The Broadway Symphony
George Shangrow, conductor

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
Johannes Passion
The Passion According to St. John

Good Friday, March 29, 1991

Evangelist  Mukund Marathe
Jesus  Peter Kechley
Pilate  Doug Albertson
Soprano  Danielle Sinclair
Aalto  Cynthia Beltmen
Tenor  Stephen Wall
Bass  Brian Box

The Broadway Symphony has the policy of regular rotation for orchestral seating — therefore, our personnel are listed alphabetically in each section.

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The use of the Rogers organ for tonight's performance was generously donated by Kersten Music Corporation, consultants for electronic and pipe organs at 821-9236.
Program Notes by George Shangrow

The Passion story has been presented in Christian churches since the fourth century. These presentations were in dramatic form with several readers handling the different characters: Christ, the Evangelist, the various individuals, and the crowd. As the ninth century instructions to interpretation appear: moving, held back, and to be sung higher. It was around this time that the tradition of the Evangelist be sung by a tenor or higher voice and that the Christ be sung by a bass or lower voice was established. The Passion story was presented between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday and in Leipzig was used for the Good Friday Vespera service.

The Leipzig Carolingian Romanization of not allowing elaborate music during the six weeks of Lent. This obviously proved a boon for church composers because it allowed a large amount of time and concentration for the large works needed for Passion and Easter time. With the St. John Passion, Bach presented his first major work during his new job as Cantor of St. Thomas's Church. He probably composed some of the work during his time at Köthen — incorporating many of the techniques that he had developed there — but the bulk of the work was composed during the three weeks prior to the presentation.

Of the five Passion settings composed by Bach, only the St. John and the St. Matthew remain intact. Bach himself repeatedly performed only two of these two works so it would seem that the loss of the works may be not so much a problem. Scholars feel that Bach did not think the other works were as good as the two he published. We probably took the most beautiful movements from them and used them in other pieces. The change to a grand setting of the Passion with choruses, arias, different singers, and large instrumental forces came as a result of the creation of opera, cantata, and church forms in the 17th century. The (devices of melody accompanied by continuo or instruments, arias with obbligato instruments, extensive chorale movements, and polyphonic ar-
arrangements of chorale melodies were all adopted for use in the Passion settings.

The recitative obviously advances. In the St. John Passion, the Evangelist, Christ, and all of the other individual characters sing only recitative a cappella (only keyboard and cello). The chorus writing is one of the great features of this Passion. The turn of the arias (crowd scenes) during the second part of the work is a driving force in the Judas Iscariot, Jesus' suffering in any setting of the Passion before or since. The chorale set-
tings form a rather idealized congregation — in Bach's time it is possible that the congregation sang along with the chorale mel-
dies. The texts of the chorales reflect the personal feelings of the listeners as a reaction to the story at any given time.

The arias are musical settings where text and music combine to form a single emotional idea in a self-contained form. These works heighten the story in an emotional way that relates directly to the Gospel story but has text from another source. There are a number of librettists that have written librettos for the Passion but by far the most well-known of these is Bartheold Heinrich Broich. Settings of Broich's Pas-
tion have been composed by Händel, Telemann, Keiser, and Mattheson — all of them famous at the time — and all of them performed in Hamburg on four different days of Holy Week in 1719.

The musical form of the work does not conform well to that of the Gospel text. It is through the genius of Bach, not Saint John, that the work as a whole is as strong and is so well able to convey the message. The center of the work is the chorale "Durch dein Glaubensflug..." which contains the text central to the understanding and reli-
gious meaning of the Passion. Around this chorale the various choruses are woven and the dramatic quality of the choruses is virtually identical with different texts. The relationships between the texts of the similar choruses is an interesting one from an emotional point of view which the listener should investigate.

The choruses "Wir haben ein Gezast" and "Lasset da
diesen lott" frame the central chorale. It always feels to me that the height of the drama is reached in the surrounding of humankind. Outside of these two works are the "crucify
coruses, 'Kreuzige, Kreuzigt' and 'Weeg, weeg dot." Framing these are two sets of pieces. The earlier one starting with the "Kreuziget," the other one continues with "Durch dein Glaubensflug" and is both beautiful and reflective "Betrachte" and the amazing tenor aria "Erwage." This first set concludes with the mocking chorus "Sii gegrasset" where the soldiers how and century to consider him as "King of the Jews" in a very nasty way as represented in the fast wind parts.

The corresponding set after the "Weeg, weeg choruses begins with the final chorale and the powerful reflection of the Barabam choruses and a textual reinforcement. The following aria for bass 'Eilt' with its fascinating interjec-
tions by the chorus provides a dramatic directie towards Judgment Day and is a kind of summation of the Passion with the arias. Finally, the chorus with the identical text to that of "Sii gegrasset" is the 'Schreibe nichts chorale where the crowd in-
structs Pilate not to put the inscription above the cross. Note the ironic combination with the "Grefting' choruses depicting the soldiers' earlier mocking. These choruses, and the two framing choruses 'Ach, grosser König' and 'In meines Herzten Grunde,' form the climatic center of the performance. As the first movement of the Passions, we see that the outer frames contain most of the arias and other choruses leading to the grand opening and closing choruses. Not included in the very last chorus 'Ach Then' this is the most beautiful chorale in the Passion. As a forward statement Bach found to be the best way to contain or sum up the tremendous emotional content of the musical and scriptur-
tal work.

In listening to the Passions, as in listening to opera, it is important to follow the text translation. Bach is a master at setting text in recitative and so knowing what each work means as it is being sung can truly heighten the enjoyment of the music as well as giving a greater appreciation for Bach's genius. We perform the work in German because Bach wrote it in German and the individual words do not fit with the musical intention when translated. Even so, they are heavy with meaning. Every word is a storyteller supreme, and at his command the various personalities and crowds make their interjections. As in any good drama, timing of cues is of the essence in conveying the emotional content of each Bach's "lead-ins" to the various choruses are espe-
cially fine.

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Baritone Brian Box is a native of Washington and received his Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University. Mr. Box has appeared frequently with the BS/SCS as a soloist in cantatas and oratorios and with the Broadway Symphony in Mahler's Songs of a Wayfarer. Among his credits are performances of Brahms' Four Last Songs with the Western Washington University Orchestra and the leading role in Dominic argento's opera Postcard from Morocco at the University of British Columbia. He is a regular performer with Northern Oregon College, Portland State University, and Portland Opera's education program and recently made his Seattle Opera debut as the Corporal in The Daughver of the Regiment.

Douglas Albertson is presently graduate teaching assistant at Portland State University working towards a Masters degree in Choral Conducting. Doug recently returned to the Pacific Northwest from a stint in California, where he led the music program at Santa Rosa First Methodist Church, as well as directing a select a cappella group called the Santa Rosa Chamber Singers. Mr. Albertson recently sang the role of Pilate in the Vancouver Opera's production of the Gerschenkron's opera. He is a graduate of the University of British Columbia and the University of California at Berkeley.

The Passion story begins with the arrest and trial of Jesus. In a small town where the people are all friendly and kind, the Passion begins with the arrest of Jesus and continues through his crucifixion and resurrection. The Passion story is performed without words, with the music used as a way to express the emotions of the characters. The Passion story is sung in Latin, with the words projected onto a screen above the stage. The Passion story is performed in the church's choir loft, with the choir members singing the parts of the Passion story. The choir members are dressed in robes, and they use different types of robes to represent different characters. The Passion story is performed in the church's choir loft, with the choir members singing the parts of the Passion story. The choir members are dressed in robes, and they use different types of robes to represent different characters.
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