

## **Brockes Passion (by Stölzel)**

Written by bluesever

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The Brockes-Passion can be considered the archetype of the German Passion oratorio. As such, it served as a model and source of inspiration for famous later masterpieces, enjoying uninterrupted popularity throughout the 18th century when no less than 11 composers, including Handel and Telemann, set it to music. The superb version by Reinhard Keiser fellow citizen of Brockes in Hamburg, is the first (1712). Four at that time known settings, by Keiser, Telemann, Händel and Mattheson, were performed over four evenings in 1719, 1722, 1723, and 1730.

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The German poet, **Barthold Heinrich Brockes**, was an almost exact contemporary of J.S. Bach. He was born in Hamburg in 1680 and lived to 1747. Although we should call his specifically poetic works "minor", Brockes was an accomplished and influential figure in pre-Enlightenment Germany: he translated Alexander Pope and James Thomson's "Seasons". From a literary standpoint Brockes's most important and, indeed, voluminous work—nine sturdy volumes—is his "Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott" ("Earthly Contentment in God"). For many eighteenth-Century composers, however, the importance of Brockes as a writer lay in his Passion oratorio libretto, "Der für die Sünden der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus" ("Jesus martyred and dying for the wickedness of the world").



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In Brockes' version of a passion, a tenor Evangelist narrates, in recitative passages, events from all four Gospels' accounts of Jesus' suffering and death. Persons of the Gospel story (Jesus, Peter, Pilate, etc.) have dialogue passages, also in recitative; a chorus sings passages depicting the declamation of crowds; and poetic texts, sometimes in the form of arias, sometimes that of chorales (hymn-like short choral pieces), reflect on the events. Some of the arias are for the persons of the Passion, Jesus himself, Peter, etc., but Mary the mother of Jesus, who does not appear in the Gospel accounts of the Passion, also has a singing part, and fictitious "characters", The Daughter of Zion, four solo Believing Souls, and A Chorus of Believing Souls, also observe and comment.



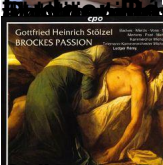
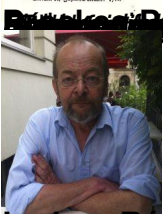
## Barthold Heinrich Brockes

**Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel** (1690-1749) was a prolific composer of stage works, oratorios, masses, cantatas, and various instrumental works, little of his output has survived ; for example, only 12 of his 85 known secular cantatas, and fragments from only 10 of his 442 sacred cantatas, are extant. At least 18 orchestral suites and over 90 vocal serenatas are completely lost. Part of this is due to the fact that his music quickly became unfashionable after his death.

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Rubens - The Crucified Christ