



# Choral Masterworks from Bach to Britten: Reflections of a Conductor

*Robert J. Summer*

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Sixteen of classical music's greatest choral compositions are discussed at length in Choral Masterworks from Bach to Britten: Reflections of a Conductor. Pieces such as Bach's Mass in B Minor and St. Matthew's Passion, Schubert's Mass in G, Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms, Verdi's Requiem, Mendelssohn's Elijah, and Britten's War Requiem are examined and analyzed in an effort to help performers, students, and listeners more fully understand and appreciate these significant works. Choral professor and conductor Robert J. Summer has combined his personal observations with shared ideas from some of the greatest choral conductors of our time, including Robert Shaw, Sir David Willcocks, Donald Neuen, Julius Herford, and Robert Page. His experiences with some of these conductors, such as his collaboration with Robert Shaw on the recording of Mahler's 8th Symphony, are captured in detail, paying homage to the conductor, the composer, and the work. Each chapter focuses on an individual work and presents musical analysis, structure, textual symbolism, and identification of traits that endear the work to performers and listeners. Summer comments on the function and relationship of solos, recitatives, and choruses, offering suggestions and considerations for preparing the works for performance. The textual organization of many works is included in appendixes, and the book concludes with a bibliography and a selected discography. Choral Masterworks from Bach to Britten is appropriate both as a textbook for choral literature classes and as a listening guide for the general music lover.



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