

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 132

Form: Aria (S) - Recit (T) - Aria (B) - Recit (A) - Aria (A) - Chorale.

Introduction & updates at [melvinunger.com](http://melvinunger.com).

NBA I/1; BC A6

4. S. in Advent (BWV 132)

\*Philippians 4:4-7 (Exhortation to rejoice in the Lord always)

\*John 1:19-28 (Testimony of John the Baptist concerning himself)

Librettist: Salomon Franck (see notes).

FP: 12 December 1715 (Weimar Palace Chapel)

Instrumentation:

Oboe

Vln I, II

Vla

Soprano

Fagotto

Continuo

(unfigured)

Form (Rhyme: ABAACCA)

Ritornello (mm. 1-18) AM

Text lines 1-2 (19-30) AM

Rit (31-32) AM

Text lines 1-2 (33-48) AM

Rit (49-66) F#m-AM

Lines 3-7 (67-79) F#m-C#m

Rit (80-81) C#m-AM

Lines 3-7 (82-90) AM-F#m

Rit (91-92) F#m

Line 7 (93) DM

Rit (94-118(dal segno)) DM-AM

Text lines 1-2 (19-48) AM

Rit (49-66) F#m-AM

The cantata takes its point of departure from the Gospel reading, where John the Baptist identifies with the Messianic messenger foretold in Isaiah: [John] said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (Also Matthew 3:3.) Isaiah 40:3-5: A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

J.S. Bach

## Cantata No. 132

### Bereitet die Wege, bereitet die Bahn

penitential period in the liturgical calendar, it admonishes listeners to put away sin.

Meredith Little & Natalie Jenne call this "French gigue-like," with the characteristic "sautillant" figure of dotted 8th, 16th, 8th (see note).

•Advent: Prepare the way for the coming Messiah!—paraphrase of Isaiah 40:3 (132/1).

#### 1. Aria

132/1.

Most of Bach's Weimar cantatas are chamber-like works, whose modest forces are nevertheless employed in colourful combinations.

Ritornello derived from vocal line.

Pastoral dance for a pastoral text: compare the first aria of Handel's *Messiah*.

A major C# major F# minor B major E major

Ob. 1. +Vln I

Viol. Va.

Vln I sometimes doubles the oboe, providing changes of tone color (see full score).

Concerning performance considerations, see note.

5

E major E7 A major A7 D major

8

E major E7 A major A7 D major

12

F# major B minor E major A major

16

Soprano

Be -

Cont. p

A major

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Word painting: Long scalar and circular melisma for "Bahn" ("pathway").

19

rei - tet die We - ge, be - rei - tet die Bahn,

Ob.

Viol. Va. Vln I

A major

C# major

F# minor

22

E major

E major

E major

Ob.

Cont.

26

be - rei - tet die We - ge, be - rei - tet die Bahn, be -

Ob.

Viol. Va.

Cont.

E major

E7

A major

30

rei - tet die Bahn!

Ob., Viol. Ritornello

Ob.

tr

Ob.

E major

E7

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33

Word painting: Extraordinarily long scalar melisma for "Bahn" ("pathway"), reaching to high A.

rei - tet die We - ge, be - rei - tet die Bahn, \_\_\_\_\_

A major A7 D major

36

F# major B minor E7 A major

39

A major

43

be - rei - - - - tet die Bahn, \_\_\_\_\_ be - -

A major D major

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47

rei - tet die We - ge, be - rei - tet die Bahn!

Ritornello

Viol. V<sub>a</sub>

A major F# minor A major A major

51

C# major F# minor B major E major

54

tr

E major E7

57

tr

A major A7 D major

61

F# major B minor E major A major

65

Text painting: Repeated notes for "make the paths level."

3 melodic ideas are treated in permutation:  
A = rolling line, B = repeated note, C = skipping figure.

Middle Section

Be - rei - tet die We - ge und

Ob

A

C

A major F# minor

Permutation technique is characteristic of Bach's early works.

4

68

machet die Ste - ge im Glauben und Le - ben dem Höchsten ganz e - ben, im

F# minor B7 E major

Cont.

71

Glauben und Le -

Ob.

G#7 C# minor

74

- ben, im Glau - ben und Le - ben dem Höch - sten ganz e - ben, be -

A B C

Viol., Va.

Ob. *pp*

C# minor C# minor

77

reitet die We - ge und machet die Ste - ge! Mes - sias kömmt an!

A B C

Ob.

Viol., Va.

The abrupt silence of the instruments at the announcement of the Messiah suggests startling surprise.

C# minor C# minor

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81

Be - rei - tet die We - ge und ma - chet die Ste - ge im

Cont.

E7 A major

84

Glau - ben und Le - ben, im Glau - ben und Le - bendem

Ob.

C#7 F# minor

87

Hö - stenganz e - ben; be - rei - tet die We - ge und machet die Ste - ge: Mes -

Viol. Va.

A(7) D major C#7

90

si - as kömmt an! Mes -

Ob.

Ritornello

Viol. Va.

F# minor

The abrupt silence of the instruments at the announcement of the Messiah suggests startling surprise.

93

si - as kömmt an!

Ob.

Viol. Va.

D major E7 A major Dal Segno

The announcement of the Messiah's arrival is unaccompanied, giving it emphasis.

132/2. •Advent preparation requires clearing away sin (132/2).

# **Tenore 1.**

Secco (right hand is editorial realization).

A major

A major

The continuo line becomes active, reflecting the text's call to action.

A major

E dim.7

F# minor

F# minor

B7

Double tritone

Tritone

C# minor  
B# dim.

C# minor

(N6) B minor

E7

D major

C# minor

The canonic imitation between singer and continuo suggests following Christ's model (*imitatio Christi*) as referenced in the text.

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Figura circulatorio for the crown of glory referenced in the text (see note for more).

13

Eh - - - - - re, die - ses ist der Chri-sten

A major

15

Kron und Eh-re, der Chri-sten Kron und Eh-re.

E7 A major A major

17

Recit.

In-des, mein Herz, berei-te noch heute dem Herrn die Glaubens-

A major C# major E# dim.7

20

bahn und räume weg die Hü-gel und die Hö-hen, die ihm entge-gen-ste-hen!

Text painting: Melodic contour depicts "Hügel und Höhen" ("hills and heights").

F# minor A# dim.7 E# dim.7 F# minor

23

(Arioso)

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 4 mm.

Wälz ab die schwe-ren Sün-den -

B minor G# dim.7

The rolling figure becomes a quasi-ostinato.

Text painting: Energetic melodic runs and chromaticism for "roll off the heavy stones of sin (see note for biblical allusions).

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25

8

stei - ne, die **schwe-ren** Sün-den - - stei - ne, nimm dei - nen Hei-land -

Chromatic inflection for "schweren" ("heavy").

D# dim.7 E minor A7

Continuo bass depicts "rolling off the heavy stones of sin" referenced in the text.

27

8

an, daß er mit dir im Glau - ben sich ver - ei -

Text painting: Unisons and duets between singer and continuo depict union with Christ (mystic union), as referenced in the text ("mit dir vereine").

D major E9 C# minor

29

8

- ne, im Glau-ben sich mit dir ver - - ei - ne!

E7 A major A7 D major

31

8

- ne, im Glau-ben sich mit dir ver - - ei - ne!

E(7) A major A major

The aria's dominating question "Who are you?" comes from the Gospel reading but is now addressed to the individual Christian. John 1:19–20: This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." The call to repentance mirrors John the Baptist's sermon as recorded in Matthew 3 (see note).

Form (Rhyme: ABBACDCD)  
Ritornello (mm. 1-7) Bm-EM  
Text lines 1-4 (7-17) Bm  
Rit (18-20) Bm  
Text lines 5-6 (20-30) Bm-AM  
Rit (30-33) AM  
Lines 7-8 (33-46) F#m-EM  
Rit (46-49) AM

### 3. Aria ● Self-examination: The law shows us to be sinners

132/3.

(132/3)

Continuo alone (unfigured bass).  
Right hand is editorial realization.

Cont.

E major

Echo

p

mf

Ritornello derived from opening vocal gesture/question, becomes quasi-ostinato.

Alfred Dürr writes, "Musically, the movement is full of audacities in voice-leading, chiefly because the voice often lies below the cello figuration, giving rise to harmonic relationships explained by Spitta in terms of an 'inverted pedal point.'" See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 89.

Regarding the significance of E major, see note.

Text painting: Ascending continuo bass suggests pressing accusation.

Cello

Cont.

Continuo

E major

Violone/Organo (+bassoon?)

The cello elaborates a simpler continuo line with a biplanar line of 16ths, thus providing a pedal above the fundamental bass (see full score).

E major

Martin Petzold suggests that the audacities mentioned by Dürr reflect human audacity, which transgresses the boundaries of the law, as referenced in the text. See *Bach Kommentar* 2:75.

5.

E7

A major

B7

7

Basso

The low register of bass singer and continuo suggest getting to the bottom of things, reflected in the question, "Who are you?"

Bass is often the voice of authority: a preacher, prophet, or apostle—here it is the voice of John the Baptist calling his listeners to repentance.

1. Wer bist du?  
Who are you?

2. wer bist du?

frage dein Ge-  
ask your conscience,

E major

E major

9

3. wis-sen, wer bist du, frage dein Ge-wis-sen, da wirst du son-der  
Then will you without

Self-examination in view of conscience.

B7

E major

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11

Heu - che-lei, ob du, o Mensch, falsch o - der treu, falsch o - der  
hypocrisy, whether you, O human, false or true

F# major G# minor F#7

13<sup>II</sup>

treu, dein rechtes Ur-teil hö - ren müssen, dein rech - tes  
your proper judgment have-to hear.

B major B7

16

Ur - teil, dein rech - tes Ur - teil hö-ren müssen.

E major F#7 B major B major

Ritornello Echo

18<sup>II</sup>

4. Wer bist du?  
Who are you?

B major B major

f

Self-examination in  
view of the law.

21

5. wer bist du? frage das Ge - set - ze, wer bist du? frage das Ge -

Ask the law, who are you?

E major E7 A major

23

set - ze, das wird dir sa - gen, 1. wer du bist, frage das Ge -

C#7 F# minor

25

set - ze, das wird — dir sa - gen, 2. wer — du bist, das wird dir sa - gen,

It will you tell who you are,

E major A major

27

3. wer du bist, das wird dir sa - gen, 4. wer du bist, das — wird — dir —

A major

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29

sa - gen, wer, 5. werdu bist:

Echo

A major

31

ein Kind des \_\_\_\_

A child of

A F# minor

Text painting: Highly chromatic lines for "a child of wrath in Satan's net," alluding to Ephesians 2:3: We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

34

Zorns, ein Kind des Zorns in Sa - tans Net - ze, ein Kind des Zorns in

wrath, a child of wrath in Satan's net,

A# dim.7 B(7) C# major

Text painting: A twisting continuo line of continuous 16ths depict "Satan's net." (All else here is editorial realization).

36

Sa - tans Net - ze, ein

F# minor

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Word painting: Chromatic, disjunct (unstable) line for "hypocritical Christian."

38 NBA: falsch und

fal - s cher. heuch -  
false and hypocritical

B7 E major E7 A major A7 D major D7

40 - le - rischer

G major C#7 F# minor

42 Christ, ein Kind des Zorns in Sa - tans Net - ze, ein fal - scher, heuch -  
Christian. NBA: falsch und

E major E7

44II - le - ri - scher Christ!

A major B major E major E major

47

E major

## 4. Recitativo

•Repentance as response: confession of unfaithfulness to God (132/4).

132/4.

Alto

F#

A#

B

C#

E

G

D

E#

Chromatic saturation  
in the vocal part in  
11 mm.

Ich will, mein Gott, dir frei heraus bekennen: ich ha-be dich bisher nicht recht be-

Viol.

Va.

"Halo" of strings suggest tender introspection.

The form follows the rhyme  
scheme: ABAB-CCDD-EEFFGG).

Cont. F# major

B minor

4

D#

kannt! Ob Mund und Lippen gleich dich Herr und Va-ter nennen, hat sich mein Herz doch

Allusion to Jesus' words: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

"Every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)

"You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me'." (Matthew 15:7-8, Isaiah 29:13)

F# major

B7

E major

7

von dir ab-gewandt.

Ich ha-be dich ver-leugnet mit dem Le-ben. Wie

A7

D major

B major

E minor

10

G#

kannst du mir ein gutes Zeugnis geben? Als, Je-su, mich dein Geist- und Wasser - bad ge-

baptism by water and Spirit

Allusion to John the Baptist's words in John 1:33: I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." See note for more biblical passages.

F#7

B minor

C# major

C#7

F# minor

13

rei - ni - get von mei - ner Mis - se - tat,

hab ich dir zwar stets

F#7

B minor

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15

fe - ste Treu ver - sprochen; acn! a - ber ach! der Taufbund ist ge - bro - chen.

B7 E major A# dim.7 E# dim.7 C# major F# minor C#7

18

Die Un - treu reu - et mich. Ach Gott, er - - bar - me dich! Ach

F#7 D# dim.7 E minor

21

hilf, daB ich mit unverwandter Treue den Gna - den\_bund im Glauben stets erneue.

A7 D major G major A major D major

## 5. Aria

132/5.

Viol. solo

Ritornello related to vocal line.

Cont.

B minor B minor

2II

A major D major

The flowing violin obbligato appears to depict the cleansing waters of the "Blut- und Wasserquelle" (i.e., literal and spiritual baptism), by which God clothes his people, as referenced in the text. See note for biblical background and note at m. 31.

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.

• Baptism of blood & water provides clean raiment (132/5).

Continuo realization is editorial.

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4

D major E7 A7

5 II

D major F# major B minor

7

A(7) D major

8 Alto

F#7 B minor B minor

Chri - sti Glie - der,

Cont.

9 II

ach, — beden - ket, was der Hei - land euch geschen - ket,

Viol.

B minor

Ritornello: The violin echoes ("remembers") the singer's line and continues with the rest of the ritornello; essentially, the vocal line is inserted into the ritornello (Vokaleinbau).

11

ach, be - den - ket,

B minor A major D major

12<sup>II</sup>

ach, be - den - ket, ach be - den - ket, ach, be -

D major E7

14

den - ket, was der Hei - land

A7 D major D major

15<sup>II</sup>

euch ge - schenket durch der - Tau -

D7 G major D major

The focus on baptism reflects the role of John the Baptist in the Gospel reading.

17

- - - - fe rei - nes - Bad!

*tr.*

D major

18

Bei der Blut- und Was - ser - quel - le

*tr.*

*tr.*

Cont.

D major F#7 B minor

19

wer - den eu - re Klei - der hel - le, die be - fleckt von

Viol. Ritornello

D major A major F# minor

21

Mis - se - tat, die be - fleckt, die

C#(7) F# minor E7 A7

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22

be - - fleckt von Mis - - - se - -

tat, von Mis - se - tat. *Ritornello*

D major E# dim.7 C#7

23

tat, von Mis - se - tat. *Ritornello*

For biblical allusions here, see note at the beginning of the movement.

F# minor F# minor

24

Chri - stus gab zum neu - en Klei - de -

Christ gave as new raiment

Cont.

F# minor F# minor (B7) E(7)

25

ro - - ten Pur - pur, wei - Be Sei - de, die - - se sind der -

crimson purple, white silk; these are the

*Viol. Ritornello*

A major A# dim.7 F#7

The last text line ("these are the Christian's finery") is repeated several times for emphasis.

27

Chri - sten - Staat, der

Christian's finery, the

B minor B minor B minor

29

Chri - sten - Staat, die - - - se sind der

Christian's finery, Violin plays end of ritornello (mm. 7-8).

B minor E7 A major

30

Chri - sten Staat, die-se sind der Chri - sten - Staat, die - se

A# dim.7 F#7 B minor

Cont.

The voice repeats the last line ("these are the Christian's finery") without obligato, thus associating the obligato with the new raiment of "crimson purple, white silk" (i.e., the cleansed state of the repentant Christian), as referenced in the text.

31

sind - der Chri - sten Staat.

Viol. Ritornello

B minor B minor Dal Segno

Zum Schluss eventuell den folgenden Choral (welcher die Cantate Nr. 96 schliesst). Vergleiche die Bemerkung in der Partitur.



132/6

# ANHANG

## Choral

(See also 22/5, 96/6, 164/6.) A chorale is missing in autograph score but a separate publication of Franck's libretto includes this chorale, so the arrangement in BWV 164/6 (transposed to A major) can be inserted. For more on the missing chorale, see note.

(Mel: „Herr Christ, der einge Gottessohn“)

Soprano 1.

•Prayer: Crucify old nature so the new nature may live (132/6).



The idea that baptism represents the dying to one's old nature ("putting off the old nature; crucifying the flesh") and being resurrected to a new life ("clothing oneself with the new nature") derives from various biblical passages (see note).



+Ob, Vln I?

Er - töt uns durch dein Gü - te, er - weck uns durch dein Gnad; }  
den al - ten Men - schen krän - ke, daß der neu' le - ben mag }

Alto

+Vln II?

Er - töt uns durch dein Gü - te, er - weck uns durch dein Gnad; }  
den al - ten Men - schen krän - ke, daß der neu' le - ben mag }

Tenore

+Vla

Er - töt uns durch dein Gü - te, er - weck uns durch dein Gnad; }  
den al - ten Men - schen krän - ke, daß der neu' le - ben mag }

Basso

+Fagotto  
Continuo?

Er - töt uns durch dein Gü - te, er - weck uns durch dein Gnad; }  
den al - ten Men - schen krän - ke, daß der neu' le - ben mag }

Tutti

A major

C#7 F# major

B minor

A major

A major

wohl hie auf die-ser Er - den, den Sinn und all Be - gehr - den und G'danken hab'n zu dir.

NBA: hier (BWV 164/6).

wohl hie auf die-ser Er - den, den Sinn und all Be - gehr - den und G'danken hab'n zu dir.

wohl hie auf die-ser Er - den, den Sinn und all Be - gehr - den und G'danken hab'n zu dir.

wohl hie auf dieser Er - den, den Sinn und all Be - gehr - den und G'danken hab'n zu dir.

F#7  
F# minor

B minor

A major

E major

A major

B minor

C#(7)  
A# dim.7

D major

B minor

E7

A major

A major

A major