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Martin Petzoldt outlines the cantata's symmetrical structure (*Bach-Kommentar* 2:952)

3. A recit. Consolation through the assistance of the Spirit
4. S aria. Representation by the Spirit
2. T aria. Trust in Jesus' protection
5. Chorale. Promise of help after the request in the Spirit
1. B recit. Christ's prediction of the suffering of His own

NBA I/12; BC A79

Exaudi: 1. S. after Ascension (BWV 44, 183)

*1 Peter 4:7-11 (Exhortation to serve one another with the gift each has received)

*John 15:26-16:4 (Farewell address of Jesus: Holy Spirit promised, persecution foretold)

Librettist: Christiane Mariane von Ziegler (Text modified somewhat by someone: J. S. Bach?). See notes.

FP: 13 May 1725 (Leipzig: St. Thomas)

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 183

For comments by Alfred Dürr, see note.

Sie werden euch in den Bann tun II

183/1. Recitativo.

•Vox Christi: Persecution is coming: John 16:2 (183/1).

Basso.

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 4 mm.

Sie wer-den euch in den Bann thun, es kömmt a-ber die
They will you into - excommunication place; (there is) coming, indeed, (a)

Ob d'am I
Ob d'am II
Ob da caccia I
Ob da caccia II

Jesus' warning that persecution is coming is taken directly from the day's Gospel. Bach originally planned an arioso movement with fugal ritornello over a chromatic bass. See *Bach Compendium*, Vocal Works Part 1, A 80, p. 324; Robert Marshall, *The Compositional Process of J. S. Bach* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), sketch in vol. 2, no. 116. A year earlier Bach set the text as a duet followed by a chorus (BWV 44/1&2).

Ascending chromatic tetrachord

Ob I climbs chromatically, increasing the tension. Regarding the ascending chromatic 4th, see note.

A minor The haunting timbre of 4 oboes playing sustained chords over a bass pedal (with Ob d'amore I climbing chromatically) colors the bleak warning. B7 G# dim.

Zeit, dass, wer euch tö-dtet, wird meinen, er thu-e Gott ei-nen Dienst da-ran.
time, when, whoever you kills, will think he is-doing God a service thereby.

A minor C# dim.7 A7 D minor D# dim.7 E minor E major

Da capo
Aria.

179/2. Molt' adagio. (♩=92.)

•Persecution & death accepted without fear (183/2).

Form (rhyme: ABABCD)CD

Ritornello (mm. 1-5) Em

A. Line 1 (Devise) (5-6) Em

Rit (6-10) Em

Lines 1-2 (2x: 10-16) Em-Bm

Rit (16-17) Bm

Lines 1-2 (2x: 17-24) Bm-Em

Rit. (24-28) Em [Fine]

B. Lines 3-4 (28-33) Em-F#m

Rit (33-34) F#m-DM

Lines 5-8 (34-41) DM-Am

Rit (41-42) Am

Lines 5-8 (42-46) Am-GM

da capo

Ritornello

Mel. marc.

Violoncello piccolo

E minor

Alfred Dürr notes that the violoncello's motoric obbligato gives the aria a "severe, almost inexorable character" (see note).

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. In this lengthy da capo aria the first two lines constitute the entire A Section.

Martin Petzoldt notes the parallelizations in movements 2 to 4: "Ich fürchte nicht" (no. 2: "I will not fear"), "Ich scheue ganz" (no. 2: "I dread absolutely"), "Ich folge gern" (no. 2: "I follow gladly"), "Ich bin bereit" (no. 3: "I am prepared"), "Ich tröste mich" (no. 3: "I comfort myself"), "Ich weiß, du sorgest" (no. 4: "I know thou carest"). See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:852.

Tenore. Line 1 (motto).
 A Section.
 Ich fürch - te nicht des To - des Schrecken,

E minor

Text painting: A tortured, "shaky" vocal line depicts fear and resigned lament despite the avowal not to fear death.

The cello piccolo encircles the tenor motorically, as if to represent God's steady, unseen, protecting arm as referenced in the B section despite the singer's fear.

7II

E minor

10 Lines 1-2 (2x). Von Ziegler 1728: gar
 ich fürch - te nicht des To - des Schrecken, ich scheu - e ganz kein Un - ge -

On repetition, the line is embellished, emphasizing the fear.

E minor E minor

12
 mach, ich fürch - te nicht des To - des Schrecken, ich scheue ganz kein Un - ge - mach,

A# dim7 F#7 B minor B minor

14II
 — ganz kein Un - ge - mach, "Shivering" embellishments. ich scheu - e ganz kein Un - gemach, Ritornello

B minor B minor

The text alludes to Hebrews 11:24-25: By faith Moses, when the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment (Luther 1545: Ungemach) with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

17 Lines 1-2 (2x).
ich fürch - te nicht des To - des Schrecken, ich scheu - e

19. B minor B minor
ganz kein Un - ge - mach, ganz kein Un - ge - mach, ich fürch - te nicht des To - des

21. D7 G major
Schrecken, ich scheu - e ganz kein Un - ge - mach, "Shivering" embellishments. ich scheu - e

23. B7 E minor
ganz kein Ungemach, ganz kein Un - gemach.

Ritornello
E minor E minor E major E minor E minor
A minor

26.
25||

B Section. Lines 3-4.

28

Denn Je - sus' Schutz - arm wird mich dek - ken, ich fol - - ge

Bach's change produces an additional "I" statement.

Cello piccolo with continuo on striding 8ths for "ich folge gerne..." ("I follow gladly").

E minor E minor A7 D major

30

gern und wil - lig nach, ich fol - ge gern und wil - lig nach, ich fol - -

C# major F# minor

32

-ge gern und wil - lig nach:

Word-painting: An extravagant scalar melisma for "folge" ("follow") suggests the path of discipleship may be arduous and frightening.

Ritornello

Cello piccolo

F# minor D major

Jesus' words from the opening movement are now used to address the persecutors directly.

34

Lines 5-8.

wollt ihr nicht mei - - nes Le - bens schonen und glaubt, Gott ei - - nen Dienst zu

D major Cello piccolo resumes striding 8ths... D7 G major

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Von Ziegler 1728: So wird er euch dafür belohnen

36

thun: Er soll euch selber noch belohnen, wohlan, es mag dabei be-

G major G major G7 C major

38

ruh'n, er soll euch selber noch be-

C major C major

Text painting: Sustained note for "ruh'n" ("rest") illustrates the believer's willingness to leave "reward" of the persecutors with God, as stated in the text.

40

lohnen, wohlan, es mag dabei beruh'n;

G# dim.7 E7 A minor A minor

Ritornello

42

Lines 5-8.

wollt ihr nicht meines Lebens schonen und glaubt, Gott einen Dienst zu

A minor B7 E minor A7 D major

44 thun: Er soll euch sel - bernoch be - loh - - nen, wohlan, es mag da bei beruh'n.

Recitativo. F#7 B minor G major G major Da Capo.

183/3. (♩ = 60.) 1. **Alto.** • Giving up life for Christ (183/3). Frequent pauses suggest halting lament.

The da capo of the previous movement ("I do not fear death's terror") creates a bridge to the recitative ("I am prepared to give up my life").

The oboes d'amore and oboes da caccia alternate with the "ich bin bereit" motive, creating a motivically imprinted movement.

The oboes have the motive first, the singer then identifies its meaning. Martin Petzoldt sees further symbolic meaning in the regularity of the oboes' motive and the enharmonic turn in m. 9 (see note).

Ob d'am I Ich bin bereit, mein Blut und armes Le - ben vor
 Ob d'am II I am prepared, my blood and poor life for (für)

Ob da caccia I Ob da caccia II
 (Ich bin bereit) b da caccia II

"Halo" of strings

G major Alto is often the voice of faith. B7 D# dim.7

The text is reminiscent of Paul's statement at the end of his life: "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:13. For additional biblical allusions, see note.)

3 dich, mein Heiland, hinzu - ge - ben, mein gan - zer Mensch soll dir ge - wid - met
 thee, my Savior, to-give-up; my entire person shall to-thee dedicated

Von Ziegler 1728: soll dir allein

D# dim.7 E minor B7 D# dim.7

5 II sein; ich trö - - ste mich, dein Geist wird bei mir ste - hen, ge -
 be; I comfort myself, thy Spirit will by me stand, supposing

Von Ziegler 1728: Diß ist mein Trost Increasing sharps (see note). G7

E7 A7 D major (E7)

8 Von Ziegler 1728: Und sollt es mir auch noch so schlimm ergehen.
 setzt, es soll - te mir viel leicht zu viel gesche - hen.
 it should for-me perhaps too much (be).

Enharmonic change

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

(for significance, see note).

Alfred Dürr writes, "The aria "requires not only strings but two unison oboes da caccia, which extend their obbligato part over lengthy stretches of music, accompanied by short, often motivic interjections from the strings. This unusual scoring is all the more remarkable in that both arias in this cantata involve obbligato instruments in the middle register (tenor or alto pitch). The triple time and the motivic repetition within the opening phrase create a relaxed, almost dance-like impression, in marked contrast to the severity of the first aria." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, trans. Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 345.

183/4. **Aria.** The courtly minuet style in C major with light embellishments represents the vitality, enlivening comfort, and aid of the Holy Spirit.

Ob da caccia I, II
Vln I

•Prayer for Spirit's guidance and intercession (183/4).

Note: The oboes' phrases leave little room for breath, reminding listeners of the biblical metaphor of the Spirit as life-giving and renewing breath.

Ritornello derived from vocal theme.

Minuet-like, with the opening ritornello in binary form.

