



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 41, Folder 2, Oberammergau Passion Play, 1977.

# THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

**date** August 25, 1977

**to** AJC Area Directors, JCRCs, Federations, National Jewish Organizations  
**from** Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Interreligious Affairs Director

**subject** REPORT ON THE 1980 OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY

As you have undoubtedly noted in the press last week, a revised version of the Oberammergau Passion Play has been prepared for possible presentation in 1980 in that Bavarian village. The several press reports issued by the AP, UPI, Reuters, New York Times, Time Magazine, among other news sources in this country and abroad have been contradictory about its anti-Jewish content and have therefore led to some confusion.

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek to clarify the present nature of the revised Oberammergau Passion Play, and to report to you on the unique role that the American Jewish Committee has been invited to play in the current revision process.

The confusion has been manifested in the following manner:

The New York Times reported in its Aug. 16th edition a UPI dispatch headlined "Sins of Mankind Kill Christ in New Oberammergau Play." That story appears to have left the impression that the new version has been completely purged of anti-Jewish references and portrayals. It also suggests that the new version actually will be the one to be produced in 1980.

A subsequent AP dispatch in the New York Times of Aug. 19, however, bears the headline, "New Passion Play Draws Protest," and indicates that "angry townspeople sought today to block a new version of the town's world-famous Passion Play." They contend that "the new script is stilted, insincere and (contains) 'consummate anti-Semitism' worse than the original." The AP report also states that the "Oberammergau town council says it will decide later this year whether to use the revised script" or revert to the 1970 version.

What in reality is the present situation?

In mid-July, AJC's Executive Vice-President, Bertram H. Gold, received an invitation from Lufthansa German Airlines to send a delegation to preview a five-and-a-half hour presentation of the newly-revised version of the play.

After some consideration, it was decided to accept the invitation and an AJC delegation saw the play on Aug. 15 in the Oberammergau village. The AJC delegation consisted of Miles Jaffe, national chairman of the Interreligious Affairs Commission; Zachariah Shuster, our European consultant; William Trosten, director of our Resource Development Department (who reads and speaks German fluently); and myself.

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Our Interreligious Affairs Department, as you may know, has been engaged in efforts to purge the Oberammergau Passion Play (and other Passion Plays in this country, in Europe, and in Latin America) of anti-Semitic content over the past several decades. In 1970, we published a comparative content analysis entitled, Oberammergau 1960 and 1970 - A Study in Religious Anti-Semitism that received widespread attention and became a significant factor leading to the decision for the preparation of the revised text.

Following our preview of the 1980 production - which began at 4 p.m. and concluded at 11:30 p.m. (with a two-hour dinner break), our AJC delegation was invited to meet with the central personalities responsible for the writing and the production of the 1980 Oberammergau play. These included the editor of the new version, Alois Fink, who is director of the Cultural Division of the Bavarian Radio and TV network; Hans Schwaighofer, director of the 1980 production; Helmut Fischer, who played the role of Jesus in 1970; the composer of the new musical score; several Oberammergau town officials, and representatives of the West German Government, the Bavarian Tourist Ministry, and Lufthansa. (Schwaighofer played the role of Judas in the 1950 and 1960 plays. The village named him to direct the 1970 version, but he resigned after the town council overruled his attempt to reform the play.)

The "dialogue" - which the Oberammergau officials characterized as "their first serious discussion with responsible Jewish representatives" - lasted until four o'clock in the morning! During this extraordinary frank and scholarly exchange, we set forth our concerns that this pageant - as we noted in our 1970 study - has traditionally been "a vehicle of anti-Jewish prejudice and an obstacle to Christian-Jewish friendship and cooperation." We also recalled that the text used every decade over the past 100 years, based on a script written in 1850 by the local parish priest, Rev. Josef Daisenberger, was acclaimed by Adolf Hitler at the height of the Second World War in these words:

"It is vital that the Passion Play be continued at Oberammergau; for never has the menace of Jewry been so convincingly portrayed." (Secret Conversations, 1941-1944, New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1953, p. 457.) Under the Nazi Government, the Oberammergau Passion Play was classified as "a racially important cultural document," and on the occasion of the pageant's tercentennial, in 1934, a Nazified special performance represented Jesus and his disciples as Aryan heroes.

We also noted that the significance of the Passion Play as an instrument for influencing attitudes toward Jews and Judaism is to be seen in the fact that since the end of World War II, some one-and-a-half million people have come to performances; that in 1970 alone, 530,000 people came from 113 different countries to view the 102 performances.

In light of that history, we told the Oberammergau officials that we welcomed the forthright initiatives taken by Mr. Schwaighofer, Mr. Fink, and those associated with them to abandon the offensive Daisenberger script, and to replace it with a modernized version of the text written in 1750 by the Benedictine priest, the Rev. Ferdinand Rosner, even though the latter version still contains a number of problems described below.



By agreement among members of the AJC delegation, we acknowledged that the new Rosner-Fink text contains a number of positive features that are encouraging:

First, the Rosner script is written as a medieval morality play cast in meta-physical terms of the eternal conflict between the forces of good and evil, symbolized by the conflict between Lucifer, the Prince of Hell, and Jesus. In that perspective, the role of the Sanhedrin and "the Jews" tends to be less central than in earlier Passion Plays.

Second, the Rosner text opens with a group of "Protective Spirits" who address the Christian audiences with this admonition:

"Don't say the Jews over there are betraying their own; all of us have done the same often enough."

Third, the several scenes involving the Sanhedrin and the Chief Priests show a relatively large group of "Rabbis" or "Jews" who seek to understand Jesus, therefore presenting "the Jews" in a much more differentiated way than in the past plays.

At the same time, we indicated, there remain a number of problems both in the revised text and in the actual production which we urged them to face and seek to resolve. These include, briefly stated, the following:

First, despite the morality play setting, there is a real danger that the Sanhedrin and "the Jews" will be perceived as "instruments of Lucifer" and are conspiring with Satanic elements against Jesus and Christians.

Second, there are four scenes of debate within the Sanhedrin about the blasphemy of Jesus which tends to underscore a far more prominent role of "the Jews" in contributing to the death of Jesus than in fact exists in the Synoptic Gospels. Several of the Sanhedrin scenes conclude with "all the Jews" on the stage crying out in a chorus, "It is decided; he must die, lest we and our reign perish!" We urged that these scenes be reconsidered, and that these provocative chorus lines be eliminated.

Third, Pontius Pilate is presented as a weakling who is manipulated by the Sanhedrin and a howling "Jewish mob" to make the decision to crucify Jesus. That portrayal, we noted, is contrary to our historic knowledge that Pilate was cruel and sadistic, and that he alone had the authority to decide on the crucifixion.

We discussed these and related issues in a serious and constructive spirit. At the conclusion of our dialogue, the Oberammergau officials formally requested of the American Jewish Committee that

- 1) We prepare for them a line-by-line analysis of the Rosner-Fink text, providing in writing the specific recommendations for editing and emendations that we felt were necessary;
- 2) We remain available as resource to help them bring about the maximum possible improvement through the removal of anti-Jewish references and negative dramatic imagery.

more.....



The AJC delegation agreed to do so, indicating our awareness that there is no guarantee that the Rosner-Fink text will finally prevail, and our recognition that even with improvements this is still a Passion Play in which Jews can never emerge ultimately untainted.

Nevertheless, we have concluded that the Jewish interest would be better served through encouraging the use of the Rosner-Fink text and by making whatever possible contributions we can to the most positive portrayals of Jews and Judaism in the 1980 production.

MHT:RPR

77-700-63



# CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE METZ-HERTZBERG

*Professor Johannes B Metz University of Munster, Germany*

*Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg-Columbia University*

*Discuss*

*Religion and the Modern World Christian and Jewish Perspectives*

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

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TUESDAY MARCH 26 9 30 A M

Hertzberg "Judaism Christianity, and Secularism Allies or Enemies?"

TUESDAY MARCH 26 8-00 P.M

Metz "Religion and Competing Political and Ideological Values The Christian-Marxist Confrontation"

WEDNESDAY MARCH 27 9 30 A.M

Hertzberg 'Religion and Contemporary Ideologies'

WEDNESDAY MARCH 27 8 00 P M

Metz "Religion and Society in Light of a Political Theology"

THURSDAY MARCH 28 9 30 A M

Hertzberg "Religion and Community by the Light of the Jewish Tradition"

THURSDAY MARCH 28 8 00 P M

Panel Discussion by Metz and Hertzberg

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memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** November 18, 1977  
**to** Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum  
**from** William S. Trosten  
**subject** OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY

Attached is the translation of Fink's report. I have translated only those portions in which we would be interested. The rest of the report deals mainly with logistical details -- hours of rehearsal, lighting, etc. I have taken the liberty of sending Miles a copy.

WST/BJB  
att.



REPORT OF THE TRIAL PERFORMANCE

OF THE

PASSION PLAY OF FATHER FERDINAND ROSNER

(1709 - 1778)

ADAPTED FOR OBERAMMERGAU BY

DR. ALOIS FINK

MUSIC BY FRANZ XAVER RICHTER

(1709 - 1789)

ARRANGED AND ADAPTED BY WOLFGANG FORTNER

WITH ASSISTANCE OF UWE LOHRMANN

SCENERY AND STAGE DESIGN BY HANS SCHWAIGHOFER

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - HERMANN HANDERER

CHORAL REHEARSAL DIRECTOR - TOSSO TROLL

GENERAL BASS (GENERAL CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS) - UWE LOHRMANN

PLAYERS, CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA FROM THE COMMUNITY OF  
OBERAMMERGAU. SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUMENTALISTS FROM THE  
RURAL DISTRICTS OF GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN AND WEILHEIM  
AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE AUGSBURGER PHILHARMONIC, THE  
MUSIC CORPS OF THE FIRST MOUNTAIN DIVISION AND THE  
TOELZER BOY'S CHOIR.

The intention to undertake a test performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play written by Father Ferdinand Rosner in 1750 has been under discussion for ten years. Such a performance would serve a dual purpose:

- 1.) To familiarize people with the only available alternative to the Daisenberger Text which has been used since 1860.
- 2.) On a practical level -- i.e. under present day conditions in Oberammergau to see whether a performance of this older text is feasible.

These trial performances have finally taken place. The following report is to inform the citizens of Oberammergau of the most important reactions to these performances and to be helpful to them in making a decision about the future of the Oberammergau Passion Play tradition.

From 1960 -- at the very latest -- the call for reform could no longer be ignored. In the foreground of the call for reform was world-wide publicity objecting to the basically anti-Semitic character of the play. This as well as the decision of Vatican Council II provided theological and historical arguments for revision.

The experiences of the last half century as well as the state of religion in today's world make it impossible to write or compose a new play which could be performed by the population of Oberammergau and be in keeping with the tradition of the town. It is a stroke of good fortune that a text exists in fact older than Daisenberger's which lends itself to the correction of the objections and weaknesses of the old text, has greater credibility, a higher quality of speech and, above all, in its theological and historical character corresponds more closely to the sensitivities of the present time. The hesitancy to take the unquestionable risk that a return to the hundred year older Rosner Text represents is understandable. What is not understandable is the attempt to prevent a testing of this one available alternative.

Now, the trial performances of the Rosner Passion Play are behind us. They were important and instructive not only for the participants but most importantly for the Town of Oberammergau. Quite apart from theoretical pro and con discussions, they provided practical experience and perceptions that are important for the preparation of a positive theatrical script. Before moving to the actual detailed report, here are a number of general observations.



The preparation time was much too short for the rehearsal of a completely new and demanding text with completely new music, new costuming and to a great extent with new and still inexperienced players. This situation created conditions that can be corrected by continued and undisturbed work. The critics -- with one exception -- were positive and concurred on all significant points with the views of the initiators. The report will go into the details later.

It is important to note that a group of Jewish experts from America made a special trip to view the play. The group was led by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, a world-famous theologian and authority of Judentum (Jews and Judaism) and expressed basic understanding of the new text.

