

Stabat Mater

Jesu meine Freude
Johann Sebastian Bach



Lagrimae di San Pietro 1–7
Orlande de Lassus



Stabat Mater
Domenico Scarlatti

Paragon Singers
Steven Hollas *organ*
Keith Bennett *conductor*

Welcome to this evening's concert. As usual, we will sing the concert without an interval, but with two short breaks for the choir to sit down and for you to stretch your legs. Wine will be available in the church hall after the concert.

Jesu meine Freude is the third, and longest, of the six (or possibly seven) funeral motets **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685–1750) composed early in his Leipzig career. It was written for the funeral, on 18 July 1723, of Johanna Maria Käsin, the city postmaster's wife – quite why she merited such an elaborate memorial is not known. The motet is based on a mid-17th century chorale, which has a text by Johann Franck and melody by Johann Crüger. The six verses of the chorale alternate with settings of lines from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 1–2 and 9–11. Despite the prevalent minor key of the music, the text is positive in tone: the chorale reflects firm belief in the comforting presence of Christ, while St Paul's words speak of Christ freeing man from sin and death. At the same time the text's vivid images of heaven and hell present Bach with a wonderful opportunity for vivid description, of which he takes full advantage.

As with all of Bach's greatest works, the music exhibits a tight and complex musical structure, melding ritornello form (the regularly recurring chorale) with a musical palindrome. The motet is framed by two identical plain harmonisations of the chorale (nos. 1 and 11), while the other odd-numbered movements treat the chorale more freely. Numbers 3 and 7 have richer textures, with wonderful descriptive writing evoking the terrors of hell and life's misery, respectively; no. 9 treats the chorale as a chorale prelude, with a quasi-pizzicato bass in the tenor part (the lowest voice here), a gentle instrumental dialogue in the sopranos and the chorale in the altos; no. 5 is a free and extended paraphrase, in which Bach has provided rare dynamic markings.

The scriptural movements cement the palindromic effect. Numbers 2 and 10 are very closely related, the latter being a musical parody of the former. Numbers 4 and 8 are for the three highest and three lowest voices respectively, the symmetry being enhanced by thematic cross-reference. The centrepiece of the work is no. 6, a double fugue in G major, the only movement in the relative major key.



In a century replete with fine composers, **Orlande de Lassus** (1530/2–94) was undoubtedly one of the greatest, and certainly the most prolific and versatile. He wrote some 530 motets, about 60 masses, 101 Magnificats as well as a vast amount of other music, both sacred and secular, and published considerably more than any other composer of his time.

For much of his life he was *maestro di cappella* at the court of Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria, in Munich. Albrecht was consciously aping the major courts of Italy and, in doing so, created what was for some time the largest musical establishment in Europe. Unfortunately, this all came crashing down when he died in 1579, leaving his successor Wilhelm V with massive debts. Large cuts in the musical establishment followed, accompanied by markedly increased Counter-Reformation fervour.

The resulting atmosphere, coupled with Lassus' increasing melancholia, did however inspire him to write one of his greatest works, the *Lagrima di San Pietro (The Tears of St Peter)*, a cycle of 20 madrigals plus a concluding motet. It was his last work, completed only three weeks before his death. In it, Lassus sets 20 poems by the arch-poet of the mannerist school, Luigi Tansillo (1510–88), depicting the grief experienced by St Peter after his denial of Christ. Lassus sets the music for seven voices, representing the seven sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the cycle is structured as three sets of seven works; this evening we sing the first seven and hope to return in two future concerts to complete the cycle.

Musically the cycle uses the concise and almost austere language of Lassus' later years but there are also glimpses of an earlier, more exuberant manner and, throughout, a dramatic and descriptive approach to the setting of the text. Though the prevailing style is contrapuntal (with homophony marking moments of particular drama or poignancy), this is short-breathed, madrigalian counterpoint, with every phrase of text being given its own individual treatment. Within the overall *gravitas* there are innumerable pictorial gestures, such as the use of different blocks of voices (high for the 'young girl' and low for the 'wretched man' in no. 5, low voices for the cockcrow in no. 3) and motivic gestures (rapid figuration for 'arrows' of no. 2, the 'hundreds of years' in no. 5 and the 'quick tongues' of nos. 6 & 7). This highlighting of textual detail, however, serves only to heighten the drama of Lassus' deeply poignant swansong.

