

The NAXOS logo is located in the top left corner, featuring the word "NAXOS" in white capital letters on a blue rectangular background. Above the text are stylized white lines representing a classical architectural facade.

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The background of the cover is a detail from Michelangelo's Pieta, showing the Virgin Mary on the left, Jesus Christ in the center with a crown of thorns, and St. John the Apostle on the right. The figures are rendered with soft, realistic shading and are set against a dark background.

# LASSUS

## St Matthew Passion

Musica Ficta  
Bo Holten

Orlandus  
**LASSUS**  
(1532–1594)

**St Matthew Passion**

**Maunder Thursday**

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**Good Friday**

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35	Nihil tibi et iusto illi	0:59
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40	Quid enim mali fecit?	0:22
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44	Ave rex Iudaeorum!	3:03
45	Vah, qui destruit templum	1:07
46	Alios salvos fecit Helias	3:17
47	Heliam vocat iste	0:44
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49	Agnus Dei – Motet	2:20
50	Et ecce velum templi scissum est	1:02
51	Vere Dei Filius erat iste	1:04
52	Mors tua, mors Christi – Motet	5:26
53	Cum autem sero factum	3:29
54	Agnus Dei – Motet	2:33

**Orlandus Lassus (1532–1594)**

**St Matthew Passion**

'The Matthew Passion' has, through the centuries become an icon in the consciousness of all music lovers, so much so that one immediately thinks of Bach's towering masterpiece. But, of course, it was not Bach's idea to set Matthew to music: performances of the Christian Easter rites have taken place since earliest Christendom, in varying guises through the centuries, as a way of celebrating the Passion story at Easter.

In earlier times, the Passion was either recited or sung monophonically. How they did it and what it sounded like we know very little about, but through the centuries the classical Gregorian plainsong developed, possibly quite differently all over Christendom. It does seem, however, that the concept of singers taking the roles of Christ and Evangelist, Pilate and Judas, as well as various smaller parts, was developing.

Around 1500 polyphonic Passions were composed where the entire gospel was sung in four- or five-part harmony, but other settings retained a large plainsong solo-part for the Evangelist as well as for Jesus while having other roles sung polyphonically. In protestant areas, the Lutheran chorales were inserted in the Passion story.

Lassus' *St Matthew Passion* was composed in the Roman Catholic tradition at the Munich court. He set all four gospels in a rather austere style, the *St Matthew Passion* being the most elaborate – and that is why we chose it for our performances. Unfortunately, it is unclear which kind of chant was used in this tradition, but we have chosen a Roman Passion chant that Lassus might have been familiar with having served for several years as chief of music at the Lateran in Rome.

During the Renaissance, it was customary to insert polyphonic motets into religious services with texts that fitted the occasion. We do not know if this was also the case during Easter celebrations, but I have tried to find fitting pieces among Lassus' rich treasure of motets (and even a spiritual madrigal!) to illuminate certain key moments in the otherwise austere Passion story.

I hesitate to call this a 'reconstruction' of how Lassus' *Passion* may have sounded in 1575 Munich – which, in

any case, we know very little about – but I think it might be a way of making Lassus' wonderful music accessible to a modern audience, making its natural and reticent telling of the story easy and appealing to follow. Several years of performing it also confirms my belief in conveying its deeply felt contents successfully in this way.

Orlandus Lassus (1532–1594) was the most versatile and arguably the greatest composer of the 16th century. He was justly famed and celebrated in his own time, and a much-treasured teacher for the generation of composers who would implement the radical paradigm shift into the Baroque period! Active in all genres, he would also excel in acting comic roles and putting on big musical events – having under him, in Munich, an ensemble of singers and instrumentalists of almost 100 people. Mastering Flemish, French, Italian, Spanish, German and Latin, he would correspond multi-linguistically and indeed humorously.

About four years before his death he suffered a serious stroke, after which he became, according to the testimony of his wife, melancholy and obsessed with thoughts of death – a state of mind reflected in the last two collections he prepared for publication: the six-voice *Cantiones sacrae*, published in Graz, 1594, and the *Lagrime di San Pietro*, published posthumously the following year.

The fact that nowadays, alas, he is not nearly as well known as contemporaries such as Palestrina, Victoria and William Byrd, might be explained by his name being so different in various languages: In his childhood he was the brilliant boy soprano Orlande de Latre in Mons and Antwerp; in Italy in his youth he was Orlando di Lasso; visiting the French king (who adored him) he was called Roland de Lassus; in Latin Orlandus Lassus; and in Germany he was called a variety of these, married a German woman and had nine sons and seven daughters by her, all of them having German names – and some of them also becoming composers, collecting and editing their father's enormous *oeuvre*.

**Bo Holten**

## Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum Matthaeum

### Dies Cenae Domini

**[1] Evangelista:** Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum Mattheum:

In illo tempore dixit Jesus discipulis suis:

**lesus:** Scitis quia post biduum pascha fiet et Filius hominis tradetur ut crucifigatur

**Evangelista:** Tunc congregati sunt principes sacerdotum et seniores populi in atrium principis sacerdotum qui dicebatur Caiaphas et consilium fecerunt ut Iesum dolo tenerent et occiderent. Dicebant autem: **Principis sacerdotum (chorus):** Non in die feo ne forte tumultus fieret in populo.

**Evangelista:** Cum autem esset Iesus in Bethania in domo Simonis leprosi accessit ad eum mulier habens alabastrum unguenti pretiosi et effudit super caput ipsius recumbentis videntes autem discipuli indignati sunt dicentes:

**[2] Discipuli (chorus):** Ut quid perditio haec potuit enim istud venundari multo et dari pauperibus?

**Evangelista:** Sciens autem Iesus ait illis:

**lesus:** Quid molesti estis mulieri? Opus bonum operata est in me. Nam semper pauperes habetis vobiscum me autem non semper habetis. Mittens enim haec unguentum hoc in corpus meum ad sepeliendum me fecit. Amen dico vobis ubicumque praedicatum fuerit hoc evangelium in toto mundo dicetur et quod haec fecit in memoriam eius. Tunc abiit unus de duodecim qui dicitur Iudas Scarioth ad principes sacerdotum: et ait illis:

**Evangelista:** Tunc abiit unus de duodecim qui dicitur Iudas Scarioth ad principes sacerdotum: et ait illis:

**[3] Iudas (chorus):** Quid vultis mihi dare et ego vobis eum tradam?

**Evangelista:** At illi constituerunt ei triginta argenteos. Et exinde quaerebat oportunitatem, ut eum traderet. Prima autem azymorum accesserunt discipuli ad Iesum dicentes:

## Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

### Maundy Thursday

**[1] Evangelist:** The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew:

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

**Jesus:** You know that in two days will be Passover and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

**Evangelist:** Then the chief priests and elders of the people came together in the hall of the chief priest who was called Caiaphas and they held counsel to take Jesus by trickery and kill him. But they said:

**Chief Priest (Chorus):** Not on a holy day lest perhaps there be a disturbance among the people.

**Evangelist:** But when Jesus was come to Bethany, he went into the house of Simon the Leper and a woman with an alabaster vessel of precious ointment poured it over his head as he sat, and his disciples were indignant saying:

**[2] Disciples (Chorus):** Why this waste, for it could have been sold for much and the money given to the poor?

**Evangelist:** But Jesus, understanding, said to them:

**Jesus:** Why do you rebuke the woman? For you have the poor always with you but you do not always have me. For pouring this ointment over my body she has done it for my burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world what she has done shall be remembered. Then one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said to them:

**Evangelist:** Then one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said to them:

**[3] Judas (Chorus):** What will you give me if I shall betray him to you?

**Evangelist:** But they agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver. And then he sought a chance to betray him. But on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying:

**[4] Discipuli (chorus):** Ubi vis paremus tibi comedere pascha?

**Evangelista:** At Iesus dixit:

**lesus:** Ite in civitatem ad quendam et dicite ei magister dicit tempus meum prope est apud te facio pascha cum discipulis meis.

**Evangelista:** Et fecerunt discipuli sicut constituit illis Iesus et paraverunt pascha. Vespere autem facta discumbebat cum duodecim discipulis suis. Et edentibus illis dixit.

**lesus:** Amen dico vobis quia unus vestrum me traditurus est.

**Evangelista:** Et contristati valde, caeperunt singuli dicere:

**[5] Discipuli (chorus):** Numquid ego sum, Domine?

**Evangelista:** At ille ipse respondens ait:

**lesus:** Qui intinguit mecum manum in parapside hic me tradet. Filius quidem hominis vadit sicut scriptum est de illo: Vae autem homini illi per quem Filius hominis traditur: Bonum erat ei si natus non fuisset homo ille.

**Evangelista:** Respondens autem Iudas qui tradidit eum dixit:

**[6] Iudas (chorus):** Numquid ego sum rabbi?

**Evangelista:** Ait illi:

**lesus:** Tu dixisti.

**Evangelista:** Cenantibus autem eis accepit Iesus panem et benedixit ac fregit deditque discipulis suis et ait:

**lesus:** Accipite et comedite hoc est corpus meum.

**Evangelista:** Et accipiens calicem gratias egit et dedit illis dicens:

**lesus:** Bibite ex hoc omnes. Hic est enim sanguis meus novi testamenti qui pro multis effunditur in remissionem peccatorum. Dico autem vobis non bibam amodo de hoc genimine vitis usque in diem illum cum illud bibam vobiscum novum in regno Patris mei.

**[7] Motet:** Expectans expectavi Dominum et respexit me, Deprecationem meam et immisit in os meum, Canticum novum, hymnum Deum nostrum.

**[8] Evangelista:** Et hymno dicto exierunt in montem

**[4] Disciples (Chorus):** Where shall we prepare for you to celebrate the Passover?

**Evangelist:** But Jesus said:

**Jesus:** Go into the city to a certain man and tell him that the master says my time is near and I will celebrate the Passover in your house with my disciples.

**Evangelist:** And the disciples did as Jesus ordered them and prepared the Passover. But when evening came, he reclined there with his twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said:

**Jesus:** Amen I say to you that one of you shall betray me.

**Evangelist:** And they were very sad and began, one by one, to say:

**[5] Disciples (Chorus):** Is it I, Lord?

**Evangelist:** But he said to them:

**Jesus:** He who dips his hand with me in the dish shall betray me. It is of the Son of Man as is written of him: Woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed: it would be good if that man had never been born.

**Evangelist:** But answering him Judas, who betrayed him, said:

**[6] Judas (Chorus):** Is it I, rabbi?

**Evangelist:** He said to him:

**Jesus:** You have said it.

**Evangelist:** But while they were eating Jesus took bread, broke it and gave to his disciples, saying:

**Jesus:** Take and eat, this is my body.

**Evangelist:** And taking the cup gave thanks and gave to them, saying:

**Jesus:** Drink of this, all of you. For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink with you again in the kingdom of my Father.

**[7] Motet:** I waited in expectation for the Lord and he heard me. He put into my mouth a new song, a hymn to our God.

**[8] Evangelist:** And when they had sung a hymn they

Oliveti. Tunc dicit illis Iesus:

**Iesus:** Omnes vos scandalum patiemini in me in ista nocte. Scriptum est enim: Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves gregis. Postquam autem resurrexero praecedam vos in Galilaeam.

