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“Passion, Lament, Glory”: Baroque Music and Modern Social Justice Resonances

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Abstract

Baroque religious music was composed and performed to stimulate devotion as well as the inspire passion through the theatricality of the religious ritual including the processional arrangements which worked in tandem with the performance practices based on strong emotional delivery. The current project aimed to re-imagine historical emotional affect through a pasticcio performance of Baroque works focused on the Easter Passion and Resurrection delivering the narrative with enactment. The project was also conceived to deliver broader social justice messages allied to displaced and misunderstood peoples of different religious and cultural backgrounds. In this paper, the audience is invited to spectate a performance of *Passion, Lament, Glory*, staged at St Paul’s Cathedral, Melbourne just before Easter 2017. They are invited to share in the background to the work and read about audience responses to the live performance. These responses are reflected upon in terms of the empathic, cathartic and applied outcomes of the performance on the audience.

Keywords: *Baroque, passion, emotion, compassion*

Aims and Overview

The performance explored in this paper aimed to impact its audiences by stimulating a deep emotional response and critical reflection on some specific aspects of the inequities in society. Its focus was racial and religious conflict and persecution as represented through the narrative of the Passion of Christ. Further to this, the work coincidentally aimed to re-invigorate aspects of musical and theatrical rhetoric stemming from the baroque repertoire that comprised the performance materials. It was a practice-led research project in which the current author, as artistic director, worked with the designer and cast in the development of the staging of the work, and the musical director in the delivery of the music. As this paper will reveal, the cast worked with a historical and modern social justice agenda underpinning their dramaturgical work, and also engaged historically-informed music performance practices. The audience, by contrast, revealed a range of responses to the work. Some were acutely aware of the modern parallels between the Passion of Christ and the religious persecutions and conflicts of modern society. For many, the visceral power of the performance itself touched them, and reported being moved to tears at several points. Another group was mainly affected by the ‘beauty’ of baroque music. There were some who were upset by having to queue to get into the performance. The reader is asked to reflect on these different

responses in their own sampling of the work as experienced in a video recording of one of the performances.

Context for the Concept

In mid-December 2016, bomb threats circulated the Internet, targeting several sites in the City of Melbourne. Among the named buildings was St Paul's, the Anglican Cathedral, located in the heart of the Central Business District. Fortunately, the intimidation was not realised, as follow-up events included the apprehension of four men suspected of being part of the bomb plot. The media reported these arrests in terms of one religious group pitting itself against the other, one culture standing against another in terms of good and evil (Davies, Hamblin, & Dowling 2016).

The Dean of Melbourne and St Paul's Cathedral, The Reverend Dr Andreas Loewe, was reported in *The Age* on 23 December 2016:

'St Paul's is one of Melbourne's most iconic religious buildings, a symbol of faith in our city and we work very hard to promote a degree of reconciliation between different faith communities in our city'.

'I believe this [the bombing threat] may well cast fears in peoples' hearts and minds and may well also point the finger at particular groups and I would want to encourage the people of Melbourne to enjoy their Christmas celebrations and to promote the values that Christmas stands for' (Spoonier, 2016).

My reading of the Dean's statement was a directive to pursue the peace, hope, and goodwill messages of Christmas and importantly, to reflect on the climate of fear and accusation he had identified.

St Paul's has a huge banner strung across its façade that reads, "Let's fully welcome refugees" (see Figure 1). In a country where deportation and detention are fraught and complex issues in relation to the treatment of refugees, the banner signals that the diocese, clergy, and lay administrators actively support human rights, peace, and conciliation between peoples of different faiths and cultures. From a social and political viewpoint, Andreas Loewe's words are sentiments I share.

As the December headlines hit the streets of Melbourne, Australia, I had just finalised a booking at St Paul's for a performance project I was to produce on 31 March and 1 April 2017, two weeks before Easter. I had chosen St Paul's because of the progressive ministry I had seen symbolised in that banner and its location in the heart of the city. My goal was to use Easter music and the narrative of the Passion of Christ set within the cathedral as a religious site to investigate racial and religious discrimination, conflict, and persecution. I am not sure how clear this agenda was when I pitched the project to the Dean, but he was enthusiastic about the collaboration between myself as a representative of the Music Conservatorium of Music (MCM) at the University of Melbourne and himself as a representative of the Cathedral, the Anglican community, and the City more broadly. He participated fully by offering to be part of the performance and provide a suitable text to recount John the Baptist's version of the final days of Christ's life.

Though I am not a practising Christian, I was raised in the Anglican tradition, so knew that the Passion of Christ is understood in Christianity as God's plan for the salvation of humanity. It is taught that Jesus bore the guilt of human sins and died to pay our penalty (Romans 5:8). Humans are redeemed, "but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish" (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus was, "wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). This Christian narrative presents an opportunity to reflect on human behaviours, especially those enacted in the name of religion. Indeed, whether Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, or Muslim, religions broadly teach that compassion and respect are central to human interaction, with peace and non-violence underpinning a 'good' life (Volf, 2015). But more than this, there is evidence to show that music has the capacity to facili-



Figure 1.

St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. (Photo: St. Pauls Cathedral by Rob Deutscher CC BY 2.0)

tate conciliation and understanding as well as provide emotional catharsis (Davidson & Garrido, 2014). In developing a project around Easter, I aimed to engage audiences into both thinking about its narrative and feeling its affect in the context of ongoing human suffering in the modern world. In this way, I hoped to encourage compassionate responses in times where people of different cultures and religious beliefs have the potential to clash and inflict immense cruelty and suffering on one another.

The Works Performed

The performance project itself was developed to enact elements of the Passion of Christ as it was portrayed in European music during the eighteenth century, specifically through works by George Frideric Handel and Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. I chose this specific music because it is highly popular in twenty-first century circulations of religious music at Easter and is often performed in religious spaces. But, for me, its emotional function often seems diluted by performer concerns about the technical execution of the music, without much regard for the deep emotional intention of the music and libretto together (Davies, 1994). Further, the frequent adoption of high baroque music in twenty-first century performance contexts for its 'beauty' appeal (Arnold, 2016; Waleson, 2012) seems to override audience reception of the deeper meaning carried within these works, which were originally created for ritualized and highly emotive ceremonial performances in churches and cathedrals throughout Europe (Bohlman, 2013; Kevorkian, 2007).

Handel's "*Salve Regina*" ("Hail, O queen, mother of mercy") was selected to open the program, drawing attention to Mary as a mother, and symbol of mercy and forgiveness. This was to establish these two central ideas: the suffering of the mother's loss and also the role of compassion in the face of aggression and hatred. After this, three choruses from Part Two of Handel's *Messiah* were used to reflect on Christ's suffering as he carried the cross ("Behold the Lamb of God", "Surely He Hath Bourne Our Griefs", also "And with His Stripes") which led to the final piece of the programme, Pergolesi's setting of the *Stabat Mater* which again focused on Mary's grief at the cross and which ends with the Ascension.

I had first developed the enactment of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* for an anniversary celebration at Sheffield Cathedral in South Yorkshire, UK, 15 years earlier. My motivation for choosing to dramatise the work in a religious setting had been that the county of Yorkshire has hosted Mystery Plays since the 1300s, with York Minster being a key performance site. The Minster is a central part of those performances — the religious space, the immensity of it, its long history as a place for people to come together in peace.

After Sheffield, the project was reformulated a couple of years later for work with an opera company in theatres in Portugal. Then, on my own arrival to Australia, it was performed in the Winthrop Hall in Perth, Western Australia — magnificent in its 20-metre high ceilings and stunning stain glass windows. But, the site-specific value of the religious context was missing and this seemed to diminish the impact of the work. So, it was a great delight for me to return the production of the *Stabat Mater* to a cathedral setting in Melbourne. With the bombing threats and that banner welcoming refugees at the forefront of my mind, I had a much clearer social agenda driving the Melbourne production: with the additions of the *Salve Regina* and *Messiah* excerpts, I was able to make a strong bridge between Mary, the Passion of Christ, and the symbolism of the Resurrection. Hence the title of the project: *Passion, Lament, Glory: The Passion of Christ, the Lament of Mary and the Glory of the Resurrection*. Perhaps it is salient to point out that Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* brings with it a rich reception history connected with the aesthetic of sentimentalism, and it has been identified as a site for "tears and "deep emotion" almost continuously since its composition in late 1735 or 1736 (Pergolesi, 2012). Indeed, by 1800, it has been disseminated in over 30 editions in hundreds if not thousands of performance across the Catholic and Protestant churches. Moreover, it has also been noted for its positioning between the solemnity of devotion and the passion of a theatrical scene, given that the text narrates Mary's experiences (Will, 2004). Keen to connect the audience to the depth of emotional experience consistent with the original composition and reception history of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, I was indeed about to embark upon exploring the interface of a devotional ritual and the theatricality of music and text in a cathedral setting.

A further reason for performing these works in the cathedral setting was owing to a custom in sixteenth-century Germany, where, on the feast of the Ascension, an image of Christ accompanied by angels and the Holy Spirit, was drawn up through the church tower (Scribner, 1988, p. 128–129). I had already explored the imagery of angels, having used a lyrical and beautiful choreography of a female aerialist high in the tower of both Sheffield Cathedral and Winthrop Hall, but now, my intention was to have the actor playing Jesus Christ travel up from the altar area of the Cathedral into the spire, literally ascending through the heavens depicted in a brilliant golden mosaic on the back wall of the spire. This desire to explore the dramatic potential of the performance space was also underpinned by the principles of modern-day social and political theatre, which aim to break down the fourth wall of the theatre and engage the audience as fully in the drama as possible (see Luckhurst & Tait, in press). I extended this idea even further by trying to engage the audience actively in the emotions of the ritual/drama by embedding the chorus within the audience, so that when Jesus arrived carrying the cross, the singers would emerge out of the audience and sing next to those sitting spectating.

The Production Process

The production took 2 months to craft, working with six separate groups who came together for the first time as a company the day before the opening performance. The first group¹ comprised those involved in the *Stabat Mater* with whom I worked initially in a week-long production intensive and then twice weekly to develop musical knowledge and learning of the enactment, which involved simple choreographies that were nonetheless tricky to execute when singing. For this, I worked closely with répétiteur, David Barnard, who assiduously coached the performers on the musical nuances. Having a previous production of the Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* in my files, I worked with a collective of 13 female singers—seven sopranos and six mezzos—in a cumulative and systematic manner, learning the music, blocking the staged movements, gradually adding layer upon layer of meaning and emotional intensity. This group was given the opportunity to give creative input and offer dramatic variation where a specific previous staging idea no longer had relevance to these performers. Furthermore, each performer was given a strong role: one was identified as Mary, each of the other 12 was offered a solo or some other special role. While their costumes were very similar, strong individuality came through the timbral qualities of the voices, and the individual shapes and movements of the performers' bodies. The number of 12 was not accidental; I saw these women as Mary's 'disciples'—her team of supporters. In Pergolesi's original work, the most likely combination of voices would have been castrato plus male alto, although the tradition of arranging the piece for different voice types began almost immediately after composition, and the work has a long history of choral performance (Pergolesi, 2012). With this in mind, I felt justified to use a group of females to perform this work. We worked on understanding a mother's loss, how this might feel in the charged social and political context of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria then, and Palestine and Israel now. Also, we considered how this would translate into modern-day Melbourne with the religious tensions such as those described at the start of this article.

