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Passio – Compassio

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# Passio—Compassio

## *J. S. Bach's Passions Transformed into a Passion Transcending Christianity*

MIRELLA KLOMP

### A Contemporary Passion in a Changed Religious Landscape

EVERY YEAR IN JUNE, *Holland Festival* (HF) takes place in the Dutch capital.<sup>471</sup> This festival—first held in 1947 to rebuild a positive interaction between the Netherlands and its surrounding countries after World War II—defines itself as “the leading international performing arts festival in the Netherlands.”<sup>472</sup> Offering a broad scope of international performing arts with a mix of performances and concerts from all corners of the world, the festival seeks to feature established names as well as new talent, showing innovation in art and exploring new types of venues and forms of theater.

One of the performances in the 66th edition of HF was *Passio-Compassio*, a contemporary passion especially seeking positive interactions. It was performed in the concert hall *Muziekgebouw aan het IJ* on June 12, 2012, for an audience of some three hundred to four hundred people.<sup>473</sup> The piece, created in 2010, drew from Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, his *St. John Passion*, Oriental early Christian songs, as well as Turkish Sufi songs (i.e., expressions of Islamic mysticism). It was performed by *Ensemble Sarband*, a German ensemble led by an artistic director originating from Bulgaria, who as a young boy migrated to Germany with his mother.<sup>474</sup> His ensemble

unites performers from widely different cultures and musical backgrounds. The cooperation in the ensemble is not a fashionable crossover, but conceived as a continuous dialogue on equal terms. All the artists unrestrictedly contribute their native traditions, their personal histories and their own creativity to the programs, so that Sarband also becomes a musical training ground for communication and tolerance between different cultural identities.<sup>475</sup>

A quote from a press review, prominently placed on the ensembles' homepage, reads: “For many years now, Sarband have been building breath-taking bridges between cultures and religions. . .”<sup>476</sup> To connect seems to be their mission; this also speaks from the name of the ensemble that literally means “connection.” Their aim is to show that music is a medium that can express mutual respect. They show this with diverse performers and to a diverse audience, all coming together in the performance, binding them “to cultural experiences previously perceived as alien.”<sup>477</sup> *Passio-Compassio* is one of their projects that intend to build bridges.

*Passio-Compassio* is also one of many contemporary passions performed in concert halls in the Netherlands. In Dutch late modern society, the passion (a large musical form rooting in the Christian liturgical tradition), like other forms of Christian material and immaterial heritage (e.g., religious language, symbols, narratives, objects, and practices) has over the last century increasingly been transferred: it migrated from the enclosed domain of the institutional churches to other domains, and changed. This process is characterized as a transfer and a transformation of religion and/or the sacred.<sup>478</sup> Particularly after the year 2000, new passions have been creatively and freely composed and transformed: modern composers, artistic and musical directors of ensembles, and even broadcasting companies have actualized the passion narrative of Christ, commented on it, deconstructed it, combined it with other narratives and discourses, and so forth. Obviously, the notion of “transformation” is not unproblematic, because there is no such thing as a “standard passion.” There has never been an *editio typica*, a fixed passion structure, or even a fixed narrative that should be seen as a standard. Yet, most passions throughout history were created in a Christian societal context, and therefore show and share in a dominant Christian discourse. What is new in the little rise of contemporary passions, is the fact that it has taken place in a society where the religious landscape has changed dramatically over the last decades. “Depillarization” since the 1960s<sup>479</sup> has crumbled the politico-denominational segregation of Dutch society: the “vertical” division into “pillars” according to different Christian denominations or ideologies in general no longer exists. Ongoing de-churching and people calling themselves less and less religious and spiritually interested<sup>480</sup> diminish the role of church in society, change the role of the church in peoples' lives, and influence the presence and interpretation of Christian ideas and values in Dutch society. Today, many people find the sacred when performing or participating in rituals in the areas of nature, art, music, wellness, and sports.<sup>481</sup> At the same time, like other European countries, the Netherlands is seeing an influx of refugees from Muslim countries, which invokes a sentiment of fear for a growing Muslim presence in a country that was long permeated with Protestantism. All in all, the Dutch religious landscape and its artifacts have seen an enormous change, which also influenced the appropriation of notions kernel to Christianity, such as “passion” and “compassion.”

The art practice *Passio-Compassio*, understood against the backdrop of the socioreligious context mentioned above, leads to the question: *What is the connection between passion and compassion in Passio-Compassio as performed by Ensemble Sarband at HF in Amsterdam in 2012, and how can this relation be evaluated from a Christian theological perspective?* In search of an answer to this question, I will engage in a theological discussion with myself, with (representations of) my own experiences, tradition, and theology, all influenced by the cultural context in which I was brought up and live. With the help of other scholars and disciplines, I enter into a conversation with ritual knowledge, for the benefit of retrieving compassion that enhances living together in a globalizing world.<sup>482</sup> “Compassion” here is taken as the act of connecting with the suffering other, reaching out, and allowing or even welcoming her/him with their pain into one’s own life. In our multicultural and multireligious society, compassion with “the other” is often far off. Sentiments such as fear, discontent, and distrust currently seem to grow. In this context, compassion is a complex concept. Yet, in order to be able to live together, it is crucial to rediscover what compassion is about.

### Interrogating Passio-Compassio

My research on *Passio-Compassio* is empirical in nature and principally based on participatory observation during the concert in 2012.<sup>483</sup> When applying participatory observation as a data collection method, positionality is important: aspects of our identities such as gender, social class, race, education, etc., are markers of relational positions rather than essential qualities.<sup>484</sup> This influences our epistemology: knowledge “is valid when it includes an acknowledgement of the knower’s specific position in any context, because changing and contextual and relational factors are crucial for defining identities and our knowledge in any given situation.”<sup>485</sup> Hence, as a practical theologian specializing in ritual-musical ethnography, I must spend a few words on my own particularity as a researcher prior to the description of any performance, including *Passio-Compassio*.

*I am a white, female Dutch theologian in her thirties, and an ordained minister in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. I was born in a Lutheran family, and raised in that tradition. I was trained for the ministry both at the Dutch Evangelical-Lutheran Seminary and at the Vrije Universiteit. Already at a young age I became familiar with Bach’s music: in church, and at the Lutheran choir camps for children that my parents had me attend, as well as during the organ lessons they had me take from the age of seven. I learned to play all the famous chorales, and when I became a teenager, our church organist (who was my teacher) sometimes had me accompany the congregation in their hymn singing.*

These particularities influence my description, the collected data, the language and concepts that I use, and how I see the ontology of the performance and the empirically obtained data: I have no other access to the ritual than by way of the research data that I generated through participatory observation of the performance.<sup>486</sup>

In case of *Passio-Compassio*, these particularities are even more crucial, because my autobiography strongly influenced the listener experience of *Passio-Compassio*. Therefore, this contribution includes an important autoethnographic angle. Autoethnographic and autoethnographic theology starts from life as it has developed and as it is developing in its connections with others, instead of well-ordered and systematically arranged knowledge.<sup>487</sup> It is a method that takes *the other* as well as *difference* very seriously. It has been said that an autoethnography “lets you use yourself to get to culture,”<sup>488</sup> and by analogy, I claim that it “lets you use yourself to get to theology.” Considering the role and position of *the other* in compassion, the following autoethnographic overtone serves as a “key” in the conversation on compassion developed below.

*That night too, we went to church, like we used to do every Holy Week. We had always done so with the entire family. That year on Good Friday my father stayed at home to pack his suitcase. My sister and I knew that he would leave our family the next day, and we had every reason to hope that he would never return. That evening, my mother drove the three of us to celebrate the liturgy in the small but sturdy “High Church” Lutheran congregation that we belonged to. She took her normal place between the other sopranos in the church choir; by way of exception, that night my sister and I sat left and right of her. During the worship service the passion narrative was being read, and, in alternatim with the congregation, the choir sang four-part chorales from Bach’s passions with which I was so familiar. At the end of the service, some choir members cried with us. I was thirteen and filled with a mix of pain, sorrow, and sheer relief. The passion was about me. Choir members comforted my broken family. The music offered consolation. God was next to me in the choir stalls.*

This experience, and—being raised with music that, according to Luther, is after all *optimum Dei donum*—several other experiences connected to music, ritual performance, suffering, compassion, and consolation, influenced my investigation of the performance

*Passio-Compassio*. It deeply influences the conversational structure and nature of this contribution.

## The Performance of *Passio-Compassio*

### *Description*

On the aforementioned evening in 2012 in the modern concert hall, the performers on stage sit and stand in a semicircle: a vocal double quartet, and some fifteen musicians with their reed flutes, violins, a fiddle, saxophones, a bass clarinet, psalteries, harpsichord, organ, and two soloist singers in the front. Among them, the director of Ensemble Sarband, Vladimir Ivanoff, playing frame drum, and the Lebanese alto, Fadia el-Hage. The music they perform has a very Eastern sound and performance practice, considering the frequent use of prepared suspensions, passing tones, and embellishing tones. The piece consists of a musical introduction followed by twenty-one parts that, when listed, make clear how this passion was put together: like a patchwork of different elements.<sup>489</sup> Elements taken from Bach's *St. Matthew* and *St. John Passion* and even his *Christmas Oratorio* are mixed with thirteenth-century mystical texts by Rumi, and combined with spiritual songs from early Christianity. The lyrics are in German, Turkish, Arabic, Aramaic, and Syrian. Songs are either sung in the original language or in translation, and some are performed in more than one language. During the performance, every now and then text fragments are projected on the black screen behind the performers, in the background of the stage.

Some forty-five minutes after the performance has started, all of a sudden five men in black capes with tall brown hats enter the stage one after another: dervishes from the Sufi Mevlevi Order originating from the Golden Horn (a historic inlet of the Bosphorus dividing the city of Istanbul in Turkey). They are also known as whirling dervishes due to their whirling practice, which is a form of remembrance of God. The dervishes remove their capes, and in a white robe and wide skirt start pivoting around their left feet, using their right feet to push off with, turning counterclockwise around their own axes and whirling for seven minutes; starting slowly, building up, and returning to slow again. Their eyes are closed, their heads with the tall hats held at slight angle. This dance of the Mevlevi Order, according to the program booklet, is a form of prayer: it is a ritual that

represents a mystical journey in which the dervish gradually leaves his or her ego and personal desires behind and through love and truth touches perfection. After returning from this journey, a person is more adult and better capable of serving creation and of loving. The continual whirling of the dervishes is thus a way of going into ecstasy and in that manner becoming closer to God. The desired state (*wajd*) is by no means reached in every celebration of a ritual, however, and it is strictly forbidden to feign it . . . When they reach momentum, they open and raise their arms, turning their right palm upward and their left palm downward: to receive the blessing of God, and to pass that blessing to the world.<sup>490</sup>

Summarizing the performance, we may say that *Passio-Compassio* was a multisensory *mishmash* (given the Oriental influence in the performance, the use of the Yiddish word seems appropriate) of languages, words and sounds, of textual and melodic quotations, of Oriental and Occidental instruments and styles of singing, a mix of cultural elements, rituals and religious traditions, of the passion of Christ, of human suffering, and love.

### *Listener experience*

As a participant observer, I was moved by the new way in which "old music" that is obviously very dear to me was brought into this concert. I often attend concerts of classical, mostly choral, music (in the Amsterdam *Muziekgebouw aan het IJ* and elsewhere) and I am in favor of contemporary classical music that creatively appropriates Christian musical forms. The connections with contemporary Western culture that are often made in these performances shed new light on these forms—light that generates new meaning. As a listener I appreciated *Passio-Compassio* in its effort to make connections between styles, cultures, and religions, and to bring Bach in a new and surprising manner: by means of Bach's choral work, Ivanoff had treated the passion narrative of Christ in a creative way, opening it to the suffering of other people (potentially every human being). He thus created a multicultural as well as a multireligious passion.

Particularly because of the latter, I also felt confusion and a certain estrangement. Whirling dervishes inserted a strange element into Bach's obviously Christian passion narrative: an Islamic religious practice. These feelings were reinforced by the concert hall seating plan: the position of the chairs was opposite the stage. Looking at the dervishes created a distance: it was "them on stage having their ecstatic experience with their eyes closed" versus "the audience passively watching this practice." There was no interaction. The connections that *Passio-Compassio* tried to make—between words, styles, languages, instruments, sounds, practices, cultures, and religions—mainly appear to be made on stage. My confusion was enhanced by the explanation of the piece in the program booklet, where passionate emotion and suffering were seemingly conflated and linked to *passio*:

Judaism, Christianity and Islam refer to messages of salvation preceded by severe ordeals, sacrifices and passions. All human beings experience suffering regardless of their religious and cultural background. Suffering, like love, results in passion. Passionate emotion itself, experienced in love for human beings or for God, can again lead to suffering. Art and religion are both capable of transcending the cycle of suffering and passion. Then, the pure emotion of passion is transformed into a universal sphere of awareness, of perception of the other. *Passio* becomes *Compassio*.<sup>491</sup>

Obviously, the essence of art is creativity and artistic freedom, so it needed be no surprise that the artist wrote a text based on creative associations of “passion” and “compassion.” But, unable to turn off the theological resonances of these notions and the Christian framework of my theology, I found myself left with the following conundrums: how was the audience involved in this transformation of passion and compassion? And were the whirling dervishes on stage taking over Christ’s role to make the connection between God and those who suffer? Did the performance not lose sight of the particularity of the Christ narrative, in which passion and compassion are (concepts) inextricably linked, and in which the other is included rather than excluded? Was Christ’s passion transformed into a universal message of love and respect? How to evaluate the move from the Christian passion to a passion transcending Christianity?

My listener experience (a mix of sympathy and alienation), combined with my theological gut feeling on compassion led to the idea that *Passio-Compassio* ended in a vague multireligious art practice where conversation and consensus would only be made possible when bracketing our particular religious identities. I was only prepared to go halfway across the bridge that Ensemble Sarband was trying to build. The performance did not appeal to my compassion for those who suffer in this world, nor did I experience any compassion with my own suffering. Did this performance show anything about compassion, or a compassionate God?

### The O/other in the Interreligious Dialogue

“Autoethnography lets you use yourself to get to theology,” I wrote. Although I was incapable of theological wording at the time, the Good Friday liturgy with the Bach chorales and the passion narrative from my teens had left an experience that intimately connected our personal suffering with God’s suffering, and the compassion of the choir members around me with God’s compassion. *Passio-Compassio*—an art performance in the secular settings of a concert hall and Holland Festival, that brought Bach’s Christian passion music into conversation with other cultural and religious traditions, of which the Islamic ritual practices were most striking—questioned my ideas about passion, compassion, and the relationship between the two. The performance particularly made clear that the globalizing world is a multireligious world in which we cannot escape the other. Both the encounter with “different” Islamic ritual practices in this performance and the fact that compassion always implies the involvement of another living creature, demand theological reflection on the O/other.

The openness or hospitality towards other languages and particularly other religious practices raises the question whether hospitality and compassion are endless. At what point does the other (religion, culture, person) become so important that one loses oneself? What conditions does the hospitality of the piece require, provided that one does not want to lose sight of the compassionate God?

