



RICHARD DANIELPOUR

THE PASSION OF
YESHUA

Plitmann ♦ Worth ♦ Overton ♦ Bridges ♦ Fallon ♦ Bass

UCLA Chamber Singers

Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra

JoAnn Falletta

Richard
DANIELPOUR

(b. 1956)

The Passion of Yeshua (2017)

A Dramatic Oratorio in Fourteen Scenes

Libretto adapted and assembled from sacred texts by R. Danielpour

CD 1: Part One

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Miryam Magdala **Hila Plitmann, Soprano**
Narrator (Talmuda) **Matthew Worth, Baritone**
Yeshua **Kenneth Overton, Baritone**
Miryam **J'Nai Bridges, Mezzo-soprano**
Kefa/Pilate **Timothy Fallon, Tenor**
Kayafa **James K. Bass, Baritone**

Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus • UCLA Chamber Singers

Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus prepared by Adam Luebke

UCLA Chamber Singers prepared by James K. Bass

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta

Richard Danielpour (b. 1956)

The Passion of Yeshua

At the first night of Passover, the youngest person at the table asks the question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" Appropriately, the place to begin speaking of *The Passion of Yeshua* is to ask the question, "Why is this Passion Oratorio different from all other Passion Oratorios?"

One of my aims in writing this work was to imagine the story of the last day of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. I thought if I could somehow take myself back in time and recreate what those last hours were like, that I may have a more developed understanding of who Jesus really was, without the 1800 years of European accretions and horrible acts that were committed in Europe in the name of Christianity. I think it is impossible for Jews and Christians alike to see the person of Jesus clearly and objectively because of the history of Christianity in Europe from the time that Constantine made it the official religion of the Holy Roman Empire, shortly after 300 AD. This oratorio is, among other things, an attempt to help me, and others, understand more fully the connection of Jesus of Nazareth to Jewish history.

The great *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach was a pivotal work in my life. I heard it for the first time at 17, and hearing it was for me one of the most substantive confirmations of my belief that I was put on this earth to write music. This monumental work remained a touchstone for me over many years, so it is not surprising that when I began to think about *The Passion of Yeshua* structurally, which is how I first conceive of any work, I found myself returning to this magnificent music of Bach. The harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and timbral languages of my work are markedly different from Bach's, but there are moments, particularly in the last scene, which in their own way, bow to the great master. I also felt as a young person uncomfortable with and aware of some of the anti-Semitic sentiments that reside in this very Lutheran work. I had thought as a young man if I could one day write a work on the same subject without these negative connotations, I would feel as if I had done something worthwhile.

Another central issue in the composition of the work was generated by the presence of the two most important women in the Gospel narrative – Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, who apparently was an important and central disciple in the mission of Jesus and quite possibly his companion. While the presence of these women seems to be far more in the forefront of many of the censored Gospels by the early Roman Catholic Church, they are present but not often heard in the four Gospels that are now part of what we refer to as the New Testament. I wanted these women to have a powerful and central place in the musical commentary related to the narrative, and in doing so, give them a voice. The story is also male dominated throughout, and I felt that there needed to be more female energy present in the piece as a whole.

The text of *The Passion of Yeshua* is divided into two languages – Hebrew and English. The Hebrew texts are all drawn from the Jewish scriptures, or Tanakh, while the English texts are taken from all four Gospels, but in two distinctively different translations – the Revised Standard Version, which has for years been understood as the Anglican revision to the original King James Version, and the Complete Jewish Bible, which is an English version by David H. Stern. The Stern translation is peppered with words that are in Hebrew, thus keeping in mind within the narrative of where all of this takes place. Many of the Hebrew texts sung by either the chorus or by the two female soloists are messianic prophecies. The most important of these are from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Isaiah is considered to be one of the most messianic of all the prophets, foretelling the coming of the Jewish Messiah. The uses of Hebrew and English are also symbolic in *The Passion of Yeshua*; the Hebrew is symbolic of the past, while the English is an archetype for the present.

The Passion of Yeshua is in two parts of seven scenes each. There are seven characters, or solo singers, and seven choruses, four short chorales, and

three 'grand' choruses. There are also seven movements in which the two female soloists (Miryam and Miryam Magdala) sing. Four are arias, and three are duets. The number seven has always been associated with 'completion' or the idea of completion in Jewish mystical thinking.

