *NBA* editions).

The relationship between BWV 232 and its generic adherences is a major theme explored in this book, notably in three essays by Janice Stockigt ('Bach's *Missa* BWV 232<sup>1</sup> in the context of Catholic Mass settings in Dresden, 1729–1733'), Szymon Paczkowski ('The role and significance of the polonaise in the "Quoniam" of the B-minor Mass') and Michael Maul ('"The Great Catholic Mass": Bach, Count Questenberg and the Musicalische Congregation in Vienna'; this last chapter is movingly dedicated to the memory of Alison J. Dunlop, whose tragically early death occurred some months prior to the publication of the volume). In the first two of these, Dresden and the possibility that the *Missa* was performed there in 1733 are to the fore. It is far from an outright criticism of these essays to suggest that, once again, they ask more questions than they answer. Stockigt's comparison of the *Missa* with other works either composed or reworked for the Hofkirche in Dresden, by Jan Dismas Zelenka, for example, is complicated not only by a want of empirical evidence (as to performance) despite the thoroughgoing nature of her research but by the implacable condition of the *Missa* itself, notably in terms of its length and scoring. Even if we leave the 'major problem' (49) of

the work's duration to one side, Stockigt's observation that 'in matters of large-scale structuring and in aspects of the instrumental and vocal scoring, Bach's *Missa* conformed with the usual style of a Catholic Kyrie–Gloria for Dresden in that era' (48) appears to be somewhat at odds with her earlier remark that 'Bach's extensive use of solo wind instruments in the *Missa* is much richer than the usual orchestration of masses performed in Dresden during these years, and this aspect of scoring brings his setting closer to practice in Leipzig' (47). The masses she enlists in her comparison between Zelenka and Bach include works by Francesco Conti and Antonio Caldara (both composers in Vienna at the time these were originally written). These settings prompt one to ask, in turn, whether or not the undoubted affinities between the so-called 'Neapolitan' mass (or more locally the Viennese orchestral mass of the early eighteenth century) and Bach's *Missa* are significantly outweighed by the differences between Bach and his contemporaries in this respect. Simply and by itself, the orchestral ritornello with which the *Missa* begins (after the first four bars), both in terms of its length and its fugal deliberation, unsettles the usefulness of comparing 'Kyrie' I with any other work beyond the domain of Bach's own sacred vocal compositions (wherein more plausible comparisons abound, as in the opening ritornellos of the St Matthew and St John passions). Stockigt, in fact, comes to a conclusion that is not dissimilar in its characterization of 'Kyrie' I in particular as being 'outside the norm' for church music in Dresden, with the result that the work remained within the Royal Library but never made it to performance (53).

The speculative tone of the first half of Paczkowski's essay in relation to an actual performance of the *Missa* in Dresden, especially in respect of observations on the prowess of individual musicians in Dresden and the nature of Bach's concertato solo writing, is impressively redeemed by a brilliant reading of the 'Quoniam' which compares the Bach setting with 'Quoniam' passages from masses by Johann David Heinichen (1721) and Zelenka (1726), along with other works, in order to affirm the Bach movement as one that 'must be interpreted in the context of Polish-Saxon court custom as a "royal dance", symbolising sovereign power in secular and religious contexts alike' (82). The only difficulty presented by this reading lies in the musical examples which Paczkowski engages to illustrate it. In the 'Quoniam' settings by Johann Adolf Hasse (74), Heinichen (77) and Zelenka (78), one is forcibly struck by the rhythmically identical head motif which sets the words 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus' in each case: this motif and the use of horns appear to be the musical features which link all three examples together. The broad arch of Bach's vocal opening, prefigured as this is by the horn obbligato (cited on p. 71), does not appear to be related to the polonaise traits identified in the other examples, and in the Bach example itself the identification of the polonaise rhythmic figuration in the obbligato bassoon parts and in the continuo is likewise difficult to relate to the other excerpts. (In passing, this continuo figuration

seems to me subsumed by a larger, syncopated motif which begins in bar 2 and which is so pervasively employed by Bach and other composers as to weaken its status as a 'polonaise' rhythm.) Perhaps the parody original of this movement, were it available, would help to settle the question of Bach's stylistic adherences in this case, but there can be little doubt that Paczkowski's reading of the aria significantly enriches our comprehension of Bach's intentions, given the context which he so copiously and persuasively provides.

Maul's essay in this collection asks the boldest question of all: whether BWV 232 may have been written at the request of the Musical Congregation of St Cecilia for performance in Vienna. The evidence in favour of such a hypothesis, as slender and circumstantial as it is astonishing, rests on the discovery of a letter written by a Leipzig student, Franz Ernst von Wallis, to Count Johann Adam von Questenberg in relation to a letter from the Count which Wallis forwarded to Bach in 1749. All we know is that the 'things' mentioned in the count's letter prompted Bach to reply, and that he was 'greatly pleased' to receive news from him (84). When this letter came to light in 1981, Christoph Wolff had at that stage wondered 'if perhaps the completion of the B-minor Mass had something to do with Questenberg's oratorio performances' (cited on p. 85). With a certain amount of scholarly verve, Maul rehearses the case in favour of such a circumstance, even if the extant documents about the Musical Congregation in Vienna and its activities are shadowy and vague, to say the least.<sup>3</sup> We know that Questenberg was a member of this society from the mid 1730s onwards, and that what Maul describes as 'extraordinarily magnificent musical performances' (95) were characteristic of its first decades. Although Maul's work rests significantly on previous research by Bruce McIntyre and Geraldine Rohling in particular, the imaginative conjecture which enlivens this essay is all his own:

Given the fact that Count Questenberg was a member of the Musicalische Congregation and that it cultivated mass compositions on an unprecedented scale and of the highest artistic demands for its St Cecilia day celebrations, we must ask the question: could the count have contacted Bach in March 1749 on behalf of the brotherhood to ask whether the Thomaskantor would be prepared to compose a Mass in honour of the patron saint of sacred music for the next St Cecilia's day celebrations of the Musicalische Congregation on 22 November 1749, or simply to test the water? (99)

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<sup>3</sup> The Congregation was established in 1725 under imperial patronage with Johann Joseph Fux and Caldara as its first deans; its activities included an annual and, it would appear, specially commissioned Mass on 22 November, the feast of St Cecilia.

Maul's essay is also important, however, for another reason: it draws Fux himself into the orbit of BWV 232, partly by means of an ingenious suggestion that Bach's commission might have been occasioned by the comparatively recent deaths of Caldara and Fux in 1736 and 1741, given that Bach was 'considered, along with Fux, as the supreme German authority in counterpoint' (102). Bach's esteem for Fux, as reported by Johann Nikolaus Forkel, has always seemed to me more politically adept than musically convincing, but even putting this to one side, it remains the case that Vienna was the *locus classicus* for the cultivation of the Mass as a musical genre in the first half of the eighteenth century, a commonplace observation which nevertheless eclipses how comparatively little research attends this domain of composition. Fux wrote approximately 100 complete settings of the mass ordinary. Bach wrote one. That, too, is a proportion which deserves scrutiny, not least because it is so profoundly expressive of the difference between the two composers in question. Whether or not Maul's essay causes us to rethink the 'universal' meaning of Bach's 'great catholic Mass' in favour of an expressly denominational signification, the singular nature of Bach's enterprise is perhaps better understood when it is contextualized by the kind of comparisons essayed in this volume. In this respect, Vienna in general, and Fux in particular, waits in the wings.

The multiplicity of contexts afforded to BWV 232 in this volume is among its chief attractions, and I regret not being able to dwell on all of them here. The dissemination of early copies of the Mass, exemplified in Tatiana Shabalina's outstanding discussion of a newly discovered source in St Petersburg ('Manuscript score No. 4500 in St Petersburg: a new source of the B-minor Mass'), which establishes its intimate connection to Bach's autograph, mediated by an earlier copy made in Frankfurt, was at once frail and full of consequence. Ulrich Leisinger's essay on Haydn's copy of BWV 232 ('Haydn's copy of the B-minor Mass and Mozart's Mass in C minor: Viennese traditions of the B-minor Mass'), which originated in Berlin c1770, traces this source to Baron van Swieten and thereby to Mozart, to the extent that 'we may conclude that Mozart was able to study Bach's Mass, a work of unprecedented scope and complexity, in detail shortly before he began working on his own Mass in C minor K. 427' (226). The essays by Anselm Hartinger on Mendelssohn's engagement with (and rearrangement of) BWV 232 for a performance of movements from the work in Leipzig in 1841 ('"A really correct copy of the Mass"? Mendelssohn's score of the B-minor Mass as a document of the Romantics' view on matters of performance practice and source criticism'), by Katharine Pardee on early performances of the work in England ('The B-minor Mass in nineteenth-century England') and by Jan Smaczny on the influence of Bach in general and this work in particular on the formative imagination of Antonín Dvořák ('Bach's B-minor Mass: an incarnation in Prague in the 1860s and its consequences'), together with Robin Leaver's pliant and subtle unravelling of the semantics

of the qualification 'Catholic' in Lutheran Germany ('Bach's Mass: "Catholic" or "Lutheran"?) and Melvin P. Unger's sensitive exploration of the *theologia crucis*, in which he locates the 'Crucifixus' at the centre of the symmetrically structured *Symbolum Nicenum* ('Chiastic reflection in the B-minor Mass: lament's paradoxical mirror'), likewise repay attentive reading.

I cannot close here without acknowledging the fact that *Exploring Bach's B-minor Mass* is dedicated to the memory of Anne Leahy. Anne died a month before the Belfast symposium from which this book is derived took place; indeed the symposium was essentially at her initiative, when, as the editors record here, she declared at a meeting of the American Bach Society in 2006 that it was time for 'another Irish Bach conference' (xix). Her lamentable and premature passing is mourned still, and so too is the loss this represents to Irish musicology and the wider world of Bach scholarship. I'm certain this book would have vastly pleased her, and that she would have marvelled over (and vigorously engaged with) its contents. The editors, contributors and publisher of this beautifully produced book deserve congratulations, not least on that account. Anyone with a serious interest in Bach will profit immensely by it.

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