The shortcomings of the new text were apparent in the first trial performance but were deliberately not corrected. Without going into specific details here, suffice it to say that the play (particularly the second half) is 45 minutes too long. In the first part, the scenes between Pilatus and the Sanhedrin must be tightened up. But, above all, the action before the removal of Jesus from the cross. The character of Christ must be made stronger in the first part right from the beginning. It is to be considered whether in the second half of the play the choral appearances can be dealt with differently. Finally, the musical passages should be

(4)

shortened -- made more accurate (they were not right for example in the scenes of The Last Supper). The change of scenes must be tightened up. The solo singers (appearance of angels is superfluous). In conclusion, it can be said that the general impression of the staging in no way represents a final, well-rehearsed production of the Rosner Text. The trial did provide, however, under unusual conditions and difficulties, the basis for a new production. It should be mentioned in this summary of critical opinion (a detailed document will follow) that Catholic and Evangelical theologians are in basic agreement with the text.

(8)

Suggestions for improvement and further adaptation -- some example: The appearance of the angels on the Mount of Olives during the resurrection scene must be tightened up. The text should be spoken. The High Council scenes and the negotiating scenes before Pilate -- particularly the expressions of opinion by individual High Council members are much too broadly laid out and must be tightened up. The mob scenes -- which were usual in the Daisenberger Text must be laid out differently in the Rosner version. The groups of people who are undecided or indifferent and those who will not permit themselves to be led by the mass must be clearly worked out and set apart from the mob who cry "To the cross with Him." These different groups should be clearly visible in the Rosner Text.



## Jewish leaders scrutinize revision of Passion Play

NEW YORK (JTA) — An American inter-religious expert has expressed "cautious optimism" over prospects that a revised version of the Passion Play will be used in Oberammergau in 1980, to replace the version hailed by Hitler for "convincingly" portraying "the menace of Jewry."

The 1850 text lauded by Hitler was written by a local parish priest, Father Josef Daisenberger. Since World War II, it is estimated that about 15 million people have seen the Daisenberger version in Oberammergau, where it is presented every 10 years.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, American Jewish Committee inter-religious affairs director, was one of five AJCommittee officials who went to Oberammergau in April in response to an invitation from Lufthansa Airlines. The delegation members were asked to preview a five-and-a-half hour revision, a modernized version of the text written in 1750, by the Benedictine priest, Rev Ferdinand Rösner. Tanenbaum told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the Rösner revision still contained a number of problems which were discussed at a meeting after the preview.

The delegation members conferred at the April meeting with central personalities connected with the preparation of the 1980 Passion Play. They included the editor of the new version, Alois Fink, director of the cultural division of Bavarian Radio, Hans Schweighofer, director of the 1980 production, Helmut Fischer, who played the role of Jesus in 1970, several Oberammergau town officials and representatives of the West German government, the Bavarian Tourist Ministry, and Lufthansa.

Tanenbaum said the discussion, which lasted more than four hours and which the Oberammergau officials called "their first serious discussion with responsible Jewish representatives," ended with two requests by the Oberammergau officials to the AJCommittee delegation.

He said the village officials asked the delegation to prepare a line-by-line analysis of the Rösner text, "providing in writing specific recommendations for editing and emendations" which the AJCommittee officials felt were still necessary, and to be available to help the Oberammergau officials "bring about the maximum possible improvement through the removal of anti-Jewish references and negative dramatic imagery" the AJCommittee officials felt were still present in the revised text.

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*Cheramberg*

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2290 FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING  
DETROIT MICHIGAN 48226

September 13, 1977

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum  
The American Jewish Committee  
165 East 56th Street  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Marc:

I have read the memo you prepared on the Passion Play and have also read the translation of the Rosner text. My impression of the really remarkable improvement made by the Rosner text is confirmed although I, of course, recognize the continuing problems. It seems to me that the significance of the new text could be given somewhat more emphasis.

I think we need to recognize that some of these problems are unavoidable and that others follow from the nature of the production. It can convey subtle ideas only with difficulty and it appears to me that by its nature, requires a strong opposition in order to achieve its dramatic goals. It seems to me that the worst portions of the play involve both text and production.

Our most difficult problem will continue to be making the judgment as to whether to push our general position as strongly as possible, accepting the risk that this may jeopardize the possibility of other changes, or whether we should operate on the basis of a general disclaimer of approval and attempt to get only the smaller changes which we may feel to be possible as a practical matter. In any event, there can be no question of the substantial improvement that has been made and that preservation of that improvement ought to be our first goal.

With best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year.

Sincerely,

  
Miles Jaffe

MJ:js

The American Jewish Committee  
Institute of Human Relations  
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum  
165 East 56 Street  
New York N.Y. 10022

Haupt-  
Abteilung Kultur  
Telefon 59 00 2267  
38 06

Ihre Zeichen

Ihre Nachricht vom

Unsere Zeichen Fi/d München 30.9.77

Sehr verehrter Herr Tanenbaum,

Ihren Brief vom 31.8. kann ich erst jetzt beantworten, weil ich soeben erst von einer Urlaubsreise zurückgekehrt bin. Lassen Sie mich Ihnen zuerst meinen herzlichen Dank sagen für diesen freundlichen und hilfreichen Brief. Die Begegnung mit Ihnen und die nächtliche Diskussion in Oberammergau war für mich ein großes Erlebnis. Ich darf Ihnen ganz offen sagen, daß ohne solche Reaktionen "von aussen" kaum mehr Grund und schon gar keine Lust mehr bestehen würde, sich für dieses Oberammergau einzusetzen. Der Streit dort geht unvermindert weiter; ausgerechnet die jetzt schon militant gewordenen Daisenberger-Anhänger haben meiner Rosner-Bearbeitung vorgeworfen, sie sei "Antisemitismus in Potenz".

Erlauben Sie mir, Ihnen einen zusammenfassenden Bericht zuleiten, den Hans Schwaighofer und ich für die Gemeinde über die Probeaufführung geschrieben haben. Vorgestern hat man sich in einer Gemeinderatssitzung über eine "Volksbefragung" in Oberammergau geeinigt; der Antrag auf einen "Volksentscheid" ist abgelehnt worden. Das Stimmenverhältnis im Gemeinderat für und gegen die Rosner-Fassung ist derzeit 10:7.

Ich bin persönlich überzeugt davon, daß eine nochmalige Daisenberger-Aufführung 1980, in welcher Bearbeitung auch immer, das Ende der Passionsspiel-Tradition in Oberammergau bedeuten würde. Man hat dann keinen Schwaighofer mehr (dieser Glücksfall für Oberammergau, der freilich auf übelste Weise verleumdet und verlästert wird), und die jungen Leute dort würden nicht mehr mitmachen. Ich werde nicht versäumen, Sie über Entscheidungen irgendwelcher Art in diesem Zusammenhang jeweils zu unterrichten.

Ich danke Ihnen noch einmal für Ihren freundlichen Brief, für Ihr großes Verständnis auch für jene kritischen Punkte, die jedem Passionsspiel nicht nur aus jüdischer Sicht immer anhaften werden und für die große Hilfe, die Hans Schwaighofer und ich in Ihnen gefunden haben.

Ihr Ihnen sehr ergebener

  
(Dr. Alois Fink)



**BEGIN CALLS ON WORLD JEWRY FOR  
COMMITMENT TO ALIYA AND FOR FUNDS  
TO LIBERATE ISRAEL FROM POVERTY**

JERUSALEM, Sept. 5 (JTA)—Premier Menachem Begin extended Rosh Hashanah greetings to world Jewry today with a call for aliya, to provide "the necessary funds to liberate our nation, once and for all, from poverty," and to undertake "the study of Hebrew as a second spoken language throughout the communities of the Diaspora."

The Premier listed aliya as the first of the "challenges of our generation." He observed that "Of the some twelve million Jews around the world... no more than one quarter has ingathered into our re-born homeland. This good land cries out for our return to Zion, from west and east. The majority of our brethren in the Soviet Union are deprived of this right. It is incumbent, therefore, on the Jews of the free world to renew and intensify the human struggle for the right of repatriation to Zion of our fellow Jews in the Soviet Union—and in Syria—who seek to reach Zion and freedom."

Begin added that "In the democratic countries our Jewish brethren are able to embark on aliya of their own free will. I call upon them today, in this Jewish season of recommitment. I call particularly upon our younger generation. Arise and come build up the land—for your sakes and ours—and for the sake of the coming generations."

**Urges Doubling Contributions**

Begin noted that "Here, in our small Jewish homeland, there prevails a problem of poverty that is intolerable to a nation which, from the time it emerged onto the stage of history, was commanded. 'Thou shalt pursue justice.' I speak of the lot of 45,000 families in Israel who live in housing conditions that are insufferable to us, as a Jewish society. My appeal, therefore, is directed to my fellow Jews in the Diaspora who have given so magnificently over the years—to the UJA and the Keren Hayesod and for the purchase of Israel Bonds."

"I ask them on the occasion of Israel's 30th anniversary to double this year their contributions and purchases. The extra sums will be totally earmarked for the construction of decent new houses for tens of thousands of families in Israel living in distressful conditions... Let each fellow Jew—once in 30 years—double his contribution for the upbuilding of our Land, thereby providing the necessary funds to liberate our nation, once and for all, from poverty and eradicate its scourge from within our society to whom liberty and social justice are supreme Jewish values."

**Calls For Study Of Hebrew**

Begin called the study of the Hebrew language, particularly by Jewish youth abroad "the key to a profounder understanding of our Jewish heritage, our sources, our history, our life. To give to your children this knowledge is to rescue them from an assimilation that is eroding and eating away at our fine youth, leading them to estrangement, so that each year thousands and tens of thousands simply vanish," Begin said.

Finally, the Premier called on the Jewish people to "stand together" in "the throes of an historic struggle for the just cause of Eretz Yisrael. In the final analysis, this is a struggle to guarantee the

lives, the security, the liberty and the peace of our children and grandchildren."

**TERRORISTS BUILDING FORTIFICATIONS,  
MILITARY POSITIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON**

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Sept. 5 (JTA)—Israeli circles claimed today that terrorists in southern Lebanon are constructing a system of military positions and fortifications near the Israeli border for eventual occupation by Syrian forces. The circles said there was no doubt that the work is being supervised and directed by the Syrians.

According to these circles, the terrorists, using mechanized equipment, are building tank and artillery positions and infantry strongholds, mainly in the central and eastern sections of the border area directly opposite Israeli settlements such as Misgav Am and Avivim. They are also claimed to have rehabilitated the air strip near Nabatiyeh village that would enable planes to take off only 20 kilometers north of the Israeli border.

The Israelis said the purpose was to prepare a military infrastructure for use by Syrian forces should they be moved southward toward Israel or in the event of a flare-up of fighting in the Lebanese border region. So far, however, Syrian forces have not penetrated southern Lebanon.

**CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM EXPRESSED BY  
AJCOMMITTEE OFFICIAL THAT NEW VERSION  
OF PASSION PLAY WILL BE USED IN 1980**

By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, Sept. 5 (JTA)—An American inter-religious expert has expressed "cautious optimism" over prospects that a revised version of the Passion Play will be used in Oberammergau in 1980 to replace the version hailed by Hitler for "convincingly" portraying "the menace of Jewry."

The 1850 text lauded by Hitler was written by a local parish priest, Father Josef Daisenberger. Since World War II, it is estimated that about 1.5 million people have seen the Daisenberger version in Oberammergau, where it is presented every 10 years.

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**Conferred With Key Figures**

The delegation members conferred at the April meeting with central personalities connected with the preparation of the 1980 Passion Play. They included the editor of the new version, Alois Fink, director of the cultural division of Bavarian Radio; Hans Schwaighofer, director of the 1980 production; Helmut Fischer, who played the role of Jesus in 1970, several Oberammergau town officials and representatives of the West German government, the Bavarian Tourist Ministry, and Lufthansa.



Tanenbaum said the discussion, which lasted more than four hours and which the Oberammergau officials called "their first serious discussion with responsible Jewish representatives," ended with two requests by the Oberammergau officials to the AJCommittee delegation.

He said the village officials asked the delegation to prepare a line-by-line analysis of the Rosner text, "providing in writing specific recommendations for editing and emendations" which the AJCommittee officials felt were still necessary; and to be available to help the Oberammergau officials "bring about the maximum possible improvement through the removal of anti-Jewish references and negative dramatic imagery" the AJCommittee officials felt were still present in the revised text.

Tanenbaum said there is a "procedural" matter of approval by the Oberammergau town council of the new Passion Play version. He said the town council will meet in December at which time the vote will be taken.

#### Factors For Optimistic View

Tanenbaum said he based his optimism on a number of factors, one being that the delegation members were told by a number of officials in Oberammergau, some villagers and some involved in production of the Passion Play, that the revised Rosner text would be that used in the 1980 presentation. In 1970, the anti-Semitic Daisenberger version attracted 530,000 persons from 113 countries.