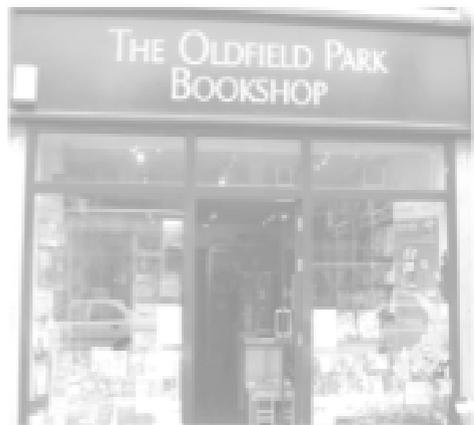


Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) is best known today as a composer of keyboard sonatas, but his early career was spent as a church musician and opera composer. Between 1705 and 1709 he was in Venice, following which he held several appointments in Rome, notably as *maestro di cappella* of the Cappella Giulia at St Peter's (1714–19), before taking up a similar position at the royal court in Lisbon (1719–29). Thereafter, he moved to the Spanish court, where he remained until his death and wrote most of his harpsichord music.

The *Stabat Mater* was probably written in Rome or Lisbon, where Scarlatti had a significant number of fine singers at his disposal. It is unique in his output, a work of astonishing complexity and maturity, quite unlike most of his surviving church music, which is mostly rather old-fashioned in style. In the *Stabat Mater* Scarlatti revels in the use of ten largely independent voices (SSSSAATTBB), creating complex webs of counterpoint, which he couples with chromatic melodies and expressive harmonies in a wonderful reflection of the text. Structurally, the work forms a series of linked short movements, the tempo, time signature and mood of which are constantly varied and reflect all manner of baroque idioms. It is quite unlike any other setting of these words, nowhere more than in its dancing figues and irresistibly exuberant final Amen.

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BACH

1. Jesu, meine Freude,
Meines Herzens Weide,
Jesu, meine Zier,
Ach wie lang, ach lange
Ist dem Herzen bange
Und verlangt nach dir!
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,
Außer dir soll mir auf Erden
Nichts sonst Liebers werden.

Jesus, my joy,
pasture of my heart,
Jesus, my adornment,
ah how long, how long
is my heart filled with anxiety
and longing for you!
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,
apart from you on the earth
there is nothing dearer to me.

2. Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an denen,
die in Christo Jesu sind, die nicht nach dem
Fleische wandeln, sondern nach dem Geist.

Now there is nothing damnable in those who
are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the
way of the flesh, but after the way of the Spirit.

3. Unter deinem Schirmen
Bin ich vor den Stürmen
Aller Feinde frei.
Laß den Satan wittern,
Laß den Feind erbittern,
Mir steht Jesus bei.
Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,
Ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:
Jesus will mich decken.

Beneath your protection
I am free from the attacks
of all my enemies.
Let Satan track me down,
let my enemy be exasperated –
Jesus stands by me.
Even if there is thunder and lightning,
even if sin and hell spread terror
Jesus will protect me.

4. Denn das Gesetz des Geistes, der da lebendig
machet in Christo Jesu, hat mich frei gemacht
von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes.

For the law of the spirit, which gives life in
Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law
of sin and death.

5. Trotz dem alten Drachen,
Trotz des Todes Rachen,
Trotz der Furcht darzu!
Tobe, Welt, und springe,
Ich steh hier und singe
In gar sichrer Ruh.
Gottes Macht hält mich in acht;
Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,
Ob sie noch so brummen.

I defy the old dragon,
I defy the jaws of death,
I defy fear as well!
Rage, World, and spring to attack:
I stand here and sing
in secure peace.
God's might takes care of me;
earth and abyss must fall silent,
however much they rumble on.

6. Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich, sondern
geistlich, so anders Gottes Geist in euch
wohnt. Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat,
der ist nicht sein.

You, however, are not of the flesh, but rather
of the Spirit, since the Spirit of God lives
otherwise in you. Anyone, however, who does
not have Christ's Spirit, is not His.

7. Weg mit allen Schätzen!
Du bist mein Ergötzen,
Jesu, meine Lust!
Weg ihr eitlen Ehren,
Ich mag euch nicht hören,
Bleibt mir unbewusst!
Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod
Soll mich, ob ich viel muss leiden,
Nicht von Jesu scheiden.

Away with all treasures!
You are my delight,
Jesus, my joy!
Away with empty honours,
I'm not going to listen to you,
remain unknown to me!
Misery, distress, affliction, disgrace and death,
even if I must endure much suffering,
will not separate me from Jesus.

8. So aber Christus in euch ist, so ist der Leib
zwar tot um der Sünde willen; der Geist aber
ist das Leben um der Gerechtigkeit willen.

However if Christ is in you, then the body
is dead indeed for the sake of sin; but the
spirit is life for the sake of righteousness.

9. Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
Das die Welt erlesen,
Mir gefällst du nicht.
Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,
Bleibet weit dahinten,
Kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!
Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht,
Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben,
Gute Nacht gegeben.

