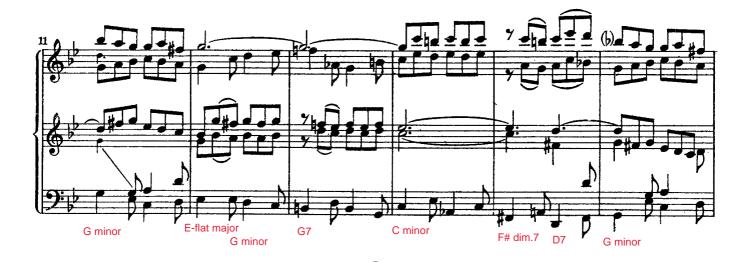


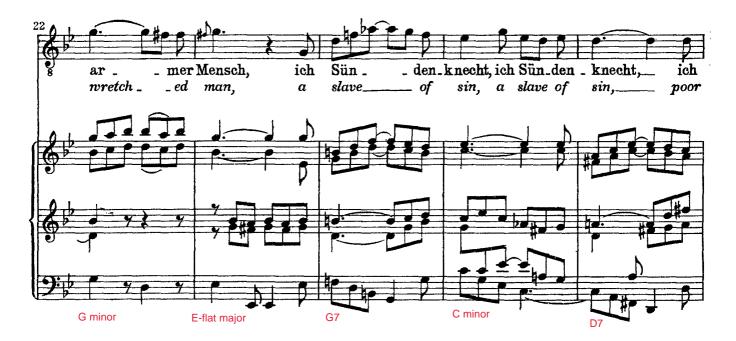
The throbbing/undulating rhythm in compound meter and minor mode is reminiscent of the opening of the St. Matthew Passion, portraying an attitude of lament. "The refrains within the text made it possible to conflate elements of da capo form with rounded binary form." (David Schulenberg in "Oxford Composer Companions. J. S. Bach," 225). The rising lines suggest increasing anxiety, perhaps also "heaped up sins" (see side note for possible biblical allusion).





Allusion to Jesus words in John 8:34: "...Every one who commits sin is a slave to sin (Luther 1545: der sünden Knecht)." Indirect allusion also to the day's Gospel reading, Matthew 18:23–26: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So The servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything."



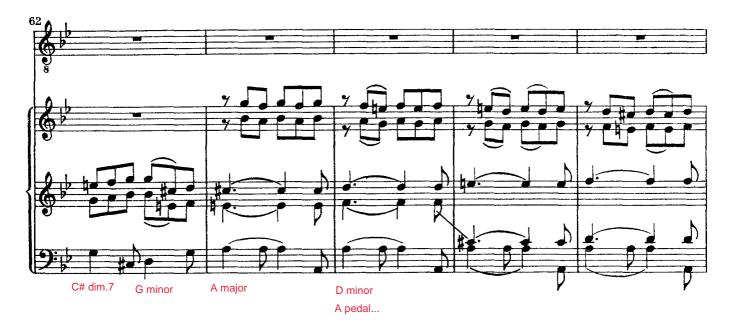




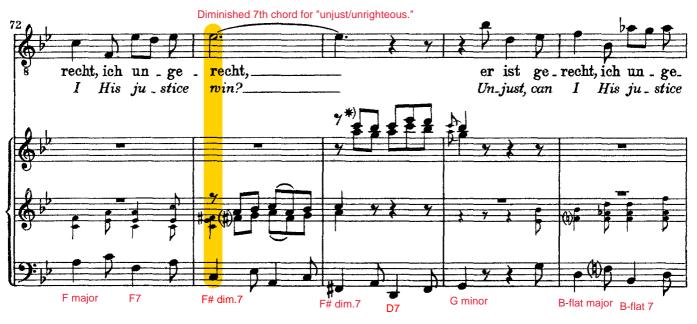


A pedal...



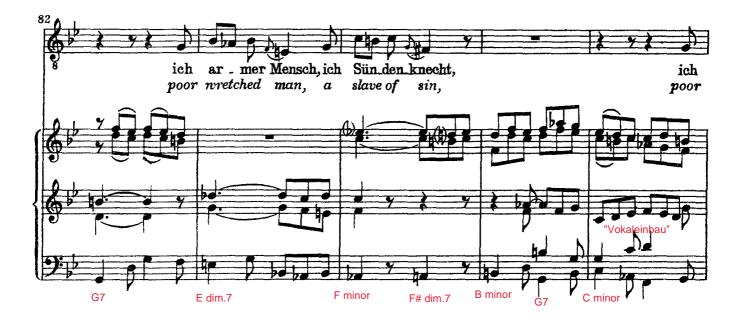


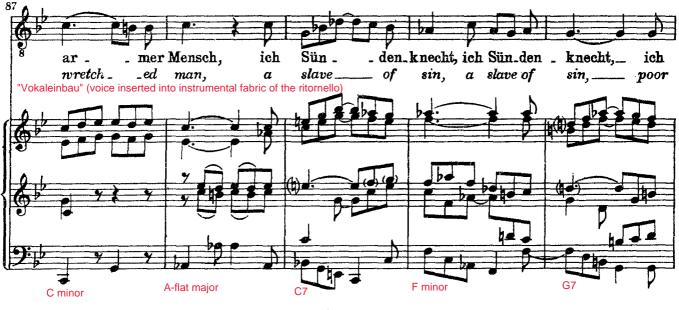




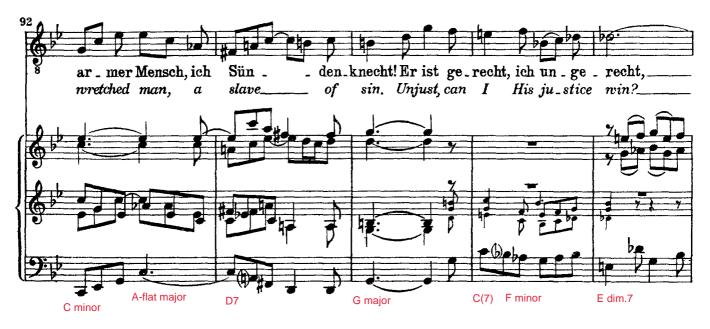
J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 55

