1989

Die Sieben Worte by Heinrich Schuetz : analysis and performance suggestions

Michael L. Busch
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Busch, Michael L., "Die Sieben Worte by Heinrich Schuetz : analysis and performance suggestions" (1989). *Master's Theses*. 3128.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.ran5-rjac>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/3128

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book. These are also available as one exposure on a standard 35mm slide or as a 17" x 23" black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 1338681

**"Die sieben Worte" by Heinrich Schuetz: Analysis and
performance suggestions**

Busch, Michael Lawrence, M.A.

San Jose State University, 1989

U·M·I

**300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

DIE SIEBEN WORTE BY HEINRICH SCHUETZ:
ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

A Project Report
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Music
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Michael L. Busch
August, 1989

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Charlene Archibeque

Dr. Charlene Archibeque

Mary C. Breden

Dr. Mary Breden

Tikey Zes

Dr. Tikey Zes

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Serena H. Stanford

Abstract

Die sieben Worte by Heinrich Schuetz:
Analysis and Performance Suggestions
by Michael L. Busch

This Project Report addresses all the musical aspects of *Die sieben Worte* by Heinrich Schuetz. To set the work into perspective, a brief examination is made into the unique musical language Schuetz utilizes throughout his major works. Then, a musical and textual analysis is offered specifically for *Die Sieben Worte*, as well as reports on performing practices and critiques of performing editions.

Research on this subject reveals that Schuetz holds a transitional place in music history, ushering in the "Italian period of German music." Information is also obtained from period sources that point to how expressively music was sung in the Baroque. "Wooden" performances were not appropriate. Multiple compositional techniques are used by Schuetz to highlight the emotive nature of the text. Suggestions are made to help the musician realize a truly expressive performance.

Table of Contents

	Page
List of Examples	v
Chapter	
1. Introduction	1
2. The Place of Heinrich Schuetz in Music History	3
3. The Works of Heinrich Schuetz	8
4. Analysis of <i>The Seven Last Words</i>	22
5. Performance of <i>The Seven Last Words</i>	37
Vocal Performance and Musicianship	37
Vocal Expression	41
Ornamentation	43
Tempo	44
Pitch	47
Basso Continuo	50
Performing Editions	54
6. Conclusions	60
Bibliography	63

Examples

Example	Page
1. Examples of Word Painting in Schuetz's Madrigals	10
2. Tenor Recitative from <i>Resurrection History</i> . .	13
3. Melodic Form in "O susser," from <i>Geistliche Konzert</i> as it Relates to Climax	17
4. Five-part Form of <i>Die sieben Worte</i>	25
5. Tonal Structure of the Symphonias	25
6. Possible Chorale Melody for the Introit	26
7. Possible Chorale Melody for the Conclusio . . .	27
8. Introit, meas. 17-24	29
9. Opening of Conclusion, meas. 1-18	30
10. Central Section: Seventh Word of Christ	32
11. Central Section: First Word of Christ	33
12. Central Section: Sixth Word of Christ	34
13. Comparison of Soprano and Tenor Recitatives	35
14. Modification of Recitatives to Accommodate Word Stress and Agogic Accent	47
15. Notation of Figured Bass in Bach's <i>St. Matthew Passion</i>	52

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross by Heinrich Schuetz is a work that is very appropriate for Christian worship during the Lenten season and especially for Good Friday. At first glance it may appear rather simple since the choir sings two short motets and the soloists bear the major portion of the work. No doubt its simplicity has contributed to its popularity today.

When the scholar begins to look deeper into the work, he finds that Schuetz has set these dying words of Jesus on the Cross in a manner that is most expressive. Schuetz allows the listener to effectively meditate on the words of Christ, not the words of a dying man, but the words of one who has come to bear the sins of the world and lead them to salvation. This is done without undue ostentation, but as if these words were being revealed to us by the apostles themselves.

The musician who wishes to perform this work would do well to learn more about the uniqueness of Schuetz's expression in his music. Such knowledge would undoubtedly lead to a better performance of this work. Since no specific information has been written in the English

language about *Die Sieben Worte*, a wide-ranging compilation of information has been included from several general sources. Topics to be discussed in this paper include Schuetz's place in music history, the unique expression of Schuetz's musical language as contained in his major works, performing practices of the period, an analysis of *The Seven Last Words*, and detailed performing suggestions specifically about the work. In those areas where no information is available, especially about its structure and performance, the author offers his own ideas based on church and recital performances.

Acknowledgements are due to Dr. Charlene Archibeque for her guidance and support as well as imparting to me her infectious zeal for knowledge and her love of performance. Thanks are also offered to Dr. Mary Breden and Dr. Zes for serving as readers. A special thank you must also be extended to my wife, Michele, whose constant patience and support allow me to strive toward my unending goals (and, to her, seemingly unending studies!)

Chapter 2

The Place of Heinrich Schuetz in Music History

The musical world into which Heinrich Schuetz (1585-1672) was born faced a time of transition. It was no longer the Renaissance world where one musical style predominated. Early Baroque styles of composition, termed by Monteverdi as the *secunda prattica*, were changing the ways in which music was being composed. Italy, with composers such as Gabrieli and Monteverdi, dominated the musical scene. A restructuring of tonality and counterpoint away from modal practices and toward the major-minor system was occurring. Text setting was less restrained and composers sought to display each word with its proper "affect." Recitative and extremes of rhythm replaced the even-flowing *tactus*. New harmonic progressions included experimentation with dissonances not allowed in the antiquated style of the past.

The beginning of Schuetz's life coincided with the ending of a generation of great Renaissance composers. The two great masters, Lassus and Palestrina, died in Munich and Rome, followed by the modern madrigalist Luca Marenzio in 1599. Schuetz witnessed the death of his beloved teacher, Giovanni Gabrieli, in 1612. In just a few years we add to this list the masters Hans Leo Hassler, Johann Eccard,

Melchior Vulpius, Seth Calvisius, and J. P. Sweelinck.¹

The list of Schuetz's contemporaries is also quite astounding. Hassler and Gregor Aichinger were both born in 1564 followed three years later by the acclaimed Claudio Monteverdi and Christian Demantius. Michael Praetorius was born in 1571 and, two years later, Christian Erbach and Melchior Franck. Frescobaldi was two years older than Schuetz, being born in 1583. J. H. Schein and Samuel Scheidt were born in the first and the second year of Schuetz's life.²

Even though this list is limited to only a few of the important composers of the day, it does give an impressive view of the musical situation as the German world saw it. Artistically, "one must go so far as to say that Schuetz was born into one of the most brilliant periods of Occidental music." Both he and Monteverdi "added to the glow of sunset to this bright day." It is almost a "tragedy" that Schuetz was to live "almost too long." After him, the musical world faded into mediocrity until the next great lights of Bach and Handel would shine. Like Bach, Schuetz in later life became an outsider to his contemporaries, left only to observe and speculate what his musical leadership would

1. Hans Joachim Moser, *Heinrich Schuetz: His Life and Work*, trans. Carl Pfatteicher (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), pp. 237-238.

2. Moser, p. 238.

bring in the future.³

During Schuetz's life, the expression of music was changing. Music became more individualized. While the old Netherlanders had constructed their pieces in basically "mathematical" terms, the new composers sought to humanize the expression of the words. The word became the central, significant mode of construction. Pictorial representation of individual words became the new musical aesthetic. The principal form used to express this new affectual music through early Baroque was the secular madrigal. From this movement comes the word "madrigalism" to denote the symbolism of the word. Moser states:

The word 'madrigalism' (*Madrigalismus*) is used to describe music's attempt, for about 150 years, even down through the Bach cantatas, to humanize, animate, and permanently relate the 'I' of the composer to the 'thou' of the listener by means extending all the way from pictures of movement to the symbolism of numbers.⁴

While German composers were stuck in the older Netherlandish and Palestrinian styles, the Italians were denouncing all types of counterpoint in favor of monodic expression. The Germans had great difficulty emulating this new style, called *stylus luxurians*. To learn the new styles, many German composers commonly traveled to Italy, known as the center of new ideas.

