

J.S. Bach
Köthener Trauermusik
SOLOMON'S KNOT



MENU

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ENGLISH

BIOGRAPHY



Köthener Trauermusik, BWV 1143/244a

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Reconstructed by Chad Kelly

SOLOMON'S KNOT

Volume 1

Part 1

1. **Sinfonia** 2:54
2. **Arie** Lass, Leopold, dich nicht begraben 6:03
3. **Rezitativ** Wie könnt es möglich sein 1:06
4. **Arie** Wird auch gleich nach tausend Zählen 4:22
5. **Rezitativ** Und Herr, das ist die Spezerei 1:20
6. **Arie** Geh, Leopold, zu deiner Ruh 5:33
7. **Choral** Ach, Herr, lass dein' lieb' Engelein 2:28

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Part 2

8. **Chor** Klagt, Kinder, klagt es aller Welt 4:51
9. **Rezitativ** O Land, bestürztes Land! 1:26
10. **Arie** Weh und Ach 3:49
11. **Rezitativ** Wie, wenn der Blitze Grausamkeit 1:11
12. **Arie** Zage nur du treues Land 4:20
13. **Rezitativ** Ach ja! 1:04
14. **Chor** Komm wieder, teurer Fürstengeist 4:53

Total Running Time 45:22

Volume 2

Part 3

1. **Dictum** Wir haben einen Gott 4:55
2. **Rezitativ** Betrübter Anblick, voll Erschrecken 0:48
3. **Arie** Erhalte mich 6:05
4. **Rezitativ** Jedoch der schwache Mensche 1:01
5. **Arie** Mit Freuden sei die Welt verlassen 3:50
6. **Rezitativ** Wohl also dir 0:35
7. **Dictum** Wir haben einen Gott 4:42

Part 4

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8. **Choral** Lass dein' Engel mit mir fahren 1:44
9. **Arie** Bleibet nun in Eurer Ruh 6:56
10. **Rezitativ** Und du betrübtes Fürstenhaus 1:32
11. **Arie** Hemme dein gequältes Kränken 3:04
12. **Rezitativ** Nun scheiden wir 2:04
13. **Chor** Die Augen sehn nach deiner Leiche 4:41

Total Running Time 42:00

Köthener Trauermusik

6 J. S. Bach's *Köthener Trauermusik* has long fascinated scholars for a simple paradox: not a note of the music survives, yet almost every other detail of the performance does. We know its date, many of the performers involved, the librettist, the libretto, and even the original service leaflet. Between 23-24 March 1729, a series of funeral celebrations for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen – Bach's treasured former employer, and godfather to one of his children – was held in Köthen. Although Bach had moved to Leipzig some years before, he formally remained Kapellmeister in Köthen, and was charged with composing a weighty sequence of funeral music. With near-complete certainty, scholars mostly agree that the arias and choruses for this *Trauermusik* were repurposed from the *Matthäus-Passion*, BWV 244.1, and the *Trauerode* 'Lass, Fürstin, lass noch einen Strahl', BWV 198 – another funeral cantata, from 1727, whose dedicatee was Leipzig's Electress of Saxony and Queen Consort of Poland-Lithuania, Christiane Eberhardine. The rich and colourful orchestra deployed in both the *Trauerode* and *Matthäus-Passion* served as an inspiration for the elements of new composition and the 'parodying' of existing arias and choruses in this reconstruction of the *Trauermusik*.

Parodying was the process of adapting existing music to fit a new text, and was common practice. The most obvious example of this is the *Trauerode*, whose music Bach later refashioned for the *Markus-Passion*, BWV 247, of 1731. All these pieces grew out of Bach's fruitful collaboration with the Leipzig poet Picander (Christian Friedrich Henrici). This partnership bore some of the most expressive and enduring works of Bach, and is rightly a chief focus of this reconstruction.

(To add further mystique to the genesis of all these works: despite extensive scholarship, the precise relationship and chronology between the *Matthäus-Passion* –

first performed on Good Friday in either 1727 or 1729 – and the *Trauermusik* remain elusive. Some even suggest that it was in fact music of the *Trauermusik* that was later parodied in Bach's *magnum opus*.)

