

96042

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

J.S. BACH

MATTHÄUS-PASSION
JOHANNES-PASSION

Dresdner Kreuzchor
Thomanerchor Leipzig
Gewandhausorchester Leipzig
Hallenser Madrigalisten
Virtuosi Saxoniae

Rudolf Mauersberger
Erhard Mauersberger
Ludwig Güttler

SENCE · QUINTESSENZ · QUINTESSENZA · QUINAESENCIA · QUINTESSÊNCIA · QUINTESSENCE · QUINTESSENZ · QUINTESSENZA · QUINAESE

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685–1750

Matthäus-Passion BWV244

CD1

59'39

Part 1

1	No.1 Chorus: Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen	8'50	12	No.12 Recitative (Soprano): Wiewohl mein Herz in Tränen schwimmt	1'24
2	No.2 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Da Jesus diese Rede vollendet hatte	0'55	13	No.13 Aria (Soprano): Ich will dir mein Herze schenken	4'10
3	No.3 Chorale (Chorus): Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen	0'58	14	No.14 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Und da sie den Lobgesang gesprochen hatten	1'16
4	No.4 Recitative: Da versammelten sich die Hohenpriester (Evangelist) – Ja nicht auf das Fest (Chorus) – Da nun Jesus war zu Bethanien (Evangelist) – Wozu dienet dieser Unrat? (Chorus) – Da das Jesus merkte (Evangelist, Jesus)	3'37	15	No.15 Chorale (Chorus): Erkenne mich, mein Hüter	1'13
5	No.5 Recitative (Alto): Du lieber Heiland du	0'56	16	No.16 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, Petrus): Petrus aber antwortete und sprach zu ihm	1'24
6	No.6 Aria (Alto): Buß und Reu	4'46	17	No.17 Chorale (Chorus): Ich will hier bei dir stehen	1'15
7	No.7 Recitative (Evangelist, Judas): Da ging hin der Zwölfen	0'39	18	No.18 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Da kam Jesus mit ihnen zu einem Hofe	2'01
8	No.8 Aria (Soprano): Blute nur, du liebes Herz!	4'44	19	No.19 Recitative with Chorale (Tenor, Chorus): O Schmerz! Hier zittert das gequälte Herz	1'43
9	No.9 Recitative: Aber am ersten Tage der süßen Brot (Evangelist) – Wo willst du, daß wir dir bereiten (Chorus) – Er sprach (Evangelist, Jesus) – Und sie wurden sehr betrübt (Evangelist) – Herr, bin ich's? (Chorus)	2'31	20	No.20 Aria with Chorus (Tenor, Chorus): Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen	5'30
10	No.10 Chorale (Chorus): Ich bin's, ich sollte büßen	0'56	21	No.21 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Und ging hin ein wenig	0'56
11	No.11 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Er antwortete und sprach	4'07	22	No.22 Recitative (Bass): Der Heiland fällt vor seinem Vater nieder	1'13
			23	No.23 Aria (Bass): Gerne will ich mich bequemen	4'24

