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NBA I/12; BC A73

Rogate: 5. S. after Easter (BWV 86, 87)

*James 1:22-27 (Be doers of the word and not hearers only)

*John 16:231-30 (Christ's farewell: Ask anything of the Father in my name)

Librettist: Unknown; perhaps Christian Weiß the elder

FP: 14 May 1724 (St. Thomas)

Concise Cantata (with mostly solos): God's Promises Are Sure.

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 86

Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch

Instrumentation:

Ob d'amore I, II

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo

Alla breve signals traditional style.

Bach chooses a "timeless" style.

(See note below.)

86/1.

•Vox Christi: I will grant your requests: John 16:23 (86/1).

Aria

1. Ob d'amore II, Vln II $\text{♩} = 60$

The instrumental lines are vocal in conception. Three vocal themes are presented contrapuntally in the ritornello (a 4th theme is the tail of no. 2):

1. "Wahrlich, ich sage euch" (mm. 21-24)
2. "so ihr den Vater etwas bitten werdet (mm. 31-34).
3. "in meinem Namen" (36-38)
4. "so wird ers euch geben (39-41).

The themes are presented in various combinations, somewhat like a permutation fugue, resulting in frequent part crossing.

The successive movements repeatedly allude to Psalm 33:4: Denn des Herrn Wort ist wahrhaftig, und was er zusaget, das hält er gewiß (Luther 1545), i.e., "For the word of the Lord is true, and what he promises he surely keeps".

The first movement is a fugue. Alfred Dürr writes, "All parts, not only the bass but also the strings...are decidedly vocal in conception. In fact, if the instruments adhered to the range of the human voice, it would be easy to sing the entire movement as a four-part motet with continuo accompaniment. The instrumental introduction states the distinctive motives to which the text is later sung by the bass...The instrumental prelude is followed by 3 similar vocal sections, A A1 A2, within each of which the text is delivered in full." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, trans. Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 322.

Eric Chafe suggests that because E major is at the upper limit of Bach's tonal spectrum, it has positive associations. See Eric Chafe, *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

For Martin Petzoldt's take on the theological basis for Bach's structure, see side note.



Section A.

A Bass

Vox Christi

21

Wahr - lich, wahr - lich, ich sa - ge euch,

Ob d'am I, Vln I

E major

See full score.

E major

For biblical background, see note.



27

wahr - lich, wahr - lich, ich sa - - ge euch, so ihr den Va - ter Et was

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Vla

E major F#7 B major B major B7 C# minor

33

bit - ten wer - det in meinem Na - - men,

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

Vla

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

E major E major C# minor G#7

39

so wird er's euch ge - ben, so wird er's euch ge - ben, so wird

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

C# minor B7 E major G# major C# minor

44

er's euch ge - - ben. Wahr - lich,

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

Vla

D major A major A major B7 E major 8va up (see full score).

B Section A'.

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50

wahr.lich,ich sa . ge euch, wahr - lich,

Ob d'am I
Vln I continued...

Ob d'am II
Vln II

Vla

E major G#7 C# minor C#7 F# minor

58

wahr - lich,ich sa . - ge euch, so ihr den Va . ter Et . was

Ob d'am I
Vln I

The second statement of the complete text migrates to the parallel minor of the original key's subdominant (AM / F#m)

C#(7) F# minor G#(7) C# minor F#7

61

bit . ten wer - det in meinem Na .

Ob d'am . I
Vln I

Ob d'am II
Vln II

B major G# minor

66

- . men, so wird er's euch ge - ben, so wird er's euch ge .

D#(7) G# minor F#(7) B major Fxdim.7 D#(7)

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71

ben, so wird er's euch ge - - ben.

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

G# minor B7 See full score for 8va. E major E major F#7

Vla

77

Section A".

Wahr-lich, wahr-lich, ich sa - - ge euch, so ihr den Vater Etwas bit-ten wer -

Ob d'am. II
Vln II

B major E major E major F#7

Continuo up 8va (see full score).

The third statement of the entire text reestablishes E major.

