

Programme Notes



St Matthew Passion

Thu 14 April 2022 • 19.30

Fri 15 April 2022 • 19.30

Sat 16 April 2022 • 19.30

PROGRAMME

conductor **Jan Willem de Vriend**
soprano **Lydia Teuscher**
alto **Ingeborg Danz**
tenor **Jeremy Ovenden**
tenor (Evangelist) **James Gilchrist**
baritone **Dietrich Henschel**
bas (Christ) **Florian Boesch**
choir **Laurens Collegium and Nieuw Amsterdams Kinderkoor**

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
St Matthew Passion, BWV 244 [1727,
revision 1736 and 1742]
Passion unseres Herrn Jesu Christi
nach dem Evangelisten Matthäus

Text: Christian Friedrich Henrici,
named Picander

*There is an interval after the first part
Concert ends at about 22.45*

**Most recent performance by our
orchestra:**
March 2018, conductor Richard Egarr



Johann Sebastian Bach, stained glass window in the St Thomas Church, Leipzig

A debt of gratitude to Telemann

For many of us, Johann Sebastian Bach is one of the greatest composers, and his *St Matthew Passion* perhaps his most significant masterpiece. But would it ever have been written if in 1722 Georg Philipp Telemann had not been awarded a pay rise?

This was the year in which Johann Kuhnau, the Thomascantor in Leipzig, died, and the city council appointed Telemann as his successor. Telemann at first agreed to the appointment, but ultimately withdrew when his employer in Hamburg increased his salary. And it was not until a further candidate was also unavailable that the choice finally fell on Bach...

Onerous job

It was an onerous job with many responsibilities. Bach's tasks not only included revealing the secrets of music to a couple of dozen choirboys, but also, for example, explaining the grammar of the Latin language. And each Sunday and religious holiday the Thomascantor was required to perform a suitable cantata in one of his four churches in Leipzig. To this end, Bach composed a huge quantity of church music during the first few years of his appointment.

For Good Friday that meant the composition of a dramatic Passion. The performance of Kuhnau's St Mark's Passion in 1721 launched an annual tradition in Leipzig

whereby the story of Christ's Passion would be presented in music and text alternately in the St Thomas Church and the St Nicholas Church. The first time that such an event fell to the responsibility of Bach was in 1724, in a performance of his *St John's Passion*, which he had already composed before his appointment in Leipzig. Bach also presented the *Passion* as told in the other three Gospels, although it is unclear how much of the music for these he had composed himself. His obituary even speaks of five Passions, of which one was written for a double choir.

Double choir

The reference to the *Passion* for double choir can only mean the *St Matthew Passion*, of which a complete score, written in an elegant hand by Bach himself, has survived to this day. This handwritten copy dates from 1736, although a first version of the *St Matthew Passion* had already been performed in 1727 or 1729.

The use of a double choir distinguishes this work from other Passions by Bach himself

and his contemporaries, and is a direct result of the interior of the St Thomas Church at that time. The two choirs, each with their own soloists, orchestra and organ, were positioned on a gallery on two sides, allowing a flow of questions and responses back and forth, as in the opening chorus, to optimum effect. In addition, on an opposite gallery the ripieno trebles sang out the choral melody 'O Lamm Gottes unschuldig' ('O Lamb of God, innocent') over the tops of both other choirs. Nowadays the innocents are often sung by a boys' choir; at that time all parts were sung by men and boys.

Betrayal and denial

The splitting of the work into two (unequal) halves was necessary to allow time for the sermon. The Passion was, after all, intended to be part of a church service. Although it might seem logical to make an interval between Chapters 26 and 27 of the Gospel of Matthew, Bach chose an earlier point in time. The end of the first part follows the arrest of Jesus, the moment when he is left all alone – 'Da verließen ihn alle Jünger und fliehen' ('Then all the Disciples left him and fled'). Just before this point Judas had betrayed Jesus, a moment described with the sound of thunder and lightning from both sides of the church.

An even more significant act of betrayal turns out to be Peter's denial of Christ. In the Bible it is this event that concludes Chapter 26. Bach makes this into an emotional climax, especially through the aria for alto that follows: 'Erbarme dich' ('Have mercy'). The central positioning of this aria, and its relationship with the announcement of the denial in the first part, is explained by our compatriot and Matthew Passion expert Kees van Houten in an article well worth reading by the cruciform shape that

underpins the work: the two moments in the Passion form the intersection between the upright and horizontal parts of the cross.

Halo

Bach found another way to centrally place the aria 'Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben' ('Out of love my Saviour wants to die'), by inserting it between the two appeals for Christ to be crucified. This text, as with the text of the other arias, is written by Picander, an amateur poet who earned his daily bread as a postman in Leipzig, and who here found the words to capture the essence of the story of the Passion. The instrumentation creates a very particular sound, partly through the combination of a flute solo accompanied by two cors anglais but also due to the absence of any real bass part.