The second group comprised those who sang the three choruses from *The Messiah*. Again, David accompanied, and this time I worked with choral director Stephen Grant and ran the staging aspect of the rehearsals. This group comprised some 92 singers from the Voice Department at the MCM. In this case, we spent rehearsal time building the emotional power of the large collective, and working on how it would feel to react to seeing someone today being scourged and tormented for their race and beliefs. They were to move the affections of audience members by performing amongst them.

The third group comprised Dean Andreas Loewe and singer/actress, Heather Fletcher. Both delivered the text the Dean had written, which offered an account of Jesus's final days by John the Baptist and one of the women who had attended the Crucifixion and Burial. Both actors prepared their dramatic texts and I then rehearsed with them in private and in the Cathedral before the performances.

The fourth group was for the *Salve Regina* and comprised the soprano soloist, Jacqueline Porter, along with the musicians, led by conductor and organist Erin Helyard. This modest string quartet and continuo ensemble had one instrumental rehearsal, one rehearsal with the singer, then two further rehearsals prior to the dress rehearsal and performances. (The instrumental ensemble worked in a similar manner with the *Messiah* chorus and the *Stabat Mater* ensemble). Dramatically, I structured the overall performance with the *Salve Regina* being a way to introduce the *Stabat Mater* performers. These female performers participated by moving to the music of the *Salve Regina*, again, literally 'supporting' the meaning of Jacqueline's text. Much of the movement and emotional material used in this work developed from the *Stabat Mater*, though it was to be presented first, heralding what was to come.

The fifth group comprised Tim Ruddy, the actor/aerial artist who played Jesus Christ, and two actors (Nathan Wright and Alastair Cooper-Golec) who were the soldiers accompanying Tim through the enactment of some of the Stations of the Cross



Figure 2.

Tim, Nathan and Alastair rehearsing in St Paul's. (Photo: Erika Von Kaschke)

during the *Messiah* and on through the *Stabat Mater*. I rehearsed with this group very sparingly owing to time constraints (see Figures 2 and 3).

The sixth group I worked with was the designer Matthew Adey, the production manager Paul Doyle, and the production crew. Matt and I visited the Cathedral on several occasions in the weeks leading up to the production and he attended rehearsals of the *Stabat Mater* to identify lighting/mood changes as well as staging materials and effects. We worked exhaustingly and closely during the production week as the Cathedral has no theatrical infrastructure, and added to this, we needed to employ Geoff Dunstan to rig for the aerial work which was a logistical nightmare and a very time-consuming undertaking.

To clarify the musical and narrative emotions this performance project aimed to articulate, it is helpful to be appraised of the texts of each musical work. The *Salve Regina* has a long history, dating back to the thirteenth century, but by the eighteenth century, it commonly appeared in Marian prayers, anthems, and at the end of the rosary (Harper, 1991).

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ,



Figure 3.

Tim and I work on the 'Pieta' tableau as the set is being constructed – we vary the mood, with a little chat, owing to the intensity of the rehearsal process. (Photo: Erika Von Kaschke)

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
Our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you do we cry,
Poor banished children of Eve;
To you do we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
Your eyes of mercy toward us;
And after this our exile,
Show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving,
O sweet Virgin Mary.

This translation is commonly used by British Catholics and comes from The World Prayers Project ([Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, 2017](#)). To me, whether or not a Christian, the sorrow and loss depicted in this text can be understood as deep and significant human emotional states. Figure 4 shows the female supporters reaching out to offer 'clement' and 'loving' help.

Handel's *Messiah* is set in English to the following lines from the New Testament:

"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,"(John 1:29), see Figure 5.



Figure 4.

In performance: Jacqueline Porter in silhouette, with the female supporters, and Mary in the background. Notice that the singers have the audience all around them. This gave the audience of 750 people the opportunity to be close to the action. (Photo: Sarah Walker)



Figure 5.

In performance: Tim Ruddy as Jesus with the chorus embedded in the audience so when the music began, the singers emerged, to generate visceral audience response. (Photo: Sarah Walker)

“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him”. (Isaiah 53: 4–5). Figure 6 shows an enactment of these words.