83

det in meinem Na - - men, so ihr den Vater Etwas

Ob d'am. I
Vln I

B major B7 C# minor E major E major E major

"Namen" ("name") is rhetorically stressed with extended notes.

89

bitten wer - det in mei - nem - Na - - - - men,

Vla

E major

95

so wird er's euch ge - - ben, euch ge - ben.

Vla continued...

D major C# minor B(7) E major E major

In light of Jesus' promise, the alto determines to pick roses despite the prick of thorns. The solo violin's ebullient figuration, characterized by an ascending

triadic opening followed by more upward leaps and fast scales may suggest opening blooms, while the broken chords may refer to the "breaking off of roses" or the spiky thorns" (compare the vocal setting in mm. 14 & 20. Performances vary in affect, depending on tempo (from Helmuth Rilling at MM=48 to Rudolf Lutz at MM=72). In contrast to the old style of the opening aria, this one is characterized by contemporary virtuosity.

Alfred Dürr writes, "[This aria is] exceptional in that its obbligato violin part contains a minimum of thematic writing and a maximum of virtuoso figuration." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 321.

Aria • Confidence in face of trouble, that prayers are heard (86/2). 86/2. (Adagio ma non troppo $\text{♩} = 56$)

Solo Violin

Ritornello *mf* Middle parts are editorial realization... *p*

A major Walking bass, perhaps to picture the stroll of the person walking among the roses referenced in the text. B7

E major A major

5 A7 D major

7 B7 E major

9 E7 A major *cresc.*

11 A major *dim.*

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. The text alludes to Song of Solomon 6:2, although there the roles are reversed (it is the bridegroom who is gathering roses): "My beloved has gone down to his garden...to gather lilies (Luther 1545: Rosen breche)." Word painting: Broken chord for "brechen" (break [roses]).

18 **A Alto**

Ich will doch wohl Ro - sen bre - - chen,

Editorial additions are grayed out for clarity.

p

For biblical background, see note.



15

wenn mich gleich **die** Dor - nen ste - - chen,

NBA: itzt (each time)

B7 E major

17

ich will doch wohl Ro - sen bre - - - chen,

E major E(7) A major C#7

19

wenn mich gleich die Dor - - nen ste - - - chen,

F# minor F# minor E major A major

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21 **B**

ich will doch wohl Ro - sen bre - chen,

A7 D major

23

wenn mich gleich die Dor - nen - ste - chen,

B7 E major

25

ich - will doch wohl Ro - sen - bre - chen, wenn mich

E7 A major

27

Chromaticism for "Dornen stechen" ("thorns prick").

gleich die Dor - nen - ste -

D# dim.7 E major

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29 **C**
- - - - - chen.
mf Ritornello *p*
A minor N6 D# dim.7 E major A major B7

32
mf *p*
E major A major

34
A7 D major

36
B7 E major

38
cresc. 7
E7 A major

40
A major

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 29 through 40 of J.S. Bach's Church Cantata BWV 86. It is written for voice and piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. At measure 29, there is a 'C' time signature change and a 'chen.' tempo marking. The piano part features a 'Ritornello' section starting at measure 32, marked with *mf* and *p*. Chord annotations in red text are provided below the piano staff for many measures: A minor N6, D# dim.7, E major, A major, B7, E major, A major, A7, D major, B7, E major, E7, and A major. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *cresc.* The score ends at measure 40 with a final A major chord annotation.

The spiritual metaphor is explained in the B section, where personal affliction is acknowledged and the music turns to the minor mode. For the significance of major vs. minor, see side note.



42 **D**

Denn ich bin der Zu_ver_sicht, denn_ich_ bin der Zu_ver_

p

F# minor

F# minor

45

sicht: dass mein Bit - - - ten und_ mein

F# minor

B7

47

Fle - - - - -

Sighing duples for "my pleading."

E major

49

- - - - - hen_ Gott_ ge - wiss zu_ Her - - zen_

E# dim.7

C#7

9

51

ge - - hen, weil - - es mir sein Wort ver - spricht, weil es mir sein Wort ver -

F# minor B(7) E major C# minor G# major

54

spricht.