3. Moser, p. 239.

4. Moser, p. 248.

The newer Venetian styles were the result of new methods of composition. Polarity of the outer voices and a demise of the inner voices, resulted from composition with the *basso continuo*. Music was heard in a new way. Wolfgang Caspar Printz, in his *Phrynus Mytilenaeus*, explains,

When one composes a piece, one sets either the discant or the bass first. But it is more convenient to compose the discant first, next the bass, and then the tenor and the alto. The old composers set the tenor first, next the bass, then the discant, and finally the alto....⁵

Even though many German composers studied in Italy, they had a difficult time accepting the new style. The Germans had become accustomed to the *stylus antiquus* and were reluctant to accept new species and forms in the styles of Gabrieli, Monteverdi, and Marenzio. Besides the textual difficulties, the new species required well-trained solo performances and virtuoso playing with very large ensembles. Only a few courts and large churches in Germany could realize such performances.⁶

It took the genius of Schuetz to usher in "the Italian period of German music." While others had been disillusioned about their studies with the Italians, Schuetz believed in the superiority of Italian music. Schuetz recognized that the Germans were not travelling a forward

5. Moser, p. 248.

6. Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1974), p. 195.

path, but were "choked up" in their own chimney. Yet he did not emulate the Italian style completely, but rather assimilated it into his own Germanic language. The results of this assimilation would change German music forever.⁷

7. Moser, pp. 149-150.

Chapter 3

The Works of Heinrich Schuetz

Before delving into *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Schuetz, let us get an overview of the master's major works. Such a study is important to a full understanding of how the single work fits into the entire body of his output. An understanding of the language the composer utilizes throughout his life will help the performer gain a proper perspective of his own role in a specific work.

With his very first opus, Heinrich Schuetz set himself apart as a great composer. *The First Book of Madrigals* (1611) was a sort of graduate work assigned to him by his teacher, Giovanni Gabrieli. In this work, he was obviously influenced by other madrigalists such as Gesualdo, Marenzio, and Monteverdi who utilized modernistic devices of dissonance and expression. His own madrigals compared very favorably with these masters and were very well received. Schuetz writes that "his first effort won high praise from 'the most prominent musicians of Venice of the time.'"⁸

These Italian madrigals are important in understanding the fundamental elements of Heinrich Schuetz's style. He

8. New Grove, p. 3.

delighted in carrying the pictorial representations of the texts to their extreme. Bukofzer writes of Schuetz's early compositions in *Music in the Baroque Era*,

The consistent use of contrast motives, the adventurous dissonance treatment, the realistic and intellectual representation of words, which could successfully rival the mature madrigals of Gesualdo and Monteverdi, appeared here for the first time.⁹

Schuetz enjoyed portraying the word and exploiting various madrigalisms. In the hands of a lesser composer, word painting could become quite superficial and elementary. It takes a great mind to create these portrayals in unending variety and subtle artistry. Moser, in his book, sets forth a "dictionary of Schuetz's tone language."¹⁰ These are examples of how Schuetz creates rhythmic and melodic pictures of the words. Those taken from the madrigals are listed here:

The image displays seven numbered musical examples (Nr. 1 to Nr. 7) from Schuetz's madrigals. Each example consists of a staff of music with a treble or bass clef, showing a specific rhythmic or melodic motif. Below the staff is the corresponding text in French, with the motif's placement indicated by a box or a specific note.

- Nr. 1:** Treble clef. Text: "flo". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Nr. 2:** Treble clef. Text: "ri d'a-mo". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Nr. 3:** Treble clef. Text: "re so-epi-ran-do in fle-bi-li su-". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Nr. 4:** Treble clef. Text: "sur-ri glo-ri". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Nr. 5:** Bass clef. Text: "te ah con ben foi". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Nr. 6:** Treble clef. Text: "le e cie-co". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Nr. 7:** Treble clef. Text: "d'un es-tre = ma, d'un es-tre = ma cor di oasso Ri de". The motif is a quarter note followed by a half note.

9. Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era: from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 89.

10. Moser, p. 256.

Example 1. Examples of Word Painting in Schuetz's Madrigals:¹¹

As art, these madrigals must be included with the best of the genre. These madrigals are enthusiastically recommended by Einstein:

There is scarcely a bolder, less scholastic, more characteristic work by Schuetz. Moderation in expression is forbidden; the excessive, the overexuberant, has been elevated to a principle. Explosive feeling employs the strongest, freest means in declamation, in contrast of motives, in harmony. An immediate precursor can scarcely be found, even though there are not a few adumbrations in Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Gesualdo di Venosa, Monteverdi, and Marenzio. These pieces by Schuetz are better constructed, less playful, more closely interwoven, deeper than anything Italian.¹²

Another of Schuetz's compositions that can be traced directly back to Schuetz's sojourn to Italy and study with his mentor, Gabrieli, are his settings of *The Psalms of*

11. Moser, p. 256.

12. as quoted by Moser, p. 270.

David (1619). In them he proudly imitated the Venetian polychoral style with various combinations of instruments. These are famous for the German introduction of the *stile recitativo*, a new choral psalmodizing style of many words upon long notes. About this style Schuetz himself writes:

I have arranged these present *Psalms* of mine in *stylo recitativo* (to the present day almost unknown in Germany), which, in my opinion, is the most appropriate form for the composition of psalms. Because of the large number of works, one must engage, according to this method, in extensive recitation instead of in repetitions. I would, therefore, kindly request those who have no knowledge of this method that in presenting my *Psalms* they should not indulge in undue haste but should maintain a discreet mean, so that the words may be recited by the singers in a manner intelligible to the listeners. If this procedure is not observed, a very unpleasant discordance will result, and there will appear nothing other than a *Battaglia di Mosche* or 'battle of insects,' contrary to the intention of the author.¹³

We may understand from this how important the sung word was to Schuetz. The characteristics of the German language such as word accent and affect were carefully realized by Schuetz. Through the affectual setting of the text, Schuetz was able to reshape German music by fusing it with the new Italian spirit.¹⁴ This transformation, begun first with the madrigals, was continued in the *Psalms*.

Heinrich Schuetz was also a master of combining two

13. Moser, p. 293.

14. Leo Schrade, "Heinrich Schuetz and Johann Sebastian Bach in the Protestant Liturgy," *The Musical Heritage of the Lutheran Church*, 7, (1970), 176.

seemingly irreconcilable forms. In his *Resurrection History* (1623), he set a new type of Easter *historia*, uniting two dissimilar forms into one -- the polyphonic setting and the monodic oratorio. Especially interesting is his peculiarly altered, modern use of plainsong recitation tone. To the traditional historical plainsong, Schuetz adds accompaniment and word painting. Especially noteworthy in this piece is the passage showing the descent of the angel and the rolling away of the stone:¹⁵

Evangelist

Ten. Am A-bend a-ber der Sab-ba-then, wel-cher an-brichet am Mor-gen

Viola da Gamba

B.c.

da er-ster Is-gos der Sab-ba-then sehr früh, da es noch fin-ster war,

kam-men sie zum Gra-be, da die Son-ne auf-ging, und tra-gen die Spe-ze-ri-en, die sie be-

-
15. Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: volume 20, The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England* (Chapel Hill: University Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 14-15.

rei - tet hat - ten. Und eis - he, es ge - schah ein gross Erd - be - ben,
den der En - gel des Her - ren stieg vom Him - mel her - ab, trat hin - zu und
wäl - zete den Stein von der Gra - bes Tür,
und set - ze sich drauf, und sein Ge - stalt war wie der Blitz und sein Klad weiss als der Schnee.

But in the night of the Sabbath, very early in the morning of the first day of the week, as it was still dark, they came to the tomb as the sun rose, and they brought the spices which they had prepared. And, behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it, and his countenance was like lightening and his raiment white as snow.

Example 2. Tenor recitative from *Resurrection History*⁶

The *Cantiones Sacrae* (1625) is referred to by several

16. Smither, pp. 14-15.

authors as the sacred counterpart of Schuetz's earlier madrigals. In this highly expressive set of pieces he employs many of the newer stylistic elements and monodic declamation he had already used in his madrigals. However, in this set these devices appear more frequently and with deeper significance. The texts Schuetz chose for the motets are quite personal and invite a subjective interpretation. They include texts from the Psalms, Song of Songs, passages from the Gospels, and prayers. All these are derived principally from one source -- the *Precationes* of the Lutheran theologian Andreas Musculus.¹⁷ They are quite personal and reflect the subjective literature of the Lutheran pietistic movement.

Opposite to the elaborate motets of *Cantiones Sacrae* is the *Becker Psalter* (1628), composed next by Heinrich Schuetz. It contained ninety simple partsong settings of psalm paraphrases by the Leipzig theologian, Cornelius Becker. The purpose of such compositions in the early Lutheran Church was to make the Word of God easier to remember by combining it with song. Luther had written seven such paraphrases, the most famous of these is derived from the 46th Psalm -- *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* ("A Mighty Fortress is Our God").