He also disclosed that in mid-August, while the delegation was in Oberammergau for the preview and the discussions, a group of villagers began circulating a petition, asking retention of the Daisenberger text. He said he was informed that the protesters had collected about 800 signatures from the 4800 Oberammergau villagers but that the petition was not expected to affect the prospective town council veto for the new text.

Tanenbaum said another reason for optimism was that the preview viewed by the delegation, attended also by critics from many West German newspapers, villagers and Germans from other cities, was in fact a dress rehearsal in which many thousands of dollars had been invested, suggesting the strong possibility that the new version would be used in 1980.

He said the reaction of the large audience for the preview was "by and large" a positive one; that the reactions of the newspaper critics had been favorable; and that at the meeting which followed the preview, several villagers and other Germans welcomed the revised text as a significant improvement on the Daisenberger version.

Among positive features of the new text, Tanenbaum said, was that it does not give as much significance to the role of the Sanhedrin as did the standard earlier version, and that it opens with a group of "protective spirits" who tell the audience, "Don't say the Jews over there are betraying their own, all of us have done the same often enough."

#### Negative Elements In New Text

On the negative side was the prospect that, despite the morality play setting, there was "a real danger" that the Sanhedrin and "the Jews" will be perceived as "instruments of Lucifer" conspiring with Satanic elements against Jesus and Christians. The revised version also contains four scenes of debate in the Sanhedrin about the "blasphemy" of Jesus which tends to underscore "a far more prominent role" of "the Jews" in contributing to the death of Jesus than in fact "exists in the Synoptic Gospels."

The AJCommittee officials urged reconsideration of those scenes, and elimination of the "provocative chorus lines" in which several Sanhedrin scenes conclude with "all the Jews" on the stage crying out "it is decided, he must die, lest we and our reign perish."

A third objection, the AJCommittee officials said, was that Pontius Pilate is presented "as a weakling who is manipulated by the Sanhedrin and a howling Jewish mob" to make the decision to crucify Jesus, "in total contradiction to the 'historic knowledge' that Pilate was cruel and sadistic and that he alone 'had the authority to decide on the crucifixion.'"

Tanenbaum said the delegation agreed to the two requests but indicating awareness that there was no guarantee that the Rosner-Fink text would be used and "our recognition that even with improvements this is still a Passion Play in which Jews can never emerge ultimately untainted." He told the JTA he had received an English translation of the revised text and was now preparing the requested line-by-line commentary. He said the commentary would be submitted to the AJCommittee for clearance and then will be forwarded to the Oberammergau officials.

#### SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER SPENT WEEKEND IN ISRAEL, MET WITH DAYAN

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 5 (JTA)--Government officials confirmed yesterday reports from Johannesburg that South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha spent the weekend in Israel on his way to Europe. They declined to confirm that he had met with Israel Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan but a South African Embassy spokesman in Tel Aviv confirmed that Botha had paid "a courtesy call" on Dayan. The spokesman said the South African official had also toured the fortress of Masada.

Botha apparently arrived in Israel late Friday night and left yesterday morning for Geneva where he reportedly was scheduled to meet with Felix Houphouet-Boigny, President of the Ivory Coast and Black African elder statesman.

It was clear that Israeli officials would have preferred to keep Botha's stopover here a secret and were disconcerted when word of it leaked out in Johannesburg. The Israeli reaction was due to the fact that Israel has come under incessant criticism in international forums from Third World and "progressive" countries for its ties with South Africa, even though its diplomats demonstrate time and again that these ties are no broader nor deeper than those which it has with other countries.

In a related development today, the Israeli Foreign Ministry office "emphatically" denied a claim in the latest issue of Newsweek of Israeli-South African arms cooperation. There was no truth in the claim, the spokesman asserted. He also denied a CBS-TV report that Dayan did indeed meet with King Hussein of Jordan during his trip to London two weeks ago.

#### HUSSEIN SEEKING WESTERN SUPPORT FOR PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO STOP ESTABLISHING WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Sept. 5 (JTA)--King Hussein of Jordan arrived here today for a two-day official visit during which he will try to enlist France's and Western Europe's support for pressure on Israel to stop establishing new settlements in the



RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

DOMESTIC SERVICE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1977

Among the positive aspects, the Jewish leaders noted that the Rosner script does not give as much significance to the rôle of the Sanhedrin as earlier Passion Plays, and that it opens with a group of "Protective Spirits," who tell the audience: "Don't say the Jews over there are betraying their own; all of us have done the same often enough."

The Jewish Committee representatives also noted that the scenes involving the Sanhedrin and Chief Priests show "a relatively large group of 'Rabbis' or 'Jews' who seek to understand Jesus, therefore presenting 'the Jews' in a much more differentiated way than in the past plays."

AMERICAN JEWISH

Turning to the problems that remain, the Jewish Committee officials said there is a danger that the Sanhedrin and the Jews will be perceived as "instruments of Lucifer" who are conspiring with Satanic elements. They also said the revised play still gives "the Jews" a more important role in the death of Jesus than do the Gospel, and that Pontius Pilate is portrayed as a weakling who is manipulated by the Sanhedrin and a "Jewish mob," despite historical evidence that he was "cruel and sadistic, and that he alone had the authority to decide on the crucifixion."

The Oberammergau officials formally requested that the American Jewish Committee prepare a line-by-line analysis of the new text and that it remain available as a resource in seeking to revise the play, Rabbi Tanenbaum reported.

"The AJC delegation agreed to do so," he said, but indicated awareness that there is no guarantee that the revised text will prevail, "and our recognition that even with improvements this is still a Passion Play in which Jews can never emerge ultimately untainted."

Rabbi Tanenbaum pointed out that in 1970 the American Jewish Committee published a comparative content analysis of the Passion Play, which it called "A Study in Religious Anti-Semitism," that received widespread attention and was a factor that led to the decision in Oberammergau to revise the text for the 1980 version.

Besides Rabbi Tanenbaum, other members of the U.S. delegation were Miles Jaffe, national chairman of the AJC's Interreligious Affairs Commission; Zachariah Shuster, AJC European consultant, and William Troscen, director of the AJC Resource Development Department.



## U.S. Jewish Committee Will Scrutinize Revision Of Oberammergau Play

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The committee's decision came after a four-member delegation visited Oberammergau last month. The group, headed by Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the committee, previewed a five-and-a-half-hour presentation of the proposed revised ver-

sion of the play, which will next be presented in 1980.

Its consensus was that while the revised text contained "a number of positive features that are encouraging," a number of problems remained.

Among the problems, according to Rabbi Tanenbaum, was the fear that the Sanhedrin and the Jews might be perceived as "instruments of Lucifer" conspiring with Satanic elements against Jesus and Christians.

### Pontius Pilate's Presentation

Another was the presentation of Pontius Pilate as a "weakling manipulated by the Sanhedrin and a howling Jewish mob" to decide to crucify Jesus.

Rabbi Tanenbaum described the delegation's dialogue with Oberammergau as "serious and constructive."

He said the Oberammergau producers re-

quested the committee to "remain available to help bring about the maximum possible improvement through the removal of anti-Jewish references and negative dramatic imagery."

Oberammergau officials will decide the fate of the proposed revision at a later date.

## RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

DOMESTIC SERVICE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1977

### 'A Number of Problems' Remain

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE ADVISING  
PRODUCERS OF REVISED PASSION PLAY

By Religious News Service (8-30-77)

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Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the Committee, has reported on discussions he and other Committee representatives had with persons involved in the play after previewing the revised version recently.

They attended a 5½-hour presentation of the play at the invitation of Lufthansa German Airlines, after which they met in a near all-night session with the editor and director of the revised version and the actor who had played Jesus in the 1970 production.

The Jewish committee officials told the Oberammergau people that they welcomed the "forthright initiatives" taken to abandon the 1850 script written by a local parish priest, Father Josef Daisenberger, and replace it with "a modernized version" of the 1750 text written by a Benedictine priest, Father Ferdinand Rosner.

They pointed out that Adolf Hitler had said that "never has the menace of Jewry been so convincingly portrayed" as in the Daisenberger version, and that this version continues to influence attitudes.

Since World War II, they noted, some 1½ million people have seen the Passion Play in Oberammergau. The play attracted 530,000 persons from 113 countries at the last performances in 1970.

While praising "positive features" of the new text, the Jewish Committee officials also found that it still contains "a number of problems."



RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

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AMERICAN JEWISH

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AMERICAN JEWISH

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memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** September 2, 1977  
**to** Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum  
**from** William S. Trosten  
**subject**

The attached article indicates that the matter of the Rosner vs Daisenberger text is far from settled. The editorial comment of the SDZ suggests that the Town Council should make the decision itself and not submit the issue to a plebiscite.

Regards.

*Bill*

WST/BJB  
att.

## Der Kini büßt für Rosner

Gräß, recht geschieht's dem König Ludwig, daß er heuer kein Bergfeuer in Oberammergau kriegt, warum hat er die Reform des Passionsspiels nicht verhindert! So ungefähr dürften die Gegner des in Oberammergau kürzlich erstmals erprobten barocken Passionsspiels nach Rosner gedacht haben, als sie beschlossen, die als Touristenattraktion inszenierten Bergfeuer zum Königsgeburtstag zu sabotieren.

Als erste ihrer von einer Bürgerinitiative angekündigten „Maßnahmen“ hatten sie in der Nacht zum Donnerstag den Oberammergauer Hausberg, den 1342 Meter hohen Kofel besetzt, den als Krone aufgerichteten, mit Pech getrankten Holzstoß und ein Holzkreuz über den Berg hinunter geworfen und damit auch noch eine Gipfelerenade der Musikkapelle und einen Fakkelzug verhindert. Nun, König Ludwig II. wird sich's merken und die enttäuschten Touristen auch.

Dieser lächerliche Vorfall hat indes trotz der Verhinderung der Gipfel-Illumination einige andere für das Passionsspieldorf wichtige Tatsachen grell beleuchtet. Solche Holzhacker-Kunstkritik zeigt deutlich, wie wenig sinnvoll es wäre,

wenn die für das Spiel Verantwortlichen und der über alle Zusammenhänge am besten informierte Gemeinderat die ihnen aufgegebenen Entscheidung einer „Volksabstimmung“ überlassen würden. Es wurde in Oberammergau nicht mehr abgewogen, argumentiert und kritisiert, sondern es war angesichts der emotionalen Aufladung geradezu zwangsläufig Tür und Tor geöffnet für unablässige Agitation, Polemik und Dorfterror. Solch ein lustiger „Bürgerkrieg“ um das Leiden Christi hatte in kürzester Zeit den guten Eindruck ausgelöscht, den — unbeschadet aller Kritiken und Verbesserungswünsche — allein das Bemühen um eine Alternative für das Passionspiel weltweit hinterlassen hat.

Darüber hinaus hat die Komikerrolle der Gipfelsturmer gezeigt, daß bei aller Alleinständigkeit der Oberammergauer für ihr Spiel doch jeder leichtfertige Umgang mit Würde und Ansehen ihres berühmten Passionsspieldorfes immer das restliche Bayern mit blamiert. Darum sollte der Gemeinderat ähnlich läppi-schen Aktionen durch eine möglichst baldige Entscheidung den Boden entziehen. Sonst stellt sich gar nicht mehr die Frage Rosner oder Daisenberger, sondern nur noch Passionsspiel oder Kasperltheater?

