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# Bach's B minor Mass: Next Up, the BSO!

By [BRIAN MCCREATH \(/PEOPLE/BRIAN-MCCREATH\)](#) • JAN 30, 2017

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manuscript of the Kyrie of Bach's Mass in B minor

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When we learned that the 2016-2017 concert season in Boston would include no fewer than four major presentations of J.S. Bach's Mass in B minor, it seemed almost like too much of a good thing. Almost (<http://classicalwcrb.org/post/ok-bach-lets-do-0>).

In fact, the opposite has been true, from my perspective anyway. After two of those four performances, the familiarity of the music isn't what stands out to me. It's the vast differences in approach that make each performance a new event.

Led by Martin Pearlman, Boston Baroque (<http://www.bostonbaroque.org/>) delivered the distilled essence of the music, nothing more, nothing less, so each note – and the relationships of all the parts, moving together – were cast in clear, discernable relief.

Meanwhile, the Boston Early Music Festival (<http://bemf.org/>) concert gave us a conductor – Ton Koopman – pre-disposed to find exuberance at every turn and young players and singers – from the Juilliard School and the Royal Conservatoire of the Hague – willing to trade a bit of precision for musical lightning bolts. It was emotionally thrilling.

When the Boston Symphony Orchestra (<http://bso.org/>) and Tanglewood Festival Chorus dive into the B minor Mass later this week, the experience will be even more different from the previous two, with modern instruments, a much bigger concert hall, and conductor Andris Nelsons.

Looking ahead to late February, when Cantata Singers (<http://cantatasingers.org/>) and conductor David Hoose round out these four sets of B minor Mass performances, I hope you'll join us to cross the finish line! At that point, if you've made it to all four presentations, I'll be there to hand you a ticket to a WCRB event later in the spring, along with the chance to win a special secret prize. And if you've made it to one or two of the others, stop by anyway to say hi! We'll have a few other fun things for you to mark the occasion.

In the meantime, to let us know you've been to the concerts, post a pic to Twitter or Instagram, using the hashtag #BachBostonMass.

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