

= St John Passion structure =

The structure of the St John Passion (German : Johannes @-@ Passion) , BWV 245 , a sacred oratorio by Johann Sebastian Bach , is " carefully designed with a great deal of musico @-@ theological intent " . Some main aspects of the structure are shown in tables below .

The original Latin title *Paßio secundum Joannem* translates to " The Passion after John " . Bach 's large choral composition in two parts on German text , written to be performed in a Lutheran service on Good Friday , is based on the Passion , as told in two chapters from the Gospel of John (John 18 and John 19) in the translation by Martin Luther , with two short interpolations from the Gospel of Matthew (in Version I , one from the Gospel of Matthew and one from the Gospel of Mark) . During the vespers service , the two parts of the work were performed before and after the sermon . Part I covers the events until Peter 's denial of Jesus , Part II concludes with the burial of Jesus . The Bible text is reflected in contemporary poetry and in chorales that often end a " scene " of the narration , similar to the way a chorale ends most Bach cantatas . An anonymous poet supplied a few texts himself , quoted from other Passion texts and inserted chorales by nine hymnwriters . Bach led the first performance on 7 April 1724 in Leipzig 's Nikolaikirche . He repeated it several times between 1724 and 1749 , experimenting with different movements and changes to others , which resulted in four versions (with a fifth one not performed , but representing the standard version) . The Passion , close to Bach 's heart , has an " immediate dramatic quality " .

= = Structure = =

= = = Text = = =

= = = = Gospel = = = =

The gospel account by John narrates the story in five " scenes " . The corresponding movement numbers are given from the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe (NBA) .

Part I

Arrest (1 ? 5) , Kidron Valley (John 18 : 1 ? 11)

Denial (6 ? 14) , palace of the high priest Kaiphas (John 18 : 12 ? 27)

Part II

Court hearing with Pontius Pilate (15 ? 26) (John 18 : 28 ? 40 and John 19 : 1 ? 22)

Crucifixion and death (27 ? 37) , Golgotha (John 19 : 23 ? 30)

Burial (38 ? 40) , burial site (John 19 : 31 ? 42)

Some musicologists regard movement 24 as the conclusion of scene 3 , the aria " Eilt , ihr angefocht 'nen Seelen " which locates the action from the courthouse to Golgotha , the calvary . Others , including Alfred Dürr regard the scene as ending with the last comment by Pilate .

Bach incorporated two short interpolations from the Gospel of Matthew (in Version I , one from Matthew and one from the Gospel of Mark) , Matthew 26 : 75 after John 18 : 27 , describing the weeping of Peter , and Matthew 27 : 51 ? 52 after John 19 : 30 , describing the tearing of the temple curtain (in Version I , this was replaced by Mark 15 : 38) . The narrator is the Evangelist , a tenor , Jesus and all other male characters are sung by a bass , the people who are often summarily called die Jüden (the Jews) are sung by a four @-@ part chorus (SATB) in dramatic turba movements . The " immediate , dramatic quality " of the " kind of musical equivalent of the Passion Play " relies on the setting of the interaction between the historical persons (Jesus , Pilate , Peter) and the crowd (" soldiers , priests , and populace ") .

= = = = Chorales = = = =

At eleven points in the structure , chorales reflect the narration , stanzas from Lutheran hymns .

Possibly Bach had an influence on their selection . He set them all in common time for four parts , the instruments playing with the voices .

Five chorales conclude a scene (in movements 5 , 14 , 26 , 37 and 40) , a chorale opens Part II (15) . Five chorales comment within a scene (3 , 11 , 17 , 22 , 28) . including the central movement of the whole Passion (22) . One chorale accompanies the bass soloist in an aria (32) .

Most chorale texts were written in the 16th and 17th century , by authors of the Reformation such as Martin Luther , Martin Schalling and Michael Weiße , and by hymn writers including Paul Gerhardt and Johann Heermann . The central chorale is not part of a common hymn .

=== Contemporary text ===

On a third level of text , contemporary poetry reflects the biblical narration . It was compiled by an unknown author , who partly used existing text . From the Brockes Passion (*Der für die Sünde der Welt Gemarterte und Sterbende Jesus , aus den IV Evangelisten* , Hamburg , 1712 and 1715) by Barthold Heinrich Brockes , he copied for movements 7 , 19 , 20 , 24 , 32 , 34 , a part of 35 and 39 . He found movement 13 in Christian Weise 's *Der Grünen Jugend Nothwendige Gedanken* (Leipzig , 1675) and took from Christian Heinrich Postel 's *Johannes @-@ Passion* (c . 1700) movements 19 (partly) , 22 and 30 .

=== Scoring ===

The work is scored for vocal soloists , soprano , alto , tenor and bass , a four part choir SATB , and an orchestra of two flauto traverso (Ft) , two oboes (Ob) , two oboes da caccia (Oc) , two oboes d 'amore (Oa) , two violins , viola (Va) , and basso continuo . Bach added some instruments in arias for special effects , old @-@ fashioned already at the time , such as archlute , viola d 'amore and viola da gamba (Vg) . Bach did not differentiate the vox Christi (voice of Christ) , singing the words of Jesus , from the other bass recitatives and arias , nor the evangelist from the tenor arias .

=== Symmetry ===

The work displays a thoughtful symmetry . In the center of the five parts is the court hearing which confronts Jesus , Pilate and the people . In the middle of the hearing , a chorale (22) interrupts the argument , which talks about prison and freedom . It is surrounded by two choral movements , which not only both ask for the crucifixion of Jesus , but also use the same musical motifs , the second time intensified . Again in symmetry of similar musical material , a preceding turba choir explains the law , while a corresponding movement reminds Pilate of the emperor whose authority is challenged by someone calling himself a king . Preceding this , Jesus is greeted in mockery as the king , corresponding in motif to the later request that Pilate should change the inscription saying he is the king to that he claimed to be king .

=== Versions ===

Bach led the first performance on 7 April 1724 at the Nikolaikirche (St. Nicholas) as part of a Vesper service on Good Friday . Part I was performed before the sermon , Part II after the sermon . Bach performed a second version on Good Friday a year later , 30 March 1725 . Other changes date from between 1728 and 1732 (version 3) , and between 1738 and 1748 (version 4) .

In version 2 , Bach opened with a chorale fantasia on " O Mensch , bewein dein Sünde groß " (O man , bewail thy sins so great) , the first stanza of a 1525 hymn by Sebald Heyden , a movement which he ultimately used to conclude Part I of his St Matthew Passion , returning to the previous chorus Herr , unser Herrscher in later versions of the St John Passion . He used three alternative arias , one of them with a chorale sung by the choir , and replaced the two closing movements , the chorus " Ruht wohl " and the chorale " Ach Herr , laß dein lieb Engelein " with the chorale fantasia " Christe , du Lamm Gottes " (Christ , you Lamb of God) , the German Agnus Dei , published in

Braunschweig in 1528 . Bach took this movement from his cantata Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn , BWV 23 , which had been an audition piece for the Leipzig post . Before , it had been part of his Weimarer Passion of 1717 .

In version 3 , after Bach wrote his St Matthew Passion , he returned the opening chorus Herr , unser Herrscher and the final chorus " Ruht wohl " to their first position , but eliminated the Gospel passages after Matthew and the closing chorale .

In version 4 , Bach returned to the first version , possibly in 1739 , but revised it thoroughly . He began a new score which covers 12 movements . As Christoph Wolff observes : " The fragmentary revised score constitutes an extensive stylistic overhaul with painstaking improvements to the part @-@ writing and a partial restructuring of the instrumentation ; particular attention was paid to the word @-@ setting in the recitatives and the continuo accompaniment . " In 1749 , Bach performed the St John Passion once more , to become his last performance of a Passion .

Wolff writes : " Bach experimented with the St John Passion as he did with no other large @-@ scale composition " , possible by the work 's structure with the Gospel text as its backbone and interspersed features that could be exchanged . Wolff concludes : " the work accompanied Bach right from his first year as Kantor of St Thomas 's to the penultimate year of his life and thus , for that reason alone , how close it must have been to his heart .

= = Overview = =

In the following , the movement numbers are those of the NBA , version I , unless otherwise noted .

= = = The chorales in detail = = =

The first chorale , movement 3 , is inserted after Jesus said to arrest him , but let the disciples go . " O große Lieb , o Lieb ohn alle Maße " (O mighty love , O love beyond all measure) is stanza 7 of Johann Heermann 's 1630 hymn " Herzliebster Jesu , was hast du verbrochen " . In personal reflection , the speaker sees the contrast of his pleasure in the world and the suffering of Jesus , ending in a short " Und du mußt leiden " (And thou must suffer) .

The second chorale , movement 5 , ends the first scene (of the arrest) , after Jesus remarks that he has to be obedient . " Dein Will gescheh , Herr Gott , zugleich " (Thy will be done , Lord God , alike) is stanza 4 of Luther 's 1539 hymn " Vater unser im Himmelreich , a paraphrase of the Lord 's Prayer .

The third chorale , movement 11 , is inserted after Jesus asks the one who beat him for justification . Two stanzas from Paul Gerhardt 's 1647 hymn " O Welt , sieh hier dein Leben " comment the scene , stanza 3 , " Wer hat dich so geschlagen " (Who hath thee now so stricken) , and stanza 4 , " Ich , ich und meine Sünden " (I , I and my transgressions) , highlighting the personal responsibility of the speaking sinner for the suffering of Jesus .

The fourth chorale , movement 14 , ends the second scene (of the arrest) and Part I. After the denial of Peter , " Petrus , der nicht denkt zurück " (Peter , when he fails to think) summarizes the scene in stanza 10 of Paul Stockmann 's 1633 hymn " Jesu Leiden , Pein und Tod " .

The fifth chorale , movement 15 , opens Part II and the third scene (of the court hearing) . " Christus , der uns selig macht " (Christ , who hath us blessed made) , stanza 1 of Michael Weiße 's 1531 hymn , summarizes what Jesus has to endure although innocent (" made captive , ... falsely indicted , and mocked and scorned and bespat ") .