‘And with His stripes we are healed.’ (Isaiah 53:5)



Figure 6.
Jesus suffering. (Photo: Sarah Walker)



Figure 7.
The action is embedded within the audience, and the chorus sings around them, enveloping them in the musico-dramatic experience, as Jesus is scourged. (Photo: Sarah Walker)

The original author of the liturgical sequence *Stabat Mater* is generally believed to have been a Franciscan monk, Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1230–1306), but Pope Innocentius III (ca. 1160–1216) and the saint Bonaventura (died 1274) are all named as potential poets, as are Popes Gregorius and John XII and Bernhard of Clairveaux (died 1135). Pergolesi would have had a deep familiarity with this text, for in 1727 the *Stabat Mater* text was approved for the Catholic Mass of the Seven Sorrows of Mary (15 September),

and was also often associated with the Stations of the Cross and Easter (Viladesau, 2014, p. 152).

*Stabat mater dolorosa
juxta Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.
Cuius animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertransiit gladius.
O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta,
mater Unigeniti!
Quae maeberat et dolerat,
pia Mater, dum videbat
nati poenas inclyti.
Quis est homo qui non fleret,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?
Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Iesum in tormentis,
et flagellis subditum.
Vidit suum dulcem Natum
moriendo desolatum,
dum emisit spiritum.
Eia, Mater, fons amoris
me sentire vim doloris
fac, ut tecum lugeam.
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum
ut sibi complacem.
Sancta Mater, istud agas,
crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.
Tui Nati vulnerati,
tam dignati pro me pati,*

At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.
Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.
O how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother, highly blest,
of the sole-begotten One.
Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.
Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?
Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?
For the sins of His own nation,
She saw Jesus wracked with torment,
All with scourges rent:
She beheld her tender Child,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.
O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with thine accord:
Make me feel as thou hast felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ my Lord.
Holy Mother! pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Savior crucified:
Let me share with thee His pain,
who for all my sins was slain,

<i>pœnas mecum dívide.</i>	who for me in torments died.
<i>Fac me tecum pie flere,</i>	Let me mingle tears with thee,
<i>crucifixo condolére,</i>	mourning Him who mourned for me,
<i>donec ego víxero.</i>	all the days that I may live:
<i>Juxta Crucem tecum stare,</i>	By the Cross with thee to stay,
<i>et me tibi sociâre</i>	there with thee to weep and pray,
<i>in planctu desídero.</i>	is all I ask of thee to give.
<i>Virgo vírginum præclára,</i>	Virgin of all virgins blest!
<i>mihi iam non sis amára,</i>	Listen to my fond request:
<i>fac me tecum plângere.</i>	let me share thy grief divine;
<i>Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,</i>	Let me, to my latest breath,
<i>passiõnis fac consórtem,</i>	in my body bear the death
<i>et plagas recólere.</i>	of that dying Son of thine.
<i>Fac me plagis vulnerári,</i>	Wounded with His every wound,
<i>fac me Cruce inebriári,</i>	steep my soul till it hath swooned,
<i>et cruóre Fílii.</i>	in His very Blood away;
<i>Flammis ne urar succensus,</i>	Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
<i>per te, Virgo, sim defensus</i>	lest in flames I burn and die,
<i>in die iudícii.</i>	in His awful Judgment Day.
<i>Christe, cum sit hinc exíre,</i>	Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
<i>da per Matrem me veníre</i>	be Thy Mother my defence,
<i>ad palmam victóriæ.</i>	be Thy Cross my victory;
<i>Quando corpus moriétur,</i>	While my body here decays,
<i>fac, ut animæ donétur</i>	may my soul Thy goodness praise,
<i>paradísi glória.</i>	Safe in Paradise with Thee.
<i>Amen.</i>	Amen.

This English translation by the Anglican clergyman Edward Casswall dates from 1849 (Casswall, 1849).

