



The successive movements repeatedly allude to Psalm 33:4 (RSV): For the word of the Lord is upright; and all his work is done in faithfulness (Luther 1545: Denn des HERRN Wort ist wahrhaftig, Und was er zusaget, das helt er gewis, better translated as "For the word of the LORD is true, and what he promises he surely keeps").

Cantata No. 86

Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch

The first movement is a fugue. Alfred Dürr writes, "All parts, not only the bass but also the strings...are decidedly vocal in conception. In fact, if the instruments adhered to the range of the human voice, it would be easy to sing the entire movement as a four-part motet with continuo accompaniment. The instrumental introduction states the distinctive motives to which the text is later sung by the bass...The instrumental prelude is followed by three similar vocal sections, A A1 A2, within each of which the text is delivered in full." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, trans. Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 322.

•Vox Christi: I will grant your requests: Jn. 16:23 (86/1).

6/1. Aria

1. Ob d'amore II, Vln II $\text{♩} = 60$

Eric Chafe suggests that because E major is at the upper limit of Bach's tonal spectrum, it has positive associations. See Eric Chafe, *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 153.

The instrumental lines are vocal in conception. Three vocal themes are presented contrapuntally in the ritornello (a 4th theme is the tail of no. 2):

1. "Wahrlich, ich sage euch" (mm. 21-24)
2. "so ihr den Vater etwas bitten werdet" (mm. 31-34)
3. "in meinem Namen" (36-38)
4. "so wird ers euch geben" (39-41).

The themes are presented in various combinations, somewhat like a permutation fugue, resulting in frequent part crossing.

For Martin Petzoldt's take on the theological basis for Bach's structure, see side note.



Section A.

A Bass

See full score. E major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 86

27

wahr - lich, wahr - lich, ich sa - - ge euch, so ihr den Va - ter Etwas

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Vla

E major F#7 B major B major B7 C# minor

33

bit - ten wer - det in meinem Na - - men,

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

Vla

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

E major E major C# minor G#7

39

so wird er's euch ge - ben, so wird er's euch ge - ben, so wird

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

C# minor B7 E major G# major C# minor

44

er's euch ge - - ben. Wahr - lich,

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

Vla

D major A major A major B7 E major 8va up (see full score).

B Section A'

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50

wahr.lich,ich sa . ge euch, wahr - lich,

Ob d'am I Vln I continued...
Ob d'am II Vln II
Vla

E major G#7 C# minor C#7 F# minor

58

wahr - lich,ich sa . - ge euch, so ihr den Va . ter Et . was

Ob d'am I Vln I

The second statement of the complete text migrates to the parallel minor of the original key's subdominant (AM / F#m)

C#(7) F# minor G#(7) C# minor F#7

61

bit . ten wer - det in meinem Na .

Ob d'am . I Vln I
Ob d'am II Vln II

B major G# minor

66

- . men, so wird er's euch ge - ben, so wird er's euch ge .

D#(7) G# minor F#(7) B major Fxdim.7 D#(7)

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71

ben, so wird er's euch ge - - ben.

Ob d'am I
Vln I

Vla

G# minor B7 See full score for 8va. E major E major F#7

77

Section A". Wahr-lich, wahr-lich, ich sa - - ge euch, so ihr den Vater Etwas bit-ten wer -

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

B major E major E major F#7

Continuo up 8va (see full score).

The third statement of the entire text reestablishes E major.

"Namen" ("name") is rhetorically stressed with extended notes.

83

det in meinem Na - - men, so ihr den Vater Etwas

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

B major B7 C# minor E major E major E major

89

bitten wer - det in mei - nem - Na - - - - men,

Vla

E major

95

so wird er's euch ge - - ben, euch ge - ben.

Vla continued...

D major C# minor B(7) E major E major

In light of Jesus' promise, the alto determines to pick roses despite the prick of thorns. The solo violin's ebullient figuration, characterized by an ascending triadic opening followed by more upward leaps and fast scales may suggest opening blooms, while the broken chords may refer to the "breaking off of roses" or the spiky thorns" (compare the vocal setting in mm. 14 & 20. Performances vary in affect, depending on tempo (from Helmuth Rilling at MM=48 to Rudolf Lutz at MM=72).

Alfred Dürr writes, "[This aria is] exceptional in that its obbligato violin part contains a minimum of thematic writing and a maximum of virtuoso figuration." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 321.

Aria • Confidence in face of trouble, that prayers are heard (86/2).
86/2. (Adagio ma non troppo $\text{♩} = 56$)

Solo Violin

1.

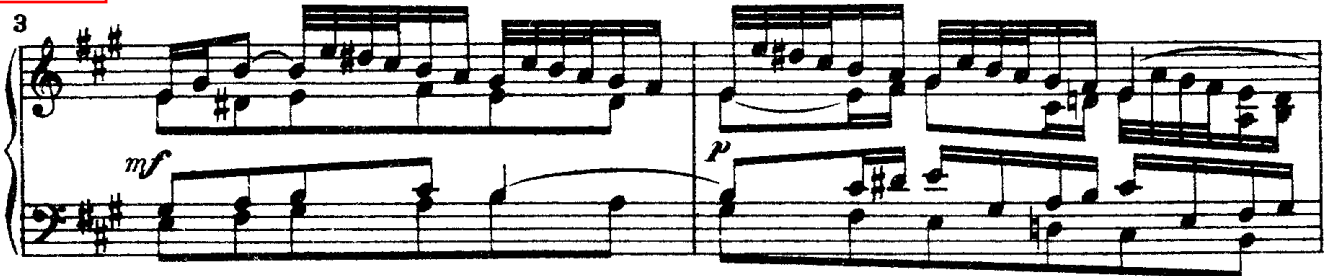
mf Middle parts are editorial realization... *p*



A major Walking bass, perhaps to picture the stroll of the person walking among the roses referenced in the text. B7

3.

mf *p*



E major A major

5.

7



A7 D major

7.

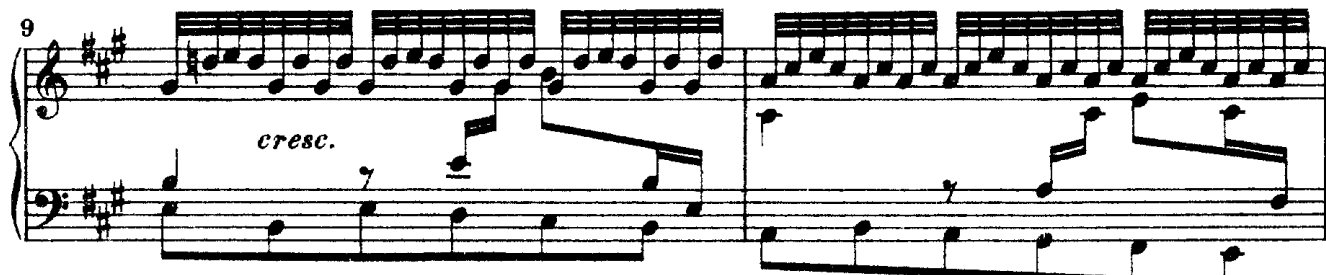
7



B7 E major

9.

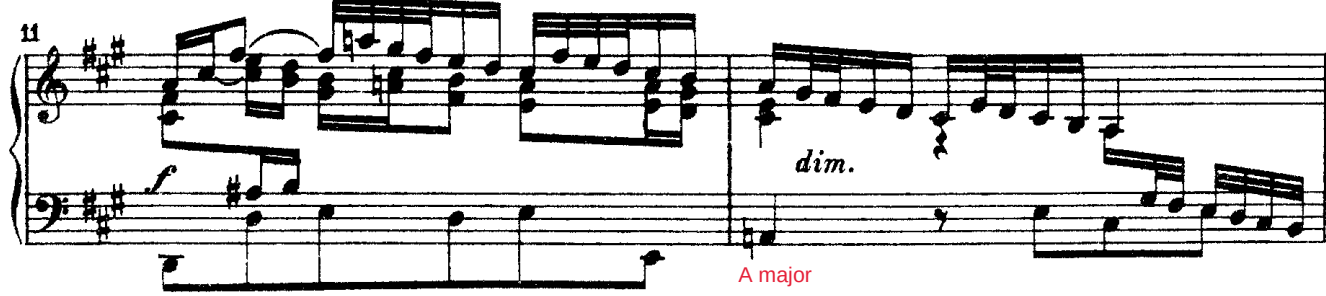
cresc. 7



E7 A major

11.

f *dim.*



A major

Alto is often the voice of the believing soul or church. See Martin Petzoldt, "Bach Kommentar" 1:176, 541, 592, 694, 2:824, 2:917, 3:101, 143, etc. The text alludes to Song of Solomon 6:2, although there the roles are reversed (it is the bridegroom who is gathering roses): "My beloved has gone down to his garden...to gather lilies (Luther 1545: Rosen breche)." Word painting: Broken chord for "brechen" (break [roses]).

18 **Alto**

Ich will doch wohl Ro - sen bre - - chen,

Editorial additions are grayed out for clarity.

15

wenn mich gleich **die** Dor - nen ste - - chen,

NBA: itzt (each time)

B7 E major

17

ich will doch wohl Ro - sen bre - - - chen,

E major E(7) A major C#7

19

wenn mich gleich die Dor - - nen ste - - - chen,

F# minor F# minor E major A major

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21 **B**

ich will doch wohl Ro - sen bre - chen,

A7 D major

23

wenn mich gleich die Dor - nen - ste - chen,

B7 E major

25

ich - will doch wohl Ro - sen - bre - chen, wenn mich

E7 A major

27

Chromaticism for "Dornen stechen" ("thorns prick").

gleich die Dor - nen - ste -

D# dim.7 E major

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29 **C**
- - - - - chen.
mf *p*
A minor N6 D# dim.7 E major A major B7

32
mf *p*
E major A major

34
A7 D major

36
B7 E major

38
cresc. 7
E7 A major

40
A major

The spiritual metaphor is explained in the B section, where personal affliction is acknowledged and the music turns to the minor mode. For the significance of major vs. minor, see side note.



42 **D**

Denn ich bin der Zu_ver_sicht, denn_ich_ bin der Zu_ver_

p

F# minor

F# minor

45

sicht: dass mein Bit - - - ten und_ mein

F# minor

B7

47

Fle - - - - -

Sighing duples for "my pleading."

E major

49

- - - - - hen_ Gott_ ge - wiss zu_ Her - - - zen_

E# dim.7

C#7

9

51

ge - hen, weil es mir sein Wort ver-spricht, weil es mir sein Wort ver -

F# minor B(7) E major C# minor G# major

54

spricht.

C# minor C7 F# minor

56

Denn ich bin der Zu - ver -

B# dim.7 C# minor G#7 C# minor C#7

58

sicht, denn ich bin der Zu - ver -

F# minor B7 B7

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60

sicht: dass mein Bit - - - ten und mein

E7 A minor E7 A minor

Long, throbbing E pedal with harsh harmonic clashes before resolution to A major to depict deferred answer to the entreaty mentioned in the text.

62

Fle - - - hen Gott ge - - -

D# dim.7 B7 E7

64

wiss zu Her - zen ge - - - - hen,

A minor D# dim.7 E7

68

weil es mir sein Wort ver - spricht, weil

A major A7 D major (E7) A major B7

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68

es mir sein Wort ver - spricht.

E major E major E7 A major

Da Capo

This is the last stanza of 16 in the 1530 chorale "Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn" by Georg Grünwald (d. 1530).

86/3. Chorale (Mel: „Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn“)

Allegro moderato $\text{♩} = 144$

• Promises of God's Word are sure & bring us to heaven (86/3).

1. Ob d'amore I Ob d'amore II

F# minor E7 A major B major C#7

Figura circulatorio (see note).

F# minor F# minor F#7 B minor E7

Soprano

The tessitura of the voice part is low. While the part could have been assigned to the alto, Bach's decision to employ the soprano allowed each voice type to be featured in the cantata.

Oboe d'amore II Oboe d'amore I

C#7 F# minor B7 E7 C#7 F# minor F# minor

NBA: gütig

was der e - - wig' güt' - - ge

B major F# minor F# minor

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13

Gott in

G#7 C# minor C# minor F#7 B minor

16

sei - - - nem Wort ver - - - spro - - - chen

F# minor F# minor F# minor

19

B
hat, ge - -

F# minor F# major B minor F# minor

22

schwor'n bei sei - - - - - nem

B major B7 E major E major

Oboe d'amore I

25 **C**

Na - - - men,

Oboe d'amore II

E major F# minor

28 The 4th text line ("that will he assuredly fulfill and grant") alludes to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

das hält und giebt er

E7 A major A7 D major F#7

31

g'wiss für - - - wahr.

B minor F# minor F# minor F#7

34 **D** NBA: Der

Er helf' uns zu der

B minor F# minor F# minor F# minor

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37

En - - gel Schar

F# minor F# minor F# major

40

E

durch Je - - sum Chri - - -

B minor C#7 F# minor F#7 B minor

43

- - - stum, A - - - men!

G# dim.7 C#(7) F# minor F#7

46

B major (C#7) F# minor F# minor F#7

49

B minor C#7 F# minor B7 E7 C#7 F# minor F# minor

The tenor recitative alludes to Jesus words to John 14:27: "...Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." The intense chromaticism of the first phrase depicts the unreliability of the world's promises, as referenced in the text.

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 5 mm.

86/4. **Recitative** • Promises of God fulfilled, unlike those of world (86/4).

Secco 1. **Tenor** C# A# G D F# B E# B# D#

Gott macht es nicht gleich wie die Welt, die viel verspricht und we-nig hält; denn, was er

Chromaticism for the unreliable world that "promises much and keeps little."

Expected resolution to F# minor is thwarted (depicting "unreliability")

A# dim.7 B minor E# dim.7 B# dim.7 C# minor C# minor

4 G# A

zusagt, muss geschehen, dass man dar - an kann seine Lust und Freude sehen.

The 3rd text line ("whatever he assents to/promises must happen") alludes to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

Consonant harmonies for "For what he promises must happen so that one can see his pleasure and joy in it."

F# major B major E major E major E major

String accompaniment with Vln I dominating. The ritornello is derived from the vocal theme, particularly the repeated motto "Gott hilft gewiß" ("God helps assuredly"), an allusion to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

Aria 86/5. **Moderato** ♩ = 72 • Prayers answered eventually, though help be deferred (86/5).

Form (Rhyme: ABBA)
Ritornello (mm. 1-8) EM
Lines 1 (motto) + 2-3 (9-19) EM-Bm
Rit. (20-22) Bm
Lines 4+1 (motto) (23-28) EM-C#m
Rit. (28-30) C#m
Lines 4+1 (motto) (31-36) C#m-EM
Rit. (1-8) EM

(37) 1. Ritornello Strings *mf*

"Gott hilft gewiß" motto (includes figura corta).

Figura corta (see note).

E major

3 (39) "Gott hilft gewiß" motto

E major B7 G#7 C# minor E7



6 (42) **Tenor** A

Gott

Intensification drives to the cadence...

A major B7 B7 E major

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9 Lines 1 (motto) + 2-3.

hilft ge-wiss, Gott hilft ge-wiss, Gott hilft ge-wiss, Gott

Bass echoes the tenor.

B(7) E(7) A major

11II

hilft ge-wiss, wird gleich die Hil-fe auf-ge-scho-ben, Gott

B7 E major E major B major

14

hilft ge-wiss, Gott hilft ge-wiss, Gott

C# minor C# minor F#7

16

hilft ge-wiss, wird gleich — die Hilfe auf-ge-scho-ben, wird sie doch

B major B major

18

drum nicht auf - ge - hoben, drum nicht auf - ge - ho - ben.

mf

B major

20

Ritornello

22

B Line 4+1 (motto). NBA: bezeugt (each time)

Denn Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies, Gottes

B major B7 E major

24

Wort be - zeu - get dies, be - zeu - get dies: Gott hilft ge - wiss,

C# minor C# minor

26

Gott hilft ge - wiss, Gott hilft, Gott hilft ge -

(B7) E major G#7 C# minor

28

wiss, gewiss, gewiss!

tr

Ritornello

mf

C# minor

30II

C Line 4+1(motto).

Denn Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies, denn Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies: Gott

p

C# minor F# minor E major F#7

33

hilft, Gott hilft ge - wiss, Gott hilft ge - wiss, Gott hilft ge - wiss, denn

tr

B7 E major E major

35

Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies: Gott hilft, Gott hilft gewiss!

mf

E major

Dal Segno
E major

This is the 11th stanza of 12 in the 1522 chorale "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her" by Paul Speratus (1484–1551). In catechismal, summarizing manner, the chorale stanza reaffirms faith in God's promise, which will be fulfilled in his appointed time.

The second phrase relates to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

(See also 186/11.) • Hope rewarded in God's own time; he may be trusted (86/6).

86/6.

Chorale (Mel: „Es ist das Heil uns kommen her“)

(5)

Soprano 1.

+Oboe d'amore I
Vln I

+Oboe d'amore II
Vln II

+Vla

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

E major

A major

A major

B major

E major

F#7 B major

B major

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

E major

F# major

B major

E major

ar - ge List, dess solln wir ihm ver - - trau - - en.

ar - ge List, dess solln wir ihm ver - - trau - - en.

ar - ge List, dess solln wir ihm ver - - trau - - en.

E# dim.7 F# minor

C# major

E major

E major

The penultimate phrase ("and [God] employs no malicious cunning on us") brings the cantata full circle to the opening movement: "Truly, truly, I say to you...")