I have been thinking about writing this work for the last 25 years. It had evolved considerably in my mind before I began in earnest to compose it. At first, I thought that I might write this in the languages of Aramaic, Hebrew, and English, but I realized that Aramaic and Hebrew are too similar in sound and would cause confusion. By the end of 2015, I realized that the time had come. I spent nearly three months assembling the texts – May, June, and the first three weeks of July 2016 were probably the most difficult work in the process. I composed the short score of the work from July 21 until August 27, 2016, at Yaddo, the artists retreat, in Saratoga Springs. And then I worked on subsequent drafts of the short score until January 2017, when I began work on the full score. I finished the full score at the MacDowell Colony on July 16, 2017 and continued making small revisions to the score until December 2017.

As an American born of Middle Eastern, Iranian parentage, I was fortunate to be part of an extended family that embraced the rich heritage of both the Jewish and Christian traditions. This made my childhood household a place of open inquiry. After many years of living with the question of Jesus, I began to accept, in head and heart, that Jesus was the culmination of 4000 years of Jewish prophets and that he was indeed the long awaited for Messiah that our people had been hoping for,

for centuries. But I could not go into a synagogue because I knew that I would not be accepted for the total sum of my beliefs and attending a church felt alien to me because I felt there was no place for my Jewishness to reside. There was no 'place' for my beliefs, and so what I did over the years was to build a temple or cathedral in sound. Music is, for me, a place where God resides.

I have never intended for *The Passion of Yeshua* to be a polemical statement. Within this hour and 40 minute piece, I wanted to ask a question, namely – “Who is this man Jesus, and why after nearly two thousand years is he arguably the most talked about person in human history?” This was the very question I found myself asking as a young man nearly 44 years ago. And it is fitting then that *The Passion of Yeshua* begins with a question from the first verse of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah: “Who has believed what we have heard and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

As a rule, I do not believe in 'telling' a listener how they should feel about a work that I have composed. That attitude would amount to a form of musical fascism. I believe that the listener is entitled to react in whatever way they wish. They are, hopefully, active participants in the realization of a work, and are respectfully entitled to their own responses. One of the things that has always attracted me to the person of Jesus as a teacher is that, unlike organized religion in general, no one was ever excluded – he welcomed people of all walks of life. This can be said to be true about music itself – with music, no one is excluded, and all are invited.

Richard Danielpour

The Passion of Yeshua

Libretto adapted and assembled from sacred texts by Richard Danielpour

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All other English texts and translations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible

CD 1: Part One

1 Scene I: Prologue

CHORUS:

Mi he'emin lishmuatenu
Uzroa ADONAI al-mi niglata
Vaya'al cayonec lefanav, vechashoreh
Me' eretz tzi'ya-lo toar lo velo Hadar:
Venir'ehu velo-mar'e venechmedehu

Nivze vachadal ishim ish machovot

Vi'ydua choli uche'master panim mimenu,

Nivze velo chashavnuhu
Achen chola'yenu hu nasa umachove'inu se'valam
Va' anachnu chashavnuhu nagu'a
Muke Elohim um'ene
Ve'hu mecholal mipsha'enu
Meduka me'avonote'inu, musar shlomenu alav

Uvachavurato nirpa-lanu

Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
For he grew up before him like a young plant,
And like a root out of dry ground
He had no comeliness or form that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by men
A man of sorrows
And acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men
hide their faces
He was despised and we esteemed him not.
Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows
Yet we esteemed him stricken Smitten by God and
afflicted
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities
Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
And with his stripes we are healed.

[Isaiah 53:1-5]

2 Scene II: Pesach

NARRATOR: Now before the Feast of Pesach when Yeshua knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And when the hour came, he sat at the table, and the talmidim with him. And he said to them:

YESHUA: I have earnestly desired to eat this Seder with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.

NARRATOR: Then taking a cup of wine, he made the b'rakhah and said:

YESHUA: Take this and share it among yourselves; this cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in my blood.

NARRATOR: And he took bread, made the b'rakhah, broke it, and gave it to them saying:

YESHUA: This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

CHORUS [Chorale]:

Hineh mah tov
Umah na'im
Shevet akhim
Gam yachad

Behold how good
And pleasant it is
For brothers to live
Together in harmony

[Psalm 133:1]

3 Scene III: Ritual/Duet

DUET:

SOPRANO: Mah Nishtanah ha laylah hazeh mikol ha-leylot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

MEZZO: She b'khol ha- leylot 'anu-'okhlin chameytz u-
matzah, ha-laylah ha-zeh kulo matzah.
She b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin she'ar y'rakot ha-laylah
hazeh, kulo maror.

On all other nights we eat both chametz and matzah.
On this night, we eat only matzah.
On all other nights, we eat many vegetables.
On this night, only maror.