My production followed this text in considerable detail, aiming to represent the emotions depicted in the narrative, with Jesus being mounted onto a cross, dying, and then being resurrected and ascending to Heaven, see Figures 8-12.

In addition to these representative narrative elements of the Passion and Ascension of Christ, my Director's program note suggested that the audience could approach "Passion, Lament, Glory" as a contemplative reflection on the long history of intercultural persecution. Discreet touches to hint as this included the veiled women deliberately concealing their identities until they heard the sad weeping of Mary (see Figures 13 and 14 below).

Reflecting on the performance, it was my intention to create a highly emotive representation of the music and text, and I hope this is captured in the film of the live performance that can be accessed through the weblink indicated at the end of this paper. While a thoroughly modern enactment, the rehearsal process was strongly founded on



Figure 8.
The Crucifixion. (Photo: Sarah Walker)



Figure 9.
The Vigil. (Photo: Sarah Walker)

discussion of eighteenth century performance practice, rhetoric and allied topics, also the content of the New Testament as a historical and religious text. We also discussed the ideas of persecuted peoples, and broader topics that arose as we worked together. After the live performances, I was able to survey the audience members on their experiences to provide feedback to this project.²



Figure 10.

Mary, played by Jordan Auld, searching for Jesus at the tomb. (Photo: Sarah Walker)



Figure 11.

The Resurrection. (Photo: Sarah Walker)

The Experience of Passion, Lament, Glory

Audience members were invited to complete Doherty's (1997) *Emotional Contagion Scale* as a measure of empathy and a general emotional reaction scale (adapted from Tröndle, Kirchberg, & Tschacher, 2014). In addition, two open-ended questions asked respondents to describe their emotional reaction to the performance and to explain their motivation to attend the performance.

It was a post-performance internet survey, so responses were low (only 40 respondents). The age range was 18–84 years ($M = 58.82$), with the vast majority in the



Figure 12.
The Ascension. (Photo: Sarah Walker)



Figure 13.
The opening of *Salve Regina*, with the veiled women, Ruth Blythman in full shot. (Photo: Sarah Walker)

55–75 age group, and 71.10% female. These individuals identified as: Australian or NZ (n = 33), British (n = 5), Irish (n = 1), and Finnish (n = 1). Of these, there were Christians: practising Anglican (n = 6), Templar (n = 1), Evangelical (n = 1), Presbyterian (n = 1), Lutheran (n = 1), United Church (n = 3), Baptist (n = 1), Greek Orthodox (n = 2), Catholic (n = 1), and a broad definition of Christian (n = 4). Of remaining individuals, there were 6 lapsed Catholics, a further 7 referred to themselves as *None*, 2 were listed as Atheists, 2 as Agnostics, and 2 left their responses blank.



Figure 14.
The same women, revealing their deeply emotive response to the lines of the Salve Regina. (Photo: Sarah Walker)

In terms of the first open-ended question, motivations for attending included having a family member in the performance, having a night out, religious reasons associated with the Lenten period, and loving one or more pieces of music in the program.

Table 1 displays the mean scores for Emotional Reaction to the performance, rated on a Likert scale (1 *least* to 5 *most*). *Pleased me*, revealed that the majority of respondents rated this item as very high scoring. The finding that the audience was stimulated to *think* and that the overall performance was *surprising* seems to support my initial goal to offer the audience something to stimulate a broader thought engagement.

Table 1: Ratings for the emotional reaction items listed

Emotional Reaction	Rating
Pleased me	4.37
Made me think	4.03
Surprised me	3.86
Made me sad	3.46
Moved me to tears	3.05
Made me happy	3.03
Made me angry	2.58
Frightened me	2.08
Made me laugh	2.08

Pearson’s two-tailed correlations were used to explore the relationship between Emotion Reaction ratings and the audience’s Emotional Contagion scores that captured re-

spondents' empathy in terms of Happiness, Love, Anger, Sadness, and Fear. The following statistically significant correlations were found between: *Made me Sad* and *Sadness* ($r = .532, p < 0.001$) and *Surprised me* and *Sadness* ($r = .451, p < 0.001$). In context, it is perhaps not surprising that those who score highly on sadness empathy also found the performance made them sad, and the more the performance surprised them the more it made them sad. No other statistically significant correlations were found.