Good night, existence
chosen by the world,
you do not please me.
Good night, you sins,
stay far behind me.
Come no more to the light!
Good night, pride and splendour,
once and for all, sinful existence,
I bid you good night.

10. So nun der Geist des, der Jesum von den
Toten auferwecket hat, in euch wohnt, so
wird auch derselbige, der Christum von den
Toten auferwecket hat, eure sterblichen
Leiber lebendig machen, um des willen, daß
sein Geist in euch wohnt.

Therefore now since the Spirit of Him
who raised Jesus from the dead
dwells in you, that same who raised Christ
from the dead will make your mortal
bodies living, for the sake of His spirit
that dwells in you.

11. Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,
Denn mein Freudenmeister,
Jesu, tritt herein.
Denen, die Gott lieben,
Muß auch ihr Betrübten
Lauter Zucker sein.
Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,
Dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide,
Jesu, meine Freude.

Go away, mournful spirits,
for my joyful master,
Jesus, now enters in.
For those who love God
even their afflictions
become pure sweetness.
Even if here I must endure shame and disgrace,
even in suffering you remain,
Jesus, my joy.





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LASSUS

1. Il magnanimo Pietro, che giurato
Havea tra mille lance, e mille spade
Al suo caro Signor morir a lato,
Poi che s'accorse vinto da viltade,
Nel gran bisogno haver di fè mancato,
Il dolore, la vergogna, e la pietade
Del proprio fallo, e de l'altrui martiro
Di mille punte il petto gli ferio.

2. Ma gli archi che nel petto gli aventaro
Le saette più acute e più mortali,
Fur gli occhi del Signor quando il miraro;
Gli occhi fur gli archi e i sguardi fur gli strali,
Che del cor non contenti, sen passaro
Fin dentro a l'alma, e vi fer piaghe tali
Che bisognò, mentre che visse poi,
Ungerle col licor de gli occhi suoi.

When the big-hearted Peter – who had sworn
to die at his dear Lord's side, come a thousand
spears and a thousand swords –
found himself defeated by fear and deserted
by his faith at the moment of need,
his breast was pierced by a thousand wounds
of pain, shame and guilt
at his failure and the martyrdom of Christ.

But the bows which shot these sharper
and deadlier arrows into his breast
were the eyes of the Lord when they gazed on him;
the eyes were bows. and glances arrows which,
not content with piercing his heart, penetrated
to his very soul; and there gave him such wounds
that he would need to lave them until the end of
his life, with the moisture of his eyes.

3. Tre volte havev' a l'importuna audace
Ancella, al serv' et a la turba rea
Detto e giurato, che giamai seguace
Non fu del suo Signor, né'l conoscea.
Il gallo publicatol contumace
Il dì chiamato in testimon' v'havea,
Quando, del suo gran fallo a pena avvisto,
S'incontrar gli occhi suoi con quei di Christo.

4. Quale a l'incontro di quegli occhi santi
Il già caduto, Pietro rimanesse
Non sia chi narrarlo hoggi si vanti,
Ché lingua non saria ch'al ver giungesse;
Parea ch'el bon Signor, cinto di tanti
Nemici e de' suoi privo, dir volesse:
'Ecco che quel ch'io dissi egli è pur vero,
Amico disleal, discepol fiero.'

5. Giovane donna il suo bel volt' in specchio
Non vide mai di lucido cristallo,
Come in quel punto il miserabil vecchio
Ne gli occhi del Signor vid' il suo fallo;
Né tante cose udir cupid' orecchio
Potria se stesse ben senza intervallo
Intento a l'altrui dir cento anni,
Quant'ei n'udio col guardo in quel momento.

6. Così talhor benché profane cose
Siano a le sacre d'agguagliasi indegne
Scoprir mirand' altrui le voglie ascose
Suol amator, senza ch'a dir le vegne,
Chi dunque esperto sia ne l'ingegnose
Scole d'amor, a chi no'l prova, insegne
Come senza aprir bocca o scriver note
con gli occhi ancora favellar si puote.

7. Ogni occhio del Signor, lingua veloce
Parea che fuss' et ogni occhio de' suoi
Orecchia intenta ad ascoltar sua voce.
'Più fieri,' parea dir, 'son gli occhi tuoi
De l'empie man, che mi porranno in croce,
Né sento colpo alcun, che sì m'annoï,
Di tanti chel reo stuol in me ne scocca,
Quant' il colpo ch'uscìo della tua bocca.'

Three times – to the bold and cheeky maid,
the servant, and the whole criminal crowd –
he had sworn that he had never followed,
acknowledged nor known the Lord.
He had just summoned the new day as witness,
when the cock heralded the same:
scarcely had he realised his fault
when his eyes met those of Christ.

