

## Soprano Rosa Lamoreaux *with the Cathedral Choral Society*

*"...enrapturing solos...text-sensitive accounts"*

*The Washington Post*

Posted, 05/14/2012

### Cathedral Choral Society gives sublime rendition of Bach's Mass in B Minor

By Cecelia Porter, Published: May 14

From the first measures, you feel drawn into something so overwhelming that you forget how much time is passing. That's the effect Bach's monumental Mass in B Minor has had on audiences since it was first heard in its massive entirety more than a century after his death.

Bach probably never heard it that way. He composed it piecemeal over the years, gradually transforming his concept into a titanic whole. Yet for liturgical reasons and matters of length, it has never fit Catholic or Protestant services. So it stands as a grand concert piece — what Bach expert Christoph Wolff calls the summa of the composer's work.

On Sunday, it was this sense of reaching for the stars that conductor J. Reilly Lewis achieved as he led the Cathedral Choral Society, its orchestra and some extraordinary vocal and instrumental soloists in the Mass. The music resounded into the spacious reaches of the Washington National Cathedral. This critic has never heard a more sublime account of Bach's Mass. The work demands superhuman musical ability

and sheer physical endurance from its performers, above all from the chorus (at times in five, six and eight parts).

Lewis opened the three-section Kyrie gently, then bit by bit lifted its fugue to passionate heights. (As one expects from Bach, fugues pop up throughout this two-hour epic, although they contrast sharply in character and design.) One felt relentless exuberance, wonder and solemnity intensify throughout the Mass, fomenting emotion and energy while impelling the performers to the final call for peace. **Along the way, we heard bounding dances of joy (the Gloria, itself a virtual concerto), sections based on Gregorian chant (the Credo), moments of jubilant a cappella choral singing (the Sanctus), enrapturing solos (soprano Rosa Lamoreaux with violinist Sally McLain) and duets (flutists Karen Johnson and Lauren Panfili), to name a few. Soloists Lamoreaux, Kate Vetter Cain, Charles Humphries, Robert Petillo and Jon Bruno, while diverse in style and tone quality, gave riveting, text-sensitive accounts of Bach's arias.**

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/cathedral-choral-society-gives-sublime-rendition-of-bachs-mass-in-b-minor/2012/05/14/gIQAuHQePU\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/cathedral-choral-society-gives-sublime-rendition-of-bachs-mass-in-b-minor/2012/05/14/gIQAuHQePU_story.html)