

METROPOLITAN HILARION ALFEYEV

ST MATTHEW PASSION

English version



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1. The Council of the Chief Priests

Choir: Come, let us sing holy laments to Christ. Alleluia.

Evangelist (Mt. 26:1–5): Jesus said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Choir: Lord my God, I will sing to thee a funeral song. Alleluia.

Evangelist (Mt. 26:14–16): Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

Choir: Thine all-holy Mother weeps for thee lamenting. Alleluia.

2. ‘One of You shall Betray Me’

Evangelist (Mt. 26:17–21): Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Choir: O Christ our God, thou hast foretold to thy disciples, ‘One of you shall betray me.’

Evangelist (Mt. 26:22–25): And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Choir: They were exceeding sorrowful, and they said unto him, ‘Not I, O Lord.’ Then Judas asked, ‘Not I, O Master?’ Jesus replied, ‘Thou hast said, Judas.’

3. The Last Supper

Evangelist (Mt. 26:26): And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it...

Orchestra (Fugue in G Major).

Evangelist (Mt. 26:26–30): ...and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Choir: Come, ye faithful, let us raise our minds on high and enjoy the Master’s hospitality and the table of immortal life; and let us listen to the exalted teaching of the Word whom we magnify.

Evangelist (Mt. 26:31–35): Then saith Jesus 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 shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

4. Jesus at Gethsemane

Mezzo-soprano (Air in D Minor): I see thy bridal chamber adorned, O my Saviour, and I have no wedding garment to enter there.

Evangelist (Mt. 26:36): Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Mezzo-soprano: Make the robe of my soul to shine and save me, O Giver of light.

Evangelist (Mt. 26:37–46): And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

5. Jesus Arrested

Tenor and choir: Today the Creator of heaven and earth said to his disciples: ‘The hour is at hand, and Judas has drawn near. Let none of you deny me when you see me on the cross between the two thieves. For as man I suffer, but as God I will save you who believe in me.’

Evangelist (Mt. 26:47–50, 55–56): And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

6. The Beatitudes

Choir: In thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom.
Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.

7. Jesus before the High Priest

Evangelist (Mt. 26:57–68): And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him far off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said: He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

Choir: He who clothes himself in light as in a garment, stood naked at the judgment; on his cheek he received blows from the hands which he had formed. Lawless people nailed to the cross the Lord of glory. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the sun was darkened, for it could not bear such outrage done to God, before whom all things tremble. Let us worship him.

8. Peter's Denial. The End of Judas

Evangelist (Mt. 26:69–75): Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Bass (Air in D Minor): God, have mercy on me and save me.

Evangelist (Mt. 27:1–5): When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Choir: What reason led thee, Judas, to betray the Saviour? Did he expel thee from the company of the apostles? Did he deprive thee of the gift of healing? When thou wast at supper with the others, did he drive thee from the table? When he washed the others' feet, did he pass thee by? How many are the blessings that thou hast forgotten! And thou art condemned for thine ingratitude, but his measureless longsuffering and great mercy are proclaimed to all.

9. Jesus before Pilate

Evangelist (Mt. 27:11): And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

Orchestra (Fugue in E Minor).

Evangelist (Mt. 27:12–17, 20–26): And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be upon us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

10. The Crucifixion

Evangelist (Mt. 27:27–31): Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

Choir: Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and stand with fear and trembling.

Evangelist (Mt. 27:32): And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

Choir: Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and take no thought for any earthly thing.

Evangelist (Mt. 27:33–34): And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

Choir: For the King of Kings and Lord of Lords draws near to be sacrificed and given as food to the faithful. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Evangelist (Mt. 27:35–37): And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus the King of the Jews.

Choir: We venerate thy cross, O Master, and we glorify thy Holy Resurrection.

11. The Death of Jesus

Evangelist (Mt. 27:38–50): Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

12. ‘We hymn thee’

Choir: We hymn thee, we bless thee, we give thanks to thee, O Lord, and we pray unto thee, O our God.

13. Earthquake. The Virgin Mary’s Lament

Evangelist (Mt. 27:51–56): And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared

unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.

Soprano (Air in F Minor): My Son and my God, my Life and my Hope died on the Cross; my Joy and my Light descended to the tomb. My Son and my Lord, the Light of my eyes, my sweetest Jesus, my Joy and my Springtime, my Sun set beneath the earth. My Son and my God, my sweetest Jesus.

Choir: Weep not for me, O Mother, beholding in the sepulchre the Son whom thou hast conceived without seed in thy womb. For I shall rise and be glorified, and as God I shall exalt in everlasting glory those who magnify thee with faith and love.