SOPRANO: Mah Nishtanah ha-laylah hazeh mikol ha-leylot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

MEZZO: She b'khol ha-leylot 'eyn 'anu matbilin 'afilu pa'am
'achat, ha-laylah ha-zeh sh'tey p'amim.

On all other nights, we do not dip vegetables, even once.
On this night, we dip twice.

SOPRANO & MEZZO: She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin
beyn yoshvin u-veyn m'subin, ha-laylah ha-zeh kulanu
me'subin.

That on all other nights, some eat sitting and others
reclining. On this night, we are all reclining.

Baruch attah ADONAI Eloheynu

Praised be you Lord our God,

CHORUS: Hal-le-lu-yah

Hallelujah

SOPRANO & MEZZO: melekh-ha'-olam

King of the universe,

CHORUS: Hal-le-lu-yah

Hallelujah

SOPRANO & MEZZO: Shehechyanu v'kimanu v'higianu
lazman hazeh.

Who has kept us alive, preserved us and
enabled us to arrive at this point in time.

CHORUS: Hal-le-lu-yah

Hallelujah

SOPRANO & MEZZO: Y'he sh'lama raba min
sh'maya. V'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael; ve'imru,

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for
us and for all Israel; and say,

SOPRANO & MEZZO & CHORUS: AMEN.

Amen.

[Passover Ritual]

4 Scene IV: Betrayal

NARRATOR: When Yeshua had spoken, he was troubled in spirit and testified:

YESHUA: Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me.

NARRATOR: The talmidim looked at one another uncertain of whom he spoke.
One of the talmidim, whom Yeshua loved, was lying close to the breast of Yeshua, so lying close, he said to
him: "Lord, who is it?"

YESHUA: It is he to whom I shall give this morsel, when I have dipped it.

NARRATOR: And when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Y'hudah from K'riot. As soon as he had taken the
piece of matzah, Y'hudah went out, and it was night.

YESHUA: Little children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will seek me, and now I say to you, where I am
going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. By
this, all will know that you are my talmidim, if you have love for one another.

NARRATOR: After singing the Hallel, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

5 Scene V: In the Valley of the Shadow of Death

Intermezzo (Instrumental)

CHORUS (Chorale):

Gam ki eilech	Yea, though I walk
b'gei tsalmavet	Through the valley of the shadow of death,
lo ira ra	I will fear no evil,
ki Attah imadi.	For thou art with me,
shiv'techa umishan'techa	Thy rod and thy staff
hemah y'nachamuni.	They comfort me.

[Psalm 23:4]

YESHUA: You will all fall away because of me tonight. As the Tanakh says: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

KEFA: Though they will fall away because of you, I will never fall away, even if I must die with you.

YESHUA (to Kefa): Truly I say to you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

6 Scene VI: Gethsemane

MEZZO (Aria):

Bekha ADONAI khasiti	In you LORD I take refuge
Al evosha le olam	Let me never be put to shame
Betzidkat'kha palteni!	In your justice save me!
Hate elay ozne'kha mehera hatzileni	Turn your ear toward me
He'ye li letzur-ma'oz leveit metzudot lehoshieni	Come quickly to my rescue,
	be for me a rock of strength, a fortress to keep me safe

[PSALM 31: 1-3]

S'hma Kol Takhanunai beshav'ee elekha	Hear the sound of my prayers When I cry to you
benos'ee yadai el-d'vir kodshekha	When I lift my hands Toward your holy sanctuary

[PSALM 28: 2]

NARRATOR: Then Yeshua went with them to a place called Gat-Sh'manim and said to his talmidim:

YESHUA: Sit here while I go over there and pray.

NARRATOR: And taking with him, Kefa and the two sons of Zevadai, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

YESHUA: My soul is very sorrowful even to death. Remain here and watch with me. My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Not as I will, but as you will.

NARRATOR: And he came to the talmidim and found them sleeping.

YESHUA: So could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation.

NARRATOR: Again, for the second time he went away and prayed. And with great anguish, he prayed more intensely, so that his sweat became like drops of blood, falling to the ground.

YESHUA: My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Thy will be done.

NARRATOR: And again, he found them sleeping, for their eyes were so heavy.

YESHUA: Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold the hour is at hand.

NARRATOR: While Yeshua was still speaking, Y'hudah came and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the head cohanim and the elders of the people. And he came up to Yeshua and said, "Shalom Rabbi," and he kissed him.

YESHUA: Friend, why are you here?