Significant in this work is Schuetz's composition of

17. New Grove, p. 21.

new melodies for the psalm paraphrases. He disagreed with the practice of forcing tunes onto hymn texts which did not necessarily fit. While leaving the superior tunes of Martin Luther intact, he supplied new melodies for the other psalms. Because of this work, Schuetz is considered to be one of the last productive chorale melodists. He was able to provide varied, new chorale melodies due to his use of modes. The modes serve in melodic construction very well, while opening greater opportunities for variation of metric structure. Significantly, Schuetz was able to introduce metric variety even though Dr. Becker used little variety in his versifications. The *Becker Psalter* remained Heinrich Schuetz's best known composition immediately after his death.¹⁸

The lack of orchestration of Schuetz's *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* (1636, 1639) reflects the ravages of the Thirty Years' War on the musical resources of the Dresden Chapel. Unlike the rich instrumentation present in the *Psalms*, only a few voices with continuo are required. With this work we begin to see a change in Schuetz's experimental style to a more reserved one.¹⁹

The *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* was particularly influenced by Schuetz's second trip to Italy and his work

18. Moser, p. 459.

19. Bukofzer, p. 93.

with Monteverdi. In this collection, he gives his version of monody; he calls it *stylo oratorio*. It is more flexible and makes greater use of bass imitations than the parallel Italian examples.²⁰ In this style, Schuetz combines the Italian arioso and recitative singing with his counterpoint and achieves a sort of "affected" monody.²¹

While the musical language still reflects the expressions of the words, these seem to be tempered with a larger idea of the form. The expression is not as sporadic as in his earlier works, but more formally planned. Note how the following piece carefully climaxes in the middle with the cry, *O wie verlanget*.²²

Beginning of a concerto (SWV 285)

Tenor

O su - ßer, o freund-li-cher, o gu - ti-ger Herr Je - sus Chri - ste, wie hoch

Thoroughbass

etc.

hast du uns e - len - de Men-schen ge - lie - bet, wie teur hast du uns er - lö - set.

20. Bukofzer, p. 93.

21. Blume, p. 198.

22. Blume, pp. 210-211.

Example 3. Melodic form in "O susser," from *Geistliche Konzert* as it relates to climax^{2 3}

The change of style becomes even more evident in the last parts of his *Symphoniae Sacrae I, II and III* (1629, 1647, and 1650). The motifs and forms are broadened and the abrupt gestures become more spread out and lyric. The musical development is calmer and less agitated, but no less emotional. Structurally the texts are fragmented and lend themselves to individual development.^{2 4}

Blume states that Schuetz's method of interpreting the Bible has undergone a transformation.

The incomparable emotional experiences that infuse the earlier monodies, and often the *Cantiones* as well, give way to a more reserved approach. The Word of God, once clothed in completely personal feelings, is again perceived as divine revelation or authoritative doctrine, and its presentation eschews emotion and ecstasy in favor of an interpretation with more general validity. There is no reason to speak of a "theological turnabout" on Schuetz's part, nor is there any need to revert to the impersonal explanation that even a Schuetz

23. Blume, p. 211.

24. Blume, pp. 211-212.

composed differently in old age than during his youth. Nor is it a matter of 'overcoming' his earlier style. Nothing was forfeited. Rather, Holy Scripture was released from the overly subjective, affect-laden interpretations into which it had fallen, and was gradually raised to the sphere of revelation. The change resulted in greater strength and moderation, in a stricter perception of God's Word, in more musical formal designs, rather than in a rejection of earlier achievements.²⁵

The next work, Schuetz's *Geistliche Chor-Musik* (1648), is "the most important German motet collection of the 17th century."²⁶ It is the culmination of all motet composition of the period. Use of counterpoint in the Protestant motet had declined, and into the genre Schuetz breathed new life. All the different types of counterpoint are present in this work.²⁷

In the largest preface of any of his works, Schuetz admonishes the younger generation of German composers to return from composition solely with the *bassus continuus*, back to the strong foundations of good counterpoint. He lists the types of contrapuntal requirements which make up a "well-regulated" composition. His goal was to inspire the German composers,

before they proceed to the composition of concertizing music to crack this hard nut (wherein the true kernel and the right foundation of good counterpoint is to be sought) and to pass their first tests in this category.²⁸

25. Blume, p. 212.

26. New Grove, p. 22.

27. Bukofzer, p. 94.

The conservative *Geistliche Chor-Musik* contains none of the artistic experimentation of his youth. Schuetz's work reflects the simple, "plain-spoken Lutheranism." The motets radiate the "warmth" of "unobtrusive polyphony" in a truly German approach. Moser quotes the writing of Leichtentritt about the *Geistliche Chor-Musik*:

These motets are German, not because they are written on German texts but rather on account of the expression of the sentiment which they contain, an expression quite different from the manner in which Italian masters presented the same texts. No rapturous mysticism but greatness, simplicity, and a warm honesty of feeling speak here with compelling power.²⁹

There is much more reverence and calmness in Schuetz's later works. The Word is here treated more as revelation than something with which to be experimented. The expression is of a man who is comfortable with his music and who has nothing to prove. A classicism has emerged without artificiality. Devoutness and reverence are the principal expressions of his Lutheran faith.³⁰

The last of Schuetz's complete works are also his most artistic. The Passions according to St. Luke, St. John, and finally St. Matthew all represent the culmination of his *historia* work.³¹ They are set for solo voices and short

28. Moser, pp. 581-582.

29. Moser, p. 583.

30. Moser, p. 601.

31. Moser, p. 601.

choruses without any type of supporting instruments. Surprisingly, not even the popular *basso continuo* is present. Each character of the drama and the Evangelist are given separate solos in the style of the old reciting tones. Both the old and the new recitative styles are perfectly united, yielding a purely liturgical work completely subservient to the Word of God. The music is set so that all attention is directed to the text.³²

Upon first examination, it seems that these Passions are set entirely in the old simple Passion style of recitation plainsong. The unaccompanied narrative is delivered so that it is completely understandable, being intoned in the most traditional manner, without any "artistic attraction." The true test of Schuetz's craftsmanship lies in an artistic achievement with extreme limitations he set for himself.³³

Schuetz took the old style of Passion expression and applied a new art taking the old genre a "discreet and a conscious step forward." The unmeasured reciting tones, which make up most of the Passions, do not quite emulate the dramatic recitative of the time. Rather, the solos are a

32. Philipp Spitta, "The Passion Music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Heinrich Schuetz," *Choral Journal* 16, no. 3 (1975): 13.

33. Philipp Spitta, "The Passion Music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Heinrich Schuetz," trans. Kenneth E. Miller, *Choral Journal* 16:3 (1975) 11.

new creation which combined the old and the new.³⁴ Bukofzer refers to this creation as "neo-Gregorian."³⁵ Since Schuetz rejected the *basso continuo* and new recitative practices, the Passions were even an out-of-date rarity for his time. As Blume states, they were "the almost unapproachable, solitary, and grandiose art of a man who had outlived his time; they had no imitators."³⁶

34. Spitta, p. 11.

35. Bukofzer, p. 95.

36. Blume, p. 218.

Chapter 4

Analysis of *The Seven Last Words*

Perhaps the best known of Heinrich Schuetz's works today is his oratorio *The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross*. Moser quotes the year 1645 as the date of composition. This places it almost exactly in between the *Resurrection History* of 1623 and the three Passions of c.1664. This also places it alongside his *Geistliche Chormusik* of 1648. The manuscript was discovered by Otto Kade in 1855 and was arranged the next year by Fr. Chrysander.³⁷

The entire title given the work is *Die Sieben Worte unsers lieben Erloesers und Seligmachers JESU CHRISTI so ER am Stamm des Heiligen gesprochen gantz beweglich gesetzt von Herrn Heinrich Schuetzen Chur Saechsichen Capellmeistern*. Pfatteicher translates this as "The Seven Words of Our Dear Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ Which He Spake on the Holy Cross, Very Movingly Set by Heinrich Schuetz, Electoral Saxon Capellmeister."³⁸

Schuetz prefaced the work with the following lines:

37. Moser, p. 493.

38. Moser, p. 492.

*Lebstu der Welt, so bist du todt,
Und kraenkst Christum mit schmertzen,
Stirbst aber in seinem Wunden roth,
So lebt er in deim Herzen.*

Liv'st thou to the world, then art thou dead,
And causest Christ so many a smart;
But di'st thou in His wounds so red,
He liveth ever in thy heart.³⁹

The actual seven last words of Christ are compiled from each of the four Gospels. They were "regarded by the Middle Ages as a sevenfold mystical unity."⁴⁰ The "seven words" are actually "seven sentences" spoken by Christ as he hung on the Cross. They represent not the pitiful words of a dying man but the strong, loving words of the only-begotten Son of God serving as the sacrifice for all the sins of the world. Listed here are each of these "words" and the part of Scripture from which they are derived:

- I. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.
(Luke 22:34)
- II. Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.
(Luke 23:43)
- III. Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy mother!
(John 19:26,27)
- IV. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?
(Matt. 27:46)
- V. I thirst. (John 19:28)
- VI. It is finished. (John 19:30)
- VII. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.
(Luke 23:46)

Other composers known to have set these words are Ludwig Senfl, Johann Obrecht, and Joseph Haydn. Heinrich

39. Moser, p. 492.

40. Moser, p. 493.

Example 4. Five-part Form of *Die sieben Worte*

The symphonias themselves echo the symmetrical structure of the entire work. A study into the tonal areas reveals the following key structure:

mm 1-5:	Em (ending with a half cadence on B)
mm 6-10:	G
mm 10-12:	D
mm 12-15:	Am
mm 15-16:	pivoting through Em?
mm 16-19:	Am (cadencing on A major)
mm 19-21:	D
mm 21-23:	G
mm 23-30:	Em (ending with a half cadence on B)

Example 5. Tonal Structure of the Symphonias

Note in particular how each of these tonal areas include practically the same number of measures that its counterpart does. Both occurrences of the Am and D areas include three measures. Only the Em and the G areas are dissimilar. Schuetz may have felt the need to further establish the Em area by extending the number of measures at the end to seven measures.

The two motets providing the frame of the work serve to comment on the drama contained in the center. Originally it was assumed by Kretzschmar, in his *Fuehrer durch den Konzertsaal*, that Schuetz used the traditional church melody as the basis for these motets. Moser has refuted this and refers to them as "motetlike developments of an original model."⁴⁴ He, in turn, speculates that Schuetz instead used a local melody that had not passed into official church use. Moser constructs two plausible melodies from the motets. The melody from the *introitus* would be:

Example 6. Possible Chorale Melody for the Introit⁴⁵

The *conclusio* has a different melody, but still is somewhat similar to the first:

44. Moser, p. 494.

45. Moser, p. 494.

Example 7. Possible Chorale Melody for the Conclusio⁴⁶

What Moser does not offer as another possible solution is that Schuetz may have constructed the melody himself. Earlier in his excellent book, he praises Schuetz as one of the great melodists because of his renowned *Becker Psalter*. In this psalter, Schuetz created ninety new melodies to accompany the psalm paraphrases of Cornelius Becker. Considering that Schuetz was such a prolific tune writer, it is certainly also plausible that Schuetz could have penned these two melodies himself for the hymn *Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund*.

Schuetz is also quite reknowned for his *musica poetica*. He was a true master of setting the emotive value of the musical word. While in his youth he expressed himself in radical means rivaling the expression of Monteverdi and Gesualdo, Schuetz later in life became more conservative in

46. Moser, p. 494.

his expression, but no less emotive. The two motets are examples of his desire to enliven the word with his music.

Especially notable in the first is his portrayal of *so gar mit bitterm Schmerzen* (so entirely with bitter anguish). The passages are filled with a struggling between voices. Schuetz has the voices enter at different times, each stretching the word *gar* over the bar lines. Here he effectively expresses how Jesus was "entirely" suffering in anguish. A performer wishing to express this idea could well do this with a crescendo beginning on *gar* leading to the word accent on the first syllable of *Schmerzen* (anguish).

The musical score consists of five staves. The first four staves are vocal parts, and the fifth is a keyboard accompaniment. The lyrics are as follows:

Staff 1: und ihm sein Leich-nam war ver-wund't

Staff 2: und ihm sein Leich-nam war ver-wund't so gar

Staff 3: ver-wund't, und ihm sein Leich-nam war ver-wund't so gar, so gar

Staff 4: ver-wund't, und ihm sein Leich-nam war ver-wund't so gar mit bit-

Staff 5: ver-wund't so gar mit bit-term

The keyboard accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and includes figured bass notation at the bottom of the staff.

Example 8. Introit, meas. 17-2467

47. Musical examples of *Die sieben Worte* taken from *Neue Ausgabe saemtlicher Werke* of Baerenreiter.

Example 9. Opening of Conclusion, meas. 11-16

The longest section of this motet is fittingly set around the words *wohl hie auf Erd mit seiner Genad, und dort in dem ewigen Leben* (well here on Earth, and there in the eternal life). As Schuetz approaches the end of the motet, he centers on the idea of "eternal" life by increasing the occurrence of *ewigen*. He both thickens the polyphonic texture and slows the harmonic progressions. He thereby paints for us the picture of not a short life, but one that will last forever.

The textual construction of the entire work relates very closely to the *historia* tradition. Its text is mostly

biblical and is very much like the final sections of the *Passion historia* which include the seven words of Christ taken from each of the Gospels. The difference between Schuetz's *Die Sieben Worte* and a *Passion historia* lies in the greater length of the Evangelist's part in Schuetz's work.⁴⁸

The part of the Evangelist is divided between three soloists (S, A, and T) and a quartet (SATB). The assignment of the Evangelist to different voices sheds a different perspective on each of the sections of the scriptural account. For example, Schuetz's use of a quartet around the dramatic cry *Eli, Eli* and just after the death of Jesus reverts to the ancient practice of the motet passions.⁴⁹ The characters of the work are also assigned to soloists: Jesus (T), the Robber on the Right (B), and the Robber on the Left (originally A, given to T in Spitta's collected works).

Musically, the style of Schuetz's *Die sieben Worte* is less like the *historia* tradition and more like the budding Italian oratorio. The solo style is based on the newer, more modern dramatic recitative style, which was developing in Italy, rather than on the older plainsong recitation tone of the *historiae*.⁵⁰

48. Smither, p. 18.

49. Stein, p. vi.

50. Smither, p. 18.

Schuetz also musically contrasted the language of the Evangelist to that of Jesus. The Evangelist's words are set in a more declamatory, simple recitative style. The words of Jesus are set in a more elaborate arioso fashion with text repetition and musical-rhetorical figures.⁵¹

Example 10. Central Section: Seventh Word of Christ

51. Smither, pp. 18-19.

Especially noteworthy is the "halo" effect that Schuetz used to accompany the words of Jesus. Besides the *basso continuo*, which Schuetz uses to bind the entire work together, there are parts for two unspecified treble instruments. These are only present in the central section during the words of Jesus. This effect was later used by J. S. Bach in his *St. Matthew Passion*. These two parts serve to enliven the musical interest by imitating some of the vocal motives and to increase the dramatic interest.

The solos of Jesus include some of the most dramatic and tonally interesting material of the work. Schuetz has insured that these solos stand out with a particular poignancy. Notice how effectively Jesus offers up his prayer, *denn sie wissen nicht*, with the rising thirds and the chain of secondary dominants enlivening it.

Example 11. Central Section: First Word of Christ

Also effective is the finality expressed in his sixth word *Es ist vollbracht* (*It is finished*). It is first spoken quickly and then in short utterances cutting off before the instruments. This passage also contains the extremely "final" cadence IV-V-I.

Example 12. Central Section: Sixth Word of Christ

The recitatives of the Evangelist are not devoid of expression either. Schuetz is a master of utilizing modest means to produce impressive results. Through these recitatives he achieves a very simple, yet expressive narrative. Their expression varies with the different types of text portrayed. Contrast the simple Soprano *Und sprach zu Jesu* (*and spoke to Jesus*) with the excited Tenor *Und abermal rief Jesus laut und sprach* (*And again cried Jesus aloud and spake*):

Example 13. Comparison of Soprano and Tenor Recitatives

The climax of the entire work is located in the exact center of the work on Jesus's words *Eli, Eli lama sabachthani*. He first brings attention to this by introducing it with a quartet, signifying the old practice. Schuetz brings further importance to this section by repeating it in the vernacular *Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen* (*My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*). These words hold special importance to the whole drama for this is the point in which Jesus is for the first time totally separated from his Father and is left utterly alone.

Tonally this section is the most turbulent. It travels through more key areas and contains more secondary dominant relations than any of the other words which He speaks. It

is also the only time in which Schuetz begins a solo with a chord other than Em or E major. These devices effectively set this solo apart from all the rest.

A solemn quartet ends the narrative section. This too is harmonically rich and truly reflective of the text. Note the descending motive as Jesus bows down his head (*neiget er das Haupt*) and the rising motive as He gives up his spirit (*und gab seinen Geist auf*). Harmonically the latter is enriched by a rising through the circle of fifths: (IV-V-I) in G; (V-I) in D; (V-I) in A; (IV-V₆-ii⁶₅-V₄-3-I) in E.

