

'Bad Blood'

These portraits were painted from photographs of the 1960 Oberammergau Passion Play. They depict ordinary citizens of the Bavarian village of Oberammergau which has staged an elaborate re-enactment of the last days and execution of Christ every ten years since 1634. This tradition is the fulfilment of a vow made by the villagers to God should he spare them from the plague which was ravaging Europe at that time. The villagers of 1960 appear haunted by a more recent evil – one in which they may have played a part and with which God's intercession was not forthcoming.

The music accompanying these paintings is entitled Heut ist der Schonste Tag in Meinem Leben (Today is the Happiest Day of My Life) sung by the celebrated Jewish tenor Joseph Schmidt. Known as the "German Caruso", Schmidt died in an internment camp in Switzerland in 1942, aged 38.

Scott Donovan