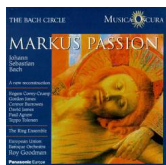


Johann Sebastian Bach - Markus Passion BWV 247 (Roy Goodman) [1996]

Written by bluesever

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1 01 Geh, Jesu, Geh Zu Deiner Pein! - 0:05:20 Chorus 1 02 Und Nach Zween Tagen
War Ostern 0:02:43 Recitative 1 03 Sie Stellen Uns Wie Ketzern Nach 0:00:46 Chorale
1 04 Jesus Aber Sprach 0:02:00 Recitative 1 05 Mir Hat Die Welt Irugfich Gericht
0:00:44 Chorale 1 06 Und Am Ersten Tage Der Sussen Brote 0:02:47 Recitative 1 07 Ich,
Ich Und Meine Sunden 0:00:42 Chorale 1 08 Er Antwortete, Und Sprach Zu Ihnen
0:03:38 Recitative 1 09 Mein Heiland, Dich Vergess Ich Nicht 0:07:38 Aria, Alto 1 10 Und
Da Sie Den Lobgesang Gesprochen Hatten 0:01:00 Recitative 1 11 Wach Auf, Oh Mensch,
Vom Sundenschlaf 0:00:54 Chorale 1 12 Petrus Aber Sagte Zu Ihm 0:02:18 Recitative
1 13 Betrübtes Herz Sei Wohlgemut 0:00:49 Chorale 1 14 Und Ging Ein Wenig Furbass
0:00:55 Recitative 1 15 Machs Mit Mar Gott, Nach Deiner Gut 0:00:46 Chorale 1 16 Und
Kam, Und Fand Sie Schlafend 0:01:54 Recitative 1 17 Er Kommt, Er Kommt, Er Ist
Vorhanden! 0:03:18 Aria, Trebie 1 18 Und Alsbald, Da Er Noch Redet 0:01:03 Recitative
1 19 Falsche Welt, Dein Schmeichelnd Kussen 0:07:26 Aria, Alto 1 20 Die Aber Legten
Ihre Hande An Ihn 0:01:02 Recitative 1 21 Jesu, Ohne Missetat 0:00:54 Chorale 1 22
Und Die Junger Verliessen Ihn Alle 0:00:36 Recitative 1 23 Ich Will Hier Bei Dir Stehen
0:04:31 Chorale 2 01 Mein Troster Ist Nich Mehr Bei Mir 0:04:19 Aria, Tenor 2 02 Und
Sie Fuhreten Jesum Zu Den Hohenpriestern 0:01:33 Recitative 2 03 Was Menschen Kraft
Und Witz Anfasst 0:00:45 Chorale 2 04 Und Der Hohepriester Stund Unter Ihnen Auf
0:00:30 Recitative 2 05 Befiehl Du Deine Wege 0:00:52 Chorale 2 06 Da Fraget Ihn Der
Hohepriester Aberma! 0:01:26 Recitative 2 07 Du Ed!es Angesichte 0:00:54 Chorale 2
08 Und Petrus War Da Nieder In Dem Palast 0:02:37 Recitative 2 09 Herr, Ich Habe
Missgehandeit 0:00:47 Chorale 2 10 Und Bald Am Morgen 0:03:40 Recitative 2 11
Angenehmes Mordgeschrei! 0:04:24 Aria, Trebie 2 12 Pilatus Aber Gedachte Dem Volk
Genug Zu Tun 0:01:52 Recitative 2 13 Man Hat Dich Sehr Hart Verhohnet 0:00:53
Chorale 2 14 Und Da Sie Ihn Verspottet Hatten 0:01:30 Recitative 2 15 Das Wort Sie
Sollen Lassen Stahn 0:00:55 Chorale 2 16 Und Es War Um Die Dritte Stunde 0:05:18
Recitative 2 17 Keinen Hat Gott Verlassen 0:00:46 Chorale 2 18 Und Etliche, Die Dabei
Standen 0:01:19 Recitative 2 19 Welt Und Himmel Nehmt Zu Ohren 0:03:52 Aria,
Baritone 2 20 Und Der Vorhang Im Tempel Zerriss 0:02:28 Recitative 2 21 Oi Jesu Du
0:00:35 Chorale 2 22 Und Er Kaufe Ein Leinwand 0:00:53 Recitative 2 23 Bei Deinem
Grab Und Leichenstein 0:04:58 Chorus Evangelist - Rogers Covey-Crump (tenor) Jesus
- Gordon Jones (baritone) Connor Burrowes (treble) David James (alto) Paul Agnew (tenor)
Teppo Tolonen (bass) The Ring Ensemble European Union Baroque Orchestra Roy
Goodman (conductor) Reconstruction by Dr. Simon Heighes

According to one of his obituaries (co-written by his son C.P.E. Bach), J.S. Bach wrote five Passions, though one might be a version of the St. Matthew Passion with just one chorus. Of the St. Mark Passion, only the text has come down to us (thanks to the publication of the poet Picander's complete works). The reconstruction of the St. Mark Passion is based on the theory that the metre of the surviving text matches movements from various other of his works. J.S. Bach used this "parody" procedure in other works, so it is plausible that he did so here. The primary sources are the Trauer Ode BWV 198 and the cantata *Widerstehe doch der Sünde*, BWV 54.

