

BWV 112 is a later chorale cantata that retains the chorale text in each movement (per omnes versus) For more about Bach's chorale cantatas that follow this model, see note.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/11; BC A67

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.)

Librettist: Chorale (Wolfgang Meuslin): Paraphrase of Psalm 23 (1531).

FP: 8 April 1731 (Leipzig: St. Nicholas)

Bach retrospectively reallocated

BWV 112 to his chorale-cantata

cycle, replacing the non-chorale-

based BWV 85. He similarly

replaced BWV 176 (for Trinity)

with BWV 129.

Instrumentation:

Corno I, II

Oboe d'amore I, II

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 112

Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt

The underlying chorale melody is different from one that was often used at the time (see note). Allusions to the underlying chorale melody appear in all three inner movements. For another setting of this chorale tune, see BWV 128.

(Chorale Verse1) (Perhaps from an earlier work—the movement survives as a fair copy, suggesting that it was copied from an existing score.)

•Shepherd's Psalm: paraphrase of Psalm 23:1–2 (112/1).

Vers 1. (Coro.)

(Moderato $\text{♩} = 92$)

Corno I

Ritornello *mf*

Corno II

Ob d'am I/Vln I

+Obs d'am/Str

Chorale head motive.

tr

G major (for significance, see note).

Concerto-like exchange between horns (playing very high) and strings (which are doubled by oboes d'amore). For Alfred Dürr's comments, see side note.

4.

G major

B minor

D7

G major

8.

Figura corta (see note).

G major

For biblical background, see note.

(Mel: „Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr.“)

12. Soprano. Line 1.

(Corno I doubles the cantus firmus here; Corno II continues with 3-note figures like hunting calls.)

(C O R O.)

+Corno I

Der Herr ist mein ge...

Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form.

Imitative counterpoint based on the chorale's first phrase.

Der Herr ist mein ge-treu...

Der Herr ist mein, ist mein

For word-for-word English translations, see Unger, Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts.

Der Herr ist

G major

G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

15.

treu - - - er Hirt,
 - - - - - er Hirt,
 ge - treu - - - er Hirt,
 mein ge - treu - er Hirt,

The lower voices do not repeat the words as in other chorale fantasias.

18.

Line 2.

+Corno I

G major

hält mich in sei - - - ner
 hält mich in
 hält mich in sei - - - - - ner
 hält mich in sei - - - - - ner Hu - te, hält mich in

Imitative counterpoint based on the chorale's first phrase.

G major

G7

A minor

G major

21.

Hu - - - - - te,
 sei - ner Hu - - - - - te,
 Hu - - - - - te,
 sei - ner Hu - - - - - te,

= m. 2b. = m. 3.

G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

24.

= m. 4. = m. 5. = m. 6. = m. 7.

G major B minor D7 G major

28.

= m. 8. = m. 9. = m. 10.

G major

31.

+Corno I
Line 3.

da - - - rin mir gar nichts
da - rin mir gar nichts man -
da - rin mir gar nichts, gar
da - rin mir

Stollen 2 (music repeats).

A

= m. 11. = m. 12. = m. 13. = m. 14.

G major G major

35.

man - - - geln wird
- - - - geln wird
nichts man - - - geln wird
gar nichts man - geln wird

= m. 15. = m. 16. = m. 17.

G major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

38. Line 4. +Corno I (starts the line embellished)

ir - gend an ei - nem Gu - te, irgend an

= m. 18. = m. 19. = m. 20.

G major

G7

G major A minor

B Line 5.

Gu - te. Er ei - nem Gu - te. Er wei - det

= m. 21. = m. 22a.

Abgesang of chorale's bar form.

B

B7

E minor

45. +Corno I

wei - det mich ohn' Un - ter - lass,
Er wei - det mich ohn' Un - ter - lass,
mich ohn' Un - ter - lass, er wei - det mich ohn' Un - ter - lass,
Er wei - det mich ohn' Un - ter - lass,

Imitative counterpoint related to the chorale's first phrase.

E major A minor

A minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

49.

Line 6.

da - rauf wächst

Imitative counterpoint related to the chorale's first phrase.

E minor

A7

D major

D7

52.

+Corno I

rauf wächst das wohl - schmek - kend'

da - rauf wächst das wohl - schmek - kend'

das wohlschmeckend' Gras, das wohl - schmek - kend'

G major

E minor

55.

Gras

Gras

Gras

Gras

Alto and tenor cut out, allowing an early return to E minor.

B major

E minor

E minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

59. Line 7. +Corno I

sei - nes heil - sa - men Wor - tes, sei - nes heil - sa - men Wor - tes, sei - nes heil - sa - men Wor - tes, sei - nes heil - sa - men Wor - tes.

Imitative counterpoint related to the chorale's first phrase.

E minor E7 A minor G major

63.

tes. tes. tes. tes.

= m. 2b. = m. 3. = m. 4. = m. 5.

G major G major B minor

67.

= m. 6. = m. 7. = m. 8.

D7 G major

70.

= m. 9. = m. 10. = m. 11. = m. 12a.

G major G major

Alfred Dürr writes, "The second movement, an aria with obbligato oboe d'amore, is based on a new minor-mode theme, which may nonetheless (if value is attached to such thematic links) be construed as an inversion of the opening of the chorale. Formally, the aria unites the two Stollen of the hymn verse to form the first vocal section and fashions a second section—related to the first—out of the Abgesang. Its bipartite design, A A', thus follows neither the textual scheme nor the da capo form then so popular in aria composition." See Dürr/Jones, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, p. 304.

Vers 2. Aria. (Chorale Verse 2) • Shepherd's Psalm: paraphrase of Psalm 23:2-3 (112/2).

112/2. (Andante con moto ♩ = 50.)

The oboe d'amore suggests a shepherd scene, the flowing 16th notes presumably representing the "fresh waters" mentioned in the text.

Form (Rhyme ABABCCD;
Reprise: bar musical form.

Ritornello (mm. 1-18) DM
Stollen 1: Lines 1-2 (19-34) DM-AM
Rit (34-52) AM-DM
Stollen 2: Lines 3-4 (53-68) DM-AM
Rit (68-74) AM
Abgesang: Line 5 (75-92) EM-GM
Reprise: Lines 6-7 (92-107) GM-DM

Ritornello derived from vocal line.

Continuo E minor alone...

"Fresh water" is metaphorically interpreted as the Holy Spirit (Jesus' "living water"). See more below.

4.

D major G major

7.

B7 E minor F#7 B minor

Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form.

10. **Alto.**

Deceptive cadence and extension...

B minor (B7) E minor N6 B minor F#7 B(7)

Line 1.
Zum

For biblical background, see note.

13. Text painting: Descending line "down" to fresh waters.

rei - nen Was - ser er - mich weist,

p *mf*

E minor

16.

Line 2.

zum rei - nen Was - ser er - mich weist, das

E minor E minor E minor

19. Word painting: Figura corta for "erquicken" ("refresh").

mich er - quicken, er - quik - ken thu - e, das mich er - quicken, er -

Figura corta (see note).

E minor D major

22. Veiled allusion to the chorale tune?

hemiola

quik - ken thu - e, das - mich er-quicken, er-quik - ken thu - e.

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

25.

Line 3.

Das ist - sein fron - hei -

Stollen 2.

B minor B minor

In the day's Gospel reading, Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd (a designation reinforced in the day's Epistle). Elsewhere, Jesus offers the "living water," that is, the Holy Spirit, who leads believers in paths of truth. These connections suggest a constellation of biblical passages (see note).



28.

li - ger Geist, das ist sein fron -

B minor

Detailed description: This system shows measures 28-30. The vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The key signature is B minor.

31. Word painting: 15th-note, scalar melisma for "Geist" ("Spirit"). Line 4.

- hei - li - ger Geist, der macht mich

A7 D major G major

Detailed description: This system shows measures 31-33. Measure 31 contains a 15-note scalar melisma for the word "Geist". The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns. The key signature changes from B minor to D major in measure 32 and then to G major in measure 33.

34.

wohl - ge - mu - the, der macht mich wohl - - - ge - mu - -

G major

Detailed description: This system shows measures 34-36. The vocal line features a trill on the final note of measure 36. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *mf* in measure 36. The key signature is G major.

37.

the.

G major G major

Detailed description: This system shows measures 37-39. The vocal line has a fermata over the word "the." in measure 37. The piano accompaniment continues with the G major key signature.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

40.

B7

43.

E minor (G7) C major D7 G major A7 D major

46.

Abgesang of chorale's bar form.

Line 5. Line 6.

Er füh - ret mich auf rech - ter Strass' sei -

D major D major

49.

- ner Ge - bo - ten ohn' Ab - lass, er füh - - - - ret

B7 E minor F# major B minor E7

52.

mich auf rech - ter Strass' sei - - - - ner Ge - bo - - - - ten

A minor D7 G major D# dim.7 B7

55.

ohn' Ab - lass, er füh - ret mich auf

E minor E minor E major A minor

58.

rech - ter ~~Stass'~~ ^{Stass'} sei - - ner Ge - bo -

Possible veiled allusion to the chorale tune?
Coloratura stresses "Geboten" ("commandments").

G7 A minor D# dim.7 B7 E minor D7

61.

- ten ohn' Ab - lass, ohn' Ab - lass von

without ceasing,

Text painting: Pulsing bass notes for "[He leads me on the right road of his commandments] without ceasing ("ohn Ablass").

G major E7 A minor F#7 B7

Ascending chromatic fourth (for significance, see note).

64.

we - gen sei - nes Na - mens wil - len, von we - gen

Bach adds the word "willen" ("sake") to the chorale stanza, making the wording closer to the Biblical psalm.

E minor E minor E7 A minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

67. hemiola

sei - - nes Na -

Coloratura stresses "Namen" ("[for the sake of his] name").

D# dim.7 B7 E minor

70.

- mens wil - len.

E minor E minor

73.

= m. 3. = m. 4. = m. 5.

E minor D major

76.

= m. 6. = m. 7. = m. 8.

G major E minor N6

79.

= m. 9. = m. 10. = m. 11. = m. 12a.

G7 D# dim.7 B7 E minor A minor (deceptive) E7 A minor B7 E minor E minor

Alfred Dürr writes, "Formally the most original movement within the cantata...is no. 3, which is made up of two heterogeneous sections, the first being a thematically-imprinted arioso with continuo accompaniment. The theme, no doubt inspired by the image of 'wandering', is taken up now and again by either voice or continuo, perhaps as an illustration of the text, which tells us that the

Vers 3. Recitativo.

112/3. **Arioso.** (♩ = 72.) (Chorale Verse 3) • Shepherd's Psalm: paraphrase of Psalm 23:4 (112/3).

Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form.

1. Basso.

This is a highly original movement, characterized by great harmonic instability and modulation to remote keys. To depict "wandering in the dark valley," an ostinato bass in the lowest continuo register treads downward in C major, while the singer wanders around imperviously, repeating the text as if to reassure himself.

The arioso section is an almost verbatim rendering of the Psalm text.

Bach adds the word "und" ("and") to the chorale stanza, making the wording closer to the Biblical psalm.

C Line 1.

Und ob ich
And though I

C major (for significance, see note).

Descending line is an 8va lower (see full score). C major
Text painting: The wandering sheep descends one 8va (from C to C) down into the dark valley.

For biblical background, see note.

4.

Line 2.

wändert' im fin - stern Thal, im finstern Thal,

wander in-the dark valley,
Chromatic inflection for "dark valley."

fürcht' ich kein Un - ge - lük ,

fear I no calamity

Singer and continuo tug in different harmonic directions...

D7

G major

C major

(F major)

G7

C major

C7

G7

The text is stated 3 times (with internal repetitions) as if the speaker is reassuring himself. The continuo's low register reinforces the threat of the dark valley.

6.

ke, und ob ich wändert' im fin - stern Thal, im fin - stern Thal,

Chromatic inflection for "finstern" (dark").

C major

C major

(C minor)

G7

8.

fürcht' ich kein Un - ge - lük - - - ke,

Chromatic inflection for "calamity."

und ob ich

C major

D7

G minor

(D major)

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

Whole tone descent for "finstern Thal."

10. wandert' im fin - stern Thal, im fin - stern Thal, fürcht' ich doch kein Un -

dark valley

D7 G minor G minor

Adagio. Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in the equivalent of 6 mm.

12. - ge - lük - ke in Ver - folgung, Leiden, Trübsal und die - ser Wel - te

in persecution, suffering, tribulation and this world's

Line 3. G A-flat B-flat D-flat F E Line 4. C

Stollen 2.

With a surprising harmonic turn, a soft "halo" of strings enters, symbolizing God's presence in the midst of trials, as referenced in the text.

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

15. Tücke: denn du bist bei mir ste - tig - lich, dein Stab und Stecken trö - sten

treachery; for thou art with me constantly, thy staff and rod comfort

Line 5. D B Line 6. A

Abgesang of chorale's bar form.

Vln II

Veiled allusion to the chorale tune. Christi's presence (symbolized by the strings) is recognized.

F minor D minor E major E7 A minor

Phrygian cadence, often used for questions.

