

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 89 Form: Aria (B) - Recit (A) - Aria (A) - Recit (S) - Aria (S) - Chorale.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/26; BC A155

22. S. after Trinity (BWV 89, 115, 55)

*Philippians 1:3–11 (Paul's prayer for the church at Philippi)

*Matthew 18:23–35 (The parable of the unforgiving servant)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: 24 October 1723 (Leipzig: St. Nicholas). This cantata is part of Bach's first cantata cycle in Leipzig (see note).

Instrumentation:

Corno da caccia (ad lib.)

Ob I, II

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo

The cantata explores themes in Jesus' parable in the Gospel reading: the immensity of human guilt, humanity's ironically common unforgiving spirit, and God's grace.

With BWV 89, Bach began a string of 4 cantatas that employ SATB chorus only in the closing chorale (BWV 89, 163, 60, 90).

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 89

Was soll ich aus dir machen, Ephraim

Aria. Quasi-arioso

89/1. (Larghetto $\text{♩} = 50$)

•Voice of God: Israel deserves no mercy: Hosea 11:8 (89/1).

Ob I & II play sighing figures in parallel 3rds.

The oscillating ostinato bass figure may be interpreted as God's apparent indecision (see m. 36; also BWV 55/1 and 105/3 (vacillation) and 150/6 (wavering determination). Alternatively, it may suggest God's rumbling anger.

Basso. (Vox Dei)

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.

Was

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12

Was soll ich aus dir machen, was

C minor

C minor

p

14^{II}

soll ich aus dir machen, Ephraim? Soll ich dich schüt -

The music falters as the question is emphasized with a pause.

Rhetorical Question 1.

Vokaleinbau (Vokal insertioni)

B dim.7

C minor

E-flat major

17

zen, soll ich dich schüt -

Word painting: Sustained note, then long melisma for schützen" ("protect").

E-flat major

19^{II}

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Rhetorical Question 2.

22

-zen, I - sra-el? Soll ich nicht billigein A -

The music falters as the question is emphasized with a pause.

E-flat major F minor F minor E dim.7

24

-dama aus dir ma-chen und dich wie Ze - bo -

F minor

27

- im zu - rich - ten?

The music falters as the question is emphasized with a pause.

F minor

30

A - ber mein Herz ist anders Sin - nes, mein Herz ist anders

But my heart is of different mind. Vokaleinbau (Vocal insertion)

Tritone interval between singer and bass signals reversal.

F# dim.7 G minor G minor

The idea that God is of a different mind, offering love instead of harsh judgment, is portrayed with a harmonic progression that travels in a different direction.

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Text painting: Wandering melisma for "different mind."

33

Sin - nes, mein Herz ist an - ders Sinnes, mein Herz ist an - - -

Oscillating figure for "anders Sinnes" ("different mind").

G minor G minor

35

- - - - - ders Sin - - - - - nes, mein

G minor G minor

38

Herz ist an - ders Sin - - - - - nes, an - ders Sin - - - - - nes, mein Herz -

G minor G minor

40

- - - ist an - ders Sinnes, mein Herz - - - ist - anders Sinnes, mei - ne Barm -

B-flat 7 E-flat major G7 C minor C minor

Vokaleinbau (vocal insertion)

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43

her - zigkeit ist zu brün - stig, mei - ne Barmher - zigkeit ist zu

C minor

Word painting: Long, flickering coloratura for "brünstig" ("ardent").

46

brün -

48 II

- stig, zu brünstig, zu brün -

C7

F minor

51

- stig, meine Barmherzigkeit ist zu brünstig, zu brün - stig.

D7 G7 C minor C minor

Dal Segno.

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Secco

89/2. **Recitativo.** • Judgment well-deserved; man himself shows no mercy (89/2).

1. **Alto.**

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 9 mm.

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 9 mm.

Alto is often the voice of faith.

Ja, freilich soll-te Gott ein Wort zum Ur-theilsprechen und seines

D major G minor

Namens Spott an seinen Feinden rächen. Un-zählbar ist die Rechnung deiner

B-flat (7) E dim.7 F major B-flat major

Sün-den, und hät-te Gott auch gleich Ge-duld, ver-wirft doch dein feind-

B dim.7 G7 C minor A dim.

se-li-ges Ge-mü-the die an-ge-bot'ne Gü-te und drückt den Nächsten um die

The references to "God's proffered kindness" and "pressing your neighbor over his debt" refer directly to the Gospel reading (see note).

D7 G minor B-flat major G# dim.7 E7 [implied Am]

Schuld; so muss die Ra-che sich ent-zün-den.

Harsh chromaticism for "vengeance must be kindled."

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

The text paraphrases James 2:13: "Judgment like that of Sodom falls on the unmerciful (89/3). no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment" but also alludes to the Gospel reading.

Aria. •Judgment like that of Sodom falls on the unmerciful (89/3).

89/3. 1. (Risoluto $\text{♩} = 72$.)

Ritornello (quasi ostinato bass) derived from vocal theme.

Continuo alone...

Compare subject in Fugue in G minor in Well-Tempered Clavier I.

[D minor]

Quasi-ostinato bass employed segmentally. D minor

F7

Alto.

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Ein unbarm..

B-flat major

F# dim.7

G7

A7

D minor

D minor

her - zi - ges Ge - rich - te,

D minor

F7

B-flat major

F# dim.7

Overlapping entries of the headmotive reflect the inflexibility of the unforgiving disposition and the inevitability of judgment referenced in the text.

ein un - barm - her - zi - ges Ge -

Head motive in diminution (up 8va)—see full score.

G7

A7

D minor

D minor

Text painting: Wave-like melodic arches "will fall upon you."

rich - te wird ü - ber dich ge - wiss er - gehn, ein unbarm - her - zi - ges Ge -

D minor

F major

B-flat major

F# dim.7

D7

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12

rich - te, — ein un - - barm - her - zi - ges Ge - rich - te wird ü - ber

G minor G# dim.7 E7 A minor F major G# dim.7 A minor

14

dich ge - wiss er - gehn, — ein un - barm - her - zi -

C7 F major C# dim.7

16

ges Ge - rich - te wird ü - ber dich gewiss er - gehn!

D7 E7 A minor A minor F major E7

18

Die Ra - - che fängt bei de - nen an,

Dramatic coloratura for "Rache" ("vengeance").

A minor C major

Descending (flat-ward) tonal sequence associated with downfall of Sodom: Am/CM-FM-Gm-Cm-A ♮ M.

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20

die Ra - - - - -

A longer melisma featuring 3 against 2 increases the tension.

C major

C major

22

- - che fängt bei denen an, die nicht Barmher - - zig - keit ge -

C7

F major

F7

24

than, die nicht Barmher - zig - keit, Barm - her - zig - keit ge - than

D7

G minor

G minor

26

und ma - chet sie wie So - - - - -

C7

D7

G minor

G minor

B-flat 7

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28

- - - - - dom ganz zu_nich_te, und

E-flat major G7 C minor C minor E-flat 7

30

ma_chet sie_wie So_dom, wie So_dom ganz zu_nich_te.

A-flat major C7 F7 B dim.7 C minor

32

Greatly modified da capo (modulating back to D minor from C minor).

Ein un_barm_her_zi_ges Ge_rich_te wird ü_ber_dich ge_wiss_er_

C minor D7 G minor F major

34

gehn, ein un_barm_her_zi_ges Ge_

B-flat major F# dim.7 (A7) D minor

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36

richte wird ü - ber dich ge - wiss er - gehn, ein un - barm - her - zi - ges Ge -

D minor D minor F# dim.7 G minor

38

richte wird ü - ber dich gewiss er - gehn!

G minor A7 D minor D minor D minor

Ritornello

40^{II}

F7 B-flat major F# dim.7 G7 A7 D minor D minor

89/4. **Recitativo.** •Sins' debt forgiven in Jesus who is the end of the law (89/4).

1. Soprano

Wohlan! meinHerze legt Zorn,ZankundZwietracht hin; es ist bereit, dem

F major F# dim.7 G minor

4

Nächsten zu ver - ge - ben. Al - lein, wie schreckt mich mein sünden - vol - les

G D-flat N6 B-flat 7 E-flat major E dim.7

Chromatic saturation
in the vocal part in
11 mm.

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7

Le - ben, dass ich vor Gott in Schul - den bin! Doch Je - su

F minor B dim.7 C minor

9

Blut macht die-se Rechnung gut, wenn ich zu ihm, als des Ge-setzes En-de, mich

A-flat

The reference to "Jesus as the end of the law" comes from Romans 10 (see note).

F# dim.7 D7 G minor B-flat major E-flat major

11

Adagio. (♩ = 50.)

Arioso *E (tr)* Word painting: Change to arioso with long melisma for "gläubig wende" ("turn [to Jesus] in faith").

gläu - big wen - - - - de.

C7 B-flat major D7 G minor B-flat major E dim.7 F7 B-flat major

Aria.

89/5. (Allegretto ♩ = 50.) • Sin's account paid by Jesus' drops of blood (89/5).

Ritornello (an ornamented version of the vocal line).

mf Ritornello

B-flat major B-flat major

Form (Rhyme: ABBACC)
Ritornello (mm. 1-8) B ♭ M
Lines 1-3 (9-23) B ♭ M-FM
Rit (24-27) FM
Line 4 (28-31) D7-Cm
Rit (32-33) Cm
Lines 5-6 (34-39) Cm-Gm
Rit (40-43) Gm
Lines 4-6 (44-51) F7-B ♭ M
Rit (1-8) B ♭ M

4

B-flat major

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8 **Soprano.** Lines 1-3.

A dance-like theme with syllabically declaimed text suggests the image of "counting" referenced in the text and child-like confidence of reconciliation with God.

Ge - rech - ter Gott, ach, rech - nest du?

B-flat major B-flat major

12

ge - rech - ter Gott, ach, rech - nest du, so wer - de ich - zum

B-flat major B-flat major

16

Heil der See - len die Trop - fen Blut von Je - su zäh - len, so

B-flat major F7 C7

20

wer - de ich zum Heil - der Seelen die Trop - fen Blut von Je - su zäh - len.

hemiola

F major F major

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24 Line 4.

Ach!

Ritornello

F major F major

28

rech - ne mir die Sum - me zu, ach, rech - ne mir die Summe zu!

D7 C minor C minor

32 Lines 5-6. Descending lines for "no one can fathom."

Ja, weil sie Nie - mand kann - er - gründen, be -

Ritornello

C minor C minor B-flat (7) E-flat major

36

deckt sie mei - ne Schuld und Sün - den, be - deckt sie mei - ne Schuld -

hemiola

F# dim.7 G minor

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39

—und Sün - den.

Ritornello

G minor G minor G7 G7 C major

42

Before repeating lines 5 & 6, Bach goes back to line 4: "Ah, put to my account that sum [of droplets of Jesus' blood]." In this way, he emphasizes the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

Lines 4–6.

Ach! rech - ne mir die
Ah, put-to-my account that

D7 G minor (F7)

45

Sum - me zu, ach, rech - ne mir die Sum - me zu! Ja,

sum

B-flat major F pedal... B-flat major

48

weil sie Nie - mand kann er - gründen, be - deckt sie mei - ne Schuld und Sün - den.

hemiola

B-flat 7 B dim. 7 C minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major

Dal Segno.

89/6. **Choral.** (Mel.: „Auf meinen lieben Gott.“) • Shortcomings acknowledged; adequacy in Christ's blood (89/6).

The chorale's harmonization is simple, without chromatic tension, suggesting a child-like faith.

Soprano. 1.
+Ob I, II
+Vin I

Alto.
+Vin II

Tenore.
+Vla

Basso.

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

Mir mangelt zwar sehr viel, doch was ich ha-ben will, ist

G minor D major D7 G minor D major

5

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

Al-les, mir zu gu-te, er-langt mit dei-nem Blu-te, da-

G minor B-flat major B-flat major G minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major

9

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

mit ich ü-ber-win-de Tod, Teu-fel, Höll' und Sün-de.

D major G minor C7 F major F7 D7 G minor G major

4 of the 5 enemies of Christ are mentioned (see note).