

The cantata was labelled "Dialogus."

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

Cantatas for Christmas and the New Year season 1726-1727 have not survived. This is the only surviving cantata between BWV 36 (for the first Sunday in Advent 1726—a reworking of a previous work) and BWV 82 ("Ich habe genug") for Purification on 2 February 1727. Bach seems to have reduced his efforts and commitment and at this time. BWV 58 uses reduced forces of S, B, oboes, strings, and continuo. BWV 82 is for B, oboe, strings, and continuo, with no chorale. Cantata 58 is the fourth of 4 dialogue cantatas for S & B in Bach's third cycle. See also BWV 57 (26 December 1725), 32 (13 January 1726), 49 (2 November 1726). Cantatas 49 and 58 are significant because both end with a bass aria (Jesus) that embeds a chorale sung by S (Soul), as does also 58/1. BWV 58 survives only in a revised version of 1733 or 1734; for the later version Bach added 3 oboes in movements 1 & 5 (third oboe as *taille*) and replaced the middle aria, which was originally in 12/8. Bach later assigned this cantata to the Chorale Cantata cycle (in 1725 there was no "Sunday after New Year"). It is not a true chorale cantata in that the outer movements are not from the same chorale and the inner movements are not chorale text paraphrases. See Dürr/Jones, p. 168.

J.S. Bach Cantata No. 58 Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid

• Dialogue: Way to heaven is hard (58/1).

Halting, dotted rhythms in sarabande? meter with chromatic pitches (e.g., lament figure); embedded chorale sung by soprano.

Dialogue cantata but not in the usual sense between Vox Christe and Soul.

Aria combined with embedded chorale in opening and closing movements. Aria-ritornello form combined with bar form of the hymn. See also BWV 49/6, 158/2, 156/2, 159/2.

This symmetrical work with movement no. 3 the keystone movement in the arch. See side note for more.

58/1. 1. Duetto

1.
Ritornello Lament figure
C major

For the possible significance of C major, see side note.

Instrumentation:

Oboe I, II
Taille (tenor oboe)
[Oboes added since 1733/34]
Vln I, II
Vla
SB
Continuo,
Organo

G major

D minor

Soprano double by *taille*

17 Soprano (Mel: „Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid“)

Chorale: Stanza 1 of "Ach Gott" by Martin Moller, which has 18 stanzas. For other appearances of same chorale, see 3/1 and 44/4.

Dialogue but more like a dialogue between two people than a believer and Christ; perhaps here representing Mary and Joseph in the Gospel reading (especially since the following movement speaks of God in the third person)..

Ach Gott, wie man - ches Her - ze - leid

Basso

Bach's score shows that he first intended the free part for alto voice but changed it to bass when writing out the parts (perhaps representing Mary & Joseph in the Gospel lesson).

Bass sings sighing/lament figure related to beginning of the ritornello.

Nur Ge - duld, Geduld, mein

(Fine)

C major

23

Her - ze, Ge - duld, — Geduld, mein Her - ze, — nur Ge - duld, —

28

nur Ge - duld, — nur Ge - duld, Geduld, mein Her - ze, Geduld, —

Vln I: Lament figure

33 **Soprano**

Here the texts are sung together in the manner of a duet. In the first movement, the focus is on "the present evil time"; in the final movement it is on "the joy of that future time."

be - geg - net mir zu die - ser Zeit!

— Ge - duld, mein Her - ze, Ge - duld, — Geduld, mein Her - ze, es ist

Vln II: Lament figure

38

ei - ne bö - - se, ei - ne bö - - se, bö - se Zeit!

2nd statement of ritornello

43

48

D major

53

Vln I: Lament figure

A minor

58

Soprano - Allusion to Matthew 7:14: "The gate is narrow and the way is hard [Luther: "schmal," i.e., "narrow"], that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

Der schma - le Weg - ist trüb - sal - voll,

Basso

Doch der - Gang zur Se - lig -

G major

Lament figure

63

keit, zur Se - - - lig - keit, doch der - Gang

Vln I: Lament figure

Vln II: Lament figure

A minor

2 measure bassetto technique (no continuo bass)

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

69

Word painting: The path to salvation (heaven) "shoots" up.

zur Se - lig - keit, zur Se - lig - keit, der Gang zur Se - lig - keit führt

A minor

D minor

74

Soprano

Here the texts are sung together in the manner of a duet.

den ich zum Him - mel

zur Freu -

Text painting: Melisma for "joy."

C major

78

wan - dern soll.

Descending chromatic tetrachord = traditional symbol of lament.

- de nach dem Schmer - ze, zur Freu - de nach dem

F minor

83

Schmerze. Nur Ge.duld, Geduld, mein Herze, es ist ei - ne bö - se Zeit!

First 2 lines of aria text (Bass voice) are repeated.

C major

dal segno

• Persecution: God rescues us like Joseph from Herod (58/2).

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

Secco Recitative

58/2.

2. Recitativo

Basso

E G# B D F C F# A D#

Ver-folgt dich gleich die ar-ge Welt, so hast du den-noch Gott zum

Angular melody. Important words often emphasized with high notes

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 6 mm. Then only 11 different pitch classes in the rest of the vocal line.

Continuo

Allusion to Abraham, whom God called to a new land (like Joseph in the Gospel reading) and who was called a friend of God. See Genesis 12:1, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah 41:8.

Key of A minor

E major

Rhetorical leap for raging King Herod

3

Freunde, der wi-der dei-ne Feinde dir-stets den Rük-ken hält. Und wenn der

B-flat

6

wütende He-ro-des das Ur-teil ei-nes schmähen To-des gleich ü-ber un-sern Hei-land

F# A E-flat D B C F G

A-flat

Allusion to the day's Gospel reading: Matthew 2:13-23, in which King Herod kills all male children 2 years old and under to attempt to kill the child Jesus.

9

fällt, so kommt ein En-gel in der Nacht, der läs-set Jo-seph träumen, daß er dem

B-flat E C#

See side note for the relevant passage in the day's Gospel reading.

C minor G minor

11

Würgersoll entfliehen und nach Ä-gyp-ten ziehen. Gott hat ein Wort, das

D minor D major

Reminiscent of the avenging angel who killed all the first-born of Egypt before the Exodus.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

Eric Chafe sees the "flood of waters" as a reference to the Exodus, and he sees the first 2 movements as representing the old year (the time of Israel) and the last 2 movements as the new year (the time of Christ). See "Analyzing Cantatas," 260, note 11; "Tonal Allegory, 154-55.

14

dich vertrauend macht. Er spricht: Wenn Berg und Hügel nieder - sinken, wenn du in Wasser.

Text painting: Leaps for mountain & hill NBA: Wenn dich die Flut des Wassers will ertrinken

Allusion to such biblical passages as Isaiah 54:10 and Matthew 24:35 (see side note).

G minor F major



17

flu. ten willst er trinken, so will ich dich doch nicht ver. las. sen noch versäumen.

Flood of water: Probably an allusion to Isaiah 43:1-2 (see side note), which itself is reminiscent of the Exodus through the Red Sea.

Leap for rhetorical emphasis on "not."

Biblical allusion to Hebrews 13:5-6 (see side note).

G minor F major

This aria is new to the later version, replacing an aria in 12/8 meter, which perhaps had a different text (only the continuo part survives). See Dürr/Jones, 168. Its central (keystone) position in a chiasmic form gives it importance (see earlier note about the significance of chiasmic form in Bach's work).

• Affliction: God is my confidence so I am content (58/3).

58/3. 3. Aria

Obligato Vln is very active. "Walking" rhythm suggests the believer's trudging (but carefree?) pilgrimage to heaven.

Viol. solo

Modified da capo form.

Solo Vln. *f*

Opening gesture based on vocal opening.

Continuo

D minor

Rhythmic figuration in solo violin contributes to a carefree mood.

4

F major

7

G minor

10

F major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

12 Soprano

Ich bin ver - gnügt in mei - nem Lei - den,

p

D minor

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

ich bin ver - gnügt, ver -

f *p*

gnügt in meinem Lei - den, denn Gott ist mei - - ne Zu - ver -

D minor

sicht; ich bin ver - - gnügt, ver-gnügt in meinem Lei - den,

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

23

denn Gott ist mei-ne Zu-ver-sicht, denn Gott ist

26

mei - ne Zu - ver - sicht.

A minor

28

D minor

C major

B Section begins with syncopations in both voice and violin, suggesting casual/carefree certainty.

31

A minor

D minor

Repeated 8th notes in continuo reinforce matter-of-fact assertion.

34

G major

C major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

37 *tr*
sel - ber — nicht;
tr
tr
Plodding 8ths in solo violin reinforce the matter-of-fact statement of assurance.
G minor

Text painting: Held note for "sure/secure."

40
ich ha - - be — si - -
G minor

Seal: Allusion to biblical passages such as 2 Timothy 2:19: "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his'" and Revelation 9:4: "The seal of God [was] upon their foreheads." Also Ephesians 1:13-14 ("sealed with the Holy Spirit").

Text painting: Held note for "secure/firm."

43
- chern Brief und Sie - gel, und die - ses ist der fe - - - ste —
B-flat major

46
Rie - gel, den bricht auch selbst die Höl - - - le nicht, den bricht
G minor

48

auch selbst die Höl - - le nicht, den bricht auch

D minor

51

A material returns without intervening ritornello.

selbst die Höl - - le nicht. Ich bin ver - gnügt in

D minor

53

mei - nem Lei - den, ich

56

bin ver - gnügt, ver - gnügt in meinem Lei - den, denn Gott ist mei -

D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 58

59

- ne Zu - versicht, ich bin ver - gnügt, ver - gnügt in meinem

62

Lei - den, denn Gott ist mei - ne Zu - ver - sicht; denn

cresc.

G minor

64

Gott ist mei - ne Zu - ver - sicht.

tr *f* Closing ritornello

D minor

67

(tr)

70

F major

73

G minor

75

F major

Secco Recitative ending with arioso after 4 mm.

•Persecution: God shows me a new land (58/4): Allusion to Gospel reading, in which an angel directs Joseph to take the infant Jesus to Egypt to escape King Herod's wrath.

D minor

58/4.

4. Recitativo

Four lines of text are set succinctly in 4 mm., the last 2 in an arioso of 11 mm.

Soprano

Kann es die Welt nicht las-sen, mich zu ver-fol-gen und zu

Continuo

F major

Chromaticism: In first 4 mm. of the entire texture, D# and F# are missing.

3

has-sen, so weist mir Got-tes Hand ein and-res Land.

Allusion to the day's Gospel reading.

5

Arioso

Ach!könn't es heu- - te noch ge-sche-hen, daß ich mein E- - den möchte

Walking bass

A minor

8

se - hen, ach! könnt' es könnt' es heute noch, ach! könnt' es heu - te noch ge - sche - hen, daß

11

ich mein E - den, daß ich mein E - den möchte se - hen, ach! könnt' es heu - te noch ge -

G major C major

13

sche - hen, daß ich mein E - den. mein E - den möch - te - se - - hen!

A minor A minor

Opening chorale returns (Soul) against voice of Jesus (aria). In the opening movement, the chorale is in 3/4 meter. As in the opening movement, 3 oboes were added for the 1733/1734 version. In comparison to movement no. 1, this chorale setting is jubilant.

58/5. 5. Duetto • Dialogue (Christ & Believer): Way to heaven is worth it (58/5).

Concerto-like writing in which Ob I and Vln I lead with 16th-note figurations.

Ob. I, II
Taille
Viol. I, II
Va.
Continuo

Concerto-like texture begins with triadic fanfare motive (derived from Bass voice's opening), which recurs in the movement.

C major
Descending C major scale may represent help of Jesus (C major triad was considered the most perfect and often used for Jesus).

Continuo has triadic motive in syncopation, reinforcing the carefree mood.

6

G major

11

This is stanza 2 of "Herr, Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht" by Martin Behm, which has 15 stanzas, sung here to the same chorale tune as the opening movement.
(Mel: „Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid“)

16 **Soprano**

Ich hab' vor mir

p

G major C major walking bass F major

21

ein' schwe - - re Reis.

C major G major

26

G major

31 **Basso**

Nur ge - - trost, ge - trost, ihr Her - zen, nur ge - -

p

C major

36

trost, nur ge - trost, ge - trost, ihr Her - zen, ge -

G major

41 **Soprano** Here the texts are sung together in the manner of a duet (similar to movement no. 1).

zu dir ins Him -

trost, ihr Her - zen, hier ist Angst,

G major

46

mels - pa - ra - deis,

dort Herr - lich -

G major

51

keit, hier ist Angst, dort Herr -

G major

56

- lich-keit, dort Herr - lich-keit!

G major

61

tr

66

B Section.
Soprano Here the texts are sung together in the manner of a duet (similar to movement no. 1).
da ist mein rech - tes
Basso Und die Freu -
Text painting: Long melisma for "joy."
G major C major F major

71

Va - ter - land, In the first movement, the focus was on "the present evil time"; here it is on "the joy of that future time."
de je - ner - Zeit.

76

und die Freu - - - de je - ner Zeit ü - - ber -

A minor D minor

80

wie - get al - le Schmer - - - -

A minor

84 **Soprano**

dar - - - an du

- zen, al - le Schmer - zen, und die

88

dein Blut hast ge - - -

Freu - - - - de je - -

C major

92

wandt.

ner Zeit ü - ber - wie - get al - le

Ritornello returns

F major

96

Schmer - zen. Nur ge - trost, nur ge -

Opening line of the Bass aria text is repeated for emphasis.

100

trost, hier ist Angst,

C major

104

dort Herr - lich - keit, dort Herr - lich - keit!

C major