



guido mancusi

*passio domini
secundum joannem*

—

st john passion
libretto in english

paladino music

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD ACCORDING TO JOHN

ST JOHN PASSION

Libretto

Dramatis Personae / Characters

E = John the Evangelist (tenor)

J = Jesus of Nazareth (Bass)

An = Angel (Soprano)

C = The Cockerel (Alto)

Pi = Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor (Tenor)

Pe = Simon Peter, a disciple of Jesus (Baritone)

Gk = Gatekeeper at the entrance of the Temple (Mezzo)

S = Servant to the High Priest (Bass)

At = An Attendant, Brother in Law of Mâlchûs (Bass)

Ch = Chorus (Disciples, the mob, High Priests, Womenfolk) S,A,T,B (Max 7 voices)

PART ONE (The Arrest)

E: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Ch: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

E: The Passion of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, called Christ, according to the word of his friend John who was his disciple.

J: As you Father are with me and I am with you, so should you also be with us, so that the world believes that you have sent me.

Father I wish that everything you have given to me is there with me where'er I be. I have testified your name, so that the love with which you have loved me, may be in them and I in them.

E: Saying these words, Jesus went out with his disciples to the other side of the Cedron brook. There was a garden into which he entered with his disciples. Judas knew also this place because Jesus was often there with his disciples. Judas gathered soldiers and Pharisees and they came there with torches and weapons. Jesus went forth and asked them:

J: Whom d' you seek?

E: They answered him:

Ch: Jesus of Nazareth

E: Jesus said unto them.

J: I am he.

E: Also Judas, who betrayed him, stood with them. As Jesus said unto them: "I am he" they went backwards and fell to the ground. He asked once again.

J: Whom d' you seek?

E: They answered him.

Ch: Jesus of Nazareth

E: Jesus answered to them.

J: I have said to you that I am he. If 'tis I you seek then let these go their way.

E: So that the word might be fulfilled which he had spoken.

An: I did not lose any of them that you assigned unto me.

Choral: Oh, Lord I have erred and strayed, on me my sins do so oppress,
I have not followed the path you showed me, this I do confess,
What most I wish for, in my fright,
From your disdain be out of sight.

E: Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and smote (struck) the High Priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter.

J: Put your sword into your sheath! The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?

An: In you is stillness, Lord
In you is such great calm,
And yet despite all life's tempests,
Are all antitheses soothed by your balm.

With calm you knit together
With such gentleness and strength
You heal what has been severed
Whate'er mortals think etern'ly rend.

PART TWO **(The Interrogation by Annas and the denial of Peter)**

E: The soldiers, their commanders and the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him. First they lead him away to Annas who was the High Priest in that same year. Caiaphas, the father-in-law to Annas gave this counsel to the Jews: *It is better that one man should die for the people.* Simon, Peter, and the other disciple followed Jesus into the courtyard in the Palace of the High Priest. Peter however remained outside of the gate. The other disciple then spoke with the woman who kept the door and brought in Peter.

GK: Are you not also one of this man's disciples?

E: He answered her.

P: No!

E: The servants and the menial staff had made a fire from coals and stood around warming themselves, for it was cold. Peter too stood with them and warmed himself.

Ch: Blessed is the spirit
That with love within it
Jesus wholly loves.

In your arms you hold them
And with comfort warm them
When they're downhearted.

You are light, health and orn'ment,
For the heart, its sweetest pasture,
Its life, joy, and treasure.

E: The High Priest asked Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered unto him.

J: I have spoken openly before the whole world. I have always taught in the synagogue and the temple where we Jews assemble. Why do you ask me? You should rather ask them that heard me, what I have said unto them: They know well what I have said.

E: Upon this answer, one of the officials who was standing by, struck Jesus in the face and said:

S: Why do you answer the High Priest this way?

E: Jesus replied unto him.

J: If it is not true what I have said then show it to be so. If it was, however true, why do you strike me?

An: Who strikes you? – Is an ignorant man.
Who strikes you father? *Gnothi seautón!* And you shall receive.

Choral: Ready thyself, my heart, keep watch, consider and pray,
Lest you, unexpectedly into darkest days do stray,
For upon all mankind and all true believers
There are those who deceive us.

E: As Simon Peter stood and warmed himself by the fire, they said amongst themselves:

Ch: Look there! Is that not one of those that were with him?

E: ... and said unto him:

Ch: Are you not also one of his disciples?

E: He lied and said:

P: No! No!

E: One of the servants of the High Priest, being a kinsman of him, whose ear Peter had cut off, said to him:

S: Did I not see you with him in the garden?

E: Once more Peter denied it.

P: No! I was not there!

E: And upon this word the cock did crow.

