

## Chapter 7

### Passion Compositions associated with Zerbst Kapellmeisters 2: J.G. Röllig St Matthew Passion

#### 7.1 Source and provenance

The sole source of this work is a fragment in Rostock University Library.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript was once part of the private collection of Duchess Luise Friederike of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1722-1791) housed from 1785 in the Palais-Gebäude in Rostock (now the University administration building).<sup>2</sup> The entire collection passed to the University in 1799. No details survive of the provenance of the manuscript or when it was acquired by the Duchess.

Röllig left Dresden in about 1734-5, where he was already successfully composing both church and instrumental music under the watchful eye of Zelenka, and enrolled at the University at Leipzig to study theology for two and a half years. It is presumed that the St Matthew Passion was performed in Leipzig in the period 1737-8. (i.e. during or immediately after Röllig was in Leipzig) on the basis of Arnold Schering comment that a 'modest' Passion by Röllig was directed by J.S. Bach.<sup>3</sup> The suggestion that Bach was the conductor is important since this would place the performance of the work in one of the two *Hauptkirchen*

<sup>1</sup> Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mus. Saec. XVIII. 54. 9

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps significantly there are also five concertos by J.F. Fasch in this collection. (FWV L : C 3; FWV L : D 10; FWV L : e 1; FWV L : G 8, FWV L h 1). Pfeiffer (1988) pp. 23 and 67ff.

<sup>3</sup> 'Auch eine bescheidene Passion von Joh. Georg Röllig... mag noch unter Bachs Kantorat erklingen sein.' Schering (1941) p.175. (Schering gives no reference to his source of information.)

between which the annual performance on Good Friday of the Passion music was presented in Leipzig. Bach generally performed his own Passion settings in the Thomaskirche where there was more space and the acoustic more benevolent.<sup>4</sup> The choir loft in the Nicolaikirche was smaller and it was here that Bach tended to perform works by other composers which rarely required forces larger than a pair of oboes or flutes in addition to the strings. On only four or five occasions between 1730 and 1750 are we unsure what was performed in the Thomaskirche. Thus, although no record survives of the occasion that the Röllig Passion was performed, it can be placed with some certainty to either 1737 or more likely to 1738. Table 7.1 below lists the likely performance history in the three principal churches in Leipzig between 1730 and 1740.

There would inevitably have been some considerable time required for Röllig to compose the work and for Bach to decide to schedule it for performance (which, presumably, would have been after he had seen the completed score.) As Röllig's setting of the St Matthew Passion requires a larger performing group (4 upper ww, 2 bn, 2 hn, strings and at least three continuo instruments) than the earlier version of BWV245 and the oratorios that Bach was in the custom of performing in the Nicolaikirche,<sup>5</sup> the likelihood that Bach deferred the performance of the Röllig Passion to 1738 to accommodate it in the Thomaskirche seems strong.

A full copy of the work (in score and parts) would presumably have been held by the Thomasschule along with 65 cantatas by Röllig until 1944, when the entire collection was destroyed.<sup>6</sup> The presence of so many of Röllig's works in the library of the Thomasschule is an indication of the esteem that Bach felt for this young composer's music. (It is perhaps worth

<sup>4</sup> It is suggested (Glöckner (1975) and Schmieder (1990)) that the anon. St Luke Passion (BWV246) with strings, 2 oboes doubling flutes, taille (for one movement) and 1 bassoon was performed in the Nicolaikirche in 1730. To accommodate the forces required for the St John Passion BWV 245 (4 upper ww - strings, including lute and gamba, and three continuo instruments) in the Nicolaikirche in 1724, Bach had the loft enlarged specially. (It has been suggested variously by Chafe and others that other performances in the Nicolaikirche took place in 1728, 1732, and 1737; though no evidence has been provided to support these proposals.) However for Version IV of BWV 245 Bach increased the number of continuo instruments to five (organ, cello, bass, bassoon and a second keyboard) and very likely performed this version of the work in the Thomaskirche in 1742/1746 or 1748 (see Schmieder (1990) - Bach generally performed works of this size in the Thomaskirche, the venue for all the performances of BWV 244 and of the St Mark Passion BWV 247 (in 1731).

<sup>5</sup> Including the Keiser St Mark Passion, Brockes Passion settings by Händel and Telemann, and the St Luke Passion BWV 246. (See Table 1.11 of the instrumentations of 18th-century Passions.)

<sup>6</sup> No records survive of the former holdings of the library.

**Table 7.1 - Passion performances in the Leipzig churches**

	<i>Thomaskirche</i>	<i>Nicolaikirche</i>	<i>Neukirche</i>
1730	-	St John BWV 245/Bach* or St Luke BWV 246/attr.Bach\$	Passionsmusik/Gerlach
1731	St Mark BWV 247/Bach	-	Passionsmusik/Gerlach
1732	-	(Brockes/Telemann?)*	
1733	<i>No Performance</i> †	-	<i>No Performance</i>
1734	St Luke BWV 246/attr.Bach¢	-	-
1735	-	St Mark/Keiser	Oratorium/Gerlach
1736	St Matthew BWV 244/Bach	-	-
1737	-	(Brockes/Telemann?)* or St John BWV 245/Bach¶ or <i>St Matthew/ Röllig ?</i>	Passionsmusik/Gerlach
1738	<i>St Matthew/Röllig ?</i>	-	Oratorium/Gerlach
1739	-	(Brockes/Telemann?)* or St John BWV 245/Bach?¥	
1740	St Matthew BWV 244/Bach	-	
†	No performance due to 'Landestrauer' (State mourning)		
*	Bach remarked, after the proposition in 1739 by the Town Council that a particular Passion be banned, that it had been performed already on several occasions. Glöckner (1975) p.615 suggests that this was Telemann's Brockes Passion, but Chafe (1979) footnote 5, p.76, on the basis of philological evidence, believes it was most probably BWV 245 that caused the Town Council such consternation in 1739, citing the textural modifications as evidence of the influence of the Leipzig theological establishment in Bach's revision process.		
¶	Chafe (1979) footnote 5, p.76		
\$	Glöckner (1975), Schneider (1990)		
¢	Spitta II, p.708		

noting that by the mid 1730s Bach had all but finished composing liturgical music for use in the parish churches and relied principally on works by other composers.) The possibility that

Röllig's St Matthew Passion was subsequently performed in Zerbst cannot be ruled out.<sup>7</sup>

The discussion below will explore some of the relationships between Röllig's fragmentary St Matthew Passion with the Leipzig tradition and with BWV 244 in particular.<sup>8</sup> It must be assumed that Röllig heard the 1736 performance of BWV 244 which would explain some of the similarities in the opening chorus of his later surviving setting of St Mark (discussed in Chapter 9), similarity of texts and treatment of the *turbae*, and the instrumentation, which clearly distinguish Röllig's Passion music from the surviving examples of J.F. Fasch.

## 7.2 Structure

The manuscript,<sup>9</sup> which is not holograph, consists of 68 pages of neatly written score.

