

The Jerusalem Passion:

The Work

An early programme, from a performance prior to the full orchestration being written, describes the work as "a contemporary oratorio in two parts.

The Theme

This inspired modern-classical work relates the passion of Christ from the novel perspective of the city of Jerusalem.

Part One traces the historical path followed by Christ from the idyllic Galilee to His harsh rejection and tragic death in Jerusalem.

The second part projects down through the ages to the "New Jerusalem", the spiritual city of God's people, united as a bride before the return of Christ.

As mentioned elsewhere, *'The Jerusalem Passion'* is a song of mourning and lament for the cities of the earth which reject Christ as did Jerusalem. But it is also a song which heralds a vast revival of faith and unity as we approach the coming of the New Jerusalem

The Music – Structure and Themes

Best described as a modern-classical oratorio, *'The Jerusalem Passion'* combines the depth of expression drawn from the classical tradition with the easily identifiable sound of contemporary music. The result is an artistic synthesis which appeals to the whole cross-section of musical tastes - described by critics as *'eminently accessible ...inspiring ...with relevance, sincerity, excitement and expectation'*. ("Opera Australia", and "The Brisbane Courier-Mail").

Composed in two parts and with a performance time of 100 minutes, *'The Jerusalem Passion'* consists of:

- 17 choral pieces in wide ranging vocal style
- 12 vocal solo sections, some as true solos, some with choir support, which encompass styles from lyric ballad to classical aria
- 9 narration passages with orchestral accompaniment
- instrumental solos for pipe organ, piano, harp, violin, viola, cello, flute, clarinet, oboe, trumpet, french horn, and guitar
- orchestral accompaniment combined with sensitive use of contemporary rhythm section.

a “Tale of Two Cities”

The two cities referred to in the work (the earthly Jerusalem and the 'New' Jerusalem which scripture tells us will descend with Christ at the time of His 'Second Coming') are symbolised by two musical motifs or themes which echo and interact throughout.

The haunting three note 'weep' theme, first stated by the french horn in the 'Overture' dominates the first half and conveys the lament of Christ for His own who rejected Him. The repeated use of this motif further suggests the ever present cry of the Spirit of God for all the cities of the earth, which, like the Jerusalem of old, continue to reject Him.

To counter this lament, the second of the musical motifs, the 'New Jerusalem' theme, first heard in the opening pipe organ solo, expresses the longing of Christ and of His people for the joy of hope fulfilled.

With each subsequent appearance of this theme (announced by the pipe organ) we are reminded that through the agony of His rejection and suffering, Christ looked forward to the 'Joy set before Him' - the joy of becoming one with His people.

In the certainty that God's people will be united as one body, as one new spiritual city before Christ's imminent return, the work climaxes in a celebration anthem, 'The Communion Chorus'.

Jerusalem - Yerushalayim - Al Kuds

Jerusalem has always been at the centre of historical and political events. The very sound of the name echoes an aged conflict - the city of God and of God's people, locked in a timeless battle for survival and identity. This was the city to which Christ came This was the city which crucified the Messiah.

The incessant conflict surrounding Jerusalem is an allegory, the Bible says: an allegory of the crucial distinction between the earthly city and the New Jerusalem. Christ brooded over that city and would have gathered her under His wings, but she would not be gathered. As He then left her and went to the cross, He yearned for another city - the New Jerusalem. He died in Jerusalem, for the sake of the New Jerusalem.

It is the New Jerusalem, the spiritual city of God's people, which is now the object of His passionate love. This is not a geographical city, but the spiritual city of God's people.

This city is coming down from God out of heaven, clothed in the glory of God. She is adorned like a bride for her husband. This city is beautiful beyond description, for she is arrayed in the robes and diadem of the King of kings.

This is the city for which the nations are yearning - they cry after her, and long for her glory and beauty. She is filled, not with hatred and violence as Jerusalem was, but with worship and holiness. Her glory and dimension are already coming down from God in these days in which we live.

God;s people are to be gathered as one into this city. The vision of ONE first of all requires a brokenness and humility of heart. Then there can come a healing from the puree waters of God's presence. The healing of our broken lives, our broken relationships, and our divisions as His people, will make unity possible

"broken ness - healing - then unity"

The hearts of men and women must be broken as they draw toward this city. Our hearts are to bow before Him and break into a song of "worthiness to the Lamb". The only song heard in this city is a ceaseless song of praise - "Holy, Holy, is the Lord" and "Worthy are You, O Lord, our God".

.It is time for God's people to become united in worship. Those who are the singers and musicians must lead this song of "worthiness". Then all can join together in the song of the Jerusalem Passion -

"Christ, Your passion has become our passion - and now in silence we renew our vision - Amen"

Site Exploration

You may explore this internet site by pressing the various buttons on the menu. To come back to this first page, press the "home" button, shaped like a house, at the bottom.

You can link to pages of photographs, a page about the composer, pages of libretto (the words) and composer's notes, details of past performances, reviewers' critiques...

Links are also provided to the Vision One organisation in Brisbane as well.

If you are an aficionado of oratoria, you might also like to view the libretto of Handel's "Messiah" set out as a continuous text from the various places from which Handel drew the words for his great work; this and other "Messiah" links are all on the "Links" page.