The sixth chorale , movement 17 , comments in two more stanzas from " Herzliebster Jesu " (3) , after Jesus addressed the different kind of his kingdom . Stanza 8 , " Ach großer König , groß zu allen Zeiten " (Ah King so mighty , mighty in all ages) reflects the kingdom and the need for thanksgiving , stanza 9 the inability to grasp it , " Ich kanns mit meinen Sinnen nicht erreichen " (I cannot with my reason ever fathom) .

The seventh chorale , movement 22 , is the central movement of the whole Passion , which interrupts the conversation of Pilate and the crowd by a general statement of the importance of the passion for salvation : " Durch dein Gefängnis , Gottes Sohn , ist uns die Freiheit kommen " (

Through this thy prison , Son of God , must come to us our freedom) is not part of a known hymn , but the text of an aria from a St John Passion by Postel from c . 1700 .

The seventh chorale , movement 26 , ends the scene of the court hearing , after Pilate refuses to change the inscription . " In meines Herzens Grunde " (Within my heart 's foundation) is stanza 3 of Valerius Herberger 's 1613 hymn " Valet will ich dir geben " .

The eighth chorale , movement 28 , is related to Jesus telling his mother and John to take care of each other . " Er nahm alles wohl in acht " (He of all did well take heed) is stanza 20 of Stockmann 's hymn (14) .

The ninth chorale , movement 32 , is part of the bass aria which follows immediately after the report of the death of Jesus . " Jesu , der du warest tot , lebest nun ohn ' Ende " (Jesus , thou who suffered death , livest now forever) is the final stanza of Stockmann 's hymn (14) .

The tenth chorale , movement 37 , ends the scene of the crucifixion . " O hilf , Christ , Gottes Sohn " (O help , Christ , O Son of God) is stanza 8 of Weiße 's hymn (15) .

The eleventh chorale , movement 40 , ends the Passion . " Ach Herr , laß dein lieb Engelein " (Ah Lord , let thine own angels dear) is stanza 3 of Martin Schalling 's 1569 hymn " Herzlich lieb hab ich dich , o Herr " .

= = = Tables of movements = = =

The following tables give an overview of all versions of the Passion , first performed in 1724 . Two versions of movement numbers are given , first that of the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe (NBA) , then that of the older Bach @-@ Werke @-@ Verzeichnis (BWV) . Voices appear in one of three columns , depending on the text source , Bible , contemporary poetic reflection , and chorale . The instrumentation is added , using abbreviations for instruments , followed by key and time signature , and the NBA number of a corresponding movement within the work 's symmetry .

= = = = Version I = = = =

There are no extant Flute parts for this version , so the movements that normally require them have Violins doubling on them . This was performed in 1724 . The Bach Compendium lists it as BC D 2a

= = = = Part I = = = =

= = = = Part II = = = =

= = = = Version II = = = =

For this version (of 1725) , in addition to the Flute parts (which were first used in late 1724 (after 1 . Sunday after Trinity) , Bach revised heavily both text and music . He added five movements from his Weimarer Passion , with three texts now thought to be by Christoph Birkmann . This is listed as BC 2b .

= = = = Part I = = = =

= = = = Part II = = = =

= = = = Version III = = = =

In this version , Bach reverted to the original layout (thus discarding the previous revisions and

additions) . However , he decided to compose a true St. John Passion , and thus eliminated the material inserted from the Gospel of Matthew . Now 12c ends in Measure 31 and Movement 33 is eliminated altogether (replaced by a lost Sinfonia) . He also dispensed with the Lute and the Viola d 'amore , replacing them with an Organ and Violini con sordino . It was possibly performed in 1728 and definitely in 1732 . This is listed as BC D 2c .

===== Part I =====

===== Part II =====

===== Standard Version (1739 @-@ 1749) =====

Essentially a reworking of the 1724 1st Version , this version is the most detail @-@ oriented revisioning of the work . On 17 March 1739 , while still working on this revision , Bach was informed that the performance of the Passion setting could not go ahead without official permission , thus (most likely) effectively halting any plans for that year . In response , Bach performed the Brockes @-@ Passion of his friend , Georg Philipp Telemann (TVWV 5 : 1) . However , though he was stopped at M. 42 of Movement 10 , he continued to work on his revision , as borne out by the Copyist 's score and parts . It is listed as BC D 2e .

===== Part I =====

===== Part II =====

===== Version IV =====

Essentially a re @-@ production of Version I with a few alterations (text changes in Movements 9 , 19 & 20 , instrumentation reflection of Version III) . It was performed in 1749 and (most likely) repeated in 1750 . It also represents (outside of the St. Matthew Passion) the largest instrumental ensemble used (calling for 3 1st Violins) , and (for the first time in his work) calls for a Contrabassoon (used in all choral parts , as well as instrumental ritornellos) . It is listed as BC D 2d .

===== Part I =====

===== Part II =====

===== Scores =====

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