

Martyn Parfect Review: Bach:Mass in B Minor
5 April 2025. Lichfield Cathedral



Martyn Parfect

Martyn Parfect was a professional clarinettist from 1978 having attended the Birmingham School of Music now renamed Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 1974. Previously studied with the John Fuest of the RLPO and was 2nd clarinet in the Melachrino Strings & Orchestra as well as soloist in concertos by Mozart, Weber and Copland. He also performed in many chamber and solo recitals around the UK with the pianist John Gough

It helps to have generous donors when putting on big works, such as Bach's Mass in B Minor, so everyone at last night's performance is indebted to the generous legacy from a past chairman. The quartet of excellent soloists, sizable musicians performing on period-instruments plus this excellent choir gave a performance that was truly memorable.

Spicer as always conveyed intensity from outset with the choir's first entry in the Kyrie which was bitingly dramatic helped by his brisk tempi.

The precision of both soprano Sophie Bevan and counter-tenor Simon Ponsford in their first duet together in the *Christe eleison*, was truly exhilarating with both voices clearly listening to each other. This was also especially so in their first duet in the Credo. Special mention should be made for the leader Catherine Martin's accompaniment to Bevan's *Laudamus te*.

If the first half was good the second half was something a little more special with the choir displaying intense feeling especially so in the *Sanctus* when the choir was split into double choir. This whole performance was fresh and alert and above all had great authenticity performing one of Bach's most popular of works. If the donor was listening from high above he would have been as happy as the very large audience clearly were.

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