The reconstruction on this recording is by Dr. Simon Heighes. Dr. Heighes has had to exercise some ingenuity, as BWV 198 and BWV 54 do not provide all the text, so he has cast his net wider. Regarding the choruses and recitative, Heighes has included some music from Reinhard Keiser's St. Mark Passion (a work that influenced Bach). But, despite all this ingenuity, Heighes has had to fill in some gaps with newly composed music.

With advances in Bach scholarship, it is now becoming accepted that Bach performed his Passions with what we would nowadays regard as unfeasibly small forces. So this performance, on the original instruments of the European Baroque Orchestra with the Finnish choir, The Ring Ensemble, is not so much an 'authentic' reconstruction of one of Bach performances, but rather the sort of performance that Bach might have aspired to.

The Evangelist is sung by tenor Rogers Covey-Crump and his mellifluous high tenor is a constant joy to listen to. Attentive to the words, he makes a most moving Evangelist.

Baritone Gordon Jones, who sings in the Hilliard Ensemble with Covey-Crump, sings Jesus. Jones makes a fine, moving Jesus with just a hint that the part might suit a bass-baritone better. Jesus's part is almost exclusively sung in an attractive arioso, accompanied by strings. But I am not clear whether this halo effect is original or something added by Dr. Heighes.

The soprano solos are sung by treble Connor Burrowes. He manages his two arias with style and enough bravura that I forgave him the occasional smudged patches. The alto solos are sung by another Hilliard Ensemble member, David James. James is a fine stylist, but on this

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recording his voice production is very mannered. He constantly sounds as if he is squeezing the voice out and, from the way he was shading out the high notes, I felt that the part lies a little too high for him. This is a shame as his two long arias, with their complex accompaniments, are amongst the finest in the work. The tenor and baritone soloists get one aria each. Paul Agnew sings his aria magnificently and his performance is one of the highlights of the disc, I only wish he had more to do. Baritone, Teppo Tolonen seemed less comfortable with the virtuoso passages in his aria.

At first sight, the structure of the passion seems a bit curious with two long alto arias, two shorter treble arias and a single aria for tenor and bass. But, given Bach's resources, this distribution would mean that he could perform the passion with just four soloists (Evangelist singing the tenor aria and Jesus the baritone aria), perhaps with the addition of four ripieno singers for the chorales.

The choruses, which have been taken from Keiser's passion, sound alarmingly similar to those written by Bach for the St. Matthew Passion. Besides the chorales and the turbae, the chorus get some more substantial movements to sing, notably the opening chorus, the chorus closing CD 1 and the chorus closing the entire piece. These are some of the most developed pieces in the work and the Ring Ensemble rise to the challenge and sing magnificently.

But it is the European Union Baroque Orchestra who make this recording special. The choruses and arias are all richly orchestrated and the orchestra play with style and élan, frequently with a spring in their step. They also sound as if they are enjoying themselves.

Roy Goodman controls proceedings admirably. His speeds are on the brisk side and there were moments where I felt the performance was too hectic, but he does allow time when it is needed.

This is not the most contemplative of Bach's passions (if it can be said to be by Bach). But even if Dr. Heighes is correct in his reconstruction, what the work lacks is the final touches of Bach's genius. No matter how much pre-existing music Bach actually used in this work, we can never know what changes he made to fit them to their new surroundings. And the problem for those familiar with Bach's music, is that movements re-used from other works still sound as if they ought to be in their old positions. This reconstruction includes some of the loveliest music from Bach's cantatas, but it can be difficult to accept that it forms a single whole new work. For those interested in hearing alternative reconstructions, then Ton Koopman has produced his own which does not use BWV 198 and he has written his own recitatives. He has recorded the work

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with his Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra. But Roy Goodman and the European Union Baroque Orchestra give Dr. Heighes's reconstruction a very committed performance and by the end they almost had me convinced. I will never quite appreciate this work the way I do the St. John and the St. Matthew, but this recording gives us a chance to hear what it might have sounded like. ---Robert Hugill, musicweb-international.com

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