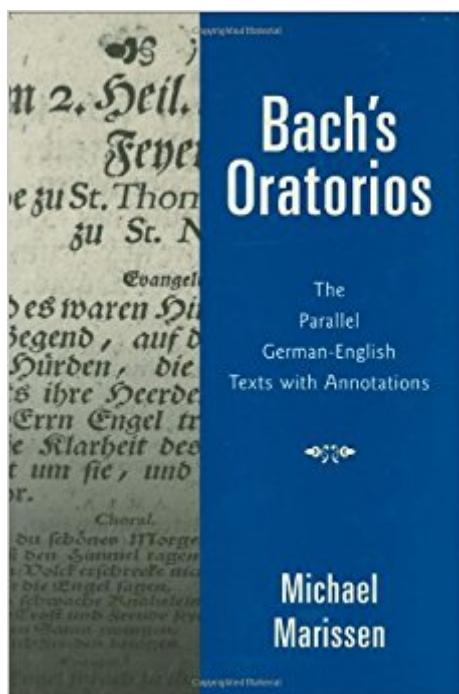


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# Bach's Oratorios: The Parallel German-English Texts With Annotations



## Synopsis

The major choral works by Johann Sebastian Bach—the Christmas, Easter, and Ascension Oratorios, and the St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John Passions—stand as the most frequently-performed and penetratingly discussed of the genre. Renowned Bach scholar Michael Marissen has assembled a compact, well-designed and ideally useful treatment of Bach's oratorios, providing the full German texts with literal English translations and copious annotations. He provides strict literal translations of these texts, with citations from the Luther Bible as it was known in Bach's day, along side extensive footnotes that provide information addressing the interests and concerns of today's Bach community. These are the first translations of the librettos from Bach's oratorios to accommodate the many sense-clarifying allusions to the readings of the Luther Bibles in Bach's day, to explore from historical dictionaries the meanings of previously unnoticed archaic usages, and to contrast relevant findings from modern biblical scholarship. Marissen's insights are particularly helpful, his thoroughness is impressive, and the book will be a longstanding, definitive, and essential reference for choral directors, performers, audience members, and Bach scholars alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Michael Marissen is the Daniel Underhill Professor of Music History, Swarthmore College, and author of *Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion* (Oxford, 1998) and *The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos* (Princeton, 1995), co-author (with

Daniel Melamed) of An Introduction to Bach Studies (Oxford, 1998), and Editor, Creative Responses to Bach from Mozart to Hindemith (Nebraska, 1998). He is frequently an invited lecturer to major performances of Bach and Handel (e.g. the NY Philharmonic, among others), and speaks about 20+ times per year at these oratorio concerts.

Having parallel German-English texts allows a much better way of seeing how Bach shaped his music to the German biblical texts and the words of the German chorales. Most English texts (for example of the Passions), have awkward word order and selection in their attempt to suit the txt to the meter of the music. This seems to me to fill a real gap for the discerning listener and performer,

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