

J. S. Bach's Arias for Soprano and Oboe Obbligato:
The Oboe Family's Vital Role in the Expressive Dialogue

by

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ABSTRACT

This document is an expansion of the information presented at a lecture-recital on March 24, 2017, at Arizona State University. The program consisted of ten arias selected from the cantatas and oratorios of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), all for soprano with oboe, oboe d'amore, or oboe da caccia obbligato.

The document first discusses the place and importance of oboe obbligatos in Bach's vocal works. In all, there are 173 arias with oboe obbligatos from the sacred and secular cantatas, oratorios, and the passions. Of these, 56 are arias for soprano. The ten selected for this document are intended to illustrate the rich variety of this repertoire and especially the ways in which Bach interprets and conveys the meaning of their texts.

Most of Bach's arias that feature the oboe, or the short-lived oboe d'amore or the oboe da caccia, come from his early years in Leipzig (1723-1726). The document examines the circumstances there that led to so much music for these instruments, discussing Bach's connection with instrument-makers and musicians, notably the oboist Johann Caspar Gleditsch (1684-1747).

The body of the document describes individually the ten arias performed on the May of 2017 recital, which come from BWV 1, 21, 74, 94, 98, 144, 187, 199, 202, and 248. Texts and translations are provided, and background information is given for each. The da capo structures and any distinctive features are discussed. Each description focuses on the meaning of the text, the musical character that conveys the overall affect, and specific devices of mood- and word-painting. In all cases, the close affinity of the voice and the oboe is a central concern.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As I was searching for a topic for my research project, I knew I was interested in exploring music that uses the oboe for word- and image-painting. As an orchestral player, I have been intrigued by such music as Beethoven's Sixth Symphony ("Pastoral"), in which the oboe personifies shepherds in the field as well as imitates quail songs. I was taken also by Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Gioacchino Rossini's *William Tell Overture*—both portraying shepherds piping in the countryside.

When I began to look for examples of such expressive use of the oboe in solo works, Bach quickly came to mind. Although Bach left rather little music originally composed for solo oboe, the instrument and its close relatives are featured prominently in his vocal works, especially the cantatas. There are more than 200 movements from the sacred and secular cantatas as well as the oratorios and passions that feature the oboe, oboe d'amore, or oboe da caccia (a relative and predecessor to the English horn). Of these, 173 arias include oboe obbligatos: 56 with soprano, 49 with alto, 40 with tenor, and 28 with bass.¹ The majority of these arias come from Bach's sacred cantatas, and the largest sub-collection is for soprano and oboe. With these numbers in mind, I selected ten arias for soprano, oboe obbligato, and continuo from the cantatas and oratorios to study and perform.

¹ Bruce Haynes, *Music for Oboe, 1650 to 1800: a Bibliography* (Berkeley, California: Fallen Leaf Press, 1992), 28-61.

In selecting these arias, I was drawn to the melancholy, minor-mode examples. This predilection became interesting as I discovered that Bach composed almost twice as many arias that convey emotions such as happiness, joy, and hope, rather than anger, sadness, or fear.² However, in the sub-collection of arias for soprano and oboe obbligato, minor keys are strongly represented. We can speculate that the tone color of the oboe and its relatives might be better suited to lament and despair rather than to rejoicing.

Bach's text painting brings out the religious connotations of the words and the feelings of the soprano who is singing them. This expression is often aided by certain fundamental text-painting techniques and musical mannerisms. One tool is the *pianto*, a "sighing" motif consisting of two even notes, usually in downward motion. The *pianto* is associated with the affects of grief and pain.³ Another emotion that music can capture particularly well is fear. Tremolos and vibrato are instrumental techniques that can be used to mimic a trembling voice. Great distress is also portrayed by dissonance or repeated notes that build in intensity.⁴ Haynes and Burgess point out that "tempo, tone color, and the shaping of gestures have a decisive effect in resetting affect and character."⁵ Although Bach generally sets texts with positive messages with upbeat music

² Bruce Haynes and Geoffrey Burgess, *The Pathetick Musician: Moving an Audience in the Age of Eloquence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 57.

³ Haynes and Burgess, *Pathetick*, 43.

⁴ Haynes and Burgess, *Pathetick*, 108.

⁵ Haynes and Burgess, *Pathetick*, 117.

in major keys, and sad content with slow tempos and minor keys, he is also known to do the opposite as a means of conveying a different perspective on the text.⁶

Most of the arias to be examined in this study are for soprano, oboe obbligato, and continuo (which includes harpsichord and cello). The oboe in Bach's cantata ensembles was used orchestrally in the choruses, but the instrument often acted as soloist in the arias, taking the role of obbligato. Obbligato means the instrument becomes less like accompaniment and more an elaborate melodic line in duet with the voice. In an interview for *The Double Reed*, renowned oboist Albrecht Mayer (b. 1965) asserts that Bach regarded the oboe as an equivalent to the human voice.⁷ Considering this close affinity between the oboe and the voice, Bach must have felt the oboe was up to the task of assuming the role of obbligato. The oboe and violin were the two instruments he most often used as obbligato.⁸ By the addition of an obbligato part to the voice and continuo, Bach created variety in the instrumental groupings and, as will be discussed, enhanced the meaning of the text.

