

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

Form: Chorus/Fantasia - Aria (B) - Recit (S) - Trio/Chorale (SAT) - Recit (B) - Chorale.

Cantus firmus: Soprano Recorder Alto Soprano

Symmetry

J.S Joyful Message of New Age in Christ

Grateful Reception of the Message

NBA I/3; BC A19

1. S. after Christmas (BWV 152, 122, 28)

*Galatians 4:1–7 (Through Christ we come of age and are free from the law)

*Luke 2:33–40 (Simeon and Hanna prophesy of Christ)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: 31 December 1724 (St. Thomas). From Bach's chorale cantata cycle (see note).

Instrumentation:

Recorders I, II, III (no. 3)

Ob I, II

Taille

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo



(Coro.) (Chorale Verse 1)

•Christ's birth brings a new year to Christendom (122/1).

122/1. (Moderato $\text{♩} = 120$)

Ritornello

G minor

G minor

A (Mel: „Das neugebor'ne Kindelein“)
161 Soprano. Chorale text line 1.

Alto.

Das neu - - ge - - bor'

Das neu - ge - bor'

Tenore.

Das neuge - bor'

Basso.

Das neuge - bor'

ne Kin - de . lein, das

Das neuge - bor'

ne Kin - de .

Das neuge - bor'

ne

m.1

= approx. m. 2

= approx. m. 3

= approx. m. 4

= approx. m. 5

G minor

J.S

Joyful Message of New Age in Christ

Alfred Dürr writes, "We are struck by the predominance of the chorale cantus firmus and the subservient function of the instruments. Indeed, despite the brevity of the four-verse chorale, only two of the six movements are independent of it." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 141.

Cantata No. 122 Das neugeborne Kindelein

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

22

ne Kin de lein,
neu ge bor ne Kin de lein,
lein, das neu ge bor ne Kin de lein,
Kin de lein.

Ritornello

= approx. m. 6. = approx. m. 7. = approx. m. 8. = approx. m. 9. = approx. m. 10.

G minor

28

G minor

34.

G(7) C minor G minor G minor G minor

B Chorale text line 2.

40.

Konrad Küster notes that, although the ritornello does not fit subsequent chorale phrases as well as the first one, Bach treats its material flexibly, "varying the intervallic relationship between its building blocks—and so the music of the opening also permeates the rest of the movement." ("Doch Bach behandelt den Orchestersatz flexibler, er variiert die Intervallbeziehung zwischen dessen Bausteinen—and so durchzieht die Musik der Eröffnung auch den übrigen Satz." See Konrad Küster, ed., Bach Handbuch (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999), p. 280.)

das her ze

Chorale phrase opening in diminution (text given 2 times).

das her ze lie be

hemiola

mf

B

G minor

G minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

46.

C7 F major C# dim.7

51.

Ritornello

D major G minor D minor D minor

56.

D minor

62.

D minor hemiola

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

68. C Chorale text line 3.

bringt a - ber - mal
bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr,
bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es, ein
bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es

74. C

D minor D7 colls. G minor

74. ein neu - es Jahr
neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es
neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es
Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es

B-flat major B-flat 7

79. Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr
Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr
Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr

E-flat major B-flat major B-flat major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

84.
Ritornello
B-flat major

90.
D(7) G minor C major F major D minor D minor

96.
Dürr notes that the accompanying vocal lines share less and less in the thematic material of the chorale until "in the fourth line it is no longer perceptible at all. At the same time, the motivic material of the instruments gradually detaches itself from its link with the ritornello, eventually blending in a temporary unison with the lower voice parts." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 139.

The chorale phrase is no longer evident in the accompanying voices; the instrumental lines now are often colla parte. A rising motive introduced from lowest voice to highest suggests praise by the "chosen Christian throng" referenced in the text.

der aus Chorale text line 4.
der aus

hemiola
der aus er wählt
N6 B-flat 7 E-flat major F(7) B-flat major B-flat major

er wählt ten
der aus er wählt ten, der aus er
wählt ten Chri sten schar, der aus er wählt
ten Chri sten schar.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

106.

Chri - sten - schar.
wähl - ten Chri - sten - schar, der aus - er - wähl - ten
ten Chri - sten - schar, der aus - er - wähl - ten

D(7) G major C minor

111.

Chri - sten - schar.
Chri - sten - schar

Ritornello

C minor G minor G minor

117.

G minor

123.

mf hemiola G minor G major

The tritone was historically associated with the devil. In the hexachordal system of solmization the way to sing B is as *mi* in the hard hexachord (the hexachord begun on G). B-F is a tritone, giving rise to the saying "Mi contra fa est diabolus in musica" ("mi against fa is the devil in music").

Aria.

122/2. (Tempo giusto $\text{♩} = 80$)

(Based on Chorale Verse 2)

•Christ's birth: Reconciling sinful mankind to God (122/2).

Continuo alone, right hand is editorial.

C minor

C major

(D7)

Ritornello (related to vocal theme).

tritone

tritone

For Konrad Küster's comments regarding Bach's development of the continuo aria, treating the bass line here as a melody, see note.

G major

F minor

B dim.7

C minor

crescendo sempre

B dim.7

G7

C minor

9. Basso.

Note the similar opening to no. 3.

tritone

tritone

O Menschen,

O people,

die ihr täglich sündigt,
you who daily do-sin,

die ihr täglich

Bass is often the voice of authority, e.g., the minister. Here the motto captures the essence of a penitential sermon.

In a concertante duet between continuo and bass singer, chromatic lines characterized by tritones depict the sinfulness of human beings.

C minor

F# dim.7 D7

12.

Alfred Dürr writes, "An impassioned, chromatically tormented ritornello melody for the bass instruments is broken up into its constituent motives and, in this form, pervades the entire movement; even the vocal melody is derived from it. The minor mode (c [minor]), maintained in the intermediate cadences (f and g), contributes to the impression of the text, 'O mortals, who sin daily, you shall be the angels' joy', as closer to a penitential sermon than a message of joy." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 140.

sündigt,

Ritornello

G major

(G7)

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) 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.

14.

o Menschen, die _____ ihr
C minor

17.

täg - lich sün - digt, ihr sollt der En - gel Freu -
C major F# dim. 7 D7 G major G7 C minor

The angels' melisma superimposes a 3/4 meter.

Text painting: Long melisma for the angels rejoicing that sinners have been reconciled to God. The text alludes to Luke 15:10: "There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

19.

D7 G minor

22.

de_ sein, o Men - schen, die _____ ihr
G minor G(7)

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

24.

täg - - lich sün - - - digit, ihr sollt — de

C# dim.7 D major B dim.7 C minor

26.

En - gel Freu - - - de sein, o Men - schen,

F major B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major

28.

die_ ihr_ täg - - - - - - - lich sündigt, ihr

E dim.7 F minor B dim.7 C minor

30.

sollt der En - - gel Freu - - - - de sein, ihr

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

32.

sollt der En - gel Freu-de sein, ihr sollt der En -

C minor C minor

35.

- gel Freu - de sein, ihr sollt der En -

you shall/should the

En angels'

C minor

37.

- gel Freu . de sein.

joy be.

Ritornello

C minor

The rhetorical separation of "ihr sollt der" suggests that Bach may have wanted the phrase to be interpreted as "you should be the joy of the angels" instead of the presumed poetic meaning "you shall be the joy of the angels (because you have been reconciled to God)"—effectively underscoring the human failure referenced in the A section of the aria. Such blame is absent in the underlying chorale stanza.

C major F# dim.7

40.

G major E dim.7 F minor B dim.7 C minor

mf p

crescendo sempre

C minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

Middle Section of da capo aria

45.

Ihr ju - - bi - li - - ren des Ge -

Text painting: Melisma for "jubilant shouting," an allusion to the angels' "Gloria in excelsis" when they appeared to the shepherds (Luke 2:13-14.)

C minor

E-flat major

48.

schrei, dass Gott mit euch ver - söhnet sei, hat

E-flat major

F minor

50.

euch den sü - ssen Trost, hat euch den sü - -

F minor

53.

- ssen Trost ver - kün - - digit,

The reference to being reconciled to God suggests biblical passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:18: All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself... (Also Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21-22.)

Ritornello

F minor

F minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

55.

ihu ju - bi li - ren des Ge -

A dim.7 B dim.7 C major F minor

58.

schrei, dass Gott ____ mit euch ____ ver söh net sei, hat

B-flat 7 E-flat major E-flat 7 A-flat major

60.

euch den sü - ssen Trost ver - kün -

B-flat 7 E-flat major

63.

dig, den sü - ssen Trost, hat

E-flat major F# dim.7 D7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

65.

euch den sü - ssen Trost ver - kün - digt.

G minor

Chromatic saturation
in the vocal part in
9 mm.

The recitative (like no. 2, based on the chorale's second stanza) continues with the subject of the angels. Three recorders play the chorale, allowing the listener to infer the words. The recorder parts were inserted into the oboe parts and would have been played by those players.

122/3. **Recitativo.** (Based on Chorale Verse 2) • Christ's birth restores our relations with heaven (122/3).

Soprano. Secco Da Capo.

1. D A B-flat C F#

Die En - gel, wel - che sich zu - vor vor euch, als

Note the similar opening to no. 2.

3. E-flat B G D7

vor Verfluchteten,scheuen, er - füllen nun die Luft im höhern Chor, um ü - ber eu - er

The recitative text alludes to the angels' "Gloria in excelsis" at Jesus' birth (see note).

(Choral-Mel: „Das neugeborne Kindelein.“
3 recorders play harmonized chorale.

Note: In Bach's score the recorder parts are notated an octave lower; apparently Bach originally intended them to be played by strings.

Text painting:
3 recorders represent the angel chorus.

Text painting: The recorders (angels) "fill the air" as noted in the text.

6. Heil sich zu erfreu.en. Gott, so euch aus dem Pa - ra - dies aus eng - li -

lein, Die ger - ne um und bei uns

F7 B-flat major 9. G# (C7) F major G minor C# dim.

scher Gemeinschaft stiess, lässt euch nun wie - derum auf Er - den durch sei - ne Gegen -

sein: sie sin - gen

D minor (E7) A major C# dim.7 D7 F# dim.7

The recitative text alludes to the angels' role in barring Adam and Eve from the Garden after the fall (see note).

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

11.

wart vollkom men seelig werden. So danket nun mit vol lem
in den Lüf ten frei, daß

G minor F7 B-flat major B-flat 7

14.

Munde für die gewünschte Zeit im neuen Bunde.
Gott mit uns ver söh net sei.

E-flat major D(7) G minor G7 C minor G major

Aria. (Terzetto.)

122/4. (Andante con moto $\text{♩} = 69$) (Verse 3) •Reconciled with God: now Satan can not harm us (122/4).

1.

mf
Quasi-ostinato bass (see note).

C7 F major

For the significance of D minor, see note.

D minor While Alfred Dürr calls this a siciliano, Little and Jenne call it French gigue-like. See Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, "Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach," expanded ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 251.

6. **Soprano.**

Stanza 3 is troped with an aria text.

O wohl uns die wir

Alto. (Choral-Mel.: „Das neugeborne Kindelein.“)

Vln I, II, Vla double the chorale.

Tenore.

Stanza 3: Ist Gott ver söhnt und

Text painting: Outer voices begin with sweet parallel 3rds for "O wohl uns" ("O how well it is for us").

O wohl uns. die wir an ihn

A7 D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

11.

an ihn glau - - - ben, die wir an ihn
un - ser Freund,
glau - - - ben, die wir

D minor

16.

glau - - - ben,
was kann uns thun der
an ihn glau - - - ben, an - ihn glauben, sein Grimm kann

C7 F major A major D minor (G7) A minor

21.

sein Grimm kann un - sern Trost nicht rau - - -
Word painting: Energetic melisma for "rob."
ar - ge Feind?
un - sern Trost nicht rau

A minor E7 A minor A minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

25.

ben, nicht rau - ben;

Trotz

ben, nicht rau - ben;

G7 C major A minor E7 A minor

29.

ihr Wü - then wird sie we - nig nützen we - nig, wird sie we - nig

Teu - fel und der Höl - len

ihr Wü - then wird sie we - nig nützen, ihr Wü -

A major D minor D minor C major F major

33.

nützen, ihr Wü

Word painting: Energetic melisma for "[their] raging."

Pfort',

then wird sie we -

F major F7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

37.

then wird sie we-nig nüt-zen:
das
nig, wird sie we-nig, we-nig, we-nig nüt-zen:

B-flat major F major F major

41.

Gott ist mit uns und will uns schüt - - -
Je su - lein _____ ist. un - ser
Gott ist mit uns' und will uns schüt - - - zen, Gott ist mit
A7 D minor A7

45.

- zen, Gott ist mit uns und will uns schüt - - - zen, Gott ist mit
Hort.
uns und will uns schüt - - - zen, Gott ist mit uns - und will uns
D7 G minor D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 122

49.

uns und will uns schützen, Gott ist mit uns und will uns
-doubling strings

Gott ist mit uns und will uns schützen, Gott ist mit

Having concluded the chorale, the alto (without doubling strings) joins the imitative texture and the text of the soprano and tenor.

schützen, Gott ist mit uns und will uns schützen,

The phrase "God with us" alludes to Matthew 1:22-23: All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). (See Isaiah 7:14.)

D minor

53.

schützen, und will uns schützen.

Word painting: Melisma for "protect."

uns und will uns schützen, und will uns schützen.

zen, uns schützen.

C7

F major

D minor

A7

D minor

D minor

57.

C7 F major D minor A7 D minor

D minor A7 D minor

The text alludes to Psalm 118:24: This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it (see also Psalm 126:2-3), as well as to the Epistle reading, Galatians 4:4: "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son." (i.e., the new age in salvation history has dawned).

122/5. Recitativo.

(Related to Chorale Verse 4) •Christ's birth: the long-awaited day has come! (122/5).

Chromatic saturation
in the vocal part in
11 mm.

Alfred Dürr writes, "The bass recitative, no. 5, accompanied by strings, contains no real arioso writing throughout its fourteen bars, but it is constantly brought close to arioso by its vocal melismas and by the liveliness of its string accompaniment: it is a type of setting suggested of its own accord by the strongly emotional text with its frequent exclamations." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 140.

Ba F **so**. D

A

B-flat

C

E-flat

1.

3.

G

E

F#

tr.

5 exclamations
regarding the
"awaited day,"
each beginning
with "O."

seinen Sohn in die_se Welt ge-bracht. O sel' - ge Zeit, die nun erfüllt! o

his son into this world has-brought. O blessed time, which now is-fulfilled! o

C7

F major

F# dim.7

D7

G minor

6.

A-flat

gläu - big War - ten, das nunmehr ge - stillt! o Glau - be, der sein En - de

faith-filled waiting, which henceforth is-stilled! o faith, which its goal

B-flat 7

D-flat B dim.7 G7

C minor

C7

Chromatic inflection for
"tribulation."

B

9.

sieht! o Lie - be,

die Gott zu sich zieht! o Freu - digkeit, so durch die Trübsal

sees! o love,

which God to himself draws! o joyfulness, which through - tribulation

Text painting: Movement in the strings
illustrates the "love that God draws to himself."

F minor

E dim.7

C7

F minor

D7

B dim.7

12.

dringt

und Gott

der

Lip - pen

Opfer

bringt!

presses

and

God

(its)

lips'

offering

brings!

The final line suggests biblical passages such as Hebrews 13:15: Through him [Christ], let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (Also Psalm 50:14, 23; 51:15-17.)

C minor

F# dim.7

G minor

D7

Extended continuo note.
G major

This is the last stanza of four in the 1597 chorale by Cyriakus Schneegäss (1546–1597); tune by Melchior Vulpius (1609). The "new year" of salvation history is here seen as a fulfillment of the Hebrew Year of Jubilee, serving as a cathechismal summary of the cantata's contents in nigh coded brevity (see note for biblical reference; see also Petzoldt, *Bach Kommentar* 2:267).

122/6. **Choral.** (Mel.: „Das neugebor'ne Kindelein.“)

•Christ's birth begins true year of Jubilee, rejoice! (122/6).

Soprano.

+Ob I
Vln I



Es bringt das rech-te Jubel-jahr, was trauern wir denn im-mer-dar?

Alto.

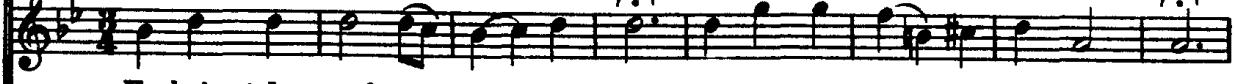
+Ob II
Vln II



Es bringt das rech-te Ju-bel-jahr, wastrauern wir denn im-mer-dar?

Tenore.

+Taille
Vla

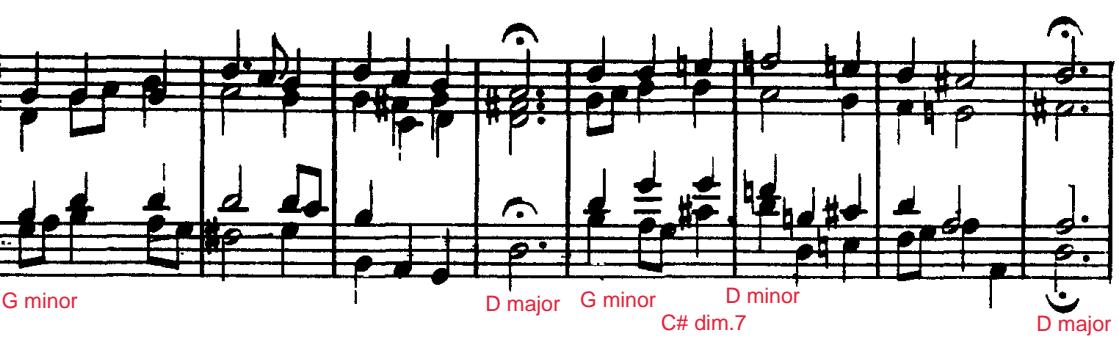


Es bringt das rech-te Ju-bel-jahr, was trauern wir denn im-mer-dar?

Basso.



Es bringt das rech-te Ju-bel-jahr, was trauern wir denn im-mer-dar?



G minor D major G minor D minor C# dim.7 D major

9.

Frisch auf! itzt ist es Singens-zeit. das Je-su-lein wend't al-les Leid.

Frisch auf! itzt ist es Sin-gens-zeit, das Je-su-lein wend't al-les Leid.

Frisch auf! itzt ist es Sin-gens-zeit, das Je-su-lein wend't al-les Leid.

Frisch auf! itzt ist es Singens-zeit, das Je-su-lein wend't al-les Leid.

G minor

B-flat major

B-flat major

B-flat major

D major G minor

G major