14. The Burial

Evangelist (Mt. 27:57–60): When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Choir: Noble Joseph, taking down thy most pure body from the tree, wrapped it in clean linen with sweet spices, and he laid it in a new tomb. But on the third day thou didst arise, O Lord, granting great mercy to the world.

15. Sealing the Stone

Evangelist (Mt. 27:61): And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Tenor (Air in C Minor): O Lord my God, I will sing to thee a funeral hymn, for thou hast descended into hell; I will sing to thee a song at thy burial, for thou hast slain death.

Evangelist (Mt. 27:62–66): Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

16. ‘Thou Didst Descend into Hell’

Choir: Thou didst descend into hell, O Christ God, and, having trampled death by death, thou didst arise on the third day.

17. The Resurrection

Evangelist (Mt. 28:1): In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Orchestra (Fugue in D Minor).

Evangelist (Mt. 28:2–7): And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he

said. Come, see the place where the Lord was laid. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

Choir: Arise, O Lord.

Evangelist (Mt. 28:8–10): And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Choir: Arise, O Lord.

Evangelist (Mt. 28:16–20): Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

18. ‘Thy Death, O Lord, We Proclaim’

Orchestra (Fugue in C Minor).

Choir: Thy death, O Lord, we proclaim, and thy Resurrection we confess. Alleluia, glory to thee.

For the Gospel passages, the King James Version of the Bible is used. Translations of liturgical texts, sometimes slightly modified by the composer, are mostly taken from: The Lenten Triodion, translated from the original Greek by Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, St Tikhon’s Seminary Press, South Canaan, PA, 2002.



The *St Matthew Passion* by Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev for soloists, choir and orchestra combines traditional elements of the Passion genre with arresting clarity and originality of expression. Its author is a professional composer who is inspired by the time-honoured tradition of church music, both East and West. At the same time, he has been, and continues to be, a bishop, who brings the Word of God to people. Throughout the course of contemporary sacred music, this monumental work stands out for its original musicality, striking variety, coherence, emotional and spiritual depth.

The work is based on St Matthew's description of Christ's passion and death. Excerpts from the Gospel are interspersed with vocal and instrumental settings – recitatives, choral sections, arias, fugues. Aside from Scripture, other texts are largely taken from church services celebrated by orthodox Christians during Holy Week.

Of all living Russian composers, **Hilarion Alfeyev** is the one whose compositions are most widely performed. During the last ten years (2007–2017) more than 200 performances of his music have been presented in various countries. Each of his new compositions turns out to be a marked event in contemporary musical life. His ability to fill music with profound religious content, to unite diverse cultures and styles, to invent new modes of expression yet remaining faithful to centuries-old classical traditions, to articulate profound themes using simple and understandable musical language, together place him as matchless among contemporary composers.

The *St Matthew Passion* is Alfeyev's most frequently-performed work. Since its premiere in 2007 it has been played over one hundred times in major European countries, as well as in America, Australia and Asia. The English version of this work has been recorded by the Russian National Orchestra conducted by the composer, with the participation of the Moscow Synodal Choir and leading Russian opera singers as soloists, and the Right Reverend Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, as reciter.

Metropolitan Hilarion's other musical compositions include the *Songs of Death* for tenor, guitar and chamber orchestra (1984–2013), *Divine Liturgy* (2006) and *All-Night Vigil* (2006) for mixed choir, *Christmas Oratorio* for soloists, two choirs and symphony orchestra (2007), *Song of Ascents*, a symphony for orchestra, choir and organ (2008), *Stabat Mater* for soprano, choir and orchestra (2012), *Concerto Grosso* for soloists, string orchestra and harpsichord (2012), *Fugue on a BACH Motif* for symphony orchestra (2013), as well as other works of vocal and instrumental music.

Born in 1966, Alfeyev studied composition at Moscow's Gnessins School of Music and later at the Moscow State Conservatory. In January 1987 he entered the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he was tonsured as a monk on 19 June, ordained deacon on 21 June and ordained priest on 19 August in the same year. In 1993–1995 he studied at Oxford University, and in 1995 he achieved a DPhil degree in Theology. On 14 January 2002 he was ordained Bishop. On 7 May 2003 he was appointed Bishop of Vienna and Austria, administrator of the Diocese of Budapest and Hungary. On 31 March 2009 he was appointed the Chairman of the Department of the External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate and a permanent member of the Holy Synod *ex officio*. On Easter Monday 2009 he was raised to the rank of Archbishop and on 1 February 2010 he was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan.

