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J. S. Bach: Markus Passion

The Lost Passion

July 12 and 13, 2025

Above: Joseph Marcell



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Markus Passion BWV 247

(Reconstr. Malcolm Bruno)

Saturday, July 12, 2025 / 7:00pm / First United Methodist Church, Portland
Sunday, July 13, 2025 / 2:00pm / Town Hall, Seattle

Julian Perkins, conductor and keyboards

Joseph Marcell, narrator

Pascale Beaudin, soprano

Cody Bowers, alto

James Reese, tenor

Jonathan Woody, bass

PART I

1. Chorus: "Geh, Jesu, geh zu deiner Pein"
2. Aria (soprano): "Er kommt"
3. Chorale: "Betrübtes Herz, sei wohlgemut"
4. Aria (bass): "Herr, so du willst"
5. Aria (alto): "Falsche Welt"
6. Chorale: "Jesu, ohne Missetat"
7. Sinfonia from Cantata: *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, BWV 4
8. Aria (tenor): "Erbarme dich"
9. Chorale: "O wir armen Sünder"
10. Chorus: "Wir haben einen Gott"

- a brief pause -

PART II

11. Sinfonia from Cantata: *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, BWV 21
12. Chorale: "Mach's mit mir, Gott"
13. Aria (tenor): "Mein Tröster ist nicht mehr bei mir"
14. Aria (alto): "Mein Heiland, dich vergess ich nicht"
15. Chorale: "O Traurigkeit, o Herzelied"
16. Aria (soprano): "Welt und Himmel"
17. Sinfonia from Cantata: *Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich*, BWV 150
18. Aria (bass): "Es ist Vollbracht"
19. Chorale: "Befiehl du deine Wege"
20. Chorus: "Bei deinem Grab"

Commissioned by Oregon Bach Festival and produced by Concert Theatre Works

Bach: Markus Passion

Well before the Reformation the portions of the gospels depicting the final days of the earthly life of Jesus – of his betrayal, trial and death – had become a fixture of the liturgy of Holy Week, and one, uniquely, that could have dramatic expression. Collaborating with his librettist 'Picander' (Christian Friedrich Henrici 1700-1764) Bach elevated this dramatic form to satisfy his own needs and imagination: his settings, with full orchestral accompaniment (less brass and timpani) becoming oratorios on an operatic scale.

In first the *Johannes-Passion* (1724) and then the *Matthäus-Passion* (1729), Bach was able to develop his own dramatic form using new texts for arias and choruses, alongside the biblical text in recitative and turba scenes punctuated by chorales. The *Markus-Passion* was first performed in 1731. Aside from another documented performance in 1744, it next appeared 20 years later in a posthumous inventory of Bach's manuscripts delivered to his publisher Johann Breitkopf by his son Carl Philip Emanuel. It then, sadly, vanished from any record.

A century later in 1873 Wilhelm Rust, one of Bach's successors at the Leipzig Thomas Kirche, at work as an editor of the centennial (1850) Bach Gesellschaft edition, discovered not a manuscript or early edition of the *Markus*, but its instrumental incipit (listing). It contained the unusual requirement for two violas da gamba and two lutes. In the absence of a manuscript or musical source but with an extant copy of Picander's libretto to hand, Rust wondered – with its unique instrumentation – whether the music for this Passion might have been reworked from an earlier cantata. Using the libretto he was soon able to show that the *Markus* was indeed in large measure a parody of the *Trauer-Ode* (BWV 198). Scansion of the text from this earlier work, showed a perfect fit for the opening and closing choruses and three of its arias as parodies of the parallel movements. A few decades after Rust's work, a further parodied aria from *Cantata 54*, followed as the strongest contender for the music of the aria 'Falsche Welt'.

Rust's unpublished investigations led to the first 'complete' publication in 1964 of all the known parodied movements revealing both the beauty and potential of the *Markus*. It also laid bare the considerable practical problems for performance in the manner of the *Johannes* and *Matthäus Passions* given the incomplete state of the material. Huge musical-dramatic gaps from the lost *recitativo* and *turba cori* (whose unique texts could never have been parodied) along with a lop-sided order of high-voiced arias and an abundance of chorales specified in the libretto (16, which is four more than contained in the grand-scale *Matthäus*) left a stilted glimpse of this masterpiece.

Now, more than sixty years on the editorial question remains: should a reconstructed *Markus* simply offer the known remains of the original work or should a completed performing edition, use the libretto as a template, filling in the gaps with music from other sources, whether by Bach or his contemporaries?

And what should be done if no suitable parody material is available for the missing aria texts? How should an editor deal with the missing and essential biblical text (the non-aria/chorale material)? Should new material be composed? What must the guidelines be in creating a performing version? In short: Should the blueprint for rebuilding be solely the libretto by Picander? Should music other than Bach's be employed? How invasive should the editor's hand be in melding together the source-materials?

With these questions in mind the present re-construction has been guided by the following premises:

Text

As the symbiotic relation of the original *recitativo-turba-chorale* has vanished, and if it is accepted that this crucial element of the Passion is *not* replaceable – either by contemporary pastiche or by recycling of parallel material from the other Bach Passions or by importation of musical setting of the same text from other composers – we are left with the possibility of a dramatic production, harkening back to the earliest of Lutheran traditions, with the biblical text spoken.

Arias

In his *Markus* libretto for Bach's original Picander included six arias. Using parody, we have music, all but universally accepted, for four. For the remaining two 'Angenehmes Mordgeschrei' and 'Welt und Himmel' various possibilities for parody or pastiche/arrangement have been proposed. Musical parody for the text of 'Angenehmes Mordgeschrei' remains inconclusive, while the match drawn from *Cantata 120a* for 'Welt und Himmel' proposed in 1964 – though not authoritatively confirmed as Bach's initial choice – is appealing not least with its virtuosic solo violin offering an obvious association with 'Erbarme dich'.

Putting aside 'Angenehmes Mordgeschrei', we turn to the number and placement of the remaining arias. The *Trauer-Ode* as template provides music for three arias (one each for soprano, alto and tenor), but with none for the bass. Adding the 'Falsche Welt' parody provides a second aria for the alto; with 'Welt und Himmel' there is a substantial second aria for the soprano. Bach however would not have left the bass voice unrepresented in a Passion. Dispensing with parody, two bass arias from other cantatas offer an ideal solution: 'Herr so du willst' after the prayer in Gethsemane (from *Cantata 73*) and the less familiar 'Es is volbracht' setting (from *Cantata 159*) as a meditation immediately after the death of Jesus, the climax of the entire Passion. Although these particular arias are not part of Picander's original libretto, they fit Bach's dramatic/musical scheme quite perfectly; and to this end a further aria for the tenor can be provided with the little-known alternative 'Erbarme dich' setting from *Cantata 55*.

Chorus and Chorale

The *Trauer-Ode* provides not only an opening and closing chorus for the *Markus*, but an additional central chorus with no apparent parallel text from Picander. Accommodating it with a (funereal) Psalm text, however, it serves perfectly as a chorus to conclude the first part. Conversely, the plethora of chorales in the original text, however they might have worked in Bach's original plan, makes no musical sense when individual chorales appear as detached musical items paired with spoken text (their initial function to punctuate a sequence of recitative, turba and aria). Though their number has been pruned significantly, in the manner Bach's cantatas and oratorios, *sinfonie* have been included at major dramatic points in both first and second parts of the Passion. These function within the flow of the spoken narrative as chorale substitutes, rather for dramatic than historic purposes. Similarly, at the Passion's midpoint, occupied in Bach's day by a sermon, a further optional short *sinfonia* has been offered, as an overture to part two. Both 'signature' chorales 'Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück' and 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden' as points of reference to respectively the *Johannes* and *Matthäus Passions* have intentionally been selected from the longer initial set of chorales.

— Notes by Malcolm Bruno

PERFORMERS

OBF Baroque Orchestra

Julian Perkins, *conductor and keyboards*

Joseph Marcell, *narrator*

Pascale Beaudin, *soprano*

Cody Bowers, *alto*

James Reese, *tenor*

Jonathan Woody, *bass*

Violin I

Marc Destrubé

Violin II

Adam Lamotte

Viola

Katherine Kyme

Cello

William Skeen

Viola da Gamba

Adaiha Macadam-Somer, *principal*

Malachai Bandy

Bass

Kristin Zoernig

Flute

Bethanne Walker, *principal*

Alaina Diehl

Oboe

Debra Nagy, *principal*

Gaia Saetermoe-Howard

Keyboards

Julian Perkins

Theorbo

Scott Pauley, *principal*

Kevin Payne

Please learn about the artists beginning on p. 6.

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Portland Baroque Orchestra

For more than forty years, Portland Baroque Orchestra has reigned as the Pacific Northwest's premier period ensemble, expertly reimagining the music of the Baroque and Early Classical periods with passion and excellence in intimate venues. Founded in 1984, PBO is a jewel amongst Oregon's arts organizations, celebrated for its masterful fusion of rich musical history and innovative artistry in every program. Specializing in historically inspired performance, the orchestra also explores music beyond the Baroque, performing on period instruments or replicas with extraordinary artistry and spontaneity. PBO audiences enjoy the rich textures of the Baroque counterparts of modern instruments, including violins with gut strings and flutes made of wood and bone, in harmony with historical rarities such as the theorbo and harpsichord. In December 2022, PBO appointed the dynamic Julian Perkins as Artistic Director following the retirement of Monica Huggett. Join PBO to travel back in time and savor the uniquely delicate and jubilant sounds of the orchestra as it was first conceived and experienced!

Early Music Seattle

Founded in 1977, Early Music Seattle (formerly Early Music Guild) is the oldest presenter of early music in the Pacific Northwest. Early Music Seattle's mission is to present outstanding early music, use early music to enrich cultural heritage through education and outreach, and welcome a growing number of artforms, performers and audiences through inclusiveness, openness, and equity. Through a timeless process of connecting and sharing, EMS presents an annual "Beyond Baroque" season. Beyond Baroque is dedicated to expanding the definition of early music and brings the greatest musical artists from around the world to Seattle for four-day festivals, showcase concerts, and other special engagement events. EMS is dedicated to nurturing the artistry that occurs when people and their ideas and talents can freely cross borders. Every season brings together top flight artists of early music to present afresh mix of the familiar, the new, and the wildly experimental, making Seattle a destination city for groundbreaking artistry in the world of Early Music.

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Ronni S. Lacroute

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Joseph Marcell, *narrator*



On film, Joseph Marcell was most recently seen in Chiwetel Ejiofor's debut feature, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, based on the true story of William Kamkwamba, a young Malawian who built a windmill in his family's village, and brought electricity and water to the drought-stricken land. Joseph plays Chief Wimbe, the village Chief. Next up in film, we will see him in *Hellboy: The*

Crooked Man. Joseph is best known internationally for his role as Geoffrey the Butler in the NBC sitcom *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, which aired for 6 seasons. Coming up we'll see Marcell star as Grandpa in *Queenie*, the highly anticipated upcoming adaptation of *Queenie* the bestselling novel by Candice Carty-Williams. His other television credits include Ryan Murphy's *Ratched* with Sarah Paulson, BBC's *Death in Paradise*, *Dr. Who* for BBC, *The Bold and the Beautiful* for CBS and *Rough Crossings* for BBC. On stage, Joseph's numerous credits include *Hamlet* at the Young Vic with Cush Jumbo, Kathy Burke's *Lady Windemere's Fan*, *Babette's Feast*, *Gaslight*, *Breakfast with Mugabe*, and *Othello*, as well as his extensive work with Shakespeare's Globe including the titular role in Bill Buckhurst's *King Lear* and Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, as well as with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Pascale Beaudin, *soprano*



Pascale Beaudin's incomparable diction, intelligent musicality, and expressivity make her much sought after for concert and recital work. She performed in North America and Europe in roles such as Zerlina, Papagena, Fiordiligi, Oscar, and Marzelline, in houses such as the Opéra de Montréal, Opéra de Québec, Opéra de Marseille,

Opéra de Metz, Angers-Nantes Opéra, and most recently with Quantum Theatre. The New York Times praised her shimmering voice, while the Washington Post reported that she "sang the aria 'Per pietà' with such deliberate quiet elegance and restraint that it was a highlight not just of the evening, but also of my year." Pascale has collaborated with Chatham Baroque, the Orchestre Métropolitain, the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, the Lanaudière Festival, the Orford Festival, Clavecin en Concert, Scotia Festival, and Chamber Music Detroit. She is a member of the Four Nations Ensemble, a chamber music group based in New York and specializing in Early Music.

Cody Bowers, *alto*



With "a voice of rare beauty" (*Seen and Heard International*, 2022), countertenor Cody Bowers has received national award recognition from The Sullivan Foundation, The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, and The George London Foundation for Singers. In 2023-2024, he debuted with the New York Philharmonic

in *Israel in Egypt*, the Atlanta Symphony in *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, The Houston Symphony in *Messiah*, The Metropolitan Opera in *El Niño*, and joined Boston Early Music Festival for Telemann's *Don Quichotte*. Bowers also recorded a Christmas album with Blue Heron, appeared with Handel & Haydn and The Thirteenth, and was heard as alto soloist in Tenet Vocal Artists' Bach *B Minor Mass*. Among his opera roles are Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina*, Tolomeo in *Giulio Cesare*, and Orlando in *Orlando*.

James Reese, *tenor*



A "shining tenor" (*New York Classical Review*), James Reese delivers dynamic, thoughtful performances that facilitate intimate connections between audiences and his art. Reese maintains close relationships with many of North America's finest ensembles and conductors. Among the highlights of his 2024-25 concert season are an international

tour with the Boston Early Music Festival (Carissimi's *Jephthe*, singing *Historicus*), his Kennedy Center solo debut with Opera Lafayette, as well as a staged performance of Bach's *Markus Passion* – an Oregon Bach Festival commission, in collaboration with Concert Theatre Works, featuring storied actor Joseph Marcell. In 2023, James won a GRAMMY award as a soloist on *Born*, an album of music by Edie Hill released by The Crossing. Critics have lauded his singing as "captivating" (*The Broad Street Review*) and "splendid" (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

Jonathan Woody, *bass*



Jonathan Woody is a versatile and dynamic musician who maintains an active schedule as a performer and composer in New York and across North America. Cited by the Washington Post for singing "with resonance and clarity," Woody is in demand as a bass-baritone soloist, appearing regularly with historically informed

orchestras including Boston Early Music Festival, Apollo's Fire, Pacific MusicWorks, Bach Collegium San Diego, Trinity Baroque Orchestra and New York Baroque Incorporated. In recent seasons, Woody has appeared at the Staunton Music, Portland Bach, Carmel Bach, and Oregon Bach Festivals, the American Bach Soloists Academy, and at the Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. He has also been seen on the operatic stages of Opera Lafayette, American Opera Projects, and Beth Morrison Projects. Jonathan is committed to racial equity in the field of the performing arts, and currently serves on Early Music America's Task Force for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access.

Julian Perkins, conductor



Dubbed "The Indiana Jones of Early Music" by BBC Radio 3, Julian Perkins brings a dynamic and adventurous spirit to all his music-making. He is the Artistic Director of Portland Baroque Orchestra in Oregon, USA, and Artistic Director of Cambridge Handel Opera and Sounds Baroque in the UK. Julian has been praised as both director

and keyboard player for his "demonic intensity" (*BBC Music Magazine* Recording of the Month), "fluid and natural pacing" (*Gramophone* Editor's Choice), and conducting "as if every bar means the world to him" (*Opera Disc* of the Month). In 2023, his recording, *Handel's Attick*, was Instrumental Choice in *BBC Music Magazine*. Julian has led Baroque and Classical projects with Southbank Sinfonia, Oregon Bach Festival, the music conservatoires in Amsterdam, The Hague and London, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Florilegium, among others.

Bill Barclay, stage director



Former Director of Music at Shakespeare's Globe, Bill Barclay is Artistic Director of both Concert Theatre Works and Music Before 1800, NYC's oldest early music presenter. His original music has been performed live in 197 countries and 42 US states, before President Obama, for the Olympic Torch, at the United Nations, and

three times for the British Royal Family. Barclay is the creator and director of several of the most important concert events in the last 10 years, including *The Chevalier*, *Secret Byrd*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Antony & Cleopatra*. He has been commissioned five times by The Boston Symphony Orchestra. He has created works of concert-theatre in the Hollywood Bowl,

Kennedy Center, Southbank Centre, Barbican, Washington National Cathedral, Shakespeare's Globe, Hampton Court, and Buckingham Palace. He regularly appears in major festivals including Aldeburgh, Tanglewood, Spoleto USA, Chautauqua, Caramoor, Oxford Festival of the Arts, Virginia Arts Festival, Brighton Early Music, National Centre for Early Music, and many more.

Roxanna Myhrum, associate stage director



Roxanna Myhrum is a producer and director of opera, theater, and puppetry who specializes in new work, site-specific performance, and interdisciplinary collaboration. A pioneering member of Boston's vibrant fringe opera scene, she has staged operas in both traditional and non-traditional spaces including historic homes, dining halls, art galleries, parks, and

nightclubs. Opera directing credits include work with White Snake Projects, Boston Opera Collaborative, Juventas New Music Ensemble, OperaHub, Metropolitan Chorale, Lowell House Opera, Commonwealth Lyric Theater, and The Harvard Choruses. Roxanna is currently the Director of Programs & Events at Boston Lyric Opera where she oversees concert programming and creative collaborations. She was recently honored with Opera America's Grant for Women Stage Directors and Conductors. Roxanna is a graduate of Harvard University, Beth Morrison Projects' Producer Academy, and the Crested Butte Music Festival's Young Artist Program.

Malcolm Bruno, composer



Recently a visiting scholar at Princeton, musicologist Malcolm Bruno lives in Wales. He is editor of a number of ongoing major publications and reconstructions for Breitkopf & Härtel and Bärenreiter Verlag in Germany. Over the past 25 years, he has also produced many CD recordings for major labels specialising in baroque and choral repertoire,

initially as Associate Director of the Taverner Consort and Players, and then as a series independent-producer for BBC Radio 3 and Public Radio International in the USA. He is Artistic Director of Larvik Barokk Festival in Norway where he also chairs the board of the ensemble Barokksolistene which he founded with Bjarte Eike and Svein Eriksen in 2005.

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