

Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (FCUM), in Warsaw,
field: Musical Arts, discipline: Composition and Theory of Music, specialty: Composition
MA: Katarzyna Brochocka

Passion According to Saint Mark in Ancient Greek
for three soloists, a choir and chamber string ensemble

Thesis supervisor:

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SUMMARY

The goal of this doctoral dissertation was to compose the *Passion According to St. Mark in Ancient Greek* for three soloists, a choir and chamber string ensemble and prepare a theoretical part of the work describing the composition. An important creative motive was to examine whether the original text and language of the Gospel was a material that builds and characterizes the musical side of the work is enough to create a satisfying musical base for the work that was designed to be performed in sacred and concert spaces.

The composer created a piece closed in time, but open to individual reading, giving vocalists some choices. The solo parts: soprano (Evangelist), tenor (Hero – multiform role), bass (Jesus) and choir (Sopranos / Altos / Tenors / Baritones / Bases – four people in each of the five voices) have been subordinated to the pronunciation in *Koiné* Greek. The choral parts have been additionally expanded in terms of interpretation, by the fragments with onomatopoeic and metaphonic functions (*vocalise* based on vowel transpositions of the selected Bible texts).

The presented description focuses on the form of the composition as well as cultural and historical references, especially those regarding the use of ancient Greek, its influence on shaping the rhythm, melody and harmony of the work. The created composition is seen as a modern perspective on the subject of the Passion of Christ, taking into account a specific use of women's voices. This is the first religious oratorio, as well as the first piece in *Koiné* Greek in the work of Katarzyna Brochocka, being – at the same time – the first Passion based on the Gospel according to St. Mark in the original New Testament language with a leading female role.

Chapter 1. Musical language – altitude arrangement

The author of the present dissertation characterizes the sound qualities of the Greek language and describes the principles of their implementation in the Passion. A number of constructional principles for creating the melody are introduced, such as the four principles for creating the vocal lines. For this purpose, basic information about the Greek language used in the New Testament (the so-called *Koiné* Greek) is presented. It is followed by a description of the ways and principles of creating harmonics, that is, how to build chords and openly use them in the *Passion* space-time ('harmonic trace'). Several options for building such 'traces', both open and closed, are presented. Also, "original rhetorical figures" affecting the harmony of the Passion are specified.

Chapter 2. The organization of sounds over time

The author discusses the organization of the sound material in time, both in terms of its rhythm and accent. They are individually tailored to the content of the scenes as well as the time signature and agogics of the composition, with the latter being additionally associated with the pace of the characters' speech. The discussion on the metric and agogic aspects of the work is supplemented with the elucidation related to sound implementation of movement topos, the use of rests, and the influence of the formal construction on the duration of the composition.

Chapter 3. Vocal parts

This chapter focuses on a description of basic differences in the treatment of soloists and choral parts, such as the creation of 'sound collections' for the characters, that is, the roles played by the choir, which are the basis for composing the choral vocals that are sung with the indicated acting intentions. Its subchapters describe the ways in which the choir accompanies individual soloists.

Chapter 4. Tone colour (sound, instrumentation, cast – clarifying explanations)

In this chapter, the author describes the tone colour of the piece and how it is affected by the sound quality, instrumentation, and cast. The description focuses on the sections for soloists, the chamber ensemble and choir, as well as choral solo parts. It also takes into consideration symbolic, textural and dynamic meanings. Subsequently, the author moves on to discuss the use of the chamber ensemble, the timbre and symbolic significance of the use of individual instruments, chords, "original rhetorical figures" in the selected scenes. The sound produced by the choir is analyzed in a similar way.

Chapter 5. The form of the composition.

This chapter describes the formal structure of the work, the dramaturgy of the *passion narrative* of Saint Mark, and its uniqueness in comparison to other gospels. In this part of the dissertation, the author views the text of St. Passion from the perspective of well-known literary approaches: *narrative criticism*, *intertextuality*, *transtextuality*. Thus, the Gospel is perceived and analyzed in various available narrative contexts and references are made, among other things, to the critical evaluation of the Gospel fragments by such authors as: Mikhail Bakhtin or Frank Kermode, as well as biblical scholars analyzing its narrative structures in the context of pronunciation and interpreting its narrative, for example, Mary Ann Tolbert, Bartosz Adamczewski. The composer presents her vision of the dramaturgy of the piece.

Conclusion

Concluding, the author summarizes the results of her work. She states what she has managed to achieve and what has only been partially accomplished. The author attempts to reflect on what type of adventure it was to write this work, who might find her discoveries useful, and which of the experiences enriched her compositional skills and to what extent. The doctoral dissertation contains three annexes: I. Bibliographical list of New Testament translations; II. List of original rhetoric figures; III. Libretto – *Passion According to Saint Mark*.