Hilarion Alfeyev is one of the leading theologians of the Orthodox Church. He authored more than 40 books on dogmatic theology, patristics, church history, and New Testament studies. His most recent theological work is a monumental 6-volume series *Jesus Christ: His Life and Teaching*.

Richard Chartres was educated at Hertford Grammar School and studied history at Trinity College (Cambridge). Before ordination he taught Ancient History at the international school in Seville. He was ordained in 1973 and served as a curate in St Andrew's Bedford. In 1975 he was appointed Chaplain to Robert





Runcie, at that time Bishop of St Albans, and from 1980–1984 he served as the Archbishop's Chaplain at Lambeth and Canterbury. He moved to St Stephen's Rochester Row in the Diocese of London in 1984. During eight years in the parish he also served as Director of Ordinands for the Central Area and as Professor of Divinity at the Gresham College.

He was consecrated Bishop of Stepney on 22 May 1992. He became the 132nd Bishop of London in November 1995. After his moving to see of London, he was appointed Dean of Her Majesty Chapels Royal in 1996 and a Privy Counsellor.

His publications include *The History of Gresham College 1597–1997* (with David Vermont) and *Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life* (2005), and many articles and essays especially on religion and the environment.

Richard Chartres retired as Bishop of London on 31st March 2017. He continues to hold the post of Dean of Her Majesty Chapels Royal until the appointment of the 133rd Bishop of London.

Olga Peretyatko-Mariotti, *soprano*, is one of the world's most sought-after sopranos. She was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia. She started her musical career singing in the children's choir of the Mariinsky Theatre, went on to study at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin and the opera studio at the Hamburg State Opera, and made her international break-through at *Operalia*, a very prestigious opera competition organized by Plácido Domingo (2007). Today she continues to receive major awards, including the high distinction of Premio Franco Abbiati della Critica Musicale Italiana and Europe's most important media prize *ECHO Klassik* in the *Best Solo Album of the Year* category.

The uniquely compelling voice and stage presence allow Ms. Peretyatko-Mariotti to combine an active opera career with frequent recitals in the most legendary venues. There is hardly a major opera house that has not yet invited her to sing



lead roles, including Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Berlin and Munich State Operas, Vienna State Opera, Zürich Opera House, La Fenice in Venice, Milan's La Scala, Teatro Real in Madrid, Opéra Bastille in Paris, Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam, La Monnaie in Brussels, the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, and the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Ms. Peretyatko-Mariotti has collaborated with star directors, including Robert Lepage, whose acclaimed production of Stravinsky *Le Rossignol* in Toronto (2009) confirmed her status as one of the top sopranos of our time. In 2017, she sang the main role of Leila in Wim Wenders's take on Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*, under musical direction of Daniel Barenboim. She is a frequent guest star at the most prestigious opera festivals including Salzburg, Baden-Baden, Aix-en-Provence and Pesaro, where a video recording of her performances in the productions of *Matilde di Shabran*, *Sigismondo*, and *La Scala di Seta* were released worldwide on DECCA, Arthaus Musik, and Opus Arte.

Agunda Kulaeva, mezzo-soprano, graduated from the Rostov State Rachmaninov Conservatory as a choral conductor in 2000 and later as a singer. In 2005, she graduated from the Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center, where she sang Zibel in the production of Gounod's *Faust*, Lyubasha in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, Maddalena in Verdi's *Rigoletto* and took part in concerts.

Being a soloist of the Novaya Opera Theater of Moscow (since 2005) she sang Amneris (*Aida*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*), Ratmir (*Ruslan and Lyudmila*), Konchakovna (*Prince Igor*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Marfa (*Khovanshchina*).

In 2014 she became a soloist of the Bolshoi Theatre, where she sang Eboli (*Don Carlo*), Carmen (*Carmen*), Marguerite (*La damnation de Faust*), Konchakovna (*Prince Igor*), Polina (*Queen of Spades*), Sonia (*War and Piece* – with Mstislav Rostropovich and Alexander Vedernikov).



Agunda Kulaeva was the Winner of Boris Christoff International Competition in Bulgaria in 2009. In 2014 she debuted as Lyubasha (*The Tsar's Bride*) at the Avery Fisher Hall in New York, as well as at the Theater an der Wien, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and at Philharmonie 2 (*Cité de la Musique*) in Paris. She sang roles of Amneris at the Sofia Opera and Ballet National Theatre (Radames – Kamen Chaney), Carmen and Eboli at the International Music Festival *Varna Summer*.