Following the moment of death, which passes almost unnoticed, comes a trembling of the earth and all the drama of the declamation of the Evangelist and the basso continuo

The basso continuo, the continuous bass line, is one of the building blocks of Baroque music. The part may be played by various bass instruments, such as a cello, double bass and bassoon, in combination with a keyboard: organ or harpsichord. In this Passion they form the sombre base line to the recitatives of the Evangelist, but they are also rarely absent from the orchestral passages.

Bach creates a similar effect in the appeal by Jesus: 'Eli, Eli, lama

sabacthani' ('My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'). The role of Christ is supported all the way through by the string section of the first orchestra, giving the text a great dignity, a kind of halo effect. The absence of the strings in this passage is very illuminating. Following the moment of death, which passes almost unnoticed, comes a trembling of the earth and all the drama of the declamation of the Evangelist and the basso continuo.

Leipzig

With the limited means at his disposal, it must have been quite a task for Bach to organise such an extended ensemble of sufficient quality. Many arias are accompanied by beautiful but complicated instrumental solos that often live longer in the memory than the sung melodies. For the oboe parts, that also appear frequently in his cantatas, Bach could rely on virtuoso Johann Caspar Gleditsch. Bach would also have had intensive contact with instrument maker Johann Heinrich Eichentopf, who developed and improved several other types of oboe, such as the oboe da caccia (later known as the cor anglais) and the oboe d'amore (pitched lower than the oboe but higher than the cor anglais).

It is probable that had Bach not been appointed as Thomascantor, he would nevertheless have taken a position elsewhere as a church musician and still composed a work such as the St Matthew Passion. However, the opportunity provided for a double choir by the St Thomas Church, and the instrumentation of the score tightly bind the work with the city of Leipzig. With a debt of gratitude to another deserving composer of Passions: Georg Philipp Telemann.

Eelco Beinema



Jan Willem de Vriend, conductor

Born: Leiden, the Netherlands

Current position: principal guest conductor Stuttgart Philharmonic, Orquestra Simfónica de Barcelona and Orchestre National de Lille
Breakthrough: 1982, as founder and artistic leader of the Combattimento Consort Amsterdam
Subsequently: Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Salzburger Mozarteum Orchestra, Zürich Tonhalle Orchestra, Berlin Konzerthaus Orchestra, RSO Stuttgart

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2014

Lydia Teuscher, soprano

Born: Freiburg, Germany

Study: Welsh College of Music and Drama, Hochschule für Musik Mannheim
Solo appearances: Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin

Opera: Semperoper Dresden, Bavarian State Opera, Staatsoper unter den Linden, Bolshoi Theatre, Glyndebourne Festival

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2022



Ingeborg Danz, alto

Born: Witten, Germany

Study: School Music at the Hochschule für Musik Detmold, voice with Heiner Eckels, masterclasses with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and others
Breakthrough: 1987 at the Detmold and Hamburg Opera

Subsequently: solo appearances with Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2004





James Gilchrist, tenor

Born: Banbury, England
Study: Choir of New College, Oxford, Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Medicine in Londen
Breakthrough: 2000, Bach Cantatas with John Eliot Gardiner
Subsequently: opera with Berlin State Opera, La Monnaie, English National Opera, solo appearances with Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music
Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2011

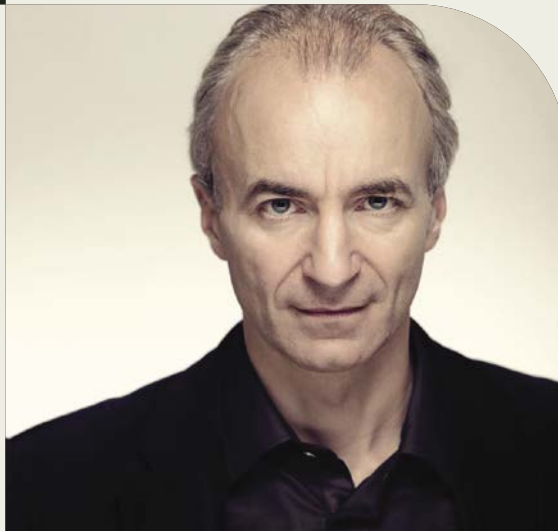


Florian Boesch, bass

Born: Saarbrücken, Germany
Study: singing lessons with his grandmother Ruthilde Boesch, Vienna Musikhochschule with Robert Holl
Breakthrough: 2000, solo recital Vienna Musikverein
Subsequently: solo appearances with Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, recitals at Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall
Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2014

Dietrich Henschel, baritone

Born: Berlin, Germany
Study: piano and conducting in Nuremberg, voice at the Munich Musikhochschule
Breakthrough: 1997, title role *Doktor Faust* (Busoni) at Opéra de Lyon
Subsequently: opera at Opéra Bastille, Dutch National Opera, Berlin State Opera, collaborations with Riccardo Chailly, Kent Nagano, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Sir Colin Davis
Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2013