The central, binding facet of this work is the message of Jesus. Schuetz has highlighted and brought attention to this by several means -- harmonically, melodically, and structurally. The structure of the work points into the center. Schuetz builds up the work to the climax at *Eli, Eli* and then lets it die down again. The pillars of the work, the motets and symphonias, serve only to lead the hearer to meditation on Jesus's words. The words of the Evangelist and the action of the story are here less important than the actual words of Jesus. This is not a drama in the staged sense. Yet, it is not just to be another reading from the lectern. Schuetz, using a more restrained expression, instead treats the text more as a revelation from God -- rich in meaning and full of mysteries to be unlocked.

Chapter 5

Performance of *The Seven Last Words*

Vocal Performance and Musicianship

Perhaps the most important task a performer faces is the realization of the composer's ideas of his work. Every composer of choral music has a specific idea of what mood and message he wishes to express. Expression of the composer's ideas is what every musician must strive to communicate. To begin a discussion of how Schuetz may have wished his *Die sieben Worte* to be performed would best start with research of vocal practices of his time.

Vocal performance in the early Baroque was in an exciting state of change. Besides the choral forms, new styles in solo literature were being cultivated, especially in Italy. Italy was developing a new type of accompanied solo singing that was unlike the plainsong styles of previous eras. That Schuetz was intrigued with this new form of expression can be easily demonstrated through such compositions as his spectacular multi-volumed *Symphoniae sacrae I, II, & III*. In fact, Schuetz was largely responsible for introducing these new forms to Germany, which was having difficulties in assimilating the new Italian styles.

Developing with these new forms of expression was a style of singing called *bel canto*. *Bel canto*, literally meaning "fine singing,"⁵² stressed the flexibility of the voice rather than the power of the voice. Much of our vocal training today dwells more on developing power to fill big concert halls. Because we have to fill larger halls while singing over bigger orchestras, this power is essential. But the music of Schuetz, especially his *Seven Last Words*, is more intimate and designed to be sung in the church.

The voice of Schuetz's time was trained to be equal throughout all registers. A common feature of *bel canto* training resulted in the unification of all the registers from the "head" voice down to the "chest" voice. Each of these registers was developed fully until all had equal strength. A letter written by Alfonso Fontanelli in 1594 illustrates this well:

Don Antonio, who is the leading bass of Naples [and] who was formerly in the service of Your Highness, has truly a fine voice (*bella voce*) and supports (*fonda*) [it] most sweetly; nor is his voice in the low [register] at all inferior to the high and to the middle, but all are very equal, which is a fine quality (*bella parte*).⁵³

The *bel canto* voice was also a very agile voice. Singers were capable of expressing wide ranges of emotion.

52. Donington, p. 55.

53. Robert Donington, *A Performer's Guide to Baroque Music*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), pp. 54-55.

through skillful alterations of their voice. Eritreo writes in 1645:

Moving his voice gradually from the lowest to the highest sound, and the same from the highest to the lowest, passing it through various turnings with incredible fluency, [Loreto Vittori] showed that he could twist and bend it, like the softest wax, wherever he wished . . . [p. 218] swift and splendid, and capable of being made most apt to any alteration . . . high, low, swift, slow, great, slight . . . for each passion of the soul its own kind of voice."⁵⁴

The *bel canto* voice was not devoid of vibrato, though. Vibrato is a natural part of a healthy voice. "White sounds" (perfectly straight, lifeless tone) which we often hear today with so-called "correct" performances was not the norm. Such sounds are contrary to healthy voice production. This does not mean, however, that the large Romantic vibrato in normal use today by singers and string players should be used. Furthermore, an uncontrolled vibrato is a terrible fault and not conducive to the perfectly articulated Baroque line. This tremolo is talked about by Schuetz's pupil, Christoph Bernhard, in his treatise *On the Art of Singing*:

...the tremulo is a defect (except on the organ where all the voices can tremulate simultaneously, and where it sounds well because of the alternation). Elderly singers feature the tremulo, but not as an artifice. Rather it creeps in by itself, as they are no longer able to hold their voices steady."⁵⁵

54. Donington, p. 56.

55. Anthony Newman, *Bach and the Baroque*, (New York: Pendragon Press, 1985), p. 185.

Newman here quotes Bernhard to prove his point that the Baroque singer used no vibrato whatsoever. While his quotation is correct, his interpretation of it is faulty. Newman's false assumption is caused from a lack of differentiation between the tremolo and the vibrato. The elderly singer spoken of here has an uncontrollable wobble, or tremolo.

That the vibrato was in normal use can be seen from Geminiani, in his *Art of Playing on the Violin*. He writes that "you must press the finger strongly upon the String of the Instrument, and move the Wrist in and out slowly and equally." He wanted the vibrato to be "made use of as often as possible."⁵⁶

George Newton, in an article written for the *NATS Bulletin*, speaks on the type of voice that should sing the music of Schuetz. He counsels the modern singer:

The appropriate vocal sound for this music requires some study. In the first place, early Baroque music held 'to that way so much praised by Plato and other philosophers, which insists that music should be first speech and rhythm and lastly melody, and not the other way around.' It means a more sharply focused tone, which will inevitably result in a smaller sound -- a sound with less vibrato but more clarity and brilliance. Only in this way can the text be given the prominence that is so peculiarly a part of this early Baroque style. This singing style makes it easier to attain the expressive agility that is essential here.⁵⁷

56. Robert Donington, *String Playing in the Baroque*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), p. 67.

Vocal Expression

The Baroque expression was one of deepfelt emotion. It was not like the many wooden performances like we hear too often today. We must bear in mind that this was the "modern" music of its time and should be performed as such. The same performance possibilities that exist today utilizing a wide range of dynamics, tempo, and nuance were developed in the seventeenth century. Note the romantic descriptions of singing in the two following examples from 1611 and 1628, respectively:

The sweet sighs, the discreet accents, the restrained embellishment, the felicitous carrying (portate), the daring descents, the high ascents, the interrupted passages, the driving on, the dying away of a note

To diminish and increase the voice loudly or softly, thinning or swelling, according as it comes opportunely, now with dragging, now dividing, with the accompaniment of a soft interrupted sigh, now drawing long passages, followed well, detached, now gruppi [trills], now by leaps, or with long trilli [single-note trills], now with short, and now with sweet passages and things softly sung . . . and with pronouncing the words distinctly in such a manner that one might hear even the last syllable of every word, which was not interrupted or suppressed by passages or other ornaments.
p. 121: And above all making the words well understood, applying to each syllable a note now soft, now loud, now slow, now fast, showing in the face and in gestures a sign of the idea of which one is singing, but with moderation and not excesses.⁵⁸

57. George Newton, "Heinrich Schuetz," *National Association of Teachers of Singing. Bulletin* 23 (1970), p. 6.

58. Denington, *A Performer's Guide*, p. 55.

To deny emotion in a work from this period, especially in such an expressive composer as Schuetz, would be to deny the purpose of the music. The conductor, therefore, must take care in choosing singers with clear voices that will convey the inner essence of the music. This same conductor should not be wary of introducing such expression to choral singing. The Baroque choral singer, being trained in school, no doubt was being trained in all the same techniques as the solo singer.

The soloists in *Die sieben Worte*, must use every tasteful means to convey the story. A large, operatic voice would not be appropriate to this work, which fits best into a Good Friday or other Lenten service. Key words must be properly accented and moods must be established. For instance, the Soprano, "and Jesus said," would sing her part differently from the Tenor, "And one among the soldiers present ran in haste." Yet neither of these should bear the same expression of Jesus singing "My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Such expression requires careful communication between director, singer, and accompanist. The music contained in the recitatives can yield to many different expressions. What may be fitting and proper for one performance may change in the very next. All must be flexible enough in their interpretations to "change with the moment."