C: It was wondrously strange. I went to the yard, like every day, only this time it was different, simply wondrous, yet so beautiful and bright; so glorious. More wonderful than the morning, the sunrise for it spoke to me. Dearly beloved, God's most wished for creature, to you will be given a great task. You will be a great help for all the world. – What should I do? – Just crow once more – As I always do! – Only this time at one exact moment; when he betrays his friend.

PART THREE (The examination and judgement of Pilate)

E: They brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium; it was early in the morning. They themselves did not go into the building, lest they should be defiled and that they might partake in the passover. Therefore Pilate went out to them and asked:

Pi: What accusation do you bring against this man?

E: They answered him.

Ch: If he were not a miscreant, we would not have brought him to you.

E: Therefore, Pilate said unto them.

Pi: Take him away and judge him according to your laws!

E: The people replied unto him.

Ch: It is not permitted for us to put anyone to death!

E: So that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled in which he had indicated in what way he should die.

Choral: Not so fleeting nor so futile is an human life,
With every blessing must we cherish it and for this must we strive.
As the flowers, wondrous rise,
And so swiftly do demise,
Behold! So are our mortal lives.

E: Pilate once more entered the Judgement Hall, summoned Jesus and did question him.

Pi: Are you the King of the Jews?

J: Do you say this of your own accord or have others said this to you about me?

Pi: (Laughing) Am I now a Jew? Your own people and the High Priests have delivered you to me. So what have you done?

J: My Kingdom is not of this world. If it was of this world, my servants would fight so that I might be not delivered to the mob? But my Kingdom is not from here.

Pi: So you are truly a King?

J: You say that I am a King. For this purpose I was born and for this cause I came into the world that I might bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice.

Pi: What is (the) truth?

Choral: Lord, I believe, aid my frailty,
Do not leave me in despair,
Lord you can with strength avail me,
When sin and death do me ensnare.

In your goodness I shall trust,
Until with joy look I must
On you, my light, from all pain free,
In the East's eternity.

E: After he had said this, he went once more out to the mob and said to them.

Pi: I find to reason to condemn him. You Jews have a custom, that I should free a prisoner at passover. Therefore, shall I not release the King of the Jews to you?

E: At this they cried out.

Ch: Not this man! Give us Barabbas! Yes!

E: Barrabas however was a murderer! Thereupon Pilate had Jesus flogged.

Pe: What have I done to you? My Jesus, my friend, my master.
For I was so afraid.
How cruelly they do harass you, my Jesus, my master.
In me you placed your blind trust,
And your life away you cast
And upon my life transgressed
The Church foundation stone now rest.
Oh Lord! What have I done? My Jesus, my master, my friend.

E: The soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. They stood before him and said;

Ch: All hail! King of the Jews!

E: And they struck him upon the face.

Choral: Who would so lay their hands on you,
My health, and you with thorns, then strew
your head, thus foully ravaged?
You are without sin, blameless,
But we have much to confess,
But you from misdeeds are quite free.

E: Pilate, therefore, went out once more and said unto them:

Pi: See I bring him out to you. You ought to know that I have found no fault in him, that I should condemn him!

E: Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said unto them.

Pi: See! Behold the ... man!

E: When the High Priests and their servants saw him they cried out:

Ch (T+B): Crucify him!

Pi: You take him and crucify him for I find no guilt in him.

E: The people then answered him!

Ch: We have a law and by that law he ought to die because he declared himself the Son of God; so he must die!

E: When Pilate heard this he was more afraid. He went once more into the Judgement Hall and said unto Jesus.

Pi: Whence do you come?

E: Jesus, however, gave him no answer.

Pi: You do not answer me? Do you not know that I have the power to set you free and the power to crucify you?

J: You would have no power over me had it not been granted you from above: therefore, the greatest sin is with him who delivered me to your power.

E: Thereupon Pilate wished to release him, but the Jews cried out.

Ch: If you let this man go you are not Caesar's friend. Whosoever declares himself as King, sets himself against Caesar.

E: Upon hearing these words Pilate had Jesus brought forth and sat himself in the judgement seat in the place called Gabbatha. It was the day of preparation for the passover at about the sixth hour. Pilate said to the mob:

Pi: Here ... is ... your ... King!

E: But they cried out.

Ch: Away with him! Crucify him!

Pi: Shall I crucify your King?

E: To this the High Priests answered;

Ch (T+B): We have no King other than Caesar.

E: Then he delivered Jesus unto them to be crucified.

Choral: Oh great love: oh such love beyond all barter,
That they have brought you to this place a martyr!
I lived in this world filled with joy and zest,
While you endure distress.

PART FOUR (The Execution of Jesus)

E: And they lead Jesus away. Bearing his cross, he went forth to the place known as the place of the skull, which in Hebrew is called Gûlgôtha. They ... crucified ... him there, and with him two others, one on either side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had them draw up a sign and fixed it upon the cross: the inscription read as follows: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many read this sign, as the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city. The inscription too was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. The chief priests said to Pilate.

