Great Music in a
Great Space:
St. John at St. John
St. John Passion
Johann Sebastian Bach
St. John Passion, BWV 245
By Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Andrew Fuchs, Evangelist
Joseph Beutel, Christus (Jesus)
Amy Justman, soprano
Kirsten Sollek, contralto
Lawrence Jones, tenor
Peter Stewart, bass-baritone

The Cathedral Choir & Ensemble 1047

Lianne Coble, Ancilla (Maid)
Scott Dispensa, Petrus (Peter)
Michael Steinberger, Servus (Attendant)
Lee Steiner, Servus (Attendant)
Enrico Lagasca, Pilatus (Pilate)

Cathedral Choir

**Soprano**
Lianne Coble
Linda Jones
Nola Richardson
Elisa Singer Strom

**Alto**
Tracy Cowart
Katie Geissinger
Heather Petrie

**Tenor**
Eric Sorrels
Michael Steinberger
Lee Steiner

**Bass**
Scott Dispensa
Dominic Inferrera
Enrico Lagasca
Margery Daley,
Choral Contractor

Ensemble 1047

**Violin I**
Mitsuru Tsubota

**Cello**
Arthur Fiacco, Jr.

**Flute**
Sato Moughalian
Janet Axelrod

**Oboe**
Diane Lesser
William Meredith

**Viola**
Alissa Smith

**Viola da Gamba**
Sarah Cunningham

**Bassoon**
Damian Primis

**Bass**
Roger Wagner

**Harpsichord**
Renée Louprette

**Organ**
Raymond Nagem

**Personnel Manager**
Arthur Fiacco, Jr.,

Special thanks to External Affairs and Public Education & Visitor Services for their assistance in coordinating the online platform.
PART ONE

1. Chorus: Herr, unser Herrscher
2. a. Evangelist, Jesus: Jesus ging mit seinen Jüngern
   b. Chorus: Jesum von Nazareth
   c. Evangelist, Jesus: Jesus spricht zu ihnen
   d. Chorus: Jesum von Nazareth
   e. Evangelist, Jesus: Jesus antwortete: Ich hab’s euch gesagt
3. Chorale: O große Lieb, o Lieb ohn alle Maße
4. Evangelist, Jesus: Auf daß das Wort erfüllet würde
5. Chorale: Dein Will gescheh, Herr Gott, zugleich
6. Evangelist: Die Schar aber und der Oberhauptmann
7. Aria, alto: Von den Stricken meiner Sünden
8. Evangelist: Simon Petrus aber folgete Jesu nach
9. Aria, soprano: Ich folge dir gleichfalls
10. Evangelist, Maid, Peter, Jesus, Servant: Derselbige Jünger war dem Hohenpriester bekannt
11. Chorale: Wer hat dich so geschlagen
12. a. Evangelist: Und Hannas sandte ihn gebunden
   b. Chorus: Bist du nicht seiner Jünger einer?
   c. Evangelist, Peter, Servant: Er leugnete aber
13. Aria, tenor: Ach, mein Sinn
14. Chorale: Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück

PART TWO

15. Chorale: Christus, der uns selig macht
16. a. Evangelist, Pilate: Da führten sie Jesum von Kaiphas
   b. Chorus: Wäre dieser nicht ein Übeltäter
   c. Evangelist, Pilate: Da sprach Pilatus zu ihnen
   d. Chorus: Wir dürfen niemand töten
   e. Evangelist, Pilate, Jesus: Auf daß erfüllet würde das Wort Jesu
17. Chorale: Ach großer König, groß zu allen Zeiten
18. a. Evangelist, Pilate, Jesus: Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm
   b. Chorus: Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabam!
   c. Evangelist, Pilate, Jesus: Vollbracht er war ein Mörder
19. Arioso, bass: Betrachte, meine Seele
20. Aria, tenor: Erwäge, wie sein blutfärbter Rücken
21. a. Evangelist: Und die Kriegsknechte flochten eine Krone von Dornen
   b. Chorus: Sei gegrüßet, lieber Jüdenkönig!
   c. Evangelist, Pilate: Und gaben ihm Backenstreiche
   d. Chorus: Kreuzige, kreuzige!
   e. Evangelist, Pilate: Pilatus sprach zu ihnen
   f. Chorus: Wir haben ein Gesetz
   g. Evangelist, Pilate, Jesus: Da Pilatus das Wort hörete
22. Chorale: Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn
23. a. Evangelist: Die Jüden aber schrieen
   b. Chorus: Lässtest du diesen los
   c. Evangelist, Pilate: Da Pilatus da Wort hörete
   d. Chorus: Weg, weg mit dem, kreuzige ihn!
   e. Evangelist, Pilate: Spricht Pilatus zu ihnen
   f. Chorus: Wir haben keinen König denn den Kaiser
   g. Evangelist: Da überantwortete er ihn daß er gekreuziget würde
24. Aria, bass, with Chorus: Eilt, ihr angefochtten Seelen
25. a. Evangelist: Allda kreuzigten sie ihn
   b. Chorus: Schreihe nicht: der Jüden König
   c. Evangelist, Pilate: Pilatus antwortet
26. Chorale: In meines Herzens Grunde
AMONG Martin Luther’s best-known writings today is his screed “On the Jews and Their Lies,” from 1543. There Luther suggested sanctions for Jews who would not embrace his Christianity: burn their places of worship, destroy their homes, seize their prayer books and Talmudic writings, and finally expel them from areas of Europe. (Since the 1980s, many Lutheran church bodies have come to officially repudiate Luther’s anti-Jewish writings.)

Now that Bach’s indebtedness to Luther has come to be widely acknowledged, listeners could easily assume that Bach harbored hostility to Jews and, accordingly, that his music projects such hostility. Throw in his engagement with the Gospel of John, with its continual harping on “the Jews” as inimical to Jesus, his followers and truth in general, and one might reasonably wonder whether there is even room for discussion.

Indeed, the debate surrounding Bach’s St. John Passion has grown more heated in recent decades: witness the media frenzy surrounding student objections to performances at Swarthmore College in 1995, and the picketing of the concert in which Helmuth Rilling and the Oregon Bach Festival scheduled the work, also in 1995.

Many music lovers maintain that Bach’s librettos can simply be ignored, that his vocal music is to be valued for its timeless, purely musical qualities (qualities that do in fact largely account for the repertory’s wildly successful migration from the church to the concert hall). Devotees often go on to insist that Bach himself would have agreed with the notion that great music is best heard for its own sake.

But Bach’s job in Leipzig was to be a “musical preacher” for the city’s main Lutheran churches. Before taking up his duties in 1723, he easily passed grueling examinations on theology and the Bible, administered by church authorities and the theological faculty of the University of Leipzig. It is worth noting in this connection that we have an estate list of titles from Bach’s large personal library of Bible commentaries and sermons; Bach’s own copy of the Calov Bible Commentary, with the composer’s many handwritten entries, also survives.

So we can be sure that in preparing his musical setting, Bach had a thorough knowledge of the Gospel of John and its Lutheran interpretation. His St. John Passion libretto consists of the Luther Bible’s literal translation (from Greek into German) of John 18–19 in the form of recitatives and choruses, along with extensive commentary in the form of interspersed arias and hymns.

John contains many references to “the Jews,” and no attentive reader can fail to notice that they are overwhelmingly negative. In this Gospel, the cosmos is engaged in a battle. On one side, there are God the Father, Good, Heaven, Light, and Jesus and his followers. On the other, Satan, Evil, the World, Darkness and “the Jews” (the usual translation for John’s “hoi Ioudaioi”—recent notions of rendering this more accurately as “the Judeans” or “the Jewish leaders” or “some of the Jewish leaders” are well-meaning but seem textually and contextually unwarranted). Many dualisms of this sort are found in other contemporary religious writings, like the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The puzzling thing, from a historical point of view, is why the author of John calls Jesus’ opponents “the Jews” when he knows that Jesus was a Jew (4:9, 4:20–22), as were his disciples (20:19, where they are seen to observe the Sabbath; on the other hand, however, it ought to be noted that no active believers in Jesus are called “Jews” in the Gospel of John). Furthermore, John’s fundamental statement concerning Jesus as God incarnate (1:1–18) is modeled on Jewish understanding of wisdom, and his Jesus is pictured as apocalyptic Passover lamb, securing freedom from the bondage of evil by being “lifted up.”
This is a characteristic pun in John’s Greek, where the concept is employed for both the crucifixion and the exaltation of Jesus. Jesus’ “exaltation” on the cross, that is to say, becomes the very means by which he is lifted up to rule in glory with God the Father in heaven, as attested in a Christian reading of Isaiah 52:13 and Psalm 110:1.

In another significant bit of wordplay by John, the Jewish high priest Caiaphas unwittingly prophesies when he provides the historically most plausible reason for “the Jews” to hand Jesus over to the Romans (18:14; 11:50–52): “It would be good that one man be put to death instead of the people,” this because of the social unrest the one man, Jesus, would cause during the pilgrimage festival of Passover. The Gospel’s word for “instead of” also means “on behalf of,” or “for the benefit of.” So John’s Jesus dies for “the people,” who, it is clear, are Jewish.

In spite of John’s notion that Jesus “is the lamb of God who takes away the world’s sin” (1:29), and in spite of the Gospel’s puns and their implications, the sad fact remains, as Samuel Sandmel observed, in his valuable book A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament, that “in its utility for later Jew-haters, the Fourth Gospel is pre-eminent among the New Testament writings.”

One approach to dealing with the difficulties of John’s text has been scholarly. In this view, the anti-Jewish sentiments are to be understood in light of their historical origins.

According to John 9:22, Jews in Jerusalem who acknowledged Jesus as God’s messiah were expelled from the synagogue. Scholars argue that the Gospel’s hostility reflects a late first-century family dispute between “rabbinical” Jews and “Christian” Jews.

John’s polemic presented a serious problem for Judaism only when it was canonized as sacred Scripture, and its gentle readers, in a subsequently Christianized Roman empire, came to identify with Jesus as non-Jewish. John’s embattled community of Christian Jews would not have intended to issue a blanket indictment. The Gospel’s inveighing against “the Jews” might be seen as historically contingent and not normative, in the same way that many Christians today do not take as normative New Testament statements on slavery or the silence of women in worship gatherings.

Another suggestion has been to alter Gospel texts radically in new translations intended for use in public worship. This idea has met with little enthusiasm. (As anyone heading a worship committee can tell you, there is no sorrow like unto that of the liturgical reformer.)

Yet another approach, related to but more evocative and useful than the first, is to update the Gospel by leaving the text intact but interpreting it theologically, reading to some degree “against the text.” Whether or not they admit it, most if not all biblical interpreters do just this, whenever they read the Bible, on any subject. (A striking current example is the argument that general biblical principles of love and inclusion should take priority over specific biblical passages apparently condemning homosexual activity.)

When this third approach is taken, by reading John theologically in light of the much greater emphasis on Christian sin and forgiveness that Luther found in Paul’s writings in the New Testament, Bach’s St. John Passion looks considerably less anti-Jewish than the Gospel text itself. I do not mean to suggest, however, that Bach’s musical output is philosemitic. (There are clearly anti-Jewish sentiments in his Cantatas 42, Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbatts; and 46, Schauet doch und sehet.) Rather, Bach seems simply to have thought that dwelling on Jews and Judaism during Holy Week detracted from the proper application of John’s narrative about Jesus’ sacrificial death.

Bach’s view can be inferred from the strong verbal and musical emphasis he places on an essential point of Lutheran theology: that all humans (except Jesus), tainted by original sin, are guilty and in need of redemption, German Lutherans most of all, for they have had the benefit of a restored Gospel in the vernacular and cannot claim ignorance.

Bach sets John’s unaltered Passion narrative to music that in no way palliates ugly aspects of the story. When “the Jews” shout out to Pilate, “Away, away with him, crucify him!” and when the Jewish leaders exclaim soon after, “We have no king but the emperor,” Bach delivers positively ferocious music.

For many composers, story elements like these occasioned still harsher commentary. Handel’s Brockes-Passion, for example, says concerning this episode (in which Jesus is taken away to be crucified): “Hurry, you besieged souls, leave Achshaph’s dens of murder, come—where?—to Golgotha! Hurry toward faith’s wings; fly—where?—to the skulls’ hilltop; your welfare blossoms there!” (Achshaph was one of the cities the Israelites are depicted in the Bible as having wiped out in their conquest of the Promised Land of Canaan.) Brockes’s apparent moral: “old Israel” should leave its murderousness behind and fly to Calvary.

The version of this poetry found in Bach’s St. John Passion provides as a commentary for the same narrative episode: “Hurry, you besieged souls, leave your dens of torment; hurry—where?—to Golgotha! Embrace faith’s wings ...” The concern here is not with “the Jews” at all but with Bach’s fellow Christian listeners, leaving inner spiritual turmoil for the peace of the cross.
Who, then, is held accountable for Jesus’ crucifixion in Bach’s *St. John Passion*? The commentary hymn following on Jesus’ being struck by one of the attendants of “the Jews” expresses matters the most forcibly, its “I, I” referring to Bach’s Lutheran congregants: “Who has struck you so? ... I, I and my sins, which are as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore; they have caused you the sorrow that strikes you and the grievous host of pain.” Bach’s Passion, in contrast to Handel’s, takes the focus away from the perfidy of “the Jews” and onto the sins of Christian believers.

