

For Bach's first Advent cantata in Leipzig, he revived a work he had written in Weimar. Cantata 61 explores the liturgical theme of the day: Christ's promised coming. In Leipzig, no cantatas were permitted after Advent 1 until Christmas. Thus, Bach had some weeks to prepare for the Christmas/New Year season of his first year in Leipzig.

61/1 is a choral elaboration in the style of a French overture, signifying the royal stature of the promised Savior. The chorale is sung in long notes against the dotted rhythm. Divided violas also show French influence.

J.S. Bach Cantata No. 61

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

Ouverture. (Coro.) (Maestoso $\text{♩} = 66$.)

61/1

Chorus (Chorale Overture) (See also 36/2, 62/1.)

• Advent prayer: Come, Savior of the Gentiles! (61/1.)

First hermeneutical sense: Christ's coming in the flesh to Israel (the incarnation). See side note.

1. **Pianoforte.**

A minor Chorale Phrase 1 in Continuo

NBA I/1; BC A1
1. S. in Advent (BWV 61, 62, 36)
*Romans 13:11–14 (Night is almost gone, lay aside deeds of darkness)
*Matthew. 21:1–9 (Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem)
Librettist: Erdmann Neumeister (see note).
FP: 2 December 1714 (Weimar Palace Chapel)
(Leipzig: 28 November 1723)
The score is core dated 1714 (the year Bach's employer, the Duke of Weimar, added to his duties as organist the responsibility of writing one cantata each month). Later, when Bach revived this work in Leipzig, he noted the order of the Leipzig liturgy in this score. See Dürr/Jones, "Cantatas of J. S. Bach," 76, "Wolff, "Bach the Learned Musician," 255–56.

Instrumentation:
Vln I, II
Vla I, II
Violoncello & Fagotto
SATB
Continuo (Organo)

A minor Chorale Phrase 1 in Continuo

Chorale Phrase 1 in Soprano.

Text painting: The first line of the chorale (a prayer) is introduced in the continuo with rising lines in the instruments, followed by a rising sequence of vocal entries (S-A-T-B), suggesting supplication rising to heaven.

3. Soprano.

Christ's first Advent (his birth) is seen through the lens of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as described in the day's Gospel reading. Despite the humble circumstances of both occasions (born in a manger, entering Jerusalem on a donkey), this royalty is acknowledged here with a French Overture.

(Mel: „Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland“.)

Nun komm, der Hei
Come Thou of man

The underlying chorale is Martin Luther's 1524 German paraphrase of St. Ambrose's plainsong hymn "Veni redemptor gentium."

Alfred Dürr summarizes, "The opening movement is an ingenious combination of chorale arrangement and French Overture.... The basic form of the overture, slow-fast (fugue)-slow, is so combined with the four-line Lutheran chorale that the first two lines are assigned to the slow opening section and a line each to the two following sections. The orchestra begins with a quotation of the first chorale line in the instrumental bass, after which the same line is sung by all four voices in turn against the ceremonial dotted rhythms of the instruments. Line 2 follows in a chordal texture of voices, again embedded in the instrumental rhythms. In the quick fugato of line 3, the instruments double the choir in unison, but line 4, returning to the style of line 2, is heard chordally within the solemn instrumental texture." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 77.

6. den Hei land,
the Sa viour,

Chorale Phrase 1 in A.

D minor

A minor

9. Alto.

Nun komm, der Hei den Hei
Come Thou of man the Sa

E minor

12.

land,
viour,

15.

Tenore. Chorale Phrase 1 in Tenor.

Nun komm, der Hei - -
Come Thou of man

A minor

18.

den Hei - - land, Nun
the Sa - - viour, Come

Basso.

D minor A minor

22.

komm, der Hei - - den Hei - - land,
Thou of man the Sa - - viour,

cresc.

E minor E major A minor

25.

C major

D minor

28.

Soprano.

Chorale Phrase 2 in four-part homophony embedded in a continuation of the instrumental material with its characteristic dotted rhythm.

A minor

Chorale Phrase 3. Faster, imitative counterpoint as is usual in a French Overture. Here triple meter stresses the joy of a dance, while the imitative entries in descending order depict the inclusiveness of the earthly response.

31.

A Gai. (♩ = 60.)

The scurrying rhythms fit the idea of diverse people responding excitedly. Text painting: Melismas for "all."

Instruments colla parte.