CD2

56'04

1	No.24 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Und er kam zu seinen Jüngern	1'40	12	No.35 Aria (Tenor): Geduld!	4'08
2	No.25 Chorale (Chorus): Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh' allzeit	1'16	13	No.36 Recitative: Und der Hohepriester antwortete und sprach zu ihm (Evangelist, Caiaphas, Jesus) – Er ist des Todes schuldig! (Chorus) – Da speieten sie aus (Evangelist) – Weissage uns, Christe (Chorus)	2'29
3	No.26 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, Judas): Und er kam und fand sie aber schlafend	2'35	14	No.37 Chorale (Chorus): Wer hat dich so geschlagen	1'03
4	No.27 Aria with Chorus: So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen (Soprano, Alto, Chorus) – Sind Blitze, sind Donner in Wolken verschwunden? (Chorus)	5'11	15	No.38 Recitative: Petrus aber saß draußen im Palast (Evangelist, Maidens I & II, Petrus) – Wahrlich, du bist auch einer von denen (Chorus) – Da hub er an, sich zu verfluchen (Evangelist, Petrus)	2'37
5	No.28 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Und siehe, einer aus denen	3'06	16	No.39 Aria (Alto): Erbarme dich	7'09
6	No.29 Chorale (Chorus): O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß	6'19	17	No.40 Chorale (Chorus): Bin ich gleich von dir gewichen	1'08
Part 2					
7	No.30 Aria with Chorus (Alto, Chorus): Ach! nun ist mein Jesus hin!	4'16	18	No.41 Recitative: Des Morgens aber hielten alle Hohepriester (Evangelist, Judas) – Was gehet uns das an? (Chorus) – Und er warf die Silberlinge in den Tempel (Evangelist, Priests I & II)	1'51
8	No.31 Recitative (Evangelist): Die aber Jesum gegriffen hatten	1'08	19	No.42 Aria (Bass): Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder!	3'20
9	No.32 Chorale (Chorus): Mir hat die Welt trüglich gericht'	0'52	20	No.43 Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus, Jesus): Sie hielten aber einen Rat	2'18
10	No.33 Recitative (Evangelist, Caiaphas, Witnesses I & II): Und wiewohl viel falsche Zeugen herzutraten	1'14	21	No.44 Chorale (Chorus): Befehl du deine Wege	1'17
11	No.34 Recitative (Tenor): Mein Jesus schweigt zu falschen Lügen stille	0'50			

CD3	69'51	13	No.57 Aria (Bass): Komm, süßes Kreuz	6'04	23	No.67 Recitative with Chorus (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Chorus): Nun ist der Herr zur Ruh gebracht	2'33	Johannes-Passion BWV245			
1	No.45 Recitative and Chorus: Auf das Fest aber hatte der Landpfleger Gewohnheit (Evangelist, Pilatus, Pilatus's Wife, Chorus) – Laß ihn kreuzigen! (Chorus)	2'40	14	No.58 Recitative: Und da sie an die Stätte kamen (Evangelist) – Der du den Tempel Gottes zerbricht (Chorus) – Desgleichen auch die Hohenpriester (Evangelist) – Andern hat er geholfen (Chorus) – Desgleichen schmäheten ihn auch die Mörder (Evangelist)	3'55	24	No.68 Chorus: Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder	6'53	CD4	52'04	
2	No.46 Chorale (Chorus): Wie wunderbarlich ist doch diese Strafe!	1'01	15	No.59 Recitative (Alto): Ach Golgatha, unselges Golgatha!	1'40				Part 1		
3	No.47 Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Der Landpfleger sagte	0'18	16	No.60 Aria with Chorus (Alto, Chorus): Sehet, Jesus hat die Hand	3'41				1	No.1 Chorus: Herr, unser Herrscher	7'53
4	No.48 Recitative (Soprano): Er hat uns allen wohlgetan	1'20	17	No.61 Recitative: Und von der sechsten Stunde an (Evangelist, Jesus) – Der ruft dem Elias! (Chorus) – Und bald lief einer unter ihnen (Evangelist) – Halt! laß sehen (Chorus) – Aber Jesus schrie abermal laut (Evangelist)	2'43				2	No.2 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Jesus ging mit seinen Jüngern	1'09
5	No.49 Aria (Soprano): Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben	4'21	18	No.62 Chorale (Chorus): Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden	1'53				3	Chorus: Jesum von Nazareth!	0'10
6	No.50 Recitative: Sie schriean aber noch mehr (Evangelist) – Laß ihn kreuzigen! (Chorus) – Da aber Pilatus sahe (Evangelist, Pilatus) – Sein Blut komme (Chorus) – Da gab er ihnen Barrabam los (Evangelist)	2'09	19	No.63 Recitative: Und siehe da, der Vorhang im Tempel zerriß (Evangelist) – Währlich, dieser ist Gottes Sohn gewesen (Chorus) – Und es waren viel Weiber da (Evangelist)	2'56				4	Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Jesus spricht zu ihnen	0'30
7	No.51 Recitative (Alto): Erbarm es, Gott!	0'58	20	No.64 Recitative (Bass): Am Abend, da es kühle war	2'14				5	Chorus: Jesum von Nazareth!	0'10
8	No.52 Aria (Alto): Können Tränen meiner Wangen	6'47	21	No.65 Aria (Bass): Mache dich, mein Herze, rein	7'17				6	Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Jesus antwortete	0'22
9	No.53 Recitative: Da nahmen die Kriegsknechte (Evangelist) – Gegrüßet seist du, Jüdenkönig! (Chorus) – Und speieten ihn an (Evangelist)	1'05	22	No.66 Recitative: Und Joseph nahm den Leib (Evangelist) – Herr, wir haben gedacht (Chorus) – Pilatus sprach zu ihnen (Evangelist, Pilatus)	2'52				7	No.3 Chorale (Chorus): O große Lieb'	0'53
10	No.54 Chorale (Chorus): O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden	2'47							8	No.4 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Auf daß das Wort erfüllet würde	1'11
11	No.55 Recitative (Evangelist): Und da sie ihn verspottet hatten	0'49							9	No.5 Chorale (Chorus): Dein Will gescheh, Herr Gott, zugleich	0'56
12	No.56 Recitative (Bass): Ja freilich will in uns das Fleisch und Blut	0'42							10	No.6 Recitative (Evangelist): Die Schar aber und der Oberhauptmann	0'46
									11	No.7 Aria (Alto): Von den Stricken meiner Sünden	4'53
									12	No.8 Recitative (Evangelist): Simon Petrus aber folgte Jesu nach	0'18
									13	No.9 Aria (Soprano): Ich folge dir gleichfalls	3'47
									14	No.10 Recitative (Evangelist, Maiden, Petrus, Jesus, Servant): Derselbige Jünger war dem Hohepriester bekannt	3'03
									15	No.11 Chorale (Chorus): Wer hat dich so geschlagen	1'34
									16	No.12 Recitative (Evangelist): Und Hannas sandte ihn gebunden	0'17