From our vantage point, it is easy to see that Bach’s *St. John Passion* by no means comes to terms with all ecumenically or socially troubling aspects of the Gospel’s first-century text. Yet there are significant steps in the right direction. Crucial in this regard is the work’s commentary on John 19:30, the aria “Mein teuer Heiland.” With extensive melismas on the word “redemption,” the bass soloist asks, concerning Jesus’ death, “is redemption of all the world here?” and proclaims the answer, “yes.” (This may at first sound super-ecumenical, but most likely it just means, if still generously, that—against the doctrines of Calvinism—in principle all humanity could be saved by Jesus, in the End, as “Lutherans.”)

One hopes against hope that a heightened awareness of and attentiveness to Bach’s setting will give scope for seeing, in the words of the great religious scholar Jacob Neusner, “the ‘St. John Passion’ as occasion to identify and overcome anti-Judaism and antisemitism—a work of aesthetic refinement and deep religious sentiment.”

*This essay first appeared in the New York Times, April 2, 2000; © Michael Marissen (Professor of Music, Swarthmore College). Prof. Marissen has also provided the English translation for this week’s concerts, and is author of Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach’s St. John Passion (Oxford University Press, 1998); Tainted Glory in Handel’s Messiah (Yale University Press, 2014), and, most recently, of Bach & God (Oxford University Press, 2016).*

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

An imposing bass-baritone,” as reviewed by Opera News, JOSEPH BEUTEL, is often praised for his “deep well-rounded tone,” and overall richness of voice and versatility on stage. Making his career across 5 continents, Beutel enjoys performing traditional operas and originating new roles in new operas on the cutting edge, along with many oratorios and other concert works. Some roles of note include originating the role of the “British Major” in *Silent Night*, Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell’s Pulitzer Prize winning opera, and most recently originating the role of “Sir” in *Mila*, an opera commissioned by Asia Society Hong Kong most recently performed in New York and San Francisco. Beutel has performed with many prestigious companies across the country and world, including Santa Fe Opera, NYCO, NY Philharmonic, New York City Ballet, English Concert, Seattle Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Sarasota Opera to name a few. Beutel also enjoys performing musical theater with credits from Encores! at City Center in New York and Live at Lincoln Center featured on PBS. Recordings include Alexander Kastalsky’s Grammy-nominated Requiem, *Memory Eternal to the Fallen Heroes*, performed live on the 100th anniversary of the Armistice to WWI in National Cathedral, Washington.

A native of Kansas City, MO, NYC-based tenor ANDREW FUCHS’s wide-ranging repertoire includes an abundance of early music, which he has sung with such groups as Pegasus, TENET, ARTEK, and New York Polyphony (with whom he recorded Palestrina’s *Missa Papae Marcelli* for BIS Records). He recently made his Kennedy Center debut in Monteverdi’s *Vespers* with The Thirteen and his Lincoln Center debut in Bach’s *Magnificat* with the American Classical Orchestra. The music of Bach has come to play a central role in Andrew’s career, and he has cherished performing the Evangelist in both the *St. Matthew* and *St. John* Passions (The Kent Singers, Saint Andrew Chorale, Canticum Novum Singers): “Fuchs made the Evangelist fully human and...served with exceptional skill” (*TheaterScene*). Additionally, while a member of The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, Andrew was a frequent soloist on their “Bach at One” series at St. Paul’s Chapel.

Equally passionate about the music of today, Andrew is very active in NYC’s new music scene and has premiered many works including the principal role of ME in Daniel Thomas Davis’s chamber opera *Six. Twenty. Outrageous.* with American Opera Projects, Alexander Goehr’s song cycle *Verschwundenes Wort* for The Juilliard School’s Focus Festival, and Zachary Wadsworth’s oratorio *Spire and Shadow* with Downtown Voices. He has also been featured in several substantial pieces by Steve Reich, such as *Three Tales* at Disney Hall and *Daniel Variations* at Miller Theatre (both with Ensemble Signal), and *Desert Music* with the American Composers Orchestra.

Highlights from recent seasons include Brahms’s *Liebeslieder Waltzes* and Britten’s *Curlew River* with the Mark Morris Dance Group, Vaughan Williams’s *On Wenlock Edge* with the Momenta Quartet, and the complete Monteverdi Book 7 madrigals with ARTEK (which was recently released on Zefiro Recordings).

Andrew holds degrees from the University of Kansas and Stony Brook University, and is an alumnus of the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar and Tanglewood Music Center.
Praised by the New York Times as “an impressive tenor” and by The Guardian as “smooth voiced”, tenor LAWRENCE JONES has established an active presence on the concert and operatic stages. Among his concert credits, Lawrence has sung as a soloist with the Utah Symphony, Musica Sacra, Boston Baroque, Charlotte Symphony, Boston Pops, the Valletta International Baroque Festival, and the Oratorio Society of New York.

He has received recognition for his portrayals of Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky’s The Rake’s Progress at the Princeton and Aldeburgh Festivals. The New York Times wrote, “Tenor Lawrence Jones brought a light, sweet voice and lyricism to Tom,” while Opera News Magazine praised him for his “clean, ringing tenor.” He has performed roles with New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Sarasota Opera, Haymarket Opera, and Opera Saratoga, for which Opera News Magazine commended him for “attractive, well-phrased legato sounds all afternoon.”

As a frequent performer of the works of Bach, Lawrence’s credits include performances of the St. John Passion, St. Matthew Passion, and B Minor Mass with the New Mexico Philharmonic, Oratorio Society of New York, Saint Thomas Choir, Bach Society of St. Louis, Kalamazoo Bach Festival, and the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

Active in the performance of contemporary works, Lawrence made his company debut in Oliver Knussen’s Where the Wild Things Are at New York City Opera, and sang in the American Stage Premiere of Elliott Carter’s opera What Next? at Tanglewood. Concert engagements have included the American Premiere of Nico Muhly’s My Days with viol consort Fretwork, Arvo Pärt’s Passio with Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and a tribute concert for Elliott Carter at Juilliard, in Mad Regales.

Following appearances in Monteverdi’s Vespers with Tenet, Back Bay Chorale, and Voices of Ascension, the 2018/19 season included two more performances of the Vespers with the Oratorio Chorale of Portland. He sang as a soloist in the B Minor Mass with the Bach Society of St. Louis, and made his company debut with the Naples Philharmonic in Stravinsky’s Pulcinella. For the 2019/20 season, Lawrence joined Chorus pro Musica and the Metropolitan Chorale at Boston’s Jordan Hall to sing in Janáček’s Amarus and Mendelssohn’s Die erste Walpurgisnacht. Most recently, Lawrence created streamed chamber music programs in collaboration with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, in which he sang Vaughan Williams’ Merciless Beauty, for tenor and string trio, and Bach arias from the Christmas Oratorio and Cantata No. 7.

Dubbed the “leading lady of crossover” by Classical Singer magazine, AMY JUSTMAN’s career has spanned musical theater, classical music, jazz and beyond. Recent highlights include Handel’s Messiah with Musica Sacra at Carnegie Hall, the Lotte Lenya Songbook for the Kurt Weill Foundation, the world premiere of Unmasked: The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber at Paper Mill Playhouse and the PBS Great Performances’ broadcast of Bernstein’s Mass with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Amy returns to Bach’s St. John Passion after singing it with Great Music in a Great Space in 2014. She has been a member of the Cathedral Choir since 2012 and was also a soloist for their Bach Mass in B Minor. Other concert work includes Mother in Amahl and the Night Visitors with Steamboat Symphony Orchestra, the Bach Coffee Cantata and Mahler Symphony no. 4 with Broadway Chamber Players, and performances with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, New York City Ballet, and American Modern Ensemble. She is a previous winner of the Lotte Lenya Competition.

She recently made her principal debut with the New York Philharmonic, singing in their Nightcap series and covering the Assistant in David Lang’s Prisoner of the State, and she debuted with Syracuse Opera as Polly Peachum in Three Penny Opera. Currently, she is part of the development of the opera Eat the Document for American Opera Projects.

Amy was most recently seen on Broadway covering and performing for both Renée Fleming and Jessie Mueller in the 2018 revival of Carousel. She made her Broadway debut in the revival of Company, performing the role of Susan as well as playing piano as part of the actor–orchestra. Other theatrical credits include In Transit, A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder, and White Christmas on Broadway, both the Broadway and 25th Anniversary National Tour of Phantom of the Opera, and Clara in the off-Broadway revival of Passion at Classic Stage Company.

Her studio work includes the jazz recordings Songs for Pickles and Hoagy Carmichael: The Stardust Road, Tania León’s Grammy-nominated Inura, and the Original Revival Cast Recordings of Company and Carousel. TV/Film credits include Company for PBS Great Performances, Fosse/Verdon for FX, Dickinson for Apple TV, and voice work for Hail, Caesar!, The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, The Get Down and The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.

She received her MM from Manhattan School of Music and her BA from Yale University, where she is currently a voice teacher for the Shen Curriculum for Musical Theater.
KIRSTEN SOLLEK has been called “...an appealingly rich alto” and “...true contralto” by The New York Times, and a singer with “elemental tone quality” by The Philadelphia Inquirer. Concert highlights include Pierre Boulez’s Le Marteau Sans Maître with Novus New York at Trinity Wall Street, Bach’s Magnificat with Musica Angelica Baroque in Los Angeles, Handel’s Dixit Dominus with Saint Thomas 5th Foundation, Mahler’s Third Symphony with Kevin Noe and the MSU Symphony Orchestra, and Vivaldi’s Stabat Mater and Duruflé’s Requiem with Great Music in a Great Space, and Brahms’s Alto Rhapsody with the String Orchestra of Brooklyn. She has been a featured soloist with Bach Collegium Japan, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Tafelmusik, Kansas City Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, and the Pacific Symphony.

In the fall of 2019 Ms. Sollek created the role of Woman in the premiere of Hannah Lash’s opera Desire at the Miller Theatre in NYC. Other opera credits include the role of Rinaldo (cover) in Handel’s Rinaldo for the Glyndebourne Festival, Rosmira in Handel’s Partenope with Boston Baroque, Bradamante in Handel’s Alcina with Teatro Municipal de Santiago in Chile, Mamma Lucia in Mascagni’s Cavalleria Rusticana with the String Orchestra of Brooklyn, and Lucretia in Britten’s The Rape of Lucretia with the Eastman Opera Theatre.

In the contemporary music field, she has worked extensively with composer John Zorn, premiering his music in the US, Europe, Australia, and Israel. She appeared as the Death Knight in Amy Beth Kirsten’s Quixote, premiered at Montclair State University’s Peak Performances in 2017. Ms. Sollek created the role of The Dying Cow in Lisa Bielawa’s serial video opera Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch’s Accuser. Ms. Sollek was a guest artist at the 2017 Bang on a Can Mass MoCA residency, coaching and singing with the vocal fellows. She has collaborated frequently with groups such as Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble Signal, ICE, Meridionalis, and Juilliard’s AXIOM. She has recorded Reich’s The Desert Music and Tehillim with Alarm Will Sound for Cantaloupe, and Music for 18 Musicians with Ensemble Signal for Harmonia Mundi.

2021–2022 appearances include a digital presentation of ASTRONAUTICA: Voices of Women in Space with Trio Triumphatrix, Boulez’ Le Marteau Sans Maître with Ensemble Sans Maître in NYC, and John Zorn’s Shir Hashirim and Holy Visions for the Elbphilharmonie’s REFLEKTOR festival in Hamburg, Germany.

Throughout the pandemic, PETER STEWART has continued to sing every week for the Cathedral’s services, and has taught virtually at Montclair State University and for the Oratorio Society of New York. Immediately before the lockdown, Peter completed a series of performances of Drowning, a new opera by Philip Glass. He also sang the first performance of The Stammerer, a concert piece written for him by Karl Kramer, performed by the chamber orchestra SONYC. Peter has been very involved singing Bach for many years, with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, with Andrew Parrott (in his acclaimed one voice per part St. Matthew Passion), with the Madeira Bach Festival, and previously at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Peter has been active in early music performance for many years. He is a long-time member of Pomerium and toured with the Waverly Consort for many years. He has participated in many European festivals and was happy to bring back the masterpieces of the Renaissance to the cathedral in which they were banned in the Council of Trent in 1545.

He has also performed a lot of contemporary music, touring worldwide for many years in various projects of Philip Glass. He has created works in collaboration with Leroy Jenkins, Julius Hemphill, Anthony Braxton, Blue Gene Tyranny and other crossover jazz composers who wrote operas. He has recorded the baritone songs of Lee Hoiby, with the composer at the piano, as Continual Conversation with a Silent Man.

Peter has taught in Japan, Italy and across the United States in various festivals, including the Amherst Early Music Festival under Kent Tritle. He currently teaches at Montclair State, and lives in northern Manhattan with his wife Maria de Lourdes Davila and their daughter Beatriz.
THE purpose of this translation is to present the libretto from Bach’s *St. John Passion* in as transparent a rendition of the German as is possible in American English (including some shifts from past to “historical present” tense that Luther took over from the New Testament’s Greek); it is also designed to make as convenient as possible a line-by-line comparison of the texts. The style and syntax of the English will therefore often leave a great deal to be desired.

Luther’s translation of the Gospel of John’s passion narrative and mine of Luther’s are printed in unindented, right-justified paragraphs. Luther’s text and, therefore, my renderings do not necessarily correspond to any of today’s English or German Bibles. The libretto’s chorale responses to the Gospel narrative are set in bold type, indented; and the aria and arioso responses in regular type, likewise indented.