36.

le Welt, al le Welt, al le Welt, dess sich
the earth, all the earth, all the earth, mor - tals

al le Welt, al le Welt, al le Welt, dess sich
all the earth, all the earth, all the earth, mor - tals

dess sich wun - dert al le Welt, al le,
mor - tals o - ver all the earth, all the

dess sich wun - dert al le
mor - tals o - ver all the

A minor

41.

wun - dert al le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al
o - ver all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all

wun - dert al le Welt, al le, al le
o - ver all the earth, all the, all the

al le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al le
all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all the

Welt, dess sich wun - dert al le Welt, dess sich wun - dert
earth, mor - tals o - ver all the earth, mor - tals o - ver

G major

Text painting: Sustained tones for "all."

46.

le Welt, dess sich wun dert al - - -
the earth, mor - tals o - ver - all

Welt, dess sich wun dert al - - - le Welt, al - le,
earth, mor - tals o - ver all the earth, all the,

Welt, dess sich wun dert al - - - le, al - - -
earth, mor - tals o - ver all the all

al - - - le Welt, deas sich wun dert al - - -
all the earth, mor - tals o - ver - all

C major

51.

Parallel 3rds and 6ths suggest sweetness...

hemiola

le Welt, dess sich wun dert al -
the earth, mor - tals o - ver all

al - - - le Welt, dess sich wun dert al -
all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all

le Welt, sich wun -
the earth, yea, o -

C major

57. *tr* **B** *tr*

le, al - le Welt, al -
the, all the earth, all

le, al - le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al -
the, all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all

dert al - le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al - le
ver all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all the -

le Welt, dess sich
the earth, mor - tals

p

C major A minor A minor

62.

le Welt, dess sich wun - dert
the earth, mor - tals o - ver

le Welt, dess sich wun - dert
the earth, mor - tals o - ver

Welt, al - le Welt, al - le Welt, dess sich wun - dert
earth, all the earth, all the earth, mor - tals o - ver

wun - dert al - le Welt,
o - ver all the earth,

mf

A minor

67.

al - - - le, Welt, dess sich wun - dert al - - -
all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all

al - - - le Welt, dess sich
all the earth, mor - tals

al - - - le Welt, dess sich
all the earth, mor - tals

dess sich wun - dert al - - - le Welt, dess sich
mor - tals o - ver all the earth, mor - tals

cresc.

D minor

72.

le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al - - - le Welt, dess sich
the earth, mor - tals o - ver all the earth, mor - tals

wun - dert al - - - le Welt, dess sich
o - ver all the earth, mor - tals

wun - dert al - - - le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al - - - le
o - ver all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all the

wun - dert al - - - le Welt, dess sich wun - dert al - - - le
o - ver all the earth, mor - tals o - ver all the

C major

C major

A minor

77. Text painting: Chromatic inflection to depict the amazement referenced in the text.

wun - dert al - le Welt, dess sich
o - ver all the earth, mor - tals

wun - dert al - le
o - ver all the

Welt, al - le, al - le Welt, dess sich
earth, all the, all the earth, mor - tals

Welt, dess sich wun - dert al - le
earth, mor - tals o - ver all

N6

A minor C major A minor

Chorale Phrase 4: The first material, with its regal dotted rhythm returns as is typical in a French Overture. The voices present the chorale in 4-part homophony embedded in a continuation of the instrumental material with its characteristic dotted rhythms. In this way, it is linked to the second chorale line, perhaps intentionally connecting their confessional content. (See Martin Petzoldt, "Bach-Kommentar," vol. 1, pp. 24-25.)

(rit.) **Tempo I.**
wun - dert al - le, al - le Welt:
o - ver all the, all the earth:

Welt, sich wun - dert al - le Welt:
earth, yea, o - ver all the earth:

wun - dert al - le Welt:
o - ver all the earth:

le Welt:
the earth:

(rit.) **Tempo I.**

A major D minor D minor

87.

Gott solch' Ge - burt
mar - - - vel at Thy

Gott solch' Ge - - - burt
mar - - - vel at Thy

Gott solch' Ge - burt
mar - - - vel at Thy

Gott solch' Ge - burt
mar - - - vel at Thy

D minor A minor

90.

ihm - be - stellt.
Ho - ly Birth.

ihm - be - stellt.
Ho - ly Birth.

ihm be - stellt.
Ho - ly Birth.

ihm - be - stellt.
Ho - ly Birth.

A minor A minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

A secco recitative flowing into arioso expands on the previous text. C major is often associated with Christ in Bach's cantatas.

61/2. **Recitativo.** •Advent: Christ's coming brings ever new blessings (61/2).
Tenore. First hermeneutical sense: Christ's coming in the flesh (the incarnation). .

For biblical background, see note.

