

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH VERSION

During my years as a singing professor at the Royal College of Music I was challenged by a student to provide an English version of the “St. Matthew” text to fit exactly Bach’s original notation. Eventually, many years later, I have completed the task and now offer it as, I hope, an acceptable translation from the German which sings naturally in flowing modern English, which has a biblical flavour and pays tribute to the nobility of the text itself and Bach’s incomparable setting. I have consulted various modern English versions of the Bible (starting with the New English Bible) and I found that there were many instances of contemporary biblical phraseology which followed Bach’s musical rhythms; other passages were more tricky but not insoluble and, as a singer myself, I ensured that the sung words flowed naturally in English. There were one or two stumbling blocks inevitably; “Hohenpriesten” became “Senior Priests” (with the authority of the Revised Standard Version of Jeremiah 19:1) while “Der Juden König” became “King of Israel”

Whereas we all have a deep love of the beautiful poetic text in the King James Bible, to distort Bach’s music extensively to accommodate this text has never seemed artistically right to me. In this country it cannot be acceptable to listen to this narrative in a foreign language; I hope I have found the best compromise which I offer here to the glory of God.

*The Reverend Lyndon van der Pump
London 2007*

25 Recitativo

Tenore

T.

(Chorus I) O grief, what ang - uish does His soul en - dure! It weighs Him

Fl.Ob.da cacc. *p*
Cont.Org. *ppp*

4

T.

down, His face grows death-ly pale.

Sopr.

p Chorus II

Alto

What is the cause of all this pain and griev -

Ten.

What is the cause of all this pain and griev -

Basso

What is the cause of all this pain and griev -

4

What is the cause of all this pain and griev -

(Chorus II)

Str. Cont.Org. *p*

8

A

T.

He stands a - lone be-fore His judge, no faith-ful friend

- ing?

- ing?

- ing?

- ing?

8

A

(Chorus I)

117 **B^a**

Weep - ing - we - call to Him, our Sav - iour, whom death has - wrapt

Weep - ing we call to Him, our Sav - iour, whom death has - wrapt

Weep - ing we call to Him, our Sav - iour, whom death has wrapt

Weep - ing we call to Him, our Sav - iour, whom death has - wrapt

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Weep - ing we call to Him, our Sav - iour, whom death has - wrapt

117 **B^a**

128 **C^a**

in - slum - ber - deep; sleep here sound-ly, sleep here sound-ly, sound - ly sleep!

in slum - ber - deep; sleep here sound-ly, sleep here sound-ly, sound - ly sleep!

in slum - ber - deep; sleep here sound-ly, sleep here sound - ly, soundly sleep!

in slum - ber deep; sleep here sound - ly, sleep here sound - ly, soundly sleep!

in - slum - ber - deep; sound-ly sleep, sleep here sound-ly, sound - ly sleep!

in slum - ber - deep; sound-ly sleep, sleep here sound-ly, sound - ly sleep!

in slum - ber - deep; sound-ly sleep, sleep here sound - ly, soundly sleep!

in slum - ber deep; sound - ly sleep, sleep here sound - ly, sound-ly sleep!

128 **C^a**