Bach's extensive use of the oboe in the arias can be attributed in part to his position as *Kapellmeister*. In the words of Bach's contemporary Johann Mattheson, the *Kapellmeister* is "a learned court official and a composer of the highest order. He is responsible for directing, arranging and composing sacred as well as secular music at the

⁶ Haynes and Burgess, *Pathetick*, 71.

⁷ Aaron Grad, "In Their Own Words with Albrecht Mayer," *The Double Reed* 33, no. 1 (2010): 92.

⁸ Ignace Bossuyt, *Johann Sebastian Bach, Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248)*, trans. Stratton Bull (Leuven University Press: 2004), 54.

court of an emperor, king or duke, and for the supervision of the performances.”⁹

Because of this demanding position, which Bach held in Cöthen and Leipzig, he was composing regularly for all the church services. His son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788), said that there were in total five cycles of cantatas for the whole church year, but only three full cycles remain among Bach’s works.¹⁰ The three surviving collections of church music come from the following years: Cycle I was composed from 1723-1724, Cycle II from 1724-1725, and Cycle III from 1725-1727.

The oboe as an obbligato instrument comes with a large and rather taxing role. The oboe is featured in the ritornellos that begin and end the arias, and it has solo passages between vocal phrases and textual repetitions. The oboe’s obbligato lines can be separate from the soprano, creating a melody and countermelody contrast, like the independent but intertwining lines of an instrumental trio sonata. The oboe’s role is also to elaborate on the text. Mattheson was known to have said repeatedly that, “not a single melody should be without meaning, without aim, or without affection, even though without words.”¹¹ Bach’s implementation of the oboe as a separate, strong ‘voice’ in an aria magnifies this artistic responsibility.

The basic structure of the arias examined here is the da capo, A—B—A. However, Bach was far too clever to continuously use this simple structure, and within these ten arias, he deviates from it in various ways. The modified da capo can be

⁹ Werner Neumann, *Notes from Bach: a Pictorial Biography* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1961), 52.

¹⁰ Alfred Dürr, *Cantatas of J. S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German—English Parallel Text*, trans. Richard P. Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

¹¹ Haynes and Burgess, *Pathetick*, 13.

considered more of the standard structure for this discussion. The most common variation is to bring back only the ritornello at the end of the aria, not the entire A section. If the opening ritornello modulates to end in a new key, Bach will not use the da capo sign and instead will write out a shorter ritornello that is altered to remain in the tonic. Generally, the da capo return of the opening music reinforces the original point and brings it into relation with the different music of the middle section. The text of the middle section is an elaboration of or commentary on the main topic, which the da capo, abbreviated or not, brings back for the ending.

The arias for this study have been selected from cantatas and oratorios of various lengths with movements made up of instrumental sinfonias, choruses, recitatives, arias, and chorales. The texts come from the Bible or from chorale tunes, or they were written for this purpose by German poets. In some cases, the sources for the librettos are unknown or anonymous. Although these arias are taken out of their context, in all cases the discussion will consider the overall message of the cantata and how the aria fits into the progression of topics.

CHAPTER 2

BACH IN LEIPZIG

“Caspar Gleditsch was Bach’s soloist at Leipzig, and the solos Bach wrote for him in his sacred works are the greatest single monument to the talent of any hautboist in the history of the instrument.” (Bruce Haynes, “Oboe” *Grove Music Online*)

While a few prominent oboe obbligato arias come from Bach’s time in Weimar, many of his Weimar cantatas do not include oboe parts.¹² In contrast, Bach composed most of his solos for the oboe during his first years in Leipzig, between 1723 and 1726.¹³ All but twelve cantatas include the oboe, usually two of them.¹⁴ We can attribute Bach’s increased use of the oboe, oboe da caccia, and the oboe d’amore to the advancement of these instruments by the woodwind makers active in Leipzig around the time of Bach’s arrival.

These instrument makers, dealers, and performers turned Leipzig into a center of musical activity, which inspired such oboists as Johann Caspar Gleditsch (1684-1747) to move there. A year older than Bach, Gleditsch worked with the composer from 1723 until his death. Bruce Haynes states that Bach probably wrote more solos for Gleditsch than for any other musician except himself.¹⁵ Gleditsch’s skills were such that Bach could leave the oboe parts less detailed, allowing Gleditsch more expressive freedom than

¹² J. William Denton, “The Oboe and the Oboe d’amore in Bach’s Church Cantatas: An examination of Bach’s oboists as well as range and notational problems,” *The Journal of The International Double Reed Society*, 6 (1978).