1. **Tenore.**

Der Heiland ist gekommen, hat unser armes Fleisch und Blut an sich genommen, und nimmt uns zu Blutsverwandten an.
 Our Lord has come to save us. He took our lowly form, assumed a human

mf Accompanied by Continuo alone.

C major
 C major is often used to represent Christ (see note at no. 3).

4.

nommen, und nimmt uns zu Blutsverwandten an. O! allerhöchstes O bountiful rich and
 fig - ure, and deigned to make us kin to Him by blood. O boun-ty rich and

Dissonance presumably used to allude to the condescension of the Incarnation.

A minor G major G# dim.7

2 rhetorical questions, both ending with a phrygian cadence.

7.

Gut, was hast du nicht an uns getan? Was thust du nicht noch täglich an den rare! is ours thru Thine all-wise design! What wealth of good hast Thou not daily
 rare! is ours thru Thine all-wise de - sign! What wealth of good hast Thou not dai - ly

cresc.

A minor Phrygian cadence A major D minor Phrygian cadence

(Arioso.) (Andante $\text{♩} = 72$) The reference to light may be related to the Epistle of the Sunday.

Continuo realization still editorial.

10. *mf*

Deinen? Du kommst und lässt dein Licht, du kommst und lässt dein Licht mit vollem Segen done us? Thou bring - est light to - shine, Thou bring - est light to - shine with blessed grace up -
 NBA: kömmt

mf

D major G major C major F major

Descending shape of 16th-note lines in voice and continuo suggests the bestowing of blessing from above. The imitation between continuo and voice may allude to the dual (human/divine) nature represented in the incarnation.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

13.

cresc.

schei - nen, du kommst und lässt dein Licht mit vol - lem Se - - - gen schei - nen, mit
on - - us, Thou bring-est_ light to_ shine with bless-ed grace up - on - - us, with

cresc.

C major

C major

16.

vol - lem Se - gen scheinen.
bless - ed grace up - on us.

cresc.

Catabasis for incarnation.

C major

F major

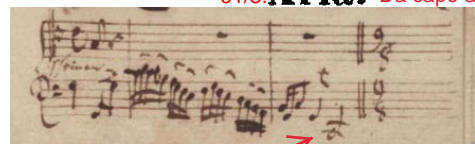
C major

F major Da capo

•New (Church) Year's prayer: Come & bless thy church! (61/3).

Second hermeneutical sense: Christ's coming in the spirit to the church.

61/3. **Aria.** Da capo aria with obligato melody (derived from opening vocal statement) is played by unison violins and violas (Vivaldi influence). The basic shape is that of a descending octave, representing the Advent/descent of Christ.



Bach ties no. 2 and no. 3 together by giving both to the tenor and letting the aria follow without a gap (see autograph score). Triple compound meter and trio texture may represent the Trinity, although Jesus is specifically mentioned (not the trine God). Or "triplets" may represent the more modern, galant style, in reference to the new (church) year.

mf

Unison Strings Ritornello

Catabasis for incarnation.

C major



C major

C major is often used to represent Christ (see note).

Da capo aria, with instrumental ritornello. Strings play unison cantabile scalar ritornello with sequential construction = Vivaldi influence. Then tenor sings likewise cantabile scalar melismas. Meter is 9/8. Lilt = happy.

4.

G major

G major

8.

cresc.

A minor

F major

D minor

Delaying C major... (This may represent the waiting implied by the season of Advent.)

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

12.

C major

16. Tenore.

Alfred Dürr writes, "In the third movement, unison violins and violas form a single obbligato part. This, in conjunction with frequent recurrences of the introductory ritornello within the vocal passages, lends the whole aria a rather pointedly strict and unified character." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 77.

Komm, Je - su, komm zu dei - ner Kir - che, komm, Je - su,
Come, Je - sus, come to Thine e - lec - ted, come Je - sus,

Ritornello theme

C major

20.

komm zu dei - ner Kir - che, und gieb ein se - - - lig neu - es
come to Thine e - lec - ted, sus - tain Thy church this com - ing
(Advent: sus - tain and bless this church of

C major

G major

23.

"Come" is repeated...

Jahr, komm, komm, komm zu dei - ner Kir - che, komm, Je - su,
year, come, come, come to Thine e - lec - ted, come, Je - sus,
(Thine,) New year: Advent begins the liturgical year.

G major

A minor

27.

komm, komm, Je - su, komm zu dei - ner Kir - che, komm, komm,
come, come, Je - sus, come to Thine e - lec - ted, come, come,

cresc.

F major

D minor

Delaying C major... (This may represent the waiting implied by the season of Advent.)

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

31.

Word painting: "Selig" ("blessed" is stressed).

komm, und gieb ein se - - - - - lig neu - es Jahr, und
 come, sus - tain - Thy church this com - ing year, sus -
 (Advent: sus - tain - and bless this church of Thine, sus -

p *mf*

C major

34.

gieb ein se - lig neu - es Jahr!
 tain - Thy church this com - ing year!
 tain - and bless - this church of Thine!)

mf Ritornello *tr*

C major

38.

G major

42.

A minor F major D minor

cresc.

Delaying C major... (This may represent the waiting implied by the season of Advent.)

46.

p *mf*

C major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

50.

Contrasting middle section of da capo form in relative minor. Various words are emphasized.

Be-för-dre dei - nes Na-mens Eh-re er-hal-te
Let ev'-ry tongue Thy truth be preach-ing, up-hold the

mf

A minor

G major

54.

die ge-sun-de Leh-re, und seg-ne Kan-zel und Al-tar!
Faith by stab-le teach-ing, and bless Thy Shrine and Al-tar here!
(Advent: and bless Thine Al-tar and Thy Shrine!)

mf

G major

E minor

Ritornello

Kanzel = Pulpit (proclamation of the Word)
Altar = Eucharist
The pulpit is typically physically higher than the altar.

58.

C major

A minor

B7

62.

Be-för-dre dei - nes Na-mens Eh-re, er-hal-te
Let ev'-ry tongue Thy truth be preach-ing, up-hold the

mf

E minor

66.

die ge-sun-de Leh-re, und seg-ne Kan-zel und Al-
Faith by stab-le teach-ing, and bless Thy Shrine and Al-tar
(Advent: and bless Thine Al-tar and Thy

C major

C major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

69.

tar, und seg - ne Kan - - zel und Al - tar, und seg - ne
 here, and bless Thy Shrine and Al - tar here, and bless Thy
 Shrine, and bless Thine Al - tar and Thy Shrine, and bless Thine

A minor C major

72.

Kan - - zel und Al - tar, und seg - ne Kan - zel und Al - tar!
 Shrine and Al - tar here, and bless Thy Shrine and Al - tar here!
 Al - - tar and Thy Shrine, and bless Thine Al - tar and Thy Shrine!)

A minor

61/4. Recitativo. (Offenbarung St. Johannis, Cap. 3, V. 20)

(Largo ♩ = 60.)
 Basso.

•Vox Christi: I stand at the door & knock:
 Revelation 3:20 (61/4).

Da Capo dal Segno.

Staccato notes for "knocking"

Arioso-style writing

Text painting:
 Strings & continuo
 have staccato
 eighth notes
 ("senza l'arco" =
 pizzicato) to depict
 Christ knocking
 on the door. The
 4.5 mm. of E pedal
 (despite changing
 harmonies) probably
 symbolize
 persistence.

1. Sie - he, sie - he! Ich ste - he vor der Thür und klop - fe an, und klopfe
 Look ye, look ye! I stand be - fore the door and knock* there-on, and knock there.

Eighth notes "senza l'arco"
 Strings p sempre staccato E pedal...

Moving to the third
 hermeneutical sense:
 Christ's coming to the
 individual believer
 through faith.

4.

B7 is harmonically distant, perhaps symbolizing the "otherness" of the eternal Christ.

an. So Je - mand mei - ne Stim - me hö - ren wird und die Thür auf - thun: zu
 on. If an - y man shall har - ken to my voice and shall op - en it: then
 (If an - y, an - y man shall hear my voice)

7.

E minor (Dissonances are resolved when the knocking is answered.)

G major

dem wer - de ich ein - ge - hen und das Abendmahl mit ihm halten und er mit mir.
 I will come in un - to him and will bide there and sup there with him, and he with me.

cresc. dim.

* The word "knock" may be repeated on each eighth-note of this group.

G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

The penultimate movement of the cantata is a substantial da capo aria for soprano and continuo. In its theological context—the mystic union of Christ and the believer—the soprano represents the bride awaiting her bridegroom). The walking bass shows Italian influence (Handel-like).

•Advent: Preparing my heart to be his dwelling (61/5).

Third hermeneutical sense: Christ's coming to the individual believer through faith.

Continuo da capo aria = 61/5. **Aria.** Soprano has the role of the Soul.

Continuo alone. This realization is editorial.

Text painting: Basic motive is based on the opening words. Its rhythm perhaps suggests three knocks followed by a listening rest (see previous movement) and its ascending shape suggests the action of offering the heart (a response to the Vox Christi of the previous movement).

For biblical background, see note.



1. **(Andante $\text{♩} = 99$)**

Continuo only. *mf*

With cello. *mf*

Realization of the continuo line is editorial...

G major

Quasi-ostinato bass is biplanar

Eric Chafe argues that Bach reduces instrumentation from movement to movement "to allegorize an increasingly personal series of affective moments corresponding to the ever nearer relationship to God." This S aria represents the most internal stage. See "Tonal Allegory," 143.

6. **Soprano.** *mf*

Text painting: Upward gesture for "opening the heart." Soprano often represents the Soul.

Öff-ne dich, mein gan - zes — Her - ze,
Op-en thou, my heart, to — Je - sus,

p *mf*

11.

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.

öff-ne dich, mein gan - zes
op - en thou, my heart, — to

tr *p*

G major

15.

Her - ze, Je - sus kommt — und zie - het ein,
Je - sus, He will come — and en - ter there,

tr *mf* *cresc.*

19.

Je - sus kommt — und zie - het ein!
He will come — and en - ter there!

tr *f* *p*

Ritornello

D major

D major

D major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 61

23.

27.

Öff-ne dich, öff-ne dich, — mein gan-zes Her-ze,
Op-en thou, op-en thou, — my heart, to Je-sus,

G major

31.

Je-sus kommt und zie-het ein, Je-sus—
He will come and en-ter there, He will—

G major

35.

kommt und zie-het ein!
come and en-ter there! Ritornello

(Fine.)

C major G major

39.

43. Adagio. (♩ = 100.)

Contrasting middle section (change of tempo, meter, and melodic movement).

Bin, ich gleich nur Staub und Er - de, will er mich doch nicht ver -
 Tho, I be but dust and ash - es, still will I be not des -

mf

G major Continuo line changes from biplanar construction to more flowing eighth notes, then 16th notes for "blessed."

A minor

45.

schmäln, sei - ne Lust an mir zu seh'n, dass ich sei - ne Woh - nung wer - de.
 pised, but find fa - vor in His eyes, that He came to dwell with me.

p

C major

48.

O, wie se - lig, o, wie se - lig, o, wie
 O how bless - ed, o how bless - ed, o how

p *cresc.*

Flowing 16th notes accompany "selig" (blessed). C major

G major

G major

50.

se - lig werd'ich sein, wie se - lig, o, wie se - lig, wie selig werd'ich sein!
 bless - ed will I be, how bless - ed, o how bless - ed, how bless - ed will I be!

p *pp*

Da Capo.

Short movement, essentially and ecstatic "Amen."

●Advent prayer: Come, my crown of joy, do not tarry! (61/6).
Fourth hermeneutical sense: Christ's coming to the believer at the end of time.

For biblical background, see note.

G major

Alfred Dürr writes, "That Neumeister was here content with only part of a hymn verse is surely a sign of incipient indifference to the chorale. We may safely assume that in later years Bach would not have adopted his textual model so uncritically and might have sought to avoid such mutilation." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 77. For an alternate view, see note

G major

5.

Freu - den - kro - ne, bleib' nicht lan -
 crown of Hea - ven, wait no lon -

kro - ne, komm, und bleib'
 Hea - ven, come, and wait

schö - ne Freu - den - kro - ne, komm, komm, komm, und bleib'
 fair - est crown of Hea - ven, come, come, come, and wait

komm, komm, komm, komm, komm, du schö - ne Freu - den - kro - ne,
 come, come, come, come, come Thou, fair - est crown of Hea - ven,

7.

Text painting: Melismas for "yearning."
 Chorale melody descends one octave (see later).

ge! Dei - ner wart'
 ger! Thou for whom

— nicht lan - ge! Dei - ner wart' ich mit Ver - lan -
 — no lon - ger! Thou for whom the world is yearn -
 (man)

— nicht lan - ge! Dei - ner wart'
 — no lon - ger! Thou for whom

bleib' nicht lan - ge! Dei - ner wart' ich mit Ver - lan -
 wait no lon - ger! Thou - for - whom the world is yearn -
 (man)

E minor

G major

10.

ich mit Ver lan
the world (man) is yearn

ich mit Ver
the world (man) is

cresc.

12.

(Breiter.)

gen.
ing.

lan yearn

gen. mit Ver lan
ing, world is yearn (man)

(Breiter.)

R. H.

E minor G major C major G major

After the cantus firmus (soprano) has descended an octave to reach its final note, the Vln 1 ascends to high G (2 octaves), perhaps to depict that Christ's descent makes unification with Christ possible and the yearning for this to happen.