Hannes Burger

S. D. Z.     27/28/8



VICTORIA M NEUMÜLLER

Public-Relations-Chef  
amtliches bayerisches Reisebüro GmbH  
8 München im Hauptbahnhof  
Telefon (089) 5 90 43 11

München, den 09. August 1977  
02/NEU/bn

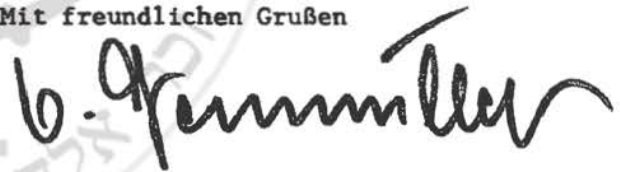
Rabbi Marc Tannebaum  
c/o Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten  
Maximilianstraße 17

8000 München 22

Sehr geehrter Rabbi Tannebaum,

im Namen der Gemeinde Oberammergau habe ich die Ehre, Sie am 14. August 1977 nach Beendigung des 1. Teiles des Probespiels - gegen 18.00 Uhr - zu einem Kalten Buffett im Hotel 'Alois Lang' herzlich einzuladen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



V. Neumüller





# PASSIONSSPIELE OBERAMMERGAU Probeaufführungen 1977

Nach dem Passionsspiel von Pater Ferdinand Rosner

Tor/Gate

**XI**

**14. AUG.**

1 Teil 16 00 h



2 Teil 20 15 h



Passionsspielhaus

AMERICAN JEWISH

ARCHIVE

Tor/Gate

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

Tor/Gate

VII

Tor/Gate

XIV

XIII

XII

XI

X

IX

6658 \*

Nº

**1.**  
PLATZ

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Row

**11**

Platz  
Seat

**192**

Preis DM

Price **20,—**

zuzüglich 10%  
Vorverkaufsgeb

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Der Platz muß eine viertel Stunde vor Veranstaltungsbeginn eingenommen werden

The organizer cannot be held responsible for personal and material damages

The seat must be occupied a quarter of an hour before the beginning of the event

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# Lufthansa

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Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum  
National Interreligious Affairs Director  
The American Jewish Committee  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022

Regional Management  
1640 Hempstead Turnpike,  
East Meadow, Long Island, N Y 11554  
Telephone (516) 794-2020  
WU Telex 961354  
Telegrams Lufthansa Eastmeadowlany

Your Ref

Our Ref

KHK:AD

Date

September 1, 1977

Dear Marc:

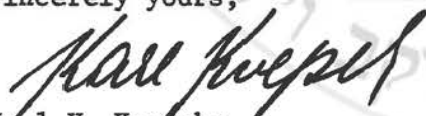
Thank you very much for your letter of August 26th. I am extremely glad that you were able to follow our invitation and see the revised version of the Passion Play. Also, the discussion with Fink and Schwaighofer I found very constructive. Both of them seem to be aware of the problem and are obviously willing to rectify the situation.

Reading the German press reviews, I cannot foresee a return to the Daisenberger text. As soon as the final decision has been made by the people of Oberammergau it may be advisable to ask Fink to New York and maybe also Schwaighofer.

Your ticket difficulties will be straightened out by my assistant Angela Din.

Travelling with you, Miles and Bill was really a pleasure and in the end I think we all had a certain feeling of achievement.

Sincerely yours,

  
Karl H. Koepcke  
Public Relations Manager  
for North and Central America



*Temple Israel*  
133 Merriman Road  
Akron, Ohio 44303  
(216) 762-8617

OFFICE OF THE  
RABBI  
DR MORTON M APPLEBAUM

August 17, 1977

Dear Marc:

Am enclosing the program which was distributed at the Blossom Music Center on Friday evening, August 12, 1977.

To be sure, I was not there. However, one of the members of our Jewish Community was and thought that I ought to see this program and the English text which it includes of the St. Matthew Passion which was presented.

The text is horrible.

Do you know whether or not same was ever taken up with the publishers of this particular music? Can something be done about it? Certainly the wording could be tempered somewhat.

Will appreciate hearing from you.

Kindest regards.

Cordially,

  
Morton M. Applebaum  
Rabbi

Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East 65th St.  
New York, NY 10022

mma:lj  
Encl.



**blossom music center**

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## The Cleveland Orchestra

LORIN MAAZEL, music director

MATTHIAS BAMERT, resident conductor

Friday Evening, August 12, 1977, at 8 30

**ROBERT PAGE** *Conducting*

**J S BACH** The Passion of Our Lord According to St Matthew

There will be an intermission between Parts I and II

The Evangelist

RYLAND DAVIES, *Tenor*

The Christus

RICHARD STILWELL, *Bartone*

*Solo Arias*

IRENE GUBRUD, *Soprano*, GWENDOLYN KILLEBREW, *Mezzo-Soprano*,

ROBERT CALVERT, *Tenor*, GARY KENDALL, *Bass*

Pilate—Peter—Judas—High Priest

GARY KENDALL

First and Second Maids

SEVILLA CARTER, RUTH STUDER

False Witnesses

LISA BEHM, JAMES SCHUSTER

**THE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL CHORUS**

ROBERT PAGE, *Director*

VANCE GEORGE, *Assistant Director*

JOELA JONES, *Organ*, DANIEL MAJESKE, *Violin*

STEPHEN GEBER, *Continuo Violoncello*

CATHARINA MEINTS, *Viola da Gamba*, DAVID PERLMAN, *Double Bass*

MAURICE SHARP and MARTIN HEYLMAN, *Flutes*

JOHN MACK, *Oboe*

JOHN MACK and FELIX KRAUS, *Oboi d Amore*

HARVEY MCGUIRE and FELIX KRAUS, *English Horns*

*This Concert is presented with the support of WCLV, Cleveland's fine arts station*

---

Fifth Festival Forum—Friday, Aug 12, 7 15-8 00 "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Passions"—with host VANCE GEORGE, Choral Director of the Kent State University-Blossom Festival School. A discussion of one of the oldest musical forms, the "Passion", with demonstration of its profound dramatic and devotional content in depicting sections of the Gospel. Next Friday, August 19 "Pin the Tale on the Music" Descriptive music, discussed by critic TOM WILLIS and played by the NEW CLEVELAND CONSORT.

Please see page 48 of the Festival Book for future programs in this series.

Please see page 39 of the Festival Program Book for forthcoming festival concerts.

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STEINWAY PIANO HAMMOND ORGAN LONDON, COLUMBIA, ANGEL, DG AND TELARC RECORDS

Information for Patrons may be found on page 4 of the Festival Program Book. ■

■ Festival Concerts of The Cleveland Orchestra are broadcast on Sunday afternoons at 4 00 p.m. on WCLV 95.5 FM/Stereo Cleveland sponsored by TRW they may also be heard nationally through the Cleveland Orchestra Broadcast Syndication Service. Orchestra Pops Concerts are broadcast Wednesdays at 10 00 p.m. sponsored by Stouffer's. ■ In consideration of the musicians on the stage and your neighbors in the audience it is earnestly requested that you refrain from smoking in the Pavilion.



## ROBERT PAGE

ROBERT PAGE recently completed his sixth season as Director of The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus. This summer he is serving in his fifth season as Director of the Blossom Festival Chorus. Mr. Page is regarded as one of the most distinguished choral conductors of this country. From 1956 to 1975, he was Director of Temple University's Choral Activities and for twelve seasons he was director of the noted Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia.



Since making his Cleveland Orchestra podium debut at Severance Hall in the annual Christmas Festival Concert, Sunday, December 19, 1971, Mr. Page has conducted the Orchestra on numerous occasions, including the subsequent Christmas Festival concerts, three *Messiah* Sing-ins, Blossom concerts, area concerts, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and the Cleveland premieres of Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* and Ginastera's *Turbid* at the regular subscription concerts. He has also led The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus or Chamber Chorus in four Festivals of Choral Masterpieces in Severance Hall. The work of his Chorus in the Carnegie Hall performance of the Berlioz *Requiem* under Lorin Maazel, February 5, 1975, was especially praised by the New York critics. The Chorus also appeared with the Orchestra in Carnegie Hall on February 2, 1976, in Mahler's Second Symphony, and assisted in the Carnegie Hall performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on February 19, 1977.

Mr. Page has been nominated for seven Grammy Awards, winning one for the 1967 recording of *Catulli Carmina*, and another for the 1974 recording of *Carmina Burana* by The Cleveland Orchestra, Soloists and Chorus, with Michael Tilson Thomas conducting. The Orchestra's recording of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, in which The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus participated, won the Grammy Award for Best Opera released in 1976 as well as the Grand Prix du Disque award. Mr. Page has led the Philadelphia Orchestra in Penderecki's *St. Luke Passion* and the world premiere of Ginastera's *Turbid*. In the summer of 1975, he conducted the Mendelssohn Club and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at the Temple University Music Festival in the first Philadelphia performance since 1916 of Mahler's Eighth Symphony.

Robert Page became chairman of the music department at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh in September, 1975. In addition, he serves on the National Music Advisory Board of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts. At the beginning of the 1975 Thanksgiving holiday, Wednesday, November 26, Channel 8 in Cleveland televised a one-hour special with program concept by Mr. Page, *Heartsong U.S.A.* The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus directed by him was featured, with narrator Brock Peters, the program, shown again November 29 on Channel 25 and destined for wide circulation, illustrated the history and meaning of the Thanksgiving observances in Ohio. Seven Cleveland-based corporations sponsored the telecast. In the 1976-77 season, Mr. Page conducted the Orchestra in the Thirteenth Children's Key Concert (November 13 and 14), the annual Christmas concert (December 12), concerts in Lakewood (December 5) and Oberlin (March 15), and the Third *Messiah* Sing-in (April 10). He has four times served as co-ordinator of the numerous high school choruses appearing in the annual Cleveland Press-Cleveland Orchestra concert at Public Hall under Lorin Maazel's direction, the last program was shown on television as a highly successful special, entitled "The Magic of Music." On November 25 and 26, 1977, Mr. Page will conduct the Orchestra, Chorus and soloists in the Cleveland premiere of Delius' *A Mass of Life*.

VANCE GEORGE, Assistant Director of the Blossom Festival Chorus, is Associate Professor of Choral Music at Kent State University. At Kent he directs the KSU Chorale, the University and Kent Choruses, and teaches conducting. He is Chairman of the Choral Department of the Blossom Festival School. Mr. George has studied with René Leibowitz, Rudolf Kolisch, Margaret Hillis and Julius Herford. He is the host of this evening's Festival Forum (please see the program page). This Sunday, August 14, at 3:00 p.m. he will conduct a concert of the Blossom Festival School Chamber Choir devoted entirely to the music of Schubert, the concert, at Kent United Church of Christ, is free to the public (see page 63 of the Festival Book).

BLOSSOM FESTIVAL CONCERTS are taped and re-broadcast by WCLV 95.5 FM/Stereo Cleveland and heard world wide through the Cleveland Orchestra Syndication Service. Audio and Recording Supervisor VLADIMIR MALECKAR. Audio Engineer A. J. STOKES.

# THE PASSION OF OUR LORD ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

By JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Born March 21, 1685, in Eisenach, died July 28, 1750, in Leipzig

Bach composed his *Passionsmusik nach dem Evangelisten Matthäus* (the composer's Latin superscription was *Passio D. N. I. C. secundum Matthaeum*) in 1728-29. The first performance took place on Good Friday (April 15), 1729, at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, where Bach was Cantor. The text, later revised and expanded by the composer, had been prepared by the poet Christian Friedrich Henrici, known by the name of Picander. It incorporates passages from the 26th and 27th chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, primarily in the passages sung by the Evangelist and the Christ.

The *Passion*, sporadically performed under Bach's direction between 1730 and 1740, remained unknown elsewhere and fell into total obscurity after his death. Mendelssohn, with the guidance of Goethe's friend and musical advisor, Zelter, resurrected it on Good Friday of 1829 in Berlin. Although universal awareness of Bach's genius stems from that event, culminating eventually in the publication of the Complete Works by the *Deutsche Bachgesellschaft*, the *Passion* itself was slow in finding performances, and was almost everywhere presented in abridgements. The first American performance (again a partial one) was given in Boston in 1874, by the Handel and Haydn Society.

The Cleveland Orchestra first performed it in 1938, in an abridged version by Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Artur Rodzinski conducted, and the Cleveland Philharmonic Choir was prepared by Boris Goldovsky. Walter Blodgett was the organist. The first complete performances of the work in Cleveland were at Severance Hall in April of 1960, when Robert Shaw conducted, the chorus used his English translation, also adapted for the present performance.

The score calls for a double chorus and additional soprano chorus, and at least four solo voices, six are customary. The orchestra, divided into two sections, consists of flutes, oboes, violins, violas, and organ, bassoons, cellos and basses as well as harpsichord (if used) are listed under *continuo*. There are *obbligato* parts for *oboi d'amore*, *oboi da caccia*, and *viola da gamba*, as well as for flutes, violins, and cellos.