Entitled "Aus / Der Passion / von / Roellig", it contains 13 items that include examples of each of the principal movements of a typical oratorio Passion, including a *turba* chorus, two recitative sections, the *Schlußchor* and eight arias. Although the movements in this incomplete version appear to be in the correct order, their juxtaposition in the manuscript confirms that this source represents a selection of exemplar movements taken from another (complete?) score and made, presumably, by a student of Röllig's music - there seems no other explanation for such an incomplete text.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Five performances of Passions according to St Matthew were given in Zerbst following Röllig's appointment (1737) in 1740, 1745, 1749, 1753, 1757. The work performed in 1740 was in Four Parts, the last occasion that a four-part St Matthew Passion was performed in this centre (previous performances of Four-Part Passions having been given in 1720, 1725, 1730 and 1735 and all assumed to be repeat performances of J.B. Kuch's setting or of a Fasch revised version of the same). A seven-Part Passion was performed from 1745. No details of the libretto or music survive to give any indication of the contents of the work or its author. It is not impossible that this work is an adaptation of the St Matthew Passion performed in Leipzig.

<sup>8</sup> The discussion in Chapter 9 of the Zerbst St Mark Passion, also believed to be by Röllig, also examines the possible relationships with the Leipzig tradition.

<sup>9</sup> A description of the source can be found in Appendix 4.

<sup>10</sup> Could this student have been Georg Peter Weimar (1743-1800) a bass singer and deputy Kantor of Zerbst 1758-63? He states in his autobiography published in the Preface of *Vollständigs, rein und unverfälsches Choral=Melodienbuch* ... (1803) that he got to know Graun's *Der Tod Jesu* by singing arias from the work. Weimar also claims to have taken violin lessons from Höckh and Fasch and composed cantatas, motets and Passion music in his own right. Weimar is also a likely link in the ownership of the St Mark Passion discussed below. The fact that all but two of the solo numbers included in the selection are for bass (or in part for bass) strongly supports the idea that a bass singer was interested and involved in the production of this source. It is possible that Weimar is the student who made the selection of bass arias and recitatives, though the date that the Duchess Luise Friederike acquired the score would have been prior to Weimar's death. No work has yet been done on Weimar holographs which would establish whether the Rostock source is in Weimar's hand though a comparison with the source of the St Mark Passion suggests that these two manuscripts were prepared by different copyists.

## (Part I)

1. **Choro** *Ja, nicht auf das Fest* (Matthew 26, vs.5)
2. **Aria** (bass) *Juda! laß den Vorsatz fahren*
3. **Terzetto** (alto, tenor, bass) *Herr und Schöpfer aller Dinge*
4. **recitative con accompagnato** (bass-Jesus) *In diese Nacht werdet ihr*  
(Matthew 26, vs.31-2)
5. **Aria** (alto) *Mir fängt Jesus an zu Zittern.*
6. **recitative con accompagnato** (bass-Jesus) *Meine Seele ist betrübt*  
(Matthew 26, vs.38)
7. **Aria** (bass) *Ihr Feinde, zuckt doch nicht die Schwerter*
8. **Aria** (tenor) *Die Fesseln, welche Jesum binden*
9. **Aria** (bass) *Tobt, rast und wütet immerhin, ihr Feinde*
10. **Aria** (bass) *Verlassen, o erbärmlichs Rufen*
11. **Aria** (bass) *Was vor ein Schall durchdringt die Lüfte*
12. **recitative accomp.** (Evangelist) *Und siehe da, der Vorhang*  
(Matthew 27, vs.51-53)
13. **Schlußchor** *So ruh in deines Grabes Höhle*

The recitative sections all commence at the beginning of a new page. The first two are settings of Christ's words on the Mount of Olives, whilst the third is the account of the rending of the curtain in the temple and opening of the tombs of the saints following Christ's death. None is given context nor represents a complete recitative section (Christ's words would certainly have been introduced by the Evangelist.) Apart from two arias and the opening of the *Schlußchor*, which commence halfway down a page immediately after the end of the recitative (though this is clearly not the recitative text that would have come immediately before the movement concerned in the complete version), all lyrical sections commence on a fresh page. That there were more arias originally seems certain as there are none in this selection for soprano solo (see Table 1.4). Note also from Table 1.4 that the preponderance of arias for bass voice - five solo arias and a *Terzetto* and two recitative sections out of 13 movements - is also most unusual. The number of bass arias may well be influenced by J.S.Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* which itself contains four bass arias, the second largest number in any surviving 18th-century oratorio *Passion*. Since two of the three recitative sections are also for bass voice, one wonders whether this collection of movements was made by a student or composer in order to study the manner in which Röllig composed for the bass voice. Though unlikely, it cannot be ruled out that the lyrical movements stem from multiple sources rather than one *Passion* setting which might explain the high preponderance of music for bass voice.

Reference has been made in Chapter 1 to the tradition of ‘sleep choruses’ in Hamburg and Leipzig Passions, dating from the anonymous setting of Postel’s libretto for St John (Hamburg 1704). The text of the *Schlußchor* of Röllig’s St Matthew Passion, ‘So ruh in deines Grabes Höhle’, confirms, in part, the centre for which Röllig’s St Matthew Passion was intended and that he probably did not commence the composition of the work until he had moved to Leipzig.<sup>11</sup> One can safely assume, therefore, that the complete work would have displayed other characteristics in common with all Leipzig Passions, such as an opening chorus, the interspersal of the text with chorales and a division of the work into two Parts, performed either side of the sermon in the Good Friday Vespers service.

From the surviving movements it is difficult to ascertain whether there is a dynamic key structure in this work; all but one of the St Matthew Passion arias (all of the solo arias) are in a flat key. In this context, the key of the *Terzetto* (E major), represents a striking contrast to the other movements. The brightness of G major in the *Schlußchor* also appears to balance the opening *turba* chorus, suggesting the possible return to a home key.

**Table 7.2 - Key structure and instrumentation of Röllig's St Matthew Passion**

1	Turba chorus		G	2 ob + strings
2	Aria	bass	F	strings
3	Terzetto	A.T.B	E	2 ob d’amore + strings
5	Aria	alto	c minor	2 fl + strings
7	Aria	bass	Bb	2 ob + strings
8	Aria	tenor	c minor	solo violin + bc
9	Aria	bass	Bb	2 ob, 2 bn + strings
10	Aria	bass	d minor	solo ob + bc
11	Aria	bass	Eb	2 ob, 2 hn + strings
13	Schlußchor		G / e minor	2 fl, 2 ob d’amore + muted strings

### 7.3 The Instrumentation

Though the instrumentation of the St Matthew Passion is more modest than that in the later St Mark Passion, and reflects more or less the forces available to Bach in Leipzig for the Good Friday service, it is striking that Röllig adopts a larger performing body for the Passion works than that required for cantatas he composed to be performed on regular Sunday *Gottesdienst* and other feast days of the year, a contrast highlighted in Table 7.3 below. As a minimum,

<sup>11</sup> There seem to have been no instances of such a theme for a final aria or chorus text in Passions of other centres - See section 1.4.4.1

Röllig always employed a four-part string section and continuo - three works for solo voice and strings survive. To this he added various combinations of wind instruments up to a full Baroque orchestra of three trumpets (2 *clarini* and a *principale*), timpani, 2 oboes and organ with SATB choir and soloists for a major celebratory feast day. Only *Gott mein Trost* (1758) requires a larger wind group (9 players) than that needed for the *St Matthew Passion* (8 players).