July 2016 Agunda Kulaeva debuted as Carmen at both Deutsche Oper Berlin and Arena di Verona as well as Marguerite in concert performance of *La damnation de Faust* at Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. Season 2016–2017 was notable for appearances at Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam (Konchakovna in *Prince Igor*), Lucerne Symphony Orchestra in Switzerland (Polina in *Queen of Spades*), Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in Sweden (mezzo-soprano part in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*), at Ravello International Festival in Italy (mezzo-soprano part in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*).

Agunda Kulaeva has collaborated with many outstanding conductors, including Xian Zhang, Jan Willem de Vriend, Teodor Currentzis, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Dmitri Jurowski, Mikhail Pletnev.

Dmitry Korchak, *tenor*, since winning in 2004 prize at Francisco Viñas International Competition in Barcelona and two prizes at Plácido Domingo's *Operalia* Competition in Los Angeles, Dmitry Korchak has continued to delight audiences worldwide in some of the most celebrated venues, playing some of the greatest leading operatic roles and collaborating with renowned conductors and orchestras.

Dmitry Korchak studied in Russia both as a conductor and as a singer. He has collaborated with such musicians as: Daniel Barenboim, Bruno Campanella, Riccardo Chailly, José Cura, Plácido Domingo, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Marc Minkowski, Riccardo Muti, Kent Nagano, Krzysztof Penderecki, Evelino Pidò,



Michel Plasson, Saulius Sondeckis, Jeffrey Tate, Thomas Sanderling, Eve Queler, Alberto Zedda, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Mikhail Pletnev, Viktor Popov, Vladimir Spivakov, Evgeny Svetlanov, Yuri Temirkanov and others.

Among Dmitry's recent engagements are: Carnegie Hall, The Metropolitan Opera, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra Bastille, Wiener Staatsoper, The Royal Opera House (Covent Garden), Teatro Regio di Torino, Teatro Regio di Parma, The Los Angeles Opera, Dutch National Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro Real (Madrid), Semperoper (Dresden), Teatro di San Carlo (Napoli), Teatro Massimo di Palermo, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Palau de les Arts in Valencia, Salzburg Festival, Rossini Opera Festival (Pesaro), Bad Kissingen Festival, Colmar International Festival, Ravenna Festival, Reate Festival etc.

Nikolay Didenko (bass) is a guest soloist of the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre (since 2013) and an opera artist who has been representing the Russian performing school in the opera houses and concert halls in New York, Washington, Houston, Paris, London, Berlin, Barcelona, Madrid, Copenhagen, Cologne, Warsaw, Salzburg, St. Petersburg, Moscow and other cities across the world.

Nikolay Didenko graduated from the Moscow Sveshnikov Choral School and the Stasov Music School as a violinist. He continued his education at the Academy of Choral Art, where in 2003 he completed a graduate course under Professor Dmitri Vdovin. In 2002 and 2003, he was a leading soloist of the Kolobov *Novaya Opera* Theatre of Moscow. In 2003 to 2005, he was a soloist of Houston Grand Opera in the USA. Since 2004, Nikolay Didenko has represented *Asconas Holt*, one of the world's leading arts management companies located in England.

The singer's repertoire includes parts from the operas *Mozart and Salieri*, *Rigoletto*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Tosca*, *Julius Caesar*, *Madame Butterfly*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Turandot*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Little Prince*, *Il Trovatore*, *Idomeneo*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *Les*

Troyens, The Mercy of Titus, Don Carlos, Un ballo in maschera, La bohème, La Sonnambula, The Capulets and the Montagues, Aida, Norma, The Turk in Italy, Falstaff, The Power of Fate, Simon Boccanegra, Don Giovanni, Boris Godunov and others. Nikolay Didenko has performed with such famous singers as Ramón Vargas, Renée Fleming, Nikolay Gyaurov, Mirella Freni, Edita Gruberová, Frederica von Stade, Vladimir Galuzin, Maria Guleghina, June Anderson, Bryn Terfel, Matti Salminen, Massimo Giordano, Laura Claycomb and others; the prominent conductors such as Antonello Allemandi, Patrick Summers, Edoardo Müller, Nello Santi, Enrique Mazzola, Marco Armiliato, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Vladimir Spivakov, Rudolf Barshai, Vasily Sinaisky, Alexander Anisimov, Vladimir Jurowski, Mikhail Pletnev, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Valery Gergiev and others.

In 2017, Nikolay Didenko received the *Grammy Award* for Best Choral Performance of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Dies Illa*.