Ornamentation

While ornamentation was undoubted in use during Schuetz's era, its use in his *Seven Last Words* is not necessary. The solemn character of this work requires a more simple approach that the sensitive musician can provide. George Newton, quoted above in the same issue of *The NATS Bulletin*, speaks eloquently on this subject of the proper performance of Schuetz's music:

This emotional intensity is projected in part in the stylized shape of ornaments: trilli, gruppi, tremoletti, accenti, etc., along with divisions of various kinds. In singing the music of Schuetz, however, the sensitive performer finds little to add to the music as written, since the composer has given it superb pictorial and emotional qualities by employing these ornaments on appropriate words. Then, too, the more solemn nature of the religious text tends to reduce the quantity of affective embellishment usually required for the Italian secular monodies. . . . No composer has set words to music with a greater regard for the text in the externals of rhythmic and inflectional values as well as the internals of meaning and vividness. At the same time the music has a formal shape and beauty which is arresting in itself.⁵⁹

Because of such expression, Newton maintains that the music of Schuetz is more accessible to the listener of today. He again writes:

The problems involved in making the music of Schuetz sound recognizable [shall we say] to the composer, and at the same time meaningful to an audience today, do not seem as great as is the case

59. Newton, p. 2.

with much of the later Baroque music. The earlier flowering of the stylized and decorative diminution practise had passed, and its later flowering among the growing breed of virtuoso performers had not yet developed. Thus the emotional intensity of the music is rarely blurred by coloratura which has little meaning for us now.⁶⁰

Tempo

Another consideration in realizing the composer's expression is to understand his music notation. Notation in the early and middle Baroque was slightly different from modern-day notation. Time signature markings carried more information relating to meter as well as tempo. Unfortunately for us, composers in Schuetz's time were not always consistent with their markings. Pitch is also a perplexing problem for the modern performer since actual pitch was not uniform from town to town or church to church.

Let us first consider the problem of tempo and meter. Schuetz used two different time signatures for his *Die sieben Worte* -- C and ♢. Curt Sachs, in *Rhythm and Tempo*, speaks of the problems in interpreting these two signatures even in the age when they were used. He cites a survey conducted by Montanos in 1592 called *Arte de musica*. Montanos writes:

- (1) that ♢ was half as long as C;
- (2) that ♢ was just as long as C;
- (3) that ♢ was slower than C;
- (4) that ♢ was faster than C.⁶¹

60. Newton, p. 3.

61. Curt Sachs, p. 222.

Sachs writes that it is important to "distinguish between proportion and non-proportion. C meant *proportio dupla* ("half as long as C") only where it clashed with C in another voice part. Otherwise, its relation with C was vague or nonexistent."⁶²

Later, in Praetorius's immense *Syntagma musicum* of 1619, no mention at all is made of a duple relationship of tactus between the two symbols. C was a little slower (*etwas langsamer und gravitetischer*). Madrigals are given this sign because of the concentration of black notes. ♢ was faster and given to motets because they contain more white notes. Praetorius also reports that the two sometimes share little difference in meaning. Quoting again from Sachs:

In Praetorius' time, however, the proportions have practically gone and, with them, the possibility of replacing unwelcome note values with preferred ones. Now, pieces are signed as C or ♢, and nobody can tell the difference by the notes -- *unnd kan man gleichwol an den Noten oder gantzen Gesange keinen unterscheid erkennen*. C and ♢ are shades of the same standard tempo -- if they differ at all. Actually, there are often no differences: Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612) -- so Praetorius relates -- has dropped C entirely; Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) writes C when there are more black than white notes; and Ludovico Viadana (ca. 1564-1645) reserves C for instrumental and ♢ for vocal pieces. thus music has arrived at a practical equalization of C and ♢.⁶³

62. Curt Sachs, *Rhythm and Tempo*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1953), p. 222.

63. Sachs, p. 224.

Of all considerations, choice of tempo is of utmost importance. Too slow a tempo leads to a stodgy performance while too fast a tempo makes for a "race to the finish line." Since *Die sieben Worte* is a work portraying the death of Christ, an air of solemnity throughout is essential. Yet the main thrust of the work is not in despair, but in faith and hope. Through it, the listener sees his redemption from sin.

In the author's opinion, a steady tactus of $\text{♩} = 56\text{--}62\text{mm.}$ is most appropriate. The choruses, containing more prophetic assurances, require a slightly slower tempo than the central section, which contains the action. The tactus of such "action" sequences as the Tenor's "and one among the soldiers present" and the angry Alto's "If thou art Christ, then save yourself and us" should be taken closer to $\text{♩} = 62\text{mm.}$ Heartrending sequences such as Jesus' "Eli, Eli" and His loving words "Father, forgive them" should be taken a few degrees slower.

While fluctuation in tempo is definitely called for, a wholesale disregard of note values or general tactus is not appropriate. The type of "artistic license" proper to the recitatives can be illustrated in an example given by Mendel in his remarks to Schuetz's *The Christmas Story*. Here he shows that the "slight modification of the notated recitatives will produce a more natural flow of speech"⁶⁴

through word stress and agogic accent:

Example 13. Modification of Recitatives to Accomodate Word Stress and Agogic Accent⁶⁵

To further highlight the story line of Schuetz's work it is suggested that the performers clearly define the separate sections of the account of the seven words. This can be done first by a slight *ritardando* and then by a short *ceasura* which arrests the *tactus* for one or two pulses. Exchanges between soloists within these sections should be done with little or no break and no slowing of the tempo. The suggested sectionalization of the center portion is as follows:

First word: Alto, Jesus. //

Second word: Tenor, Jesus, Tenor, Jesus, Tenor. //

Third word: Soprano, Thief on the left, Soprano, Thief on the right // Soprano, Thief on the right, Soprano, Jesus //

Fourth word: Quartet, Jesus, Quartet, Jesus. //

Fifth word: Alto, Jesus. //

Sixth word: Tenor, Jesus. //

Seventh word: Tenor, Jesus. // Quartet.

64. Arthur Mendel, ed., *Schuetz: The Christmas Story*, (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., Ed. 1930), p. viii.

65. Mendel, ed., p. viii.

Pitch

Pitch in the seventeenth century was no less confusing than metrical markings. Consider the two quotes below:

CHOIR PITCH. At the beginning of the 17th century the choir pitch customary in church use was a *whole tone lower* than chamber pitch (hence the *low pitch of old church organs*).

CHAMBER PITCH. . . .in the 16th to 17th centuries [pitch] seems to have been very *high* in Germany, as appears from the *pitch of old organs*, which are about a *whole tone higher* than our chamber pitch. . . .⁶⁶

Both of the quotes above were taken from the same author -- Praetorius. They symbolize how actual pitch was not kept at a constant during the time. Before 1750, the notes on the staff represented "degrees in a gamut that had no permanent anchor at a standard pitch level." This is quite the same as using a solfeggio system with "movable do." Musicians today think of "a'" as a tone approximating 440 vibrations per second. Musicians before 1750 adjusted "a'" to fit the necessity of the moment. The actual pitch varied over the distance of a major third.⁶⁷

Pitch varied from town to town and from instrument to instrument. Praetorius speaks of instrument makers who altered keys to best fit the particular instrument. Shawms and "discant fiddles" sounded "fresher and more penetrating"

66. Mendel, Pitch, p. 88.

67. Arthur Mendel, "Pitch in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries," *Studies in the History of Musical Pitch*, (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1968), p. 89-90.

in higher pitches, whereas trombones and "bass fiddles" sound "more solid and majestic" at lower pitches. This created "a great deal of trouble when organs, positives, harpsichords, and other wind instruments are not at the same pitch."⁶⁸

Pitch during the time of Praetorius was also on the rise. Praetorius reports that it was raised year after year in Italy, England, and in the "princely courts of Germany." He disagrees with this practice as being impractical. He speaks at great length about this problem. Here is an excerpt:

Now there have been some who have sought to raise this present pitch of ours a semitone higher still. But, although it is not my place to correct it, such a high pitch is in my opinion very inconvenient for the singers of vocal music, especially altos and tenors, and is often impossible for them to reach. Therefore it would be sensible to leave the pitch at the aforementioned level since even so it is often found too high not alone for vocalists, but also for players of stringed instruments. . . .⁶⁹

From extended testimony by Schlick and Praetorius, Mendel created a table of their old approximate pitches related to our modern "a." While performance pitches were commonly a major third higher, Praetorius wished to see this changed to only a minor or major second higher than "a¹=440."⁷⁰

68. Mendel, p. 109.

69. Mendel, p. 109-110.

70. Mendel, p. 128.

Such information is quite valuable to us today. It allows us a great deal of freedom in setting the pitch of our performances to suit our choir's capabilities. Of course, any changing of pitch would require transposition by the instrumentalists, just as in Schuetz's day.

As written, *Die sieben Worte* could be considered too low for most choirs. Raising it by a semitone could make it easier to sing for the altos without hurting the tenors. The key of Fm, with all its flats, could also enrich the harmonies. While F#m or even Gm might also be possible, care must be taken that the tenors not be forced too high. The written key of Em could be kept for that very reason, for a church choir performing this work would most likely have baritones singing on either of the tenor lines.

Basso Continuo

Accompanied solo singing was a new form of expression in the Baroque. Cultivated in Italy, it took the genius of Heinrich Schuetz to develop music with the continuo toward a unique form of German expression. During Schuetz's time, in fact, use of the continuo had developed into such popularity among German composers that polyphony was already becoming a lost form among the young composers. They were being brought up only on the continuo and the concerto style without learning the rigors of pure counterpoint. Schuetz urged for reform. In later life he made it his goal to

inspire German composers,

before they proceed to the composition of concertizing music to crack this hard nut (wherein the true kernel and the right foundation of good counterpoint is to be sought) and to pass their first tests in this category.⁷¹

Unfortunately, Schuetz's publishers demanded that he include continuo parts with many of his compositions. In fact, his publisher even required him to supply parts for his *Geistliche Chor-Musik* of 1648, which he meant to be largely unaccompanied and from which comes the above quote. Ironically, as if through vengeance against the publisher, it appears that Joh. Klemme hastily added poor figurations for the continuo parts.⁷²

On the other hand, soloistic compositions such as *Die sieben Worte*, include the basso continuo throughout. Like the above work, the exact figures are not always provided for us. Those written in seem to serve more as reminders for someone who probably already knew the work. Therefore, careful realization, with a little imagination, is urged of those who wish to follow the figures and create their own accompaniment.⁷³

The author will not attempt to discuss the subject completely since there are many excellent books on the art

71. Moser, pp. 581-582.

72. Moser, p. 582.

73. Mendel, *Christmas Story*, p. x.

of thoroughbass. Instead a brief quote from Mendel's remarks on Schuetz's *The Christmas Story* will suffice.

Mendel informs us that the instruments used for accompanying the recitatives were most often a bass viol, or similar instrument, and a harpsichord or organ. Only the most basic chord changes were given along with the bass line in whole and half notes. "But it was understood that the chords to be played above these bass notes [in less expressive passages] were not to be held out for their full value on the organ, but rather to be sounded in short (eighth- or quarter-) note values, and the intervening spaces filled with rests, thus:"⁷⁴

Notation in autograph score:

Da ver-samm-le-ten sich die Ho-hen-prie-ster und Schrift-ge-lehr-ten, und die

Notation in Original Cello, Organ, and Violone parts

Example 15. Notation of Figured Bass in Bach's *St.*

74. Mendel, *Christmas Story*, p. ix.

*Matthew Passion*⁷⁵

Mendel speculates that this was a carry-over technique from earlier times when such passages were strummed or plucked. There would be no reason to write in rests since the sound would die away anyway. This notation remained the same when the accompaniment was transferred to the organ. "Here again it is the spirit and sense of the old convention that must concern us, not the letter. The recitative should give the effect of free, punctuated narration."⁷⁶

Mendel suggests that the organist use simple registrations such as one 8' gedackt and possibly a soft 8' and 16' in the bass. While the organs of that time contained no swell pedal for dynamic expression, there is no reason not to slightly alter the organ registrations for color. A special color in the parts of Jesus could be utilized for effect.⁷⁷ For example, a change to an 8' rohrflöte or thickening by combining flutes would be quite appropriate.

As to the realization of the figured bass, it is important to convey an improvisatory nature. Mendel states this when speaking of his realization to *The Christmas Story*:

75. Mendel, p. ix.

76. Mendel, p. x.

77. Mendel, p. xi.

...a certain amount of elaboration -- doubling, rolling of chords (fast or slow, upwards or downwards, depending on the expression), even the addition of some slight melodic interest in the accompaniment (but only enough to complement the singer's material; never enough to compete with it) -- would be not only appropriate but called for. The accompanist, like the singer, should aim at giving the impression of an improvised narrative, in which, ideally, the singer would be accompanying himself (like a folk-singer with a guitar) and the expression of the recitative and its accompaniment would vary as one.⁷⁸

Performing Editions

According to an excellent resource recently published called *Heinrich Schuetz: a bibliography of the collected works and performing editions* compiled by D. Douglas Miller and Anne L. Highsmith, there are a total of fifteen editions available of *Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz*. Of these, three (nos. 14-16) are one movement arrangements, two (nos. 1-2) are in collected works editions, one (no. 13) is a score for chorus only, one (no. 12) is in miniature score, and eight (nos. 3, 5-11) are suitable performing editions including all five movements. Two of these performing editions (nos. 8 and 10) use the exact same plates. The editions are here listed directly from the text:⁷⁹

1. Die Sieben Wortte unsers lieben Erloesers und Seligmachers Jesu Christi. -- In SGA. -- 1885.
-- Bd. 1, p. 147-158.

Edited by Philipp Spitta. Figured bass not realized. Original German text. Notes in

78. Mendel, p. xi.

79. D. Douglas Miller, *Heinrich Schuetz: a bibliography of the collected works and performing editions*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 232-234.

German.

2. Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz. -- In
NSA. -- 1957. -- Bd. 2, p. 3-31. Pub. no.:
Baerenreiter-Ausgabe 3662.
Edited by Bruno Grusnick. German text. Words
in Gothic type. Notes in German.
3. Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz. --
Kassel: Baerenreiter, c1965. Pub. no.:
Baerenreiter-Ausgabe 1577.
Edited by Bruno Grusnick. German text. Words
in Gothic type.
4. Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz = The
seven last words of Jesu on the Cross. --
Stuttgart: Haenssler, c1967. Pub. no.: XX 478.
Edited by Guenter Graulich. Continuo realized
by Paul Horn. German text with English
translation. Notes in German and English.
5. Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz. --
Leipzig: VEB Breitkopf & Haertel, [19--]. Pub
no.: Edition Breitkopf Nr. 1770.
Edited by Albrecht Haenlein. German text.
6. The seven words of Christ on the Cross. --
Saint Louis, Miss.: Concordia Publishing
House, c1950. Pub. no.: S 621.
Edited by Richard T. Gore. English text.
Transposed up m3.
7. The seven last words. -- New York: G. Schirmer,
c1890.
Edited by Carl Riedel. English translation.
8. Die sieben Worte Jesu Christ am Kreuz = The
seven words of Jesus Christ on the Cross. --
Boston, Mass.: E. C. Schirmer, c1970. Pub.
no.: E. C. S. choral music no. 2756.
Edited by Daniel Pinkham. German text with
English translation. Notes in English.
Transposed up M2.
9. The seven last words. -- New York, N. Y.:
Kalmus, [19--]. Pub no.: Kalmus vocal scores
6434.
English text.
10. The seven last words from the Cross. -- London:
Oxford University Press, Music Dept., c1961.
Edited by Paul Steinitz. German text with

English translation. Notes in English.

11. The seven words of Jesus Christ = Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi. -- London; New York: Eulenburg, [19--]. Pub. no.: Edition Eulenburg No. 977.
Edited by Fritz Stein. Figured bass not realized. German text. Notes in German and English.
12. The seven words of Christ on the Cross. -- St. Louis, Miss.: Concordia, [19--]. Pub. no.: 98-1627.
Edited by Richard T. Gore. Chorus score. English text. Transposed by m3.
13. Praise God's Son who redeems us. -- Fort Lauderdale, Fla.: Music 70, c1983. Pub. no.: M70-342.
For chorus (SATTB); keyboard reduction of vocal parts. Concluding chorus from "Die sieben Worte Kristi am Kreuz". Edited by Elwood Coggin. English text.
14. Since Christ Our Lord was crucified. -- Boston, Mass.: E. C. Schirmer, c1926. Pub. no.: Concord series no. 88.
For chorus (TTBB) a cappella; keyboard reduction of vocal parts. Arrangement of the opening chorus of "Die sieben Worte Jesu Kristi am Kreuz". Arranged by A. T. D. English text.
15. Since Christ His head in sorrow bowed. -- Boston, Mass.: E. C. Schirmer, c1936. Pub. no.: E.C.S. no. 994.
For chorus (SATTB); keyboard reduction of vocal parts. Opening chorus of "Die sieben Worte Jesu Kristi am Kreuz". Edited by A. T. D. English text.

The performing editions to be discussed will be the Breitkopf & Haertel (no. 5), the Concordia (no. 6), the Kalmus (no. 9), and the Oxford (no. 10). Comparisons will be made against the *Neue Ausgabe saemtlicher Werke* (NSA) of Baerenreiter.

The *Neue Ausgabe saemtlicher Werke* (1957), edited by Bruno Grunsnick, is printed in German only with German endnotes. The realization of the continuo has little imagination. Unfortunately, the chords are all in half and whole notes with little or no rests provided. Grunsnick has not even attempted to change some of the obvious cadential chords to major, and his work has extremely little melodic interest. True to a collected works edition, no dynamics are given but modern day clefs are used.

The Breitkopf & Haertel edition (n.d., \$6.65) very closely approximates that of NSA. The only differences are that it uses a more modern typeface. The entire text is in German only, with slight alterations. Unfortunately, the continuo realization is quite similar to the NSA. Some of the chords have been altered, though, to reflect more logical progressions and conclusions. Dynamic markings have been included with occasional German tempo indications.

While the Concordia edition (1950, \$1.60), edited by Richard Gore, appears to be the most well researched edition, it is the least like the Schuetz original. His choice of key, G minor, is much too high. Gore's intentions were to make the SATTB work more accessible to church choirs by rescoring it SAATB. Unfortunately, to score it as such, he had to switch the inner choral A-T parts occasionally to accomodate the vocal ranges. The high key also puts the soloists in a high tessitura. Instead of the original

German, Gore has substituted an English translation. Because of this translation, he has altered note values to accommodate proper speech accents. Valuable to this edition are the printed instrumental parts with bowings in the actual vocal score. All the editorial markings are bracketed and measures are numbered. The continuo realization is also in too many whole and half notes.

The Kalmus edition (n.d., \$3.00) uses the same plates as the G. Schirmer edition (1890). While this edition by Johannes Riedel is certainly the oldest of all the performing editions, it has many redeeming elements. The realization of the continuo is melodically and rhythmically the most interesting of all five editions cited. Importantly, this realization never overshadows the solo voices. Only the English text is provided and uses the King James language. This is both a help and a hindrance. First, the King James language lends an extra solemnity to the work. Some of the words, however, such as "malefactors" and "eftsoons," are so antiquated that they have lost their meanings. The largest detraction of this edition is the over-editing. Not a measure goes by without some type of performance marking. The time signatures, C and C , are also incorrectly inserted throughout the whole central section. Schuetz did not include any such markings. Yet, if the director is knowledgeable about Baroque performing practices, the Kalmus is still a good edition to use.

The Oxford edition (1961, \$8.95) is the most practical of all the editions. It contains both the German and English texts. The English text, however, is a poor singing translation. Word accents and speech patterns are often awkward. Very helpful, though, are the two accompaniment possibilities. The "A" version can be used with instruments and organ or with just a two manual organ with pedal (the right hand playing the instrument's parts on a separate manual). The "B" version is for organ with manuals only. *Basso continuo* figures are provided.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

Proper expression is the key to a good performance of *The Seven Last Words of Christ*. The musician wishing to perform this work would do well to exhaust all the informational sources that are available to him. Very important to his quest is a thorough knowledge of the composer, the compositional style, how the piece relates to this style, how the piece would have been performed during the composer's time, the form of the piece as it relates to climax and relaxation, the theological impact and deeper significance of the words, and the best editions from which to perform. Without such background, a truly meaningful performance is close to impossible.

Since Schuetz's music unfortunately is not often performed, such knowledge is especially important. Whether this is due to a lack of awareness, understanding or dislike of his music is unimportant. What is important is that Schuetz created an influential musical language deeply affecting all the important composers and performers of his time. Schuetz ushered in a new period of German expression culminating in the music of Bach and Handel and later in Hugo Distler. Not to take the time to uncover the great

treasures of this master composer would be a great injustice.

At first glance, Schuetz's *The Seven Last Words of Christ* may appear to be rather ordinary. But the musician who delves into the work will discover a multitude of jewels awaiting discovery. Rather than excitement, this work fosters contemplation on the crucifixion of Christ and what His words mean to the listener. Schuetz did not take time to subjectively interpret these words, as he would have done early in his career. Instead, Schuetz treats the words of Christ as revelation. Emotion is still a part of his language, but it is revealed in a more mature manner, without undue pomp or sentiment. His intentions are made clear through his use of harmonic language, the five-part form, the instrumentation at the parts of Jesus, and in the opening and closing choruses. With the utmost economy of means, Schuetz has presented an excellent meditation for any Good Friday or other Lenten service.

Like Beethoven, Schuetz was a revolutionary ushering in a new era of German composition. Even today, the unique character of Schuetz's language is difficult for some to comprehend. His music contains an expression not found anywhere else. The conductor desiring to perform any work by Heinrich Schuetz would do well to heed a challenge by Friedrich Blume:

...Heinrich Schuetz appears to us like a messenger from another world, independent, intellectual,

completely unsentimental, with a penetrating power of expression, but frequently (so at least it seems to us) with a distancing coolness. The fascinating and compelling power of his work can only make itself felt when the solo singers and the choirs have been properly guided and educated to understand it. Otherwise Schuetz's music produces the effect of a perpetual *understatement*. The effect is only superficial. When one begins to work one's way more deeply into his oeuvre one acquires a feeling for the fact that, beneath the surface, scarcely hidden, there are precious crystals to be found, that the musical embodiment generated by the words represents the very personal confession of a man to who '*nil humanum alienum est.*' The sensitive structure of that musical embodiment is based on an admirable technical mastery, and Schuetz knows how to translate every pulse of emotion into the aptest musical expression. It is in this that the strength and unique quality of his music consists, and performers and audiences must be aware of this fact....Anyone who is unable to feel the enderlying emotion, the passionate excitement in Schuetz's work had better leave it alone."⁸⁰

80. Friedrich Blume, "Heinrich Schuetz after Three Hundred Years," trans. Maurice Benn, *Studies in Music*, 7 (1973), pp. 8-9.

Bibliography

- Blume, Friedrich. "Heinrich Schuetz after Three Hundred Years." Translated by Maurice Benn. *Studies in Music*, 7 (1973): 1-9.
- Blume, Friedrich. *Protestant Church Music*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974.
- Bukofzer, Manfred F. *Music in the Baroque Era: From Monteverdi to Bach*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1947.
- Dart, Thurston. "How They Sang in Jena in 1598." *Musical Times*, 108 (1967): 316-317.
- Dart, Thurston. *The Interpretation of Music*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Donington, Robert. *A Performer's Guide to Baroque Music*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973.
- Donington, Robert. *String Playing in Baroque Music: With Recorded Illustrations by Yehudi Menuhin, George Malcolm, and Robert Donington*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977.
- Ellis, Alexander J., and Mendel, Arthur. *Studies in the History of Musical Pitch*. Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1968.
- Fischer-Dieskau, Klaus. "The Employment of Dynamics in Interpreting the Music of Heinrich Schuetz and Hugo Distler." *Choral Journal*, 14 (1973): 5-8.
- Frotscher, Gotthold. *Performance Practices of Early Music*. Translated by Kurt Michaelis. New York: Heinrichshofen Edition, 1981.
- Mendel, Arthur. "A Brief Note on Triple Proportion in Schuetz." *Musical Quarterly*, 46 (1960): 67-70.
- Mendel, Arthur. *Pitch in Western Music Since 1500: A Re-examination*. Basel: Barenreiter-Kassel, 1979.
- Mendel, Arthur. "Some Ambiguities of the Mensural System." In *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*. Edited by Harold Powers. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

- Mendel, Arthur, introd. *The Christmas Story (Historia von der Geburt Jesu Christi)*. By Heinrich Schuetz. New York: G. Schirmer, Ed. 1930, 1949.
- Miller, D. Douglas & Highsmith, Anne L. *Heinrich Schuetz: A Bibliography of the Collected Works and Performing Editions*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Moser, Hans Joachim. *Heinrich Schuetz: His Life and Work*. Translated by Carl F. Pfatteicher. St. Louis: Concordia, 1959.
- Mudde, Willem. "Heinrich Schuetz, Composer of the Bible." *The Musical Heritage of the Lutheran Church*, 5 (1959): 79-91.
- Newman, Anthony. *Bach and the Baroque: A Performing Guide to Baroque Music with Special Emphasis on the Music of J. S. Bach*. New York: Pendragon Press, 1985.
- Newton, George. "Heinrich Schuetz." *National Association of Teachers of Singing. Bulletin*, 26 (1970): 2-6.
- Rifkin, Joshua. "Schuetz and Musical Logic." *Musical Times*, 113 (1972): 1067-1070.
- Sachs, Curt. *Rhythm and Tempo: A Study in Music History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1953.
- Schrade, Lec. "Heinrich Schuetz and Johann Sebastian Bach in the Protestant Liturgy." *The Musical Heritage of the Lutheran Church*, 7 (1970): 170-190.
- Skei, Allen B. *Heinrich Schuetz: A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981.
- Smither, Howard E. *A History of the Oratorio: Volume 2, The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.
- Spitta, Philipp. "The Passion Music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Heinrich Schuetz." Annotated and Translated by Kenneth E. Miller. *Choral Journal*, 16, no. 3 (1975): 10-13.
- Ulrich, Homer. *A Survey of Choral Music*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973.
- Young, Percy M. *The Choral Tradition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971.