
St. Matthew Passion

by Johann Sebastian Bach

Seattle Chamber Singers
Orchestra Seattle

George Shangrow
music director



Seattle Chamber Singers Orchestra Seattle

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present

Johann Sebastian Bach

St. Matthew Passion

with the

Columbia Boys and Girls Choirs

Steve Stevens, conductor & founder

First United Methodist Church, Seattle, Washington
Good Friday, April 5, 1996

The Evangelist — Howard Fankhauser
Jesus — Michael Delos
Soprano — Catherine Haight
Mezzo Soprano — Emily Lunde
Tenor — Stephen P. Wall
Bass — Brian Box

Character Roles			
Peter	Paul Benningfield	False Witness I	Emily Lunde
Judas	Douglas Durasoff	False Witness II	Paul Benningfield
Pontius Pilate	Rob Kline	1st Servant	Barbara Anderson
Pilate's Wife	Barbara Anderson	2nd Servant	Laurie Medill
High Priest	Andrew Danilchik		

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Program Notes

The tradition of dramatically presenting the crucifixion or passion story of Jesus on Good Friday began during the Middle Ages. Priests and monks recited or chanted passages from the Gospels, using a different person for each of the characters in the story. It was usual practice for a low-voiced man to read the words of Jesus, and a higher voiced man to take the narrative parts. The congregation, usually brothers of the order but sometimes people of the parish, were given the parts of the disciples, high priests, and the crowds in the Jerusalem streets. Telling the passion story using this general form continues even today in Christian churches around the world. Some congregations use the spoken word, others music, dance, or a combination of expressions. However, there are no passion settings more powerful or emotional than Johann Sebastian Bach's St. Matthew Passion.

Bach wrote the St. Matthew Passion in 1728 while cantor of the five main Lutheran churches in Leipzig. The text is from the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 26 and 27 in the German translation of Martin Luther. Additional text for the arias and some choruses was written by Picander. The St. Matthew Passion is scored for unusually large performance forces: two four-part choruses, two orchestras, six major soloists and a choir of youth. There is organ scored throughout, and a few special solo instruments are required as well. This is all in keeping, however, with the massive structure of the work. The St. Matthew Passion is in two large parts, each part beginning and ending with grand choruses. In between the big choruses, Bach unfolds the story by generally following this form: the Evangelist sets the scene, the various characters of the story take their parts, and a soloist sings a recitative and aria which makes deeply personal comments on the preceding action. Each of these components is beautiful in its own right, but interspersed in the drama Bach adds the magic of the chorales. It is with the chorales—all familiar hymn tunes—that Bach ties the action of the story to the present day. Following each important turn of events in the story, Bach gives to the chorus a chorale which reminds us of the consequences of those events in Jesus' life.

In the opening chorus, Bach is calling upon humankind to gather for the telling of the passion story. The orchestral sounds are relentless, dark and moody. His use of double chorus and orchestra gives a sense of dialogue or even argument between the forces. And then, over the top of all this remarkable counterpoint, he sets the chorale tune "O Lamb of God Unspotted" in the children's voices. This is the way we enter into the St. Matthew Passion; with distress and comfort all at the same time.

Now we move into the drama. Note that the words sung by Jesus are accompanied by what one music historian in the 19th century called a "halo of strings". Bach did not use this device in his St. John Passion, but it is not unique to St. Matthew. It is found in earlier works, such as *The Seven Last Words* by Heinrich Schütz. The Evangelist's opening recitative sets the scene with Jesus together with his followers. Jesus alarms his disciples by telling them that by the close of Passover, he will be delivered up and crucified. The chorus interjects with a chorale, asking "But what crime has he committed?". Then the chorus assumes various parts—those of the chief priests, elders and scribes, who decide not to kill Jesus during the feast of Passover in order to avoid trouble; and of the disciples who prepare for the Passover meal with Jesus. Jesus tells the disciples that one of them will betray him. Bach sets the disciples' response "Lord, is it I?" exactly eleven times, leaving the twelfth response, that of Judas Iscariot, for the next recitative. Judas asks the question in a different manner from the other disciples, "Is it I, Rabbi?", setting up the actual betrayal scene later where Judas greets Jesus as "Rabbi." The scene of the Last Supper is one of the most tender moments in the entire work. The words that have become the liturgy for Holy Communion is the only real aria Jesus sings. After the soprano recitative and aria which comment on Jesus' words comes one of the most descriptive of Jesus' recitatives. Notice the upward moving scale which starts in the cello part and ends in the Evangelist's lines as the characters ascend the Mount of Olives.

Next comes an illustration of Bach's use of tonality to make a philosophical point. He uses the tune of the Passion Chorale (O Sacred Head Now Wounded) with a joyful text extolling the virtues of the Savior/Shepherd, set in the key of E Major. Immediately following Peter's declaration that he will be absolutely faithful to Jesus no matter what happens, and Jesus telling Peter that even he will deny him three times before the night is through, the chorale comes back—this time a half step lower, signifying the personal loss humankind must endure through the example of Peter's denial.

The next accompanied recitative and aria have a solo tenor juxtaposed with Chorus II singing a chorale. The cello-bass repeated note pattern symbolizes the trembling and tormented heart. The combination of recorders and English Horn (oboe da caccia) in canon is the first of several unusual orchestrations Bach uses in the St. Matthew Passion. The wonderful thing about this section is the contrast between the uneasiness of the aria and the consoling comfort of the chorale.

The bass recitative "The Savior falls down before his father" has the strings playing an arpeggio figure that goes constantly downward, except when the text refers to God's uplifting mercy. In the aria, the setting of the words so agrees with the voice that the opening ascending interval of a sixth on the word "Gerne (gladly)" just rolls off the tongue. Bach shows his constant desire to heighten the emotional meaning of the text by using all the devices at hand, contrasting both text and texture of the music; he even changes the tonality from minor to major.

Leading to the end of Part One are the Evangelist's sections describing Jesus praying in the garden at Gethsemane, and how none of the disciples would maintain the vigil with him. Then the soldiers and priests come for Jesus and the Evangelist tells how Judas intends to identify Jesus with a kiss. The grief-filled duet which follows contains many canons, and is reminiscent of a chorale melody. As in the opening movement, Chorus II interrupts the duet saying "Let him go, halt, do not bind him!" The duet leads directly into a double chorus depicting the oath "May lightning and thunder in ruin engulf them!" Bach's amazing use of antiphonal choirs and rapidly changing harmonies creates a storm of emotional turmoil, unlike anything composed before it.

After a highly charged dramatic recitative comes the closing chorus to Part I: "O man, bewail thy grievous sin". This movement was originally composed to be the opening chorus to the St. John Passion (in a key one half step lower), but Bach abandoned that idea. For the St. John, he wrote instead the marvelous wailing chorus "Herr, unser Herrscher, dessen Ruhm in allen Landen herrlich ist!" and used "O Mensch beweine..." for St. Matthew, giving Part I an ending which anticipates the final outcome.

Part II opens with an unusual dialogue between the alto soloist and Chorus II. Note that with each entrance of the chorus the harmonies grow more strange. The aria/chorus ends on a singularly unresolved note with the alto asking "Ah, where has my Jesus gone?"

The drama continues with the introduction of the two false witnesses who sing a bizarre duet. Jesus, however, remains silent. The following tenor recitative is accompanied by oboes and an arpeggiated figure in the viola da gamba, which has exactly 39 strokes, symbolizing the scourging of Jesus. In the tenor aria Bach uses great contrasts in setting the text, portraying the emotional meanings of the words patience, shame, scorn, and false tongues.

Jesus' trial in the Judgment Hall is followed by outbursts from the crowd. Here, as in all the crowd scenes, Bach makes it the job of the Evangelist to keep the drama taut. His interjections are brief and exciting. The chorale which ends this section is particularly bittersweet.

Next comes Peter's denial. Peter is asked by two individuals and by a group of people if he knows this man Jesus. All three times Peter's reply is "no". After the third denial, Peter hears the cock crow and remembers Jesus' words that "before the cock crows, even you shall deny me". Bach's setting of the Evangelist's words "And Peter went out and wept bitterly" is absolutely heart wrenching, and the ensuing alto aria with violin obligato is one of the most intimate and beautiful moments in the whole work.

A very worldly return to the story comes with Judas trying to return the thirty pieces of silver to the priests. The attempt is in vain as the priests tell him that in no way can he absolve himself of the deed he has done. In a strange duet, sung in this performance

by the men's sections of the chorus, the priests say they cannot even put the "blood money" in the treasury. Judas is overcome with remorse, and goes out and hangs himself. Another aria (for bass) with violin obligato follows, this one in great contrast to the previous solo violin aria.

The trial of Jesus proceeds. Pontius Pilate asks the crowd which prisoner should be set free, Jesus or Barabas ("Barabam"). The crowd's loud unanimous outburst is "Barabam!" This exclamation is followed by the "Crucify him!" chorus, which is a short fugue with a bizarre, angular theme that tonally describes the ugliness of the crowd and the act of crucifixion.

The heart of the entire St. Matthew Passion follows in the soprano recitative and aria "Out of love for me my savior is dying" This aria is accompanied only by obbligato flute and two English horns. With this aria, Bach suspends reality; he takes us out of the action of the story for a brief moment to remember the reason for Jesus' suffering and death. A quietness is brought about—but it is short-lived, for the Evangelist interrupts and the crowd again repeats the demand to "crucify him!" But this time the chorus sings it a whole step higher in pitch, increasing the feeling of fervor and tension. Pilate's attempts at ridding himself of guilt are thwarted by the crowd chorus "His blood is on all of us and on our children". The soldiers dress Jesus in a purple robe and a crown of thorns and mock him (listen for the flutes!) saying "We hail thee, O King of the Jews". They spit on him. Bach follows this jeering scene with the Passion Chorale, this time with both music and text for "O sacred head now wounded".

When Jesus is led to be crucified, a man named Simon comes forward to carry his cross. Bach depicts this with a remarkable bass aria accompanied by viola da gamba, a predecessor of the modern cello with six strings and frets on the fingerboard. The difficult chords, ornaments, string crossings and dotted rhythms show the feeling of dragging the cross down the street. The text speaks of sharing the burden with Jesus, as Jesus shares the burdens of the people. The length of the aria also gives the feeling of the length of the ordeal.

Choruses by the mocking crowd ask Jesus why, if he is the son of God, he can't take *himself* down from the cross. The alto aria that comes next

tells the people they should come to Jesus' waiting hands and seek redemption and forgiveness in his bosom. The people, (Chorus II), don't seem to get it—they just keep asking "Go where?" This aria is another instance of unusual orchestration; it uses only two English horns with continuo.

The next section depicts the death of Jesus. This is the only time that his words are not accompanied by strings; only the continuo organ and cello. To constant harassment by the crowd, Jesus cries out his last words, and dies, followed by the final, most moving setting of the Passion Chorale.

With a burst of continuo writing comes the earthquake and the opening of the graves. This strikes terror in the hearts of those present. Then comes a most special moment: the words of the captain of the guards "Truly this was the Son of God" is set for full chorus and orchestra. It is just two bars of music, but they are so moving and profound, they are perhaps the two most wonderful measures in the entire work. Dame Janet Baker, a superb musician and interpreter of Bach's music, wrote in her autobiography that it is these two bars that she waits for in the St. Matthew Passion and which always stay with her after a performance.

The story nears the end with a beautiful bass aria "God, make my heart pure". But then once more, the crowd comes in with a very rude chorus intimating to Pilate that if there are no guards around Jesus' tomb, his disciples will come in the night and steal his body, and then claim that he was resurrected. Pilate gives his permission for watchmen and a stone to be placed as a seal on the tomb. A four-part recitative and chorus bids Jesus good night in a very sad, yet praising manner. The final chorus "Here at the grave we all sit weeping" ends the work with a deeply moving, yet unfinished and tragic feeling.

Notes by George Shangrow
and Kay Benningfield



Guest Artists & Soloists

The Columbia Choirs

The Columbia Choirs is a community based group which includes girls and boys from age 8 years until the boys voices change. The ensembles were founded in 1984 by conductor Steve Stevens. In addition to an annual concert series, the choirs sing in a variety of venues including conventions, concert halls, cathedrals, public and private schools, retirement homes, and on radio and television. The repertoire spans many centuries of classical choral literature.

Among the many honors the choir has received is being named the 1989 "Choir of the Year" at the Bournemouth Music Festival in Bournemouth, England. In tonight's program the combined Boys and Girls Concert Choirs will be featured. Last summer the choirs made an encore appearance at the International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales. In this most famous of international choir festivals, the choir placed fourth out of thirty-one choirs from around the world.

Steve Stevens is one of the most experienced children's choir directors in the United States. Choirs under Mr. Stevens' direction have concertized in 49 of the United States, Canada, Mexico, the British Isles, Scandinavia, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, and Russia. They have also appeared on national network television in the U. S., France, Japan, and Russia; have sung for the Pope, the President of the United States, and for members of the British royal family.

Howard Fankhauser, Tenor/Evangelist

Howard Fankhauser is a frequent soloist with community and professional choirs and orchestras throughout the Northwest, including the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, the Seattle Youth Symphony, Cascadian Chorale, and Choir of the Sound. Recent performances have included Mozart Cantatas with the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Handel's Messiah at St. Mark's Cathedral, Orphee in Gluck's Orphee et Eurydice, guest

artist in St. James Cathedral's New Year's Eve all-Bach concert, and tenor soloist in Mozart's Requiem.

