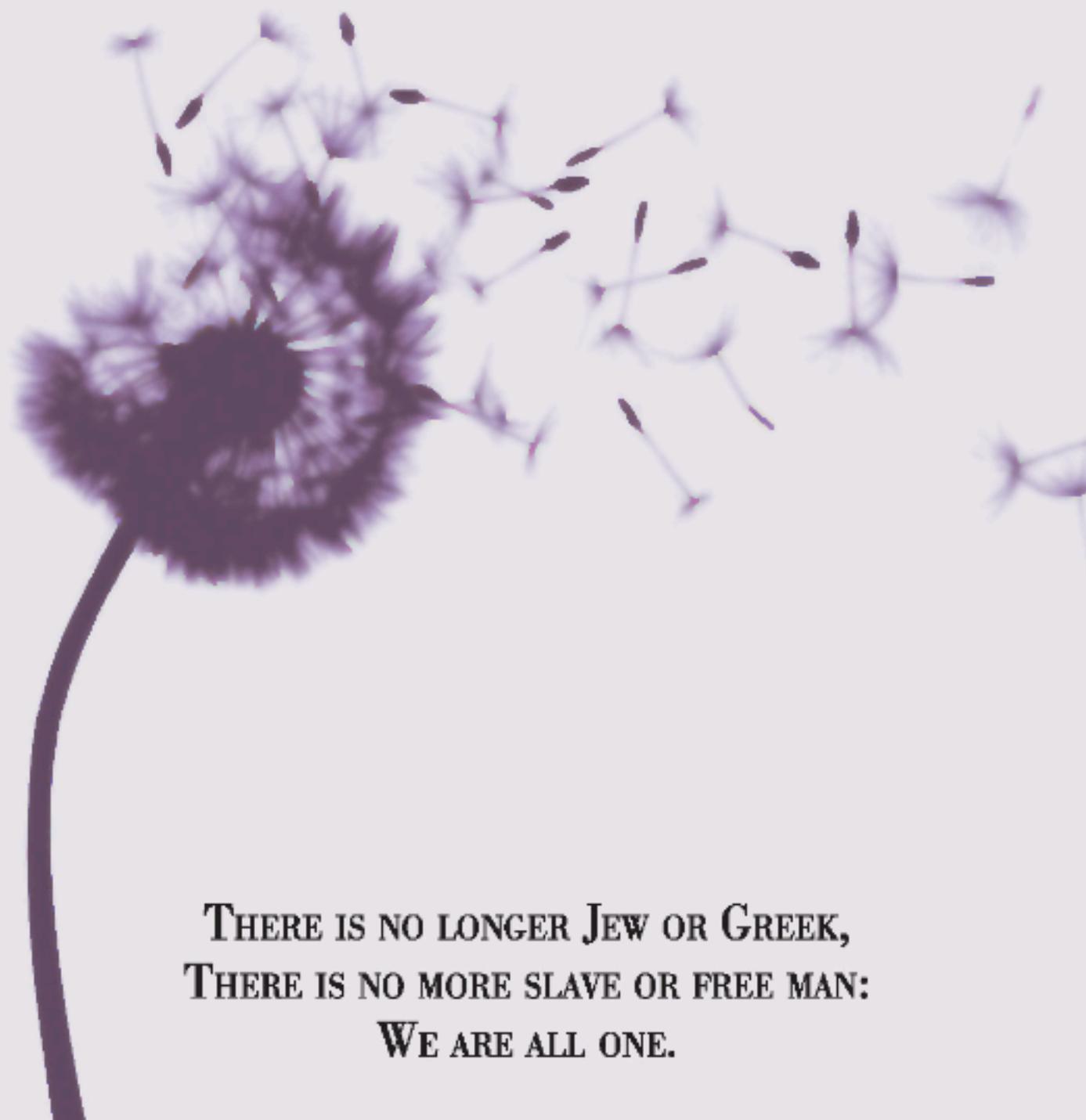


SUNDAY MAY 13TH, 2012

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF JAMES LEVY'S

Passion Oratorio



THERE IS NO LONGER JEW OR GREEK,
THERE IS NO MORE SLAVE OR FREE MAN:
WE ARE ALL ONE.

PASSION ORATORIO

By James Levy

Soloists:

Thomas Young, tenor;
Alison Crockett, Amy Broadbent, sopranos.

The Band:

Peter Fraize, sax/clarinet; David Marsh, bass;
Francis Thompson, percussion, James Levy, keyboard

The Choir:

Sopranos: Pat Ameling, Carol Bossert, Emily Cooke,
Susan Drilea , Joan Frye, Arielle Goodman, Dianne Kaseman,
Joan Schnieder-Wilson, Jenna Stein.