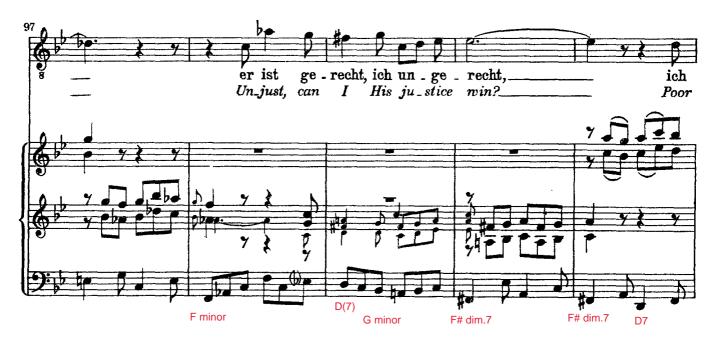






J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 55

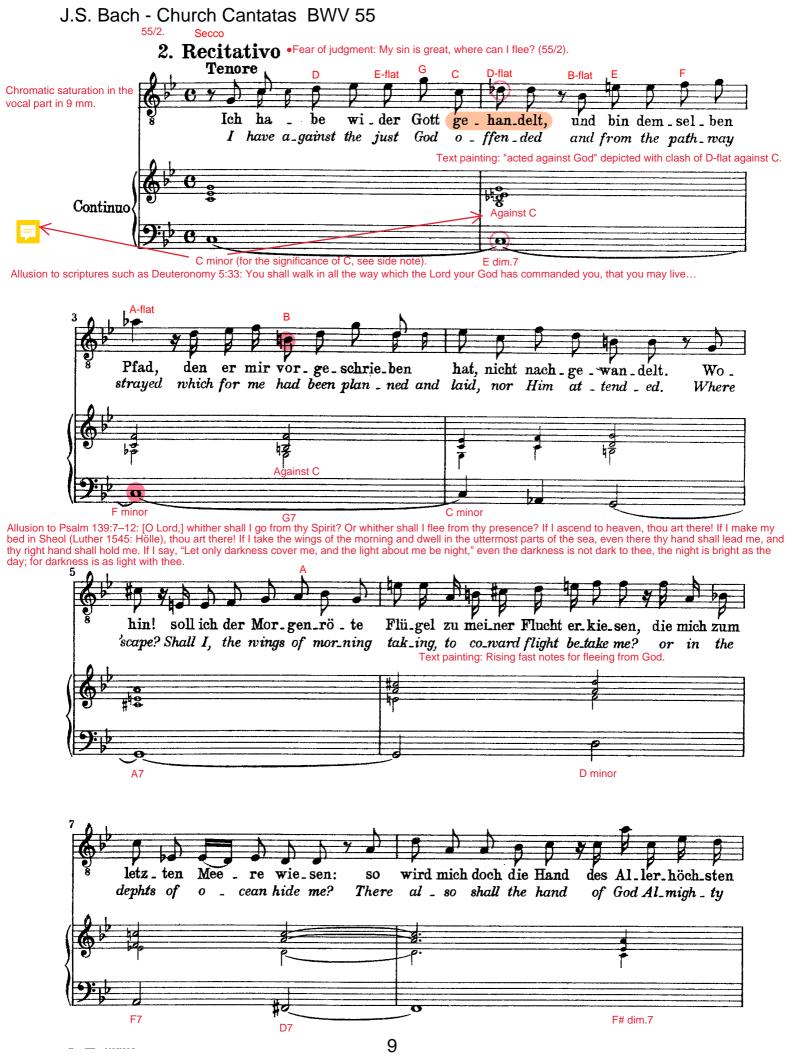






Text painting: Chromaticism from previous phrase on "Zittern" (trembling) reappears on the opening text. Compare mm. from mm. 50–52.

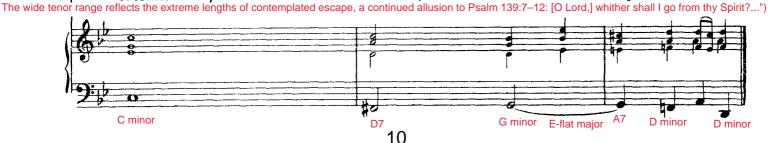




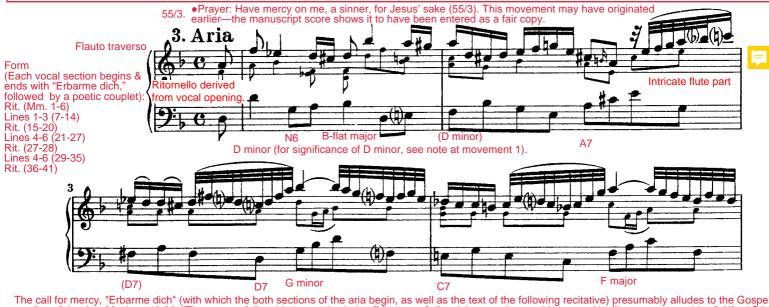
J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 55



sin_ner. And if to hea_ven I should ven_ture, God dwelleth there and threatens vengeance hot.

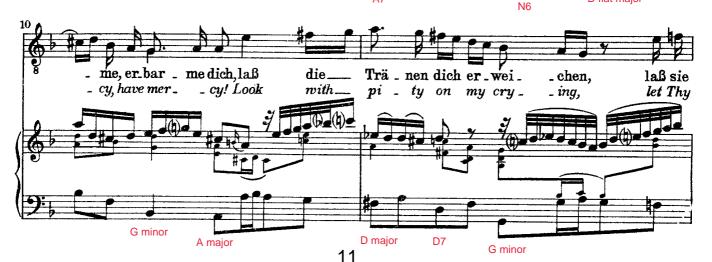


"Here...we find the gesture of beseeching, which is musically represented by a rising leap of a sixth and then a falling step of a second, by expressive, virtuoso flute passage-work, and by the frequent use of the Neapolitan-sixth chord." (Dürr/Jones, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 619.

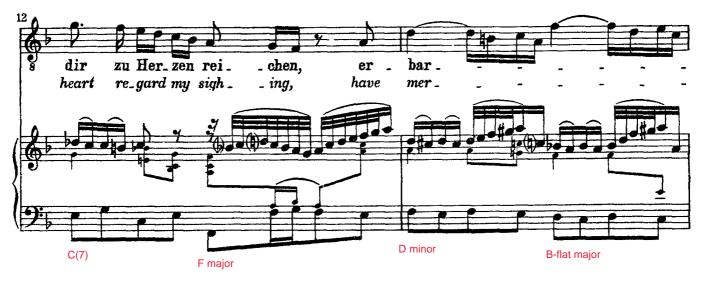


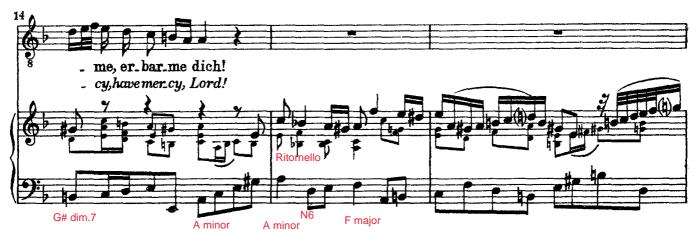
The call for mercy, "Erbarme dich" (with which the both sections of the aria begin, as well as the text of the following recitative) presumably alludes to the Gospel reading of the day, Matthew 18:26: "The servant fell on his knees, imploring [his master], "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." Alfred Dürr 5 **Tenore** refers to the "ever-changing melodic garb of the words 'Erbarme dich,' [extending] into the following movement." (Dürr/Jones, 619).