NARRATOR: Then Yeshua said to the head cohanim and the officers of the Temple Guard:

YESHUA: Have you come out, as you would against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the Temple Court, you did not arrest me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

NARRATOR: Then all the talmidim forsook him and fled.

7 Scene VII: Interlude

CHORUS:
Ve* kulanu catzon ta'inu
ish ledarco paninu,
Va' ADONAI hifgia bo et avon kulanu.

(And) All we like sheep have gone astray
We have turned everyone to his own way.
And the LORD has laid upon him the iniquity of us all.
[Isaiah 53:6]

Even ma'asu habonim ha'yta lerosh pina

The stone which the builders rejected has
become the head of the corner.

Me'et ADONAI ha'yta zot hee nifla'at be'eyne'ynu.

This is the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
[Psalm 118: 22-23]

Ve kulanu catzon ta'inu
ish ledarco paninu,
Va ADONAI hifgia bo et avon kulanu.

All we like sheep have gone astray.
We have turned everyone to his own way

CD 2: Part Two

1 Scene VIII: In the Palace of the High Priest

NARRATOR: They who had seized Yeshua led him to Kayafa, the high priest, where the Torah teachers and elders were assembled. Kefa followed him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest.
Now the head cohanim and the... Sanhedrin sought false testimony against Yeshua, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward.
The high priest stood up and said:

KAYAFA: Have you nothing to say to the accusations these men are making?

NARRATOR: Yeshua remained silent.

CHORUS (Accusers): This man said "I can tear down GOD's Temple and rebuild it in three days."
This man said "I can tear down God's Temple..."
This man said "I can tear God's Temple down..."
This man said... This man said...
THIS MAN SAID, "I CAN TEAR DOWN GOD'S TEMPLE AND REBUILD IT IN THREE DAYS!"

CHORUS (Defenders): Rabbi, we know you are a teacher come from GOD, for no one can do the signs that you do, unless GOD is with him...

KAYAFA: Silence! I put you under oath - tell us if you are the Mashiach, the Son of GOD.

YESHUA: These words are your own, but I tell you one day you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven.

KAYAFA: Blasphemy! Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?

CHORUS: Guilty! Guilty! He deserves death!
Prophecy to us Messiah: Who is it that struck you? Prophecy to us Messiah!
Guilty!

2 Scene IX: Kefa's Denial

MEZZO (Aria):
Ki Sha'ma'ti dibat rabim magor misaviv
Behi' vasdam yakhad ala'y lakakhat nafshi Zamamu.

Va'ani alekha vatakhiti ADONAI,
Amarti ELOHA'Y atah
Beyad'kha Itotay hatzileni miyad oy'va'y
umérodfa'y.

All I hear is whispering
Terror is all around me
They plot together against me
Scheming to take my life
But I trust in you LORD,
You are my God,
My times are in your hand
Rescue me from my enemy's power.

Ha'ira panecha al-avdekha: hoshi'eni vekhasdekha
Make your face shine on your servant: in your grace,
rescue me...
[Psalm 31: 13-17]

NARRATOR: Kefa was sitting outside in the courtyard when some servant girls came up to him:

FIRST GROUP OF SERVANT GIRLS (Altos from Chorus): You too were with Yeshua from the Galil.

NARRATOR: But he denied it:

KEFA: I don't know what you are talking about!

NARRATOR: He went out on the porch and another girl saw him, and said to the people:

FIRST & SECOND GROUPS OF SERVANT GIRLS (Sopranos & Altos from Chorus):
This man was with Yeshua from Natza'ret!

KEFA: I don't know the man!

CROWD (Chorus): You must be one of them; your accent gives you away!

KEFA: I dont know the man!

NARRATOR: And immediately the rooster crowed. Kefa remembered what Yeshua had said:
"Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times," ... and he went out and wept bitterly.

NARRATOR: When Y'hudah, who had betrayed him, saw that Yeshua had been condemned, he was seized with

CHORUS (Chorale):

Ashre nesui peshah ke-sui khata'ah	How blessed are those whose whole offense is forgiven, those whose sin is covered:
Ashre adam loyachshov ADONAI lo avon	How blessed are those to whom the LORD imputes no guilt
ve'en beruho remiyah.	In whose spirit is no deceit.

[Psalm 32:1-2]

remorse saying: "I have sinned in betraying an innocent man to death". Then, he went off and hanged himself.

