

WIGMORE HALL 125

Saturday 4 April 2026
11.00am

Schütz: The Seven Last Words

Martha McLorinan mezzo-soprano
Elisabeth Paul alto
Charles Daniels tenor
Simon Wall tenor
Jimmy Holliday bass
Silas Wollston organ

Fretwork
Emilia Benjamin viol
Emily Ashton viol
Sam Stadlen viol
Richard Boothby viol
Joanna Levine viol

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)

Sehet an den Feigenbaum SWV394 (pub. 1648)

Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630)

Suite No. 7 from *Banchetto Musicale* (pub. 1617)
*I. Paduan • II. Gagliarda • III. Courente •
IV. Allemande & Tripla*

Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)

Da Jesus an dem Creutze stundt SSWV113

Heinrich Schütz

Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott SWV447

Samuel Scheidt

From *Ludorum musicorum* (pub. 1621)
Paduan dolorosa • Courant dolorosa

Heinrich Schütz

Auf dem Gebirge SWV396 (pub. 1648)

Die Sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz SWV478

*I. Introitus: Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund •
II. Symphonia • III. Die Sieben Worte • IV. Symphonia •
V. Conclusio: Wer Gottes Marter in Ehren hat*



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Heinrich Schütz, the towering figure in German music before JS Bach, was born 100 years before him in 1585. His music is overwhelmingly sacred and almost entirely vocal, and he published nearly 20 collections in his long lifetime, though the *Sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz* was not among them. It survives in a manuscript housed in a Kassel library and is tentatively dated to Schütz's last years, probably sometime before 1657.

It is noticeably symmetrical in its design, with the central business of Christ's last words framed by two choruses and two instrumental symphonias. The instruments aren't named but a consort of five viols feels suitably sober for such a grave scene, especially given the viols' association with death.

The story is told by a succession of voices, both solo and, when Jesus cries out: *My God, why have you forsaken me?* in a chorus of four voices. Jesus's words are sung by a tenor accompanied by organ continuo, with two of the viols, sometimes anticipating, sometimes reflecting the vocal line.

The story of Schütz's education in music is an enchanting one: his father owned an inn in the town of Weissenfels called 'Zum gülden Ring', and in 1598, when Schütz was 13, Landgrave Moritz of Hessen-Kassel stayed at the inn and heard the young Schütz sing:

His Noble Grace was moved to ask the parents to allow the lad to come with him to his noble court, promising that he would be reared in all good arts and commendable virtues.

And so it was that Schütz was sent to Kassel to sing in the choir and be educated. He then studied in Italy with Gabrieli and brought back the latest Italian musical ideas to Germany; and this can readily be heard in *Ebarm dich mein*, where he uses the declamatory techniques of the *seconda pratica* to express this imploring, pleading text. Yet the self-flagellatory text is typical of the German reformed church.

Both *Sehet an den Feigenbaum* and *Auf dem Gebirge* appear in Schütz's large collection of sacred music published in 1648: *Musicalia ad chorum sacrum, das ist: Geistliche Chor-Music, erster Theil Op. 11*. Again the instrumental forces are not specified, but the music fits a group of viols perfectly.

Schütz spent almost all of his long and productive life in the service of the Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony in Dresden. At the end of a life that lasted longer than most at the time – he was 87 when he died in 1672 – his last years saw him begging the Elector to allow him to retire, but which only happened when Johan Georg died in 1656.

It is curious that in that neck of the German woods almost simultaneously three similar-sounding composers should emerge: Schütz was born in Köstritz, 9 October 1585; Johann Hermann Schein was born just a few months later in Grünhain in 1586; and Samuel Scheidt was born in Halle, 3 November 1587. All were within a day or so's walk from each other, and all became friends.

Of the three, Schütz and Schein were the closest friends, and had astonishingly similar careers: both were boy trebles whose voices had attracted the attention of an influential noble; both studied law before turning to music; and both spent their working lives in a single city, Dresden for Schütz and Leipzig for Schein, the largest and most important cities in Saxony. Schütz visited Schein in his deathbed and composed a motet on the text *Das ist je gewisslich wahr*, which he published a few months after Schein's death, in 1631.

Schein had been a boy treble in the Hofkapelle in Dresden, and then went on to study law in Leipzig, but it was music that drew him and he became Kapellmeister in Weimar in 1615. A year later he auditioned for the prestigious position of Thomaskantor in Leipzig, which he won and where he worked for the rest of his short life, afflicted by illness as it was.

He published his most important work, *Banchetto Musicale*, in 1617, from which this suite is taken. There is much influence of English composers, especially Dowland, in these works, which are suites of dances worked into entertaining art music, no longer intended to accompany the dance itself.

Samuel Scheidt, in contrast to both Schütz and Schein was a notable and virtuoso organist, who had studied in Amsterdam with the great Sweelinck and returned to his native Halle to work as organist for Margrave Christian Wilhelm of Brandenburg, alongside the English viol player William Brade and Michael Praetorius. In addition to a large body of sacred vocal music, he also published much organ music and four volumes of *Ludorum musicorum* or musical games, written for four or five viols, though the two we play today are plangent in character.

He gave the opening recital of a new organ in the Stadtkirche in Bayreuth in 1619, when both Praetorius and Schütz were present. He worked in Halle throughout his life, and enjoyed a thriving musical establishment up to the departure of Christian Wilhelm in 1625 to join the Protestant side in what became the Thirty Years War. He was to suffer terrible deprivation during the war, and never regained the eminence he had achieved before.

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Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)

Sehet an den Feigenbaum SWV394 Look upon the fig tree

Biblical text

Sehet an den Feigenbaum und alle Bäume, wenn sie itzt ausschlagen, so sehet ihrs an ihnen und merket, dass itzt der Sommer nahe ist.	Look upon the fig tree and all trees, when they put out buds, look upon them and note, that Summer is close.
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Also auch ihr, wenn ihr dies alles sehet angehen, so wisset, dass das Reich Gottes nahe ist. Himmel und Erde vergehen, aber meine Wort vergehen nicht.	Likewise you, if you look upon all this, thus know, that the Kingdom of God is near. Heaven and Earth pass away, but my word does not pass away.
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Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630)

Suite No. 7 from *Banchetto Musicale* (pub. 1617)

I. Paduan
II. Gagliarda
III. Courente
IV. Allemande & Tripla

Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)

Da Jesus an dem Creutze stundt SSWV113

Heinrich Schütz

Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott SWV447 Have mercy upon me, O Lord God

*Erhard Hegenwalt, after
Biblical text*

Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott, Nach deiner grossen Barmherzigkeit Wasch ab, mach rein mein Missetat, Ich erkenn mein Sünd und ist mir leid. Allein ich dir gesündigt hab Das ist wider mich stetiglich; Das Bös vor dir kann nicht bestehn, Du bleibst gerecht, ob man urteilt dich.	Have mercy upon me, O Lord God, after thy great goodness wash me thoroughly from my wickedness for I acknowledge my faults and am repentant. Against thee only have I sinned and my sin is ever before me. Evil cannot remain in your sight; you remain just when others judge you.
--	--

Samuel Scheidt

From *Ludorum musicorum* (pub. 1621)

Paduan dolorosa
Courant dolorosa

Heinrich Schütz

Auf dem Gebirge SWV396 (pub. 1648) On the mountains

Biblical text

Auf dem Gebirge hat man ein Geschrei gehöret, Viel Klagens, Weinens und Heulens, Rahel beweinete ihre Kinder, Und wollt sich nicht trösten lassen, Denn es war aus mit ihnen.	A voice is heard on the mountains of weeping and great lamentation. Rachel is weeping for her children, and will not be comforted because they are no more.
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*Please do not turn the page until the song and its
accompaniment have ended.*

Die Sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz SWV478

Johann Böschenstein
(Introitus and Conclusio),
Biblical text

Introitus (chorus)

Da Jesus an dem Kreuze
stund
Und ihm sein Leichnam war
verwund't
Sogar mit bittern Schmerzen,
Die sieben Wort, die Jesus
sprach,
Betracht in deinem Herzen.

Symphonia

Evangelist
Und es war um die dritte
Stunde,
Da sie Jesum kreuzigten.
Er aber sprach:

Jesus
Vater, vergieb ihnen;
Denn sie wissen nicht, was
sie tun!

Evangelist
Es stund aber bei dem
Kreuze
Jesu seine Mutter
Und seiner Mutter Schwester,
Maria, Cleophas Weib,
Und Maria Magdalena.
Da nun Jesus seine Mutter
sahe
Und den Jünger dabei stehen,
Den er lieb hatte, sprach er
zu seine

Jesus
Weib, siehe, das ist dein Sohn!

Evangelist
Darnach spricht er zu dem
Jünger:

Jesus
Johannes, siehe, das ist
deine Mutter!

Evangelist
Und von Stund an nahm sie
der Jünger zu sich.

The Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ on the Cross

Introduction (chorus)

Muse in your heart the
seven words
that Jesus
pronounced
in bitter sorrows
when he was on the
cross,
covered with wounds.

Symphonia

Evangelist
And it was in the third
hour,
that they crucified Jesus.
But he said:

Jesus
Father, forgive them,
because they do not
know what they do!

Evangelist
By Jesus's cross stood his
mother
and his mother's sister
Maria, wife of Cleophas,
and Maria Magdalena.
When Jesus saw his mother
and near her the young
man he had loved,
he said to his mother:

Jesus
Woman, behold your son!

Evangelist
And then he said to the
young one:

Jesus
John, behold your
mother!

Evangelist
And from then on the young
man took her with him.

Evangelist
Aber der Übeltäter einer, die
da gehenkt waren, lästert'
ihn und sprach:
Schächer zur Linken
Bist du Christus, so hilf dir
selbst und uns!

Evangelist
Aber der Übeltäter einer, die
da gehenkt waren, lästert'
ihn und sprach:

Schächer zur Rechten
Und du, fürchtest dich auch
nicht vor Gott,
Der du doch in gleicher
Verdammnis bist ?
Und zwar wir sind billig
darinnen, denn wir
empfangen,
Was unsre Taten wert
sind;
Dieser aber hat nichts
Ungerechtes gehandelt.

Evangelist
Und sprach zu Jesu:

Schächer zur Rechten
Herr gedenke an mich, wenn
du in dein Reich kommst!

Evangelist
Und Jesus sprach:

Jesus
Wahrlich ich sage dir:
Heute wirst du mit mir im
Paradies sein.

Evangelist
Und um die neunte Stunde
schrie Jesus laut und
sprach:

Jesus
Eli, Eli, lama asabthani?

Evangelist
Das ist verdolmetschet:

Jesus
Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum
hast du mich verlassen?

Evangelist
Darnach als Jesus wusste, dass
schon alles vollbracht war,
Dass die Schrift erfüllet
würde, sprach er:

Evangelist
But one of the two villains
that were hung there,
insulted him by saying:
Left Thief
You are the Christ, so
help yourself and us!

Evangelist
But the other
replied, rebutting
him:

Right Thief
And you, do you not fear
God,
you who are damned like
me?
We are suffering a just
fate,
because we gather the
fruits of our actions;
but he did nothing
bad.

Evangelist
And he said to Jesus:

Right Thief
Lord, think of me when you
reach your kingdom!

Evangelist
And Jesus said to him:

Jesus
In truth, I tell you:
today you'll be in Heaven
with me.

Evangelist
And in the ninth hour,
Jesus screamed:

Jesus
Eli, Eli, lama asabthani?

Evangelist
Which means:

Jesus
My God, my God, why
have you forsaken me?

Evangelist
Then, since he knew that
all was accomplished
so that the scriptures were
fulfilled, Jesus said:

Jesus
Mich dürstet!

Jesus
I am thirsty!

Evangelist
Und einer von den
Kriegesknechten lief bald hin,
Nahm einen Schwamm und
füllte ihn mit Essig und
Ysopen
Und steckte ihn auf ein Rohr
und hielt ihn dar zum Munde
Und tränkte
ihn.
Da nun Jesus den Essig
genommen hatte, sprach er:

Evangelist
And one of the centurions
came,
took a sponge, filled it
with vinegar and
hyssop
put it on a
reed,
raised it to his mouth and
he drank.
When Jesus had drunk
the vinegar, he said.

Jesus
Es ist vollbracht!

Jesus
All is finished.

Evangelist
Und abermal rief Jesus laut
und sprach:

Evangelist
And again he cried and
said:

Jesus
Vater, ich befehle meinen
Geist in deine Hände!

Jesus
Father, I commend my
spirit into your hands!

Evangelist
Und als er das gesagt hatte,
Neiget er das Haupt und
gab seinen Geist auf.

Evangelist
And after saying this,
He lowered his head and
gave up his spirit.

Symphonia

Symphonia

Conclusio
Wer Gottes Marter in Ehren
hat
Und oft gedenkt der sieben
Wort,
Dess will Gott gar eben
pflegen,
Wohl hie auf Erd mit seiner
Gnad,
Und dort in dem ewigen Leben.

Conclusion
Those who honor the
martyrdom of God
and often remember the
seven words,
God will certainly take
care of,
here on earth through his
grace,
and there in eternal life.