17	Chorus: Bist du nicht seiner Jünger einer?	0'24	CD5	55'27	19	No.26 Chorale (Chorus): In meines Herzens Grunde	1'00	31	No.36 Recitative (Evangelist): Die Juden aber	2'13	
18	Recitative (Evangelist, Petrus, Servant): Er leugnete aber	1'17	1	No.21 Recitative (Evangelist): Und die Kriegsknechte flochten	0'09	20	No.27 Recitative (Evangelist): Die Kriegsknechte aber	0'32	32	No.37 Chorale (Chorus): O hilf, Christe, Gottes Sohn	1'01
19	No.13 Aria (Tenor): Ach, mein Sinn	2'28	2	Chorus: Sei begrüßet, lieber Jüdenkönig!	0'36	21	Chorus: Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen	1'24	33	No.38 Recitative (Evangelist): Darnach bat Pilatum	1'55
20	No.14 Chorale (Chorus): Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück	1'03	3	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Und gaben ihm Backenstreiche	0'55	22	Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Auf daß erfüllet würde die Schrift	1'38	34	No.39 Chorus: Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine	7'09
	Part 2		4	Chorus: Kreuzige, kreuzige!	0'53	23	No.28 Chorale (Chorus): Er nahm alles wohl in acht	1'09	35	No.40 Chorale (Chorus): Ach Herr, laß dein lieb Engelein	1'49
21	No.15 Chorale (Chorus): Christus, der uns selig macht	1'04	5	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Pilatus sprach zu ihnen	0'09	24	No.29 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus): Und von Stund an	1'30		Christoph Genz <i>tenor</i> (Evangelist & Arias) Egbert Junghanns <i>bass</i> (Jesus)	
22	No.16 Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Da führten sie Jesum	0'33	6	Chorus: Wir haben ein Gesetz	1'18	25	No.30 Aria (Alto): Es ist vollbracht!	4'52		Andreas Scheibner <i>bass</i> (Petrus, Pilatus & Arias)	
23	Chorus: Wäre dieser nicht ein Übeltäter	0'59	7	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus, Jesus): Da Pilatus das Wort hörte	1'18	26	No.31 Recitative (Evangelist): Und neiget das Haupt und verschied	0'26		Christiane Oelze <i>soprano</i> (Arias) Annette Markert <i>alto</i> (Arias)	
24	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Da sprach Pilatus zu ihnen	0'08	8	No.22 Chorale (Chorus): Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn	0'49	27	No.32 Aria (Bass, Chorus): Mein teurer Heiland	5'20		Sylke Schwab <i>soprano</i> (Maiden) Hans-Jürgen Richter <i>tenor</i> (Servant)	
25	Chorus: Wir dürfen niemand röten	0'37	9	No.23 Recitative: Die Juden aber schrieen (Evangelist) – Lässest du diesen los (Chorus)	1'17	28	No.33 Recitative (Evangelist): Und siehe da	0'28		Hallenser Madrigalisten Virtuosi Saxoniae	
26	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus, Jesus): Auf daß erfüllet würde das Wort Jesu	1'42	10	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Da Pilatus das Wort hörte	0'33	29	No.34 Arioso (Tenor): Mein Herz, indem die ganze Welt	0'42		Ludwig Güttler <i>conductor</i>	
27	No.17 Chorale (Chorus): Ach großer König	1'33	11	Chorus: Weg, weg mit dem	0'58	30	No.35 Aria (Soprano): Zerfließe, mein Herze	6'04			
28	No.18 Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, Pilatus): Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm	1'16	12	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Spricht Pilatus zu ihnen	0'06						
29	Chorus: Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabam!	0'13	13	Chorus: Wir haben keinen König	0'14						
30	Recitative (Evangelist): Barrabas aber war ein Mörder	0'28	14	Recitative (Evangelist): Da überantwortete er ihn	0'49						
31	No.19 Arioso (Bass): Betrachte, meine Seel	2'02	15	No.24 Aria (Bass, Chorus): Eilt, ihr angefochtenen Seelen	3'57						
32	No.20 Aria (Tenor): Erwäge, wie sein blutgefärbter Rücken	8'01	16	No.25 Recitative (Evangelist): Allda kreuzigten sie ihn	1'05						
			17	Chorus: Schreibe nicht: der Jüden König	0'36						
			18	Recitative (Evangelist, Pilatus): Pilatus antwortet	0'14						

Recording: January & February 1970 (Matthäus), May 1998 (Johannes), Lukaskirche, Dresden, Germany
Recording producer: Reimar Bluth (Matthäus); Bernd Runge (Johannes)
Balance engineer: Claus Strüben (Matthäus); Horst Langheinrich (Johannes)
Editing: Annelene Dziengel, Hildegard Miehe (Matthäus); Wolfgang Ragwitz, Eberhard Hinz (Johannes)
Cover: Shutterstock/tofutyklein
© 1975 VEB Deutsche Schallplatten Berlin (Matthäus)
© 1998 Edel Records GmbH (Johannes)
© 2019 Brilliant Classics
Licensed from Edel Germany GmbH

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791

Matthäus-Passion BWV244

The fact that the Bach family was unanimous in considering the St Matthew Passion the greatest of its genre leaves little doubt that Johann Sebastian was well aware of the work's singular qualities. And when Anna Magdalena supplied a figured bass with the heading 'for the great Passion', there were no questions in the house of the Thomaskantor as to which work she had in mind.

Bach revised the Passion on numerous occasions, adapting it to the performance setting. All the alterations had one thing in common: namely that they were intended to amplify the impact of the monumental design. That Bach went to the length of employing two choirs for the vocals and a full orchestra doubled must have seemed extortionate indeed to his contemporaries. It is all the more astonishing that we know so little of the work's origins and the conditions under which it was performed; there is no indication of scoring for the St Matthew Passion, or of its reception by Leipzig's churchgoers. Not even the year of the premiere can be established with complete confidence. While 1729 used to be the consensus among Bach scholars, the belief has now gained ground that the work must have been performed in the Thomaskirche two years earlier.

