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MUSICAL RHETORIC AND MEANINGS IN THE
MAUNDY THURSDAY CANTATAS
BY G. H. STÖLZEL (1690–1749)

This article was published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Eero Tarasti's *Musical Signification Project*. Therefore, it analyses the rhetorical elements and meanings encoded in G. H. Stölzel's passion cantatas in order to present them in the context of research on musical meaning. For this reason and due to limited space, the historical context is presented at a minimum. The text uses a synthetic approach to the presented question with point-by-point examples as its illustrations.

Martin Luther formulated three main postulates regarding liturgical music: he considered it divine gift, accepted its affective and shaping power in accordance with the Christian interpretation of the Greek theory of ethos, and assigned it a didactical purpose (Bartel 1997, 3–6). He regarded both theology and music as the basics of understanding the Gospel's teaching (Hough 2012, 30–31). This attributed music a special role in realizing the rhetorical functions appropriate for sermons: teaching, moving and convincing to accept the truth, which granted it the status of an exotic art, spoken—and not only depicting (Lisecki 1993, 13).

In line with the doctrine of affects, Baroque music was supposed to evoke extreme emotions in man (Paczkowski 1998, 11). In Protestant music, the most intensive tension of an affect was centred on creating passion. The Passion

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of the Lord posed an emotional climax in the Lutheran theology, in which love was regarded as the reason and result of Jesus' death—it constituted the ultimate proof of God's love for man, and simultaneously caused in man gratitude and love for Christ, which resulted from the sense of guilt (Elferen 2009, 92–93, 123–24). The orthodox approach emphasized the bitter aspects and the desire for union with Christ, which was a painful experience for the sinful nature of man. Meanwhile, in the 17th-century Pietistic poetry, this desire, as considered by Pietists to be a symptom of pride, was being replaced by a passive longing for God's grace (Elferen 2009, 152–53, 159).

Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel—a composer, librettist, music theorist and theologian—carried out the duties of a Kapellmeister at the Ducal Court of Saxony-Gotha-Altenburg in the years 1719–1749, during the reign of Friedrich II, and subsequently Friedrich III, where he enjoyed an exceptionally high rank, equal to ducal secretaries (Talle 2017, 193). A significant part of his musical creation at that time was sacred music performed in the castle church; however, he also composed secular music for the needs of the court and accepted commissions from the courts in Sondershausen and Gera (Hannenbergh 2001, 434). His music was also performed in other German centres—in Leipzig by Johann Sebastian Bach and in Zerbst by Johann Friedrich Fasch (Pfau 2008, 113). During his lifetime, Stölzel remained a valued composer who overtook Johann Sebastian Bach on Friedrich Wilhelm Marburg's list of the most famous composers of the eighteenth century, whereas today he returns to the circulation after years of oblivion.

Stölzel wrote on the connections between music and affects, as well as music and rhetoric in the introduction to the libretto of the cantata cycle from 1728/29. In his opinion, moving the human mind is the ultimate goal of poetry and music, which fulfils an ancillary and interpretative role in relation to poetry, therefore Stölzel demanded from a poet and composer creating a spiritual music in a sacred state of mind and his being affected (Pfau 2022, 4).

In the eighteenth century, Gotha belonged to the most significant hubs of Central Germany where oratorio passions and passion oratorios were regularly performed during services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday or only Good Friday, and in contrast to other German centres, often not only during afternoon services, but also morning ones (Blankenburg 1963, 50, 54). Meanwhile, passion cantatas, located in the midst of cantatas *de tempore* and passions, were initially a peculiarity of the church music of Gotha. The purpose of their occurrence was to spread the reflection on the Passion of the Lord over all Sundays of Lent, for which the starting point was the recommendation of

Ernest I the Pious (1601–1675), regarding Lent sermons, published in the document *Fürstlichen Ausschreiben und Puncta, wie es mit dem Bibellesen in den Kirchen von den Pfarrern hinkünftig gehalten werden solle* in 1669. The principal difference between the passion cantata and the passion was the lack of biblical verses next to contemplative poetry and hymnal stanzas (Blankenburg 1963, 56–59). Stölzel composed two types of the passion cantata: a purely contemplative one, which was an interpretation of the Passion of the Lord, for the Sundays of Lent, and an epic-contemplative one, combining narration and exegesis, performed during Holy Week (Hannenberg 1976, 16–17). The latter, introduced by the end of Stölzel's activity, replaced passions (Blankenburg 1963, 58).