**Table 7.3: The instrumentation of Röllig's accompanied sacred music**

	<i>trav.</i>	<i>fl.d'</i>	<i>douce</i>	<i>oboe</i>	<i>ob d'</i>	<i>fag.</i>	<i>horn</i>	<i>gamba</i>	<i>tpts.*</i>
<b>Surviving works</b>									
St Matthew Passion	2	-	-	2	2d	2	2	-	-
St Mark Passion	2	2d	2 picc	2	3	2	2	2	-
Ich bin Gewiß	1	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	-
Sei du mein Anfang	-	-	-	2 (¶1)	1d	-	2	-	-
Gott fährt mit Jauchzen auf	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	3(+)
Rühmet seinen heiligen Namen	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	2?
Es ist euch gut dass ich hingehe	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alle die Gottselig Leben wollen	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Das Volk so im Finstern wandelt	-	-	2	-	-	-?	2	-	-
O wie meynt es Gott so gut	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wer ist doch das vor eine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Freunde wählen und nicht fehlen	1	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	-
Mein Geist, lass deine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gott mein Trost so kann ich u.	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	3+
Euer Hertz soll sich freuen	2d	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3+
Sey gretreu bis (1771)¶2	2d	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Sanctus con Echo (in D)	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	2+
Kyrie [& Gloria]	2d	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
<b>Other Works listed in 1761 Breitkopf catalogue ¶3</b>									
Ehre sey Gott in der Höhe	1	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
Und da die Engel von ihnen u.	-	-	2	2	-	-	2	-	-
Nun öffnen sich die blassen Lippen	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	3+
Gott hat Jesum auferwecket,	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
Bleibe bey uns, denn u.	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
Michael! wer ist wie Gott,	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3+
Der Herr hat seinen Engel,	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3+
<b>Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3+ = three trumpets + timpani</li> <li>d= doubling instruments</li> <li>¶1 2 oboes 'or flutes'</li> <li>¶2 plus timpani</li> <li>¶3 Breitkopf-Katalog (1761), pp.21-22.</li> </ul>									

Notable is the requirement for four or more upper woodwind players as well as a pair of horns

and *concertato* bassoons in each Passion setting. Again, not only does the St Matthew Passion appear modern in this respect (see Table 1.11 of instrumentations of 18th-century Passions), the need for a larger wind-group than the norm (particularly upper woodwind) provides another indicator that Röllig probably composed the work having experienced the tradition in Leipzig, where J.S. Bach favoured much larger performing groups for his Passions than any of his contemporaries, utilising both the first and second choirs of the Thomasschule for these performances. The adoption of the pair of horns can be also considered unique in the third to fourth decades of the 18th century in the context of oratorio Passion history.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly, in neither Leipzig nor Zerbst was there a hint of the *Stille Woche*, customary in some centres, in which instruments were required to be reduced in number, muted or made entirely silent. In the case of Zerbst, quite the opposite seems to have been true, the music for Passion week being considered one of the highlights of the church calendar.<sup>13</sup>

#### 7.4 The lyrical movements - Internal Structures

As one might expect by the late 1730s, Röllig cast all but one of the St Matthew arias in *da capo* or *dal segno* form whilst the *Terzetto* is a simple cavatina structure.<sup>14</sup> There is much more uniformity of verse length and rhyme structure in the St Matthew Passion than in the earlier *Mich vom Stricke meiner Sünden*; all but one of the arias consist of five lines of verse with only four similar rhyming patterns between them. Of the two in non-repeating form, the *Schlußchor*, item 13, falls into two main parts defined by key and texture, whilst the *Terzetto* (No.3) is little more than an extended *arioso*. (Both are described below.) Two ‘progressive’ features of these movements, seen in the works of other mid-century composers such as C.P.E.Bach and C.H. Graun, are a contrasting metre for the ‘B’ section (item nos. 2 and 5)

<sup>12</sup> See further comments on orchestration below.

<sup>13</sup> Wäschke (1908b) p.11.

<sup>14</sup> *Cavatina* = ‘The proper form for the *cavatina* would seem to be in one section without repetition (except for a short instrumental anticipation of the beginning ...) in other words, just a “sentence” set to music.’ (*Harvard Dictionary of Music*). See Section 1.5 above for a description of aria form in the 18th century.



and tempo changes in the course of the music (nos. 5 and 9).<sup>15</sup>

<b>Table 7.4 Rhyming schemes, lengths of texts and movement structures</b>					
	<b>movement type</b>	<b>Rhyme scheme</b>	<b>Structure:</b>		
			<b>da capo</b>	<b>type #</b>	<b>other</b>
<b>5 lines</b>	aria	ab.aab	2	A2	
			10	D1*	
	aria	ab.aac	8	A1a*	
	aria	ab.ccb	7	A2	
			9	A1*	
			11	A1*	
	aria	ab.ccx	5	A1*	
<b>7 lines</b>	chorus	abac.dcc	-	-	13
<b>8 lines</b>	aria	aab.aab.aa.	-	-	3 (binary)
# for explanation of formal types, see 1.5.1					

All but one of the *da capo* arias adopt the full repeat, No.10 being in an abridged form (D1). The aria ‘Die Fesseln, welche Jesum immerhin, ihr Feinde’ (No.8) displays a modification to the standard modulatory pattern of part A of the *da capo* form: the modulation back to the home key is enacted in the medial ritornello R2.

**Table 7.5 Plan of No.8: Tenor Aria , ‘Die Fesseln, welche Jesum binde’**

	<i>Bar No.</i>	<i>section</i>	<i>key</i>	<i>text</i>
<b>A</b>	1-142	R1	C minor	
	143-282	S1	C minor-Eb	1-2
	283-342	R2	Eb-C minor	
	343-53	S2	C minor	1-2
	53-60	R3	C minor	
	<i>Fine</i>			
<b>B</b>	603-652	S3	C minor-Eb	3
	652-672	R4	Eb	
	673-83	S4	Eb	4-5
	<i>Dacapo</i>			

*143 bars*

Whilst two arias feature a medial ritornello in the B section together with a full repetition of the text in S4, five arias (Nos. 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11 - indicated on Table 7.4 by asterisks) can be described above as having ‘modified’ A1 and D1 structures. While there is no repetition of the

<sup>15</sup> This can only be found in three other surviving works by Röllig, both arias in Cantata *O wie meynt es Gott so gut*, in the Bass aria from *Freunde wählen und nicht fehlen* (1734) and in the aria ‘Mir fällt das allerbeste Los’ from the St Mark Passion (1750).

text of the B section in these movements, they have an instrumental articulation (medial ritornello) in the B section defined by a change of key (see table below) with different lines of text in S3 and S4. Nos 5, 10 and 11 are the only ones to have lines 3 and 4 in S3 and line 5 in S4 (No.8 divides the text the other way - see Table 7.5 above).<sup>16</sup> Invariably, the arias in major keys commence S3 in the submediant minor key. The seven-bar S3 in No. 9 remains in this key more or less throughout the section whilst the other movements with longer B sections modulate to the mediant (i.e. a tonic-dominant relationship).