**Evangelista:** Respondens autem Petrus ait illi:

9 **Petrus (chorus):** Et si omnes scandalizati fuerint in te ego numquam scandalizabor.

**Evangelista:** Ait illi Iesus:

**Iesus:** Amen dico tibi quia in hac nocte antequam gallus cantet ter me negabis.

**Evangelista:** Ait illi Petrus:

10 **Petrus (chorus):** Etiam si oportuerit me mori tecum non te negabo.

**Evangelista:** Similiter et omnes discipuli dixerunt. Tunc venit Iesus cum illis in villam quae dicitur Gethsemani et dixit discipulis suis:

**Iesus:** Sedete hic donec vadam illuc et orem.

**Evangelista:** Et adsumpto Petro et duobus filiis Zebedaei coepit contristari et maestus esse. Tunc ait illis:

11 **Iesus (Motet):** Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem: sustinete hic, et vigilate mecum: nunc videbitis turbam, quae circumdabit me: vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.

12 **Evangelista:** Et progressus pusillum procidit in faciem suam orans et dicens:

**Iesus:** Mi Pater si possibile est transeat a me calix iste. Verumtamen non sicut ego volo sed sicut tu.

**Evangelista:** Et venit ad discipulos et invenit eos dormientes et dicit Petro:

**Iesus:** Sic non potuistis una hora vigilare mecum? Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in temptationem. Spiritus quidem promptus est caro autem infirma.

**Evangelista:** Iterum secundo abiit et oravit dicens:

**Iesus:** Pater mi si non potest hic calix transire nisi bibam illum, fiat voluntas tua.

**Evangelista:** Et venit iterum et invenit eos dormientes:

went out onto the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them:

**Iesus:** All of you shall suffer scandal for me this night.

For it is written: I shall strike down the shepherd and scatter the sheep of his flock. But after I shall rise again, I will go before you into Galilee.

**Evangelist:** But Peter, answering, said:

9 **Peter (Chorus):** Even if all are scandalised because of you, I shall never be scandalised.

**Evangelist:** Jesus said to him:

**Iesus:** Amen, I say to you that in this night before the cock crows you will deny me three times.

**Evangelist:** Peter said to him:

10 **Peter (Chorus):** Even if I must die with you, I shall not deny you.

**Evangelist:** And all the disciples said the same. Then Jesus came with them to a place that is called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples:

**Iesus:** Sit here, while I go there to pray.

**Evangelist:** And he took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sad and mournful. Then he said to them:

11 **Jesus (Motet):** My soul is sad even to death: stay here and watch with me: now you will see a crowd that will surround me: you will take flight and I shall go to be sacrificed for you.

12 **Evangelist:** And he went a little way off and fell on his face, praying and saying:

**Iesus:** My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me. But nevertheless not as I will but as you will.

**Evangelist:** And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter:

**Iesus:** So could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is ready but the flesh is weak.

**Evangelist:** A second time he went away and prayed, saying:

**Iesus:** My Father if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

**Evangelist:** And he came again and found them sleeping,

Erant enim oculi eorum gravati. Et relictis illis iterum abiit et oravit tertio eundem sermonem dicens. Tunc venit ad discipulos suos et dicit illis:

**Iesus:** Dormite iam et requiescite. Ecce adpropinquavit hora et Filii hominis traditur in manus peccatorum.

Surgite eamque ecce adpropinquavit qui me tradit.

13 **Motet:** Qui vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum, Et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me, dicit Dominus.

**Evangelista:** Adhuc eo loquente ecce Iudas unus de duodecim venit et cum eo turba multa cum gladiis et fustibus, missi a principibus sacerdotum et senioribus populi. Qui autem tradidit eum dedit illis signum dicens:

14 **Iudas (chorus):** Quemcumque osculatus fuero ipse est tenete eum.

**Evangelista:** Et confestim accedens ad Iesum dixit:

15 **Iudas (chorus):** Ave rabbi.

**Evangelista:** Et osculatus est eum. Dixitque illi Iesus:

**Iesus:** Amice ad quod venisti?

**Evangelista:** Tunc accesserunt et manus iniecerunt in Iesum et tenuerunt eum. Et ecce unus ex his, qui erant cum Iesu, extendens manum exemit gladium suum, et percutiens servum principis sacerdotum amputavit auriculam ejus. Tunc ait illi Iesus:

**Iesus:** Converte gladium tuum in locum suum. Omnes enim qui acceperint gladium gladio peribunt. An putas quia non possum rogare Patrem meum et exhibebit mihi modo plus quam duodecim legiones angelorum? Quomodo ergo implebuntur scripturae quia sic oportet fieri?

**Evangelista:** In illa hora dixit Iesus turbis:

**Iesus:** Tamquam ad latronem existis cum gladiis et fustibus comprehendere me: Quotidie apud vos sedebam docens in templo et non me tenuistis.

**Evangelista:** Hoc autem totum factum est ut implerentur scripturae prophetarum tunc discipuli omnes relicto eo, fugerunt.

16 **Motet:** Animam meam dilectam tradidi in manus iniquorum, et facta est mihi hereditas mea sicut leo in silva: dedit contra me voces adversarius, dicens:

for their eyes were heavy with sleep. And having left them again, he went away and prayed again for the third time in the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them: **Iesus:** Sleep now and rest. Lo the hour has come and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go, lo, he who betrays me approaches.

13 **Motet:** He who will follow me, let him deny himself. Let him take up his cross and follow me, says the Lord.

**Evangelist:** As he was speaking, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great crowd with swords and staves, sent by the chief priests and the elders of the people. And he who betrayed him gave a sign saying:

14 **Judas (Chorus):** He whom I shall kiss is the one. Hold him.

**Evangelist:** And immediately coming to Jesus, he said:

15 **Judas (Chorus):** Hail, rabbi.

**Evangelist:** And he kissed him. And Jesus said:

**Iesus:** Friend, for what have you come?

**Evangelist:** And then they came and laid hands on Jesus and held him. And lo, one of those who were with Jesus drew his sword and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said:

**Iesus:** Sheathe your sword. For all who take up the sword shall die by the sword. Do you think that I cannot ask my Father and he will show me more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that this must come to pass?

**Evangelist:** At that time Jesus said to the crowds:

**Iesus:** As for a robber you have come out to take me with swords and staves. Daily I sat among you, teaching in the Temple, and you did not take me.

**Evangelist:** But this was all done that the writings of the prophets be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him and fled.

16 **Motet:** My beloved soul I handed over to the hands of the wicked and my heritage was made as a lion in the wood: my adversary spoke out against me, saying:

Congregamini, et properate ad devorandum illum: et posuerunt me in deserto solitudinis, et luxit super me omnis terra, quia non est inventus qui me agnosceret, et faceret bene.

**17 Evangelista:** At illi tenentes Iesum duxerunt ad Caiaphan principem sacerdotum ubi scribae et seniores convenerant. Petrus autem sequebatur eum a longe usque in atrium principis sacerdotum. Et ingressus intro sedebat cum ministris ut videret finem. Principes autem sacerdotum et omne concilium quaerebant falsum testimonium contra Iesum ut eum morti traderent: et non invenerunt cum multi falsi testes accessissent. Novissime autem venerunt duo falsi testes et dixerunt:

**18 Falsi testes (chorus):** Hic dixit possum destruere templum Dei et post triduum aedificare illud.  
**Evangelista:** Et surgens princeps sacerdotum ait illi:

**19 Princeps sacerdotum (chorus):** Nihil respondes ad ea quae isti adversum te testificantur?  
**Evangelista:** Iesus autem tacebat et princeps sacerdotum ait illi:

**20 Princeps sacerdotum (chorus):** Adiuro te per Deum vivum ut dicas nobis si tu es Christus Filius Dei.  
**Evangelista:** Dicit illi Iesus:  
**Iesus:** Tu dixisti verumtamen dico vobis amodo videbitis Filium hominis sedentem a dextris virtutis et venientem in nubibus caeli.  
**Evangelista:** Tunc princeps sacerdotum scidit vestimenta sua dicens:

**21 Princeps sacerdotum (chorus):** Blasphemavit quid adhuc egemus testibus? Ecce nunc audistis blasphemiam quid vobis videtur?  
**Evangelista:** At illi respondentes dixerunt:

**22 Princeps sacerdotum (chorus):** Reus est mortis.  
**Evangelista:** Tunc expuerunt in faciem eius et colaphis eum ceciderunt, alii autem palmas in faciem ei dederunt dicentes:

let us come together and hasten to devour him: and they put me in the desert of solitude and the whole earth mourned for me, because none was found to acknowledge me and treat me well.

**17 Evangelist:** And taking Jesus they brought him to Caiaphas, the chief priest, where the scribes and elders gathered together. But Peter followed him afar off into the hall of the chief priest. And he went in and sat with the servants, to see what would happen. But the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus that they might have him put to death: and though many false witnesses came, they found none. But in the end there came two false witnesses and said:

**18 False Witnesses (Chorus):** He said I can destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it again.  
**Evangelist:** And rising, the chief priest said to him:

**19 Chief Priest (Chorus):** Do you answer nothing to what these men witness against you?  
**Evangelist:** But Jesus was silent and the chief priest said to him:

**20 Chief Priest (Chorus):** I adjure you by the living God that you tell us if you are Christ, the Son of God.  
**Evangelist:** Jesus said to him:  
**Jesus:** You have said it but I say to you later you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God and coming in the clouds of heaven.  
**Evangelist:** Then the chief priest rent his garments, saying:

**21 Chief Priest (Chorus):** He has blasphemed, what further testimony do we need? Lo, you have now heard his blasphemy, what does it seem to you?  
**Evangelist:** And they, answering, said:

**22 Chief Priest (Chorus):** He is guilty of death.  
**Evangelist:** Then they spat in his face and struck him with blows, but others with their hands to his face, saying:

**23 Princeps sacerdotum (chorus):** Prophetiza nobis Christe quis est qui te percussit?  
**Evangelista:** Petrus vero sedebat foris in atrio. Et accessit ad eum una ancilla dicens:

**24 Ancilla (chorus):** Et tu cum Iesu Galilaeo eras.

**Evangelista:** At ille negavit coram omnibus dicens:

**25 Petrus (chorus):** Nescio quid dicis.  
**Evangelista:** Exeunte autem illo ianuam vidit eum alia et ait his qui erant ibi:

**26 Alia ancilla (chorus):** Et hic erat cum Iesu Nazareno.

**Evangelista:** Et iterum negavit cum iuramento quia non novi hominem. Et post pusillum accesserunt qui stabant et dixerunt Petro:

**27 Alia (chorus):** Vere et tu ex illis es nam et loquella tua manifestum te facit.  
**Evangelista:** Tunc coepit detestari et iurare quia non novisset hominem. Et continuo gallus cantavit. Et recordatus est Petrus verbi Iesu quod dixerat, priusquam gallus cantet ter me negabis. Et egressus foras ploravit amare.

**28 Madrigal** (text by Luigi Tansillo (1510–1568)):  
Tre volte aveva a l'importuna, audace  
ancella, al servo ed a la turba rea  
detto e giurato che già mai seguace  
non fu del suo Signor, né 'l conoscea.  
E 'l gallo publicatol contumace  
il di chiamato in testimon v'avea,  
quando, del suo gran fallo a pena avvisto,  
s'incontrar gli occhi suoi con quei di Cristo.

### Dies Parrionis Domini

**29 Evangelista:** Mane autem facta consilium inierunt omnes principes sacerdotum et seniores populi adversus Iesum ut eum morti traderent. Et vinctum adduxerunt eum et tradiderunt Pontio Pilato praesidi. Tunc videns Iudas qui eum

**23 Chief Priest (Chorus):** Prophecy to us, Christ, who is it that struck you?  
**Evangelist:** But Peter sat outside in the palace. And there came to him a serving girl, saying:

**24 Serving Girl (Chorus):** And you were with Jesus, the Galilean.  
**Evangelist:** But he denied it before them all, saying:

**25 Peter (Chorus):** I know not what you mean.  
**Evangelist:** But going out into the doorway another girl saw him and said to those who were there:

**26 Other Girl (Chorus):** And this man was with Jesus, the Nazarene.  
**Evangelist:** And he denied it again with an oath, saying I know the man not. And after a little while, those who were standing there came to Peter and said:

**27 Other Girl (Chorus):** Truly you are one of them, for your speech makes it clear.  
**Evangelist:** Then he began to curse and swear that he did not know the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, before the cock crows you will deny me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly.

**28 Madrigal:**  
Three times had he sworn, to the importunate  
and bold girl, to the servant and the guilty crowd,  
that he had never been a follower  
of his Lord, and he did not know him.  
The stubborn cock announced the day,  
summoning to bear witness.  
When he understood his great lapse  
his eyes met those of Christ.

### Good Friday

**29 Evangelist:** But in the morning all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus that they should put him to death. And they took him, bound, before Pontius Pilate, the governor. Then Judas, who betrayed

tradidit quod damnatus esset paenitentia ductus rettulit triginta argenteos principibus sacerdotum et senioribus dicens:  
**Judas (chorus):** Peccavi tradens sanguinem iustum.  
**Evangelista:** At illi dixerunt:

**30 Principibus sacerdotum (chorus):** Quid ad nos tu videris?

**Evangelista:** Et proiectis argenteis in templo recessit: Et abiens laqueo se suspendit. Principes autem sacerdotum, acceptis argenteis dixerunt:

**31 Principibus sacerdotum (chorus):** Non licet mittere eos in corbanam quia pretium sanguinis est.

**Evangelista:** Consilio autem inito emerunt ex illis agrum figuli in sepulturam peregrinorum. Propter hoc vocatus est ager ille Acheldemach, ager sanguinis usque in hodiernum diem. Tunc impletum est quod dictum est per Hieremiam prophetam dicentem: Et acceperunt triginta argenteos pretium adpretiati quem adpretiaverunt a filiis Israel: et dederunt eos in agrum figuli sicut constituit mihi Dominus. Iesus autem stetit ante praesidem et interrogavit eum praeses dicens:

**32 Pilatus (chorus):** Tu es rex Iudaeorum?

**Evangelista:** Dicit ille:

**Iesus:** Tu dicis.

**Evangelista:** Et cum accusaretur a principibus sacerdotum et senioribus nihil respondit. Tunc dicit illi Pilatus:

**33 Pilatus (chorus):** Non audis quanta adversum te dicant testimonia?

**Evangelista:** Et non respondit ei ad ullum verbum ita ut miraretur praeses vehementer. Per diem autem sollemnem consueverat praeses dimittere populo unum vincitum quem voluissent. Habebat autem tunc vincitum insignem qui dicebatur Barabbas. Congregatis ergo illis dixit Pilatus:

**34 Pilatus (chorus):** Quem vultis dimittam vobis Barabban an Iesum qui dicitur Christus?

**Evangelista:** Sciebat enim quod per invidiam tradidissent eum. Sedente autem illo pro tribunali, misit ad illum uxor eius dicens:

him, seeing him condemned, repented and took the thirty silver pieces to the chief priests and elders, saying:  
**Judas (Chorus):** I have sinned, betraying innocent blood.  
**Evangelist:** But they said:

**30 Chief Priests (Chorus):** What is that to us?

**Evangelist:** And he threw down the silver pieces in the Temple and went out: and taking a rope he hanged himself. But the chief priests took up the money and said:

**31 Chief Priests (Chorus):** It is not lawful to put the money into the treasury, for it is the price of blood.

**Evangelist:** But they took counsel together and with the money bought the potter's field for the burial of strangers. For this reason the field is called Acheldemach, the field of blood, to this very day. Then there was fulfilled the words spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: And they took thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one costed, costed by the children of Israel and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord so laid down for me. But Jesus stood before the governor and the governor questioned him, saying:

**32 Pilate (Chorus):** Are you the King of the Jews?

**Evangelist:** He said:

**Jesus:** You say it.

**Evangelist:** And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders he said nothing. Then Pilate said to him:

**33 Pilate (Chorus):** Do you not hear the testimony they give against you?

**Evangelist:** And he replied not a word so that the governor was greatly amazed. But on that festival day it was the custom for the governor to release to the people a prisoner that they wanted. But he had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas. To the people gathered together Pilate said:

**34 Pilate (Chorus):** Whom do you want me to release to you, Barabbas or Jesus that is called Christ?

**Evangelist:** For he knew that they had handed him out of malice. But as he sat before the judgement seat, his wife sent to him, saying:

**35 Uxor Pilati (chorus):** Nihil tibi et iusto illi multa enim passa sum hodie per visum propter eum.

**Evangelista:** Princeps autem sacerdotum et seniores persuaserunt populis ut peterent Barabban, Iesum vero perderent. Respondens autem praeses ait illis:

**36 Pilatus (chorus):** Quem vultis vobis de duobus dimitti?

**Evangelista:** At illi dixerunt:

**37 Populus (chorus):** Barabban!

**Evangelista:** Dicit illis Pilatus:

**38 Pilatus (chorus):** Quid igitur faciam de Iesu qui dicitur Christus?

**Evangelista:** Dicunt omnes:

**39 Populus (chorus):** Crucifigatur!

**Evangelista:** Ait illis praeses:

**40 Pilatus (chorus):** Quid enim mali fecit?

**Evangelista:** At illi magis clamabant dicentes:

**41 Populus (chorus):** Crucifigatur!

**Evangelista:** Videns autem Pilatus quia nihil proficeret sed magis tumultus fieret, accepta aqua lavit manus coram populo dicens:

**42 Pilatus (chorus):** Innocens ego sum a sanguine iusti huius vos videritis.

**Evangelista:** Et respondens universus populus dixit:

**43 Populus (chorus):** Sanguis eius super nos et super filios nostros.

**Evangelista:** Tunc dimisit illis Barabban. Iesum autem flagellatum tradidit eis ut crucifigeretur. Tunc milites praesidis suscipientes Iesum in praetorio congregaverunt ad eum universam cohortem. Et exuentes eum, clamydem coccineam circumdederunt ei. Et plectentes coronam de spinis posuerunt super caput eius et harundinem in dextera eius et genu flexo ante eum includebant dicentes:

**35 Pilate's Wife (Chorus):** Have nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.

**Evangelist:** But the chief priest and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas but let Jesus perish. But the governor replying said to them:

**36 Pilate (Chorus):** Which of the two do you want released?

**Evangelist:** But they said:

**37 People (Chorus):** Barabbas!

**Evangelist:** Pilate said to them:

**38 Pilate (Chorus):** What then shall I do with Jesus, that is called Christ?

**Evangelist:** They said:

**39 People (Chorus):** Let him be crucified!

**Evangelist:** But the governor said to them:

**40 Pilate (Chorus):** What evil has he done?

**Evangelist:** But they cried out all the more, saying:

**41 People (Chorus):** Let him be crucified!

**Evangelist:** But seeing that it was no use and that a greater tumult would break out, Pilate took water and washed his hands before the people, saying:

**42 Pilate (Chorus):** I am innocent of the blood of this just man; you will see to it.

**Evangelist:** And the whole people answered and said:

**43 People (Chorus):** His blood be upon us and on our descendants.

**Evangelist:** Then he released Barabbas to them. But he handed over Jesus to be scourged and crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the palace and gathered together the whole company. And stripping him, they put on him a scarlet robe. And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it on him and a reed in his right hand and they knelt before him in mockery, saying:

**44 Milites (chorus):** Ave rex Iudaeorum!

**Evangelista:** Et expuentes in eum acceperunt harundinem et percutiebant caput eius. Et postquam illuserunt ei, exuerunt eum clamydem, et induerunt eum vestimentis eius, et duxerunt eum ut crucifigerent. Exeuntes autem, invenerunt hominem Cyrenaeum nomine Simonem: Hunc angariaverunt, ut tolleret crucem eius. Et venerunt in locum qui dicitur Golgotha quod est Calvariae locus. Et dederunt ei vinum bibere cum felle mixtum. Et cum gustasset noluit bibere. Postquam autem crucifixerunt eum, dividerunt vestimenta eius, sortem mittentes: Ut impleretur quod dictum est per Prophetam dicentem: Dividerunt sibi vestimenta mea, et super vestem meam miserunt sortem. Et sedentes servabant eum. Et inposuerunt super caput eius causam ipsius scriptam: Hic est Iesus rex Iudaeorum. Tunc crucifixi sunt cum eo duo latrones: unus a dextris et unus a sinistris. Praeterentes autem blasphemabant eum moventes capita sua et dicentes:

**45 Latrones (chorus):** Vah, qui destruit templum et in triduo illud reaedificat salva te ipsum si Filius Dei es descende de cruce.

**Evangelista:** Similiter et principes sacerdotum inludentes cum scribis et senioribus dicebant:

**46 Sacerdotum (chorus):** Alios salvos fecit se ipsum non potest salvum facere: si rex Israel est descendat nunc de cruce et credemus ei confidit in Deo liberet nunc eum si vult dixit enim: quia Dei Filius sum.

**Evangelista:** Id ipsum autem et latrones qui fixi erant cum eo inproperabant ei. A sexta autem hora tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram usque ad horam nonam. Et circa horam nonam clamavit Iesus voce magna dicens:

**Iesus:** Heli Heli lema sabachthani?

**Evangelista:** Hoc est:

**Iesus:** Deus meus Deus meus ut quid dereliquisti me?

**Evangelista:** Quidam autem illic stantes et audientes dicebant:

**47 Quidam alii (chorus):** Heliam vocat iste.

**Evangelista:** Et continuo currens unus ex eis acceptam

**48 Soldiers (Chorus):** Hail, King of the Jews!

**Evangelist:** And spitting on him, they took the reed and struck his head. And after they had mocked him they stripped him of his robe and put on his own clothes, and led him out to be crucified. Going out they found a man called Simon of Cyrene and forced him to carry the cross. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, the place of the skull. And they gave him wine to drink, mixed with gall. And when he had tasted it, he would not drink. But after they crucified him they shared out his clothes, casting lots, so that it might be fulfilled that which is said through the prophet, saying: They shared out my clothes, and over my clothing they cast lots.

And sitting, they watched over him. And they put over his head the reason for his death: This is Jesus, King of the Jews. Then they crucified with him two thieves, one on his right, one on his left. But those passing by blasphemed him, nodding their heads and saying:

**49 Thieves (Chorus):** Fie, you that destroy the Temple in three days and build it up again in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

**Evangelist:** In the same way the chief priests with the scribes and elders, mocking him, said:

**50 Priests (Chorus):** He saved others but he cannot save himself: if he is the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusted in God, let him free him now, if he will, for he said I am the Son of God.

**Evangelist:** For the thieves who were crucified with him made the same charge. But at the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice:

**Jesus:** Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani?

**Evangelist:** That is:

**Jesus:** My God, my God, why have you deserted me?

**Evangelist:** But some of those standing there, hearing him, said:

**51 Bystanders (Chorus):** He is calling on Elias.

**Evangelist:** And at once one of them ran and filled a

spongiam implevit aceto et imposuit arundini, et dabat ei bibere. Cetero vero dicebant:

**52 Quidam alii (chorus):** Sine videamus an veniat Helias liberans eum.

**Evangelista:** Iesus autem iterum clamans voce magna emisit spiritum.

**53 Motet:** Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

**54 Evangelista:** Et ecce velum templi scissum est in duas partes a summo usque deorsum. Et terra mota est et petrae scissae sunt. Et monumenta aperta sunt et multa corpora sanctorum qui dormierant surrexerunt. Et exeuntes de monumentis post resurrectionem eius venerunt in sanctam civitatem et apparuerunt multis. Centurio autem et qui cum eo erant, custodientes Iesum, viso terraemotu et his quae fiebant, timuerunt valde dicentes:

**55 Milites (chorus):** Vere Dei Filius erat iste.

**Evangelista:** Erant autem ibi mulieres multae a longe quae secutae erant Iesum a Galilaea ministrantes ei. Inter quas erat Maria Magdalene et Maria Iacobi et Ioseph mater et mater filiorum Zebedaei.

**56 Motet:** Mors tua, mors Christi, fraus terrae, gloria coeli, et dolor infernisunt meditanda tibi. Vive diu, sed vive Deo, nam vivere mundo mortis opus. Viva est vivere vita Deo. Quicquid erit tandem mea spes est unica Christus, huic vivo, huic moriar, caetera curo nihil. Quid valet hic mundus? Quid gloria? Quidve triumphus? Post miserum funus, pulvis et umbra sumus.

**57 Evangelista:** Cum autem sero factum esset venit quidam homo dives ab Arimathea nomine Ioseph qui et ipse discipulus erat Iesu. Hic accessit ad Pilatum et petiit corpus Iesu. Tunc Pilatus iussit reddi corpus. Et accepto corpore, Ioseph involvit illud sindone munda. Et posuit illud in monumento suo novo quod exciderat in petra. Et advolvit saxum magnum ad ostium monumenti et abiit.

sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed and gave him to drink. But the rest said:

**58 Other Bystanders (Chorus):** Let us see if Elias come to save him.

**Evangelist:** But Jesus, crying out in a loud voice, gave up the ghost.

**59 Motet:** Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

**60 Evangelist:** And lo, the veil of the Temple was rent in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook and the rocks broken. And graves were opened and many bodies of the saints who slept were raised. And going from their graves after rising they went into the holy city and appeared to many. But a centurion who was with those guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what happened and was very afraid, saying:

**61 Soldier (Chorus):** Truly he was the Son of God.

**Evangelist:** But there there many women, far off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

**62 Motet:** Your death, the death of Christ, deceit of the earth, glory of heaven and grief are to be held in mind. Live long, but live in God, for to live in the world is the work of death. True life is life with God. But whatever shall be, my one hope is Christ, to live with him, die with him I care nothing for other things. What is this world worth? What glory? What triumph? After our wretched death we are dust and shadow.

**63 Evangelist:** But when it was evening there came a certain rich man from Arimathea, by name Joseph, who was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and sought the body of Jesus. Pilate agreed and ordered the body to be given him. And Joseph, when he had taken the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new monument that he had cut out of the rock. And he rolled a great stone over the

Erat autem ibi Maria Magdalene, et altera Maria, sedentes contra sepulchrum. Altera autem die, quae est post Parasceven convenerunt principes sacerdotum et Pharisaei ad Pilatum, dicentes: Domine, recordati sumus quia seductor ille dixit adhuc vivens: Post tres dies resurgam. lube ergo custodiri sepulchrum usque in diem tertium: Ne forte veniant discipuli eius, et furentur eum et dicant plebi: Surrexit a mortuis: Et erit novissimus error peior priore. Ait illis Pilatus: Habetis custodiam, ite custodite sicut scitis. Illi autem abeuntes, munierunt sepulchrum. signantes lapidem cum custodibus.

#### FINIS PASSIONIS

☞ **Motet:** Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

entrance to the monument and went away, But there was there Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, sitting by the sepulchre. The next day after the Passover, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Lord, we recall the deceiver said, while he was alive: After three days I shall rise again. Therefore command that the sepulchre be guarded up to three days, in case his disciples come and steal his body and tell the people he has risen from the dead: that will be a greater error than before. But Pilate said to them: You have a guard. Go and see to it as you can. But they, going away, strengthened the sepulchre, sealing the stone and setting guards.

#### END OF PASSION

☞ **Motet:** Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

*English version edited by Keith Anderson*



Photo: Dan Møller

**Torsten Nielsen (Evangelist)**



Photo: Dan Møller

**Lauritz Jakob Thomsen (Jesus)**

#### Bo Holten

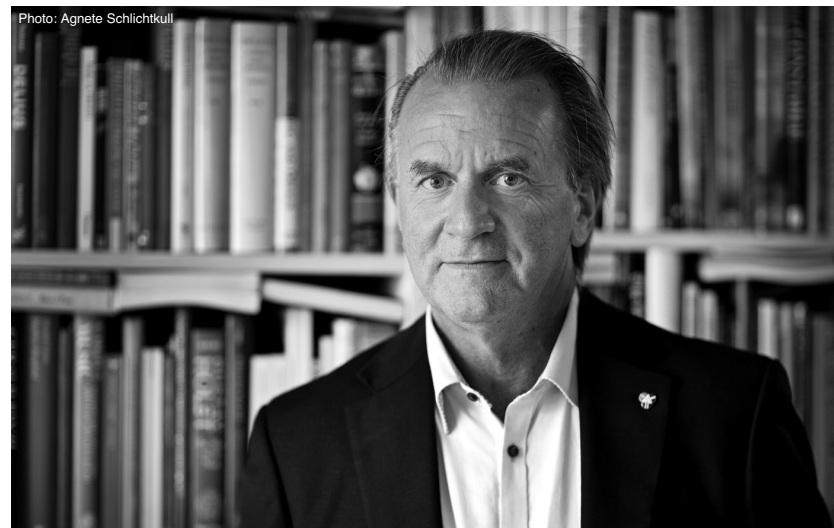


Photo: Agnete Schlichtkull

Upon completing his studies in musicology at the University of Copenhagen and bassoon at the Royal Academy of Music, Bo Holten established his reputation as a conductor of early music vocal groups, first with Ars Nova which he formed in 1979 and later with Musica Ficta formed in 1996. He has an international reputation as a leading specialist in early music, especially in vocal polyphony. Musica Ficta have proved to be a dominant force in Danish musical life and one of the finest vocal ensembles in Europe having given over 250 concerts and theatre performances, and released multiple recordings. Bo Holten has been a guest conductor with a wide range of ensembles and choirs in Scandinavia and abroad, and in 2007 he was appointed chief conductor of the Flemish Radio Choir. He has composed over 100 works including symphonies, solo concertos, works for chorus and orchestra, operas, and musicals. He has also written works for chamber ensembles, song cycles, and pieces for percussion ensemble, as well as scores for films and television series. Among his most widely performed works are the 30 a cappella works which span his composing career. In autumn 2014, Bo Holten staged his second Gesualdo opera *Gesualdo – Shadows*, and in 2018 he completed his grand opera on Martin Luther, *Schlagt sie tot!*



## Musica Ficta



Musica Ficta, based in Copenhagen, is a professional vocal ensemble, founded in 1996 by the composer and conductor Bo Holten. With Musica Ficta, Holten has realised his vision of creating a highly flexible ensemble, where the classical Oxbridge early music ideal is combined with the warmth of the Scandinavian choral sound. The ensemble works exclusively on thematic projects, enhancing the musical experience by letting historical, literary and philosophical perspectives play an active role in programming, as well as in the spoken introductions during the concerts. This has resulted in a series of musical events where location, texts, illustrations and narration have combined to give the audience a deeper understanding and experience of an epoch, an artist/composer or a musical genre. Recently, Musica Ficta and Bo Holten have dedicated themselves to the genre of Italian madrigals from the late Renaissance and especially to the music of the Italian composer Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613). The ensemble launched a three-year project on embellishments and improvisation in the genre of madrigals, exploring the possibilities of this music. The ensemble is also specialised in vocal music of the most important Danish composers from the Romantic era and beyond. Danish song is the heartbeat of Danish culture and Musica Ficta represents this tradition with the deepest dedication and skill. [www.ficta.dk/en](http://www.ficta.dk/en)

Orlandus Lassus was one of the greatest and most celebrated musicians of his day, and a teacher whose influence extended into the Baroque period and beyond. Although the *St Matthew Passion* is almost always associated with J.S. Bach's towering masterpiece, earlier settings developed from plainchant into polyphony throughout the 16th century. Lassus composed four Passions of which this is the most elaborate. His sublimely interwoven polyphonic settings are here placed alongside a traditional Roman Catholic Passion chant through which the roles of Jesus and the Evangelist unfold in a seemingly timeless meditation. Certain key moments in the otherwise austere Passion story are further illuminated in this recording by the inclusion of motets and a spiritual madrigal.

COPENHAGEN VOCAL ENSEMBLE  
**MUSICA  
FICTA**

**Orlandus  
LASSUS**  
(1532–1594)

## **St Matthew Passion**

**Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum Mattheum**

**1–28 Maundy Thursday 50:40 29–54 Good Friday 37:35**

**Musica Ficta**

**Torsten Nielsen, Baritone (Evangelist)**

**Lauritz Jakob Thomsen, Baritone (Jesus)**

**Ann-Christin Wesser Ingels, Soprano**

**Louise Odgaard, Soprano • Eva Wöllinger-Bengtsson, Alto**

**Josef Hamber, Tenor • Tobias Aabye Dam, Tenor**

**Rasmus Kure Thomsen, Bass-baritone**

**Bo Holten, Conductor**

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

Recorded: 6, 9 & 10 April 2015 in Isaiah Church, Copenhagen, Denmark

Producer and engineer: Viggo Mangor • Editors: Viggo Mangor and Bo Holten

Booklet notes: Bo Holten • Cover: *Cristo in Pietà tra la Vergine e san Giovanni evangelista*, 1455,  
by Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430–1516) (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, Italy)