The cantatas *Jesu deine Paßion will ich jetzt bedenken* H 397 and *Judas der Verräther küßt Jesum* H 398 are a destined for Maundy Thursday part of the unique, fully preserved epic-contemplative cycle¹ *Sechs geistliche Betrachtungen des leidenden und sterbenden Jesu, aus der Leidens-Geschichte der heiligen vier Evangelisten gezogen* (Blankenburg 1963, 56–57), whose libretto was created by the composer. The manuscript, as a copy by an unknown author, is kept in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin–Praußischer Kulturbesitz under the signature Mus.ms. 21401. The aim of the article is to respond to the question on how Stölzel operates the means of musical expression in order to illustrate and interpret the verbal text, and encodes meanings appropriate for the Lutheran theology of music.

In the Christian tradition, Maundy Thursday commemorates the institution of the sacrament of Eucharist during the Last Supper, therefore, the fragments of the Holy Scripture read on that day during the Lutheran liturgy relate to the events in the Cenacle. Meanwhile, passion cantatas intended to be performed before and after the sermon were a kind of continuation of the biblical narration, since the content of the first of them begins at the moment of leaving the Cenacle, and both pass the description of the events of the same evening. The topic of the cantatas is indicated by the titles of the meditations: *Jesus am Ölberge* (Jesus on the Mount of Olives) and *Jesus in Banden* (The Capture of Jesus). Both of them consist of six movements of the same arrangement: chorale, recitative, aria, recitative, duet, chorale, and the following threads are

¹ Stölzel composed two epic-contemplative cycles, of which only one, arranged as six spiritual meditations, has survived in the musical and textual layer. In the literature, it is marked with the year 1749 (Hannenberg 1976, 17; Sorg 2020, 183) or 1741 (Blankenburg 1963, 56–57; Siegmund 2020, 152). The second cycle from 1746, consisting of eight cantatas, has survived only in the form a libretto (Hannenberg 1976, 17; Sorg 2020, 183; Blankenburg 1963, 56; Siegmund 2020, 152).

determined by the content of the recitatives. The first meditation is concentrated on the behavior of Jesus and remains strictly related to the content of the Gospel. The main thread discussed in the first recitative is the courage necessary to cope with evil, which Jesus' disciples declare before He presages Peter's denial. The second recitative is focused on Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane terminated with committing Himself to the Will of the Father and His spiritual combat against death, after which He comes across the disciples sleeping. The second meditation is based on a shorter passage of the Gospel which results in a greater poetic autonomy. In the first recitative, the subject turns to the mob that came to arrest Jesus, and in the second one, to the disciples who escaped. The courage theme of the first cantata returns, and the events of the Garden of Gethsemane are evoked again.

While the course of narration is determined by the recitatives, the remaining genres may be attributed specific functions. Chorales, extraordinarily important in the Lutheran music (Grimalt 2020, 131–32), except for the textual references to poetry, are primarily a form of prayer. At the same time, from the viewpoint of the compositional technique, Stölzel, according to his own theory of counterpoint described in the treatise *Anleitung zur musikalischen Setzkunst*, refers to the conception of *trias harmonica*—associated by German theorists with the symbolic representation of the Holy Trinity in the form of the interval relations of the triad—and the tradition of *stile antico* within the major-minor tonality (Vogt 2015, 116–19; Gatz 2019, 138; Remeš 2020). Meanwhile, the arias and duets are focused on the emotional layer. The former express regret caused by man's fragility which does not allow him to put words into action, and gratitude for the Sacrifice of Christ, while the latter contain an instruction: a call for vigilance and prayer, as well as consideration of one's conduct and conversion.

The basic carrier of meanings in the Baroque music are musical-rhetorical figures which contain meanings (Grimalt 2020, 45–48). They result from the grade of departure from the rules accepted in music, its etymological references, analogies between certain physical and abstractive properties, or the affectivity specific to a figure (Krones 2017, 305). Stölzel uses figures from the category *hypotyposis* and word painting, as well as figures related to operating musical structures. While the affective function is realized by expressive figures which make use of chromaticism, dissonances, rests, contrasts of texture and dynamics, and leaps.

In order to visualize biblical scenes, Stölzel uses word painting. Its clear example are the musical structures present in the recitatives *Du trittst mein*

Jesu and *Und wie? Ihr Jünger*, which illustrate drops of bloody sweat falling on the ground or flowing down the face of Jesus—a symbol of His spiritual struggles in the Garden of Gethsemane. Both structures contain the meanings of the verbs *fällt* (falls) and *rann* (flows down). The first of them has a vertical character, and bases on the leaps of a minor seventh and perfect fourth down, connected by a minor second up. The second one, arranged horizontally, is composed of smaller intervals which, despite the descending direction, represent a wavy drawing more clearly. Except for the elements of the outer world, abstract concepts are also subject to the musical representation. In the aria *Wie hurtig ist man*, the composer utilizes two types of melodics, portraying adjectives describing man's conduct. The first verse is represented by figurative melodics with a dissonant leap of a minor seventh down in the word *hurtig* (hurriedly), expressing a vivid, though false readiness to make promises (*saltus duriusculus*). The second verse—"wie leicht gelobt man alles an" (how easily a man swears everything)—begins with a cantilena melodics based on a descending progress of quavers and crochets signifying the easiness of swearing. In the instrumental parts, gradual rise of the melodic line in relation to the first verse resembles man's good intentions which intensify further disappointment and grief caused by his weakness, expressed in the motives of a descending melodics.

A symbolic meaning is also assigned to the four-sound motive based on the broken seventh chord in the duet *Ach, ihr Jünger* in which the instruction of considering by Jesus' disciples their conduct, expressed at the beginning of the movement, returns. Simultaneously, the wavy melodics of the tenor part depicts physical and spiritual bonds tying Jesus.

The choir texture of the chorale stanzas became for Stölzel the area of operating the musical structures in order to deepen the content, however, also to bind them more intensively with composer's poetry, whose example is the final chorale of the first meditation. The question of the third verse of the stanza: "Was schlafet ihr doch wie die Todten?" (Why are you sleeping like the dead?) in the bass part is communicated by the four-sound structure repeated subsequently with backward repetition (*epanodos*). A similar form of the figure, apart from the extreme sounds of the bar, also occurs in the remaining voices. By that means, the disciples' sleep, encountered by Jesus, becomes a reflection of death as a symptom of spiritual weakness. Meanwhile, in reference to the endings of the last two verses of the stanza, the composer uses the figure *hyperbaton* which means a transfer of a note or phrase from its natural position to another (Bartel 1997, 301). The relocation of the sound

structures between the voices transfers the call for a reflection on choosing one's fate from the disciples to all Christians.

Teaching through music is complemented by the task of affecting realized via expressive figures. The primary emphatic means is the *pathopoeia* based on a semitone movement. The composer uses it in the cantatas in relation to the titles of Jesus (*Heyland* and *Gottes-Held*) or His experiences in the Garden of Gethsemane: sadness ("du fällt betrübt"), shiver and fright ("zu zittern und zu zagen"), heaviness of sin ("großen Last"), strengthening by the Angel of the Lord ("stärcket") etc. The semitone movement is also the dominant means of expression in the first part of the duet *Wacht und bethet!*, which emphasizes the meaning of the caution that Jesus addressed to the disciples, when He found them sleeping after the prayer, as an admonition to all Christians who desire to imitate Him.

A more elaborate affective figure which expresses negative content is the *passus duriusculus*. In the aria *Liebste Hand*, it occurs in the form of chromatic progresses in the expressions: "du lässest auch für mich" (you also allow me), "dich mit Banden hart belegen" (so that you are tied tightly) and "du ziehest mich heraus" (you pull me out of there). They refer to the Sacrifice as a consequence of man's sin in order to incite the sense of guilty and gratitude resulting from it. Their appearance in the instrumental parts is accompanied by the figure *imaginatio crucis* next to the verb *belegen*.

In the recitatives, the expressive function is carried out by semitone progresses in *basso continuo*. In the recitative *So thust du denn*, two of them with an ascending direction signify a spiritual decline of man. The first one appears in relation to the disciples' assurance that they will not abandon Jesus with no heed to the dangers and the threat of death, the second one in relation to the announcement of Peter's denial. Meanwhile, in the second recitative—*Du trittst mein Jesu*—analogical progresses accompany the fragments devoted to the heaviness of faults lying on the back of the Lamb of God, and the struggle of the "Hero of God" (*Gottes-Held*) against death. The figure refers again to the spiritual aspects connected with the Redemption and Christ's victory over death. In the second cantata in the recitative *Und wie? Ihr Jünger*, two successive chromatic progresses combine spiritual and physical aspects of the Passion of the Lord. The first one ascending refers to the "plagues of soul" experienced by Jesus before death whose consequence is the defeat of sin, the second one descending relates to the physical marks of suffering preceded by the figure of the cross which then also occurs within the first progress in the

vocal part, directly in reference to death in the expression “an den Tod betrübt” (example 1).

4

Basso

Mein Hey-land, ja, so geht es dir. Dein in-ner - li-che See-len-Pla-gen, so dich bis an den Tod be-trübt, dein

Basso continuo

6

8

B.

Trau-ren, Zit-tern und dein Za-gen, den blut-gen Tod-tes-Schweiß

Bc

Example 1. G. H. Stölzel, Recitative *Und wie? Ihr Jünger*, bars 4–9

In relation to the negative content of the cantatas, there are present dissonances occurring both as the figure *saltus duriusculus* and chords. The first ones usually refer to suffering, for example, in the words: *zu zittern* (to shiver), *innerliche Seelen-Plagen* (spiritual affliction of soul), *folterten* (tormented), or betrayal in the word *verrätherischer* (treacherous). Meanwhile, dissonant chords often carry out the accentuating function, however, they also express negative content, especially when multiplied. This concerns the words as follows: *Gefahr* (danger), *Tode* (death), *Seelen-Weh* (pain of soul), *Zittern* (fear), *blutgen* (bloody), *fliehet man* (flees).

In order to emphasize the expressiveness of the verbal text, figures using rest are applied. In the second part of the aria *Wie hurtig ist man*, the composer uses the figure *abruptio* to underline the meaning of the word *leider!* regarding not holding promises in the expression “so bleibt es leider! ungethan” (this unfortunately remains unexecuted). The course of the melody is interrupted by the end, and then its content is reintroduced again in a different musical arrangement (example 2). The fragmentation of the text deepens the expression of regret. In the second aria *Liebste Hand* on the eternal sufferings of a man condemned to hell, a similar interruption of the melodic course before the words of the last verse on rescuing a man, and formulating them in the conclusion, serves deepening gratitude towards Jesus. Whereas the impotence

of a man who cannot abandon his fear is expressed by the figure *suspiratio* in the ending of the recitative *Und wie? Ihr Jünger*.

64

Violino 1
Oboe 1

Violino 2
Oboe 2

Tenore

Basso continuo

70

VI 1
Ob 1

VI 2
Ob 2

T.

Bc

Doch wenn mans soll im Werk er - wei - sen, so bleibt es lei - der! so bleibt
es lei - der un - ge-than wenn mans

Example 2. G. H. Stölzel, Air *Wie hurtig ist man*, bars 64–72

In the textural field, the emphatic function is fulfilled by the figure *noema*. In the two-voice ending of the recitative *Du trittst mein Jesu*, the homophonic texture in relation to the disciples signifies the confidence of standing by Jesus which vanishes due to sleepiness, when the texture changes to polyphonic. Meanwhile, in the second part of the duet *Ach, ihr Jünger*, the replacement of the polyphonic texture with a homophonic one in the fragment marked with crotchet rests accompanies the content devoted to the loneliness of Jesus in the face of suffering for man's sins. In both cases, this figure highlights man's imperfection and his tendency to evil.

The range of expressive means is complemented by the figures *exclamatio* in exclamations and *interrogatio* in interrogations. In the recitative *Du trittst mein Jesu*, the apostrophes “mein Jesu” (my Jesus) and “O! Gottes-Lamm” (Oh, Lamb of God!) are accompanied by a leap of a minor sixth up, and the “O! Gottes-Held!” (Oh, Hero of God!) of a minor third up—the intervals denoting sorrowful affects.

A significant element of the meaning layer of a composition are the connections resulted from reusing a musical material within and between movements. The first case concerns arias and duets arranged in the *da capo* form in which two parts, often contrasted in terms of content or perspective, are based on a common musical material, and thus link different threads. Stölzel made use of an auto quote—a common melody of the vocal part, nevertheless, with a different harmonic background also in the fragments of both recitatives of the second cantata. The melody accompanying the words on the army of the hosts of angels which would not spare the “evil band”, if the hour of Jesus’ suffering did not come, returns in the reminder of His distresses in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He committed himself to the Will of the Father. In this way, the rescue of man is presented as a consequence of Jesus’ voluntary sacrifice which constitutes the main idea of the passion in Lutheran theology.

The influence of the expressive means supports the selection of appropriate keys. In accordance with the Baroque art of composition based on the theory of affects, each of them may be assigned an individual meaning consolidated in numerous categories. The significance of the keys selected by Stölzel is visible both in relation to the keys of the movements of the cantatas, and the modulations within them, and refers to the interpretations by Johann Mattheson.

The first cantata consists of three movements in the key of B-flat major and the three next in G minor. The key of B-flat major, which was assigned by Mattheson the features of greatness and modesty, and elevating the soul to arduous affairs (1713, 249), is also the main key of the cycle. It resembles the duality of Jesus’ nature and expresses the ability to perform superhuman deeds which is exemplified by the precise prophecy of the moment of Peter’s denial (second rooster crowing). In the chorale opening the first cantata, it emphasizes the victory over sin. The key of G minor connects the seriousness of D minor with sweetness and pleasure (237). It accompanies the part on the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and the spiritual struggle with death. In the aria *Wie hurtig ist man*, the keys of B-flat major and G minor receive a symbolic character in which the reference point remains the description of Jesus’

behavior from the recitative. Meanwhile, in the duet *Wacht und bethet!* after the first part in the key of G minor, the second one appears in D minor—a key which makes it possible to achieve the state of piety and calmness in church works (236). At the same time, the content of the fragment of the libretto persuades to imitate Christ and participate in the “suffering plan”. In the final chorale of the cantata, which recalls the admonition from the duet, the key of G-minor returns.

The keys of the movements of the second cantata are more varied. In the opening chorale, denoting the persuasive function (243), Stölzel uses the key of C major, which is assigned the features of coarseness and insolence (240), in combination with the thread of betrayal which introduces into the theme of the second cantata. The key of A minor, in which both recitatives were composed, is defined as somewhat pitiful and calm, or even encouraging to sleep (238). Sleep in both cantatas is a metaphor of sin and death, hence the selection of the keys reflects the image of man presented in the content. Both the aria and duet of the second cantata use the keys of F major and D minor. F major denotes virtuous feelings (241), as the main key of the aria it expresses gratitude for the Sacrifice of Jesus which conducts to the rise of piety. While in the duet, gratitude and love for Christ gushes forth from the piety of the people, and the consideration of the sinful nature of man. The closing chorale of the cantata consolidates the mood of piety appropriate for the reflection by the use of the key of D minor.

Modulations and secondary chords of particular keys also have a significant role. The key of C minor in the aria *Wie hurtig ist man* expresses the sadness of man’s impotence to imitate Jesus (244). What is more, in the momentous scene of the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane in the recitative *Du trittst mein Jesu*, the composer takes advantage of the semantics of the key to deepen fear and dread expressed in the libretto. The words about the three-time prayer to the Father on high were arranged in the key of C major expressing the helplessness of the petition, and then its object—distancing the chalice—occurs in the key of F minor resembling a mortal fright of the Sacrifice for the sins of the mankind (248–49), followed by the key of D major meaning bravery which accompanies the ultimate submission of the fate to the Will of the Father.

In the context of both cantatas as a certain whole constituting the musical repertoire of the service, the message is connected with the selection of the ensemble. Although no functions are assigned to the vocal voices, they are arranged symmetrically, and their registers correspond to the content of the cantatas. In the first one focused on Jesus, introducing the alto and soprano

after the tenor goes along with the successive threads of prayer and spiritual struggle against death with God's help, while in the second one centred on man's sin, lower voices—alto, then tenor and bass—appear in relation to evil in the earthly (arrest) and spiritual (hell) extent. The instrumentation, apart from *basso continuo*, consists of two violins and two oboes in the arias, complemented by a viola in the chorales, and by a cello and bassoon in the duets, whereas in the case of the last two, the ensemble of the duet *Wacht und bethet!* was reduced by oboes for concentration on the verbal text of the Gospel, and the *Ach, ihr Jünger* enlarged by a viola. Meanwhile, a symbolic meaning may be assigned to the replacement of the oboe with a grand oboe tuned in F in the aria *Liebste Hand* which accompanies positive content related to gratitude, love and conversion throughout the entire cycle.

