

etc ADVERTISING FEATURE



Don't miss next Sunday's incredible performance of Mass In B Minor at Glasgow City Halls

Voices of hope and joy

JOAN MCFADDEN

IN just over a week, Sunday May 19, will see the end of several months of preparation when, at 4pm in Glasgow City Halls, Bearsden Choir, together with five outstanding professional soloists and the orchestra of McOpera Ensemble, under the baton of Musical Director, Andrew Nunn, will perform Bach's stunning Mass in B Minor for the first time in their 50 year history.

Andrew says: "I believe passionately in music for all and I don't think we should ever limit ourselves. We're doing big masterpieces and our audiences undoubtedly appreciate that. We performed Messiah in December 2018 and got a wonderful response. Whilst the B Minor is less well known than Messiah we're sure that the audience will recognise many parts of the piece and we'll get a similar response."

Bach's Missa, composed in 1733 and comprising the full Kyrie and Gloria movements, was intended to stand on its own. Twelve years were to pass before he conceived of the plan to complete the work into a Missa Toto, finally completed in 1749 a year before his death, yet there is no feeling of musical discontinuity between the two elements. The Mass was never performed in its entirety during Bach's lifetime; the first documented complete performance took place in 1859.

There are dance rhythms throughout, with a celebration of life itself – its joys, challenges and tragedies – producing an unsurpassed piece. This is a massive orchestral and choral piece in which themes develop, modulate and overlap into an immense statement of the scale

and seriousness of Bach's intent. The complex development is reverent – but at the same time its solemnity is leavened by a sense of hope. Sweetness and light, pure happiness interspersed with moments of darkness sweep into the unrivalled joy of Gloria in Excelsis, the glorious ecstatic dance of a joint celebration between mankind and the angels who announced the birth of Christ and the reign of peace on earth.

INSPIRING PERFORMANCE

THERE are breath-taking solos, hymns of thanks and elegant arias, followed by the prayer for forgiveness of sins, somehow mixing deepest sadness with an equally deep sense of consolation. The Credo unfolds with a firm belief in the existence of the One God by means of a solid chant-like theme, underpinned by a confident striding orchestral bass-line, with the sense of embracing the whole universe.

The treatment of Mary's Visitation by the Holy Spirit is extremely intense; it seems to have nothing to do with biology or notions of sexual purity, but to stand as an inspiring metaphor for how an idea – The Word, Truth, Love -- is made manifest through one of us in the "making" of a being both human and divine.

The grief and pity of the crucifixion takes the audience to the depths, with the shock and ecstasy accompanying the unexpected Resurrection captured in choral runs of sheer delight, with the Mass presenting the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost as the Church teaches. Yet there are still moments of darkness, followed by the blinding flash of light produced by faith, which leads to a thrilling climax where heaven and earth are full of the glory. The final prayer for peace in any

mass is always the one that resonates most directly with the singers and audience and this one, Dona Nobis Pacem, is particularly beautiful. The audience and its world view have been changed by the whole imaginative experience, the whole story offered by the work the choir shares in this very special performance.

"This is the most challenging piece I've ever worked on but also one of the

most rewarding and I think everybody involved would say the same" says Andrew.

"We've been rehearsing every Wednesday evening since January and I can hear the difference every time. This is a really pivotal moment for the choir, not just celebrating the end of our golden jubilee year but pushing us into the next 50 years, whatever that might bring."



MASS IN B MINOR JS BACH

SUNDAY 19TH MAY 2019 / 4:00PM
GLASGOW CITY HALLS

TICKETS:
City Halls Box Office,
Choir members or
enquiries@bearsdenchoir.co.uk

£20 / £17.50 / £5