<b>Table 7.6 Key schemes of B sections of Röllig's St Matthew Passion arias</b>				
	<b>movement.</b>	<b>key</b>	<b>S 3</b>	<b>S 4</b>
<b>Major keys:</b>	2	F	vi -ii-iii	
	7	Bb	vi-iii	
	9	Bb	vi	
	11	Eb	vi-iii	iii-vi
<b>Minor keys:</b>	5	Cm	III-i	i
	8	Cm	i-III	III
	10	Dm	i-III	III-VI

The most unusual structure is in No.9, the bass aria 'Tobt, rast und wütet immerhin, ihr Feinde', where changes of metre and tempo coincide with the appearance in the text of the second line: 'and to this the innocent has no answer'. The proportionately lengthy A section (42 bars) is reprised in its complete form after the short B section in which the last three lines of verse are set. The structure are as follows:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The medial ritornello can be found in the majority of the arias of the Zerbst St Mark Passion *Die betrübte und getröstete Sulamith* the work discussed in Chapter 9. The medial ritornello in the B section had all but died out in the 1720s. (See descriptions of aria-types in Section 1.5.)

<sup>17</sup> The full text of the aria is:  
 'Tobt, raast, und wütet immerhin ihr Feinde  
 die Unschuld sagt hierzu nichts mehr.  
 Verwunder' dich du ungerichteter Küster  
 entsetzt euch nicht ihr Höllenfalschheit dürster,  
 bemühet euch nur nicht zusehe'

**Table 7.8** St Matthew Passion No.9: Bass Aria *Tobt, rast und wütet immerhin, ihr Feinde*

	<i>Bar No.</i>	<i>section</i>	<i>key</i>	<i>metre / tempo</i>	<i>text</i>
<b>A</b>	1-113	inst. ritornello	Bb	common time	
	113-16	vocal phrase	Bb-dom of F		1
	17-21	vocal phrase	F	<sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> <i>Lento</i>	2
	22-25	inst. ritornello	F	common time/ <i>a tempo</i>	
	26-31	vocal phrase	F		1
	32-37	vocal phrase	F-Bb	<sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> <i>Lento</i>	2
	38-42	inst. ritornello	F	common time/ <i>a tempo</i>	
	<i>Fine</i>				
<b>B</b>	42-49	vocal phrase	Bb-Gminor		3-5
	<i>Dacapo</i>			<i>91bars</i>	

The shortest movement, a *cavatina* of just 35 bars, is the *Terzetto*. In this simple, song-like pastoral movement, the four-bar introduction presents one theme whilst the voices introduce a second. The three solo voices are essentially homophonic throughout apart from some imitative interplay in the second vocal phrase. The simplicity of the structure is reflected also in the simplicity of the style; parallel thirds and sixths between the upper treble instruments and voices predominate. The harmony is very static; the opening four bars feature a tonic pedal in the sustained oboes d'amore and the rest of the movement remains close to the tonic or dominant:

**Table 7.9** St Matthew Passion No .3: Terzetto *Herr und schöpfer aller dinge*

<i>Bar No.</i>	<i>section</i>	<i>key</i>	<i>text</i>
1-4	inst. ritornello	E	
5-12	vocal phrase	E	1-3
13	inst. phrase	E	
14-24	vocal phrase	E-B	4-6
25-34	vocal phrase	E	7-8
33-35	inst. phrase	E	

The dominant orchestral colour is that of the oboes d'amore which, apart from their opening sustained pedal, double the alto and tenor voices throughout. The upper strings are silent for most of the movement, entering only in between vocal phrases or in anticipation of the final

cadence.

## 7.5 Texts and style

Though Röllig confined himself principally to sacred and instrumental music for court worship and entertainment (there is no evidence to suggest that he composed any music for the stage), he regularly displays strong theatrical leaning in the Passion works. Having trained in Dresden, Röllig would have come into contact with a great deal of both authentic Italian music and German music in the Italian style, performed in the Court, the Catholic court chapel and in the Italian opera house.<sup>18</sup> It is perhaps not surprising therefore not only that the music of the *St Matthew Passion* should display a mix of Italian and German styles, but that also there might be elements of the ‘theatrical’ *topos*.<sup>19</sup> To fully appreciate the opportunity that Röllig has to adopt such a ‘secular’ style for a liturgical work, we must first examine *libretti* of the surviving music.

### 7.5.1 The Gospel text

Röllig adopts a highly ‘affective’ style in the recitatives of the *St Matthew Passion*. The theatrical *topos* is apparent in each of the three recitatives in this selection, an approach which, as has been pointed out in Chapter 1, was far from universal for oratorio Passion settings of the time.<sup>20</sup> Example 7.1 (a setting of Matthew 26, vs.31-2) opens with Christ’s words set

<sup>18</sup> From the appointment of Heinrich Schütz in mid-17th century, the princes of Saxony had made the Court of Dresden an important German centre of Italian and, in particular, Venetian music. Schütz had trained under Giovanni Gabrieli, and he shared the Kapellmeistership with Giovanni Andrea Bontempi and Vincenzo Albrici and had as his Vice-Kapellmeister Marco Gioseppe Peranda. In 1685 a permanent Italian Opera company was established in Dresden under the leadership of the Venetian opera composer Carlo Pallavicino. With the support of the elector, Kapellmeister Adam Strungk established a new Italian opera company to perform in Leipzig during the three annual fairs so that it might serve as a training-school for musicians who could subsequently be placed in the court of Dresden. Later Italians in the court included court composer Giovanni Alberto Ristori (1692-1753). By 1730, the strength of Italian singers and musicians at the court had reached unprecedented numbers. The most significant appointment was that of Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783) in 1731. Trained largely in Italy (from 1722 under Nicola Porpora and Alessandro Scarlatti) Hasse, the foremost German composer of the Italian opera style in the mid-eighteenth century, proceeded to present thirty-four of his operas over the next thirty-two years. (See Buelow (1993) pp. 216ff). It was in this environment that Röllig gained his early training in composition from Zelenka (1679-1745), Kapellmeister of the Court chapel and member of the Court orchestra, and T.C. Reinhold, Kantor of the Kreuzkirche

<sup>19</sup> See section 1.6.2 above

<sup>20</sup> See also the discussion of the *St John Passion*, *Ach! Wir armen Sünder* in Chapter 8. The theatrical *topos* is also clearly apparent in the *St Mark Passion*, *Die betrübte und getröstete Geistliche Sulamith* which will be discussed in Chapter 9.

with the traditional sustained 'halo of strings'. The quotation of the scriptures 'Ich werde den Hirten schlagen, und die Schafe der Herde werden sich zerstreuen' that follows is set with a lyrical *arioso* (unlike the terse *vivace* to be found in BWV244 - NBA no.14, pp.57-8) with a clear antecedant and consequent phrase (bars 43-61) marked both by the *I - V - I* progression,

### Musical example 7.1

Röllig St Matthew Passion: No.4, recitative: 'In diese Nacht werdet ihr' (complete)

The musical score is presented in three systems, each featuring a vocal line for Jesus and instrumental accompaniment for Violin I, II, Viola, and Continuo.

**System 1:** Jesus sings a recitative line with the lyrics "In dies- e Nacht werd - et ihr euch al - le ärg - en an mir Denn es steh - et ge -". The Continuo part includes figured bass notation: 5 3, 7, 6 3.

**System 2:** Marked *arioso*, Jesus sings "schrie - ben: Ich wer - de den Hirt - en schla - gen, Ich wer - de den Hir - ten". The Continuo part includes figured bass notation: 6, 6, 7 #.

**System 3:** Jesus sings "schla - gen und die Scha - - fe den Her - de, die Scha - - fe der". The Continuo part includes figured bass notation: 4 2.

The musical score is for a section of the St Matthew Passion by J.G. Röllig. It features four staves: Jesus (Bass), Violins I & II (Treble), Viola (Bass), and Contrabass (Bass). The music is in German, with a translation provided at the bottom.

**First System:**

Jesus: Her - de wer - den sich zer - streu

**Second System:**

Jesus: en

**Third System:**

Jesus: Wenn ich ab - er au - fer - ste - he

**Fourth System:**

Jesus: will ich vor euch hin - geh - en in Ga - li - läm

**Translation:**

(Translation: 'Then Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered abroad.'))

and by the repetition of the text. The vocal phrase culminates in an athletic melismatic *motif* for the vocal part on the word ‘zerstreuen’ (‘scattered’), a flight up and down of fast scales in the violins (bar 9) and a harmonised version of the same again in the strings (bar 10). The use of an Alberti bass-style broken chord pattern, normally associated with the bass line of keyboard pieces and not, as here, with the cello part in an orchestral context, may demonstrate both Röllig’s awareness of current musical developments and his adoption of slower harmonic rhythms characteristic of the second half of the 18th century. (Though it should be noted that Bach also uses a similar pattern in the chorus ‘Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen’ in BWV245.) In essence, Röllig’s approach is similar to that displayed in Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung* where the orchestra plays a short musical impression of the text that immediately precedes it. This is more clearly seen in the concluding bars of this recitative (where a reference to Christ’s Resurrection is marked by a rising triplet broken chord figure, and the going before the disciples to Galilee by a falling scale) and in example 7.2.

In contrast to J.S.Bach’s strict use of instruments in the recitative (where the strings accompany only the words of Christ while Evangelist and all other soloists of the *synagoga* are rigidly supported by continuo instruments only), Röllig utilises the full string section to accompany the more ‘dramatic’ passages in the Evangelist’s narrative such in the third extract of Gospel text, *Und siehe da, der Vorhang* (Matthew 27, vs.51-53). Here the rending of the Temple curtain and the attendant earthquake at the moment of Christ’s death provides ample scope for a theatrical *topos* which Röllig is not shy to exploit. The recitative opens with dotted rhythms and a demisemiquaver scale in unison strings. A falling scale (bar 5) represents the rending of the curtain, demisemiquaver repeated Eb’s and staccato lombardic rhythms, the earthquake (bars 7-9), and rising triplet broken-chord patterns (bars 11 and 13) depict the Resurrection. Röllig goes on to adopt very similar techniques and style for the setting of the equivalent sections of the Gospel text in the St Mark Passion (Mark 14: 1-3 and 15: 38-47).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See Section 9.7. Other notable examples of fast scalic work in the works of Röllig can be found in the 1st violin part in the opening movement (chorus) of the Ascension cantata *Gott fährt mit Jauchzen auf*.

**Musical Example 7.2**

Röllig, St Matthew Passion: No.12, recitative: 'Und siehe da, der Vorhang' (bars 5-14)

The musical score is divided into three systems, each separated by a double bar line (//). The first system (bars 5-8) features the Evangelist and Violin I/II, Viola, and Continuo. The second system (bars 9-12) features the second Evangelist (Ev.), Violin I/II (Vn I,II), Viola (Va), and Continuo (Cont). The third system (bars 13-14) features the second Evangelist (Ev.), Violin I/II (Vn I,II), Viola (Va), and Continuo (Cont).

**System 1 (Bars 5-8):**

- Evangelist:** Bar 5 starts with a fermata. Bar 6 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 7 and 8.
- Violin I,II:** Bar 5 has a fermata. Bar 6 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 7 and 8.
- Viola:** Bar 5 has a fermata. Bar 6 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 7 and 8.
- Continuo:** Bar 5 has a fermata. Bar 6 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 7 and 8.

**System 2 (Bars 9-12):**

- Ev.:** Bar 9 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 10, 11, and 12.
- Vn I,II:** Bar 9 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 10, 11, and 12.
- Va:** Bar 9 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 10, 11, and 12.
- Cont:** Bar 9 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bars 10, 11, and 12.

**System 3 (Bars 13-14):**

- Ev.:** Bar 13 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bar 14.
- Vn I,II:** Bar 13 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bar 14.
- Va:** Bar 13 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bar 14.
- Cont:** Bar 13 has the instruction *unis*. The melody continues through bar 14.

**Lyrics:**

Und die Er-de er-be-ne-te und die  
Fel-sen zer-ri-sen und die Grä-ber tä-ten sie auf,  
und stun-den auf viel Lie-ber der



Ev. 8 Hei - li-gen die daschlie - fen und

Vn I, II

Va

Cont

(tr.: '...and the Earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened;  
and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,...')

The extent of Röllig's 'modernity' is highlighted by the lengths to which Bach goes to achieve similar effects within his strict procedure of allowing only continuo instruments to accompany the Evangelist. To achieve a more dramatic setting of the account of the rending of the Temple curtain in BWV 245, Bach imports a text from St Matthew to complete the report, which otherwise would be missing from St John's account (Items 33 and 34 in the *Neue Bachs-Ausgabe*). Item 33 is gospel text and is treated as a standard recitative. Since item 34 is a 'free' text, Bach is able to score this short movement for sustained flutes and oboes da caccia with repeated demisemiquavers, rushing scales and broken chord figures in the unison strings representing thunder, earthquake and the opening of graves. In the St Matthew Passion BWV 244 Bach attempts to achieve a similarly dynamic effect with only continuo instruments and, in contrast to the earlier setting (BWV245), Bach adopts only one continuous rhythmic pattern throughout. A similar effect is achieved by Römheldt in his 1750 setting of St Matthew for Danzig, though with more discontinuous semiquavers in chords (example 7.3).

**Musical Example 7.3**Römhildt *St Matthew Passion*: Nos.72-73, *recitative acompagnato*<sup>22</sup>

*No.72 (conc.)*

Evangelist

A-ber Je - sus schrie Laut - Und er ver - schied

Violin I, II, Flute

Viola, Continuo

*No. 73*

Ev.

Und sie - he da, der Vor - hang im Tem - pel zer - riß

Vn I, II Va

Cont

in zwei - Stück von o - ben - an bis un - ten - aus. Und die Er - de er be -

be - te, und die Fel - sen zer - ris - sen

Ev.

Vn I, II Va

Cont

15

<sup>22</sup> (tr.: 'Jesus, when he had cried again, with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom; and the Earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ...')

However, treatment of this text by these composers is in strong contrast to the setting of equivalent passages in the St Mark Passion set by Bach's pupil Homilius (see Ex 1.16) and the style of recitative to be found in the Zerbst St John Passion, *Ach! Wir armen Sünder*. The scale and operatic style of the opening *turba* chorus of Röllig's St Matthew Passion, 'Ja, nicht auf das Fest', is in the Telemann tradition rather than the simpler settings to be found in the first two decades of the century. The 14 bars are divided into two main sections; in the first (bars 1-8), the choral parts are strictly chordal, continuing in bars 5-8 with the choir in two parts. The second commences in bar 9 with a set of imitative entries in each voice followed by a dominant pedal in bars 11--13 and a bold final cadence.<sup>23</sup> In a similar fashion to the sections described above, the music features fast scalic passage-work, bustling *Trommel-*demisemiquaver in the strings and dramatic four-note chords in the violins.

### 7.5.2 The Lyrical texts

Even without the original context of the supporting Gospel text, an underlying structure of alternating dramatic and contemplative arias in the selection can be perceived. A theme that is common to several of the lyrical texts is one of conflict. In No.2 the solo bass berates Judas with the words 'verfluchte diese That' ('curse this deed') and 'Denn ist Satans Rath'. In the texts of three further arias the word Feind(e) ('enemy') appears; 'und fälle deinen Feind' ('and cut down your enemy - No.5), 'Ihr Feinde, zuckt doch nicht die Schwerter, hier Schwert des Herrn und Gideon' ('You, enemies, raise not your swords for here is the sword of Man and Gideon' - No. 7) and 'Tobt, rast und wütet immerhin, ihr Feinde, die Unschuld sagt hierzu nichts mehr' ('You, the enemy can storm, rave and rage constantly, the Innocent will say nothing more' - no.9). (Though, indicative of the early classical style, the dramatic impact of these movements is diluted by the use of major keys in all but one.)<sup>24</sup> Whether Röllig was the compiler, or even the author of the libretto, cannot be known, but he clearly relishes the opportunity for energetic settings.<sup>25</sup> This can be seen in two arias in the St Matthew Passion: 'Juda, laß den Vorsatz fahren,' (No 2, example 7.4) and 'Ihr Feinde, zuckt doch nicht die

<sup>23</sup> In structure this short movement appears, in effect, to be a prototype of the *turba* choruses in the St Mark Passion. (See discussion below in Chapter 10.)

<sup>24</sup> Which is true also of the St Mark Passion *Die betrübte uns getröstete Geistliche Sulamith* (see chapter 9).

<sup>25</sup> Is it, perhaps, due to this highly dramatic and often theatrical style that Bach, the composer of perhaps the most theatrical of church pieces, favoured Röllig's composition by performing it. It may well be that Röllig's knowledge of Bach's St Matthew Passion encouraged the younger composer to adopt such a style.

Schwerter' (No. 7, examples 7.5 and 7.6). In the first, the speaker angrily berates Judas and charges him to do his dreadful deed.<sup>26</sup> The angry motto of the A section is in a style often reserved for the 'whipping aria' created by the dotted rhythm and demisemiquaver scale.

#### Musical Example 7.4

Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: No.2, aria: 'Juda, laß den Vorsatz fahren' (bars 1-5, 8-10)

Example 7.4a: bars 1-5

**Allegro non tanto**

Violin I,II *unis*

Viola

Continuo *(f)*

Vn I,II

Va

Cont

6 4 5 3 7 5 5 6 6

5

6 6 5 3

<sup>26</sup> The sentiment and style is reminiscent of aria No.7 in *Die betrübe und getröstete Geistliche Sulamith* which is also a bass aria. Although the sentiment expressed is uncharacteristic of that expressed by Jesus in the gospel narration, is the choice of the bass voice to suggest the association of the sentiment of the speaker with Jesus, *i.e.* the soliloquant is speaking on behalf of Jesus?

Example 7.4b: bars 8-10

8

B Ju - da Ju - da Ju-da laß den Vor-satz fah - - - ren

Vn I,II

Va

Cont

*p*

*f*

(tr.: 'Judas, go! do your intention')

In the aria 'Ihr Feinde, zuckt doch nicht die Schwerter' the solo bass voice is required to negotiate a wide range with some athletic singing. In the final bars repeated semiquavers in the strings and demisemiquaver scales commencing in the 1st violins (and in unison strings from bars 51) portray the phrase '...one word can fling you to the ground. Be off with you and flee therefrom'.

**Musical Example 7.5**Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: No.7, aria: 'Ihr Feinde, zuckt doch nicht die Schwerter'

(bars 49-54)

**(Allegro)**

Bass  
stel - len ein Wort ein Wort kann euch zu Bo - den

Violin I  
*f* *p*

Violin II  
*[f]* *[p]*

Viola  
*f* *[p]*

Continuo  
5 4 *f* *p* 7 5

B  
fäl - len auf. Pac - ket euch, pac - ket euch und flieht da - von pac - ket

Vn I  
*f*

Vn II  
*f*

Va  
*f*

Cont  
*f*

B  
euch und flieht da - von und flieht da - von

Vn I  
*p* *f* *p* *f*

Vn II  
*f*

Va  
*p*

Cont  
5 4 6 # 6 4 5 3 D.C.

The falling bass line and sequential triadic figures in the 1st violins in the opening bars of the same aria betray an Italian influence (see Example 7.6). Unusually, the oboes double the 2nd violin and viola lines in the opening bars (highlighting consecutive 5ths). The oboes are *tacet* for the B section and for all but one short passage in the vocal passages of the A section. Röllig recreates a very similar mood in the St Mark Passion with very similar materials in No.21, 'Verfluchte Faust.' Common to both is the slow-moving harmony in the opening bars, the arpeggio and broken chord figures in the violin parts and wide leaps, the bold vocal melody and the virtuosic melismas, particularly the fast scalar motifs exemplified by the demisemiquaver runs in the B section.

### Musical Example 7.6

Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: No.7, aria: 'Ihr Feinde, zuckt doch nicht die Schwerter' (bars 1-4)

**Allegro**

Oboe I, II

Violin I

Violin II, Viola

Continuo

Ob.

Vn I

Vn II Va

Cont

Balancing these dramatic sections are contemplative passages, each orchestrated with soft-toned instruments or with reduced orchestrations: the *Terzetto* (2 oboes d'amore) and Arias No. 5 (2 flutes and strings), 8 (solo violin and continuo), 10 (solo oboe and continuo) and the *Schlußchor* (2 flutes, 2 oboes d'amore and muted strings). In some of these more lyrical moments one can find features most associated with a mid-century style. In the alto Aria No. 5, 'Mir fängt Jesus an zu zittern' (for 2 flutes, strings and basso continuo - example 7.7) appear triplet figures against duple semiquavers in bar 1, the syncopated violin motive against the lombardic rhythm in the flutes, the change of metre to  $3/8$  in the B section as well as changes of speed indicated by *un poco allegro* (bar 41) and *andante* (bar 52) - all features found in the music of the generation of composers born after the turn of the 18th century.

### Musical Example 7.7

Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: No.5, alto aria: 'Mir fängt Jesus an zu Zittern' (bars 1-3)

The musical score for Musical Example 7.7 consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Flutes, Violin I, II, and Continuo (Viola 8va). The second system includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Violin I, II (Vln I, II), and Continuo (Va 8ve). The music is in 3/8 time and features triplet figures against duple semiquavers in bar 1, a syncopated violin motive, and a lombardic rhythm in the flutes. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 1-3 and the second system covering bars 4-6.

Stylistically, the most forward-looking movement is No 11, 'Was, vor ein Schall durchdringt die Lüfte' (see example 7.8). The periodic phrase structure, feminine cadences, slow harmonic rhythm, frequent pauses and pedal points all suggest an early classical style and the Italian influence is again unmistakable. The oboes are not confined to *colla parte* writing with



the violins or vocal part and frequently have sustained notes against a moving violin motif (e.g. bars 8-9, 24-5 and 26-7). The horn parts take on a more harmonic accompanimental role in *tutti* phrases rather than a purely melodic one.

### Musical Example 7.8

Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: bass aria: 'Was vor ein Schall durchdringt die Lüfte' (bars 10-18)

10

Horns in Eb

Oboes

Bass

Violin I, II

Viola

Continuo

15

Hn

Ob

B

Vn I, II

Va

Cont

Was vor ein Schall durch

*f*

*p*

*p*

Hn  
 Ob  
 B  
 Vn I,II  
 Va  
 Cont

dringt die Lüf te Was vor ein Schall durch dringt die Lüf-te Gott

*f* *p* *f*

(tr: 'What kind of sound penetrates the breezes?')

For the *Schlußchor*, a sleep chorus firmly in the Leipzig tradition, Röllig chooses muted strings and the soft tones of the oboes d'amore and flutes to accompany the choir. Through-composed, the movement falls into two sections: 1) common time, in G major, with overlapping imitative entries in the instrumental parts based upon the opening quaver theme, a section which gains in complexity as it progresses, and 2) in E minor, a homophonic German Lied in triple time which brings the work to a pianissimo conclusion. It is in the latter part of the movement that Röllig most clearly writes with the voice of a mid-century composer (see example 7.9 below). The periodic structure of the simple homophonic German Lied is interspersed with instrumental echoes of the last bar of the previous vocal phrase and many of the phrases conclude with feminine cadences (as bar 44).

**Musical Example 7.9** Röllig St Matthew Passion: No.13, *Schlußchor* (bars 35-56).

**Andante**

35 40 45 50 55

Flute

Oboe d'amore

Soprano,  
Alto

Tenor,  
Bass

Violin I, II,  
Viola

Continuo.

Der Sab - bath ist jetzt an - ge - bro - chen des Men - schen fall des

Men - schen fall ist an - ge - ro - chen ru - he sanft

In dei - ner düs - tern Gruft In dei - ner düs - - ten Gruft

*vn unis*

Cont

(tr.: 'The Sabbath has now dawned,.....softly sleep in thy gloomy tomb')

The music of the conservative movements, indicated often by a reduced instrumentation of voice, *obbligato* melody instrument and basso continuo – as in the tenor aria ‘Die Fesseln, welche Jesum binde’ (see Example 7.10) – displays the extended melodic lines and ‘melodic’ bass line typical of the Baroque aria. The 9-bar repetition of opening rhythmic pattern, the spinning-out of the main thematic material, the expressive wide leaps and strong harmonic implications of the melodic line, suspensions and use of sequence are all features of the high baroque style. The counterpoint continues in the first vocal passage; here the suspensions and wide expressive leaps in the vocal part are clearly derived from the ritornello. Where the violin is silent the bass maintains the quaver motion. Note, also, the essentially instrumental treatment of the vocal phrase, (in contrast to the more lyrical vocal style and homophonic texture of ‘Was vor ein Schall’, Ex 7.8)

### Musical Example 7.10

Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: No.8 aria: ‘Die Fesseln, welche Jesum binde’ (bars 1-24)

The musical score for Musical Example 7.10 is presented in three systems. The first system shows the Tenor (T), Violin (Vn), and Continuo (Cont) staves. The Tenor part is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The Violin and Continuo parts are in the same key and time. The Continuo part includes figured bass notation: 6, 5 4, 7 b, 4 2, 7 6, 7 6 6, 6. The second system shows the Violoncello/Double Bass (Vn) and Continuo (Cont) staves. The Vn part includes figured bass notation: 4 3, b, 4 3, b, 9 8, 4 3, 6b, b, 6 5. The third system shows the Tenor (T), Violoncello/Double Bass (Vn), and Continuo (Cont) staves. The Tenor part includes the lyrics: 'Die Fesseln, welche Jesum binden sind die'. The Vn and Cont parts include figured bass notation: 6 4, 5 b, 5, 4 3.

T: Sün - den sind sie Sün - den die Er wil lig für uns trug  
 Vn:   
 Cont: 6 4 5 4 6 4 5 4 2 3 7 5 9 8 6 5

(Translation: 'The fetters which bind Jesus are the sins he willingly bears for us.')

A similar texture with *obbligato* melody instrument and basso continuo accompaniment can be found in No. 10: 'Verlassen, o erbärmlichs Rufen'. (see Example 7.11). The modulations in the opening ritornello, chromatic approach to the dominant in bar 12-16 and the descending chromatic scale in the oboe at the cadential phrases underline the very strong influence of the High Baroque.

### Musical Example 7.11

Röllig *St Matthew Passion*: bass aria: 'Verlassen, o erbärmlichs Rufen' (bars 10-22)

(Adagio)

Oboe: 10 15  
 Continuo:   
 Ob: tr 20 %  
 B:   
 Cont: Ver la - ßen Ver - la - ßen

## 7.6 The use of the Orchestra

Some generalizations can be made: with the exception of the two arias for voice, treble *obbligato* and continuo, the full four-string section texture (2 violins, viola and bass) is consistently maintained in all movements; there is no reduction to just continuo only for any lengthy passage or cadential phrase. However, the writing is often only in two parts - there is some independence of the 2nd violin part, but there are sections in every movement where the violins are in unison and the viola part is linked to the bass part. Röllig adopts standard *colla parte* practice, with the oboes doubling the upper vocal parts in choral movements; and the instrumentation is directly related to *Affekt* of the movement's text.

Röllig's approach to orchestration, like his musical style, reflects his mid-century position. Mention has been made of the solo arias for voice, *obbligato* instrument and continuo. Röllig also seems to have had a preediction for the oboe d'amore in the Passion works, no doubt to exploit the colour of the instrument, though, by 1735 its use in new works was rare. A characteristic common in many mid-century works is the scoring of a pair of *obbligato* solo bassoons as in movt. 9, a feature shared with aria No.12 in *Die betäubte und getröstete Geistliche Sulamith*.<sup>27</sup> However, it is Röllig's use of the horn that deserves particular mention. The horn only found a place in opera and court orchestras during the first quarter of the 18th century. The first reported use was in 1705 in Hamburg (in *Octavia* by Keiser). In addition Mattheson noted in 1713 that the instruments were beginning to be used in North German orchestras. One of the most notable instances of the use of the horn in a concerto-work was in the first of the concertos J.S. Bach presented to the Duke of Brandenburg in 1721, which was probably produced in his years in Weimar. Paris first employed horns in the opera orchestra as late as 1733.<sup>28</sup> The first use of horns in an oratorio Passion in Hamburg was in 1746 (Telemann: St Matthew 5:31) and they were not used again until 1762 (Telemann St Matthew 5:47), though they had previously been employed once for a Passion oratorio in

<sup>27</sup> Although contemporary practice would suggest that a bassoon would play the bass line when an oboist is scored in the ensemble, one finds no specific references to bassoon parts in the cantatas except in one movement, the bass aria 'Wir der Mond bald soll, bald Trübe' from the cantata *Freunde wählen und nicht fehlen* (1734) where the voice is accompanied by a solo oboe, solo bassoon and continuo. It is possible that, because of the nature of the music of the final movement in the St Matthew Passion, the bassoonists might not be required, thereby releasing them to play flute or oboe and consequently reducing the number of woodwind players required by two.

<sup>28</sup> Carse (1964) p.113.

1722 in Telemann's *Seliges Erwärmen*.<sup>29</sup> After 1767, C.P.E. Bach employed pairs of horns and oboes in 10 of his 21 oratorio Passions.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in Röllig's *St Matthew Passion* can be seen one of the earliest uses of the horns in liturgical Passions in the 18th century. One can go further: although the use of a pair of horns is not in itself a remarkable feature of works of the period, the incidence of use in 62% of Röllig's known church cantata-works (including the Passions) is significant. A comparison with Bach and Fasch is compelling: only 7.7% of Fasch's church cantatas and as few as 3% of Bach cantatas require a pair of horns.

In his idiomatic use of horns, Röllig is nearer to Händel and Telemann than to Bach. Always paired (there is no writing for solo horn), the horns rarely play clarino-style passage-work or lengthy melodic lines. Röllig writes horn-call motifs, short interjections and simplified melodic phrases for the horns in his cantatas and Passions, and tailors the musical material in movements with horns so that these instruments can play an active role in the delivery of the melody, but the greater part of the horn writing is triadic rather than conjunct and linear.

## 7.7 Conclusions

From evidence provided by the music, it has been possible to establish a date of composition between 1736-37: some cantatas survive from his time in Dresden, but it is unlikely that Röllig would have contemplated such a piece of work without the strong possibility of a performance in mind; it is also unlikely that Röllig would have come across the tradition of the 'sleep chorus' in Passion music other than in Leipzig; the forces required reflect the instruments available to Bach; the unusually high number of bass arias is matched only by Bach's *St Matthew Passion*;<sup>31</sup> the medial ritornello in the B section had generally died out by the 1720s but was, unusually, still a common structural feature of Bach's cantata works. It also seems unlikely that the work was produced for Zerbst.<sup>32</sup> Thus, we only have Schering's unsupported statement that Bach directed a performance of the work. If this is true, there is a strong inference that the year of performance is 1738: in all probability Bach would not have

<sup>29</sup> Menke (1983) pp.18ff.

<sup>30</sup> In H782, 784, 787, 789, 790, 792, 793 and 798. See section 1.6.1.1 above and Helm (1989) pp. 187ff.

<sup>31</sup> See discussion of vocal soloists in oratorio Passions in Section 1.4.3.

<sup>32</sup> It is possible that the composition was produced in Zerbst though from the performance pattern (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2) it would appear that the work performed 1740 was one which had already been heard in Zerbst prior to Röllig's appointment. The division of the text of the post 1745 Zerbst *St Matthew Passion* (see Table 4.9) would also suggest that it was derived, like the 1748-1752 *St John Passion*, from the earlier settings heard in the centre. (See discussion of the recitative of *Ach! Wir armen Sünder* in Chapter 8.)

performed the work without prior assessment of the completed score; the first available date would have been 1737 and it is likely that due to the larger than average orchestra required, Bach might have wished to perform the work in the Thomaskirche in 1738.<sup>33</sup> After this point, we can be confident that other works were performed in 1739 and 1740.<sup>34</sup>

It is clear from the music of the *St Matthew Passion*, as Härtwig states,<sup>35</sup> that Röllig is steeped in the style of the high baroque, and can be considered a more conservative composer of the younger generation, having more in common with Homilius (1714-85) than C.H. Graun (1703/4-1759) or C.P.E. Bach (1714-1788). But, even in this comparatively early work, his first major composition, several features have been identified to demonstrate his knowledge of, and willingness to adopt, forward-looking characteristics: the use of Alberti bass figures, a slower-moving harmonic pulse, Lombardic and triplet melodic figures, triadic writing and syncopated motifs as well as the use of pairs of horns. There is no doubt that some of the music is routine, which may be due to Röllig's comparative inexperience. It is notable that the music is most successful when Röllig is writing in a more homophonic lyrical style to be found in the *Schlußchor* and the bass aria 'Was vor ein Schall durchdringt die Lüfte' (No. 11).

As a first essay in the genre, there can be no doubt that Röllig has produced a significant work which perhaps deserves to be described as more than merely (in Schering's words) 'modest'.<sup>36</sup> There seems enough evidence to suggest that a version surviving in a 'complete' form might well have found favour with modern performers. Why such a selection of movements should survive is difficult to explain; certainly the text is not complete enough to provide a satisfactory group of movements for performance. The suggestion that this source is the work of a student seems the most plausible explanation, two features that might have been of interest to such a student being the unusual extent of the writing for solo bass and Röllig's adoption of the theatrical *topos* for such an important liturgical work.

<sup>33</sup> See comments above.

<sup>34</sup> If the work did receive a performance in Leipzig around about this period but not under Bach's direction, then the only other venue it was likely to have been performed was the Neukirche where Gerlach regularly directed concerted Passion music. Unfortunately, the vague references to 'Passionsmusik' and 'Oratorium' in the records (see Table 7.1) make it unclear whether the anonymous works that Gerlach directed were of the liturgical or lyrical type.

<sup>35</sup> Härtwig (1980)

<sup>36</sup> Schering (1941) p.175.