Altos: Carol Abrahams, Monica Boruch, Laurie Kawa ,
Lori Merrill, Elizabeth Robinson, Ann Seltz, Gail Unterberger,
Emily Webbe, Linda Winter.

Tenors: Sean Casey, Paul Clark , Chris Frentrup,
Steven Hilmy, Mike Johnson, Gary Lawson, Linda Pattison,
Mary Wood

Basses: John Abrahams, Peter Carlson, Chuck Jespersen,
Rodney Laster, Frank Molony, Jeff Pattison, John Pattison
Bob Wood.

DEDICATIONS:

*To Rev. Mansfield Kaseman, who encouraged, supported
and inspired me to write these and other songs.*

*To The Rockville United Church Sanctuary Choir, who
brought all these songs to life and has provided friendship,
camaraderie and support these last twenty-one years.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXTS

This version of the *Passion*, with material drawn from all four Gospels, other sources and original text, removes the Judas or betrayal theme while emphasizing the theme of the opening of God's covenant to all people: *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no more slave or free man.*

A miracle: a people who known generations of slavery were led to freedom. Wandering in the desert, they formulated laws which would enable them to live as a free people. These laws became the first books and the people became the people of the book. The law then inspired the fiery rhetoric of the Prophets culminating in the lofty ethics of Amos, Jeremiah and Isaiah. These ideas were incubated in the Jewish culture which was made stronger and more insular by a vast interlocking set of laws and traditions.

By the time of the Roman occupation, however, more of the world was almost ready to accept the big ideas of Judaism: a God of Justice; the Golden Rule -- namely that which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow; and the Sabbath, a day off, a day for prayer and study. Plus, no human sacrifice. To this very day, however, most people will not accept the dietary rules and Sabbath restrictions which were woven into the very fabric of Judaism.

So one point of view of the *Passion* is that it tells the beginning of the story of how, in the time of Hillel and Philo, the pod of Jewish culture burst open on the Western World by way of the ministry of Jesus and the development and spread of Christianity -- or as some might say, Judeo-Christianity.

I hope that this setting of the *Passion* might bring present

day Jews and Christians a little closer together. It is important for Christians to be reminded that their religion began as a variant of Judaism. The Gospel of John frequently sets up a false dichotomy with its constant references to “the Jews” as if Jesus and the disciples weren’t themselves Jewish. From a dramatic point of view it is important to understand that the theme of sacrifice need not go hand in hand with the theme of betrayal.

It is nice for Jews understand how much Jesus had in common with the later prophets like Isaiah. My feeling is that Jews are far more comfortable with what Jesus is said to have preached than with what Paul and others wrote afterwards. In this *Passion* the words and parables of Jesus’s ministry are central.

In 2012/5772, can we all agree that everyone may love their own religion and tradition while acknowledging that other people love theirs? The belief, or meme, that salvation is unique to one particular religion is what perpetuates conflict. If we view religions as belief systems created by people, and spread by them, then the value of that meme to a new and spreading religion is clear: the promise that one particular religion is the “true” religion and you must follow it in order to get into heaven is a powerful selling point.

For generations Passions plays have been used to incite anti-Semitic pogroms and attacks. This setting of the *Passion* reclaims the story for a wider audience by removing Judas. It is significant that as each subsequent version of the Gospel was written his role became larger. One way belief systems spread is by discrediting the systems they are intending to replace. The Gospels were written about a 100 years after the crucifixion and each was addressing a different audience. Having Judas in the story, whose very name evokes Judaism, served to discredit the old religion and thus pave the way for the new.

The conflict between the two belief systems is portrayed in Luke 22, as Jesus is being arrested: *Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, 'No more of this!' And he touched his ear and healed him.*

Parables are fundamental to understanding the Gospels and here the symbolic meaning is clear: The authorities don't want you to hear this new version of the old religion, but Jesus will ultimately be heard.

Since I believe that Jesus would have seen his sacrifice in the context of the Paschal Lamb, I've also included what I always thought was an important Passover story. The Children of Israel are escaping the Egyptian soldiers who are drowning in the Sea of Reeds. The Angels are singing and God asks them why? They reply that they are singing because the Israelites, God's children, are escaping. God rebukes them by saying, "but my children, the Egyptians, are drowning."

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no more slave or free man. We all are one. That is the universal message. It is the message of the most sacred Jewish Prayer, the Shema, a prayer that had been uttered daily by Jews for over a thousand years before the birth of Jesus:

Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

We are made in God's image, we must all be one as well.

In the *Lamentation for Jerusalem*, the text includes the isolated line, "Islam," for eventually the city would be a battleground not just between the Jews and Christians, but between Christians and Muslims and then Jews and Muslims.

"Jerusalem" means City of Peace. Inshallah.

1) PSALM 118 (INVOCATION)

Choir: Open the gates, open the gates,
open the gates of righteousness.

Soprano: I will pass through them
through the gates of righteousness.

Alto: I will praise the Lord.

Soprano: Praise the Lord of righteousness.

Choir: Praise the Lord!

I will praise thee for thou has heard me
and become my true salvation, Lord.
Praise the Lord!

Tenor: The very stone that was rejected,
the very stone that was cast away...
The very man who was rejected,
the very man who was cast away,

Choir: has become the cornerstone,
has become our sure foundation.

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, for this is the Lord's doing.
It is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
This is the day,

Soloists: I will rejoice and be glad, be glad in it.

Choir: This is the day of the Lord.

2) SO THEN REMEMBER WORLD (PRELUDE)

(based on Ephesians 2;1116)

Choir: So then remember, So then remember world:

a time without Christ,
cut off from our God, the cov' nent
and having no hope in the world

But God so loved the world, so loved the world.

So then remember world, that God sent us the Son of God.

Jesus the Savior, the Light of the World did come down to us,
lived with us, ate with us, drank with us,
prayed with us, died with us.

So then remember world, the Passion of the Christ.

First Lesson

Luke 19: 29 - 37

As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.' "

Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

They replied, "The Lord needs it."

They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

3) BLESSED IS THE KING

(based on Luke 19:38, John 12:15)

Choir: Blessed, blessed, blessed,
Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in Heaven, Glory to the highest heaven!

Alto: Glory, talkin 'bout glory...

Choir: Glory, glory...
Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Daughter of Zion, be not afraid be not afraid
Look, your King is coming on a donkey's colt.
Your King is come!

4) IF THEY KEPT THEIR PEACE

(based on Luke 19:39 - 40, paraphrase in blues form)

Choir: (murmuring)
Teacher, order your disciples to stop

Tenor: If they kept their peace if they would not speak out, the
earth would raise its voice. The very stones would shout

Choir: The whole wide world would shout .

Sop: If they could not see, if they closed their eyes to the light, a
star would light their way the blind would find their sight

Choir: The blind would find their sight .

Alto: Should the world not listen should the truth go unheard,

Choir: God would send them his son

Alto: incarnation of the word...

Choir: Earth would raise its voice,

Alto: The very stones would shout...

5) THERE IS NO LONGER...

(based on Galatians 3:28)

Choir: There is no longer Jew or Greek
there is no more slave nor free man,
there is no blessing for being born a male.
We are all one in Christ our Lord.

We are made one, Jew Greek, Slave, Free.
Truth will set you free, We all are one.

Second Lesson

Luke 12:20 - 21

Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

6) THE HOUR IS COME

(based on John 12:23 - 25)

Tenor and Choir: The hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Choir: For those who love their life, all the comforts of this life,
all the things that you can't take when the hour has come.

But those who live for love, serving God in Heav'n above,
their souls just like the dove fly back to God!
The hour is come.

If a seed falls down on the dry rocky ground or if the wind blows it
away, it will never grow.

But if the seed should fall on fertile ground
it will grow for generations!

The hour has come. The hour has come to glorify our God!
The hour is come.

7) LAMENTATION FOR JERUSALEM

Choir: Jerusalem Jerusalem

Yerushalayim shel Zahav, shel Melech David.

(Jerusalem of gold, of King David)

The followers of Jesus Christ come to Jerusalem, Amen.

Jerusalem Jerusalem

Yerushalayim shel Zahav, shel Melech David.

Islam.

The followers of Jesus Christ cry "Peace"

Salaam,

Shalom.

Third Lesson

Matthew 23:1-4

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

8) WOE TO YOU

(based on Matthew 23: 13 - 33)

Choir: Woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, woe...
Woe to you to you, hypocrite, pharisee.

Tenor: Pharisee, you know you should,
walk the path of brotherhood. On the outside you look good,

Choir: but on the inside, hypocrite.

Tenor: You walk a round with your piety,
making sure that we all can see, but when it comes to humility,

Choir: you are a stranger. You blind fool you hypocrite.

Fourth Lesson

Luke 22:7

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed.

9) FREEDOM! FREEDOM!

Choir: Freedom! Freedom!

Once we were slaves, then our God with a
mighty outstretched hand brought us forth and
gave us Torah and a land and King David who slew Goliath.

Freedom! Freedom!

Freedom, sing for freedom, precious freedom.
Sing as if you were yourself freed from Slav'ry,
Egypt or where ever your chains held you bound,
and praise the Lord who brings freedom.

Eat the Unleavend bread and remember that
when Phaeroh's army was drowned
all the ang'els were singing and the LORD said
Why do you sing when my children the Egyptains are drowning?
drowning?

10) SEDER SONG

(based on Luke 22)

Tenor: Go into town and seek a stranger,
he will make himself known to you.
go to his Inn, prepare the Seder,
we'll drink and dine the whole night through.

We'll sing of how God freed our fathers,
of how we're called, nation of priests.
But in my heart I know we're brothers,
Egyptians, Jews, Romans, and Greeks.

O how my heart sings, for this evening,
I sing to you who gave me breath
But in my dreams I hear the crying
I see a cross, I feel my death.

Choir: While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and when
he blessed it, he broke it up and said, this is my body, I give it now
to thee, when you are gathered, eat this, remember me.

And then he took the wine, and gave thanks to God for it, and then
he passed the cup, everybody took a sip.

Tenor: This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for
many. Truly I tell you I will never again drink the fruit of that vine
'til that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Fifth Lesson

Matthew 18: 1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'

11) WHO IS THE GREATEST

(based on Luke 22: 26 - 27)

Choir: Who? who? Who is the greatest? Which one?

Alto: The greatest among you shall be come as the youngest,
the leader as one who serves.

God's mission and call extends to us all
and bids us to go and serve.

Choir: Be as the youngest,

Alto: Like a little child, come home, come home my child.

Choir: I am among you as one who

Alto: Serve the Lord!

Choir: serves the Lord with all I say and do
just put your trust and faith in me...

The greatest among you shall be come as the youngest
the leader as one who serves.

Sixth Lesson

Mark 14:27 35

And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.'

Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed

12) ABBA, FATHER

(Based on Mark 14:36, 15:34 Luke 22:40)

Choir: Abba, Father, Abba, Father, Abba, Father...

Tenor: Father to thee, all things are possible,
Father to thee Eternity is spread out like a tapestry.

Choir: Father, Father.

Ten: Father if thou art willing remove this cup from my lips
yet not my will but thine will be done.

I've dreamed of a cross and a crown of thorns

I've dreamed of the nails and my flesh all torn.

Choir: My God, my God why have you forsaken me?

Seventh Lesson

(read over the ending music of song 12, Luke 44-47)

In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, 'Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial. While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came...

13) THE ARREST

(based on Luke 22: 47 - 51)

Choir: When they arrested Jesus,
they cut off the ear of the high priest's slave.
Yes, they cut off the ear of the high priest's slave.

Yes when they came to take Jesus,
they cut off the ear of the high priest's slave.
Yes they cut off the ear of the high priest's slave.

But Jesus healed him, the Spirit freed him
and he went on to spread the Word that
God was made flesh and lived among us
He was arrested and put on trial.

14) THE TRIAL

(Based on Mark 14:53 - 62)

Choir: Peter followed, watching...

They took Jesus to the high priest and all the chief priests.
The elders and scribes were assembled.

We heard him say, I will destroy, I will destroy this temple.
False testimony!
Have you no answer?

They took Jesus to the high priest and all the chief priests.
They took Jesus to off to Pilate, to Pontius Pilate.

The King of the Jews! Are you the Son of God?

They took Jesus to off to Pilate, and off to Herod and all the
chief priests and they sentenced him to die.

You will see the Son of Man
sitting at the right hand of the Power
and coming with the clouds of Heaven.

Prophecy!

Tenor: You say I am.

Choir: Peter followed...

15) THIS MAN

(Based on Luke 22:56 - 62)

This man is one of them, This man came with him.
But then again he denied it, so then again they let him be.
So then again he denied it saying "Lord I don't know thee."

And the cock crowed... and Peter remembered what
Jesus said to him and bitter were the tears
which Peter wept for him that day.

Eighth Lesson

Mark 15: 16 - 20

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out...

16) HE WAS CRUCIFIED/JESUS REMEMBER ME

(based on Luke 23:34, 42)

Choir: He was crucified...

Soprano: Father, oh Father, Father, oh Father,
forgive them, forgive them, they know not what they do.

Choir: Jesus, Jesus...

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom...