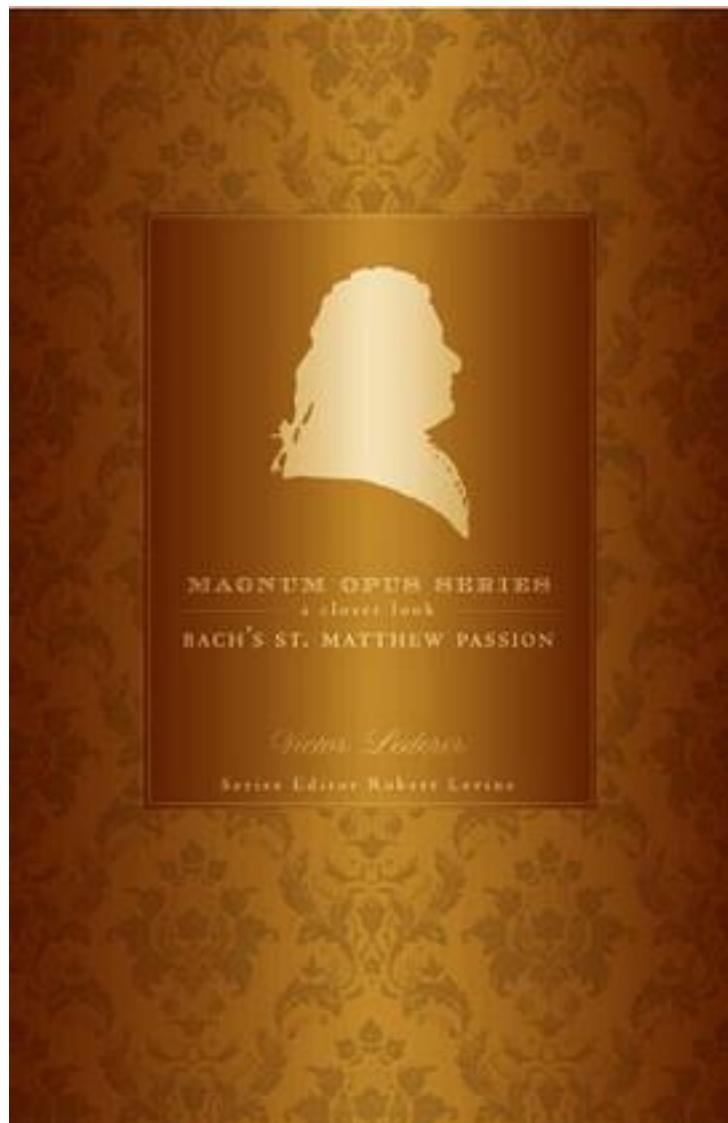


Bach's "St. Matthew Passion"



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This is an in-depth study of a seminal work, first performed in 1727. Johann Sebastian Bach's the "St. Matthew Passion" stands as a singular expression of religious sensibility. Conceived within the constraints of Bach's role as cantor of the St. Thomas Church in the provincial German city of Leipzig, the music has a power and profundity that readily transcend time and place. Yet the darkness of the subject - the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus - and the complexity and sophistication of Bach's compositional techniques can be difficult listening for even the most eager novice. By highlighting the inspiration Bach drew from opera, this book truly illuminates the hybrid forms that comprise the work, thereby clarifying many of the composer's dramatic strategies. Drawn from the "Gospel of St. Matthew", the narrative sections - featuring characters including the narrator - Evangelist, Pilate, Peter, Judas, and Jesus himself - have tremendous theatrical power, while non-Biblical arias and chorales offer moments of deep reflection and consolation. This book shows the willing but intimidated beginner the way into the intricacies of Bach's masterwork while unveiling subtleties for the more knowledgeable listener as well. Finally, Lederer recounts the fascinating performance history of the piece and looks at the merits of different recordings of this extraordinary work, indisputably one of the cornerstones of Western music. "Magnum Opus" is a series for anyone seeking a greater familiarity with the cornerstones of Western Classical Music - operatic, choral and symphonic. Always passionate, down-to-earth, and authoritative on the works and their creators, "Magnum Opus" is an indispensable resource for anyone's musical library and the perfect gift for the music-lover in your life.

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