A Reconsideration of the Performance of the Chorales in J. S. Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannem*, BWV 245

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In contemporary recordings and performances, the chorales of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) seem to be often performed in a predictably straightforward and homogenous manner: similar tempi, similar phrase shapes, similar delivery. This may be because the conductor or performers believe that the congregation in the Thomaskirche or Nikolaikirche in Leipzig, Germany (comprising community locals), sang the Passion chorales, thus leaving them to be less dramatic or deliberate. However, the evidence in the *Ordnungen und Gesetze der Schola Thomana* (Regulations and Legislations of the Thomas School), the evidence presented by three renowned Bach scholars, and the evidence of Bach’s music suggests that the congregation would not have sung the chorales of the Passion. They instead were performed only by Bach’s musicians, thus being more than capable of indulging in unique and dramatic delivery for each chorale. While this argument is perhaps now more generally accepted than it used to be, recordings and performances of Bach’s chorales still say something very different.
Having scrutinized the musical language and text that Bach deliberately and thoughtfully laid out, there is possibility for a more dramatic and contextualized approach to these chorales, something the congregation would not and could not have achieved. Because there is almost no published scholarship regarding the performance practice of Passion chorales, there is a need for a study of this nature. The goal of this article is to provide conductors and performers with a historically informed option to present Bach’s chorales in a manner that reflects the drama of the Passion story while highlighting harmonic language and textual interpretation. While this article focuses solely on Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannem*, these principles can be universally applied to all of Bach’s chorales in his Passion, Cantatas, and Oratorios.

**Intent and Scope of Study**

Although Bach’s Passion performance practices have been intensively studied, there is little information in the area of Passion *chorale* performance practices. In his books on Bach’s chorales and passions, Charles Sanford Terry discusses the history of each Passion, provides an overall description of each chorus and aria, lists textual information relevant to the chorales (author of text and composer of melody) and discusses Bach’s organ chorales. Alfred Dürr provides harmonic and formal analysis of the *Passio secundum Johannem* and its chorales and discusses the origins and content of chorale texts. In *The Essential Bach Choir*, Andrew Parrott gives a thorough description of the four different choirs Bach had at the five churches he served in Leipzig. He also describes the regulations at the Thomaskirche that were written in 1723, 1730, and 1733.

Dorottya Fabian offers a number of suggestions about how to perform Bach’s music in modern concert halls. Although she does discuss tempo, ornamentation, rhythm, and articulation, she does not relate these to the chorales. When discussing the Passion settings of Bach, W. Murray Young gives a description of each part of the Passion and provides a short synopsis of each movement. With regard to the chorales, he identifies the authors of the hymn texts and the composers of the original melodies. Paul Steinitz provides a thorough description and interpretation of the librettos used in Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannem* and *Matthaus-Passion* and also places the Passion settings in historical context. He presents a formal analysis of the chorales and discusses the origins of their texts. The distinguished Bach scholars John Eliot Gardiner and Christoph Wolff have both published extensively on historical context and importance of the *Passio secundum Johannem*, but neither, like the list above, included information pertaining to performance practices of chorales.

Walter Blankenburg states that “chorales were ‘first and foremost resting points’ serving as ‘meditation and prayer.’” Blankenburg criticized contemporary performances for being “too fast, or at least far too forcefully dramatized…and in a wavering tempo.” Voicing the same opinion of slower tempos, Robin Leaver said of the Thomaskirche, “It’s hardly conducive to swift congregational singing” and in Bach’s day, “Two-thousand people couldn’t have sung very quickly.” Leaver also disapproves of many modern performances of the chorales because he does not like their “unseemly haste.”

Although Bach specialists believe that chorales in the eighteenth century were sung congregationally during the performance of Passion settings in many Lutheran churches in Germany, Christoph Wolff explains that in Leipzig, only the professional choristers sang the chorales:

> We know for sure that in Leipzig during Bach’s time [the congregation] would not participate in the singing of the chorales. They did elsewhere, in Hamburg, for example, with [Georg Philipp] Telemann. It is clearly indicated in the regulations of the St. Thomas School that the choir was singing without the congregation, and that the choir was leading the congregation in the singing of the congregational chorales outside of the cantata. They were singing a hymn, for example, after the sermon that was intoned by the cantor. The choirboys would then lead the congregational singing because there was no organ accompaniment.

Wolff also observes that Telemann does not transpose
his Passion chorales but instead keeps them in the original keys that were more appropriately suited for congregational singing. Bach, however, modifies the chorale melodies with passing tones and ornaments and does present his Passion chorales in different keys, often at pitch levels that would have been difficult for congregational participation.14

These insights appear to have been predicated on the groundbreaking publication of a Thomschule statute dating from 1723 that specifies the exact responsibilities of the professional choristers in the performance of concerted music in Leipzig during Bach’s tenure there.15 Tenor David Gordon suggests that the ample size of both the Thomaskirche and the Nikolaikirche should be taken into serious consideration, noting that the large number of congregants, generally well over one thousand, could not have been easily led by the small number of church musicians—about fifteen to twenty-five—that Bach had at his disposal. Furthermore, if this small group of musicians were to attempt to lead the congregation in the singing of chorales, Bach would have used more predictable and familiar melodic and harmonic language. Instead, he often increased the harmonic turbulence and used varying melodic ornaments, such as leading or passing tones.16 Conductor Helmuth Rilling points out that the congregation would not have sung the chorales based on the tessitura of the vocal lines. The final chorale is an example of a key and tessitura that is too high for the congregation to sing comfortably (Figure 1).17
Figure 1. J. S. Bach, Passio secundum Johannis, mm. 1–28.

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Historical Context

A passion is a musical setting of the gospels describing the last week of Jesus Christ’s life on earth as recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each gospel is assigned to a specific day during Holy Week: Matthew on Palm Sunday, Mark on Tuesday, Luke on Wednesday, and John on Good Friday.18 Performances of passions in the eighteenth century were not treated as concerts or entertainment as they frequently are now but rather as the gospel readings for worship services. The oratorio-passions of Bach represent dramatized presentations of the gospels, including arias, recitatives, choruses, and chorales. To quote renowned Bach scholar Alfred Dürr:

> A Passion in the style of an oratorio eschews the use of the biblical narrative, and lets the events unfold before the listener in the manner of a religious drama. Its language is no longer that of the “low style” hitherto considered appropriate for sermons and religious poetry. Rather, it employs the “elevated style” used in opera and oratorio, and no longer merely aims at straightforward contemplation, but at emotional involvement and astonishment.19

A sermon was delivered to the congregation between the two halves of the musical setting. Basil Smallman describes Bach’s chorales:

> Bach is unique for his time in the use he makes of the chorale. His great contemporaries, Handel, Keiser, Telemann, and Mattheson tended to regard the ancient hymns as an outmoded form of expression in church music, which had no place in the new, elegant, more theatrical style. But in the Passions and the later church cantatas and organ works, Bach repeatedly affirms the importance of the chorales as a vital source of religious and musical inspiration and thereby retains a valuable link with the true Lutheran tradition.20

Leipzig, Germany, was politically conservative and religiously orthodox,21 which may have been the reason why the passion was not set to music there until well after 1700. The Kapellmeister of the Thomaskirche and the Nikolaikirche, Johann Kuhnau, composed the first passion for the Thomaskirche, a Passion According to St. Mark, which was used during Holy Week in 1721.

During Kuhnau’s final year in Leipzig, Bach was living and working in Anhalt-Cöthen in the court of Prince Leopold. The prince’s interest in music diminished after he was married, which motivated Bach to pursue other musical and professional opportunities. When Kuhnau died in 1722, Bach applied for this position of Kapellmeister for the Thomaskirche and the Nikolaikirche in Leipzig and was accepted the following year.

Bach’s first passion, the Passio secundum Johannem, BWV 245, was first performed on Good Friday of 1724 at the Nikolaikirche. It was his largest-scale work to date.22 Bach was well aware that opera was one of the most significant compositional genres of the time and allowed its dramatic influence to enter into this passion setting.

Avoiding any glib “operatic” characterization of his biblical cast, Bach instead encourages individual singers and players of his ensemble to step forward at given points—to voice their thoughts, prayers, and emotions as contemporary witnesses to the re-telling of Christ’s Passion (and in his own performances even to swap roles). This was an experimental way of creating a fresh experience for his listeners, one outwardly geared to their spiritual edification but unprecedented in its dramatic intensity. What must have been so shocking to Bach’s first listeners was that all this was heard and being played out in church.23

For that Good Friday service in 1724, the congregation had some sense of the sort of music they would be hearing, since Bach had been performing his own music in worship for the past year. They considered it to be “incomparably harder and more intricate” than anything else they had ever heard.24 “Now for the first time in his cantorate, and with the spoken elements of the liturgy shrunk to a minimum in the Good Friday service, his music could legitimately occupy the centre-stage and constitute what Telemann once described (of his own cantata cycles) as a veritable ‘harmonious divine service’
Fifty and more years ago it was the custom for the organ to remain silent in church on Palm Sunday, and on that day, because it was the beginning of Holy Week, there was no music. But gradually the Passion story, which had formerly been sung in simple plainchant, humbly and reverently, began to be sung with many kinds of instruments in the most elaborate fashion, occasionally mixing in a little setting and singing of a Passion chorale in which the whole congregation joined. And then the mass of instruments fell to again. When this Passion music was performed for the first time—with twelve stringed instruments, many oboes, bassoons and other instruments—many people were shocked and did not know what to make of it. In the pew of a noble family in church, many ministers and noble ladies were present, singing the first Passion chorale out of their books with great devotion. But when this theatrical music began, all these people were thrown into the greatest bewilderment, looked at one another, and said, “What will come of this?” An old widow of the nobility said, “God save us my children! It’s just as if one were present at an Opera comedy.” But everyone was genuinely displeased by it and voiced many just complaints against it. There are, it is true, some people who take pleasure in such idle things, especially if they are of sanguine temperament and inclined to sensual pleasure. Such persons defend large-scale church compositions as best they may, and hold others to be crotchety and of melancholy temperament—as if they alone possessed the Wisdom of Solomon and others had no understanding.26

It may have taken a bit of time for the congregation, and later an audience, to comfortably understand that this piece of music was a vehicle one could use to reach their spiritual goal. “After conducting the John Passion in Düsseldorf in 1851, [Robert] Schumann found it ‘in many ways more daring, forceful and poetic’ than the Matthew: ‘How compact and genial throughout, especially in the choruses,’ he exclaimed, ‘and of what art!’”27 Regardless of the congregational opinion he experienced that evening, Bach pressed on and wrote passion settings on the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.28 The scores of Mark and Luke, however, have been lost. Bach wrote four versions of the Passio secundum Johannem, changing the forces and content of particular movements, and “for the two last performances in the year of his death and one the year before, he reverted in all essentials to its original state.”29

Methodology

The fact that in Leipzig, Passion chorales were sung only by the choir and not by the congregation opens the possibility of more varied interpretations of individual chorales. One possible model may be found in the chorale preludes of German organists such as Bach and his contemporaries. W. Gillies Whittaker has noted the following in his classic work on Bach’s cantatas:

The organ preludized in order to give the tone to the priest or the choir. It further gave out the liturgical songs and hymns in alternation with the choir, one verse being sung and the next played on the organ. It is contrary to the inclinations of human nature to remain content with frequent reiteration of a simple melody…Organists, on account of the unsuitability of their instruments to polyphony, decorated plain chants and hymns…as instruments improved, it would be natural for the organist to elaborate his verses so as to interpret the mood. This, together with the previously employed melodic decoration, originated the organ chorale prelude and other forms of expansion.30

Moreover, Karl Hochreither comments that it was expected that the organist interpret the mood and text of the chorale or hymn.31 Hochreither, quoting Johann Petri, writes, “An organist must either know a congregational song from memory, or he must have the hymnal before him so that he can always play according to the affect of the hymn.”32 Hochreither, quoting Daniel Türk, states:
in J. S. Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannis*, BWV 245

[The organist] plays hymns of praise and thanksgiving in a lively manner; hymns of lament and penitence, mournfully; Lenten hymns, stirringly; hymns about God’s omnipotence, in a resplendent, majestic and exalted manner; for quiet moods of devotion, softly and extremely simply, etc. If he can express the main character of a hymn he has already fulfilled one of his most important responsibilities and can be sure of receiving the approbation of every musically informed person.33

Differences in chorale tempos and musical affekt were expected of the organist, and therefore also of the choir or congregation. This can be directly applied to chorales in Passion settings.

The widely disseminated view that all chorales should be performed at an even *forte*, without regard for their content (“objectively” as it is called), turns out to be one of the dubious consequences of the attempt to remove Bach from the romantic tradition, which, in turn, introduced a series of grave misconceptions. Even if an “affective emotion” is not identical with romantic “mood” or “feeling” it is nevertheless related to it.34

According to Dorottya Fabian, “Most scholars believed that the congregation did not join in singing the chorales of Bach’s Passions and thus regarded congregational practice irrelevant.”35 As previously noted, a reason for this might be the physics of the building and Bach’s small chorus of twenty-four singers.36 Furthermore, there is the issue of the printed booklets that were in the hands of the congregants. “Bach’s congregation regularly had the texts of his choral works before them, in the form of booklets specially printed for this purpose—like libretti in an opera house.”37 The entire congregation did not have booklets, however. Only about three to five hundred copies were printed. We also know that there was not a program printed for the *Passio secundum Johannis*.38 Bach, a devout Lutheran, was teaching through his music. Regardless of whether or not the congregation sang the chorales of the Passion, Bach would have wanted the listeners to be moved by the text and music. It was not only his belief but also his duty as *Kapellmeister* of the churches of St. Thomas and St. Nicolas to always “uphold pure teaching.”39 He used the chorales as a period of reflection and understanding for the congregation, or audience (which would more aptly apply to modern-day performances of this work). Variance of tempos and especially musical affect would undoubtedly help convey the message to those seated in pews or theatre chairs listening to the Passion.

Tempo needs specific consideration when dealing with Baroque performance practice. Dorottya Fabian explains:

> The complex nature of finding the appropriate tempo is revealed when the many components to be considered are all explored together. This approach supports the notion that the speed itself is a relative and not overwhelmingly significant matter because sorting out the underlying musical issues sets the framework of a tempo within which the performer is free to play faster or slower.40

Robert Donington, quoting Joachim Quantz, speaks more specifically on the matter of tempos. “Take the tempo ‘more from the content of the piece than from the [time] word’; but ‘whatever speed an allegro demands, it ought never to depart from a controlled and reasonable movement.’”41 “The tempo of a piece, which is usually indicated by a variety of familiar Italian terms, is derived from its general mood together with the fastest notes and passages which it includes. Proper attention to these considerations will prevent an allegro from being hurried and an adagio from being dragged,” says Donington, quoting C.P.E. Bach.42 Tempo is also relative to the surrounding tempos found elsewhere in the work. In various recordings of the *Passio secundum Johannis*, the chorales were mostly executed in the same, slow manner, with a tactus of sixty to eighty beats per minute.43 There are, however, conductors who have chosen to vary the tempos and delivery of the chorales in their Passion performances, for example, John Eliot Gardiner. It is not that their tempos are faster or slower than the sixty- to eighty-beat range; it is that they do not use one specific
tempo, dynamic, or affekt for each chorale.

**Delivery of Chorales**

Helmuth Rilling states, “The chorales in the St. John should not be treated all the same way. They are very much dependent in two ways: one is their position in the story of the Passion, and the other is their text, and they are all composed in a quite different way.” David Gordon remarks, “You could sing O große lieb the same way you would sing Ach großer König [the same melody in both chorales]; how could you not sing them differently? I say that not as a casual listener but as someone who has really, really tried hard to get inside this music from a scholarly point of view as well as a performer. I really do not believe there is a good case at all for the congregation to be singing these chorales.” An excellent place to find justification is in the text and the harmonic language that supports it. “The Passion is not just a musical composition. It is a religious music-drama, in which the music is calculated to intensify the impact of the words,” said Arthur Mendel.

In the Passio secundum Johannem, there are instances in which Bach sets the same chorale tune with two different harmonizations. These chorales can be considered pairs, or sister chorales: 3 with 17; 14 with 28; 15 and 32 with 37. Chorales that are not paired with others in the Passion were founded upon well-known melodies that Bach specially harmonized for this work. Through analysis, one can see how Bach used harmony, melody, and range to show that particular words and moments are to be emphasized and treated uniquely. The harmonic treatment of each chorale varies according to its place in the dramatic narrative, therefore rendering each chorale unique and requiring a unique treatment.

An interesting perspective by David Gordon brings to light Bach’s writing implement in regard to the specialty of each chorale:

People were writing with bird feathers still through the first decade of the nineteenth century. So everything that Bach wrote, he wrote with a feather dipped in ink. And it was a big giant mess. It took forever to write. You’ve seen his handwriting; it was unbelievably awful. So I think he goes through the trouble to not say, as he does in a couple of other pieces that I’ve done, “when you get to this point, just go back and do that movement as you did before, do that again here.” Like the Hosanna in the B Minor Mass, and there’s a chorale in the [St.] Matthew that’s that way. “Just do that again,” with different words or something. But he didn’t here; he went through the trouble to write it out in a different key with different voice leading, different harmonic underpinning, different harmonics, and a different tonality. Why did he write it differently? If he wanted different energy coming from the singers, is it not possible they responded naturally to that?
Following is an example of one pairing found in the *Passio secundum Johannem*. Chorale No. 3 “O große Lieb” is the first chorale and it is paired with number 17. The text and translation follow:

O große Lieb, o Lieb ohn’ alle Maße,
die dich gebracht auf diese Marterstraße!
Ich lebte mit der Welt in Lust
und Freuden,
und du mußt leiden.

O great, boundless love, that hath brought thee
to this path of martyrdom!
I lived among the worldly
in contentment and pleasure and thou must suffer!

This chorale describes the selfish and sinful life of a believer, which in turn causes Jesus’s suffering. The knowledge of Jesus’s pending crucifixion is apparent. As seen in Figure 2, the chorale opens in G minor, yet the word “lieb” (love) is set with a D major chord, which emphasizes its sweetness and importance. Helmuth Rilling explains, “You have a fermata on the word ‘lieb,’ and this is the only place among all the chorales where a fermata is put not at the end of the phrase but in the middle of the phrase. So this means that Bach wanted this word to be held.”

Figure 3 displays the chromatic descending bass line under the text “auf diese Marterstraße” (unto this martyr’s path), which conveys the agonizing road ahead for the Savior. An ascending chromatic line in the bass accompanies the words “Ich lebte mit der Welt” (I have lived with the world). “This may well be a reference to the contrast between the sufferings of Christ and living with the world, a life which is quite different to that of Christ, only superficially joyful, and in reality rather evil.”

Near the end, the phrase “Lust und Freuden” (pleasure and joy) has “movement in the accompanying voices, major harmony, with a cadence in the relative major, B-flat, instead of the D minor or G minor that might have been expected.” The chorale closes with the harshest of words, “du mußt leiden” (and you must suffer). For this painful conclusion, Bach writes a “rhythmic ritardando, the word ‘du’ emphasized by means of a diminished seventh chord; the word ‘leiden’ emphasized by means of the secondary dominant (instead of the expected subdominant sixth chord) and a leap of a diminished fifth in the bass (or leap of an augmented fourth in the continuo).” Furthermore, in this final phrase, Bach writes his “cross motive” in the bass lines to portray the
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text (Figures 4 and 5).

_Ach großer König_ is the sister chorale to _O große Lieb_. These two chorales share the same melody, which Bach only slightly ornaments in this setting; the treatment of the harmony, however, is quite different. The text and translation follow:

_Ach großer König, groß zu allen Zeiten,
wie kann ich gnugsam
diese Treu ausbreiten?
Keins Menschen Herze
mag indes ausdenken,
was dir zu schenken.

Ich kann's mit meinen Sinnen
nicht erreichen,
womit doch dein Erbarmen
zu vergleichen.

_Wie kann ich dir denn deine Liebestaten
im Werk erstatten?_

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_O great King, at all time great,
how may I sufficiently
spread this faith abroad?

Yet no human heart may imagine
what thing to offer thee.

My senses cannot conceive
with what to compare thy compassion;
how, then, may I repay thy deeds of love
with any deeds of mine?

The author questions how the sinner can ever proclaim faithfulness and repay the Father for Christ’s sacrifice. In the first stanza, the believer recognizes the greatness of God. It is bold and laudatory (‘Ah great King, great at all times, how can I rightly praise this great devotion?’). The music repeats for the second stanza. Contrasting with the opening forthrightness, the second portion of the text is much more tender and even a little desperate. It is humbling to the believer to think of an action or of an emotion great enough to repay his savior for His tremendous gift of mercy and love (“No human
heart can yet imagine ever what it may give thee."). Its constant eighth-note motion that is mostly stepwise not only creates a driving sense of movement and pulse but also allows for suspensions that quickly resolve into succeeding chords.

The chorale opens in A minor, only one step higher than that of the previously analyzed chorale. The four main cadence points are all on major chords: E major, C major, A major, and finally A major to close. This is not only a significant key change but a drastic color change. On an instrument that is not fully tempered (like the organ Bach would have had), A major sounds very different from the G major of the previous chorale. The diminished quality that depicted suffering in O große Lieb is not found in Ach großer König. Although there are instances of diminished chords, they occur less frequently (Figures 6 and 7).

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**Figure 5. J. S. Bach, Passio secundum Johannem, mm. 1–11.**
Chorale No. 3: Performance Suggestion
Conclusion

J. S. Bach’s Passio secundum Johannem BWV 245 is a significant work and has long been studied. Upon scrutiny of Bach’s harmonic setting, text choices, and dramatic context of the chorales in this Passion, and considering that the congregation did not participate in the singing of Passion chorales in performances when Bach was present, a conductor has the possibility to use a variety of Affekt and interpretations for the chorales. This idea of varying the delivery of chorales may not be new to modern-day performers, but because there has been almost no published literature on the subject, it is important to shed light on the topic. Should you have the opportunity to perform this work, consider Bach’s harmonic language, deliberate choices of text, and overall context of the chorales to inform your artistic decisions regarding tempi, textual emphasis, range of dynamics, and phrase shapes.

Author’s Note: This article was adapted from the author’s dissertation (University of Arizona, 2016).
in J. S. Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannem*, BWV 245

Figure 7. J. S. Bach, *Passio secundum Johannem*, mm. 1–11.
Chorale No. 17: Performance Suggestion
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NOTES


5 Dorottya Fabian, Bach Performance Practice.


11 Fabian, 105, quoting Leaver, 16.


13 Christoph Wolff, telephone interview, 5 March 2011.

14 Ibid. “[Telemann] does not really transpose the chorales. He takes them from the key of the hymnal and sets them in half notes. Whereas, Bach is jumping around, he modifies the melody by including passing notes and other things, and he also is transposing the melodies in keys which are not really appropriate for congregational singing. As you can see in the Christmas Oratorio or St. Matthew Passion, what he does with “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden” is he really moves that into all kinds of keys.”