The city fathers and church leaders in Leipzig had no lack of grounds for objecting or presenting their cantor with legal documents designed to put him in his place (as they indeed did with relish on some occasions). Bach's contract of May 1723 includes a passage requiring him to 'preserve good order in the churches by fashioning the music in such a way that it be not unduly protracted, further that it be constituted in such a manner that the outcome is not operatic but may rather arouse the spirit of reverence amongst those present.' 'Bach's rendering of the St Matthew Passion not only far exceeded the time limit, but also enlisted the entire repertoire of vocal forms in use at this time. He borrowed the various recitative forms (secco and

accompagnato) and the principle of arias and ariosi from the world of opera, and inserted among them congregational chorales based on the word of the Gospel and polyphonic choruses.

Tradition dictated that the 'musical Passion' was performed during the vesper service on the afternoon of Good Friday, usually beginning at two o'clock. The first part of the Passion (up to Christ being taken prisoner) preceded the sermon, while the inquisition at the hands of the high priests and the crucifixion came after it. The Leipzig-based poet Christian Friedrich Henrici (known as Picander) divided the words of the Gospel according to St Matthew into 15 'acts' based on the progress of events, and rounded off each set with a meditation. One might easily believe at first sight that the focus is on the original biblical text, but Bach's musical setting shifts the centre of gravity towards the poet's insertions in which the daughter of Zion, Mary and the faithful soul add a contemplative aspect.

It is not possible to discern what influence Bach brought to bear on Picander's writing. That 'Bach made his own tools in Picander' (Spitta) and that 'he drafted the plan for the work in detail and Picander worked virtually under his supervision' (Schweitzer) is rather a matter of wishful thinking on the part of biographers. Bach does, however, seem at least to have chosen the chorales himself, just as some of the interventions in Picander's writing most likely stem from his pen – amendments in the choice of words which, though minor, more forcefully underline the congregational character. The community spirit is at its most impressive in the introductory chorus 'Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen', which Picander had originally intended as a soprano aria for the daughter of Zion.

The interpretation of Bach's autograph and the symbols he used in writing the St Matthew Passion have been another target of avid speculation. Some of the numerical cabalistics and alphabetical decipherings point more to the mathematical genius of Bach's exegetes, while others can actually be appreciated as an audible experience. When Christ prophesises his betrayal at the last supper, the question 'Lord, is it I?'

is asked 11 times – Judas having no need to ask since the betrayal has already been committed. The Jewish turba chorus ‘Laß ihn kreuzigen!’ (‘Crucify him!’) is replete with sharps, while the words of Christ are the only recitative passages to be wrapped in the ‘halo’ of the strings. It is not until the struggle with death, when Christ takes his last step towards incarnation with the call ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani’ (‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’) that the strings fall silent here too.

In 1732 Christian Gerber, a contemporary of Bach, reported a performance of the Passion at which ‘a pious, noble widow’ screamed ‘God save us, ‘tis though one were at an opera or comedy’. It is, however, debatable whether the Passion in question was any of those from Bach’s pen. Bach’s rendering of the St Matthew Passion sank into oblivion after he died. There were still some insiders who described it as one of his most magnificent pieces, but nobody was so bold to undertake a performance of this monumental work – nobody, that is, until Carl Friedrich Zelter and Felix Mendelssohn tackled the Passion with the Berliner Sing-Akademie in 1829. The audience included Frederick William III of Prussia as well as Berlin’s intellectual crème de la crème in the personages of Droysen, Hegel, Heine, Schleiermacher, Rahel von Varnhagen and many others. The *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* enthused: ‘an important and fortunate event. The greatest and holiest of works by the master of all tone poets springs back to life again after almost a century of seclusion, a magnificent celebration of faith and the arts...’. The St Matthew Passion had now become an indispensable part of the concert programme for Easter week.

© Wolfgang Lempfrid

Translation: Stephen Smith

Johannes-Passion BWV245

Johann Sebastian Bach: Johannes-Passion BWV245

Music often sounds so worldly and jolly that it is more suited to a dance floor or an opera than to divine service... Now, however, it has become the practice to sing the Passion story (which was formerly sung in simple plainchant, humbly and reverently) with the accompaniment of many kinds of instruments in the most elaborate fashion. Occasionally a verse from a Passion hymn is introduced, and the whole congregation joins in the singing, and then the panoply of instruments is heard again. When in one of our great cities this Passion music was done for the first time, with twelve violins, many oboes, bassoons, and other instruments, many people were astonished and did not know what to make of it... They were thrown into the greatest bewilderment, looked at each other, and said, ‘What will become of this?’. An elderly widow of the nobility exclaimed, ‘God save us, my children! It’s just as if we were at an opera’. Everyone was genuinely displeased and voiced just complaints against it.

So wrote the theologian Christian Gerber in his *History of Church Ceremonies in Saxony*, published in Dresden and Leipzig in 1732. The passage has sometimes been understood as referring to either the St John Passion or the St Matthew Passion of Johann Sebastian Bach, both of which had been performed in Leipzig before 1732, but this is almost certainly not the case. For one thing, Bach’s were not the first elaborate Passion settings to be sung there. A St Mark Passion by Johann Kuhnau, his predecessor as Thomaskantor, had been heard in St Thomas’s Church in 1721, two years before Bach’s arrival in the city, and similar works at the university church before then. The performance that earned the disapprobation of the pious clergyman is more likely to have taken place in Dresden.

Gerber’s account, with its mention of music ‘befitting an opera’, a ‘panoply of instruments’ and the occasional ‘verse from a Passion hymn’, would nevertheless apply quite well to Bach’s St John Passion, and his congregation might easily have reacted with ‘the greatest bewilderment’ when they first experienced it at the St

Nicholas Church in 1724. Some, indeed, might have argued that Bach had acted in breach of his contract, which expressly stated that the liturgical music he provided 'should not last too long, and should be of such a nature as not to make an operatic impression, but rather incite the listeners to devotion'. The Bach Passions are now so firmly accepted as masterpieces of devout Lutheran church music that we may wonder what the authorities and congregations in Leipzig and elsewhere might have found so theatrical. What disturbed the 'elderly widow' and caused her to compare whatever setting of the Passion she heard to an opera was most probably the inclusion of recitative and da capo (A–B–A) arias. Certainly the former, with its brief, dramatic choral interjections, might seem to smack of the opera house, while the arias had the effect of thrusting the soloist 'to the centre of the stage'. However, recitative and aria were not new in church music.

As early as 1701 the Hamburg pastor Erdmann Neumeister had described a set of cantata texts he had written for the Weißenfels court as 'resembling a piece from an opera, composed of *stylo recitativo* and arias'. But few of those who attended the service in the St Nicholas Church on Good Friday in 1724 can have experienced, outside the opera house, a work on the scale of the St John Passion that included such a large proportion of recitative. The text of the recitative in the St John Passion is taken entirely from St John's Gospel, except for two brief passages (Nos. 12 and 33) from St Matthew's. In much the same way as operatic recitative, therefore, it carries forward the dramatic action. Most of it falls to the Evangelist (tenor), but the words of Christ, Pilatus, Petrus and other individuals are allotted to different singers. As was traditional, the words of Christ are sung by a bass, but Bach does not sanctify them with a 'halo' of string sounds, as he was to do in the St Matthew Passion a few years later: in the St John Passion, all the recitative is accompanied only by continuo (organ and string bass).

For the most part it is composed in a straightforward narrative style, but Bach is always ready to respond to a particular poignant or dramatic incident with a passage

of *arioso* or an extended melisma. One example of this is the long, chromatic passage on the word 'weinete' ('wept') to express Petrus's remorse at having denied Jesus (No.12). Another is the harrowing vocal phrase that represents the scourging of Jesus (No.18). Where it calls for it, the Gospel narrative is set as a brief *turbæ* ('crowd' in Latin) chorus; when the Jews call for Christ to be crucified, for example (Nos. 21 and 23). These two choruses quite naturally share the same music, since they set the same text, but it is a feature of the St John Passion that the *turbæ* often use the same music for different texts; the very first (in No.2), to the words 'Jesum von Nazareth' is heard no fewer than four more times (again in No.2, and also in Nos. 16, 18 and 23). Some commentators have taken these repetitions as indicating that Bach had to complete the work in some haste: others have argued a concern for musical unity on the composer's part. The American scholar Eric Chafe, after a careful study of the different words to which the music is repeated, has suggested that Bach intended by this means to establish Jesus of Nazareth as King of the Jews, anticipating the ironic inscription that Pilatus placed above the cross (in No.25).

There are in all eight arias in the St John Passion (two for each soloist), and these introduce a contemplative element into the telling of the Passion story. Five of them (as well as two extended *ariosos*, Nos. 19 and 34, and the final chorus, No.39) use texts from a celebrated Passion oratorio by the Hamburg poet Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1712), which was set to music by Keiser, Telemann, Handel and others. Bach's arias are remarkable for their range of expression, but no less so for their variety of instrumentation. The 'panoply of instruments' goes far beyond the violins, oboes and bassoons mentioned by Gerber. Trumpets and horns would have been considered inappropriate for a Passion setting, but most of the other instruments current at the time are included, as well as some which might have been thought almost obsolete. Two viola d'amore and a lute lend a subtle colouring to the bass *arioso* 'Betrachte, meine Seel' (No.19) and to the succeeding aria, where the string instruments (as well as some of the tenor's phrases) suggest the arc of the rainbow

mentioned in the text, and the bass viol, closely associated with Lutheran sentiments about easeful death, is chosen to accompany Jesus' last words on the cross: 'Es ist vollbracht'. In the outer sections of this aria, Bach frames the work with two great choruses. If the members of the congregation who settled into their pews on the afternoon of 7 April 1724 were not already aware of the magnitude of what they were about to hear, the opening chorus, with its surging semiquavers filling both the instrumental and the vocal textures of an expansive da capo structure, must have convinced them of it. The other extended chorus is the traditional one of farewell after Jesus has been laid to rest (No.39), the descending string phrases suggesting burial. The text had again been designed for ternary (da capo) setting, but Bach extended it by repetition to fill a rondo form (A-B²-A-B²-A) which was more in proportion to the rest of the work.

The St John Passion might well have ended with this chorus (as the St Matthew Passion was later to do with a similar one) but, perhaps to emphasise how the work glorifies the Saviour through the Crucifixion, Bach ends instead with a chorale which at its climax recalls the very opening of the work in the words 'Herr Jesu Christ, erhöre mich' ('Lord Jesus Christ, hear me'). This is the last of several chorales (or hymns) introduced at appropriate points in the story. Whether or not the congregation joined in the singing of them (as they apparently did in the Passion that Gerber decried), the effect of these well-known hymns was to involve everyone in the performance – in other words, to make it a corporate act of worship. The eight different tunes that Bach uses would all have been familiar to his congregation. Two of them (Nos. 3 and 15) are used twice (Nos. 17 and 37 respectively), but the one most associated with the work is Melchior Vulpius' melody for 'Jesu, Kreuz, Leiden und Pein', which is sung in a plain harmonisation in 'Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück' (No.14) and 'Er nahm alles wohl in acht' (No.28) and also used to accompany the solo bass singer in the aria 'Mein teurer Heiland' (No.32).

Bach repeated the St John Passion on at least three later occasions in Leipzig, each

time revising it to suit the prevailing conditions. The most radical changes were those undertaken for Good Friday 1725, when the work was given in St Thomas's Church. On that occasion the opening chorus was replaced by a chorale fantasia, 'O Mensch, bewein dein' Sünde groß', later transferred to the St Matthew Passion; a new aria, 'Himmel, reiße, Welt erbebe', in which the bass soloist is joined by the sopranos singing a fourth strophe of 'Jesu, Kreuz, Leiden und Pein' to the Vulpius hymn tune, was inserted after the chorale 'Wer hat dich so geschlagen' (No.11); a new and challenging tenor aria replaced 'Ach, mein Sinn' (No.13); another took the place of 'Betrachte, meine Seel' (No.19) and 'Erwäge, wie sein blutgefärbter Rücken' (No.20), thereby dispensing with the obsolescent *viola d'amore* and lute; and the final chorale (No.40) made way for an elaborate setting of the hymn 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes'. These new constituents tend to shift the emphasis of the work from an assertion of Christ's majesty through his crucifixion to a recognition of human sin and repentance perhaps more in keeping with orthodox Lutheranism.

© Malcolm Boyd