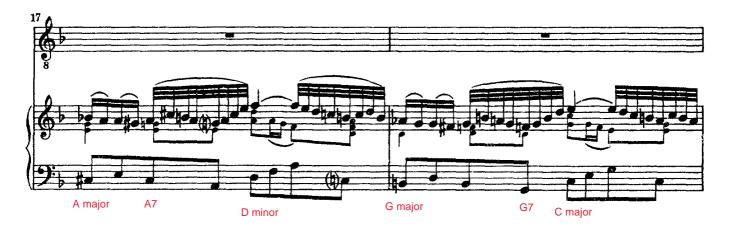


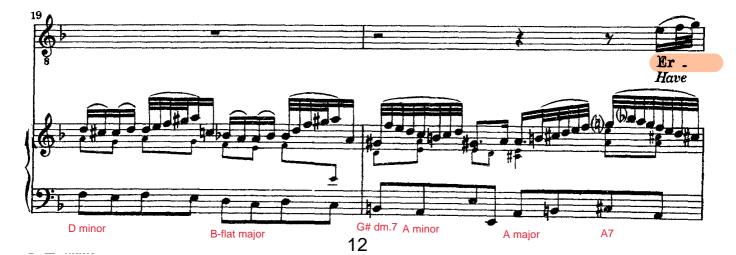


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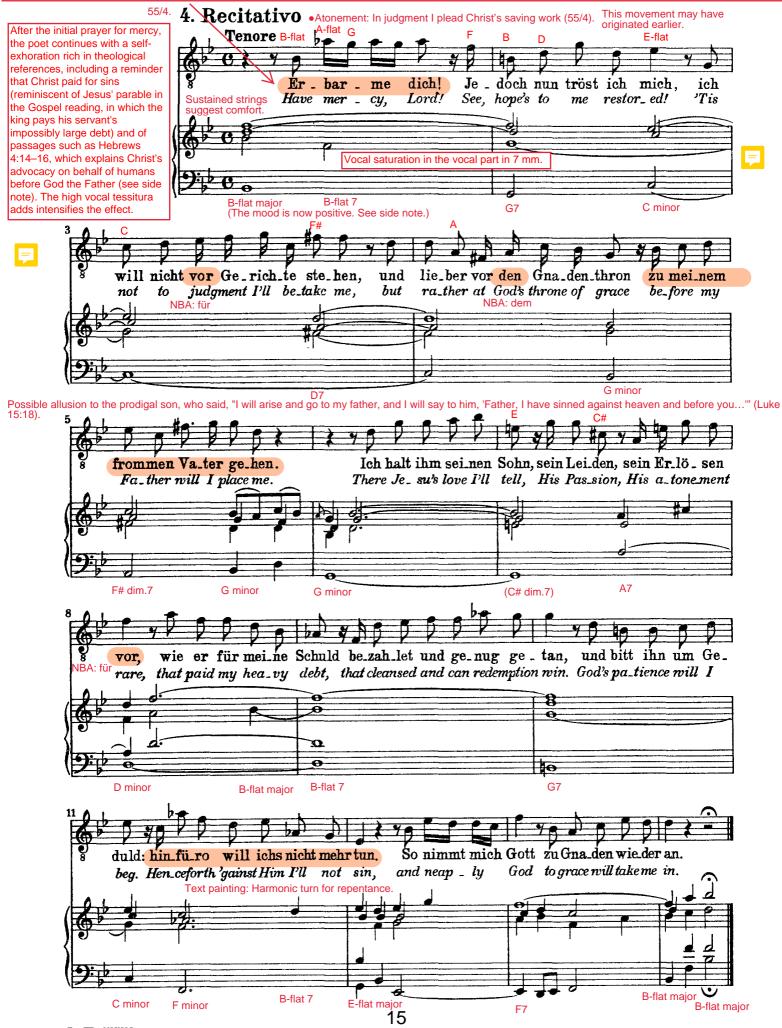








The opening "Erbarme dich" (which also begins both sections of the previous aria) presumably alludes to the Gospel reading of the day, Matthew 18:26: The servant fell on his knees, imploring, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." Compare the motive with "Erbarm es Gott" in the St. Matthew Passion.



The simplicity of the closing chorale suggests a child-like faith and assurance. Compare the setting of this same stanza in the St. Matthew Passion.

• Prayer of repentance, returning to God (55/5). This is the 6th stanza of 12 in the chorale "Werde munter, mein Gemüte" by Johann Rist (1607–1667).