Many published translations of Bach’s *St. John Passion* were designed to accommodate foreign-language performances of the work (e.g., they focus on aligning syllabic with musical rhythms, particularly in the arias and chorales). For these and other reasons, such translations often substantially alter the meanings of the German libretto and thus can hamper proper musical interpretation. Other translations, especially those produced for recording booklets, also often contain a variety of serious errors. Yet another problem is that many translations simply copy their biblical passages verbatim from standard English Bibles like the King James Version, the New Revised Standard Version, or the New International Version, Bibles that may reflect neither the readings of Luther’s particular Greek biblical sources nor his reception and interpretive understanding of them. Moreover, Bach’s commentary on arias and chorales do not always make sense following from such renderings. It is worth emphasizing that Bach’s *St. John Passion* is an interpretation not of “the Bible” but of Luther’s particular translation of his particular biblical sources.


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**PART ONE**

[1] **CHORUS**

Herr, unser Herrscher, dessen Ruhm  
In allen Landen herrlich ist!  
Zeig uns durch deine Passion,  
Daß du, der wahre Gottessohn,  
Zu aller Zeit,  
Auch in der größten Niedrigkeit,  
Verherrlicht worden bist!

Lord, our ruler, whose praise  
is glorious in all the lands!  
Show us through your Passion  
that you, the true Son of God,  
at all times,  
even in the greatest humiliation,  
have been glorified!

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**[2a] EVANGELIST**

Jesus ging mit seinen Jüngern über den Bach Kidron, da war ein Garte, darein ging Jesus und seine Jünger. Judas aber, der ihn verriet, wußte den Ort auch, denn Jesus versammelte sich oft daselbst mit seinen Jüngern. Da nun Judas zu sich hatte genommen die Schar und der Hohenpriester und Pharisiär Diener, kommt er dahin mit Fackeln, Lampen und mit Waffen. Als nun Jesus wußte alles, was ihm begegnen sollte, ging er hinaus und sprach zu ihnen:

Jesus went with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which Jesus and his disciples entered. Judas, however, who betrayed him, also knew the spot, for Jesus often gathered in that very place with his disciples. Now when Judas had engaged the band [of Roman soldiers] and attendants of the chief priests and of the Pharisees, he comes to that place with torches, lanterns, and with weapons. Now since Jesus knew everything that [according to scripture] should happen to him, he went out and said to them:

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**JESUS**

Wen suchet ihr?

**EVANGELIST**

Sie antworteten ihm:

Whom do you seek?

They answered him:
[2b] CHORUS
Jesus of Nazareth.

[2c] EVANGELIST
Jesus says to them:

JESUS
Ich bin's.

EVANGELIST
Judas, however, who betrayed him, also stood with them. Now since Jesus said to them, “That, I AM,” they drew back and fell to the ground. He then asked them once more:

JESUS
Whom do you seek?

EVANGELIST
They again said:

[2d] CHORUS
Jesus of Nazareth.

[2e] EVANGELIST
Jesus answered:

JESUS
I have told you I’m that one; if you are looking for me, then let these others go!

[3] CHORALE
O great love, o love beyond all measure,
that has brought you on this path of torment!
I lived with the world in delight and joy,
and you have to suffer.

[4] EVANGELIST
In order that what he [had] said, the Word, would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those whom you have given me.” Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it out and struck at the high priest’s servant and cut his right ear off; and the servant’s name was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter:

JESUS
Put your sword in its casing! Shall I not drink the cup that my Father has given me?

[5] CHORALE
Your will be done, Lord God, alike on earth as [it is] in the kingdom of heaven.
Give us patience in time of suffering, to be obedient in love and woe;
restrain and hold in check all flesh and blood that acts against your will!
[6] EVANGELIST

Die Schar aber und der Oberhauptmann und die Diener der Juden nahmen Jesum und bunden ihn und führten ihn aufs erste zu Hannas, der war Kaiphas Schwäher, welcher des Jahres Hoherpriester war. Es war aber Kaiphas, der den Juden riet, es wäre gut, daß ein Mensch würde umbracht für das Volk.

[7] ARIA

Von den Stricken meiner Sünden
Mich zu entbinden,
Wird mein Heil gebunden.
Mich von allen Lasterbeulen
Völlig zu heilen,
Läßt er sich verwunden.

[8] EVANGELIST

Simon Petrus aber folgete Jesu nach und ein ander Jünger.

[9] ARIA

Ich folge dir gleichfalls mit freudigen Schritten
Und lasse dich nicht,
Mein Leben, mein Licht.
Befördre den Lauf
Und höre nicht auf,
Selbst an mir zu ziehen, zu schieben, zu bitten.

[10] EVANGELIST

Derselbige Jünger war dem Hohenpriester bekannt und ging mit Jesu hinein in des Hohen- priesters Palast. Petrus aber stund draußen für der Tür. Da ging der andere Jünger, der dem Hohenpriester bekannt war, hinaus und redete mit der Türhüterin und führte Petrum hinein. Da sprach die Magd, die Türhüterin, zu Petro:

MAID

Bist du nicht dieses Menschen Jünger einer?

EVANGELIST

Er sprach:

PETER

Ich bin's nicht.

EVANGELIST

Es stunden aber die Knechte und Diener und hatten ein Kohlfu’r gemacht (denn es war kalt) und wärmeten sich. Petrus aber stund bei ihnen und wärmete sich. Aber der Hohepriester fragte Jesum um seine Jünger und um seine Lehre. Jesus antwortete ihm:

The band, however, and the captain and the attendants of the Jews took Jesus and bound him and led him at first to Annas (the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the one who was high priest in that year). But it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews it would be good that one man be put to death for the people.

To unbind me
from the ropes of my sins,
my Salvation is bound.
To heal me fully from all
my vice-boils,
he lets himself be wounded.

Simon Peter, however, and another disciple followed Jesus.

I will follow you likewise with joyful steps
and will not let you [go],
my Life, my light.
Pave the way,
and do not stop
drawing, shoving, imploring me yourself.

This same disciple was known to the high priest and went with Jesus into the high priest's palace. Peter, however, stood outside, in front of the door. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke with the woman keeping the door and led Peter in. Then the maid, the doorkeeper, said to Peter:

Aren’t you one of this man’s disciples?

He said:

That, I am not.

But the servants and attendants stood around, having made a charcoal fire (for it was cold), and warmed themselves. But Peter stood among them and warmed himself. But the high priest asked Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered him:
JESUS
Ich habe frei, öffentlich geredet für die Welt. Ich habe allezeit gelehret in der Schule und in dem Tempel, da alle Juden zusammenkommen, und habe nichts im Verborgnen geredet. Was fragest du mich darum? Frage die darum, die gehöret haben, was ich zu ihnen geredet habe! Siehe, dieselbigen wissen, was ich gesagt habe.

EVANGELIST
Als er aber solches redete, gab der Diener einer, die dabeistunden, Jesu einen Backenstreich und sprach:

ATTENDANT
Solltest du dem Hohenpriester also antworten?

EVANGELIST
Jesus aber antwortete:

JESUS
Hab ich übel geredt, so beweise es, daß es böse sei, hab ich aber recht geredt, was schlägest du mich?

Wer hat dich so geschlagen,
Mein Heil, und dich mit Plagen
So übel zugericht?
Du bist ja nicht ein Sünder
Wie wir und unsere Kinder,
Von Missetaten weißt du nicht.
Ich, ich und meine Sünden,
Die sich wie Körnlein finden
Des Sandes an dem Meer,
Die haben dir erreget
Das Elend, das dich schläget,
Und das betrübte Marterheer.

[12a] EVANGELIST
Und Hannas sandte ihn gebunden zu dem Hohenpriester Kaiphas. Simon Petrus stund und wärmete sich, da sprachen sie zu ihm:

[12b] CHORUS
Bist du nicht seiner Jünger einer?

[12c] EVANGELIST
Er leugnete aber und sprach:

PETER
Ich bin’s nicht.

EVANGELIST
Spricht des Hohenpriesters Knecht’ einer, ein Gefreundter des, dem Petrus das Ohr abgehauen hatte:

ATTENDANT
Sahe ich dich nicht im Garten bei ihm?

I have spoken freely and openly before the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, where all Jews come together, and have spoken nothing in secret. Why do you ask me about this? About this, ask those who have heard what I have spoken to them! Look, these same ones know what I have said.

But when he said such things, one of the attendants standing nearby gave Jesus a blow to the face and said:

Should you answer the high priest like that?

But Jesus answered:

If I have spoken badly, then prove it is evil; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?

Who has struck you so,
my Salvation, and beat you up
so badly, causing plague-spots?
You are by no means a sinner,
like we and our children [are];
you do not know of any misdeeds.

I, I and my sins,
which are as [countless as] the grains
of sand on the seashore,
they have caused you
the sorrow that strikes you
and the grievous host of pain.

And Annas sent him, bound, to the high priest Caiaphas. Simon Peter stood and warmed himself, when they said to him:

Aren’t you one of his disciples?

He denied it again and said:

That, I am not.

One of the high priest’s servants, a kinsman of him whose ear Peter had cut off, says:

Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?
EVANGELIST
Da verleugnete Petrus abermal, und alsobald krähete der Hahn. Da gedachte Petrus an die Worte Jesu und ging hinaus und weinet bitterlich.

[13] ARIA
Ach, mein Sinn,
Wo willt du endlich hin,
Wo soll ich mich erquicken?
Bleib ich hier, 
Oder wünsch ich mir 
Berg und Hügel auf den Rücken? 
Bei der Welt ist gar kein Rat, 
Und im Herzen 
Stehn die Schmerzen 
Meiner Missätet, 
Weil der Knecht den Herrn verleugnet hat.

[14] CHORALE
Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück, 
Seinen Gott verneinet, 
Der doch auf ein’ ernsten Blick 
Bitterlichen weinet. 
Jesu, blick mich auch an, 
Wenn ich nicht will büßen; 
Wenn ich Böses hab getan, 
Rühre mein Gewissen!

PART TWO
[15] CHORALE
Christus, der uns selig macht, 
Kein Bös’ hat begangen, 
Der ward für uns in der Nacht 
Als ein Dieb gefangen, 
Geführt für gottlose Leut 
Und fälschlich verklaget, 
Verlacht, verhöhnt und verspeit, 
Wie denn die Schrift saget.

[16a] EVANGELIST
Da führeten sie Jesum von Kaiphas vor das Richthaus, und es war frühe. Und sie gingen nicht in das Richthaus, auf daß sie nicht unrein würden, sondern Ostern essen möchten. Da ging Pilatus zu ihnen heraus und sprach:

Pilate
Was bringet ihr für Klage wider diesen Menschen?

EVANGELIST
Sie antworteten und sprachen zu ihm:

[16b] CHORUS
Wäre dieser nicht ein Übeltäter, wir hätten dir ihn nicht überantwortet.

[13] ARIA
Then Peter denied it once more, and immediately the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the words of Jesus and went out and wept bitterly.

Peter, who does not think back [to Jesus’ Word], 
denies his God; 
at a penetrating glance, however, 
he weeps bitterly.

Jesus, glance on me as well, 
whenever I am unrepentant; 
whenever I have done something evil, 
stir my conscience!

[15] CHORALE
Christ, who makes us blessed, 
has committed no evil; 
for us, in the night, he was 
seized like a thief, 
led before godless people, 
and falsely accused, 
mocked, scorned, and spat upon, 
as scripture goes on to say.

[16a] EVANGELIST
Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas before the hall of judgement, and it was early. And they did not go in the hall of judgement, in order that they would not be defiled, but might eat Passover. Then Pilate went out to them and said:

What charge do you bring against this man?

They answered, saying to him:

Were this one not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you.
Da sprach Pilatus zu ihnen:

PILATE

So nehmet ihr ihn hin und richtet ihn nach eurem Gesetze!

EVANGELIST

Da sprachen die Juden zu ihm:

[16d] CHORUS

Wir dürfen niemand töten.

[16e] EVANGELIST

Auf daß erfüllet würde das Wort Jesu, welches er sagte, da er deutete, welches Todes er sterben würde. Da ging Pilatus wieder hinein in das Richthaus und rief Jesu und sprach zu ihm:

PILATE

Bist du der Juden König?

EVANGELIST

Jesus antwortete:

JESUS

Redest du das von dir selbst, oder haben’s dir andere von mir gesagt?

EVANGELIST

Pilatus antwortete:

PILATE

Bin ich ein Jude? Dein Volk und die Hohenpriester haben dich mir überantwortet; was hast du getan?

EVANGELIST

Jesus antwortete:

JESUS

Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt; wäre mein Reich von dieser Welt, meine Diener würden darob kämpfen, daß ich den Juden nicht überantwortet würde; aber nun ist mein Reich nicht von dannen.

[17] CHORALE

Ach großer König, groß zu allen Zeiten,
Wie kann ich gnugsam diese Treu ausbreiten?
Keins Menschen Herze mag indes ausdenken,
Was dir zu schenken.

Ich kann’s mit meinen Sinnen nicht erreichen,
Womit doch dein Erbarmen zu vergleichen.
Wie kann ich dir denn deine Liebestaten
Im Werk erstatten?

Then Pilate said to them:

So take him away and judge him according to your [own] law!

Then the Jews said to him:

We are not permitted to put anyone to death.

So that the Word of Jesus would be fulfilled — what he said when he indicated what manner of death he would die. Pilate then went back into the hall of judgment and summoned Jesus and said to him:

Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered:

Do you say that on your own, or have others said it to you about me?

Pilate answered:

Am I a Jew? Your people and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?

Jesus answered:

My kingdom is not of this world; were my kingdom of this world, my attendants would fight, so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; again, as it is, my kingdom is not from here.

Oh great king, great through all the ages,
how can I adequately enlarge upon this faithfulness?
Meanwhile, no human heart could think of something [fit] to give you.

With my capacities I cannot arrive at what indeed to compare your mercy with.
How can I, then, your acts of love with my deeds repay?
[18a] EVANGELIST
Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm:

PILATE
So bist du dennoch ein König?

EVANGELIST
Jesus antwortete:

JESUS
Du sagst’s, ich bin ein König. Ich bin dazu geboren und in
die Welt kommen, daß ich die Wahrheit zeugen soll. Wer
aus der Wahrheit ist, der höret meine Stimme.

EVANGELIST
Spricht Pilatus zu ihm:

PILATE
Was ist Wahrheit?

EVANGELIST
Und da er das gesagt, ging er wieder hinaus zu den Juden
und spricht zu ihnen:

PILATE
Ich finde keine Schuld an ihm. Ihr habt aber eine
Gewohnheit, daß ich euch einen losgebe; wollt ihr nun, daß
ich euch der Juden König losgebe?

EVANGELIST
Da schrieen sie wieder allesamt und sprachen:

[18b] CHORUS

Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabas!

[18c] EVANGELIST

Barrabas aber war ein Mörder. Da nahm Pilatus Jesum und
geißelte ihn.

[19] ARIOSO

Betrachte, meine Seel, mit ängstlichem Vergnügen,
Mit bittrer Lust und halb beklemmtem Herzen
Dein höchstes Gut in Jesu Schmerzen,
Wie dir aus Dornen, so ihn stechen,
Die Himmelschlüsselblumen blühn!
Du kannst viel süße Frucht von seiner
Wermut brechen,
Drum sieh ohn Unterlaß auf ihn!

[20] ARIA

Erwäge, wie sein blutgefärbter Rücken
In allen Stücken
Den Himmel gleiche geht,
Daran, nachdem die Wasserwogen
Von unserer Sündflut sich verzogen,
Der allerschönste Regenbogen
Als Gottes Gnadenzeichen steht!
Und die Kriegsknechte flochten eine Krone von Dornen und
satzten sie auf sein Haupt und legten ihm ein Purpurkleid an
und sprachen:

Sei gegrüßet, lieber Judenkönig!

Und gaben ihm Backenstreiche. Da ging Pilatus wieder
heraus und sprach zu ihnen:

Sehet, ich führe ihn heraus zu euch, daß ihr erkennt, daß
ich keine Schuld an ihm finde.

Also ging Jesus heraus und trug eine Dornenkrone und
Purpurkleid. Und er sprach zu ihnen:

Sehet, welch ein Mensch!

Da ihn die Hohenpriester und die Diener sahen, schrieen sie
und sprachen:

Kreuzige, kreuzige!

Pilate sprach zu ihnen:

Nehmet ihr ihn hin und kreuziget ihn; denn ich finde keine
Schuld an ihm!

Die Juden antworteten ihm:

Wir haben ein Gesetz, und nach dem Gesetz soll er sterben;
denn er hat sich selbst zu Gottes Sohn gemacht.

Da Pilatus das Wort hörete, fürchtet’ er sich noch mehr und
ging wieder hinein in das Richthaus und spricht zu Jesu:

Von wannen bist du?

Aber Jesus gab ihm keine Antwort. Da sprach Pilatus zu
ihm:
PILATE
Redest du nicht mit mir? Weißest du nicht, daß ich Macht habe, dich zu kreuzigen, und Macht habe, dich loszugeben?

EVANGELIST
Jesus antwortete:

JESUS
Du hättest keine Macht über mich, wenn sie dir nicht wäre von oben herab gegeben; darum, der mich dir überantwortet hat, der hat’s größ’re Sünde.

EVANGELIST
Von dem an trachtete Pilatus, wie er ihn losließe.

CHORALE
Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn, ist uns die Freiheit kommen; Dein Kerker ist der Gnadenthron, Die Freistatt aller Frommen; Denn gingst du nicht die Knechtschaft ein, Müßt unsre Knechtschaft ewig sein.

EVANGELIST
Die Juden aber schrieen und sprachen:

CHORUS
Lässt du diesen los, so bist du des Kaisers Freund nicht; denn wer sich zum Könige machet, der ist wider den Kaiser.

EVANGELIST
Da Pilatus das Wort hörte, führte er Jesum heraus, und setzte sich auf den Richtstuhl, an der Stätte, die da heißt: Hochpflaster, auf Ebräisch aber: Gabbatha. Es war aber der Rüsttag in Ostern um die sechste Stunde, und er spricht zu den Juden:

PILATE
Sehet, das ist euer König!

EVANGELIST
Sie schrieen aber:

CHORUS
Weg, weg mit dem, kreuzige ihn!

EVANGELIST
Spricht Pilatus zu ihnen:

PILATE
Soll ich euren König kreuzigen?

EVANGELIST
Die Hohenpriester antworteten:
Wir haben keinen König denn den Kaiser.

Then he handed him over, so that he would be crucified. They took Jesus again and led him away. And he carried his cross and went out to the place that is called “Place of Skulls,” which in Hebrew is called: “Golgotha.”

Eilt, ihr angefochtenen Seelen,  
Geht aus euren Marterhöhlen,  
Eilt — Wohin? — nach Golgatha!  
Nehmet an des Glaubens Flügel,  
Flieht — Wohin? — zum Kreuzeshügel,  
Eure Wohlfahrt blüht allda!

Allda kreuzigten sie ihn, und mit ihm zween andere zu beiden Seiten, Jesum aber mitten inne. Pilatus aber schrieb eine Überschrift und satzte sie auf das Kreuz, und war geschrieben: “Jesus von Nazareth, der Juden König.”

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, but Jesus in the middle. But Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross, and it was written, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. And it was written in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate:

Schreibe nicht: der Juden König, sondern daß er gesagt habe: Ich bin der Juden König.

Write not: “The King of the Jews”; rather, that “He said: ‘I am the King of the Jews.’”

Was ich geschrieben habe, das habe ich geschrieben.

What I have written, that have I written.

In meines Herzens Grunde,  
Dein Nam und Kreuz allein  
Funkelt all Zeit und Stunde,  
Drauf kann ich fröhlich sein.  
Erscheint mir in dem Bilde  
Zu Trost in meiner Not,  
Wie du, Herr Christ, so milde  
Dich hast geblut’ zu Tod!

In the bottom of my heart,  
your name and cross alone  
shines forth every age and hour,  
for which I can be joyful.  
Appear to me in the image —  
for consolation in my distress —  
of how you, Lord Christ, so abundantly have bled yourself to death!