In July, Mr. Fankhauser was featured in the Living Composers Recital at the NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) national convention. He has been heard in the role of Evangelist on numerous occasions. This is his debut performance with Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers.

Michael Delos, Bass/Jesus

Michael Delos has appeared throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, dividing his time between opera and the concert platform. A Northwest native, Mr. Delos has appeared extensively with Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers in the major Bach works, Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, Vaughan Williams' Hodie, Handel's Messiah, and Haydn's The Seasons. In 1987 he joined the roster of the New York City Opera. He has made frequent Seattle Opera appearances since his debut in the 1978-79 season, and is also a welcome guest artist with the Chicago Opera Theater and Hawaii Opera, as well as the companies of Salt Lake, Portland, Vancouver, Las Vegas, and St. Louis. In the winter of 1991, Mr. Delos appeared with the Opera of Monte Carlo, Monaco in Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress, garnering international acclaim.

Catherine Haight, Soprano

Catherine Haight is on the voice faculty at Seattle Pacific University and has a vocal studio on the east side. She has appeared as soloist with Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers in presentations of the Fauré Requiem, Haydn's oratorio The Seasons, Handel's Messiah, and numerous Bach cantatas including the solo soprano cantata, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen. In addition to being a favorite with OS/SCS, Ms. Haight has per-

formed with the Bellevue Chamber Chorus, the Skagit Valley Bach Choir, and has recently completed a tour of Australia as the soprano soloist for Carmina Burana.

Emily Lunde, Mezzo Soprano

Northwest native Emily Lunde made her solo debut with Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers in their 1989 presentation of Bach's b minor Mass. Ms. Lunde makes frequent solo appearances with many other Northwest ensembles. She has soloed in the Seattle Symphony's Baroque series under the baton of Gerard Schwarz, was the featured soloist with City Cantabile Singers in the world premiere of Fred West's oratorio in celebration of Earth Day, Upon This Land, and was heard in the Pacific Northwest Ballet production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Her solo appearances with the New Whatcom Choral Society of Bellingham include Handel's Messiah and the Dvorak Mass in D.

Stephen P. Wall, Tenor

Stephen P. Wall has appeared many times with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers. He was the tenor soloist for both of the great Beethoven works: the Missa Solemnis and the Ninth Symphony. He also appeared in the title role in Monteverdi's The Return of Ulysses. His credits with Seattle Opera include roles in Tannhäuser, Die Meistersinger, War and Peace, and the recent production of Elektra. Mr Wall has been a featured soloist with the Seattle, Spokane, Vancouver, B.C., and Sapporo (Japan) symphonies. He currently is Professor of Voice at Pacific Lutheran University.

Brian Box, Bass

Brian Box is a native of Washington and received his Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University. Mr. Box has appeared frequently with OS/SCS being one of the favorites of audiences and critics alike for his Bach performances. Among his credits are the Four Last Songs by Brahms with the Western Washington University Orchestra and the leading role in Dominic Argento's opera Postcard from Morocco at the University of British Columbia. He is a regular performer with Northwest Opera in Schools, Etc. and Seattle Opera's education program and has had regular appearances on the main stage since his debut as the Corporal in The Daughter of the Regiment.

Elizabeth Reed, Viola da Gamba

Elizabeth Reed has performed in Germany, Italy, England, Canada, and Jordan as well as throughout the United States. Her experience includes faculty concerts at Eastman, Oberlin, Indiana University, and the Banff Centre for the Arts. She has appeared at the Boston and Bloomington Early Music Festivals, and has recorded for Focus records. Principal cellist for the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, she also plays principal for the Portland Baroque Orchestra, the Dayton Bach Society, Ensemble Seicento, the Benevolent Order for Music of the Baroque, and the Manly Street Chamber Players. She graduated from the North Carolina School of the Arts, the Oberlin Conservatory, and the Eastman School of Music, and has done doctoral work at Indiana University's School of Music. She was a winner of the Durham Symphony Young Artists' Concerto Competition. Tonight is her debut with Orchestra Seattle.

Seattle Chamber Singers

George Shangrow, music director

Choir I

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors	Basses
Jennifer Miletta	Sharon Agnew	David Adams	Douglas Durasoff
Adams	Margaret Alsup	Ralph Cobb	Rob Jones
Patty Adams	Luna Bitzer	David Means	Jim Macemon
Sue Cobb	Suzi Means	Tom Nesbitt	Rob Platt
Crissa Cugini	Nancy Shasteen	David Zapolsky	Richard Wycoff
Andrea D'Ambrosia	Nedra Slauson		
Jill Kraakmo			
Alexandra Miletta			
Liesel Van Cleeff			

Choir II

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors	Basses
Barb Anderson	Wendy Barton	Paul Benningfield	Andrew Danilchik
Kyla DeRemer	Kay Benningfield	Alex Chun	Dick Etherington
Dana Durasoff	Cheryl Blackburn	Jon Lange	Peter Henry
Cinda Freece	Jane Blackwell	Jim Whitson	Rob Kline
Lorelette Knowles	Laurie Medill		Robert Schilperoort
Nancy Lewis	Adrienne Thomas		John Stenseth
Paula Rimmer			

Columbia Choirs

Steve Stevens, founder & conductor

Columbia Boys Choir

Christopher Beard	William Harvey	Alex Kaufman	Kyle Poffenroth
Tyler Byers	David Haverhals	John Keech	Christopher Rau
Chris Boushee	Damon Huberty	Daniel Kohler	Andy Robinson
Matthew Bridge	Neil Jackson	Ben Krows	Mathew Steadman
Kevin Dowdell	Andrew Johnson	Chad Lampe	Andrew Thureson
Scott Egan	Sean Jones	Sam Morris	

Columbia Girls Choir

Meghan Aikins	Emily Fish	Elizabeth Maslen	Jody Norwood
Emily Allen	Julia Gamache	Jessica Michel	Anne Odell
Emelyn Berg	Heidi Gilbert	Kassi Miller	Nikki Pawlucki
Cynthia Bevan	Leah Green	Abby Mitchell	Eileen Price
Anneliese B.-Long	Victoria Harrell	Debra Morris	Angela Reed
Dana Caulley	Ashley Harris	Stephanie Morris	Shannon Reed
Jessica Coleman	Heidi Hurn	Melissa Murray	Michael E. Schtezle
Casey Cook	Amanda Johnson	Alicia Nason	Erica Shanta
Sara Davies	Jessica Harris	Ginelle Neumann	Randi Steadman
Ashley Firman	Anne Knie	Jennifer Nichols	Stephanie Swain
			Jerica Wood

Orchestra Seattle

George Shangrow, music director

Orchestra Seattle operates on a basis of rotating seating, therefore personnel are listed alphabetically in each section.

Orchestra I

VIOLIN

Dean Drescher
Sue Herring
Maria Hunt
Deb Kirkland, Concertmaster
Eileen Lusk
Danielle McCutcheon
Gregor Nitsche
Leif-Ivar Pedersen, Prin. 2nd
Janet Showalter

VIOLA DA GAMBA

Elizabeth Reed

HARPSICHORD

Robert Kechley

VIOLA

Deborah Daoust
Beatrice Dolf
Stephanie Read
Robert Shangrow, Principal

CELLO

Julie Reed, Principal
Karen Thomson

STRING BASS

Jo Hansen

ORGAN

Lisa Ham

FLUTE

Kate Alverson, Principal
Libby Gray

RECORDER

Kate Alverson
Laurel Uhlig

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN/ D'AMORE

M. Shannon Hill, Principal
Geoff Groshong

BASSOON

Judy Lawrence

Orchestra II

VIOLIN

Dajana Akropovic-Hobson
Leah Bartell, Principal 2nd
Susan Dunn Ovens
Betsy Kim
Fritz Klein, Concertmaster
Avron Maletzky
Druska Salisbury-Milan
Sondra Schink

VIOLA

Saundrah Humphrey,
Principal
Alice Leighton
Shari Petersen

CELLO

Matthew Wyant, Principal
Valerie Ross

STRING BASS

Allan Goldman

ORGAN

Lisa Ham

HARPSICHORD

Robert Kechley

FLUTE

Kirsten James McNamara,
Principal
Cindy Martin

OBOE

Susan Worden, Principal
Colin Mailer

BASSOON

Jeff Eldridge

VIOLA DA GAMBA

Elizabeth Reed

☎ For tickets and information about all Orchestra Seattle/
Seattle Chamber Singers events, call 682-5208.

Upcoming

Saturday, May 11, 8:00 pm
Saint Saens Symphony No. 3 "The Organ Symphony"
Robert Kechley Symphony No. 2 "Ferdinand the Bull"
First United Methodist Church

Call 682-5208 for tickets and information.

Orchestra Seattle Seattle Chamber Singers



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