Ch (T+B): Write not "the King of the Jews" but that he said; "I am the King of the Jews".

E: Pilate answered unto them.

Pi: What I have written, written have I.

Choral: I say to you oh beauteous, threach'rous world, farewell
In your seeming glittering life I so loved to dwell.
In Heaven 'tis good, and there desire I to reside
Where God will ever those reward, who in that place abide.

E: After the soldiers had place Jesus upon the cross, they took his garments and divided them in four parts. They took also his undergarment that was woven without seam from the top throughout. They said to each other.

Ch: Let us not tear it into pieces but cast lots to see to whom it shall belong.

E: So that the scriptures be fulfilled: "They divided my clothes among themselves and they cast lots for my garments." This, therefore, the soldiers did.

Pi: "Do not go the Syria", they said. "It is too hot and dry there!", they said. "... and the people are so un-Roman." They warned me about the Jews. They are wildly rebellious and will not subordinate themselves to Caesar.
 Judea! Truly a beautiful land; not at all dry and hot. And the people in Naples or Massilia are also no different. There is only one thing which differentiates them from we Romans: an unflinching belief that there is only one God: Utter rubbish!
 Judea! It could be possible to make good Romans out of you, but like this? And when I recount this business with the Nazarene back home, they'll all be horrified.
 Meanwhile, I have done my duty; no more no less. There are rules and regulations which are to be followed by the Emperor's Proconsul. Where we all end up if everyone does as he pleases?
 Judea! I, Lucius Pilatus am so true. It is not for nothing that I am known as "Pontius" – the bridge builder. Otherwise, I would not have been given this post. I could always, I tell you, mediate between people. So here too! Even so an insurgency was suppressed and the Temple priests have renewed their fealty to the Emperor.
 Judea! And the Nazarene? A stupid carpenter, a ne'er-do-well, a do gooder. It made me a little sad, but they made their choice and they chose Barabbas. And someone to the cross must go; well then ... !
 Judea! I have done my duty.

Choral: Oh dear soul, Oh humankind,
 Awake and ponder, here we find
 that which God to us presents,
 His dear Son from the throne of Heav'n,
 To this vale of tears, here sent.

E: Now there stood by the cross his mother, the sister of his mother and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved, he said unto her.

J: Woman, behold your son!

E: Then he said to me.

J: John! Behold! Here is now your mother!

E: And from that time forth, I took her into my own home.

An: Oh dear John! Dearest John! Such providence! Beloved John! You are the chosen disciple. You bring the good news to the entire world. The life and death of our dear Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the most high, most sovereign, though his kingdom is not on earth. His realm is his Father in heaven. His realm is God.

E: Thereafter, Jesus knowing that all things were accomplished, said.

J: I am thirsty.

E: They placed a sponge soaked with vinegar upon a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus, therefore, had taken the vinegar, he said.

J: It is accomplished.

Choral: All this he has done for our sake,
 His great love to demonstrate,
 Thus rejoices Christianity,
 And give thanks for all eternity!
 Kyrie eleis!

PART FIVE
(The Burial of the body).

E: Because it was the day of preparation and lest the body should remain upon the cross on the Sabbath, we all beseeched Pilate that their legs might be broken, and their bodies then taken away, for this Sabbath was an high day.
 So then the soldiers came and first broke the legs of them who were crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, seeing that he was already dead, they did not break his legs but one of the soldiers pierced his side with his lance and forthwith there came out blood and water.

Choral: I cry to the Lord in my distress:
 God listen unto my cries!
 Deliver us from death's caress,
 And your sweet balm be our prize,
 God has of everything well thought,
 And to us all his wisdom brought.
 To God all honour and praise!

E: And I, who saw everything, who has born witness to it all and this record is true. And I know that I tell the truth so that you too might believe. So it came to pass that the scripture might be fulfilled: Not one of his bones shall be broken. And again another scripture said: They shall look on him whom they have pierced.

An: Joseph of Arimathea go now to Pilate and ask him for the body of Jesus. Take him from the cross and wind him in a linen cloth and bury him with fragrant spices, as are the sepulchral customs of the Jews.
 Up! Up! Joseph.

E: Joseph did as he was commanded. Now in this place where he was crucified, there was a garden and in that garden was a new grave in which no man had been entombed. As it was the day of preparation and the grave was near at hand upon they laid Jesus there.

Tutti: Mankind upon Jeshua look,
Very God an' Holy Ghost,
Who through strength no resistance brook,
That death its pow'r has lost.

Choral: Oh such sadness! Oh heart's distress
Shall there now be no complaint
That God's goodliness, his own child,
Should in a grave be laid.

O.A.M.D.G.
GM

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