How the fallen Peter felt
as he met the gaze of those holy eyes,
no tongue can begin to say,
for there is no language to express it.
But it was as if the Lord, surrounded by enemies
and abandoned by his own, was saying:
'See, it was true what I said,
you disloyal friend, you proud disciple.'

No young girl ever saw her face reflected
in a crystal mirror so clearly as the wretched
man in that moment saw his betrayal
in the eyes of the Lord;
and no greedy ear, were it to listen
without interruption for hundreds of years,
would hear as many things
as he seemed to hear in that moment.

Although such a profane analogy
is unworthy of such sacred matters,
just so can a lover perceive the desires
of the beloved without being told.
One who is experienced in the refined
school of love can teach the novice how,
without opening one's mouth or writing words,
one can express all one will with the eyes alone.

It seemed as if each of the Lord's eyes
was a quick tongue: as if his own eyes
were ears intent on hearing their voice.
'Your eyes,' the Lord's eyes seemed to say,
'are worse than the impious hands that will drag
me to the cross, and none of the many blows
of the wicked crowd causes me as much pain
as that which your words have given me.'



SCARLATTI

Stabat Mater dolorosa
juxta Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta,
mater Unigeniti!

Quae moerebat et dolebat,
pia Mater, dum videbat
nati poenas inclyti.

Quis est homo qui non fletet,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Iesum in tormentis,
et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
moriendo desolatum,
dum emisit spiritum.

Eia, Mater, fons amoris
me sentire vim doloris
fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum
ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.

At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.

O how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother, highly blest,
of the sole-begotten One.

Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?

For the sins of His own nation,
She saw Jesus wracked with torment,
All with scourges rent:

She beheld her tender Child,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.

O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with thine accord:

Make me feel as thou hast felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ my Lord.

Holy Mother! pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Saviour crucified:

Tui Nati vulnerati,
tam dignati pro me pati,
poenas mecum divide.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
crucifixo condolere,
donec ego vixero.

Juxta Crucem tecum stare,
et me tibi sociare
in planctu desidero.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
mihi iam non sis amara,
fac me tecum plangere.

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
passionis fac consortem,
et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
fac me Cruce inebriari,
et cruore Filii.

Flammis ne urar succensus,
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die iudicii.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
da per Matrem me venire
ad palmam victoriae.

Quando corpus morietur,
fac, ut animae donetur
paradisi gloria. Amen.

Let me share with thee His pain,
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
mourning Him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live:

By the Cross with thee to stay,
there with thee to weep and pray,
is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins blest!,
Listen to my fond request:
let me share thy grief divine;

Let me, to my latest breath,
in my body bear the death
of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with His every wound,
steep my soul till it hath swooned,
in His very Blood away;

Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
in His awful Judgment Day.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
be Thy Mother my defense,
be Thy Cross my victory;

While my body here decays,
may my soul Thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee.



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paragon singers

Paragon Singers was formed in 1976. In recent years the choir has come increasingly to specialise in Renaissance, Baroque and 20th-century music and is now considered a leading chamber choir in these fields in the area. Paragon Singers performs several times a year in Bath and its environs as well as making frequent appearances elsewhere. The choir has made concert tours to Kenya, Ireland, France and Holland and, in 2012, combined forces with a choir from Berlin in performances of Striggio's 40/60-part mass in Bath and Berlin.

Keith Bennett (*conductor*)

Keith studied music at Oxford, where he was organ scholar at Brasenose College, and at Trinity College of Music. He was awarded a doctorate from Oxford in 1978 for his study of the Italian madrigalist Luca Marenzio. From 1979–2004 he was a principal lecturer at Bath Spa University, including 18 years as Course Director of the BA Music degree. As well as conducting Paragon Singers, he has performed widely as an accompanist, continuo player and singer.

Steven Hollas (*organ*)

Steven Hollas read music and history of art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He teaches piano, harpsichord and organ in Bradford-on-Avon, mainly at the Wiltshire Music Centre. He plays continuo for Bradford Baroque Band and accompanies several choirs and soloists in the area.

paragon singers

<i>sopranos</i>	Hazel Baker, Charlotte de Grey, Julia Draper, Mary Henderson, Josephine Herrlinger, Jane Hunt, Stephanie Lockhart, Abigail Reynolds
<i>altos</i>	Louise Best, Gill Clarke, Lavinia Ferguson, Margaret Graham, Adele Reynolds, Mandy Shaw
<i>tenors</i>	Rupert Bevan, James Henderson, Neil Moore, Chris Rogers, Gareth Somerset
<i>basses</i>	Phil Brotheridge, Marc Horobin, Tony Shield, Nicholas Stuart



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