In her book *Fragile Identities*, Marianne Moyaert discusses the tension between openness and identity in interreligious dialogues, stating that dialogue partners are often expected “to unite the attitude of faith *commitment* on the one hand and *openness* on the other,”<sup>492</sup> whereas it remains unclear what precisely these concepts entail. She agrees with Hans Küng that it is theology that should clarify why openness is appropriate (or not). Thus, the tension between faithfulness and betrayal that comes with hermeneutical openness does not only relate to one’s own religion, but also to God. This tension, by the nature of the case, must not be transcended or removed:

The moment theology no longer wrestles with the religious other is the moment the strange other is reduced to the same or is deleted as a *totaliter aliter*. The moment the theologian no longer wrestles with his faith commitment to God is the moment he [sic] has fixed God to the familiar or deleted God as the mysterious, unknowable *Real*.<sup>493</sup>

Moyaert employs Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics to think through hospitality from a theological viewpoint. She gives two motivations for hospitality.<sup>494</sup> First of all, bearing in mind that we ourselves were strangers—and she refers to several biblical narratives where Jews and Christians are strangers—leads to hospitality towards other strangers: only by acknowledging the strangeness of our own identity we can open ourselves to the strangeness of the other. This also implies that we must acknowledge the fragility of our own identity, as well as the vulnerability of our religious meanings: we are never completely at home with ourselves; our religious



meanings are never complete, never perfect. Identity and otherness are not opposed. Secondly—again she refers to biblical narratives—there is the idea that God reveals himself in the stranger:

”God enters the picture as a God *incognito*, to whom we offer or do not offer hospitality. God reveals and conceals himself in the stranger and, without knowing whom we are dealing with, we discover with surprise and only later the attitude with which we met God” (Jansen 2002:299). But people can receive God in the stranger only when God is no longer fixed to the known and the familiar.<sup>495</sup>

## Qualities of Compassion

### *Beyond the Me, Myself, and I*

Moyaert’s argument opens our eyes to the inclination to consider Bach’s passions and the Christian passion narrative as “ours” and “owned.” My listener experience was deeply influenced by an easy identification with both, supported by my religious upbringing and theological education. But in that I was overlooking the distance between myself, the text(s), and the musical works, which also have aspects of strangeness. The strange and uncanny effect of *Passio-Compassio* can actually help to understand the strangeness also of Bach’s passions: to recognize the foreign in the familiar. The religious language of Bach’s libretto and the words of the chorales surely differ from our God-talk today. And Jesus’ suffering to the point of death remains an incomprehensible religious truth, no matter our familiarity with the narrative. To recognize the foreign in the familiar, in turn, makes us more hospitable to the foreign other: only by acknowledging the strangeness of our own tradition, religious objects, and practices, we can open ourselves to the strangeness of other traditions, religious objects, and practices. Hospitality towards the “other” practices of the whirling dervishes could then have led to a movement deeper into these ritual practices, breaking open a love and compassion transcending my own (religious) particularity. It could have actually deepened or strengthened my core convictions. It could have led to acknowledge that the whirling dervishes in their strangeness whirled for me, prayed for me, blessed me and every other human being in my and their suffering, using their ecstatic union to bring or even tie us to God. Locking up God’s compassion in the particularity of the suffering Christ means being in God’s way. Compassion requires openness: as Moyaert said, we can only receive God in the stranger when God is no longer fixed to the known and the familiar.

Thus compassion demands a shift from self-centeredness to other-centeredness for those who have compassion. This may seem obvious, but it is not. What looks like compassion is sometimes just focused on the self: when people show compassion in order to make them feel better about themselves, it is not other-centered and thus not compassion. From those who suffer, compassion requires at least an openness that allows the other to connect with you, to reach out to you, and to welcome you with your pain into their life. In either position, compassion is getting beyond the me, myself, and I.

### *A Manifestation of Divine Love*

*Passio-Compassio* raised the question of how the move from a Christian passion to a passion transcending Christianity should be evaluated. This question is obviously related to my teenager experience that Christ’s suffering and compassion and human suffering and compassion were deeply connected. It is also connected with a Lutheran theology that has a strong Christological focus.

Moyaert points to the fact that interreligious dialogue implies the possibility of not only a gain in meaning, but also a loss of meaning: “Interreligious dialogue . . . also presupposes the work of mourning. A discourse that speaks one-sidedly of interreligious dialogue as a source of enrichment ignores the vulnerability of religious meanings.”<sup>496</sup> What applies to interreligious dialogues also applies to multireligious art practices, I think: these also include the work of mourning. The performance *Passio-Compassio* “pointed away” from Christ, and Bach’s passions were transformed into a passion transcending Christianity. This may feel like a loss. Yet, the question is whether this “transcending Christianity” actually *excludes* God, and if so, whether this is problematic. When we turn to Scripture, at this point, we discover that this kind of “pointing away” is not unfamiliar to Christ himself. He did not come “to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28), and “being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). He became “the Lamb that was slaughtered, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Rev 5:12). Christ went to the end, to death. He kenotically emptied himself to the point where no life was left, in order to make humanity more fully human. This means that in his suffering he did (and still does) not exclude humanity, but in essence included humanity.

In line with this, we may say that, as a passion transcending Christianity, *Passio-Compassio* did not leave, lose or exclude, but rather included God. Wherever people suffer, Christ suffers. This should, however, not be a reason to glorify suffering: it is not our suffering that is salvific, not through our suffering that our life is renewed; it is through the suffering of Christ that we regain life. Only a suffering God can help. Similarly, his passion is the ground of Christian compassion. Wherever people show compassion,

they become—I say with Martin Luther<sup>497</sup>—as it were, a Christ to the other. Here, I think, lies a key to retrieve compassion: the compassion of the other is the compassion of the Other. It is exactly for this reason that people through the ages have prayed: “*Erbarne Dich*,” “have mercy.”

The basis of Christ’s compassion is divine love. Christ’s suffering and his death are manifestations of divine love, and these make the passion salvific. This is how Bach understood the passion: because his *St. Matthew Passion* interprets the passion and death of Christ as a manifestation of divine love, one also finds that references to the bridegroom and bride abound, e.g., in the powerful opening choir where the daughters of Zion admonish the faithful to behold the bridegroom.<sup>498</sup> When reexamining *Passio-Compassio*, it appears that Vladimir Ivanoff also understands that compassion roots in love. In his multireligious performance, many of the mystical Sufi texts and spiritual songs he interwove with parts from Bach’s passion are about love: “A heart that loves rises up to the canopy of heaven” (#*intro*); “Love means letting go of one’s self over and again” (#1); “Every moment I hope that love will kill me; Ah never shall such sweet pain come into the weak heart” (#17). At the end of the performance, like in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, we hear the aria *Erbarne Dich*:

Have mercy, my God,  
For the sake of my tears.  
Behold,  
Heart and eye are weeping before you  
Bitterly.  
Have mercy, my God.<sup>499</sup>

In *Passio-Compassio*, this area was accompanied by the mystical Sufi text:

Oh brother, hear, do not be deaf to love!  
Let love change you!<sup>500</sup>

With this text, Ivanoff tied the *Erbarne Dich* aria even closer to God: the call to the brother reinforced the call to God to show his mercy. At the same time, Rumi’s text could be taken as a call for compassion of a human brother: “Have mercy, let love change you.” *Passio-Compassio* thus connected God’s compassion with human compassion, emphasizing the importance of love, suggesting that any manifestation of compassion is a manifestation of divine love.

## Conclusion

Our globalizing world is characterized by the interchanging of world views, products, ideas, and also religious practices and beliefs. The reality of the religious other has come closer and it touches upon our daily living together. In this essay, I showed that the performance *Passio-Compassio* initially led to feelings of estrangement and a wrestling with my faith commitment to Christ (rooted in my religious and theological upbringing, as well as the practices of whirling Dervishes that presented the religious other). The performance intended to transform passion into compassion, but I was unable to open myself to the way the performers seemed to be offering compassion. My fear of multireligious vagueness that betrayed Christ was in the way, likely influenced by former experiences in which suffering, compassion, Bach’s passions, and Lutheran liturgy were profoundly linked.

The autoethnographic angle let me use myself to get into a theology based on (interreligious) hospitality. The theological reflection on passion and compassion made clear that sufferers at least need to be a little open to the other in order to be able to experience compassion. In this, it is helpful to recognize that the self also has foreign aspects: one is never complete, never fully at home with oneself. Otherwise, when showing compassion, one needs to be focused on the other rather than the self. Either way, compassion transcends the me, myself, and I.

Further theological reflection showed that compassion is inextricably linked with the passion of Christ, even when this is not obvious. All human compassion is anchored in the suffering of Christ that brought and brings new life to humanity. In compassion, it is not the glorification of suffering that renews life, but the fact that all suffering is about Christ’s suffering. At the heart of compassion thus lies divine love. God is found in the act of connecting with the sufferer, and in the act of letting others connect with oneself. I started this essay with a description of “compassion” as the act of connecting with the suffering other, reaching out, and allowing or even welcoming her/him with their pain into one’s own life. In conclusion, I would like to rephrase that description of compassion, because I seem to have excluded Someone. “Compassion” is the act of connecting with the suffering other—and in that,

by that, and through that, with the love of the suffering Other—reaching out and allowing or even welcoming her/him with their pain into one’s own life. In retrospect, *Ensemble Sarband* with their performance of *Passio-Compassion* at Holland Festival indeed managed to build bridges, in my theology.

## Appendix

Intro, with projection of text by thirteenth-century Persian poet and theologian Rumi.

1. Aria “Können Tränen meiner Wangen nichts erlangen” (*St. Matthew Passion*, sung in Arabic), followed by instrumental interlude with projection of text by Rumi.
2. Chorale “Wie soll ich Dich empfangen” (Paul Gerhardt, sung in German and Turkish).
3. Turba “Wir haben ein Gesetz” (Instrumental with projection of text by Rumi).
4. Evangelist “Und weinete bitterlich” (Instrumental with projection of text by Rumi).
5. “Qoló dHut” (Spiritual song, sung in Syriac).
6. “Abo dKochto” (Spiritual song, sung in Aramaic).
7. Syrian-Orthodox chant: “Amano Morio” (Spiritual song, sung in Aramaic).
8. “Yawno Tlito” (Spiritual song, sung in Aramaic).
9. Hicaz Ilahi “Nur-I cemali” (instrumental prelude with projection of text by Rumi).
10. Muslim spiritual song (sung in Turkish).
11. Turba “Jesum von Nazareth” (instrumental with projection of text by Rumi).
12. “Aljaum” (Maronite liturgy, sung in Arabic).
13. Aria “Von den Stricken meiner Sünden” (*St. John Passion*, sung in Arabic).
14. “Acem lahi” (Muslim spiritual song, sung in Turkish).
15. Chorale “Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden” (instrumental prelude with projection of text by Rumi, chorale Paul Gerhardt, sung in German and Arabic).
16. Chorale “Befiehl du deine Wege” (chorale by Paul Gerhardt, sung in German and Turkish).
17. “Es ist vollbracht” (instrumental prelude with projection of text by Rumi, aria *St. John Passion*, sung in Arabic).
18. “Dörcüncü Selâm” (from the ritual of the Mevlevi, sung in Turkish).
19. Son Pesrev (instrumental).
20. Son Yürük Semai (instrumental with projection of text by Rumi).
21. Aria “Erbarme Dich” (*St. Matthew Passion*, sung in Arabic, with projection of text by Rumi).

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[471](#). The author wishes to thank Prof. Dr. Robert Vosloo and Dr. Nadine Bowers-du Toit for their reflections and constructive comments on previous versions of this text.

