

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

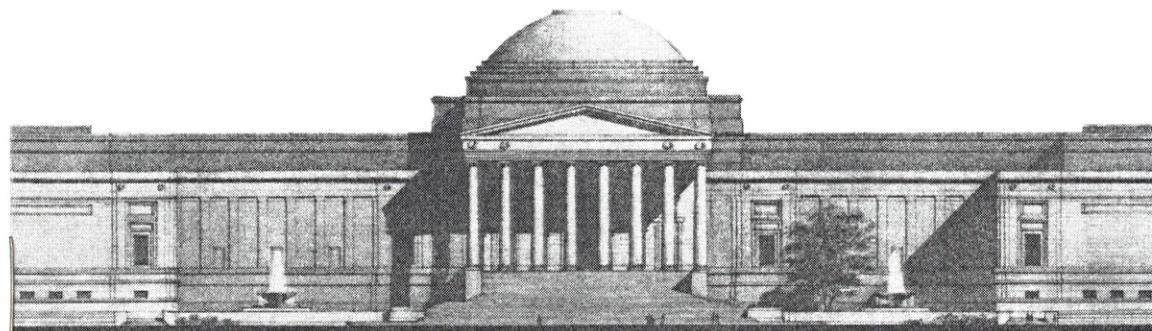
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

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The Sixty-third Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art

2,522d Concert

National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble

Rosa Lamoreaux, *artistic director*

Smithsonian Chamber Players

Kenneth Slowik, *conductor and organist*

Presented in honor of the exhibition

Rembrandt's Late Religious Portraits

6 February 2005

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637–1707)
Jesu, meines Lebens Leben BuxWV 62
Sinfonia
Aria: *Jesu, meines Lebens Leben*

Johann Theile (1646–1724)
*Das Leiden und Sterben unseres Herren Jesu Christi
nach dem Heiligen Mattäo* (1673)
(The Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Saint Matthew)

Actus I

Sinfonia (orchestra and chorus): *Das Leiden und Sterben unseres Herren*
(The Passion and Death of our Lord).

Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, and chorus): *Und es begab sich*
(Jesus' preaching attracts the attention of the high priests and scribes).

Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, and chorus): *Da nun Jesus
war zu Bethanien* (A woman anoints Jesus' feet in the house
of Simon in Bethany).

Recitative (Evangelist, Judas, and chorus): *Da ging hin der zwölften einer*
(Judas betrays Jesus).

Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, and chorus): *Er sprach: Gehet
hin in die Stadt* (Jesus and the disciples celebrate the Passover feast).

Aria (soprano): *O Gottes Sohn, du Heil der Sünder*
(An observer responds to what she has just seen and heard).

Ritornello (orchestra)

Recitative (Evangelist, Jesus, Judas, and Petrus): *Und da sie den Lobgesang
gesprochen hatten* (Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane; Jesus is
identified by Judas and arrested).

Recitative (Evangelist, Caiphas, Jesus, and chorus):
Und der hohe Priester stund auf (Jesus is placed on trial).

Aria: *Du duldig Lamm, o Gottes Sohn*
(An observer responds to the trial scene).

Ritornello

Recitative (Ancilla I, Evangelist, Petrus, Ancilla II, and chorus):
Petrus aber saß draußen (Peter denies Jesus three times).

Aria (Petrus): *Ach, wo soll ich mich hinwenden*
(Peter is overcome with remorse).

Ritornello

INTERMISSION

Actus II

Recitative (Evangelist, Judas, Pilatus, and chorus):
Des Morgens aber hielten (Judas hangs himself; Jesus is
brought before Pilate).

Ritornello

Recitative (Evangelist, chorus, and Jesus): *Und indem sie hinausgingen*
(Jesus is taken to Golgotha and crucified).

Recitative (Evangelist and chorus): *Und es waren viel Weiber da*
(Jesus' body is given to Joseph of Arimathea and placed in a tomb).

Aria (chorus): *Habe Dank, o Gottes Sohn*
(The Christian congregation thanks God for the sacrifice of Jesus
and looks forward to the Resurrection).

The Musicians

NATIONAL GALLERY VOCAL ARTS ENSEMBLE

This concert is the second appearance by the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble in its reconstituted form as a chamber choir. Its debut took place on 17 October 2004, in a program of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English vocal music. It was founded in 1985 as a vocal quartet by former Gallery music director George Manos, who presented it regularly in that form until his retirement in 2003. Under its new artistic director Rosa Lamoreaux, the ensemble will appear again on 26 June 2005, singing Renaissance a cappella choral music.

Evangelist: Robert Petillo, tenor

Jesus: Steven Combs, bass-baritone

Pilatus: James Shaffran, baritone

Caiphas: K. C. Armstrong, bass

Ancilla I (First maidservant): Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano

Ancilla II (Second maidservant): Gisele Becker, soprano

Uxor Pilati (Wife of Pilate): Barbara Hollinshead, alto

Judas: Roger O. Isaacs, countertenor

Petrus: Gary Glick, tenor

THE SMITHSONIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS

Under the direction of Kenneth Slowik, the Smithsonian Chamber Players have undertaken the exploration of the sonic, cultural, and historical aspects of the master instruments in the collection of musical instruments at the Smithsonian Institution. Consisting of musicians who share expertise in and deep involvement with historic performance practices, the chamber players have been an integral part of the Smithsonian's exploration of American music-making. They fill a core function in the Smithsonian Chamber Music Program, the largest period-instrument residency in any museum in the world. The participating Smithsonian Chamber Players in this program are Julie Andrijeski and Scott Metcalfe (violin), Alice Robbins and John Moran (viola da gamba), and Patricia Neely (violone).

KENNETH SLOWIK

Organist and harpsichordist Kenneth Slowik is artistic director of the period-instrument chamber music program at the National Museum of American History. As a cellist and viola da gamba player, he was a founding member of the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the Axelrod Quartet, the Smithsonian String Quartet, the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, and the Castle Trio. A frequent performer with Anner Bylisma's Ensemble l'Archibudelli and at festivals throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States, Slowik is increasingly in demand as a conductor of opera and oratorio. His solo, conducting, and ensemble appearances have led to more than fifty recordings, many of them prizewinners. Slowik is artistic director of the Baroque Performance Institute at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and conductor of the Santa Fe, New Mexico, Bach Festival.

THE EXHIBITION

Rembrandt's *Late Religious Portraits* offers a unique opportunity to explore one of the most fascinating aspects of Rembrandt van Rijn's artistic career, his brooding and pensive religious portraits painted in the late 1650s and early 1660s. Created during a time of personal turmoil, this group of works by Rembrandt (1606–1669) has never been shown together before. The exhibition brings together seventeen powerfully evocative half-length images of religious figures. Many of these dramatic portraits depict apostles and evangelists, but among them are representations of Christ, the Virgin, and unidentified saints and monks. The men and women in these powerful images peer out of the dark recesses of dimly lit interiors, burdened by the weight of their spiritual and emotional concerns. Rembrandt's choices as to their physical features and their surroundings were a personal response to the stories he knew about them, which came primarily from the Bible. In much the same way, the composers from Rembrandt's time always included arias and choruses in their passions and oratorios that reflected their personal response to the biblical texts. Both the Gallery's juxtaposition of Rembrandt's late religious portraits in a single exhibition and this concert presentation of a composer's response to the writings of the apostle Matthew are explorations of the ways in which creative artists respond to the religious epics that form an important part of their environment.

Program Notes

Dietrich Buxtehude's beautiful cantata *Jesu, meines Lebens Leben* was chosen for the opening work of this program as an *exordium*, or fervent invitation to the listeners to focus their attention on the drama about to unfold. Johann Theile's dramatic work, which follows, is the story of Christ's crucifixion, or passion.

Repetition of this story has been an essential part of the Christian liturgical year since early church history. Each of the four Gospels presents an individual account of the passion. From the fourth century, readings of these texts to special reciting formulae were part of the Holy Week ceremony, serving both a didactic and a commemorative function. As early as the ninth century, manuscript sources indicate that the single reciter was to vary the pitch, dynamics, and tempi of his delivery so as to impart a greater sense of drama. By about 1250, the dramatic realism suggested by this differentiation was further heightened by having three singers play the roles of the Evangelist, Jesus, and the *soliloquentes*, such as Pilate. By the end of the fourteenth century, a chorus was introduced for the crowd scenes, or *turbae*. From this point it was but a short step to incorporating polyphony (already used in the church liturgy for certain Christmas lessons) into the passion presentations.

The two surviving monumental passion settings by Johann Sebastian Bach are universally acknowledged as the pinnacle of perfection in the genre. They stand at the culmination of a long series of polyphonic German Lutheran passions with voices and instruments, in which Johann Theile's *St. Matthew Passion*, published in 1673, is an important link. Theile and Bach both followed the traditional assignments of the solo parts: the Evangelist is a tenor, and Jesus and Pilate are basses. In Theile's *Passion*, as in Bach's, the words of Jesus are surrounded by what Albert Schweitzer called a "halo of strings," played in the earlier work by two violins. In addition to the *soliloquente* roles and *turba* choruses, Theile interrupts the narrative at four points for short strophic arias, in which he uses non-Gospel texts to offer brief meditations on the passion. The work concludes with a chorale-like tutti aria.

Program notes by Kenneth Slowik