Laurens Collegium Rotterdam

Founded: 2002 by Barend Schuurman
Present conductor: Wiecher Mandemaker
Members: young professional singers
Repertoire: all style periods in chamber choir formation
Achievements: annually in concert series at the Rotterdam Doelen; Choir in Residence Haarlem Choral Biennale (2009), premieres of Vanessa Lann, Klaas de Vries and Daan Verlaan
Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2011



Jeremy Ovenden, tenor

Born: Guildford, England
Study: Royal College of Music, Londen, with Norman Bailey and Neil Mackie, privately with Nicolai Gedda
Collaborated with: Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim, Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Nikolaus Harnoncourt
Opera: Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, La Monnaie, Dutch National Opera
Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2017



Nieuw Amsterdams Kinderkoor

Founded: 2005, as one of the choirs of Nieuw Vocaal Amsterdam
Chorus Master: Caro Kindt
Members: a selection from the talent choirs and advanced training choirs of Nieuw Vocaal Amsterdam
Repertoire: specialized in opera; the NAK is regular children's choir partner of Dutch National Opera
Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2018

Agenda

Fri 22 April 2022 • 19.30

conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**
Wotan **Michael Volle**
Loge **Gerhard Siegel**
Alberich **Samuel Youn**
Mime **Thomas Ebenstein**
Fricka **Jamie Barton**
Wagner Das Rheingold

Sun 1 May 2022 • 14.15

conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**
mezzosoprano **Karen Cargill**
soprano **Christiane Karg**
Alma Mahler Songs
Gustav Mahler Symphony Nr. 4

Fri 13 May 2022 • 20.15

Sun 15 May 2022 • 14.15

conductor **Lahav Shani**
violin **Michael Barenboim**
Mahler Adagio from Symphony
Nr. 10
Roustop Violin Concerto Nr. 1
(World Premiere)
Ben-Haim Symphony Nr. 1 (Dutch
Premiere)

Sat 14 May 2022 • 13.27 (!)

Jurriaanse Zaal
piano **Lahav Shani**
violin **Michael Barenboim, Cecilia
Ziano** and **Saskia Otten**
viola **Galahad Samson**
cello **Daniel Petrovitsch** and
Pepijn Meeuws
Schönberg Transfigured Night
(Piano Trio)
Shostakovich Piano Quintet

Thu 19 May 2022 • 20.15

Fri 20 May 2022 • 20.15

conductor **Tarmo Peltokoski**
piano **Yuja Wang**
Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto Nr. 1
Rachmaninoff Paganini-Rhapsody
Sibelius Symphony Nr. 2

Musicians

Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

Honorary Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

First violin

Igor Gruppman,
concertmeester
Marieke Blankestijn,
concertmeester
Quirine Scheffers
Hed Yaron Meyerson
Saskia Otto
Arno Bons
Mireille van der Wart
Shelly Greenberg
Cor van der Linden
Rachel Browne
Maria Dingjan
Marie-José Schrijner
Noëmi Bodden
Petra Visser
Sophia Torrenga
Hadewijch Hofland
Annerien Stuker
Alexandra van
Beveren
Koen Stapert

Second violin

Charlotte Potgieter
Cecilia Ziano
Frank de Groot
Laurens van Vliet
Tomoko Hara
Elina Staphorsius
Jun Yi Dou
Bob Bruyn
Letizia Sciarone
Eefje Habraken
Maija Reinikainen
Sumire Hara
Wim Ruitenbeek
Babette van den Berg
Melanie Broers

Viola

Anne Huser
Roman Spitzer
Maartje van Rheeden
Galahad Samson
Kerstin Bonk
Lex Prummel
Janine Baller
Francis Saunders
Veronika Lénártová
Rosalinde Kluck
León van den Berg

Cello

Emanuele Silvestri
Joanna Pachucka
Daniel Petrovitsch
Mario Rio
Gé van Leeuwen
Eelco Beinema
Carla Schrijner
Pepijn Meeuws
Yi-Ting Fang

Double bass

Matthew Midgley
Ying Lai Green
Jonathan Focquaert
Robert Franenberg
Harke Wiersma
Arjen Leendertz
Ricardo Neto

Flute

Juliette Hurel
Joséphine Olech
Désirée Woudenberg

Oboe

Remco de Vries
Karel Schoofs
Hans Cartigny
Anja van der Maten

Oboe/cor anglais

Ron Tijhuis

Clarinet

Julien Hervé
Bruno Bonansea
Jan Jansen

Clarinet/ bass clarinet

Romke-Jan Wijmenga

Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten
Lola Descours
Marianne Prommel

Bassoon/ contra bassoon

Hans Wisse

Horn

David Fernández
Alonso
Wendy Leliveld
Richard Speetjens
Laurens Otto
Pierre Buizer

Trumpet

Giuliano
Sommerhalder
Alex Elia
Simon Wierenga
Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders
Alexander Verbeek
Remko de Jager

Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

Timpani/ percussion

Randy Max
Danny van de Wal
Ronald Ent
Martijn Boom
Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels