

MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI

The Illustrated Man

*A Cantata Cycle by
Images & Visual Design*

**Dietrich Buxtehude
Christian Herrnbeck**



The Consort of Melbourne

Conceived & Directed by

1:00 pm, Tuesday 9 – Friday 12 October

Monash Sinfonia

Peter Tregear

St Paul's Cathedral

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MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI

Membra Jesu nostri patientis sanctissima, BuxWV 75 (literally 'The Most Holy Limbs of Our Suffering Jesus'), is a set of seven short cantatas composed in 1680 for Holy Week by German-Danish composer Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) to the medieval hymn, *Salve mundi salutare* (also known as the 'Rhythmica oratio') attributed to Arnulf of Leuven (c. 1200–1250). The seven cantos address a different part of the body of Christ, starting with his feet and rise up via the knees, hands, side, breast and heart to conclude with his face. The latter inspired what we know today as the 'Passion' Chorale' ('O Sacred Head Sore Wounded').

Buxtehude's setting has long been recognised as one of the masterworks of Western sacred music, though performances in Australia have been surprisingly rare. All seven cantatas follow the same formal structure, opening with an instrumental sonata and framed by a setting of biblical text that returns at the end (with the exception of the very last, which concludes with a lively 'amen'). The work as a whole commences and concludes in C Minor, but each of the middle cantatas ascends in key till we reach the sixth, 'to the heart'. As in J. S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, here the one sharp of the key signature of E Minor symbolizes the cross, as indeed, in a more poetic fashion, does the especially intense vocal writing and dark instrumental colouring of this movement. As for the cantata addressed 'to the side', the framing biblical text here is taken from the Song of Solomon, the thinly-veiled eroticism of which underscores both the corporeality of the overall subject matter and the piety it enshrines.

I. AD PEDES

1 Sonata

2 Concerto (Choir)

*Ecce super montes
pedes evangelizantis
et annunciantis pacem*

3 Aria (Choir)

*Salve mundi salutare,
salve Jesu care!
Cruci tuae me aptare
vellem vere, tu scis quare,
da mihi tui copiam*

4 Aria (Soprano I)

*Clavos pedum, plagas duras,
et tam graves impressuras
circumplector cum affectu,
tuo pavens in aspectu,
tuorum memor vulnerum*

5 Aria (Bass)

*Dulcis Jesu, pie deus,
Ad te clamo licet reus,
praebe mihi te benignum,
ne repellas me indignum
de tuis sanctis pedibus*

6 Concerto (da capo)

I. TO THE FEET

Behold upon the mountains,
the feet of one who bringeth good tidings,
who publisheth peace.

Nahum 1:15

I greet you, salvation of the world,
I greet you, dear Jesus.
I would take up your cross;
truly, you know why,
give me your strength.

The nails in your feet, the hard blows
and grievous marks
I embrace with tenderness;
Fearful at the sight of you,
Mindful of your wounds.

Sweet Jesus, merciful God,
I call to you, even though I am culpable.
Show me your grace,
turn me not away, unworthy though I am,
from your sacred feet.

"Your body will submit, Jesus said to me once. He appeared to me without warning last night, and his body looked bruised and sticky. He said that someone had been spitting at him. He looked at my hands and I showed him where I had pricked my feet too. This made him smile a little, but of course it's not enough."

II. AD GENUA

1. Sonata

2. Concerto (Choir)

*Ad ubera portabimini,
et super genua blandientur vobis*

3. Aria (Tenor)

*Salve Jesu, rex sanctorum,
spes votiva peccatorum,
crucis ligno tanquam reus,
pendens homoverus deus,
caducis nutans genibus*

4. Aria (Alto)

*Quid sum tibi responsurus,
actu vilis corde durus?
Quid rependam amatori,
qui elegit pro me mori,
ne dupla morte morerer*

5. Aria (Soprano I & II, Bass)

*Ut te quaeram mente pura,
sit haec mea prima cura,
non est labor et gravabor,
sed sanabor et mundabor,
cum te complexus fuero*

6. Concerto (da capo)

*"He shows me his wounds, how they fester and bleed when we're ungrateful. How we make him suffer. I'm not faithful enough to him. I don't give him all that he deserves. There are many faults in **my body**, and I hope to make them all the source of suffering so that I will be the perfect replica of his suffering."*

III. AD MANUS

1. Sonata

2. Concerto (Choir)

*Quid sunt plagae istae
in medio manuum tuarum?*

3. Aria (Soprano I)

*Salve Jesu, pastor bone,
fatigatus in agone,
qui per lignum es distractus
et ad lignum es compactus
expansis sanctis manibus*

4. Aria (Soprano II)

*Manus sanctae, vos amplector,
et gemendo condelector,
grates ago plagis tantis,
clavis duris guttis sanctis
dans lacrymas cum oculis*

5. Aria (Alto, Tenor, Bass)

*In cruore tuo lotum
me commendo tibi totum,*

II. TO THE KNEES

To the breast thou shalt be lifted,
and on bended knees you shall be dandled.

Isaiah 66:12

Hail, O Jesus, King of Saints
promised hope of sinners,
hanging on the wood of the cross
like man condemned, true God
sagging on failing knees.

How should I respond to you,
I who am poor in deed and hard of heart?
How should I repay you, beloved one,
you who chose to die for me,
that I might not die twice?

To seek you with a pure mind,
let that be my primary concern.
It is neither hard nor arduous,
but healing and purifying,
when I will have embraced you.

III. TO THE HANDS

What are these wounds
in the midst of thine hands?

Zechariah 13:6

Hail Jesus, Good Shepherd,
weary with agony,
by the wood spread apart
and to the wood fastened
by your outstretched holy hands.

Holy hands, I grasp you
and, lamenting, I rejoice in you.
I give thanks for these severe blows,
for the hard nails and holy drops of blood;
in tears I kiss you.

Washed in your blood
I entrust myself completely to you;

*tuae sanctae manus istae
me defendant, Jesu Christe,
extremis in periculis*

6. Concerto (da capo)

*“When I see the cross being lifted till it leans against the wall, I'm afraid. My fear is that I will feel nothing beyond the pain of the nails being driven in. I watch them watching me. I stretch one arm along a beam and open **the palm** out towards them. I ask God to show them what this means.”*

IV. AD LATUS

1. Sonata

2. Concerto (Choir)
*Surge, amica mea,
speciosa mea, et veni,
columba mea inforaminibus petrae,
in caverna maceriae*

3. Aria (Soprano I)
*Salve latus salvatoris,
in quo latet mel dulcoris,
in quo patet vis amoris,
ex quo scatet fons cruoris,
qui corda lavat sordida*

4. Aria (Alto, Tenor, Bass)
*Ecce tibi appropinquo,
parce, Jesu, si delinquo,
verecunda quidem fronte,
ad te tamen veni sponte
scrutari tua vulnera*

5. Aria (Soprano II)
*Hora mortis meus flatus
intret Jesu, tuum latus,
hinc expirans in te vadat,
ne hunc leo trux invadat,
sed apud te permaneat*

6. Concerto (da capo)

*“I have encircled **my waist** with a knotted cord fastened so tightly that I can neither eat nor breathe without pain, and I have placed small chains of iron round my arms. In a short time these cords and chains have cut deeply into my flesh.”*

V. AD PECTUS

1. Sonata

2. Concerto (Alto, Tenor Bass)
*Sicut modo geniti infantes rationabiles,
et sine dolo concupiscite,
ut in eo crescatis in salutem.
Si tamen gustatis, quoniam dulcis est
Dominus.*

may your holy hands
defend me, Jesus Christ,
in my gravest perils.

IV. TO THE SIDE

Arise, my love,
my fair one, and come away,
O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the covert of the cliff.

Song of Solomon: 2:13-14

Hail, side of my Saviour,
in which sweet honey hides,
in which the power of love is revealed,
from which the fount of blood springs
that washes our sinful hearts.

Behold, I approach you,
spare me, Jesus, if I fail.
Still, with reverential gaze
and of my own free will I come to you
to examine your wounds.

At the hour of death may my breath
enter, Jesus, into your side;
may it thus expire into you.
So that it is not assaulted by the fierce lion,
and remains with you.

V. TO THE BREAST

As newborn babes,
desire the sincere milk of the word,
that ye may grow thereby:
if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is
gracious.

I Peter 2:2-3

3. Aria (Alto)

*Salve, salus mea, deus,
Jesu dulcis, amor meus,
salve, pectus reverendum,
cum tremore contingendum,
amoris domicilium*

4. Aria (Tenor)

*Pectus mihi confer mundum,
ardens, pium, gemebundum,
voluntatem abnegatam,
tibi semper conformatam,
juncta virtutum copia*

5. Aria (Bass)

*Ave, verum templum dei,
precor miserere mei,
tu totius arca boni,
fac electis me apponi,
vas dives deus omnium*

6. Concerto (da capo)

“I want to make a courageous act of love, as a mark on the favours Jesus has shown me. I take a knife and engrave his name on my breast in large deep characters. This operation is performed so severely and with such courage that the wound is still fresh and bleeding two months after the first opening. The pain lifts my thoughts to the passion of Jesus. I think of the stinging when his sweat ran into his wounds.”

VI. AD COR

1. Sonata

2. Concerto (Soprano I & II, Bass)

*Vulnerasti cor meum,
soror mea, sponsa.*

3. Aria (Soprano I)

*Summi regis cor, aveto,
te saluto corde laeto,
te complecti me delectat
et hoc meum cor affectat,
ut ad te loquar, animes*

4. Aria (Soprano II)

*Per medullam cordis mei,
peccatoris atque rei,
tuus amor transferatur,
quo cor tuum rapiatur
languens amoris vulnere*

5. Aria (Bass)

*Viva cordis voce clamo,
dulce cor, te namque amo,
ad cor meum inclinare,
ut se possit applicare
devoto tibi pectore*

6. Concerto (da capo)

Hail, my salvation, God,
sweet Jesus, my beloved,
hail, revered breast,
to be touched tremblingly,
love's dwelling place.

Make my breast pure,
ardent, pious, sighing;
may my volition be denounced
let me be yours always,
united with a wealth of virtues.

Hail, true temple of God,
I pray, have mercy on me,
you, the sanctuary of all goodness;
let me be among the chosen ones,
O precious vessel, O God of all.

VI. TO THE HEART

Thou hast ravished my heart,
my sister, my spouse.

Song of Solomon 4:9

Heart of the highest King, welcome,
I greet you with a joyful heart.
Your sweet embrace delights me,
and my heart longs
for you to encourage me to speak to you.

Through the marrow of my heart,
that of a sinner and one accused,
may your love carry me
to where your heart has been lacerated,
weary with the wound of love.

The voice of my living heart cries out,
sweet heart, for I love you.
Incline to my heart,
that it might nestle
against you with a devoted breast.

"He has shown me **his heart** with a huge fire inside it. He calls this the purgatory of his love for me. His love will never be gentle and full of caresses, he said. It will never comfort me. It often seems to me that my head is surrounded by sharp thorns, deeply driven in."

VII. AD FACIEM

1. Sonata

2. Concerto (Choir)

*Illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum,
salvum me fac in misericordia tua*

3. Aria (Alto, Tenor, Bass)

*Salve, caput cruentatum,
totum spinis coronatum,
conquassatum, vulneratum,
arundine verberatum
facie sputis illita*

4. Aria (Alto)

*Dum me mori est necesse,
noli mihi tunc deesse,
in tremenda mortis hora
veni, Jesu, absque mora,
tuere me et libera*

5. Aria (Choir)

*Cum me jubes emigrare,
Jesu care, tunc appare,
o amator amplectende,
temet ipsum tunc ostende
in cruce salutifera.*

6. Concerto (Choir)

Amen.

VII. TO THE FACE

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant;
save me for thy mercies' sake.

Psalm 31:16

Hail, bloodstained head,
all crowned with thorns,
shattered, wounded,
beaten with cane,
your face spat upon and soiled.

When I shall have to die,
do not forsake me
in the fearful hour of death;
come, Jesus, without delay,
guard me and liberate me.

When you bid me to depart,
dear Jesus, then appear,
beloved whom I will embrace,
then show yourself to me
on the cross of salvation.

Amen.

"It often seems to me that **my head** is surrounded by sharp thorns, deeply driven in."

The interpolated quotes are taken from Melbourne-based writer Kevin Brophy's *Visions* (1989), a gothic novel portraying a young girl and her search for saintliness (used with the kind permission of the author).

On the Visual Design

Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostris* provides an experience of deep religious belief and the Christian concept of love. Since Greek philosophers started to analyse this notion, a distinction was made between Eros, Philia and Agape/Caritas. The reference to Philia and Agape/Caritas is already part of the hymn attributed to Arnulf of Leuven in the 13th century: a pure love, the love of God for human beings, the love of human beings for God, for the neighbour, and even for one's enemy.

Buxtehude decided to frame these lyrics by verses of the Old Testament. Two of the seven cantatas (4 and 6) thus make reference to Solomon's *Song Of Songs*, an extravagantly erotic love story between a woman and a man. Their relationship is as close as if they were brother and sister, yet at the same time full of a desire that is a painful experience. In making reference to the *Song Of Songs*, Buxtehude added an explicitly erotic aspect.

He thus reminds us that love and the grace of charity are the central virtues of Christianity, while he also implies that the capability for love and its power (including that attributed to Eros!) are the essence of all human beings. The visual imagery seeks to illuminate *all* aspects of love that the cantatas address, from the Love-Thy-Neighbour variety to the starkly erotic. The photographs were taken in St. Marien Lübeck (the church where Buxtehude worked as an organist), at several places in the Balkan (depicting Roma people), Berlin and elsewhere. I hope they will accompany the experience

of *Membra Jesu Nostri* in St. Paul's Cathedral in an appropriate way, and show how much I was moved by Buxtehude's music myself.

