

# St. John Passion - Johannes Passion, BWV 245, J.S. Bach

at the Landcommanderij Alden Biesen

**Palm Sunday, April 14 th 2019, 3 p.m.**

**Good Friday, April 19 th, 2019, 8 p.m.**

The Bach Academy Alden Biesen has chosen as an annual passion concert for the Johannes Passion of J.S. Bach. Performers are soloists, choir and ensemble led by Luc Ponet.

The Bach Academy Alden Biesen, founded within the Organum organization Alden Biesen, is a synonym of a better concert performance and experience of baroque music at the unique location of the Landcommanderij Alden Biesen with its baroque church.

## **Soloists:**

**Elke Janssens, soprano**

**Pieter De Praetere, countertenor**

**Philip Defrancq, tenor (Evangelist)**

**Mathis Van Cleynenbreugel, tenor**

**Joris Grouwels, bass-baritone (Christ)**

**Lieven Termont, bass-baritone**

**A conversation with Luc Ponet outlines the frame of reference within which this John Passion may be seen.**

**Performing this repertory at Easter seems obvious. After all, the theme is the suffering and death of Jesus. Is this also valid for the performance of this work ?**

Luc Ponet: «It is not so evident. We should not forget that performing this music by Bach in the 18th century was an obvious choice. The singers and instrumentalists were familiar with the performance practice of that moment and the musical interpretation was within a liturgical context. That context disappeared over the centuries. A performance has become an independent, worldly affair: the art for the art, art for the sake of art. With the Bach Academy we try to find a balance with respect for the original plus a deeper, more intense experience value because, for example, the audience is brought close to the performers and soloists when it comes to the arrangement in the church. «

**Do you have the right material in terms of voices and instruments for the performance of Bach's work?**

Luc Ponet: «The Bach Academy goes back to the original line-up and tradition: a limited number of choristers, being four singers / concertists plus four choristers, supplemented by four strings plus continuo group, two oboes (also oboe d'amore and oboe da caccia) and two traversos. The viola da gamba, like the lute, plays one aria. Bassoon and theorbo are optional for strengthening. We can count on outstanding and specialized musicians, selected for their established value or youthful talent. In short: we perform with six soloists, 14 choir singers and orchestra. Performances with large choirs and extensive orchestras are a 19th century phenomenon, aimed at large concert halls. «

**Why does this music touch us so deeply, even today?**

Luc Ponet: «Suffering and dying are both universal and of all times and are transcending every philosophy of life. The intelligent way in which J.S. Bach translated this part of the Gospel of John into a musical oeuvre is special. He touches us with musical rhetoric. He personalizes the text and recalls it in a striking, tangible musical experience in which vibrations become sensible. «

**Has our hearing evolved?**

Luc Ponet: «The hearing of the 21st century listener is contaminated, infected, affected by permanent noise pollution. Who still knows the silence, whisper, the purity of an acoustic performance? Sound systems everywhere make our hearing lazy. The Bach Academy focuses on the original pitch, makes music with less pressure on the (bowl) strings and thereby creates refinement and intimacy. The church of Alden Biesen is extremely suitable for this. The 'different' sound is, however, beyond dispute, but therefore not innovative or modern. We are people of today and aspire to a contemporary experience of historical musical heritage with the natural of the original by people of today. Need to balance between heart and reason, feeling and understanding ? Bach's music is the perfect therapy for that. «

## **Practical:**

**Tickets: 25 euros and 23 euros (members Davidsfonds, Willemsfonds, Vermeylenfonds, Vriendenkring/Circle of Friends).**

**Reservation: [info@organum-aldenbiesen.be](mailto:info@organum-aldenbiesen.be), 0470-244242**

## **Friends of the Bach Academy Alden Biesen**

In view of the bond that develops between the Bach Academy and the public, this year offers an opportunity to become a member of a 'circle of friends'. Provided a contribution (individually or as an organization / company) the 'friend / friends' enjoy attractive conditions such as access to special events, professional concert introduction, visibility / name recognition.

For more info see [info@organum-aldenbiesen.be](mailto:info@organum-aldenbiesen.be), [www.organum-aldenbiesen.be](http://www.organum-aldenbiesen.be) or 0470-244242