

LIBRETTO

Passion according to St. Luke (1779)

1. Chorus

O lamb of God who bears our sins,
in wrath has the Lord laid them upon you.
You came that sinners might have peace,
to save us.

Let your death ever hover before our eyes,
that we may live for you and not for sin.
Let us in the battle of suffering on earth
become like you.

Should you command us to depart from this world,
then we shall comfort ourselves with all your sufferings.
You have, to the consolation of your devout,
taken from death its power.

2. Chorale

Verses 1–2 O innocent lamb of God
slaughtered on the stem of the cross,
ever found patient,
although you were despised.
You have borne all sin,
otherwise must we have despaired.
Have mercy on us, o Jesus!

Verse 3 O innocent lamb of God
slaughtered on the stem of the cross,
ever found patient,
although you were despised.
You have borne all sin,
otherwise must we have despaired.
Give us your peace, o Jesus!

3. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And he came out, and went, as he was wont,
to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.
And when he was at the place, he said unto them,
JESUS. Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

EVANGELIST. And he was withdrawn from them about a
stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying,

JESUS. Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from
me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

EVANGELIST. And there appeared an angel unto him
from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he
prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great
drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when
he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he
found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them,

JESUS. Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into
temptation.

4. Aria

Ah, that we should find mercy,
you bore our sins!
God took them from us and cast them upon you.

We went astray like sheep.
Upon you lay our punishment;
upon you God avenged himself.

5. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And while he yet spake, behold a multi-
tude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went
before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But
Jesus said unto him,

JESUS. Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

EVANGELIST. When they which were about him saw
what would follow, they said unto him,

CHORUS. Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

EVANGELIST. And one of them smote the servant of the
high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered
and said,

JESUS. Suffer ye thus far.

EVANGELIST. And he touched his ear, and healed him.
Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the
temple, and the elders, which were come to him,

JESUS. Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

EVANGELIST. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, WOMAN. This man was also with him.

EVANGELIST. And he denied him, saying,

PETER. Woman, I know him not.

EVANGELIST. And after a little while another saw him, and said,

FIRST MAN. Thou art also of them.

EVANGELIST. And Peter said,

PETER. Man, I am not.

EVANGELIST. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying,

SECOND MAN. Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen.

EVANGELIST. And Peter said,

PETER. Man, I know not what thou sayest.

EVANGELIST. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

6. Accompanied Recitative

Where is the hero,
the most fiery in battle,
who promised to avenge the slightest outrage?
Here he stands among women, freezes and speaks:
"I know not this man."
Brazenly he repeats his crime.
Yet see, he looks into his own heart.
The cock terrifies the lion.
The savior looks at him.
Now he weeps bitterly.

7. Aria

Flow, gentle tears!
Your tenderness
shows remorse and suffering.
Yet may you be scorned!
He who here in happy settings

grieves over mere trivialities
and feels ashamed to weep,
will there, when times grow pressing,
howl in utter despair.

8. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying,

CHORUS. Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?

EVANGELIST. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

9. Chorale

Who struck you so,
my Savior, and so cruelly
injured you with torments?
You are not a sinner
like us and our children;
of misdeeds you know nothing.

I, I and my sins,
that are as numerous as grains
of sand at the sea,
they have caused
the misery that smites you
and the grievous host of sufferings.

10. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

CHORUS. Art thou the Christ? tell us.

EVANGELIST. And he said unto them,

JESUS. If I tell you, ye will not believe: if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

11. Aria

From the beginning you established the earth
and covered it over with sky.
One day when flames set the earthly orb afire
heaven and earth will remain no longer.
You however are,
remain eternally, who you are!
And we are yours
and so will we ever be!

12. Recitative

EVANGELIST. Then said they all,
CHORUS. Art thou then the Son of God?
EVANGELIST. And he said unto them,
JESUS. Ye say that I am.
EVANGELIST. And they said,
CHORUS. What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.
EVANGELIST. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying,
CHORUS. We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.
EVANGELIST. Pilate asked him, saying,
PILATE. Art thou the King of the Jews?
EVANGELIST. And he answered him and said,
JESUS. Thou sayest it.
EVANGELIST. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people,
PILATE. I find no fault in this man.
EVANGELIST. And they were the more fierce, saying,
CHORUS. He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.
EVANGELIST. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

13. Choral

You, ah, you have endured
slandrous speeches, mockery and contempt,
spitting, blows, lashes and fetters,
you righteous one, God's son,
just to save wretched me
from the devil's shackles of sins.
A thousand thousandfold thanks be to you,
dearest Jesus, for this.

14. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them,
PILATE. Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.
EVANGELIST. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying,
CHORUS. Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:
EVANGELIST. (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying,
CHORUS. Crucify him, crucify him.
EVANGELIST. And he said unto them the third time,
PILATE. Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.
EVANGELIST. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

15. Chorale

The pious one dies, who walks aright and just.
The evil one lives, who trespasses against God.
The man escapes death and has gone free:
God is taken prisoner.

16. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

17. Chorale

O great love, o love beyond all measure,
which brought you to this road of torments!
I lived with the world in pleasure and joys,
and you must suffer.

18. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said,
JESUS. Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?
EVANGELIST. And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus,
JESUS. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

19. Aria

His blood, poured out on the cross,
was not shed for us in vain;
it cleanses us of our guilt.
If you will stain yourself anew,
then you are unworthy of his graciousness.
For diligence in good works
will He strengthen his own;
thus lives the Christian, his bondservant,
for his own salvation and for His glory.

20. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying,
CHORUS. He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.
EVANGELIST. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying,
CHORUS. If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.
EVANGELIST. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, This Is

The King Of The Jews. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying,

FIRST MALEFACTOR. If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

EVANGELIST. But the other answering rebuked him, saying,

SECOND MALEFACTOR. Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

EVANGELIST. And he said unto Jesus,

SECOND MALEFACTOR. Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

EVANGELIST. And Jesus said unto him,

JESUS. Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

21. Accompanied Recitative

O you, love itself,
what an example have you left for us.
Yourself without comfort and yourself abandoned,
you take pity and even in death look after your own.
I too am yours. Therefore look after me!
If one day I cannot bless my own,
then may you bless them more than I!
And dying let me rejoice in your consolation,
even today to be with you in Paradise.

22. Aria

To beseech heaven for his enemy,
to go to death for his friend,
that is, indeed, great love.
For sheer enemies who despise him,
to abandon the throne of glory
and willingly to grow pallid on the cross for them,
that is yet greater love.

23. Recitative

EVANGELIST. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said,

JESUS. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:

EVANGELIST. and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

24. Aria

The sacrificial victim stood upon Golgatha,
bled, died!
Then creation trembled,
as he won for us our salvation!
Darkened shines upon Golgatha
the sun, which saw him sacrificed!

25. Chorale

Such great mercy and fatherly favor
has God shown to us entirely out of love
in Christ, his son, who gave himself
in the death of the cross for our salvation.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.

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