Christian Herrnbeck (Berlin)

The Consort of Melbourne

Soprano I	Kate McFarlane
Soprano II	Jennifer Cook
Alto	Nicholas Tolput
Tenor	Daniel Thompson
Bass	Nicholas Dinopoulos

Monash Sinfonia

Violin I	Edward Antonov Emma Charles
Violin II	Alexander White
Viola	Megan Burslem
Cello	Timothy Hennessy Amy Tcheupdjian
Double Bass	Rebecca Scully
Chamber Organ	Hugh Fullarton
Artistic Director	Elizabeth Sellars
Stylistic Coach	Rachael Beesley

Production Credits

Conceived and Directed by	Peter Tregear
Images & Visual Design	Christian Herrnbeck
Text Editor	Gert Reifarth
Artistic Producer	Fred Wallace
Technical Services	Russell Proud
Stage Manager	Hannah Hookey

The Consort of Melbourne is a professional vocal ensemble founded and directed by Peter Tregear and Warren Trevelyan-Jones which champions both historical music and contemporary Australian chamber choral repertoire. Alongside an annual subscription season in the Melbourne Recital Centre, the Consort has also been invited to collaborate with groups such as the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra, Melbourne Youth Orchestra, the Song Company, La Compañía and in 2011 made its debut at the Melbourne Festival alongside the Kronos Quartet performing Terry Reilly's *Sun Rings*. The Consort's 2012 season concludes on 15 December at the Melbourne Recital Centre with *Sing Joyfully* a Christmas celebration with special guest, Tiffany Speight (soprano), performing works by J. S. Bach, Purcell and Rutter alongside traditional music for the season.

Monash Sinfonia is the premier string ensemble of the Monash University Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music directed by Australian violinist Elizabeth Sellars. Since its formation in 1996, Sinfonia has developed an international profile, performing in the Palazzo Vaj in Italy at the Monash Prato Centre as part of the biennial chamber music festival and touring Brazil in 2011, premiering new works by Thomas Reiner and Jonatas Manzoli. In Australia, the Sinfonia has been a regular broadcaster on 3MBS radio and has performed on numerous occasions at the Robert Blackwood Hall, BMW Edge at Federation Square and the Melbourne Recital Centre. Collaborative artists have included Melbourne Symphony Concertmaster Wilma Smith, Tin Alley String Quartet, Miki Tsunoda, baroque specialist Paul Wright, Serbian virtuoso violinist Nemanja Radulovic, and the Consort of Melbourne.

Christian Herrnbeck (Photographic Artist) is based in Berlin. He sees himself in the tradition of 'political photography'. His images are not intended to be documentary but rather as parts of people's life stories – the viewer's own experience, knowledge and ideas are meant to complement his images. Several of Christian's exhibitions traced the lives of Sinti and Roma war refugees sent back by the German Government to states in former Yugoslavia after the wars in the Balkan. In 2002 he began his long-term project: Niemand's Orte. Ein fotografisches Projekt über das europaweite System nationalsozialistischen Terrors ('No Man's Places. A Photographic Project Depicting the System of National Socialist Terror Across Europe'). Its first part, Concentration Camps, Institutions for "Euthanasia" and Extermination Camps, was presented as a multimedia installation in the museum of the former concentration camp of Sachsenhausen near Berlin from February to June 2009 and other places. Articles about his work written by others and by himself have been published in newspapers, magazines and books. In July 2012, he was the Visual Designer for IOpera's critically acclaimed Melbourne production of 'The Emperor of Atlantis', an opera by Viktor Ullmann and Peter Kien. His exhibition *...from infinitudes into abysses...* about the ghetto-prison of Theresienstadt accompanied this production, and is viewable online at:

<http://www.artdes.monash.edu.au/non-cms/gallery/catalogues/emperor-issue1/>

Peter Tregear (Director) is a prize-winning conductor, singer and music academic. A graduate of the University of Melbourne Faculty of Music, he later undertook doctoral studies at King's College Cambridge and was subsequently appointed a lecturer in music. There he sang with the world famous choir, among many other ensembles, as well as teaching at the Choir School. He has mounted several modern revivals and world premieres of historical and contemporary operatic, choral and concert works and was awarded the Sir Charles Mackerras Conducting Prize in 2003, and a Green Room Award for Best Opera Conductor in 2008. With Gert Reifarth, he founded IOpera in 2007, a company which aims to present productions of lesser-known operatic works; the company's latest production was *The Emperor of Atlantis* in July 2012. From 2010 until August 2012 Peter held the position of Executive Director of Monash University Academy of Performing Arts. He is currently Professor and Head of the School of Music, Australian National University.

This Melbourne Festival & Monash University Production is in partnership with IOpera Inc.

Gert Reifarth & Peter Tregear, artistic directors

Christian Herrnbeck, visual designer

IOPERA

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Monash University Academy of Performing Arts

Paul Grabowsky (Executive Director)

Damien Boyle (Manager)

Melbourne Festival

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