

Flutist in J.S. Bach *St John Passion* with the arias *Ich folge dir* and *Zerfließe mein Herz*.

J.S. Bach's *St John Passion* includes two arias with flute or flutes. The aria *Ich folge dir* is performed quite early in the passion story, after a short recitativo. The aria begins with the text (in English translation), "I follow you likewise with joyful steps and I do not leave you." To me, the music is an expression of joyful trust and confidence. The aria is played with two flutes in unison. The affections do not change much during the aria, which is in itself a part of the affective content of the piece: it is trustful throughout. Both while practicing and in the concert I evoked the feeling of joyful trust in myself before starting and kept that emotion in myself throughout (Sound example 1). This performing strategy to arouse the emotions (or, in eighteenth-century terminology, the affections or passions) in oneself in order to evoke the same emotion in the listener is described by Bach's son C.Ph.E. Bach and also J.J. Quantz. Quantz was deeply influenced by the performing tradition in Dresden in the 1730-40's - an environment which also J.S. Bach had numerous contacts with. In the concert we performed the aria with a soprano singer, two baroque flutes, a baroque cello, a baroque double bass and a small organ.

The aria *Zerfließe mein Herz* comes at the darkest moment of the story, near the end of the oratory. Jesus is dead, and the devastated and vulnerable boy-soprano-soul reflects upon what has just happened. The soprano tells her/his heart: "Dissolve in floods of tears in honor of God, and tell heaven and earth of your distress: your Jesus is dead!" I evoke in myself a feeling of deep sadness, of being heart-broken and crying floods of tears in my heart, but in an extrovert way, like crying out loud internally. In the rehearsal I could allow myself to go near the limit of being so moved that it risked to affect my playing negatively. In the concert, however, with its heightened concentration levels and the abundance of information and the interactions and various impulses between all of us performing, I at times felt that actively arousing a specific, labelled emotion got in conflict with my focus of the musical moment.

In German (which we performed in) the text starts with the word *Zerfließe* which corresponds with the first 32:nd notes in the opening theme of the flute. For me, this figure and several of the other legato figures with 32:nd notes are expressive of tears floating. I embraced the veiled sound that the key of f minor creates on a baroque flute because of the many cross-fingered notes. This key was in Bach's time associated with lament and depression. The opening interval of a raising fourth I played heavily, as a body very heavily raising (Sound example 2). The tempo indication is *Molt' adagio* which is an unusual indication and reflects the affective content. (*Adagio* is common in Bach's music, but not with the added *molto* which means "very".) In bars 41-45 and 59-61 the flute has a legato slur over several repeated notes. I played them as Quantz requests, without tongue strokes and with no break in the sound, just waves like an extremely slow and controlled vibrato. Together with a diminuendo it sounded a bit like sobbing and emphasized the heavy, hopeless feeling (Sound example 3). In bar 70, the soprano sings the word "tot" for the first time, and the flute, the oboe da caccia and the soprano all have a large descending interval with the soprano landing on a dissonance. I played crescendo from bar 68 up to bar 70. Though it is only one word in the voice, I imagined two words in the flute: "tot, tot" (Sound example 4). On the first beat of bar 80 is one of the most harsh, tragic dissonances in the flute repertoire from this time. I made a crescendo throughout the bar before and stayed on the first note as long as possible, emphasizing the dissonance. (Sound example 5). In the concert we performed the aria with a soprano singer, a baroque flute, an oboe da caccia, a baroque cello, a baroque double bass and organ.