This all provides us with a tantalising amount of information, enough to allow us to reconstruct this music for performance today – but not without an amount of creative judgement and input. For some, the lack of certainty renders reconstruction frustrating. For others, it is a source of inspiration. This version does not claim to be definitive; such certainty is unattainable and, arguably, beside the point. Instead, this reconstruction – commissioned by Solomon's Knot and developed in consultation with their Artistic Director Jonathan Sells – uses carefully considered creative licence to bring to life two elements central to the original: the sincerity of the text, and the context of the occasion for which it was written.

While models exist for most choruses and all arias, the question of the recitatives is more problematic. A small but significant number of reconstructions have been made since 2008, all of which adapt recitatives from the *Matthäus-Passion* and *Trauerode*, on the basis that their *affekt* and imagery align convincingly. Yet there is no evidence that Bach ever parodied recitative. Whereas the arias often express abstract theological reflection, Picander's recitative texts respond directly – and sometimes viscerally – to the mourning of Leopold's death. Furthermore, their poetic scansion does not lend itself easily to parody, and the specificity of their rhetoric suggests to this reconstructor that Bach would have composed new recitatives, tailored specifically to the text. For that reason, the recitatives in this reconstruction are newly composed: not attempting to deceive the listener into thinking it is Bach, as that exercise is futile, but an effort to preserve the text's integrity and declamation without forcing it into unsuitable musical clothing.

Picander's libretto blends public solemnity with private grief, and one aim of this reconstruction is to evoke something of the original occasion. A detailed running sheet survives for the services of 23-24 March. Two chorales known to have been sung at the funeral – 'Ach, Herr, lass dein' lieb' Engelein' (familiar as the closing chorale of the *Johannes-Passion*) and 'Lass dein' Engel mit mir fahren' – have been inserted at suitable moments in this reconstruction, functioning as communal moments of reflection, just as in Bach's oratorios and cantatas. Solomon's Knot are a collective of musicians with a unique ability to communicate with their audiences in live performance. Their performance brings something of the immediacy that the mourners of 1729 might have experienced.

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With the aim of accessing the events of March 1729, we have adopted a theory proposed by the eminent scholar and performer Andrew Parrott, the first reconstructor of the *Trauermusik*. He speculates that the order of the text preserved in the surviving service booklet may not reflect exactly the order in which the funeral music was performed. Specifically, he claims a central section of the text and music could have actually been performed first, at the private service on the evening of the 23rd. The remaining parts would have then featured in the public celebrations during the day of the 24th. We were drawn to the differences in atmosphere between private and public, night and day, and our reconstruction clearly delineates an intimate night music sequence, introduced by the Sinfonia from BWV 21 'Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis', followed by a grand outpouring of grief, announced with the processional French overture style of 'Klagt, Kinder'.

Central to the liturgical sequence in the public arena was the recurring psalm verse 'Wir haben einen Gott, der da hilft, und einen Herrn, der vom Tode errettet'. As elsewhere in Bach's cantatas, this type of text would almost certainly have been set as a choral fugue. However, the verse's length and structure pose problems for parodying

existing choral fugues written by Bach, despite the best efforts of other reconstructions. After surveying every one of Bach's choral fugues, we concluded that a tailored setting was necessary – one shaped around the natural inflection and theological weight of the words. Again, while the music does not come from Bach, the act of composing a bespoke fugue subject around the inflection and meaning of the text feels an authentic response which Bach himself would have enacted.

In our reconstruction, where music has been parodied from the *Matthäus-Passion*, BWV 244.1, it follows the earliest surviving source, copied at a later date by Bach's trusted scribe Johann Christoph Farlau. A number of interesting features arise, mainly in subtle differences found in the vocal and instrumental lines. One significant feature is that the evocative *obbligato* viola da gamba line from the *Matthäus-Passion* aria 'Komm, süßes Kreuz' appears here for the lute. This delicate texture fits appositely the intimate atmosphere at the beginning of our *Trauermusik* sequence. Farlau belonged to the generation of Leipzig copyists – often Bach's own pupils and sons – for whom transcription was a form of apprenticeship. In preparing this reconstruction, I too have spent countless hours as an apprentice, copying notes not with a quill but with a keyboard. In doing so, I have been continually humbled by the richness of learning from the master.

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Volume 1

Part 1

Am Abend, beim Begräbnis

1. Sinfonia

2. Arie ALEXASHWORTH

Lass, Leopold, dich nicht begraben,
Es ist dein Land, das nach dir ruft;
Du sollst ein ewig sanfte Gruft
In unser aller Herzen haben.

3. Rezitativ NATHAN MERCIECA

Wie könnt es möglich sein,
Zu leben und dich doch vergessen?
Ach nein!
Wir wissen gar zu allgemein,
12 Was treuer Untertanen Pflicht,
Und unser Sinn ist nur dahin gericht,
Auch noch dein Asche zu verehren.
Hochseelges Haupt,
Nur dies muss unsern Schmerz vermehren.
Wenn, wie so früh der Tod dich raubt,
In stiller Ehrfurcht wir bei uns ermessen.

4. Arie NATHAN MERCIECA

Wird auch gleich nach tausend Zählen
Sich das Auge wieder klären,
Denkt doch unser Herz an dich,
Deine Huld
Wird zwar durch den Tod entrissen,
Unsre Schuld
Bleibet aber ewiglich,
Dass wir dich verehren müssen.

Evening. At the burial.

Aria

*Let them, Leopold, not bury you,
it is your land calling out to you;
you shall have an eternal and gentle tomb
within all our hearts.*

Recitative

*How could it be possible
to live and yet forget you?
Ah no!
We know full well
the duty of loyal subjects,
and it is uppermost in our minds
to venerate your ashes.
Most blessed head,
but this will increase our pain:
since death claimed you so prematurely,
we shall silently revere your memory.*

Aria

*Having shed a thousand tears,
our eyes will be clear once more,
for our hearts still think of you;
though your favour
has been snatched from us through death,
our obligation
will abide forever,
and we shall honour you.*

5. Rezitativ THOMAS HERFORD

Und Herr, das ist die Spezerei,
Womit wir deinen Sarg verehren,
Ein jeder Untertan
Dringt sich von allen Seiten
Durch angenehmen Zwang und Streiten
Aus Sehnsucht vor den andern an:
Gleichsam, als sollten sie die Treu
Dir auch noch in dem Tode schweren.

6. Arie THOMAS HERFORD

DIE STERBLICHEN

Geh, Leopold, zu deiner Ruh,

DIE AUSERWÄHLTEN

Und schlummre nur ein wenig ein.

DIE STERBLICHEN

Nun lebst du
In der schönsten Himmelsruh,
Wird gleich der müde Leib begraben,

DIE AUSERWÄHLTEN

Der Geist soll sich im Himmel laben,
Und königlich am Glanze sein.

7. Choral

Ach, Herr, lass dein' lieb' Engelein
Am letzten End' die Seele mein
In Abrahams Schoss tragen!
Der Leib in sein'm Schlafkämmerlein
Gar sanft, ohn' ein'ge Qual und Pein,
Ruhn bis am jüngsten Tage.
Alsdenn vom Tod erwecke mich,
Dass meine Augen sehen dich
In aller Freud', o Gottes Sohn,
Mein Heiland und mein Gnadenthron!

Recitative

*These, my lord, are the spices
with which we shall honour your coffin;
each and every subject
presses in from all quarters
as a pleasant duty, longing and vying
with each other to be at the forefront,
as if to swear loyalty
even in death.*

Aria

THE MORTALS

Go, Leopold, to your rest,

THE CHOSEN

and slumber for a little while.

THE MORTALS

*You now dwell
in loveliest, divine repose,
your weary body shall soon be buried.*

THE CHOSEN

*Your spirit shall be refreshed in heaven
and be regal in its brilliance.*

Chorale

*Ah, my lord, grant that your dear angels
might at the last bear my soul
to Abraham's bosom!
May the body, in its little chamber,
rest very gently without torment or pain
until Judgement Day.
Then wake me from death
that my eyes might behold you
with great joy, O Son of God,
my Saviour and throne of mercy!*

Herr Jesu Christ,
Erhöre mich, erhöre mich,
Ich will dich preisen ewiglich!

*Lord Jesus Christ,
hear me, hear me,
I shall praise you eternally!*

Part 2

Gedenkfeier, am nächsten Tag

The next day. Commemoration.

8. Chor

Klagt, Kinder, klagt es aller Welt,
Lasst es den fernen Grenzen wissen,
Wie euer Schatten eingerissen,
Wie euer Landesvater fällt.

Chorus

*Lament, children, lament it to all the world,
let distant lands know
how your shadow has been torn from you,
how your sovereign is no more.*

9. Rezitativ KATE SYMONDS-JOY

- O Land, bestürztes Land!
Wo ist dergleichen Pein,
Wie deine Not bekannt?
14 Die Sonne, die dir kaum am Mittag stunde,
Verhüllet ihren Schein
In einen Todesschatten ein.
Ach, Leopold!
Der Gott getreu, und seinem Lande hold,
Der niemals, wünschen wir, versterben hat gesollt,
Wird uns zu früh entwandt.
O Schmerz, o Wunde!
O Land, bestürztes Land!

Recitative

*O land, confounded land!
Where is the pain
to match your agony?
The sun, though it is scarcely noon,
shrouds its light
in the shadow of death.
Ah Leopold!
Who was true to God, gracious to his land,
whom we never wanted to die and who never
should have done so, he is snatched from us too soon.
O pain! O wounds!
O land, confounded land!*

10. Arie KATE SYMONDS-JOY

Weh und Ach
Kränkt die Seelen tausendfach,
Und die Augen treuer Liebe
Werden, wie ein heller Bach
Bei entstandnem Wetter trübe.

Aria

*Misery
strikes the soul a thousand times over,
and the eyes of true love
become like a limpid stream,
made murky by a storm.*

11. Rezitativ DAVID DE WINTER

Wie, wenn der Blitze Grausamkeit
Die Eichen rührt, und das Gefieder
Im Walde hin und wieder
Vor Schrecken und vor Furcht zerstreut.
So siehst du auch, betrübtes Köthen, du,
Ein treuer Untertan
Fühlt allzuwohl, wie er geschlagen.
Ein jeder sieht den andern an;
Die Wehmut aber schleusst die Lippen zu.
Sie wollten gern und können doch nicht klagen.

12. Arie DAVID DE WINTER

Zage nur du treues Land,
Ist dein seufzerreiches Quälen
Und die Tränen nicht zu zählen,
O! so denke, dem Erbleichen
Ist kein Unglück zu vergleichen.
Zage nur du treues Land.

13. Rezitativ CLARE LLOYD-GRIFFITHS

Ach ja!
Dein Scheiden geht uns nah,
Holdseelger Leopold:
Und die wir dich mit Schmerzen klagen,
Dass unser Sonnenstrahl vergeht,
Der unserm Land so hold
Mit heitern Blicken aufgegangen.
O Jammerriss, der uns so früh entsteht,
Der unser Herz mit bangen Zagen,
Wie das gebeugte Haupt mit schwarzem
Flor umfängen.

14. Chor

Komm wieder, teurer Fürstengeist,
Beseele die erstarrten Glieder
Mit einem neuen Leben wieder,

Recitative

*As when cruel lightning
strikes the oaks, and the birds
fly to and fro in forests
with terror and fear –
thus, sad Köthen, do you feel,
a loyal subject
in defeat.
Each long looks at the other;
sadness, however, seals lips,
which wished to lament but cannot.*

Aria

*Quail, O loyal land!
Your sighs and torments
and tears cannot be counted.
Bear in mind, no misfortune
can compare with dying.
Quail, O loyal land.*

Recitative

*Ah yes!
Your death affects us sorely,
most gracious Leopold:
we who lament in pain
that our sun has been extinguished –
you who blessed our land
with radiant looks.
O misery! O rupture! that our hearts
have been so early draped with fear
and our bowed heads
covered in a black veil.*

Chorus

*Come again, O precious Prince,
breathe new, immortal,
eternal life*

Das ewig und unsterblich heisst.
Die Jugend rühmt, die Alten preisen:
Dass unser Land und ihre Zeit
So viele Gnad und Gütigkeit
Von unserm Fürsten aufzuweisen.

*into our rigid limbs.
Youth extols, the aged give praise
that our Prince has bestowed
on our house and era
so much grace and kindness.*

Volume 2

Part 3

Nach der Predigt

1. Dictum

Wir haben einen Gott,
Der da hilft, und einen Herrn,
Herrn, der vom Tode errettet.

2. Rezitativ KATE SYMONDS-JOY

Betrübter Anblick, voll Erschrecken,
Soll denn so bald das Grab den Leib bedecken,
Der Tod ist da,
Die Stunde schlägt, das End' ist nah.
Mein Gott, wie kommt mir das so bitter für,
Ach! Warum eilest du mit mir!

3. Arie KATE SYMONDS-JOY

Erhalte mich, Gott,
In der Hälfte meiner Tage,
Schöne doch,
Meiner Seele fällt das Joch
Jämmerlich.
Erhalte mich, Gott,
In der Hälfte meiner Tage.

4. Rezitativ CLARE LLOYD-GRIFFITHS

Jedoch der schwache Mensche zittert nur,
Wann ihm die sterbende Natur
Die kalte Gruft geöffnet zeigt,
Wer aber stets wie unsre Fürstenseele
Noch lebend auf der Welt
Mehr nach dem Himmel steigt,
Als sich am Eitlen feste hält,
Der flieht mit Lust aus dieser irdnen Höhle.

After the sermon.

Dictum

*We have a god
who grants us help and a lord
of lords who saves us from death.*

Recitative

*Sad spectacle full of terror,
shall the grave cloak the body so soon?
Death is here,
the hour tolls, the end is near.
My God, how bitter,
ah, why make such haste with me!*

Aria

*Preserve me, O God,
in my remaining days,
spare me,
my soul falls wretchedly
under the yoke.
Preserve me, O God,
in my remaining days.*

Recitative

*But the weak will shudder,
when mortal nature
reveals to them the cold, gaping tomb.
Yet who always, like our Prince's soul,
while still alive in this world,
aspires more toward heaven
than clinging to vanity,
he will flee with joy this earthly chasm.*

5. **Arie** CLARE LLOYD-GRIFFITHS

Mit Freuden sei die Welt verlassen,
Der Tod kommt mir recht tröstlich für.
Ich will meinen Gott umfassen,
Dieser hilft und bleibt bei mir,
Wenn sich Geist und Glieder scheiden.

6. **Rezitativ** ALEX ASHWORTH

Wohl also dir,
Du aller Fürsten Zier,
Du konntest dich nicht sanfter betten,
Gott hilft und kann vom Tod erretten.

7. **Dictum**

Wir haben einen Gott,
Der da hilft, und einen Herrn,
Herrn, der vom Tode errettet.

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Part 4

Nach dem Curriculum Vitae
und den Gebeten

8. **Choral**

Lass dein' Engel mit mir fahren
Auf Elias Wagen rot
Und mein Seele wohl bewahren,
Wie Lazrum nach seinem Tod.
Lass sie ruhn in deinem Schoss,
Erfüll sie mit Freud und Trost,
Bis der Leib kommt aus der Erde
Und mit ihr vereinigt werde.

9. **Arie** JONATHAN SELLS

Bleibet nun in Eurer Ruh,
Ihr erblassten Fürstenglieder;
Doch verwandelt nach der Zeit

Aria

*May we depart this world with joy,
Death draws near me as a comfort.
I shall embrace my God,
He will succour me and stand by me,
when soul and body are parted.*

Recitative

*All hail to you,
O jewel among princes,
you could not be laid to rest more gently,
God helps and can save you from death.*

Dictum

*We have a god
who grants us help and a lord
of lords who saves us from death.*

After the curriculum vitae
and prayers.

Chorale

*Let your angel go with me
on Elijah's red chariot
and preserve my soul,
as befell Lazarus after his death.
Let my soul rest against your bosom,
fill it with joy and comfort,
till the body leaves the earth
and is united with my soul.*

Aria

*Dwell now in peace,
you pallid princely limbs;
but transform after a while*

Unser Leid
In vergnügte Freude wieder,
Schliesst uns auch die Tränen zu.

10. Rezitativ THOMAS HERFORD, ZOË BROOKSHAW

Und du betrübtes Fürstenhaus,
Erhole dich nun auch einmal
Von deiner Qual.
Wie Gottes Hand bisher
Beständig auf dich schwer
Und voller Plagen hat gelegen,
So wird Dich auch nun in der Folgezeit
Ein' unverrückte Fröhlichkeit
Ergötzen und verpflegen.
Die Nacht ist aus,
Der Tag bricht Dir nun heuter an.
Nun wird Dir, wie im frohen Lenzen,
Die angenehme Sonne glänzen,
Die keine Finsternis, noch Nebel stören kann.

11. Arie ZOË BROOKSHAW

Hemme dein gequältes Kränken,
Spare Dich der guten Zeit,
Die den Kummer wird versenken,
Und der Lust die Hände beut:
Schmerzen, die am grössten sein,
Halten desto eher ein.

12. Rezitativ JONATHAN SELLS

Nun scheiden wir,
Hochseelger Leopold, von Dir,
Du aber nicht aus unserm Sinn.
Wir gehn nach unsern Hütten hin
Und sammeln ängstlich auf der Erden
Mehr Asche zur Verwesung ein,
Und wünschen, wenn wir auch den Sold
Einst der Natur bezahlen werden,

*our pain
into pleasant joy,
and halt our weeping too.*

Recitative

*And you, grieving princely dynasty,
recover now
from your agony.
As the hand of God has till now
always weighed heavily on you,
full of torment,
so in times to come,
a steadfast happiness
will delight and tend you.
The night is over,
a new day now dawns serenely.
The pleasant sun will shine for you again,
as in happy springtime,
unhampered by darkness or mists.*

Aria

*Check your tormented affliction,
save yourself for better times
which will dispel worry and care
and offer you happiness.
The greatest pain
is swiftest to pass.*

Recitative

*We now take our leave,
O highly blessed Leopold,
but do not banish you from our thoughts.
We return to our humble dwelling
and gather, anxiously on earth,
more ashes for decay,
and we wish, even if one day
we must render nature her due,*

So selig und so sanft, wie unserm Leopold
So müß' auch unser Ende sein!

13. Chor

Die Augen sehn nach deiner Leiche,
Der Mund ruft in die Gruft hinein:
Schlafe süsse, ruhe fein,
Labe Dich im Himmelreiche!
Nimm die letzte gute Nacht,
Von den deinen, die dich lieben,
Die sich über dich betrüben,
Die dein Herze wert geacht',
Wo dein Ruhm sich unsterblich hat gemacht.

CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH HENRICI 'PICANDER' (1700–1764)

*that our end be as blessed and gentle
as it was for our Leopold!*

Chorus

*Our eyes gaze upon your body,
we call down into the tomb:
sleep sweetly, rest well,
renew yourself in the Kingdom of Heaven!
Accept this final good night
from your subjects who love you
and who mourn you,
who have held your heart dear,
where your renown has made itself immortal.*

TRANSLATION BY © RICHARD STOKES



SOLOMON'S KNOT

Solomon's Knot is an international, flexible Baroque collective of unconduted singers and instrumentalists who bring old music to new life by pushing the limits of what is possible on the stage and concert platform.

Taking inspiration from innovative live theatre, the singers perform everything from memory, and combine scrupulous musical preparation with high-wire risk-taking and intense, direct delivery. The ensemble's sound is defined by tight, compact instrumental impact coupled with the vocal virtuosity of soloists who can meld as an intuitive ensemble.

22 Solomon's Knot collaborates with stage directors, visual artists, other ensembles, composers and choreographers to challenge what it does and learn from others. In 2023 it was appointed as the Baroque Ensemble in Residence at Wigmore Hall, its London home.

www.solomonsknot.co.uk



SOLOMON'S KNOT

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SOPRANO

Zoë Brookshaw, Clare Lloyd-Griffiths

ALTO

Kate Symonds-Joy, Nathan Mercieca

TENOR

Thomas Herford, David de Winter

BASS

Alex Ashworth, Jonathan Sells (Artistic Director)

VIOLIN I

George Clifford (Leader), Rachel Stroud

VIOLIN II

Gabi Jones, William McGahon

VIOLA

Joanne Miller, Nichola Blakey

GAMBA I

Anna Lachegy

GAMBA II / CELLO

Kate Conway

DOUBLE BASS

Jan Zahourek

LUTE

Elizabeth Kenny, Toby Carr

FLUTE

Eva Caballero, Marta Gonçalves

OBOE

Daniel Lanthier, Shai Kribus

BASSOON

Inga Maria Klaucke

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James Johnstone

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Cover Image

'Descent from the Cross' (c. 1436)

by Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399–1464)

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