Since 2005, Nikolay Didenko has been the artistic director of the charity project the *White Steamboat* for creative development and rehabilitation of musically gifted children with disabilities, orphans, children from socially disadvantaged, incomplete, large and low-income families. Since 2017, he has been the President of the *White Steamboat* foundation supporting of creative children and youth.

The Moscow Synodal Choir, one of the oldest professional choirs in Russia, was founded in Moscow in 1721. Soon after the revolution of 1917 the choir was dissolved. It was revived in 2009 and has now become one of Russia's leading church choirs. Its artistic director is Alexey Puzakov.

The choir's repertoire includes a large number of pieces by Russian composers, including Rachmaninoff's settings of the Divine Liturgy and the of the All-Night Vigil, and Tchaikovsky's setting of the Liturgy. They also devote considerable energy to performing Bach's Passions and cantatas, as well as music of contemporary composers such as Arvo Pärt and Hilarion Alfeyev.



The choir gives regular concerts at the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory and tours extensively in Europe and America.

The Russian National Orchestra was founded in 1990 by pianist and conductor Mikhail Pletnev and today is recognized as one of the world's top orchestras. Over its quarter century history, the orchestra has attained the appreciation of both critics and the general public. Maintaining an active international schedule, the RNO appears throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas, and is a frequent visitor to major festivals such as Edinburgh, Shanghai and the *BBC Proms*. The orchestra presents its own *RNO Grand Festival* each September to open the Moscow season, and is the founding orchestra of Festival Napa Valley, held every July in California.

RNO concerts are regularly aired on National Public Radio in the United States, the European Broadcasting Union, and Russia's *Kultura* channel (*Russia-K*). The orchestra's critically acclaimed discography, launched with a 1991 CD cited as the best recording of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, *Pathétique*, in history, now numbers more than 80 recordings on *Deutsche Grammophon*, *PENTATONE* and other prestigious labels. The orchestra's recording of *Sleeping Beauty*, conducted by Mikhail Pletnev, is, according to the BBC, among the most listened to classical music recordings of the last 75 years. In 2004 the RNO became the first orchestra in Russian history to win a Grammy Award, the most prestigious of music prizes. In 2008 *Gramophone* magazine included the RNO in its list of the world's 20 best orchestras.

The RNO is unique among the principal Russian ensembles as a private institution funded with the support of individuals, corporations and foundations in Russia and throughout the world. In recognition of its artistry and pathbreaking structure, the RNO was the first non-governmental orchestra to receive grant support from the Russian Federation.



Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev
St Matthew Passion
English version

Disc 1

1	1. The Council of the Chief Priests (Choir, Evangelist).	5.17
2	2. 'One of You shall Betray Me' (Evangelist, Choir).	5.16
3	3. The Last Supper (Evangelist, Orchestra: Fugue in G major, Choir).	5.20
4	4. Jesus at Gethsemane (Air of mezzo-soprano, Evangelist)	5.23
5	5. Jesus Arrested (Tenor and Choir, Evangelist)	3.18
6	6. The Beatitudes (Choir)	5.23
7	7. Jesus before the High Priest (Evangelist, Choir).	5.07
8	8. Peter's Denial. The End of Judas (Evangelist, Air of bass, Choir)	6.29
9	9. Jesus before Pilate (Evangelist, Orchestra: Fugue in E minor)	4.26

Total time: 46.06

Disc 2

1	10. The Crucifixion (Evangelist, Choir)	7.11
2	11. The Death of Jesus (Evangelist).	2.30
3	12. 'We hymn thee' (Choir).	4.21
4	13. Earthquake. The Virgin Mary's Lament (Evangelist, Air of soprano, Choir)	7.29
5	14. The Burial (Evangelist, Choir)	4.40
6	15. Sealing the Stone (Evangelist, Air of tenor)	5.13
7	16. 'Thou Didst Descend into Hell' (Choir)	2.23
8	17. The Resurrection (Evangelist, Orchestra: Fugue in D minor, Choir).	5.08
9	18. 'Thy Death, O Lord, We Proclaim' (Orchestra: Fugue in C minor, Choir)	5.35

Total time: 44.35

Bishop Richard Chartres, *Evangelist*
Olga Peretyatko-Mariotti, *soprano*
Agunda Kulaeva, *mezzo-soprano*
Dmitry Korchak, *tenor*
Nikolay Didenko, *bass*

The Moscow Synodal Choir
The Russian National Orchestra
Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, *conductor*

Recorded in 2011, 2015–2018
Recording producer and engineer: Rainer Maillard

Project managers: Anastasia Khodukina, Yanina Grasevich
Editor: Natalia Storck
Design: Grigory Zhukov

MEL CD 10 02531