These results suggest that those who responded to the survey found much to think about, and those who were empathic to sadness were certainly highly affected by the work. The responses made by the audience to the open-ended question concerning emotional response to the performance add to this picture. Five thematic areas emerge from the responses, including positive emotional experiences, specifically emotional religious/spiritual experiences, mixed emotional experiences, performance quality and achievement, anger, and dissatisfaction. Indicative examples for each theme are presented in the tables below.

Table 2: Positive and emotional experiences

Thankful
Spiritually uplifting, deeply moving, inspiring
Enjoyment
Felt enlightened and moved
Enjoyment, pleasure in the music and the performance
An aesthetic/emotional reaction to the music, singing and playing, and the darkened cathedral atmosphere, all combined. My feelings were of pleasure
Moved by the beauty and stimulated by the interpretation

Table 3: Emotional religious/spiritual experience

Christ's death affects me when his mother is also involved so the performance made me quite sad and prompted a stream of thoughts around the issue of Christ's sacrifice and its impact on his mother. Images of the deposition of Christ or the Pietà always make me very emotional.
Moved and uplifted as a gift from God, having just lost my beautiful, talented, compassionate 44-year old daughter in a sudden collapse on plane. What is the meaning of everything – I was angry with God – and then I saw this play and felt I understood my tragedy better.
I was moved by the beautiful music, John the Baptist's words had new meaning for me, having heard them often as a child and young adult, then having not attended a church service for forty years or more.

Table 4: Mixed experience of the strength of the emotions experienced

Powerful, moving, uncomfortable yet exhilarated by potential
Surprised and moved by the physicality. Awed by the atmosphere and location. Joy at hearing one of my very favourite pieces.
Happy to see it. Interested to see and enjoyed the creative staging. Pleasure for the quality of performance. Angry at the suffering.
I was very tired, but was still stirred by the passion and pain on display.

<p>As a lapsed Catholic I felt a range of complex emotions, including guilt for being lapsed, and straightforward human compassion for a man being violently assaulted. I'm also a historian, and my main reason for attending was curiosity about experiencing an important dimension of Christian experience. I didn't feel a spiritual sense of being uplifted by the resurrection — at that point I felt more academically interested in the historical spectacle of a Passion play, and amazement at the skill of the aerial artist.</p>
<p>I felt quite emotional through much of the performance. The depiction of Christ's suffering made me feel both angry and sad. The depiction of Mary's grief was very moving, and the meeting of the risen Christ with his mother was wonderful and uplifting (especially as a mother, to see the son's respect for his mother).</p>
<p>It made me think about the way we treat refugees and people outside the mainstream of our society and made me feel what it might have been like to actually witness the passion of Christ and the suffering of his family and supporters. It was a visceral experience due to the excellent staging of the crucifixion scene.</p>

Table 5: Performance quality and achievement

<p>I was moved. I was also impressed that a large group of young people had produced an artistic piece of work in which they were so intimately involved. It included different artistic expression, including chorus, orchestra, solo speaking, dance acrobatics. I have myself recently produced and written a Miracle play in St Paul's Cathedral called <i>Lazarus</i>, and was again surprised and delighted how well the space lent itself to dramatic presentations of religious themes.</p>
<p>The strong overall performance aroused a great sense of connection with ALL of the characters and the incredible beauty of the music and the intensity of its performance drew me closer to participation in the story.</p>
<p>Standing ovation, very impressed.</p>
<p>Amazed by the talented performers. Impressed by the design and format of the show, for example the flash mob choir.</p>
<p>Open-minded and appreciative of the interpretation using several art forms — music, dance, drama, lighting, costumes and props and circus arts.</p>

