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MDG
SCENE



01/17-(5)

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
St. John Passion BWV 245

Veronika Winter, soprano
Franz Vitzthum, alto
Andreas Post, tenor
+ other soloists
Stuttgarter Hymnus-Chorknaben
Handel's Company
Rainer Johannes Homburg, cond.

2 Hybrid-SACDs

MDG 902 1985-6

UPC-Code:



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RECORDING

LC06768

Get Ready!

Johann Sebastian Bach revised his *St. John Passion* several times. Which one to choose? Rainer Johannes Homburg selected the last version for this performance with his Hymnus Choirboys of Stuttgart and Handel's Company. Why? It combines the carefree expressivity of Bach's initial years at St. Thomas, eliminating unnecessary second thoughts from his middle years, with an experienced and mature master's instrumental tonal sophistication – which Homburg fully exploits. The richly colored continuo group, here even including a contrabassoon, makes us sit up and listen. Get ready for an enthralling listening experience and vibrant performance by this prizewinning traditional choir!

Glad Tidings

While the *St. Matthew Passion* focuses on Jesus' human suffering, in the *St. John Passion* Christ presents himself above all as the divine Redeemer. Bach captures the dramatic reduction going along with this depiction; the carefully balanced symmetry of the composition is a genial reflection of the architecture of the Gospel of St. John, from the initial "Herr unser Herrscher" to the concluding "Dich will ich preisen ewiglich." In this way the narrative of the suffering and death of Jesus – very much as Martin Luther saw it – becomes a message full of happy hope for all people.

Gripping Message

Bach repeatedly conveys the special core of this message with special instruments. The viola d'amore is used, and so are the lute, oboe da caccia, and oboe d'amore. However, one of the high points is doubtless the gripping alto aria "Es ist vollbracht," which calls on the solo viola da gamba to express the most highly personal sorrow. The repeated employment of a contrabassoon must have made Bach's contemporaries take special notice. And even today its grumbling in the bass depths results in fascinating shuddering.

Go For it!

Andreas Post, a highly expressive Evangelist, guides us through the fast-paced action, which keeps us in suspense until the very last second. And this three-dimensional recording in high-resolution SACD quality means that listening experience merges with real life: an existential human borderline experience that will move even those who are not devout Protestants.

Johann Adam Hiller: Choral Music
Stuttgarter Hymnus-Chorknaben, Handel's Company
Rainer Johannes Homburg, cond.
MDG 902 1876-6 (Hybrid-SACD)

Heinrich Schütz: Sacred Music
Stuttgarter Hymnus-Chorknaben
Rainer Johannes Homburg, cond.
Musica Fiata; Roland Wilson, cond.
MDG 902 1784-6 (Hybrid-SACD)