Ritornello

C# minor C7 F# minor

56

Denn ich bin der Zu - ver -

B# dim.7 C# minor G#7 C# minor C#7

58

sicht, denn - ich - bin der Zu - ver -

F# minor B7 B7

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60

sicht: dass mein Bit - - - ten und mein

E7 A minor E7 A minor

See full score for correct octave of E pedal...

Long, throbbing E pedal with harsh harmonic clashes to depict the anguished entreaty mentioned in the text before deferred resolution to A major.

62

Fle - - - hen Gott ge - - -

D# dim.7 B7 E7

64

wiss zu Her - zen ge - - - - hen,

A minor D# dim.7 E7

68

weil es mir sein Wort ver - spricht, weil

A major A7 D major (E7) A major B7

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68

es mir sein Wort ver - spricht.

E major E major E7 A major **Da Capo**

This is the last stanza of 16 in the 1530 chorale "Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn" by Georg Grünwald (d. 1530).

86/3. Chorale (Mel: „Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn“)

Allegro moderato $\text{♩} = 144$

• Promises of God's Word are sure & bring us to heaven (86/3).

One oboe d'amore echoes the other, like fulfillment following a promise. Emphatic note repetitions reinforce the text's emphasis that God will keep his sworn promise. The sweet parallel 3rds and 6ths of the oboes d'amore in the instruments' trio texture perhaps point to the angels referenced at the end of the stanza (compare the swirling strings (*figura circulatio*) at the beginning of the St. John Passion.

Ob d'amore I Ob d'amore II

F# minor E7 A major B major C#7

Parallel 3rds & 6ths suggest sweetness...



Figura circulatio (see note).

F# minor F# minor F#7 B minor E7

7

Soprano

The tessitura of the voice part is low. While the part could have been assigned to the alto, Bach's decision to employ the soprano allowed each voice type to be featured in the cantata.

Oboe d'amore II Und

Oboe d'amore I

C#7 F# minor B7 E7 C#7 F# minor F# minor

10

For biblical background, see note.



NBA: gütig

güt' - ge

B major F# minor F# minor

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13

Gott in

G#7 C# minor C# minor F#7 B minor

16

sei - - - nem Wort ver - - - spro - - - chen

F# minor F# minor F# minor

19

B
hat, ge - -

F# minor F# major B minor F# minor

22

schwor'n bei sei - - - - - nem

B major B7 E major E major

Oboe d'amore I

25 **C**

Na - - - men,

Oboe d'amore II

E major F# minor

28 The 4th text line ("that will he assuredly fulfill and grant") alludes to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

das hält und giebt er

Continuo sustains a note for "hält" ("holds/keeps"), here used in reference to God keeping his promise.

E7 A major A7 D major F#7

31

g'wiss für - - - wahr.

B minor F# minor F# minor F#7

34 **D** NBA: Der

Er helf' uns zu der

B minor F# minor F# minor F# minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 86

37

En - - gel Schar

F# minor F# minor F# major

40

E

durch Je - - sum Chri - - -

B minor C#7 F# minor F#7 B minor

43

- - - stum, A - - - men!

G# dim.7 C#(7) F# minor F#7

46

B major (C#7) F# minor F# minor F#7

49

B minor C#7 F# minor B7 E7 C#7 F# minor F# minor

The tenor recitative alludes to Jesus words in John 14:27: "...Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." The intense chromaticism of the first phrase depicts the unreliability of the world's promises, as referenced in the text.

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 5 mm.

For biblical background, see note.

86/4. **Recitative** • Promises of God fulfilled, unlike those of world (86/4).

Secco 1. **Tenor** C# A# G D F# B E# B# D#

Gott macht es nicht gleich wie die Welt, die viel verspricht und we-nig hält; denn, was er

Chromaticism for the unreliable world that "promises much and keeps little."

Expected resolution to F# minor is thwarted (depicting "unreliability")

A# dim.7 B minor E# dim.7 B# dim.7 C# minor C# minor

The 3rd text line ("whatever he assents to/promises must happen") alludes to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

4 G# A

zusagt, muss geschehen, dass man dar - an kann seine Lust und Freu-de sehen.

Consonant harmonies for "For what he promises must happen so that one can see his pleasure and joy in it."

F# major B major E major E major E major

String accompaniment with Vln I dominating. The ritornello is derived from the vocal theme, particularly the repeated motto "Gott hilft gewiß" ("God helps assuredly"), an allusion to the Psalm verse that underlies all of the libretto, Psalm 33:4 (see note at no. 1).

Aria 86/5. **Moderato** 72 • Prayers answered eventually, though help be deferred (86/5).

(37) Vln I 1

Ritornello Strings *mf*

"Gott hilft gewiß" motto (includes figura corta).

Figura corta (see note).

E major

Form (Rhyme: ABBA)
Ritornello (mm. 1-8) EM
Lines 1 (motto) + 2-3 (9-19) EM-Bm
Rit. (20-22) Bm
Lines 4+1 (motto) (23-28) EM-C#m
Rit. (28-30) C#m
Lines 4+1 (motto) (31-36) C#m-EM
Rit. (1-8) EM

3 (39)

"Gott hilft gewiß" motto

E major B7 G#7 C# minor E7

The motto "Gott hilft gewiß" is sung 7 times in the A section, 7 times in the B section. See side note.

6 (42) **Tenor** A

Gott

Intensification drives to the cadence...

A major B7 B7 E major

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For biblical
background,
see note.



9 Lines 1 (motto) + 2-3.

hilft ge-wiss, Gott hilft ge-wiss, Gott hilft ge-wiss, Gott

Bass echoes the tenor.

B(7) E(7) A major

11

hilft ge-wiss, wird gleich die Hil-fe auf-ge-scho-ben, Gott

B7 E major E major B major

14

hilft ge-wiss, Gott hilft ge-wiss, Gott

C# minor C# minor F#7

16

hilft ge-wiss, wird gleich — die Hilfe auf-ge-scho-ben, wird sie doch

B major B major

18

drum nicht auf - ge - hoben, drum nicht auf - ge - ho - ben.

mf

B major

20

Ritornello

22

B Line 4+1 (motto). NBA: bezeugt (each time)

Denn Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies, Gottes

B major B7 E major

24

Wort be - zeu - get dies, be - zeu - get dies: Gott hilft ge - wiss,

C# minor C# minor

26

Gott hilft ge - wiss, Gott hilft, Gott hilft ge -

(B7) E major G#7 C# minor

28

wiss, gewiss, gewiss!

tr

Ritornello

mf

C# minor

30II

Denn Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies, denn Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies: Gott

Line 4+1(motto).

p

C# minor F# minor E major F#7

33

hilft, Gott hilft ge - wiss, Gott hilft ge - wiss, Gott hilft ge - wiss, denn

tr

B7 E major E major

35

Got - tes Wort be - zeu - get dies: Gott hilft, Gott hilft gewiss!

mf

E major

Dal Segno

E major

86/6.

Chorale (Mel: „Es ist das Heil uns kommen her“)

(5)

Soprano 1.

+Oboe d'amore I
Vln I

+Oboe d'amore II
Vln II

+Vla

For biblical
background,
see note.



Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Die Hoffnung wartt der rech - ten Zeit, was Got - tes Wort zu - sa - - get:
wenn das ge - sche - hen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein' g'wisse Ta - - ge.

Figura corta

E major

A major

A major

B major

E major

F#7

B major

B major

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

Er weiss wohl, wenn's am be - sten ist, und braucht an uns kein'

E major

F# major

B major

E major

ar - ge List, dess solln wir ihm ver - - trau - - en.

ar - ge List, dess solln wir ihm ver - - trau - - en.

ar - ge List, dess solln wir ihm ver - - trau - - en.

E# dim.7

F# minor

C# major

E major

E major

The penultimate phrase ("and [God] employs no malicious cunning on us") brings the cantata full circle to the opening movement: "Truly, truly, I say to you...")