The last line recalls biblical passages such as Psalm 119:42, 43, 49, 81, and 114.

18. mich, auf - dein Wort, auf dein Wort, auf dein Wort ich mich, las - se.

me, on thy Word, I - rely. "lasse" ("rely on" or "entrust").

Line 7. F#

"Dein" is rhetorically emphasized 3 times.

Descending strings for "lasse" ("rely on" or "entrust").

A minor D7 G major G major

The tonality returns to G major.

The "free declamation returns at the close to the metrically fixed form of arioso, though here the writing remains unthematic throughout." See note by Dürr above.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

Vers 4. Duetto. (Chorale Verse 4) • Shepherd's Psalm: paraphrase of Psalm 23:5 (112/4).

(Allegretto $\text{♩} = 72$.) Violins in 2-part canon...

Streams of 8th notes are later associated with "geistlich Freuden" ("spiritual joys")—see m. 95ff.

Form (Rhyme ABABCCD)
Ritornello (mm. 1-18) DM
A. Stollen 1: Lines 1-2 (19-34)
DM-AM
Rit (35-52 = 1-18) AM-DM
A. Stollen 2: Lines 3-4 (53-68=19-34)
DM-AM
Rit (69-74) AM
B. Abgesang: Line 5 (75-92),
EM-GM
A': Lines 6-7 (92-107=19-34)
GM-DM
Rit (1-18) DM

112/4. Vln I 1.

Figura corta (see above).

Vln II

D major

For biblical background, see note.

Bourée-like, with galant elements that include Lombard rhythm, syncopation, and internal repetition.

5.

A major E7 A major A major

10.

A7 D major D7 G major A7

The triplets develop out of the Lombard rhythm. In the Abgesang of the stanza, the triplets are associated with "Freuden Öl" ("oil of joy"). See m. 74ff.

14.

D major A7 D major

18. Soprano.

Martin Petzoldt suggests that the syncopation in the first Stollen signifies opposition against the enemies referenced in the text; in the second Stollen it reflects jubilation. See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:808.

Singers in 2-part canon... Syllable stress is determined by musical rhythm rather than normal declamation.

Tenore. Line 1.

Line 2.

Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form.

Du be-reitest für mir ei-nen Tisch vor mein'n Feinden al-lent.

Allusion to the chorale tune.

+Vla

Vln II & Vla double voices... *p* sempre

D major D major D major

22. +Vln II Texture changes to 5-part counterpoint. NBA: für

piu piano

Du bereitest für mir einen Tisch vor meinen Feinden allenthal -

hal - - - ben, allenthal - - - - - ben, du be -

Vln II Vln I

A major A major A major E7 A major

27.

- - - - - ben, du be - reitest für mir einen Tisch vor

reitest für mir einen Tisch vor mei - nen - - - - - Fein - - - - -

E7 A major

31. Tritone for "Feinden" ("enemies").

meinen Fein - - - - - den allenthal - - - - - ben, allenthal - - - - - ben,

Chromatic/dissonant harmonies for "Feinde" ("enemies"). - - - - - den allenthal - - - - - ben, Violins in 2-part canon...

Vln I

mf Ritornello

D# dim.7 E7 A major A7

35.

= m. 1. Vla *f* = m. 2. = m. 3. = m. 4. *f* = m. 5.

D major A major E7

Vln II

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

40. = m. 6. = m. 7. = m. 8. = m. 9.

A major E7 A major A major

44. = m. 10. = m. 11. = m. 12. = m. 13.

A7 D major D7 G major A7

48. = m. 14. = m. 15. = m. 16. = m. 17.

D major A7 D major

52. **Soprano.** Line 3. Line 4.

Stollen 2 (the music for Stollen 1 repeats **but with lines switched**).

machst mein Her-ze un - - ver - zagt und frisch, mein Haupt thust du - mir

Singers in 2-part canon... = m. 18 (lines switched). = m. 19 = m. 20. = m. 21.

Vln II p Vln I p

D major D major D major

56. sal -

Tenore.

machst mein Her-ze un - - ver - zagt und frisch, mein Haupt thust du mir

= m. 22. = m. 23. = m. 24. = m. 25.

Vla

A major A major A major E7 A major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

60.

ben, machst mein Herze un - - - ver - zagt und frisch. mein Haupt thust du
sal - - - ben, machst mein Herze un - - ver -

= m. 26. = m. 27. = m. 28. = m. 29.

E7 A major

64.

mir sal - - - zagt und frisch, mein Haupt thust du mir sal - - - ben, thust du mir sal - - -

= m. 30. = m. 31. = m. 32. = m. 33.

Tritone

D# dim.7 E7 A major

68.

ben (= m. 34)

ben

Vln II, Vla Vln I

Ritornello

A major A7 D major E7 (A major) E7

72.

mit dei - - - nem

Abgesang of chorale's bar form.

Singers in 2-part canon (with doublings)...

Soprano.

Line 5.

mit dei - - - nem

Vln II doubling alto...

pp

E7 A major A major

Word painting: Coloraturas of triplets for "Freuden Öl" ("oil of joy").

76.

Geist, der Freu - - - - - den -

Tenore.

mit dei - - - - - nem
Vla doubling tenor...

B minor D major (B minor) B minor B minor A7 B7

80.

Öl, mit dei - nem , Geist, der Freu - - - - - den Öl, mit

Geist, der Freu - - - - -

Harmonic wandering...

E minor C# dim.7 E major

83.

dei - - - - - nem Geist, der Freu - - - - -

- - - - - den - Öl, mit dei - nem Geist, der Freu - - - - -

(E7) A major A7 (D major) E7

86.

den Öl, mit deinem Geist, der Freu -

den Öl, mit dei - - - nem Geist, der Freu - - -

Harmonic wandering...

A major A7 D major D7 (G major) D major

90.

Line 6. Reprise in subdominant with lines switched.

Line 7.

den Öl, und schenkest voll ein meiner Seel' dei -

den Öl. cf. m. 19. cf. m. 20.

D major D7 G major

94.

ner geistlichen Freu -
Word painting: Streams of 8th notes depict "geistlich Freuden" ("spiritual joys")—compare the ritornello's Fortspinnung.

und schenkest voll ein meiner Seel' dei -

cf. m. 21. cf. m. 22. cf. m. 23. cf. m. 24.

G major D major D major D major A7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 112

98.

- den, und schenkest voll ein, schenkest voll ein meiner
ner geistlichen Freu - den, und schenkest

cf. m. 25, cf. m. 26. cf. m. 27. cf. m. 28.

D major A7

102.

Seel' - - - - - dei - ner geist - - - - - li - chen
voll ein, schenkest voll ein, und schenkest voll ein -

cf. m. 29. cf. m. 30. cf. m. 31.

D major G# dim.7

105.

Freu - - - - - den.
meiner Seel' deiner geistlichen Freu - den.

cf. m. 32. cf. m. 33. cf. m. 34. Vln I Violins in 2-part canon...
mf

A7 D major D major D major

Dal Segno.

Martin Petzoldt argues that the cadential patterns here resemble the rhythms of the head motive in movement 1 and tie the two movements together.

The final stanza serves as a catechismal response.

112/5. **Vers 5. Choral.** (Mel: „Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr.“)

Soprano. 1/5.

For biblical background, see note.



Corno I & II
Oboe d'am I & II

Bach may have added the Hn II part to a setting taken from his own collection of chorales (see note).

Gu - tes und die Barm - her - zig - keit fol - gen mir nach im Le - ben,
und ich werd' bleiben al - le - zeit im Haus des Her - ren e - ben:

Gu - tes und die Barm - her - zig - keit fol - gen mir nach im Le - ben,
und ich werd' blei - ben al - le - zeit im Haus des Her - ren e - ben:

Gu - tes und die Barm - her - zig - keit fol - gen mir nach im Le - ben,
und ich werd' bleiben al - le - zeit im Haus des Her - ren e - ben:

Gu - tes und die Barm - her - zig - keit fol - gen mir nach im Le - ben,
und ich werd' bleiben al - le - zeit im Haus des Her - ren e - ben:

G major G major G major G major



9. auf Erd' in christ - li - cher Gemein', und nach dem Tod da
auf Erd' in christ - li - cher Ge - mein', und nach dem Tod da
auf Erd' in christ - li - cher Ge - mein', und nach dem Tod da
auf Erd' in christ - li - cher Ge - mein', und nach dem Tod da

G7 C major E7 A minor A minor D7 G major E7 A minor

12. werd' ich sein bei Chri - sto, - mei - nem Her - ren.
werd' ich sein bei Chri - sto, - mei - nem Her - ren.
werd' ich sein bei Chri - sto, - mei - nem Her - ren.
werd' ich sein bei Chri - sto, - mei - nem Her - ren.

E minor B major E minor G major D# dim.7 E minor E minor D major G major