3 Scene X: Yeshua before Pilate

SOPRANO (Aria):

Ashira na Li'y'di'-di	Let me sing for my beloved
Shirat dodi lekharmoni:	A love song concerning his vineyard
Kerem hayah Li'y'di'-di	My beloved had a vineyard
bekeren ben-shamen	on a very fertile hill,
va'yazkehu, va'ysaklehu, va'yi'ta'ehu sorek;	He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines
va'yiven migdal betokho vegam yekev khatsevbo,	He built a watchtower in the midst of it, and howed out a winepress in it.
va'yekav la'asot anavim	and he looked for it to yield good grapes,
va'ya'as b'ushim	but it yielded wild grapes

[Isaiah 5:1-2]

Ki berov khokhma ravka'as Ve yosif da'at, yosif machov.	For in much wisdom is much grief, the more knowledge, the more suffering.
---	--

[Ecclesiastes 1:18]

NARRATOR: The Sanhedrin led Yeshua from Kayafa to the Governor's palace; by now it was early morning.
So Pilate went out to them and said:

PILATE: What charge are you bringing against this man?

CHORUS (MEN): We found this man subverting our nation, and claiming that he himself is the Messiah, a king:

PILATE: You take him and judge him according to your own Law.

PRIESTS: We don't have the legal power to put anyone to death.

NARRATOR: So Pilate went back into the palace, and called Yeshua, and said to him:

PILATE: Are you the King of the Jews?

YESHUA: Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?

PILATE: Your own nation and the head kohanim have handed you over to me. What have you done?

YESHUA: My kingdom is not of this world.

PILATE: So you are a king, after all? So then you are a king?

YESHUA: You say I am a king. For this reason, I have been born, and for this reason, I have come, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.

4 Scene XI: 'Behold the Man'

NARRATOR: Pilate went outside again to members of the Sanhedrin and a crowd that had gathered there, saying:

PILATE: You brought this man before me on a charge of subverting the people. I examined him in your presence and did not find the man guilty of the crime you are accusing him of... However, you have a custom that at Passover I set one prisoner free. Do you want me to set free for you the King of the Jews?

CHORUS: Not this man! Not this man but Bar-Abba!

PILATE: But what has this man done wrong? I haven't found any reason to put him to death.

CHORUS: GIVE US BAR-ABBA!

NARRATOR: Pilate then took Yeshua and had him flogged, and the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and placed it on his head and arrayed him with a purple robe and struck him with their hands saying:

CHORUS: Hail King of the Jews! Hail King of the Jews! Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail King of the Jews!

NARRATOR: Pilate brought Yeshua out, and sat down on the Judge's seat, called 'The Pavement'. It was about noon on Preparation Day... So, Yeshua came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said to them:

PILATE: See, I am bringing him out to you, so you may know that I find no crime in him. Behold the man!

CHORUS: Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified!

NARRATOR: Yeshua!

CHORUS: Let him be crucified!

PILATE: Shall I crucify your King?

CHORUS: We have no king but Caesar! Take him away! Let him be crucified!

PILATE: Behold your King!

NARRATOR: Yeshua! Yeshua!

PILATE: Behold your King!

CHORUS: Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified!

NARRATOR: Yeshua of Natzeret!

CHORUS: Let him be crucified!

NARRATOR: Yeshua of Natzeret!

CHORUS: Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified!

NARRATOR: Yeshua of Natzeret, is one of our brothers!!!

SOPRANO & MEZZO:

Me'a mal nafsho yir'e yisba
Beda'ato yatzdik tzadik avdi larabim:
va'avonotam' hu yi'sbol

By his knowing pain and sacrifice
my righteous one makes many righteous;
it is for their sins that he suffers.

SOPRANO & MEZZO:

Me'a mal nafsho yir'e yisba
Beda'ato yatzdik tzadik avdi larabim:
va'avonotam' hu yi'sbol

By his knowing pain and sacrifice
my righteous one makes many righteous;
it is for their sins that he suffers.

[Isaiah 53:11]

NARRATOR: When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, he released to them Bar-Abba, but Yeshua, he handed over to be crucified.

5 Scene XII: Via Dolorosa

SOPRANO (Aria):

Nigas vehu na'aneh velo yiftakh-piv

kase latevakh yuval ukherakhel lifne'y,
gozezeha ne'elama
velo yiftakh piv.
Meotzer umimishpat lukakh
ve'et doro mi yesokhe'akh
ki nigzar me'eretz kha'yim',
mi pesha ami nega lamo

He was oppressed and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth
and like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and judgment, he was taken away;
and none of his generation protested
that he was cut off from the land of the living
for the crimes of my people?

[Isaiah 53: 7-8]

Me'a mal nafsho yir'e yisba
Beda'ato yatzdik tzadik avdi larabim:
va'avonotam' hu yi'sbol

By his knowing pain and sacrifice
my righteous one makes many righteous;
it is for their sins that he suffers.

[Isaiah 53: 11]

NARRATOR: As they led him away, there followed a great multitude of women who bewailed and lamented him. When they came to the place called Gulgolta, there they nailed him to the cross along with two others, one on either side, with Yeshua in the middle.

YESHUA: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

NARRATOR: Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross, it read:

"THIS IS YESHUA FROM NATZERET, THE KING OF THE JEWS"

After they nailed him to the cross, they divided his clothes among them by throwing dice.

Then they sat down to keep watch over him.

NARRATOR (Arioso): But standing by the cross of Yeshua were his mother, and his mother's sister, and Miryam Magdala. When Yeshua saw his mother and the talmuda whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother:

YESHUA: Woman, behold your son: son, behold your mother!

SOPRANO & MEZZO DUET:

Z'kenim misha'ar shavatu
Ba'k'hurim minginatam shavat
mesos libenu ne'hepak'h le'evel mekholenu,
nafla ateret roshenu...

The old men have deserted the city gate
The young men have abandoned their music
Joy has vanished from our hearts
Our dancing has turned to mourning.
And the crown has fallen from our heads...

[Lamentations 5:14-16]

6 Scene XIII: Darkness over the Land

CHORUS: He saved others, he cannot save himself. If you are the Son of God, save yourself! He trusted in God! Let him come down from the cross and we will believe!

NARRATOR: Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, there was darkness over the land. At about the ninth hour, Yeshua cried with a loud voice and said:

YESHUA: Eli, Eli, l'mah sh'vaktani? [My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?]

CHORUS (Sopranos & Altos): Eli, Eli, l'mah sh'vaktani?

YESHUA: It is accomplished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

NARRATOR: And with these words, he gave up his spirit.

CHORUS (Chorale):

O-se shalom
Bimromav
Hu ya'ase shalom
Aleinu
V'al kol Yisrael
V'imru,
AMEN

May God,
Who makes
Peace on high,
Bring peace to all and
To all Israel,
And say
AMEN

[From the Kaddish]

7 Scene XIV: Epilogue

CHORUS:

Hen avdi et moch-bo,
behiri ratzta nafshi
Nata'ti ruchi alav,
mishpat l'ago'yim yotzi
Lo yitz'ak, velo yisa: velo-yashmia bachutz, kolo.

Behold my servant whom I uphold,
My chosen, in whom my soul delights.
I have put my Spirit upon him,
he will bring forth justice to the nations
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;

Kane ratzutz lo yishbor,
ufishta cheha lo y'chabena;
Le'emet yotzi mishpat.
Lo yich'-he velo yarutz
ad-yasim ba'aretz mishpat.

A bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench.
To the truth he will bring forth judgement.
He will not fail or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth...

[Isaiah 42: 1-4]

END





Hila Plitmann



GRAMMY Award-winning singer, songwriter, and actress Hila Plitmann has worked with many leading conductors, and performed with the likes of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO). She has an impressive catalogue of varied recordings, including Hans Zimmer's GRAMMY-winning soundtrack for *The Da Vinci Code*, Eric Whitacre's *Goodnight Moon* with the LSO, and John Corigliano's song cycle *Mr. Tambourine Man* with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, for which she won a GRAMMY Award. Recent recordings include Richard Danielpour's *Toward A Season of Peace* and Corigliano's *Vocalise*, both released to critical acclaim on Naxos.

www.hilaplitmann.com

Matthew Worth



Matthew Worth is quickly becoming the baritone of choice for innovative productions and contemporary works. In 2018, he created the role of the Narrator in the world premiere of *The Passion of Yeshua* with the Oregon Bach Festival. The season also included Worth's return to Boston Lyric Opera as Figaro in Rosetta Cucchi's production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Recent season highlights include the title role in the world premieres of both *JFK* with Fort Worth Opera and *The Manchurian Candidate* with Minnesota Opera, and *Moby Dick* at Washington National Opera.

Kenneth Overton



Kenneth Overton made his New York City Opera mainstage debut in 2012 as Doctor Grenvil in Verdi's *La traviata*. That season, he also performed in the world premiere of David Ott's *The Widow's Lantern* at Pensacola Opera, where he was reengaged as Joe in *Showboat* and then Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd*. He performed the role of Stephen Kumalo in Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars* for Union Avenue Opera, and was nominated for Outstanding Achievement in an Opera by the St. Louis Theater Circle for this role. He has performed with Opera Grand Rapids, Toledo Opera, and Opera Idaho.

J'Nai Bridges



Critically acclaimed by *Opera News*, mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges completed a three-year residency at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2015. She is a recipient of the 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Award, a 2016 Richard Tucker Career Grant, a 2013 Sullivan Foundation Award, a 2012 Marian Anderson Award, a 2011 Sara Tucker Study Grant, and a 2009 Richard F. Gold Grant. Bridges was awarded First Prize at both the 2016 Francisco Viñas International Singing Competition and the 2015 Gerda Lissner Competition, and was the winner of the 2008 Leontyne Price Foundation Competition.

Timothy Fallon



Tenor Timothy Fallon released his debut album *LISZT 15 Songs* with pianist Ammiel Bushakevitz in 2018 on BIS Records. From 2007 to 2013 he was part of the ensemble of the Oper Leipzig in Germany. In 2013 he performed Baroncelli in Wagner's *Rienzi* for the Bayreuther Festspiele. He collaborated with I Virtuosi Ambulanti in *Wertheriade*, a salon opera devised for him of seldom-performed pieces from the *bel canto* era. Fallon holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Westminster Choir College, a Master of Music in Opera from Binghamton University and an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School.

James K. Bass



Three-time GRAMMY Award-nominated conductor and singer James K. Bass is director of choral studies at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, associate conductor of Seraphic Fire and artistic director of the Long Beach Camerata Singers. He has prepared choirs for eminent conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Sir David Willcocks, Michael Tilson Thomas and Gerard Schwarz. In 2017 he made his solo debut with The Cleveland Orchestra singing with Franz Welser-Möst in Severance Hall, and in 2018 was bass soloist with the Aspen Chamber Orchestra led by Xian Zhang. Other engagements as a soloist include the New World Symphony with Michael Tilson Thomas, The Florida Orchestra and The Sebastians among many others. He was the featured baritone soloist on the GRAMMY Award-nominated recording *Pablo Neruda: The Poet Sings*, and also appeared on the GRAMMY Award-nominated album *A Seraphic Fire Christmas*. His discography includes releases on the Harmonia Mundi, Naxos, Albany Records and Seraphic Fire Media labels. Bass serves as director of education for Seraphic Fire, and associate programme director and serves on the conducting faculty at the Professional Choral Institute at the Aspen Music Festival.

Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus



Photo: Nancy J. Parisi

The Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus (BPC) is dedicated to the performance of high quality, diverse musical programs and developing singers in the choral arts. With over 140 singers, the BPC is frequently heard as the principal guest chorus of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO). Formed in 1937 as the Buffalo Schola Cantorum, it became the BPC in 1992 to reflect its close association with the BPO. Founder Jessamine E. Long was succeeded by noteworthy musicians, including Cameron Baird and Thomas Swan. The BPC makes various guest appearances throughout the region and produces self-sponsored concerts such as its annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

UCLA Chamber Singers



Photo: Nick Lie

The UCLA Chamber Singers, a 35-voiced mixed choir, represents the highest level of ensemble singing in the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, and has been conducted by choral luminaries including Roger Wagner, Donn Weiss, and Donald Neuen. The choir routinely presents performances representing the entire spectrum of choral literature on campus and in the community, annually presenting major choral orchestral works with the UCLA Philharmonia in the historic on-campus venue Royce Hall. The ensemble has collaborated with nationally recognized arts groups including the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, Seraphic Fire and the touring production of *Distant Worlds*, the music of Final Fantasy.

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra



Photo: David Seide (DefinedSpace.com)

Founded in 1935, the GRAMMY Award-winning Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) is Buffalo's leading cultural ambassador and presents more than 120 classics, pops and youth concerts each year. Since 1940, the orchestra's permanent home has been Kleinhans Music Hall. In 2013 the BPO made its 24th appearance at Carnegie Hall as a participant in the Spring For Music festival. In March 2018, it became the first American orchestra to perform at the Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw, Poland. Over the decades, the BPO has matured in stature under leading conductors, including William Steinberg, Josef Krips, Lukas Foss, Michael Tilson Thomas, Maximiano Valdés, Semyon Bychkov and Julius Rudel. During the tenure of JoAnn Falletta the BPO has rekindled its distinguished history of radio broadcasts and recordings, including the release of 48 new albums, with two more pending, of diverse repertoire on the Naxos and Beau Fleuve labels. The Philharmonic's Naxos recording of composer John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* (8.559331), featuring soprano Hila Plitmann, received GRAMMY Awards in the Classical Vocal Performance and Classical Contemporary Composition categories.

www.bpo.org

JoAnn Falletta



Photo: Heather Bellini

JoAnn Falletta serves as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and Virginia Symphony Orchestras, and is the principal guest conductor of the Brevard Music Center of North Carolina. She has guest conducted many of the most prominent orchestras across the world, and served as principal conductor of the Ulster Orchestra from 2011 to 2014, with whom she made her debut at the BBC Proms. A recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, winner of the Stokowski Competition, and the Toscanini, Ditson, and Bruno Walter conducting awards, Falletta became the first female conductor to lead a major American ensemble upon her appointment as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in 1999. She has received twelve ASCAP awards, served on the US National Council on the Arts, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2019, Falletta was named *Performance Today's* 2019 Classical Woman of the Year, and won her first individual GRAMMY Award as conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra for *Spiritualist* by Kenneth Fuchs. Her recordings for Naxos include the double GRAMMY Award-winning release of works by John Corigliano and numerous GRAMMY-nominated albums.

www.joannfalletta.com

Richard Danielpour



Photo: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

Award-winning composer Richard Danielpour has established himself as one of the most gifted and sought-after composers of his generation. His music has attracted an international and illustrious array of champions, and, as a devoted mentor and educator, he has also had a significant impact on the younger generation of composers. His list of commissions includes celebrated artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman, Dawn Upshaw, Emanuel Ax, Gil Shaham, Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, Gary Graffman, Anthony McGill, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, the Guarneri and Emerson String Quartets, the New York City and Pacific Northwest Ballets, and institutions such as the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Mariinsky and Vienna Chamber Orchestras, the Orchestre National de France, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and many more. With Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, Danielpour created *Margaret Garner*, his first opera, which premiered in 2005 and had a second production with the New York City Opera. He has received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Fellowship, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the Joseph H. Bearns Prize from Columbia University, and fellowships and residencies from the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Copland House, and the American Academies in Berlin and Rome. He served on the composition faculty of the Manhattan School of Music from 1993 to 2017. Danielpour recently relocated to Los Angeles where he has accepted the position of professor

of music at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. He is also a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music where he has taught since 1997. Danielpour has a vast discography, and many of his recordings can be found on the Naxos and Sony Classical labels. Danielpour's music is published by Lean Kat Music and Associated Music Publishers.

www.Richard-Danielpour.com

Richard
DANIELPOUR
(b. 1956)

The Passion of Yeshua (2017)
A Dramatic Oratorio in Fourteen Scenes

Libretto adapted and assembled from sacred texts by R. Danielpour

CD 1: Part One 45:14
CD 2: Part Two 57:59

Miryam Magdala Hila Plitmann, Soprano
Narrator (Talmuda) Matthew Worth, Baritone
Yeshua Kenneth Overton, Baritone
Miryam J'Nai Bridges, Mezzo-soprano
Kefa/Pilate Timothy Fallon, Tenor
Kayafa James K. Bass, Baritone

UCLA Chamber Singers
Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus
and Orchestra
JoAnn Falletta

Commissioned by the Oregon Bach Festival, the SDG Foundation, and the Buffalo Philharmonic, with the generous support of Don and Mary Thompson, Alan and Nancy Manocherian, and Jon Wiswasser. World Premiere, 8 July 2018, Oregon Bach Festival, JoAnn Falletta, conductor. Special thanks to Anthony Constantino, Derek Cooper, Efrat Sar-Shalom, Elaine Pagels, Neal Stulberg, Janelle McCoy, and Michael Anderson.

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

The Hebrew and English texts are included in the booklet, and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/559885.htm

Recorded: 13–14 April 2019 at Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo, New York, USA • Producer and engineer: Bernd Gottinger
Publisher: Lean Kat Music [BMI] • Booklet notes: Richard Danielpour
Cover design: Jefferson Rodriguez



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Richard Danielpour's dramatic oratorio *The Passion of Yeshua* – a work which has evolved over the last 25 years – is an intensely personal telling of the final hours of Christ on Earth. It incorporates texts from the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Gospels inspiring extraordinarily beautiful music that stresses the need for human compassion and forgiveness. Danielpour returns to the scale and majesty of Bach in this oratorio, creating choruses that are intense and powerful, and giving both Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene a central place in a work of glowing spirituality. Conductor JoAnn Falletta considers *The Passion of Yeshua* to be “a classic for all time.”

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

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Time:
1:43:13