Die Kriegsknechte aber, da sie Jesum gekreuziget hatten, nahmen seine Kleider und machten vier Teile, einem jeglichen Kriegsknechte sein Teil, dazu auch den Rock. Der Rock aber war ungenähet, von oben an gewürket durch und durch. Da sprachen sie untereinander:

The soldiers, however, when they had crucified Jesus, took his clothes and made four parts, to each soldier his part, with these also the robe. But the robe was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. Then they said to one another:

Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen, sondern darum losen, wes er sein soll.

Let’s not cut it up, but toss for it, [to see] whose it shall be.
Auf daß erfüllet würde die Schrift, die da sagt: “Sie haben meine Kleider unter sich geteilet und haben über meinen Rock das Los geworfen.” Solches taten die Kriegesknechte. Es stund aber bei dem Kreuze Jesu seine Mutter und seiner Mutter Schwester, Maria, Kleophas Weib, und Maria Magdalena. Da nun Jesus seine Mutter sahe und den Jünger dabei stehen, den er lieb hatte, spricht er zu seiner Mutter:

JESUS
Weib, siehe, das ist dein Sohn!

EVANGELIST
Darnach spricht er zu dem Jünger:

JESUS
Siehe, das ist deine Mutter!

He thought of everything in the final hour: still considerate of his mother, [he] assigns her a guardian.

O humankind, set everything in order, love God and humanity, die afterwards without any woe, and do not let yourself be troubled!

And from that hour on, the disciple took her to his own. After this, since Jesus knew that everything had already been accomplished, [and, in order] that scripture would be fulfilled, he says:

I thirst!

A vessel filled with vinegar was standing there. But they filled a sponge with [the] vinegar, set it upon a hyssop branch, and held it up to his mouth. Now when Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said:

It is accomplished!

And bowed his head and departed this life.
Mein teurer Heiland, laß dich fragen, 
Jesu, der du warest tot, 
Da du nunmehr ans Kreuz geschlagen 
Und selbst gesagt: Es ist vollbracht, 
Lebest nun ohn Ende, 
Bin ich vom Sterben frei gemacht? 
In der letzten Todesnot, 
Nirgend mich hinwende 
Kann ich durch deine Pein und Sterben 
Das Himmelreich ererben? 
Ist aller Welt Erlösung da? 
Als zu dir, der mich versühnt, 
O du lieber Herre! 
Du kannst vor Schmerzen zwar nichts sagen; 
Gib mir nur, was du verdient, 
Doch neigest du das Haupt 
Und sprichst stillschweigend: ja. 
Mehr ich nicht begehre!

And siehe da, der Vorhang im Tempel zerriß in zwei Stück von oben an bis unten aus. Und die Erde erbebte, und die Felsen zerrissen, und die Gräber täten sich auf, und stunden auf viele Leiber der Heiligen.

Und siehe da, — while the entire world with Jesus’ suffering likewise suffers, the sun clothes itself in mourning, the veil tears, the rock crumbles, the earth quakes, the graves split open, because they see the creator growing cold — what will you do for your part?

And look: the veil in the Temple rent in two pieces from top to bottom. And the earth quaked, and the rocks rent, and the graves opened, and the bodies of many saints arose.

My heart, — while the entire world with Jesus’ suffering likewise suffers, the sun clothes itself in mourning, the veil tears, the rock crumbles, the earth quakes, the graves split open, because they see the creator growing cold — what will you do for your part?

Dissolve, my heart, in floods of tears to honor the Most High! Declare to the world and to heaven the distress: your Jesus is dead!

But the Jews, because it was the preparation day, in order that the corpses might not remain on the cross during the sabbath (for that particular sabbath was a very great day), asked Pilate that their legs be broken, and that they be taken down. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, because they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs; rather, one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water went out. And he who has seen this has given witness to it, and his witness is true, and this same one knows that he says the truth, so that you may believe. For such a thing has taken place so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “You shall break apart none of its bones.” And again another scripture says: “They will look on whom they have pierced.”
O hilf, Christe, Gottes Sohn,
Durch dein bitter Leiden,
Daß wir dir stets untertan
All Untugend meiden,
Deinen Tod und sein Ursach
Fruchtbarlich bedenken,
Dafür, wiewohl arm und schwach,
Dir Dankopfer schenken!

After that, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus (but secretly, for fear of the Jews), asked of Pilate that he might take down Jesus’ corpse. And Pilate allowed it. Therefore he came and took down Jesus’ corpse. But there came also Nicodemus, who formerly had come to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took Jesus’ corpse and bound it in linen cloths with spices, the way the Jews are accustomed to burying. But there was by the place where he was crucified a garden, and in the garden a new grave, in which nobody had ever been laid. Right there they laid Jesus, for the sake of the preparation day of the Jews, because the grave was near.

Be fully at peace, you holy bones,
which I will no longer bewail;
be fully at peace and bring also me to this peace!
The grave — which is appointed to you
and from now on no distress will enclose —
opens to me the [gates of] heaven and closes the [gates of] hell.

Oh Lord, let your dear little angels
at the very end carry my soul
to Abraham’s bosom,
[and let] my body rest in its little sleeping chamber,
completely in peace, without any sorrow and pain,
until the Last Day!
Then raise me from the dead,
so that my eyes will look on you
in all joy, O Son of God,
my Savior and Throne of Grace!
Lord Jesus Christ, grant me this;
I want to praise you eternally!
ABOUT GREAT MUSIC IN A GREAT SPACE

The Great Music in a Great Space (GMGS) concert series seeks to utilize the full potential of the massive Gothic design of the Cathedral to present music, both familiar and not so familiar, in unique and spiritual settings. In addition to using the more common performance areas of the Cathedral such as the Great Choir and the Crossing, GMGS concerts also take place in less obvious locations such as the Nave or in one of the Chapels of the Seven Tongues, located along the Cathedral’s eastern periphery.

GMGS is comprised of three concert series: the Great Choir choral series, the Great Organ recital series, and our holiday concerts celebrating the Christmas season and New Year’s Eve. The repertoire of the choral series encompasses a musical palette from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary compositions, and also features explorations of less familiar traditions such as Spanish Renaissance music and Eastern Orthodox hymnody. The Great Organ recital series features evening organ recitals, from both Cathedral organists and internationally acclaimed guest artists.

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EVERY TUESDAY FROM 13 APRIL, 2021

6 PM Tuesdays at 6. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulties of presenting in-person concerts, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine has launched a weekly series of online music recitals, Tuesdays at 6, on the Cathedral’s Facebook page and YouTube channel. These recitals feature the music staff of the Cathedral, performing both in the great space of the Cathedral’s Gothic interior and in the more intimate surroundings of their own living rooms. Concerts will be streamed starting April 13, 2021.

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