

INTENSITY, INTIMACY, AND INNOVATION: ESTHER AND THE ST. JOHN PASSION

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Offered in partnership with Music of the Baroque.

When he composed *Esther*, Handel essentially invented the English oratorio. With the visceral drama of opera, the extraordinary—even modern—fierceness of its plot, and a wonderfully translucent, spiritual score, *Esther* has a mesmerizing fascination. All of these qualities are shared by Bach's *St. John Passion*. The predecessor to the epochal *St. Matthew Passion*, the *St. John Passion* is freewheeling, with an immediate accessibility and distinctive inwardness.

This Saturday seminar explores both the music and the words of these masterpieces, providing a rich context for their appreciation.

Agenda

10-10:45 Handelian style. Commentaries by Hogwood, Lang, Mackerras, et al. Film, "Handel the Entertainer".

10:45-12 Esther. Recording by Christopher Hogwood. Analysis and discussion.

12-12:30 Introduction to Bach, St. John Passion. Commentaries by Gardiner and Harnoncourt

12:30-1:30 Lunch

1:30-2:30 St. John Passion, part one (DVDs by Rattle, Berlin Philharmonic, dir. Peter Sellars and Harnoncourt)

2:30-4 St. John Passion, part two



Jacopo Tintoretto - *Esther before Ahasuerus*
Kensington Palace



Rembrandt van Rijn - *Ahasuerus, Haman and Esther*
Pushkin Museum



Sandro Botticelli – Lamentation Over the Dead Christ
Alte Pinochotek



El Greco – Saint Peter in Tears
Greco Museum



Michaelangelo Buonarrati – Pietà
Saint Peter's Basilica