(Moderato $\text{♩} = 104$)

5 -Vln I (Obs up 8va, see full score) -Strings +Strings
C major D7

9 -Strings +Strings Vln I
= m. 12 M. 13 missing = m. 14
G major G7 C major C major

15. Vln I Vln I Vln I Vln I
C major

19. hemiola
C major C major

23. C major C7 F major C major C7 F major C major C major C major

The opening words are reminiscent of the opening words of the 4th stanza of Luther's chorale "Nun bitten wir den Heil'gen Geist," which reads "Du höchster Tröster

Soprano is often the voice of the soul.

27. Soprano.

26

Höch - - ster Trö - - ster, heil - - ger Geist,

p *mf*

Ob da caccia I, II

Ritornello

C major

30 31.

+ Strings

C major

C7

F major

G7

34 35.

+ Strings

C major

C major

38 39.

höch - - ster Trö - - ster, heil' - - ger Geist,

p

tr

C major

After the motto statement, the Holy Spirit is mentioned 3 times in succession, a possible trinitarian reference (see note).

42 43.

höch - - ster Trö - - ster, heil' - - ger Geist.

Strings

G minor

A7

D minor

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46 47.

höch - - ster Trö - - ster, heil - ger Geist.

D minor G7 C major

51.

Striding scale for "who shows me the path."

der du mir die We - - ge weis't da -

C major D7

55.

Word painting: Sustained note for "darauf" ("on:[the path]).

rauf ich wan - deln soll, Ritornello + Strings

B minor D7 G major G major

59.

Word painting: Long, winding melisma suggests the path may be circuitous.

darauf ich wan -

G major G major

63.

G major G7 C major

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66 67. Tutti

Vln I Vln I Vln I

mf Ritornello

D7 G major G major G7 C major

70 71.

C major (D7) G major G major D7 G major

74 75.

G major G major G7

B Section. Paraphrase of Romans 8:26-27: The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

78 79.

hilf mei - ne Schwach - heit mit ver - tre - ten, denn vor mir
(für mich)

Text painting: Vacillating pitches, syncopation, and minor keys for "my weakness."

Vln I Vln I Vln I

P

E7 G# dim.7 (A minor) A minor A7

83 84.

sel - ber kann ich nicht be - ten, ich weiss, ich weiss:

(D minor) D minor

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87 88. *hemiola*

du sor - gest vor mein Wohl;
(für)

Vln I

Ob da caccia I, II

mf Ritornello

D minor G minor C7

92. *hemiola*

F major A7

95 96. hilf mei - ne Schwach - heit mit ver - tre - ten,

p Ob da caccia I, II

D minor G minor G minor

101. NBA: Denn von mir selber

100. denn vor mir selbst kann ich nicht be - ten, ich
(für mich)

Vln I

G(7) C minor G7 C minor C minor

104 105. weiss, ich weiss: du sor - gest vor mein Wohl.
(für)

Vln I

Ob da caccia I, II

hemiola

Ritornello

C7 F major G7 C major Da Capo.

This is the 5th stanza of verse 5 of 12 in the 1653 Protestant hymn "Zeuch ein Toren" by Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676). Bach's setting is characterized by flowing eighth notes and embellishments (often in parallel motion), in accordance with the traditional representation of the Spirit as the life-giving force. In this way, it differs markedly from Bach's setting of the same tune in BWV 16/6 and BWV 28/6 and stands in stark contrast to the static bleakness of the opening movement.

183/5. **Choral.** (Mel: „Helft mir Gott's Güte preisen.“) • Spirit teaches us how to pray effectively (183/5).

+Ob d'amore I, II
Vln I

+Ob da caccia I
Vln II

+Ob da caccia II
Vla

Soprano. 1.
Du bist ein Geist, der leh- - -ret, wie man recht be - ten soll; dein

Alto.
Du bist ein Geist, der leh- - -ret, wie man recht be - ten soll; dein

Tenore.
Du bist ein Geist, der leh- - -ret, wie man recht be - ten soll; dein

Basso.
Du bist ein Geist, der leh- - -ret, wie man recht be - ten soll; dein

5
Be - ten wird er - hö - -ret, dein Sin - gen klin - get wohl; es steigt zum Himmel an, es

Be - ten wird er - hö - -ret, dein Sin - gen klinget wohl; es steigt zum Himmel an, es

Be - ten wird er - hö - -ret, dein Sin - gen klin - get wohl; es steigt zum Himmel an, es

Be - ten wird er - hö - -ret, dein Singen klinget wohl; es steigt zum Himmel an, es

11
steigt und lässt nicht a - -be, bis der ge - holfen ha - -be, der al - lein hel - fen kann.

steigt und lässt nicht a - -be, bis der ge - holfen ha - -be, der al - lein hel - fen kann.

steigt und lässt nicht a - -be, bis der ge - holfen ha - -be, der al - lein hel - fen kann.

steigt und lässt nicht a - -be, bis der ge - holfen ha - -be, der al - lein hel - fen kann.

Contemporary hymnals have "allen" ("all"). In her libretto, Von Ziegler changed this to "allein" ("alone"). Martin Petzoldt suggests that the change aligns with the Reformation *solus solus Christus, sola gratia, sola fide* (Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.) See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:957.