16 David Gordon, telephone interview, 27 February 2011. Actual quote is as follows: “I think one needs to actually look at the reality of the Thomaskirche and the Nikolaikirche. They were huge, first of all. [Bach] was constantly complaining about there not being enough musicians. So you’ve got well over one-thousand [congregants] jammed into this big church, this little tiny bunch of people who played several instruments, and who knows how well they played, you couldn’t drive a congregation that big with that small of an ensemble. Secondly I think one of the things, and we see this more in Matthew perhaps, is the increased harmonic turbulence inside the pieces. And I think even going from the second chorale you picked; it’s the same key signature but the first one starts in F-sharp minor (No. 14) and the second one in A major (No. 28) – there are different leading tones in the F-sharp in one and not the other. I don’t see how someone as impeccable and demanding as Bach, would write this stuff if one wouldn’t be heard and if it was heard it would be confusing. It would confuse the congregation as to what they should be singing.”

17 Helmut Rilling telephone interview, 30 April 2011. “I’m quite sure the congregation did not sing the chorales in Bach’s time. This is especially so because the range in which the chorales are written sometimes is much too high for a congregation. Take the final chorale; this is a very high range in the sopranos but also the other sections, and the congregation could not have done that.”


19 Dürr, St. John Passion, 30-31.


22 Gardiner, 347.

23 Ibid., 346.

24 Ibid., 348.
in J. S. Bach’s *Passio secundum Johannem, BWV 245*  

25 Ibid.  
27 Gardiner, 345.  
28 “Bach Passions,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passions_(Bach), accessed January 2, 2011. “The double chorus St Matthew Passion, BWV 244 was composed on a libretto by Picander for Good Friday of 1727 and/or 1729. After revision the Passion was performed again in 1736 and 1742. Bach’s copy of an anonymous St Luke Passion, BWV 246, was published in the Bach Gesellschaft Complete Works (vol. xlv/2) but is regarded as spurious, with the possible exception of the introduction to the second half. Bach wrote the St Mark Passion, BWV 247 for 1731. Picander’s libretto for the Passion was once thought to have been destroyed in the bombing of Dresden in World War II, but the recovered copy seems to show that the work was a parody of music from the so-called Trauer-Ode, “Laß, Fürstin, laß noch einen Strahl,” BWV 198, and that some choruses were used also in the Christmas Oratorio. There are several reconstructions of the Passion.

29 Gardiner, 347.  
32 Ibid.  
33 Ibid. This quote is referring to four-part harmonized accompaniment.  
34 Ibid., 181.  
36 David Gordon, telephone interview, 27 February 2011.  
38 Christoph Wolff, telephone interview by the author, 5 March 2011.  
39 Williams, 166.  
40 Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice*, 97.  
42 Donington, 16.  
43 After attending live performances, singing in the choir of performances and listening to recordings of the *Passio secundum Johannem*, I noticed that almost every performance had an unwavering tactus of sixty to eighty beats per minute with the same delivery or affekt for each chorale.  
44 Helmuth Rilling, telephone interview, 30 April 2011.  
45 David Gordon, telephone interview, 27 February 2011.  
46 Mendel, xxxix.  
47 David Gordon telephone interview, 30 April 2011.  
48 Chorale text by Johann Geermann (1585-1647), verse 7 of Herzliebster Jesus, was hast du verbrochen, 1630, (Fischer-Tümpel, I, #334), Chorale melody by Johann Crüger (1598-1662).  
50 The markings in the Performance Suggestion examples show only what I consider to be significant moments or aspects of each chorale. In regards to the circling of specific notes within these examples, it does not imply that they necessarily need to be audibly emphasized. They are points to be brought to the attention of performers during rehearsal. The tempo of each chorale should be relative to the preceding chorus, recitative, or aria. With the intention of putting the focus solely on the markings that will make each chorale unique, I left out common score markings, phrase shapes, scene descriptions, and translations. It should be noted, however, that each phrase in each chorale should have a climax and then a release.  
51 Helmuth Rilling, telephone interview, 30 April 2011.  
52 Dürr, 72.  
53 Ibid.  
54 Ibid.  
55 Helmuth Rilling, telephone interview.  
57 View the dissertation at: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1762246828.