

Antiphonal

As in Bach's use of two interacting choirs & orchestras in the *Passion of St. Matthew*.

Aria

A song movement which features a soloist singing in a steady tempo (as opposed to the unmeasured, sung-speech style of the recitativ). In addition to the standard continuo accompaniment, an aria can call for a few additional instruments and sometimes even feature a solo instrument, such as the solo violin in “Erbarme dich”.

Baroque suite

A multi-movement work in which the composer bases each movement's structure on a form of dance; ex. J. S. Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major contains an Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Minuets, and a Gigue (after the famous Prelude).

Chamber organ

A small pipe organ suitable for use in a continuo or accompaniment setting.

Chorale

A movement which typically features a four-part hymn supported by the orchestra such that the high-pitched instruments play the same line as the sopranos, mid-range instruments play the alto line, etc.; in a Lutheran service, chorale movements allowed the congregation to join in song.

Colla parte

[Italian: “with the part”] A performance instruction to closely accompany the rhythm, phrasing, and tempo of the primary voice (a soloist or group).

Continuo

As in Basso Continuo, or “Continuous Bass.” Refers to the group of players who play the lowest line of the music, typically a keyboard instrument such as organ or harpsichord, sometimes a plucked instrument such as theorbo (bass lute), and a sustaining instrument such as the cello; bass instruments which provide the harmonic foundation throughout the entire Passion, even in solo vocal movements (for which the rest of the orchestra does not play).

“Erbarme dich”

“Erbarme dich, mein Gott” is an aria from *St. Matthew* featuring the alto and violin soloists accompanied by first & second violins, viola, and continuo, depicting the lamentation of Peter after having denied knowing Christ.

Evangelist

In *St. Matthew*, the role of the narrator sung by a tenor.

Greek Chorus

A group of singers whose role (as a collective) is to comment, through song, on the drama, action, ideas, or morals depicted by the main action.

Libretto

The text of a passion, oratorio, or opera; text frequently not written by the composer of the music, such as Picander's text in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

Motet

A sacred piece of choral music with multiple vocal parts but with no instrumental accompaniment.

Oratorio

A large-scale, programmatic, multi-movement piece of music involving a chorus and orchestra featuring soloists. A Passion, such as that of St. Matthew, is an example of an oratorio.

Passion

An oratorio which depicts the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Christ; Bach's two surviving Passions - St. Matthew and St. John - depict the story of Christ from the perspectives of the gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, respectively.

Picander

The pen name of German poet & librettist Christian Friedrich Henrici who wrote the non-scriptural text for the St. Matthew Passion and many other Bach cantatas.

Recitativ

Sung speech; a movement which features a soloist singing freely in the rhythm of ordinary speech (as opposed to a strictly metered tempo) accompanied only by continuo instruments .

Sung Speech

See definition for recitativ.

Turba Chorus

A chorus representing a crowd; in the *St. Matthew Passion*, the turba chorus plays the collective role of the citizens whom Pilate addresses when he asks "Welchen wollet ihr, dafl ich euch losgebe? Barrabam oder Jesum, von dem gesaget wird, er sei Christus? (Which one would ye have that I release unto you? Barab-bas or Jesus, of whom it is said that he is the Christ?)".

Vesper

In the case of Lutherans such as Bach, an evening prayer service; in a Lutheran Good Friday service of *St. Matthew Passion*, the congregation would have joined in singing the chorale hymns.