

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 59

Form: Duet (S/B) - Recit (S) - Chorale - Aria (B). The libretto, written by Erdmann Neumeister, who published it in 1714 as part of a yearly cycle of cantata texts called "Geistliche Poesien mit untermischten Biblischen Sprüchen und Choralen auf alle Sonn- und Festtage" (Spiritual Poetry with Biblical Sayings and Chorales Intermixed for all Sundays and Feast Days), originally intended for Georg Philipp Telemann, had seven movements in all (no. 5. chorale, no. 6 recitative, no. 7 aria). Bach set only the first four movements. Ending without a chorale seems unusual. While Bach's autograph score ends with no. 4, the autograph parts have markings suggesting something more was to come (see images below and side note).

Introduction and updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/13; BC A82
Pentecost (BWV 172, 59, 74, 34)
*Acts 2:1-13 (Outpouring of the Holy Spirit)
*John 14:23-31 (Jesus' farewell; he promises to send the Holy Spirit)
Librettist: Erdmann Neumeister
TC: 16 May 1723; FP: 28 May 1724 (with BWV 172 at St. Nicholas).
Note: Bach began official church duties in Leipzig on 30 May, the first Sunday after Trinity, when he presented BWV 75. Perhaps he wrote BWV 59 earlier because he was expecting to be working at the main churches by Pentecost (11 May, 1723).
Alternatively, he may have performed BWV 59 at the University Church on that day, since he began work there at that time. See "New Bach Reader," 119c; Wolff, "J. S. Bach, the Learned Musician," 242-43, 269.

Bach re-used movements 1 & 4 in BWV 74/1 & 2 (different text in 74/2).

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 59

Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten

1. Duetto

59/1.

Instrumentation:
Tromba I, II
Timp
Vln I, II
Vla
Continuo
Organo

See side note for Alfred Dürr's description of the first movement.

Though the text is the Vox Christi, it is set as a dialogue between the Soul and Christ.

• Promise of God's indwelling: John 14:23 (59/1).

The first movement appears again in Cantata 74 (1725), where Bach sets it for 4 voices, 3 trumpets, timpani, 2 oboes plus oboe da caccia, strings, and continuo. The movement is characterized by constant tonal oscillation between a major key and its dominant (especially C major and G major), presumably to depict the conditional nature of the biblical statement.

The 3 trumpets are used antiphonally, underscoring the relational/conditional nature of Jesus' promise.

Ritornello's head motive is derived from vocal line ("He who loves me")

Trps & Timp

Strings

mf

D7 G major G7 C major (D7) G(7) C major

C major (for the significance of C, see side note). Continuo has walking bass.

Vln I & 2 have sequentially descending lines.

C major D7 G major

Trps & Timp

G major G7

Statement 1: CM-GM

Soprano.

Wer mich liebet,
Basso.

The text is the opening statement in the day's Gospel reading (see side note). Bach sets the complete text 5 times, the first 4 times as canons (often used to depict discipleship—the *imitatio Christi*). Here, the soprano (Soul) often leads the bass (the *Vox Christi*), emphasizing the initiative of the soul (which, however, needs constant reminding). See Petzoldt, *Bach Kommentar* 2:977.

wer mich liebet,

Wer mich liebet,

wer mich

editorial realization of continuo

Trp I

Strings (Vln I with head motive)

p

C major D7 G major G(7) C major (D7) G major G(7)

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Word painting: Sustained notes for "hold."

11

der wird mein Wort hal - - - ten, und mein Va - ter wird ihn lie - ben, und wir
lie - bet, der wird mein Wort hal - - - ten, und mein. Vater wird ihn

C major D(7) G(7)

14

wer - den zu ihm kommen und Wohnung bei ihm ma - - - chen;
lie - ben, und wir wer - den zu ihm kommen und Wohnung bei ihm ma - - - chen;

C major D(7) G major

16

Statement 2. CM-Am.
The bass (Vox Christi)
leads, as if to remind
the Soul.

wer mich - - - liebet, der wird mein Wort
wer mich - - - liebet, der wird mein Wort hal - - - -

G major G7 C major (D7) G(7) C major

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19

hal - - - ten, und mein Va - ter wird ihn lie - ben, und wir

- ten, und mein Va - ter wird ihn lie - ben, und wir wer - den zu ihm

D7 G major A(7) D minor A minor E major A minor

22

wer - den zu ihm kommen und Wohnung bei ihm ma - - - chen.

kom - - - - - men und Wohnung bei ihm ma - - - chen.

A minor A minor

24

A minor A minor

27

Statement 3. Am-Dm. Wer mich - - - liebet, der wird mein Wort

Wer mich - - - liebet, Trp I

A minor A minor G major

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30

hal - - - ten, und mein Va - - - ter wird ihn lie - ben, und wir
der wird mein Wort hal - - - ten, und mein Va - - - ter wird ihn

C major F major

33

wer - den zu ihm kom - - - men und Wohnung bei ihm ma -
lie - ben, und wir wer - den zu ihm kommen und Wohnung bei ihm ma -

F major A7 D minor D minor

35

chen. Wer mich -

chen.

Trp I & II Trps & Timp

mf *p*

D minor D minor C major F major

Statement 4. FM-CM.

The 4th statement essentially repeats the first one on the subdominant, though the order of voices is not the always same and the instrumental lines are different. It acts as a kind of reprise, with the 5th statement functioning like a coda (see note at beginning).

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38

liebet, wer mich liebet,

Wer mich liebet, wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort

Trp I with head motive

Trp II

F major G7 C major C(7) F major G7 C(7) F majors

Compare m. 10, where the soprano leads. Here the Vox Christi leads, as if to remind the soul.

41

der wird mein Wort hal - - - ten, und mein Va - ter wird ihn lie - ben, und wir

hal - - - ten, und mein Va - ter wird ihn lie - ben, und wir wer - den zu ihm

F major G7 C major

44

wer - den zu ihm kommen und Wohnung bei ihm ma - chen.

kommen und Wohnung bei ihm ma - - - chen.

Trps & Timp

C major D7 G major G(7)

46

Wer mich lie-bet, der wird mein Wort hal-ten, und mein

Wer mich lie-bet, der wird mein Wort hal-ten, und mein

Trps

C major D7 G major G(7) C major

49

Va-ter wird ihn lie-ben, und wir wer-den zu ihm kommen und Woh-

Va-ter wird ihn lie-ben, und wir wer-den zu ihm kommen und Woh-

C major

51

-nung bei ihm ma-chen.

-nung bei ihm ma-chen.

Choral: Leut' dich Chorale Leut' dich

+Timp

Ritornello extended; concerto-like interplay between strings and trumpets. See full score.

C major D7 G major (A7) D minor A minor G7

54

+Timp

Avoiding C major... G major C(7)

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56

F major

G major

A minor deceptive

59

F major

G7

C major

C major

59/2. 2. Recitativo •Pentecost: God honors mortals by indwelling them (59/2).

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 10 mm.

A question of amazement (related to the day's Gospel reading of Jesus' promise for divine indwelling and the Pentecost account of the Holy Spirit's descent on the believers Cont. in Jerusalem) is asked, then repeated in some form 3 more times, ending with a wish related to the previous movement's text ("He who loves me...").

1. Soprano

Exclamatio

O! was sind das für Ehren, wo-zu uns Je-sus setzt? Der uns so würdig

Translation: O, what kind of honors are those, to which Jesus places us?

NBA: vor

NBA: worzu

"Halo" of strings to suggest God's presence. The Vln I rises to C major, suggest heavenly honors.

A minor

G7

C major

The first person plural of the preceding movement's text is understood trinitarily, a doctrine reinforced by biblical passages such as Ephesians 3:14-19 (see side note). The following Sunday is Trinity Sunday, beginning the Trinity season. Bach emphasizes the concept by giving the highest note to the word "and."; descending line for entering human hearts

C#

schätzt, daß er verheißt, samt Vater und dem heiligen Geist, in unsre Herzen einzukehren.

that he promises, with Father and the Holy Ghost, into our hearts to enter.

NBA: unsern

D(7)

G minor

A major

The text is reminiscent of the day's Gospel and Epistle readings (see above), but also to biblical passages such as Psalm 144:3-4. O Lord, what is man that thou dost regard him, or the son of man that thou dost think of him: Man is like a breath, his days are like a passing shadow; Psalm 103:14. [God] knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust; Ecclesiastes 2:23. All [man's] days are full of pain, and his work is a vexation...

G#

NBA: F#

Exclamatio

O! was sind das für Eh-ren?

Der Mensch ist Staub, der Ei-telkeit ihr

Man is (but) dust, of futility the prey,

NBA: vor

Diminished 7th chord for "dust."

D minor

iv

E major

C# dim.7

Phrygian cadence, commonly used for questions.7

Diminished 7th chord for "care."

F# dim. 7th chord for "miser's object."

10

Raub, der Müh' und Arbeit Trauerspiel, und allen Elends Zweck und Ziel.

of care and toil the tragic drama, and of all misery the object and goal.

NBA: alles

D minor F# dim.7 D7 G minor F# dim.7 G minor

13

Wie nun? Der Allerhöchste spricht: er will in unsern Seelen die Wohnung sich er-

How then? The Most High says: He desires in our souls a dwelling for himself to elect.

G minor G7 C major C(7) F major

16

wählen. Ach! was tut Gottes Lie-be nicht? Ach, daß doch, wie er wollte, ihn

Ah, what does God's love not all do? Ah, if only, as he would wish,

G7 C major G minor A major D7

(Arioso)

Related to Jesus' conditional promise in the previous movement: "He who loves me..."

19

auch ein jeder lie-ben, ihn auch ein je-der lie - ben, ihn auch ein

every one would love him.

G major G7 C major

22

je - der lie - ben soll - te!

D(7) G major G major G major

59/3. 3. Choral (Eigene Melodie)

"Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott"
Hymn by Martin Luther

¶ Der gesang Veni sancte spiritus.

Rom heyliger geystherre Gott erful mi,

deyner gnaden gult deyner gleubgē hertz muz

hundert fünf, denn hundertfünflich entzündt im vben

Alto & Tenor join the soloists.

While Vln I & continuo duplicate the soprano and vocal bass respectively, Vln II and Vla sometimes expand the texture to 6 parts. See full score.

Viol. I, II
Va.
Cont.

G major

D major G major

D major G major

(A7)

G major

© Major

A major

D major

B minor

r E minor

D major

G major

11

entzünd in ihm! O Herr, durch deines Lichtes Glanz zu dem Glauben versammelt

Phrygian cadence

B minor

E7 A minor A minor B major E minor D major G major D major G(7) C major G major

The reference to God's people coming from all the world and from all languages is reminiscent of the Pentecost account and of other biblical passages (see side note).

17

hast das Volk aus aller Welt Zungen; das sei dir, Herr, zu

hast das Volk aus aller Welt Zungen; das sei dir, Herr, zu

hast das Volk aus aller Welt Zungen; das sei dir, Herr, zu

hast das Volk aus aller Welt Zungen; das sei dir, Herr, zu

G major A(7) D major G major E7 A minor

Text painting: Wide-ranging part-writing for "from all the world and tongues."

23

Lob gesungen. Alleluja, alleluja!

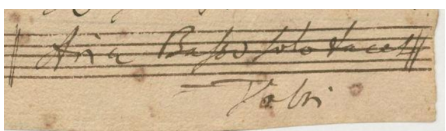
Lob gesungen. Alleluja, alleluja!

Lob gesungen. Alleluja, alleluja!

Lob gesungen. Alleluja, alleluja!

G major D major D major G major G major E minor G major G major

At this point, the tenor performing part notes the bass aria and has the word "Volti," suggesting that something will follow the bass aria (see below).



4. Aria •Pentecost: God's indwelling is greater than all earthly kingdoms; some day we shall dwell with him in heaven (59/4).
59/4. (Andante $\text{♩} = 66$)

A final trio setting (solo violin, bass, and continuo), makes the cantata seem incomplete.

Form (Rhyme: ABAB-CC-DD-EE)
Ritornello (mm. 1-8) CM
Lines 1-2 (8-12) CM-GM
Lines 3-4 (12-16) CM-GM
Lines 5-6 (16-20) CM-Am
Rit. (20-24) Am-GM
Lines 7-8 (23-30) (GM)-G7
Lines 9-10 (31-34) CM
Rit. (34-42) CM

1. Solo Vln.

mf Ritornello Figura corta (see note below).

The long text of 10 lines with rhyme scheme of ABAB-CC-DD-EE, is structured in 2 parts: the first 6 lines being treated like the 2 Stollen and Abgesang of bar form (AAB). This first part "derives its thematic material strictly from the opening ritornello, whereas the second is more freely structured." See "The Cantatas of J. S. Bach," trans. Richard Jones, p. 351.

3

6

8 Basso Line 1.

Die Welt mit al - len Kö - nig - rei - chen,

11 Line 2. Line 3.

die Welt mit al - ler Herr - lich - keit kann die - ser

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13 Line 4.

Herr - - - - - lich - keit nicht glei - chen, wo - mit uns

C major

15 Line 5.

un - ser Gott - - - - - er - - - freut: daß er - in -

D(7) G major G major G7 C major C7

17 Line 6.

un - sern Her - zen thro - - - - - net und wie in -

D minor D minor

19

ei - nem Him - mel woh - - - - - net.

E7 A minor E major A minor

mf Ritornello

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21

A minor D major D7 G major

Line 7 begins with a preemptive interjection (before the ritornello finishes), which then repeats...

Ach! ach Gott, ach! ach Gott, wie se - lig sind wir

Chromatic inflection flat-ward for the exclamation "ah!"

G major C7 F major G7

Word painting: Long melisma with figura corta for "how blessed we are."

doch, wie se - lig sind wir

Regarding the figura corta, see side note.

A7 D minor G7 C major

Line 8.

doch, wie se - lig wer - den wir erst noch, wie se - lig

Melodic flourish for "how blessed we will be."

D minor (C7)

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Line 9.

30

wer - den wir erst noch, wenn wir nach die - ser Zeit der Er -

(D minor) G7 C major E7 A minor

The bass performing part ends with the words "Chorale Segue." See the note at the end of no. 1.

32

den bei dir im Himmel woh-nen werden, im Him - mel wohnen wer - den.

Text painting: Ascending scales for "shall dwell with thee in heaven."

See full score.

G major C major C major

35

Figura corta permeates the texture...

C major D7 G major

38

G major B-flat major A7 D minor

40

D minor G major G7 C major C major

At this point, Neumester's libretto has "Gott heil'ger Geist" (the 3rd stanza of Luther's hymn *Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*). One could "complete" the cantata with Bach's setting in Cantata 6/6, transposed from G minor to A minor, though that would give the sopranos a high G. See Petzoldt, *Bach Kommentar* 2:975, 980.