[472](https://www.hollandfestival.nl/en/about-hf/vision-of-the-holland-festival/). <https://www.hollandfestival.nl/en/about-hf/vision-of-the-holland-festival/>.

[473](#). The author was part of the audience at this concert. A fragment of this performance can be found on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgsbni\\_jrg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgsbni_jrg). Also see the website of the ensemble for more information on the work: [sarband.de/Prog\\_PassioE.html](http://sarband.de/Prog_PassioE.html).

[474](http://sarband.de/Vladimir.html). [sarband.de/Vladimir.html](http://sarband.de/Vladimir.html).

[475](http://sarband.de/artists.html). [sarband.de/artists.html](http://sarband.de/artists.html).

[476](http://sarband.de/index.html). [sarband.de/index.html](http://sarband.de/index.html).

[477](http://sarband.de/english_introduction.html). [sarband.de/english\\_introduction.html](http://sarband.de/english_introduction.html).

[478](#). On the transfer and transformation of immaterial religious heritage, see De Hart, *Keeping the Faith?*; Sengers, *The Dutch and Their Gods*. Also (in Dutch language): De Hart, *Maak het Nieuw*; Post, "Heilige Velden"; Borgman, *Metamorfozen*; Van de Donk, *Geloven in het Publieke Domein*; Frijhoff, *Heiligen, Idolen, Iconen*.

[479](#). Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch Culture*, 325.

[480](#). Bernts and Berghuijs. *God in Nederland*.

[481](#). Post, "From Identity to Accent."

[482](#). Ritual knowledge, according to Jennings, is "to know reflectively what is known ritually, to re-cognize ritual knowledge"; see Jennings, "On Ritual Knowledge," 333.

[483](#). Additionally, I used the following sources: the printed program booklet with lyrics and explanations, YouTube clips on the performance, texts on the webpage of the performing ensemble by the musical director, quotations from press reviews selected by the musical director published on that website, a specific document on the passion downloaded from that website, as well as texts on the webpage of the performing ensemble on how they work.

[484](#). On positionality, see Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism."

[485](#). Maher and Tetreault, "Frames of Positionality," 118.

[486](#). Barnard, "Dots on a Blank Sheet," 43–44.

[487](#). Barnard, "My Father's Tobacco-Jar," 2.

[488](#). Pelias, "The Academic Tourist," 372.

[489](#). The appendix at the end of this essay contains an overview of the elements that the piece comprises.

[490](#). Quote from program booklet *Passio-Compassio* (page 14–15).

[491](#). Quote from program booklet *Passio-Compassio*, 28.

[492](#). Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 2.

[493](#). Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 276.

[494](#). Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 262–64.

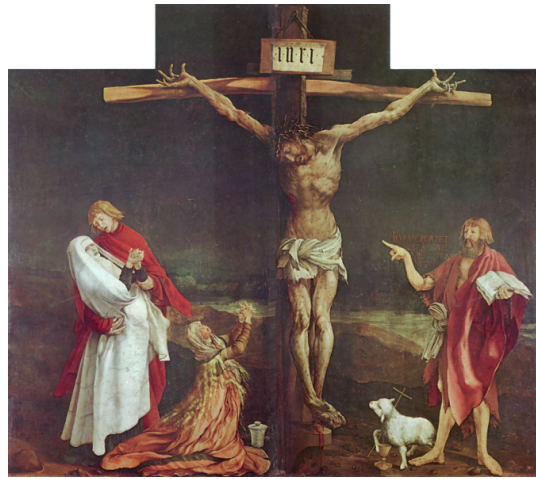
[495](#). Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 264. The citation from Jansen is taken from Jansen, *Talen naar God*, 299, and was translated into English by Moyaert.

[496](#). See Moyaert, *Fragile Identities*, 277.

[497](#). Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*: "Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another"; 367–68.

[498](#). Rathey, *Bach's Major Vocal Works*, 117–29, esp. 117–18.

[499](#). Quote from program booklet *Passio-Compassio*, 24.



**Figure 1**