Writing in the *Sunday Plain Dealer* on August 7, 1977, music critic Robert Finn observed that the *St. Matthew Passion* is one of the all-time peaks of serious musical expression, a work that combines devotional impact with narrative power in a way seldom equalled in the whole history of sound. It was not, at first, recognized as such, all signs point to the likelihood that the early audiences (i.e. congregations) were shocked and disturbed rather than moved and elevated. Christian Gerber, writing in 1732, commented as follows on a passion service, and his report has been applied with justification to the 1729 premiere: "When this theatrical music began, all the people were thrown into the greatest bewilderment, looked at each other, and said: 'What will come of this? An old widow of the nobility said: 'God save us, my children! It is just as if one were at an opera-comedy!' Everyone was genuinely displeased by it and voiced just complaints against it.' Although the dramatic scenes and recitatives were probably most responsible for such a reaction, Bach's daring chorale harmonizations are known to have met with considerable resistance also. All this may explain an official warning from the Leipzig Town Council to the Thomascantor in 1739, ten years later, not to perform the passion music he had planned until he received official permission to do so. Bach's reply, according to the clerk of the council by the name of Bienengraeber, was quite truculent.

One certain indication of the antipathetic reception accorded the *St. Matthew Passion* was its total neglect after Bach's death. That this glorious work could repose on a dusty shelf for almost 100 years before being revived is a potent refutation of those who claim that music can be good only if it is appreciated by all the people immediately, and while it is still 'modern'. The story of Felix Mendelssohn's admirable zeal in restoring the *Passion* to the world on March 11, 1829, is well known.

The *St. Matthew Passion* is a gigantic drama, a sacred opera—which is but another term for oratorio. Ever since the beginnings of the Christian era, there has been Passion music, the deeply affecting events of Christ's suffering were sung in the styles of the successive eras, from the unaccompanied Gregorian chant through the four great works of Heinrich Schütz right down to the 'Passions-Bericht' ('Passion-Report') of one of our contemporaries. Singers took the parts of the protagonists in the historic drama, acting out the happenings with their voices. For obvious reasons, the realism of the 'passion play' was generally shied away from, with few



exceptions, it was music that offered an idealization as well as an intensification of this profoundly human story. Bach, the great synthesizer of styles and faiths, was able for the most part to transcend the restrictive denominational and dogmatic aspects of his time. In the gospel story he found universal meaning, and that is why this work becomes an unforgettable experience to all listeners sensitive to the great moments of man's history, regardless of the religious beliefs they may profess. What counts to us today is the power and lasting significance of the Passion story, as transmuted into musical and dramatic art by one of the greatest masters. Western civilization has produced in a millennium °

Space limitations forbid an adequate description of this work, to say nothing of an analytical outline. The literature on it is enormous, and growing still. Yet it is clear that no work is essentially so little in need of 'explanation' as this, if listeners will follow the text (which should always be sung in their own language) and allow themselves to be carried by the strong and clear dramatic current. In his notable book, *The Bach Family* (Oxford University Press, New York 1954), Karl Geiringer writes that the *St. Matthew Passion* represents the climax of Bach's music for the Protestant church. It uses the largest performing apparatus and is in scope one of the composer's most extensive works. He wanted this *Passion* to be of general appeal, and indeed there is in this work a simplicity and directness not often to be found in Bach's larger compositions.

Comparing the *St. John Passion* of 1723 with the *St. Matthew*, Dr. Geiringer comments that in the latter vehemence and violence no longer dominate. The work radiates tenderness and love, harsh contrasts are toned down, and a heart-stirring blending of bliss and grief such as only Bach could create prevails throughout. Here there is no unbridgeable gap between the human and the divine, the Lord approaches mankind in his suffering, and mankind suffers with him. Here too one finds a striving for unification and integration, in later years, Bach was to symbolize this idea in the great *B minor Mass*—a Catholic work written by a Protestant musician. Would not the knowledge of Mendelssohn's share in his rediscovery have given him much joy? His vision was human and universal, theology and dogma served his all-embracing art, not the other way around.

Although the *Passion* divides easily and conveniently into two large parts, it is continuous in intent. Albert Schweitzer has observed that the dramatic plan is at once simple and ingenious. The story of the *Passion* is cast into the form of a series of tableaux. At the characteristic points the narrative breaks off, and the scene that has just passed is made the subject of a pious meditation. This is effected in arias that are usually led up to by an *arioso*-like recitative. At minor resting points the feelings of the Christian spectators are expressed in chorale verses.

The gospel narrative or 'Evangelium' is assigned to a tenor voice, on which extraordinary demands are made. Not only does the part lie very high, but the 'Evangelist' must be heard to concern himself personally with the action, rather than simply reporting it, in his soaring phrases, he communicates and often propels the dramatic substance. The figure of the Christ is surrounded, whenever he speaks, with a 'halo' formed by the string quartet, though not original with Bach, this is an inspired pictorial-symbolic idea. 'Only once are the accompanying strings silenced,' Dr. Geiringer remarks—when Christ in agony cries out, 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' the halo is extinguished. The choruses are largely in the nature of *turbae* or crowd scenes, brief and powerful statements that convey the impact of a moment in almost realistic terms, the disciples, the people, the priests are all characterized in most concise and dramatic manner. There are several larger numbers for double chorus, with the opening and closing pieces of the work like colossal pillars or archways. The chorales seem inevitably to break the thread of the action, but they were meant to fulfill at least two purposes—to allow the congregation to join in the melody and thus to make the work belong to them more directly, and to reflect deeply upon the meaning of what has just occurred rather than to rush on heedlessly.

One hesitates even to refer to the extent of symbols the composer employs in the *Passion*, since so few can be mentioned. Only a keen familiarity with the score reveals the infinite care Bach expended on subtly symbolizing in music the many suggestive details of the text, such as the form of the cross, or numerical ideas like the occasional reduction of the twelve disciples by one—Judas. With what boundless imagination the composer approached his great subject can be felt from the very outset. Dr. Geiringer describes this most elaborate section of the work, in

°A word about the term *Passion*. Its modern connotation is that of extreme feeling, either sensual or intellectual, in which the element of pain is minimized or ignored. Its older meaning becomes clear from the term *compassion*, which means 'feeling with' or 'suffering with'. The Latin *passio* means suffering, we encounter it in the liturgy, where the line *passus et sepultus est* means 'he suffered and was buried'. In the theater, the church, or the concert hall, a 'Passion' relates, depicts and comments upon the suffering of Jesus Christ.—Ed

which a chorale melody is introduced as a *cantus firmus*. Two wildly excited groups confront each other with terse questions and sorrowful answers, against a background of a flood of tears, suggested by the heaving and milling orchestra. Above the passionate grief of humanity so depicted rises the crystal-clear, serene church tune, thus setting the stage for this work on mortal frailty and divine strength.

~  
*A note on the text*

The present performance is sung in an English translation by Robert Shaw as revised and adapted by Robert Page (a course of action suggested by Mr. Shaw himself, see below). In the piano-vocal score (G. Schirmer, Inc., 1959) which embodies this translation, Mr. Shaw has outlined the problems and obligations of a translator in candid and searching terms. A few brief excerpts from that preface are here reprinted with the permission of the author and the publisher.

"Any translation of a great work must mean a loss to those for whom its original language is a native tongue. Bach's recitative was true not only to the rhythm and accentuation of German speech, but to the spirit and shadings of the Lutheran Gospel. Nevertheless, in the case of his Passion Music we cannot escape the conviction that Bach's first concern was to affirm and quicken a faith—by the immediate communication of its great drama. This is truly possible only when the story and its meaning are told in the living language of the singer and listener—the language in which they dream, hope, remember, think, love and believe.

"The attention of the translator has to be that of finding in one language the innate expressive attitude of the other, in order to evoke the same basic experiences. The corollary of this attention is the desperate avoidance of injury to the music itself, to details of word and tone relationship—so sensitive in Bach—since, in all great song, spirit is no less resident in musical detail than it is in text.

"Many people will find many ways to improve this translation. Even should it have a general acceptance, soloists and conductors will want to change words here and there. We hope this will happen. For then the language of the *St. Matthew Passion* will become more immediate and personal to those who use it, and will become a truly living language."—ROBERT SHAW

*A note on the present performance*

An entirely unabridged performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* requires from three-and-a-half to four hours of time. It is generally given in two parts, with an extended intermission. The present version, about two-and-a-half hours in duration, attempts to make the work available for a single evening's concert. Robert Page has remarked that he has aimed to retain "the propulsion of the narrative", largely by regretfully omitting certain scenes that might be considered "peripheral" to the story. He feels that in this form the work may even intensify its dramatic concept, and capture its audience directly and vividly. He reminds us, as quoted by Mr. Finn in the article mentioned above, that "the whole idea behind musical settings of the passion story in the first place was to dramatize the teachings of the church, to make them real to common people. The basic idea was not to divorce the audience from the piece, but to involve them in it."

For the benefit of those who may wish to follow the performance with a score, the individual numberings of the Schirmer vocal score are retained in the printed text, it is the editor's feeling that this may also be instructive in demonstrating a kind of abridgment that does least damage to the total conception while offering its own dramatic values.

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**J S BACH**  
**THE PASSION OF OUR LORD**  
**ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW**  
*English Translation by Robert Shaw*  
Copyright, 1959, by G. Schirmer, Inc.  
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Text adapted and revised  
by Robert Page for this performance

**PART I**

**PROLOGUE**

**NO 1 DOUBLE CHORUS**  
*(Daughter of Zion and*  
*Congregation of Believers)*

Come ye daughters, share my wailing  
See ye! Whom? The Bridegroom see!  
See Him! How? A lamb is He  
See it! What? His patience mild  
Look! Ah, where? Upon our guilt  
Look on Him for love untold  
He Himself the Cross is bearing

**CHORALE (Sopranos)**

O Lamb of God most holy  
The bitter Cross have You taken  
At all times meek and lowly,  
Though by Your children forsaken  
The sins of man You're bearing,  
Else were we left despairing  
Have mercy on us, O Jesus

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**OF THE PASSION**

**NO 2 RECITATIVE**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 1-2)*

When Jesus then had finished all these sayings, He said to His disciples: You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man shall then be delivered up that He be crucified

**NO 3 CHORALE**

Ah, dearest Jesus, How have You offended,  
That such a bitter judgment has been  
handed?  
Where is Your guilt, in what the great  
transgression for Your confession?

**THE RULERS CONSPIRE**  
**AGAINST JESUS**

**NO 4 RECITATIVE**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 3-5)*

Then assembled all the chief priests and the scribes together, with the elders of the people, in the court of the high priest whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted there by what craft to lay hold on Jesus and kill Him. But thus they said

**NO 5 CHORUS**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 5)*

Not upon the feast lest from it an uproar rises among the people

**THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY**

**NO 6 RECITATIVE**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 6-8)*

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper there came unto Him a woman and bearing a box of precious ointment she poured it on His head as He sat to eat. But when His disciples saw it, they became indignant, and said

**NO 7 CHORUS**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 8-9)*

To what purpose is this wasted? For this ointment might have better far been sold, and the poor and the needy nourished

**NO 8 RECITATIVE**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 10-13)*

When Jesus had understood, He said to them: Why trouble you the woman? It is a good work that she has done. For you have always the poor with you, but Me you shall not always have. For in that she has poured this ointment on My body, this she has done for My burial. Verily I say to you, Whosoever hereafter the gospel shall be preached throughout the world, there also shall this that this woman has done, in her remembrance

**NO 9 ARIOSO Contralto**  
O dearest Savior, Friend!  
While Your disciples foolish quarrel  
That this good woman sought  
Your body to anoint,  
For burial to prepare it,  
So, let me, too, attend You now  
See in my eyes full tearful flowing  
An ointment on Your head bestowing

**THE TREASON OF JUDAS**

**NO 11 RECITATIVE**  
*(Matthew XXVI, 14-16)*

Then one of the twelve disciples, he known as Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests and said: Now what will you give me if I to you betray Him? And they promised him thirty silver pieces. And from that time sought he opportunity that he might betray Him

**NO 12 ARIA Soprano**  
Bleed and break, O loving heart!  
Ah, a child, whom You did cherish,  
On Your breast so fondly nourish'd,  
Hastes with evil to betray You,  
Like a snake he comes to slay You

**THE PREPARATION OF  
THE PASSOVER**

**THE LAST SUPPER**

**NO 13 RECITATIVE**  
(Matthew XXVI, 17)

Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread came the disciples to Jesus, and said unto Him

**NO 14 CHORUS**

Where, Master, do You wish the feast of the Passover be prepared?

