

Joshua Rifkin bio

Joshua Rifkin's life in music has spanned Renaissance motets and ragtime masters, Bach cantatas and Baroque Beatles. He has conducted major orchestras, ensembles, and opera companies throughout much of the world, and compiled an extensive discography ranging from the fifteenth-century chanson master Antoine Busnoys to Mexican modernist Silvestre Revueltas; his epoch-making recording of piano works by the Black American composer Scott Joplin has entered the Grammy Hall of Fame. The Bach Ensemble, which he founded in 1978, won Britain's Gramophone Award for its pathbreaking recording of the Mass in B Minor, has toured widely in the U.S. and Europe, and curated the Academy of Music in Brixen/Bressanone, Italy, and the festival Bach:Sommer in Arnstadt, Germany.

Rifkin's list of scholarly publications covers topics from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, with particular emphasis on Josquin Desprez, Heinrich Schütz, and J. S. Bach; his edition of the B Minor Mass, published by Breitkopf & Härtel, presented the first critical text of this standard work, and his edition of Schütz's wedding concertos for Bärenreiter has won critical acclaim. Subjects of recent studies include authenticity and chronology in Josquin; stylistic development of the motet around 1500; questions of biography, sources, and performance in Schütz; problems of editorial practice in Bach; and the relationship of Rembrandt van Rijn and Burchard Grossmann the Younger.

Joshua Rifkin has received honorary doctorates from the University of Dortmund, Germany, and the Academy of Music in Krakow, Poland, as well as the the Gutenberg Medallion, the highest distinction of the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen, Germany; the European Church Music Prize; and honorary membership in the Royal Musical Society.