Table 6: Anger and dissatisfaction

<p>Due to seating and ticketing issues I could not settle...</p>
<p>Annoyed.</p>
<p>Dissatisfaction, not with the performers or the performance.</p>
<p>I loved the musical and spoken performances in the beautiful Cathedral. However I was disturbed by the non-biblical exaggeration of the place of Mary in the drama. I do not worship Mary and it was plainly heresy to have Jesus kneeling in worship of Mary after the resurrection...The aerial acrobatics distracted from the truth of the salvation in Jesus for all who put their faith in Him. So this too was disappointing, although it was an extraordinary performance in itself.</p>

The emergent themes reveal contrasting experiences, some very positive based on deep emotional affect. For a minority there was some discontent, entirely based on having to queue to be seated and then having restricted visibility – the consequence of the show being a sell out, with many people trying to gain access on the night. But for the

majority of respondents, this was an emotional experience that offered an opportunity to reflect on the power of enactment in delivering narrative meaning.

With this specific production, social justice messages had been central to the conceptualisation and development of the work and this had affected the audience. However, the survey revealed that the transference of experience from the Easter narrative to a broader social justice reflection was not as strong as I had anticipated. The immersive audience experience with the committed theatrical investment by the performers certainly provoked much emotional response and provided the audience with an experience quite different to being a passive recipient of a static performance. However, so dominant is the twenty-first century narrative of baroque music as being “beautiful” that for some audience members they failed to experience the specific “painful” emotions the music had been composed to communicate. I found this intriguing for there was a very strong theatrical enactment and yet somehow these audience members stayed emotionally close to their modern perception of baroque music.

Concluding Remarks

In the twenty-first century, spoken/acted theatre has consistently confronted its audiences with questions of political apathy and complicity in relation to wars, poverty, migration, identity politics and loss – e.g., Theatre of Cruelty or the Theatre of Excess (see Luckhurst & Tait, in press). In *Passion, Lament, Glory* I believed that I was already working provocatively, underscoring the narrative and sub-narratives relating to cultural and religious hatred and cruelty, as well as love and compassion, especially given that musicians and student singers were working in a religious setting. I also worked with the potentials of theatrical representation when the fourth wall of theatre is broken and an immersive audience experience ensues. But, perhaps there are more appropriate or different kinds of immersive audience experience that could have been undertaken to challenge the audience beyond the bounds of the Passion of Christ narrative to underscore those concerns of interfaith and interpersonal cruelty across time?

The small survey response rate may, of course, reflect a skewed sample of participants. I have spoken to many people who saw the performance, and I have received such powerful and positive reactions to my production. Many people sent me emails, even stopped me on public transport, telling me how profoundly they had been affected by the production. Also, they reported how they had surprised themselves at the depth of emotional response they had experienced to the enacted cries of Jesus, or how they felt this mixed emotion of glory and horror as the choir stood beside and around them singing “Behold the Lamb of God.” Perhaps because those people relayed these feelings to me in person — where I could see the visceral impact of the event on them — I have gained a broader access to the audience perception. My hope is that *Passion, Lament, Glory* caused its specific audiences, perhaps long after the performance, to reflect on the inequities that still confront us. Just as music can be used as a tool in the therapeutic relationship, it has great capacity to not only move the affections but provoke thoughts and feelings about social action and change.

I now ask you to watch Kade Greenland’s recording of the performance and consider whether or not you can recognise the emotional aspects of the baroque works in the expressions of maternal love, cultural and religious hatred, anger, violence, despair and hope. In fact, whether ‘passion, lament and glory’ works as a concept?

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Notes

1. All cast, musicians and production teams are listed in the Appendix
2. This survey approved by the ethics committee of the University of Western Australia with whom I was collaborating on modern audience experiences of Passion plays.

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