**NO 15 RECITATIVE and CHORUS**  
(Matthew XXVI, 18-22)

He said Go into the city to such a man, and say to him The Master says My time is at hand, I will keep the passover here with My disciples And when evening came He sat at the table with the twelve And as they did eat, He told them, Verily I say to you, it is one of you who shall betray Me Then were they exceeding sad, and began every one of them to question and say unto Him Lord, is it I?

**NO 17 RECITATIVE and ARIOSO**  
(Matthew XXVI, 23-29)

He answered to them and said Who dips his hand with Me in the dish, shall the same betray Me The Son of Man goes on His way as of Him it has been written, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed! For him it were better if he had not been born And then Judas approached Him, he who betrayed Him, and said Lord, is it I? He said to him You say it

And as they were eating, He took of the bread blessing it, He broke it and gave the disciples, and said Take you, eat you This is My body

And He took the cup, and blessing it, He gave it them and said Drink you all of it, this is My blood of the new testament Know you, this blood is shed for the many for remission of sins I say to you, that from this day henceforth no more will I drink the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew with you within My Father's kingdom

**NO 19 ARIA Soprano**

Lord, to You my heart is given,  
Sink therein, dwell now in me  
So will I in You find haven  
Though to You this world be small  
You shall be my all in all—  
More than earth and heaven be

**AT THE MOUNT OF OLIVES**

**NO 20 RECITATIVE**  
(Matthew XXVI, 30-32)

And when they had sung a hymn of praise together, they went out unto the Mount of Olives Then said Jesus to them This very night all you shall be offended because of Me, for it is written Yea lo, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad But after I am arisen, then I will go before you to Galilea

**NO 21 CHORALE**

Remember me my Savior,  
My Shepherd, lead me home  
O fount of every goodness,  
From which my good has come  
Your mouth has oft refreshed me  
With milk and honey d food  
I rest me in Your spirit  
And joy in Heaven's good

**PETER'S DENIAL  
FORETOLD BY JESUS**

**NO 22 RECITATIVE**  
(Matthew XXVI, 33-35)

Peter then gave Him answer, and said to Him E'en though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I, Lord, be never offended Jesus said to him Verily I say to you, this very night ere yet the cock crows, even you will three times deny Me Peter said to him Lord, e'en though I should die with You yet will I never deny You And likewise also said all the others

**NO 23 CHORALE**

I'll stand here close beside You,  
Lord, never me forsake  
Nor will I ever leave You,  
E'en when Your heart shall break  
And when Your lingering paleness  
By thorns of death is pressed,  
Into my arms I'll take You  
And clasp You to my breast

**GETHSEMANE**

**NO 24 RECITATIVE**  
(Matthew XXVI, 36-38)

Then came Jesus with them unto a garden called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples Sit you here while I go yonder and pray He took with Him Peter and both the sons of Zebediah and began to be sorrowful and heavy Then said Jesus to them Ah, My soul is full of sadness e'en unto death Tarry here and watch with Me



NO 26 ARIA and CHORUS *Tenor*

*Aria*

I would be with my Jesus watching  
E'en my death  
Ransom finds in His last breath,  
His sorrow insures my gladness

*Chorus*

So slumber, all my sins, and stay!  
The griefs He is for us enduring  
How bitter, yet how sweet are they

NO 27 RECITATIVE

(Matthew XXVI, 39)

And he went a little farther, and falling  
upon His face, He prayed and said My  
Father, if possible, will You let this cup  
pass from Me, yet, not as I will, but as You  
will

NO 28 ARIOSO *Bass*

The Savior low before His Father bended  
Whereby sustained am I and all  
—yea before our Falling—  
And up to God's great love ascended  
He is prepared the cup of death's  
dark bitterness to savor,  
Wherein the sins of all the world  
Their odors pour in bitter flavor—  
If thus it be so God has willed

NO 29 ARIA *Bass*

Gladly will I take my portion  
Cross and cup in sure devotion  
Drink I with my Savior here  
For His mouth as with milk and  
honey flowing  
First has blest it redeeming shame  
and fear,  
Sweetness at His lips restoring

NO 30 RECITATIVE

(Matthew XXVI, 40-42)

And He came to His disciples and found  
them sleeping, and said to Peter What,  
could you not even watch with Me one  
hour? Watch you, and pray that you enter  
not into temptation The spirit indeed is  
willing, but the flesh is weak

Again He went away, praying, and said  
My Father, if it must be, that this cup may  
not pass from Me, then I will drink it, and  
let Your will be done

NO 31 CHORALE

What God has willed will always be,  
His will is best most surely  
An ever present help is He

If faith be fixed securely Our help in  
need, all-good all-wise  
Rebukes with kindness ever  
Who trusts in God, on Him relies  
Will be forsaken never

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST

NO 32 RECITATIVE

(Matthew XXVI, 43-50)

And again He came and found them  
sleeping, and saw their eyes were heavy  
with sleep And He left them, and again  
went away and prayed again the third  
time, repeating once again the same  
words He then came to his disciples, and  
said unto them Ah! are you still resting  
and sleeping? Lo, the hour is at hand,  
when the Son of Man to the hands of  
sinners now shall be betrayed So arise!  
Let us be going Look now, he is near who  
will betray Me

And as He was speaking came Judas,  
who was one of the twelve disciples and  
with him came a great array, with swords  
and with staves, who were sent by the  
priests and the elders of the people Now  
this same Judas, who betrayed Him, had  
given a sign to them, and said Whom-  
soever I shall kiss is He, take that one  
And straightway he came to Jesus and  
said All hail to Thee, O Master! and  
kissed Him Jesus then said unto him Tell  
me, why are you here? And thereupon  
they came, and laid their hands on Jesus,  
and took Him

NO 33 DUET and CHORUS

*Soprano and Contralto*

(*Daughter of Zion and Congregation of  
Believers*)

Alas, my Jesus now is taken  
Loose Him! Stop now! Bind Him not!  
Moon and stars have for grief the night  
forsaken,  
Since my Jesus has been taken  
They pull Him on, ah, they have bound  
Him  
Have lightning and thunder from Heaven  
all vanished?  
Then open the fiery abysses, O Hell!  
Defile them, devour them,  
Destroy them, dispel them!  
Strike swiftly to brand  
The false-hearted traitor,  
The murderous band!

End of Part I

The "Mostly Mozart Marathon" of Sunday, August 21, will be preceded by a series of chamber music events throughout the Blossom grounds, between 6 15 and 7 15 p.m. Music for strings, winds, brass, and various other combinations will be performed. Please see page 40 of the Festival Book for the program of the concert itself

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## PART II

NO 36 ARIA with CHORUS  
*Contralto*

(Daughter of Zion and Congregation of Believers)

Ah, now is my Jesus gone!  
Whither has the dear One departed,  
O you fairest one among women?  
Must it be so, can I bear it?  
Whither has your friend turned away?  
Ah my Lamb in tiger's talons!  
Ah, where is my Jesus gone?  
For we would go with you to seek Him  
Ah, my soul, what can I say now,  
When you will so anxious pray now?

## IN THE COURT OF CAIPHAS

NO 37 RECITATIVE  
(Matthew XXVI, 57-60)

And they that had so laid hold on Jesus led Him away unto the high priest, Cai-phas, and with him were the scribes and the elders assembled all together. Peter also followed after Him afar off, unto the court of the high priest's palace, and went inside, and sat with the guards and servants, that he might see how all would be ended

Then did the priests conspire with the elders, and all of the council, how that they might false witness bring on Jesus that He might be put to death. But found they none

NO 39 RECITATIVE  
(Matthew XXVI, 60-63)

At last there were two who falsely witnessed, in this wise. This man has said: Full power is given Me to destroy God's temple, and in three days can I again rebuild it. And the high priest then did arise, and say to Him: Do You answer nought to that which these have witnessed against You? Yet was Jesus still silent

NO 40 ARIOSO *Tenor*

He answers not  
To false accusation, never  
So is my heart reliant  
That His great mercy standeth ever  
He will endure whate'er be done  
So, like Him, in our agony  
He should the pattern be  
In persecution, still be silent

NO 41 ARIA *Tenor*

Be still, be still—  
Though the traitors' tongues shall sting me  
Bear I whatsoever they will—  
Scoff and scorn!  
Ah, my God their evil turn,  
My heart's honor bright avenging!



NO 42 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVI 63-66)

And the high priest gave Him an answer thus, and said I adjure You here before the living God that You do tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God Jesus said to him You say it, yet I say to you, Hereafter when you see Him, you shall see in that time the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven Thereupon the high priest tore his robes asunder, and said He has spoken blasphemy! What need we further witness? Truly you all have heard the blasphemy that He has spoken What think you now? They answered to him, and said Of death this man is guilty!

NO 43 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVI, 67-68)

Then mocked they at Him, and they spat on Him, and struck Him with their fists Others among them smote and slapped Him in the face, and shouted O prophet! Now tell us, O Christ, by whom you are struck!

NO 44 CHORALE

Who was it so did strike You,  
My Lord, and who requite You  
This fierce and cruel blow?  
For You were no offender—  
As we to sin surrender  
No evil did You ever know

**PETER'S DENIAL**

NO 45 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVI, 69-73)

Peter sat outside in the palace court, and a damsel came unto him and said Thou also hast been with Jesus of Galilea But Peter denied it before them all, and said I know not what you say And again at the palace doorway he was seen by another maid, who said to them that stood there with him This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth He denied it a second time, and swore an oath I do not know this man And in a little while came others who had been standing beside him, and said to Peter Surely you also are a disciple, for all your speech does betray you

NO 46 RECITATIVE  
(Matthew XXVI, 74-75)

But still did he deny with cursing and with swearing I know not this man! Immediately the cock crew Then Peter brought to mind the words of Jesus which said unto him Ere yet the cock does crow will you have three times denied Me And he went out, and wept bitterly

NO 47 ARIA *Contralto*

Have mercy, Lord, my God,  
See how my tears are flowing  
Look on me  
Heart and eyes are weeping  
so bitterly

**JESUS BEFORE PILATE**

NO 49 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVII, 1-4)

Now when the morning came, all the chief priests gathered with the elders of the people to plot against Jesus, that they might kill Him And when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to the court of the governor Pontius Pilate When, therefore, Judas—the same who had betrayed Him—saw Jesus condemned to death, he repented of himself, and brought once again the thirty silver pieces to the high priests and the elders, and said I have great evil done, for I have righteous blood this day betrayed They said And what is that to us? Go see you to that!

NO 50 RECITATIVE  
(Matthew XXVII, 5-6)

Then he cast the silver pieces in the temple, and turned away, and went out, and he hanged himself

NO 54 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVII, 15-22)

Now upon that feast the governor was accustomed to release thereon one prisoner unto them, whomever they wanted Now at that time, and among the other prisoners, was a most notorious man, whose name was Barabbas And when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them Whom will you that I release unto you, Barabbas or this Jesus, of whom tis said He is Christ?

They shouted Barabbas! Then Pilate said unto them And what shall I do, then, with Jesus, of whom they say that He is Christ? Again they shouted Let Him be crucified!

NO 56 RECITATIVE  
(Matthew XXVII, 23)

The governor answered But what evil deed has He done?

NO 57 ARIOSO *Soprano*  
He is for all men good alone  
The blinded have been giv'n to see,  
The lame to walk aright,  
He speaks to us His Father's Word,  
He drives the devils forth,  
The sorrowing of their grief are free,  
He takes all sinners to His own —  
Than this, my Jesus naught has done

NO 58 ARIA *Soprano*

For love now is my Savior dying,  
Of mortal sin He knows naught  
May the everlasting torment  
On that Day of Judgment wrought  
Not on my poor soul be lying  
For love now is my Savior dying

NO 59 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVII, 23-26)

When Pilate therefore had seen he  
prevailed nothing, but that rather arose a  
tumult, he took water, and washed his  
hands before them all, and said I am  
innocent of the blood of this just man, see  
you to it! Then together all the people  
answered, and said His blood be on us  
and on our children!

THE SCOURGING

And Pilate then set Barabbas free, but  
Jesus he had scourged, and then he  
delivered Him that they might crucify  
Him

NO 60 ARIOSO *Contralto*

Have mercy, God!  
How stands the Savior all unheeding!  
O torturers! O scourge! O bleeding!  
You murderers, let Him be!  
Does sight of all His anguish bring  
No pity here within your breast?  
Ah, yes—You have a heart  
It must the murder-stone outlast!  
Were none so hard as we!  
Have mercy, let Him be!

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

NO 62 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVII, 27-30)

The guards of the governor came, and  
they took Jesus to the common hall, and  
gathered around Him all the soldier band  
And then they did strip Him, and brought  
a scarlet robe and put it on Him, and  
platted Him a crown of thorns, and put it  
upon His head and a reed in His right  
hand, and bowed the knee before Him  
low, and mocked at Him, and said We hail  
Thee, King of the Jews! And they spat  
upon His face, and took the reed, and  
smote Him upon His head

NO 63 CHORALE

O Head so sorely wounded,  
Defiled and put to scorn—  
O sacred Head, surrounded  
By mocking crown of thorn—  
O Head adorned and honored,  
So lovely fair to view,  
But now so low degraded,  
I greet and treasure You

NO 64 RECITATIVE

(Matthew XXVII, 31-32)

And after they had mocked Him thus,  
they took off from Him the scarlet robe,  
and clothed Him again in His own rai-  
ment, and led Him away that He be  
crucified And as they were going out,  
they came upon a man of Cyrene, whose  
name was Simon, and compelled this  
man to carry Jesus cross

NO 65 ARIOSO *Bass*

Yea, truly for us all must flesh and blood  
Be forced the cross to bear  
What works our spirit greatest good—  
The least can enter there

THE CRUCIFIXION

NO 67 RECITATIVE and CHORUS  
(Matthew XXVII, 33-43)

And when they finally had come to a  
place called Golgotha—that is to say, the  
place of skulls—then they gave Him vine-  
gar to drink that was mingled with gall, but  
when He tasted it, yet He would not drink  
it

And when, therefore, they had cruci-  
fied Jesus, they divided His garments, by  
casting lots for them And over above His  
head they hung a bold inscription of His  
death accusation, namely This is Jesus,  
the King of the Jews

And all they who passed that way re-  
viled at Him, deriding, they wagged their  
heads, and shouted He who destroyed  
the temple of God and built it again in  
three days—Save Yourself! If You are the  
Son of God, come down to us from off the  
cross!

And likewise also did the chief priests  
mock Him, with the scribes and with the  
elders, and said Savior was He of others,  
but for Himself not a Savior! If He be King  
of Israel, then let Him come off the cross  
and we will then believe Him He in God  
has trusted let His God then deliver Him  
now, if He will, for He has said I am God's  
own Son

NO 68 RECITATIVE

(Matthew XXVII, 44)

And also scoffed at Him the two thieves  
who were crucified with Him

NO 69 ARIOSO *Contralto*

Ah, Golgotha,  
Unholy Golgotha!  
The Lord of Glory see in shameful  
desecration  
The blest Redeemer of the race  
Hangs as a curse upon the cross  
The Lord who heav'n and earth has  
made—



Him earth and air has been denied  
The sinless suffers condemnation  
—So does it weigh upon my soul  
Ah, Golgotha,  
Unholy Golgotha!

**NO 71 RECITATIVE and CHORUS**  
(Matthew XXVII, 45-50)

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land, until the ninth hour And about the ninth hour Jesus cried aloud and said Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Some of them who stood and watched Him, when they had heard Him, turned and said He calls now for Elias And straightway one of them did run, and took a sponge and filling the sponge with vinegar he put it upon a reed and gave Him to drink The others spoke among them Wait and see now if Elias answers and will save Him And again did Jesus cry aloud and was gone

**NO 72 CHORALE**

When comes my hour of parting  
Then do not part from me  
When shades of death are dark'ning  
Your steps my guide shall be  
When anxious fears shall rend me,  
And close my heart enchain,  
Then then will You befriend me  
Through Your own grief and pain

**NO 73 RECITATIVE and CHORUS**  
(Matthew XXVII, 51-58)

And then behold! The veil of the temple was rent in twain, all from the top into the ground And there came a great earthquake and the rocks burst asunder, and the graves were opened again, and there rose many saints and the holy ones that were sleeping, and came from out the graves after Jesus' resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared to many Now when the captain, and the others with him who were watching Jesus—when they saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they trembled greatly, and said Truly, this was the Son of God

**THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS**

At eventide there came a wealthy man from Armathea, named Joseph, who was also one of Jesus' disciples He went unto Pilate, and begged of him the body of Jesus, wherefore Pilate commanded that it be given him

**NO 74 ARIOSO Bass**

At evening, hour of cooling rest  
Was Adam's fall made manifest  
At evening, too, they took the Savior  
down  
At evening did the dove return—

A bit of olive-leaf she bore  
O fairest time, O evening hour!  
Our peace with God is evermore assured  
For Jesus has His cross endured  
His Body comes to rest  
Ah, my beloved, do you ask?  
Go—and beseech Jesus Body broken  
—O holy thought, O precious heavenly token!

**NO 75 ARIA Bass**

Come, my heart, be ever clean,  
That my Jesus I may bury  
Enter now, whom I adore,  
Evermore  
Here in sweetest rest to tarry  
World, away! Let Jesus in

**THE BURIAL**

**NO 76 RECITATIVE and CHORUS**  
(Matthew XXVII, 59-60)

Then Joseph took the Body and wrapped it in a cloth of purest linen, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn from out the solid rock And when he had rolled a mighty stone to the door of the tomb, he went away

**NO 77 ARIOSO and CHORUS**

*(Daughter of Zion and Congregation of Believers)*

Now has the Lord been laid to rest  
My Jesus, sweet good-night

His pain is o'er,  
Which all our sin on Him has pressed

My Jesus sweet good-night

O true and holy Body!  
See, how I come in penitence to mourn  
Him

Thus did my Fall  
His agony betide

My Jesus sweet good-night

While life shall last  
I will this wonder ever thank  
That thus my soul was worthy in His sight!

My Jesus, sweet good-night

**EPILOGUE**

**NO 78 DOUBLE CHORUS**

Here bide we still with tears and weeping,  
And call to Thee in death now blest  
Rest Thou softly, softly rest  
Rest, Thou weary Body sleeping  
Rest Thou softly, rest Thou well  
See in grave and stone a grace  
For the anxious, the despairing  
Heaven's pillow, comfort bearing,  
And the soul's sweet resting place

Come, my joy!

Slumber doth mine eyes embrace  
Here bide we still with tears and weeping,  
And call to Thee in death now blest  
Rest Thou softly, softly rest

## THE SOLOISTS

IRENE GUBRUD, *Soprano*, a native of Minnesota, is a graduate of St. Olaf College and the Yale Graduate School of Music. She has participated in the Affiliate Artists Program and has been the



recipient of grants, including those from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the Juilliard School and the Concert Artists Guild. She was also awarded a Ford Foundation Grant enabling her to commission George Crumb's *Star Child*, premiered by Miss Gubrud with the New York Philharmonic on May 5, 1977, Pierre Boulez conducting. She also sang the premiere of Ned Rorem's *Little Prayers*. Miss Gubrud has appeared with the Chicago Symphony and the Symphony of Bordeaux in France. She has sung in New York's Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Recital Hall and has given recitals in Boston, Washington, D.C., and Bordeaux, France.

She sang Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* in Denver, Atlanta, San Francisco, and at the Ravel Festival in France at the invitation of Pierre Bernac. She has also appeared with the Metropolitan Opera Studio and performed on numerous radio and television broadcasts. Last June, she sang in Mahler's Fourth Symphony at the Festival Casals in San Juan, Jerzy Semkow conducting.

Irene Gubrud is making her Cleveland Orchestra debut in this performance.

GWENDOLYN KILLEBREW, *Mezzo-Soprano*, was born into a musical family and began her study of the piano at the age of five. In 1963, while studying at Temple University, she was chosen to be a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Pablo Casals in his oratorio, *El Pesebre*. Shortly following her studies at Juilliard with Hans Heinz, she won First Prize in the Belgian International Vocal Competition. Since that time, she has been active in concert and opera performances throughout the U.S. and Europe. She has appeared frequently with the orchestras of New York, Boston, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Milwaukee, as well as with those of Seattle, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Houston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. With the New York Philharmonic, Miss Killebrew has recorded Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, directed by Leonard Bernstein, sung in the 'Celebration of Women Composers' program with Sarah Caldwell, and participated in the recent Mahler Festival conducted by Pierre Boulez. She has also appeared at the festivals of Prague, Salzburg, Ravinia and Dartmouth. This summer, Miss Killebrew's appearances include Mahler's Eighth Symphony at the Hollywood Bowl and the Bach *Magnificat* and Haydn's *Theresienmesse* at Tanglewood, the Berkshire Music Festival.



Especially in demand for the dramatic mezzo-soprano roles of Verdi and Wagner, the artist has also had great success in music ranging from Handel to Henze. She has sung with the Metropolitan and New York City Opera Companies, as well as with companies in San Francisco, Santa Fe, San Diego, Connecticut, the Opera Society of Washington, the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, the Netherlands Opera, and the companies of Munich, Copenhagen and Geneva. She has recorded the title role in Handel's *Tamara* and was a soloist in Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* conducted by Leonard Bernstein at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and recorded by Columbia Records.

Gwendolyn Killebrew is making her debut with The Cleveland Orchestra.

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WBOE, Cleveland and Northeast Ohio's only 50,000-Watt public radio station (90.3 FM), is broadcasting musical previews of the Blossom Music Center Festival Concerts. The programs will be aired from July 7 through August 26 from 10:00 to 11:30 p.m., on the evenings before the Friday and Saturday performances, offering concertgoers the opportunity to acquaint or reacquaint themselves with the works to be performed.



RYLAND DAVIES, *Tenor*, was born in Wales and educated at the Royal Manchester College of Music where he won the Ricordi and Imperial League of Opera Prizes. On leaving college he



went to Glyndebourne, where he was the first singer to be awarded the Christie Prize, his debut principal role was that of Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in 1968. Since that highly acclaimed performance, he has sung with every major opera house and orchestra in Great Britain and has appeared at Glyndebourne in subsequent seasons. He has sung many roles at Covent Garden. Mr Davies' American debut, with the San Francisco Opera in *Così fan tutte* and *Otello*, led to appearances with the San Francisco Symphony and the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood, conducted by Seiji Ozawa. In 1970, Mr Davies sang Cassio in Herbert von Karajan's production of *Otello* at the Salzburg Festival. The artist has appeared at the Paris Opéra, the Palace of Versailles, with the National Orchestra in Madrid, and at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Erich Leinsdorf.

Mr Davies made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *Così fan tutte* and returned the following season in *The Barber of Seville*. He has recorded works by Berlioz, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Verdi on a variety of labels.

This performance marks Mr Davies' debut with The Cleveland Orchestra.

RICHARD STILWELL, *Bartone*, was born in St. Louis. He came to New York in 1965, intent on a career in Broadway musicals. That year, he won the Fisher Foundation Award of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions. With the \$2,000 prize, he continued his vocal training. He subsequently auditioned for the New York City Opera and was immediately chosen to make his operatic debut as Pelléas in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He has since become closely identified with that role, having performed it at La Scala in Milan, at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, with the Lyric Opera in Chicago, and last March, at the Paris Opera, conducted by Lorin Maazel.



Mr Stilwell has appeared with the major opera companies of this country and Europe, in operas spanning the history of the medium, including Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, and Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*. He sang in the world premières of *The Seagull* with the Houston Grand Opera and *Inez de Castro* with the Baltimore Opera, both works were written for him by Thomas Pasatieri. Mr Stilwell has become one of the leading singers of the Metropolitan Opera since his debut there in 1975, the company is planning a new production of *Billy Budd*, in which he will star during the 1978-79 season. Mr Stilwell has appeared with the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Pittsburgh. Last year, he sang the role of Jesus in *The St. Matthew Passion* with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood. At Wolf Trap Farm Park this summer he is singing leading roles in a number of works, including the east coast première of Busoni's *Dr. Faustus*.

Richard Stilwell is making his first appearance with The Cleveland Orchestra.



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Associate editor of this program book. TIMOTHY D. PARKINSON

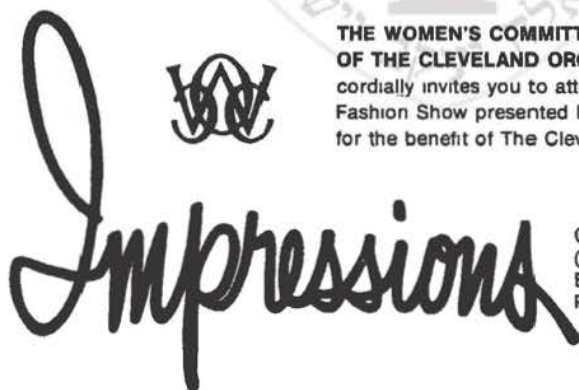
ROBERT CALVERT, *Tenor*, was born in Pittsburgh and studied voice and opera at Carnegie-Mellon University and at the Curtis Institute of Music. His teachers have included Beatrice



Krebs, Lorenzo Malfatti and Euphemia Giannini Gregory. Mr. Calvert has presented numerous recitals and has appeared in a variety of operatic roles in this country and abroad. In 1970 he sang at the Opera Barga Festival in Barga, Italy, where he performed the roles of Enrico in *Il Campanello* by Donizetti and Germano in Rossini's *La Scala di Seta*. He has appeared in Switzerland at the St. Gallen Stadttheater, at the Stratford Festival and for L'Opéra du Québec in Canada, with the Opera Society of Washington, the Philadelphia Lyric Opera, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. In 1970, Mr. Calvert sang the role of Guglielmo in the Lake Erie Opera Theatre production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Michael Charry.

Robert Calvert is making his debut as soloist with The Cleveland Orchestra in this concert.

GARY KENDALL, *Bass*, holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Missouri, a doctorate of performance and literature in voice from Indiana University, and also studied at the Curtis Institute of Music under Max Rudolf. He was the 1972 winner of the National Arts Club Competition for Basses, and the 1973 National Winner of the Young Artists Award sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs. He was awarded first prize in the recent Geneva International Competition. Mr. Kendall has appeared with orchestras in Switzerland and France, at the Spoleto Music Festival in Italy, with the Vienna Volksoper and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He has sung with the opera companies of Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Louisville and San Antonio, and with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Antonio, Seattle, Indianapolis and Cincinnati, as well as with the Oratorio Society of Utah. For two seasons he was resident as bass soloist at the Marlboro Music Festival. During the past season he appeared at the Casals Festival, with the Florentine Opera in Milwaukee, and with the Central City Opera in Colorado. In 1976, Gian Carlo Menotti chose him to give the premiere of two works composed in observance of the U.S. Bicentennial, *Landscapes and Remembrances* and *Hero*. Gary Kendall made his debut with The Cleveland Orchestra on April 21-23, 1977, in Bach's B minor Mass, Lorin Maazel conducting.



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Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Lamm,

im Auftrag von Herrn Dr. Fink, der zur Zeit verreist

ist, überreiche ich Ihnen in der Anlage ein Manuskript.

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Eigentlich "Antisemitismus" ungenau; nicht zutreffend, wenn man dabei auch an einen gewollten antisemitischen Effekt denkt. Richtiger: Antijudäismus.

In allen Stadien seiner Entwicklung war Oberammergau ein Volksschauspiel; als sinnfällige Gestaltung heiligen Geschehens gehört es in das weit verzweigte Gebiet der Volksreligiösität; aus der ehemals selbstverständlichen Welt des Glaubens in die moderne Welt übertragen ist es ein Phänomen des Folklorismus geworden - einem solchen Spiel entsprechen natürlicherweise ausgeprägte Stereotypvorstellungen, Gruppenvorurteile, die sich am leichtesten in einem unreflektierten "volkstümlichen" Freund-Feind-Denken niederschlagen. Volkstümliches Denken ist undifferenziert. Gruppenbestimmtes traditionsgesteuertes Leben tendiert zum Zusammenschluß nach innen und zum Absperren nach außen. Wer anders redet, anderes glaubt, sich auffallend anders kleidet ist verdächtig und gilt zumindest als mögliche Gefahr, als Feind. Eine primitive Verhaltensweise, die aber bei hochgebildeten Angehörigen von Kulturvölkern genau so anzutreffen ist. Von diesem atavistischen Hang zu Gruppenvorurteil und Gruppenhaß sind auch die Anhänger jeder Konfession nicht frei.

Einen christlichen Antijudaismus gibt es seit dem Mittelalter: Karfreitagspogrome, Legenden von Hostienschandung, Brunnenvergiftung, Ritualmorden usw. sind nur einige Stichwörter dafür. Als Reaktion darauf gab es fast ebenso lange einen nicht weniger fantasievollen jüdischen Antichristianismus: Ein Stichwort dafür jene "Marienlegenden", die nur von der Hure Maria sprachen, selbst den Namen des röm. Legionars nannten, der der Vater Jesu geworden sein soll. Nur völlige Ignoranz konnte leugnen, daß die Volksfrömmigkeit wo immer das möglich war judenfeindliche Motive aufgenommen hat - die Juden als Gottesmörder -, und ganz besonders die Passionsspiele, in denen diese Haltung geradezu eine dramaturgische Notwendigkeit wurde. So wurden die Hohen

Priester mehr oder weniger verzerrt dargestellt, wofür sich allerdings schon im Joh.Evangelium und mehr noch in den Apokryphen scheinbare Belege fanden.

Das gilt auch für den Oberammergauer Text. Der Geistliche Rat Daisenberger, wirklich ein Wohltäter der Gemeinde, war gewiß persönlich nicht judenfeindlich, aber sein Text hat einen unübersehbaren antijüdischen Akzent, der sich keineswegs nur im Verbalen erschöpft. Warum?

Das Passionsspiel, die Darstellung des Prozesses Jesu, ist ein Drama. Das Drama lebt von Konflikten. In der volkstümlichen barocken Passion hatte man den großen Widersacher, den Teufel, der - wir kommen darauf zurück - abgeschafft werden mußte. So blieben für die dramatische Auseinandersetzung die "historischen" Gegenspieler Jesu, mit all der auch historisch falschen Verallgemeinerung bis zur jüdischen Kollektivschuld, wie sie sich schon aus einer bösen christlich-volkstümlichen Tradition anbot (auch dieses Seitenthema sollte man nicht vergessen, wenn man von der Oberammergauer Tradition spricht). Der Theologe Daisenberger, der nebenbei auch historisch sehr interessiert war, wollte nun diese Last des Gegenspielers nicht allein den Hohen Priestern aufbürden, und so führte er die ja auch dramatisch nicht unergiebig Intrigue der aus dem Tempel verjagten, natürlich jüdischen Handler ein. Und eben dadurch, vielleicht nur aus der Hemmung, Geschichte zu verfälschen, wurde die Sache erst ganz schlimm. Das Ausspielen der Handlerszene, die negative Charakterisierung des ganzen Synhedrions, die sich daraus ergebende verleumderische Wortwahl bis zur programmatischen Gegenüberstellung von christlicher Kirche und Synagoge - ein beliebtes Motiv schon der Bildenden Kunst des MA - das alles zeigt Daisenbergers Text ganz in der Tradition unreflektierter antijüdischer Vorurteile.

Vor 150 Jahren konnte man dem Verfasser keinen Vorwurf machen; 1860 wußte man nicht, was man heute weiß. Heute aber weiß man es.

(Nach Georg R. Schroubek, 1970, EMUNA HORIZONTE, Heft4,Jahr.5)



Das "American Jewish Committee", eine seit Jahrzehnten um den Abbau von Vorurteilen bemühte Organisation, hat im Mai 1970 eine textvergleichende Studie über die Fassung des Oberammergauer Textes von 1960 und 1970 veröffentlicht. Diese sehr detaillierte Analyse wird in der deutschen Ausgabe ergänzt von den Eindrücken der Pastorin Marianne Timm, einem Aufsatz aus PUBLIK von Dr. Charlotte Stein und einem Artikel von Dr. Hans Lamm aus der "Allg. Unabhängigen Jüdischen Wochenzeitung". Zu diesen Untersuchungen habe ich noch einen Beitrag des kath. Theologen Thomas S. Kepler genommen, erschienen im Juli 1961 in "The Christian Century", Chicago.

Hier in Stichworten die antijüdischen Befunde, die den verschiedenen Berichten gemeinsam sind:

Zuerst das allgemeine Ergebnis, zu dem die Analyse der Textbücher von 1960 und 1970 kommt:

- Die Veränderungen seien nur eine geringe Milderung der durchwegs antijüdischen Phraseologie. Sodann die Übereinstimmung in folgenden Hauptpunkten:
- Kollektivschuld - also die vollkommen undifferenzierte negative Darstellung des jüdischen Volkes;
- die ebenso den geschichtlichen Tatsachen widersprechende Verzeichnung des Sanhedrin oder etwa der Pharisäer; nämlich ihrer Hauptrolle gegen Jesus;
- die absolut falsche Zeichnung des Pilatus und der Rolle der römischen Besatzungsmacht;
- die willkürliche und tendenziöse Auswahl aus dem Neuen Testament; die Separierung Jesu und seiner Anhänger vom jüdischen Volk und von der jüdischen Tradition;
- die Fluch- und Verstoßungstheologie (Kirche - Synagoge); die Tempelhändler als Motivation für die Verfolgung Jesu, überhaupt

die bei den Gegnern Jesu, zu denen das ganze Volk gezählt wird, vorherrschenden Motive des Hasses, der Rachsucht, des Neides; kurz vorzugsweise niederer Instinkte bis zur deutlich ausgesprochenen Lust an Grausamkeit und Quälerei.

Im Gegensatz dazu ROSNER: Bei ihm die Dramatik und Spannung in eine ganz andere Dimension gehoben - im Vordergrund nicht der Kampf der Guten (= Jesus und seine kleine Schar) gegen die Bösen (= d i e Juden), sondern zwischen Himmel und Holle. "Die Juden" sehr differenziert: mit Mühe kommt im Synedrium eine Mehrheit gegen Jesus zustande, und auch seine Gegner haben ernstzunehmende Argumente, haben Würde. Die Tempelvertreibung kommt als Szene gar nicht vor, wird nur von einem der Eiferer eher nebenbei berichtet. Jesus wird an keiner Stelle außerhalb des jüdischen Volkes gesehen. Die Figur des Pilatus entspricht dem, was man heute über den historischen Pilatus weiß, viel eher.

Der Gesamttext Rosners mit seinen 8455 Versen (zum Vergleich: Schillers Wallensteintrilogie hat 7627 Verse) ist, man möchte für die Zeit seiner Entstehung sagen: natürlich nicht frei von antijüdischen Affekten, die aber in der Hauptsache bloß verbal sind und deren Streichung oder Änderung nichts am menschlichen Grundcharakter seines Werkes ändern. Ein Passionsspiel ist nun einmal kein theologisches Lehrstück, sondern Volksstück, als solches auch ein historisches Dokument, das in so weit auch historisch gesehen werden muß.

Rosners Grundhaltung ist genau die, die P. Ralph Bormann gefordert hat: "Der echte Christ identifiziert sich mit denen, die gegen Christus arbeiteten, seinen Tod verlangten und ihn kreuzigten. Er schaut auf seine Schuld ... und weiß, daß wegen seiner Sünden Christus sterben mußte".

Diese von Rosner an mehreren Stellen direkt ausgesprochene Haltung ist der reine Gegensatz zu der im Text von Otmar Weis und Daisenberger nicht zu verleugnenden Emotion, die ein christliches Publikum sich ohne Selbstkritik, fast heuchlerisch und selbstgerecht auf der Seite der Guten wahren läßt, schon deswegen, weil sein Abscheu vor den anderen kräftig genährt wird.



*Oberammergau*

CONFIDENTIAL

August 3, 1977

Bernie Resnikoff

Marc H. Tanenbaum

Dear Bernie,

It was really wonderful seeing you especially in such vibrant good health.

On a confidential basis, I would like you to know that I have been invited to come to Munich, August 11-15, in order to preview a revised version of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Apparently, my serving as the Jewish consultant from the United States for "Jesus of Nazareth" has had some fall-out even in Munich. I will be joined by Zach Shuster, Bill Trosten, and Miles Jaffe, who is chairman of the Interreligious Affairs Commission.

The purpose of this note is to indicate to you my interest in coming to Israel from Munich for about two or three days, beginning on August 15th.

Should that be possible, I would want to arrange to meet some of the appropriate people in the new government, including the Minister of Religious Affairs. Any other suggestions that you might have for two or three days of visits that would help me understand the present administration would be greatly appreciated.

With warmest good wishes, I am,

Cordially yours,

MHT:RPR

*WMS - Bergen*