

Ulrich LEISINGER (ED.), *Bach: Messe in h-Moll BWV 232* (Stuttgart: Carus, [2014]), 312 pp + 1 DVD-ROM, ISMN: 9790007142599, €199.

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This latest edition of J. S. Bach's B-minor Mass, by Ulrich Leisinger, described by the publisher as a 'hybrid edition', aptly addresses the needs of present-day performers and at the same time fulfils the scholarly expectations of new critical editions to conform to the current study environment.

With two very important editions of the B-minor Mass published in the last ten years, those by Joshua Rifkin (Breitkopf, 2006) and Uwe Wolf (Bärenreiter, 2010), the appearance of yet another comes as a bit of a surprise. However, the latest edition by Ulrich Leisinger aptly addresses the needs of present-day performers and at the same time fulfils the scholarly expectations of new critical editions to conform to the current study environment.

The difficulties with editing the B-minor Mass are well known. Besides the near-impossible task of deciphering what Bach actually wrote in the scratched-out sections of his score that were subsequently filled in by his second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, the existence of a set of parts of the first portion of the Mass from July 1733, containing further refinements that were not transferred to the score even when the latter was revised fifteen years later, presents the editor with yet more challenges.

In the Foreword, Leisinger explains his editorial approaches, including those that differ from his predecessors', as follows: (1) he accepts some of Carl Philipp Emanuel's numerous changes to Bach's autograph score, which, in Leisinger's view, have been carried out 'with great reverence, close temporal proximity, and a solid knowledge of his father's style', and limited to 'what was absolutely necessary'; (2) he takes the so-called Dresden parts as the primary source for the first section of the Mass, viz. Kyrie and Gloria; and (3) to complement the critical commentary, he supplies a computer program on the accompanying DVD-ROM, which allows interested readers to explore the source evidence very quickly and efficiently.

The first point is somewhat unexpected: accepting some of C. P. E. Bach's editorial interventions goes against the recent trend set by Rifkin and Wolf, which distinguishes between the hands of J. S. and C. P. E.,



32 x 25 cm

## Contents:

### Full score + DVD

Scoring:

Soli SSATB, Coro  
SSAATTBB, 2 Fl, 3  
Ob/2 Obda, 2 Fg,  
Corno da caccia, 3 Tr,  
Timp, 2 Vl, Va, Bc

particularly in the *Credo* section, in an attempt to restore Bach's original text. It seems that Leisinger is not interested in contributing further to this specific discussion: that a well-known variant reading, such as the A# in the bass part in bar 62 of 'Et in Spiritum'—which, according to both Rifkin and Wolf, was added by C. P. E. Bach after Sources C and D had been made—is left in the main text without commentary speaks for itself.

Leisinger's second point, on the other hand, is a logical move. While Rifkin's main objective was to present the state of the autograph score that Bach put together in his final years, Wolf's 2010 edition took a step further and included an additional layer of text—the variants found in the Dresden parts of 1733, which he indicated in grey ink. This may have been a neat way of conveying the complexity of the source information, but the similarity of colours (grey and black), together with the use of dotted lines to indicate Wolf's editorial interventions, has made the score too complex for practical use. Clearly the option of using the 1733 parts as the primary source was available to Leisinger's predecessors, but must have been rejected for a good reason. In order to capture the essence of the work, the rationale behind the production of a hybrid edition based on the 1733 *Missa*, written for the Dresden court, and the 1748/9 version of the B-minor Mass, the intended recipient of which is unknown, must be solid and supported by clear editorial principles. However, as the musical contents of the 1733 *Missa* and the corresponding section of the score of the *Missa Tota* of 1748/9 display no fundamental differences, practical musicians will certainly benefit from having the more detailed scoring and articulation marks imported from the original parts. So thanks to Leisinger, for the first time we have an edition of the B-minor Mass in which the main text of the 'Domine Deus' features the flute 'solo' (as opposed to the 'tutti' indicated in the score of the *Missa Tota*) using the Lombard rhythm () . It should be noted that certain compromises, such as the use of ossia notation in the 'Quoniam' to supply the later revisions from Bach's score, and the addition of the bassoon part in the final movement 'Dona nobis pacem', were necessary to distinguish the 1733 parts as the primary source. One major drawback of this hybrid edition is the sudden disappearance of continuo figures from the *Credo* section onwards, which regrettably had to be the case if the chosen editorial principles were to be upheld. Should another edition be planned in the near future, it may well be based on the version used by C. P. E. Bach in 1786, which takes in all these additional details. For the time being, however, C. Wolff's edition of 1997 can be used for that purpose.

The third point, the most innovative and welcome feature of this edition, has enormous implications for the future actualisation of critical editions. Navigating the digital version of the score supplied on the accompanying DVD-ROM is extremely easy. Each critical annotation is accompanied by an image of the facsimile in expanded view. This is incredibly convenient as the sources of the B-minor Mass abound with places in which the notation is difficult to decipher and a comparison of the readings from the handful of primary sources at hand is therefore crucial. So an activity that would usually involve having to clear one's desk or table to lay photographic reproductions side by side can now be completed in just a few mouse clicks. For example, it took a mere 30 seconds to locate the annotation in the bass of bar 76 of the 'Et resurrexit' in the digital edition (see Figures 1 and 2) and display the facsimile images of the four sources side by side, which is very impressive.

Put into historical perspective, this edition exhibits a recognisable continuity from Wolf's 2010 edition at various levels of editorial preference, ranging from slurring (e.g. 'Et in Spiritum Sanctum', Oboe II, bb. 6–7 ) to the division into twenty-three movements with further subdivisions (e.g. 'Et expecto' begins at bar 123b of the 'Confiteor', rather than at the return to D major at bar 147, which can be observed in earlier editions

from Smend's of 1954 to Rifkin's of 2006, while 'Pleni sunt coeli' now appears as a visible section within Sanctus), which is a welcome feature.

Conductors will find this edition easier to read in comparison with other available options. Its staves measure 6 mm in height, as opposed to 5.1 mm in Smend, C. Wolff and Rifkin's or 5.6 mm in U. Wolf's edition, and dispense with the original-clef indications at the start of each movement, which are usually considered essential for modern critical editions.

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**Figure 1** Excerpt from the digital score with the option to display annotations enabled



**Figure 2** 'Et resurrexit', annotation in b. 76, bass