An important carrier of meanings in Lutheran theology is numerical symbolism. The whole cycle consists of six cantatas constructed of six movements destined for three services. In the Maundy Thursday cantatas, the numerical symbolism is represented by the structures imitating the cross and the number of repetitions of sounds. In the recitatives of the first cantata, figures of the cross occur three times in relation to crossing Cedron—as a symbolic frontier of good and evil which should not be crossed during Passover, and a seasonal brook where blood of sacrificial lambs flew down (Mędala 1985, col. 1383)—and the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus finally entrusts His life to the Will of the Father. At the end of the recitative *Was kömmest du*, single and double repetitions of the sounds are juxtaposed contrastingly in comparison of Jesus' disciple who pulled out his sword against the mob, and the army of the angelic hosts which would not spare these people if such Will of God. Single repetitions appear earlier in direct relation to the moment of the arrest, while the double ones show in reference to prayer and spiritual struggles. Therefore, number 2 is associated with the profane sphere, and number 3 with the sacred sphere.

In the context of the practical character of the composition, the melodies of the Protestant chorale present in the soprano parts of the chorale movements are of great importance, since they introduce an intertextual element to the discussed cantatas, obvious to then receiver, familiar with the chorale, and indispensable to decode the meanings carried by the chorale (Tarasti 2002, 82–83). Although they were also subject to certain modifications aimed at expressing the content, they were still closely connected with the pious practice of the participants of the service as well-known melodies of passion hymns. The oldest of them by Melchior Volpius, present in the chorale *Jesu*,

deine Paßion, originates in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was previously performed in the songs: *Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein* and *Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod* from the Gotha hymnal from the mid-seventeenth century (Zahn 1891, 19). All of them were composed by the end of the seventeenth century and usually related to the activity of Pietists who emphasized personal piety. Thus, the compositions were not free from the religious tradition of Gotha which was intensively influenced by the Pietistic movement.

The epic-contemplative cantatas during Holy Week were a significant element of Lent services in 18th-century Gotha. In the discussed compositions, Stölzel represents an orthodox approach to the Lutheran faith visible in the particular emphasis on the bitter aspects of the Passion of the Lord. The applied musical-rhetorical figures highlight man's sinfulness and Christ's victory over death, moreover, they underline the literal content of admonitions. At the same time, they focus on the moment of the meditation and topicality of the Gospel.

The aspect of Jesus' obedience, revealed especially in the musical layer, is the background of the described events and simultaneously the foundation of the idea of imitating Christ. Whereas the selection of the keys determines the most important stages of the meditation from the recognition of man's sinful nature, through the example of love and piety, and the incitement of gratitude for Jesus' Sacrifice, to achieving the atmosphere of piety leading to conversion. The additional reference to the religious tradition of Gotha, through the use of the melodies of passion hymns known there, has an essential meaning for deepening the involvement of the faithful, and consents to the practical function of the composition, moreover, it conveys additional meanings resulting from the context of the time and culture in which the discussed works were composed.

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MUSICAL RHETORIC AND MEANINGS
IN THE *MAUNDY THURSDAY CANTATAS* BY G.H. STÖLZEL (1690–1749)

Summary

Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, according to the Baroque convention, used the musical rhetoric and theory of affects for musical interpretation of the text, which, in the case of religious creation, realized an especially important practical function. The aim of the article is to discover the meanings proper to the Lutheran theology encoded by the composer in his two Passion cantatas for Maundy Thursday. The theme of the cantatas refers to the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and the arrest of Jesus. The conducted analyses especially include the use of musical-rhetorical figures focused on demonstrating the bitter aspects of the Passion of the Lord, the semantics of the key based on the catalogue by Johann Mattheson, supporting the expressive layer and determining the stages of the inner change due to the reflection, and the numerical symbolism revealing the mixture of profane and sacred content. Meanwhile, the establishment of the composition in the religious tradition of Gotha is ensured by the intertextual references to the chorale melodies known to the participants of the service, which are simultaneously a link between the orthodox Lutheranism represented in Stölzel's cantata poetry and the kind of individual piety resulting from the influence of Pietism on the musical culture of the centre.

Keywords: musical rhetoric; theory of affects; numerical symbolism; passion cantatas; Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel