

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 85

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

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/11; BC A66

Misericordias Domini: 2. S. after Easter (BWV 104, 85, 112)

*1 Peter 2:21-25 (Christ as example; you have returned to the shepherd of your souls)

*John 10:11-16 (Jesus declares himself to be the Good Shepherd—
(see note))

Librettist: Unknown; perhaps Christian Weiβ the elder

FP: 15 April 1725 (Leipzig: St. Nicholas) This cantata belongs
to Bach's second cantata cycle in Leipzig, composed after a long
series of chorale cantatas.

A lyrical cantata expounding
the pastoral theme of Jesus
as Good Shepherd.

Of the first movement, Alfred Dürr writes, "The opening movement is one of those settings of Jesus's words for bass voice whose form lies somewhere between aria and arioso. Framed and articulated by a six-bar instrumental ritornello, this dictum is heard in two corresponding vocal sections, A and A'." The vocal head-motive has already been quoted four times by the continuo during the ritornello before it is taken up by the bass as a 'motto.' As a counterpoint to this motive we hear descending semiquaver runs, which, however, do not consolidate thematically to the same extent. The oboe repeatedly comes to the fore in concertante style, so that at times the movement resembles the middle movement of an oboe concerto. See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 302.

Cantata No. 85

Ich bin ein guter Hirt

Instrumentation:

Ob I, II

Vln I, II

Vla

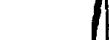
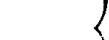
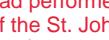
Violoncello piccolo (see notes)

SATB

Continuo



Some 2 weeks before (30 March), Bach had performed the second version of the St. John Passion (the first version was performed the year prior).



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10 *mf* *(tr)* *mp* *Hirt läßt sein*
ich bin ein gu - ter Hirt. *Ein gu good ter* *shepherd gives-up his*

C minor *p* C minor

15 Rhetorical pause

Hirt. Ein gu . ter Hirt läßt sein Leben, sein Le . ben für die ...

B-flat major

E-flat major

F# dim.7

E-flat major

poco a poco

17^{II}

Schafe, ein guuter Hirt läßt sein Leben für die Schafe.

mf Continuo alone for reflection.

rit.

Ob *a tempo*

Str

G minor

rit.

G minor

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20

tr. *tr.* *cresc.* *poco a poco*
F# dim.7 G7 *tr.*

22II

G7 C minor (B-flat 7) C minor D7 (tr.) G minor

25 C *mf* *tr.* Ich bin ein gu - ter Hirt, ich bin ein
G minor B-flat major *p* *tr.* G major

27II

gu - ter Hirt, ich bin ein gu - ter Hirt. Ein gu - ter
C minor *mp* (tr.) C major C7

30

Hirt läßt sein Le - ben, sein Le - ben für die Schafe, ein
F minor B-flat 7 C minor *poco cresc.*

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cresc. poco a poco

32

gu - ter Hirt läßt sein Le - ben für die Scha - fe,

C minor C minor C major F minor

34II

ein gu - ter Hirt läßt sein Le - ben, sein Le - ben für die Scha - fe, ein

F minor G7 C minor cresc. cresc. mf

Breiter

37

gu - ter Hirt läßt sein Le - ben für die Scha - fe.

cresc. p tr. C minor C minor tr. a tempo

39II

tr. tr. (tr) mf

cresc. poco a poco C7

42

cresc. molto rit. tr. ff f

F minor tr. (E-flat 7) A-flat major F minor G7 C minor C major

The individual voice of faith speaks, interpreting Jesus' words.

2. Arie

Moderato ($\text{♩} = 80$)

•Jesus identified as the good shepherd: he gave his life for sheep (85/2).

Regarding the
violoncello piccolo,
see notes
above at
instrumentation.

Violoncello piccolo
Ritornello *f*

G minor G minor

Form:
Ritornello (mm. 1-9) Gm
A. Lines 1-4 (9-22) Gm-Dm
Rit (22-27) Dm
B. Lines 1-4 (27-40) Dm-Cm
A'. Lines 1-4 (41-53) Gm
Rit (53-61) Gm

poco a poco

G7 C minor C minor

B-flat (7) E-flat M7 D7 G minor

A Alto
Alto is often the voice of faith. The text (given in full three times), alludes to Jesus' own words in the Gospel reading (see note).

A Section (entire text). Je - sus ist_ ein gu - ter Hirt, Je - sus_ ist_ ein

fp *p* *mf*

G minor

f *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

gu - ter Hirt, denn er hat - be - reits sein Le - ben

p *cresc. poco a poco*

G minor B-flat 7 E-flat major B-flat major F7 B-flat major

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15

für die Scha - fe hin - ge - ge - ben, die ihm from-him

B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major B-flat major F7 B-flat major D7

The vocal line becomes increasingly virtuosic for the last line ("no one will steal them from him").

17II

Nie - mand rau - ben wird, die ihm Niemand, Niemand rau -

no one rob will

G minor C# dim.7 A7 D minor

20

Word painting: Long melisma for "rob/steal."

ben, rau - ben

D minor F major rit.

22II

a tempo

wird.

Ritornello

D minor C7 F major

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B Section (same text).

25

C *mp*

Je - sus ist_ ein

A7 D minor F major B dim.7

28

p

gu - terHirt, Je - sus ist_ ein gu - terHirt,

C minor C minor C minor F7 *pp* B-flat major

31

mp

denn er hat_ be - reits sein Le - ben_ für_ die_

cresc. poco a poco

F# dim.7 D7 G minor C7

33II

D *mf*

Scha - fe hin - ge - ge - ben, die_ ihm Nie - mand

B-flat major C7 F major B dim.7 G7

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36

ben, Niemand rau
Word painting: Long melismas for "rob/steal."
mf *dim.*

C minor C minor

39

rit. *f* **E a tempo**
ben, rau, ben wird. *Je - sus ist* *ein*
p *mf* *rit.* *f* *pp*
a tempo

C minor C minor C minor G minor

42

mp
gu - ter Hirt, Je - sus ist ein gu - ter Hirt, denn
p

G minor

45

p **poco cresc.** *mf*
er hat bereits sein Leben für die Schafe hinge - ge - ben, die ihm Nie - mand
pp *cresc. poco a poco*

G minor G7 C minor C minor F7

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48

rau
Word painting: Even longer melisma for "rob/steal."
cresc. poco a poco

B-flat major
D7
G minor

51

f
breiter
rit. F a tempo
benwird, Je-sus, Je-sus ist ein gu-ter Hirt.
rit. a tempo
breiter
f Ritornello
G minor

54

mf
cresc. poco a poco
G minor
G7
C minor

56II

f
C minor
F7
B-flat major

59

D7
G minor
ff
G minor

BWV 85

(See also 104/6.) •Shepherd Psalm: Paraphrase of Psalm 23:1–2 (85/3). This is the first stanza of three in the 1598 chorale of the same name by Cornelius Becker (1561–1604). Its associated tune is also associated with the words "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr."

3. Choral ($\text{d} = 84$)

Chorale phrase

85/3. *Ob I*
Ob II
p *mf* *tr*
p *Figura corta* (see note).
B-flat major *(C7)*

5 (86) *mf* *p* *mf*
F major *(G7)*

9 (89) *cresc poco a poco* *F7*
C minor *D7* *G minor*
B-flat major

13 (91) *B-flat major* *B-flat major*

17 (98) *A Sopran* Chorale tune lightly ornamented...
mf
Der Herr ist mein ge - treu.er
Zur Weid' er mich, sein Schäflein,
Ob I *Ob II*
f=p
B-flat major *D7* *G minor* *F7*
B-flat major

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21 /55

Hirt,
führt,

B-flat major D7 G minor G7 C minor F7 B-flat major D7

25 /59

dem auf schö - ner,

cresc.

D7 G minor G minor G minor

29 /63

Text painting: The phrase is stretched to emphasize the words (especially appropriate for Stollen 1: "completely entrust myself"). In contrast to the performing part, the autograph score shows that Bach originally wrote a shorter version of the phrase.

cresc.

ganz grü - ver trau - Au

C minor F7 B-flat major F# dim.7 G minor B-flat major F7

33 /67

e:
e.

cresc.

B-flat 7 E-flat major F7 B-flat major B-flat major G7

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37/70

Ob I Ob II

C minor E-flat major F7 D7

41/74

B-flat 7 B-flat major F7 B-flat major cresc. poco

G minor F7 B-flat major (C7) F minor

45/78

a poco B-flat 7 E-flat major E-flat major

49/82

C mf Zum fri schen

cresc. f p

E-flat major E-flat major E-flat major F7 G minor

53/86

Was - ser leit't er mich,

Ob I Ob II

C minor C minor C7 F minor F7

57/90

B-flat minor E-flat 7 F minor C7 F minor F7 cresc.

B-flat minor E-flat 7 F minor C7 F minor

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61/94 *f*
 mein Seel zu la - ben
 Ob I Ob II
 F minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major

65/98 *tr* D
 kräf.tig lich
 Ob I Ob I & II Ob II *mf* cresc. poco
 B-flat major D7 G minor C7

69/102 a poco
 D minor D minor D minor

73/106 *mf*
 durch's sel - ge Wort der
 NBA: selig
 f G minor B-flat 7 *p dolce* G7 C minor F7 (G minor)

78/111 D7 E §
 Gna den.
 Ob I
 G minor B-flat major B-flat 7 E-flat major F7 *p Dal Segno* §
 B-flat major

The musical score consists of five staves of music for a three-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Bass). The top staff features soprano entries with lyrics like 'mein Seel zu la - ben' and 'kräf.tig lich'. The second staff includes oboe parts labeled 'Ob I' and 'Ob II'. The third staff shows bass entries with dynamics like 'a poco'. The fourth staff contains soprano lines with lyrics such as 'durch's sel - ge Wort der' and 'Gna den.'. The fifth staff concludes with a dynamic marking 'p Dal Segno'. Numerous red annotations are present, including boxes around specific notes, arrows pointing to certain dynamics or chords, and handwritten text like 'NBA: selig' and 'B-flat major'.

The text alludes to Jesus' words in the Gospel reading (see note). However, the Gospel says the hirelings flee rather than sleep.

85/4. 4. Recitativ • Shepherd watches sheep when hirelings sleep (85/4).



Tenor

mp

Wenn die Miet-lin-ge schla-fen, da then wa-chet die-ser
When the hirelings sleep, then keeps-watch this

f p dolce Strings

Text painting: Sustained strings in low register for the sleeping hirelings.

E-flat (7) A-flat major (B-flat 7)

3 Hirt bei sei-nen Scha-fen, so, daß ein Je-des
shepherd by his sheep, so, that each-one

stacc. *fp*

Text painting: Fast triplets presumably depict agitation.

E-flat major B dim.

5 in gewünschter Ruh die Trift und Wei-de kann ge-nie-ßen, in wel-cher
in welcome rest the meadow and pasture can enjoy, in which

B dim.7 C minor

The reference to streams of life allude to Jesus' words (see note).



7 Lebensströme fließen. Denn, sucht der Höllen-wolf gleich ein-zu-dringen, die
streams-of-life do-flow. For, seeks the wolf-of-hell (indeed) to-break-through, the

mf *poco accel. e cresc.*

Flowing figure *mf*

D7 G minor G minor E-flat dim.7 F minor

10 Wieder ruhig

Schafe zu verschlingen, so hält ihm die-ser Hirt doch sei-nen Ra-chen zu.
sheep to devour, then holds - this shepherd indeed his jaws shut.

cresc. Sweet modulation to A-flat major to depict God's intervening protection from the menacing jaws of the devil.

D-flat major E-flat major A-flat major A-flat major

The reference to the devil as a "wolf of hell" suggests several biblical passages referring to adversarial lions. 1 Peter 5:8: Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Daniel 6:22: My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me. 2 Timothy 4:17: The Lord stood by me and gave me strength...So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. (See also Psalm 22:21, 1 Samuel 17:34-35, Hebrews 11:33.)

Alfred Dürr writes, "The instrumental texture radiates a powerful warmth and intimacy, which is achieved by frequent parallel thirds and sixths between the obbligato part (for unison violins and violas) and the continuo, by the deep pitch of the string part, and by the simple harmony, which on several occasions touches upon the subdominant. The highly text-engendered singing of the tenor stands out against this instrumental background." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 302.

85/5. 5. Arie • Jesus as shepherd shows his love by dying for sheep (85/5).

1. Larghetto ($\text{♩} = 66$)

Strings
unison

Ritornello unrelated to vocal beginning.

Form (Rhyme: AABBA)
Ritornello (mm. 1-9) E M
A. Lines 1-3 (9-27) E M-B M
Rit (27-33) B M
B. Lines 4-5 (33-49) B M-Gm
Line 1 (50-57) E M
Rit (57-65) E M

E-flat major

cresc. sempre

B-flat 7

A Lines 1-3.

Exclamatio (3x)

5 Tenor

The 9/8 meter underscores the pastoral context (even though the aria is the only movement with no mention of the shepherd), while parallel 3rds and 6ths between strings and continuo suggest sweetness. Peter Wollny suggests that triplets in 9/8 meter were a new phenomenon when Bach began to employ them in his Leipzig period. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yw7VdgR6q0>, accessed 26 July 2024.

poco rit. a tempo

Seht!

poco rit. a tempo

The tenor's part is often above
the instruments...

mf

Seht!

Seht, was die Lie.be tut!

Seht, was die Lie.be

E-flat major

E-flat major

B

Mein Je.sus hält

Text painting: Repeated notes for "My Jesus holds."

mf

mf

B-flat major

B-flat major

tut, was die Liebe tut, seht, was die Liebe tut!

Rhetorical
pause

— in zar.ter H ut die Sei.nen fe — ste einge.schlos - sen, mein Je.sus

NBA: guter (each time)

p espri.

F7

B-flat major

B-flat 7 E-flat major

Text painting: Sustained notes for "hält in guter Hut" ("holds in good keeping"). The statement represents a positive version of Jesus' words in the Gospel reading, "No one shall snatch them out of my hand."

23
guter
hält in zarter Hut die Seinenfe - ste ein geschlos.
F7 B-flat major

27 C a tempo
sen.
a tempo
Ritornello
B-flat major

32
In the second vocal block,
the two themes are
presented in reverse order.
NBA: Er hat am Kreu - - - zesstamm ver -
und
B-flat major B-flat major D7 G minor

36
cresc.
gos Word painting: Melismas in triplets for "vergossen" ("poured out")
sen für sie sein teu res Blut,
G minor G major G7

40
er hat am Kreuzes stamm vergos - - - sen für
cresc. poco a poco
C minor D7 G minor G minor

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44

sie sein teu-res Blut, sein teu-res Blut, am Kreuzestamm für

G minor G7 C minor G minor

48 rit. Line 1: E a tempo

sie seinteu - res Blut. Seht! Seht! Seht, was die Liebe

a tempo

cresc. rit. f p pp p

G minor G minor E-flat major

53

tut! Seht, was die Liebe tut, was die Liebe tut, seht, was die Liebe Breit

mf p pp cresc.

E-flat major

57 F

tut!

a tempo

ritornello

mf p cresc. sempre

E-flat major

61

molto rit.

E-flat major

E-flat major

85/6. **6. Choral** • God as shepherd: I need not fear anything (85/6).

Soprano
+Ob I, II
Vln I

Alt
+Vln II

Tenor
+Vla

Bass

Ist Gott mein Schutz und treuer Hirt, kein Unglück mich befürchtet wird; weicht,
Ist Gott mein Schutz und treuer Hirt, kein Unglück mich befürchtet wird; weicht,
Ist Gott mein Schutz und treuer Hirt, kein Unglück mich befürchtet wird; weicht,
Ist Gott mein Schutz und treuer Hirt, kein Unglück mich befürchtet wird; weicht,

5
C minor B-flat (7) E-flat major G major C minor

al - le mei - ne Fein - de, die ihr mir stiftet Angst und Pein, es wird zueu - rem
al - le mei - ne Fein - de, die ihr mir stiftet Angst und Pein, es wird zu eu - rem
al - le mei - ne Fein - de, die ihr mir stiftet Angst und Pein, es wird zu eu - rem
al - le mei - ne Fein - de, die ihr mir stiftet Angst und Pein, es wird zu eu - rem

10
B-flat 7 E-flat major E-flat major E-flat major B-flat 7 G7 C minor rit.

Scha - den sein; ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de, ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de.
Scha - den sein; ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de, ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de.
Scha - den sein; ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de, ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de.
Scha - den sein; ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de, ich ha - be Gott zum Freun - de.

C minor G major A-flat major cresc. molto C minor rit.

The final line alludes to Jesus' words, "No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends..." (John 15:15).