¹³ Bruce Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe: A History of the hautboy from 1640-1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 364.

¹⁴ Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe*, 364.

¹⁵ Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe*, 364-365.

others. In addition to the oboe, he worked in Leipzig playing the recorder, traverso, and bassoon. Along with his close relationship with Bach, Gleditsch was friendly with the woodwind makers in town and helped with the design and promotion of the oboe d'amore and oboe da caccia. These relationships would intertwine as Gleditsch encouraged Bach to compose for the new instruments on the Leipzig scene.

The hunting oboe, or the oboe da caccia, was physically different from the modern-day equivalent, the English horn. Its body was curved and made of wood, with a large, wide, flaring metal bell. Gleditsch had been playing an oboe da caccia for at least a year before Bach arrived in Leipzig. Therefore, it is no surprise that Bach began composing for the da caccia within a month of his arrival. He used the oboe da caccia as obbligato in twenty-two solo arias.¹⁶ Bach utilized the oboe da caccia for solo use, while in other scores calling for a taille. Both instruments were pitched in F, but the taille was a straight shape, resembling the treble oboe, and Bach scored it for ensemble use.

Bach wrote nearly half of his 'oboe family' solos for the newly developed oboe d'amore, which appeared in Leipzig around 1717. The instrument was played only in Germany, and its career was all but finished by 1760, ten years after Bach died. The oboe d'amore is between the length of the oboe and oboe da caccia. It has a bulb-like bell and a special timbre, and is pitched in A. Johann Gleditsch and the Leipzig woodwind community promoted both the oboe da caccia and the oboe d'amore during the brief time during which Bach composed these inspired oboe arias.¹⁷

¹⁶ Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe*, 380-382.

¹⁷ Bossuyt, *Christmas Oratorio*, 54.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF TEN ARIAS BY J. S. BACH FOR SOPRANO WITH OBOE

OBBLIGATO

BWV (*Bach Werke Verzeichnis*) 202 *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, Give way now, dismal shadows*

(1707-1717) Weimar—Secular Solo Soprano Cantata to celebrate a wedding

All with soprano: 1. Aria, 2. Recitative, 3. Aria, 4. Recitative, 5. Aria, 6. Recitative, 7. Aria, 8. Recitative, 9. Aria (Gavotte)

BWV 202/1 with Oboe Obligato

Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten,

Give way now, dismal shadows,

Frost und Winde, geht zur Ruh!

Frost and wind, go to rest!

Florens Lust

Flora's delight

Will der Brust

will grant our hearts

Nichts als frohes Glück verstaten,

nothing but joyful fortune,

Denn sie trägt Blumen zu.

*for she comes bearing flowers.*¹⁸

Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, the first movement of the Wedding Cantata, was the opening of the recital in which I performed selections from Bach's arias for soprano solo with oboe obbligato. I felt that beginning with a piece about springtime, nature, and awakening love was a fitting introduction to a discussion of Bach's interpretations of texts on various topics. In some ways, this aria differs from the others in this study. It is the only one from a secular cantata and would have been performed at weddings rather than in church services. Instead of religious connotations, the text describes such

¹⁸ All translations from Aryeh Oron, "Text and Translations," *The Bach Cantatas Website*, last modified May 3, 2015, <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Texts/>.

mythological characters as Flora, Phoebus, and Amor. The entire cantata is sung by a solo soprano, while most of the other cantatas in this study are for mixed vocal ensembles. Finally, this aria is the only one to be accompanied by a string ensemble rather than basso continuo alone.

The date of composition of the Wedding Cantata is somewhat uncertain. According to Richard Jones, “Cantata 202 has often been thought to date from Bach’s Cöthen period (1717-1723), but this is pure conjecture.”¹⁹ It is also possible that Bach composed the aria during his time in Weimar, from 1707 to 1717. Jones goes on to point out that the “sinuous oboe line and slow—fast—slow design” are reminiscent of other arias from that period. With this range of dates, Salomo Franck (1659-1725) would have most likely been the librettist.²⁰ Franck was a poet for the court in Weimar and wrote librettos in a style that Bach was fond of, ranging from Biblical content in strophic form to non-strophic verse, similar to the librettos that Bach set in his cantatas by another German poet, Erdmann Neumeister (1671-1756).²¹

The opening aria, *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, has two distinct sections, the first of them returning to create an ABA design. The first section, *Adagio*, sets the first two lines of text, which depict darkness moving to light and the elements of winter receding to give way to springtime. The second section, marked *Andante*, is slightly faster and depicts symbolically the coming of spring. The two violins and viola create a

¹⁹ Richard D. P. Jones, *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach, Volume I: 1695-1717* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 270.

²⁰ Jones, *Creative Development*, 271.

²¹ Alfred Dürr, *Cantatas of J. S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German—English Parallel Text*, trans. Richard P. Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 14.

background of rising arpeggios with ever-growing harmonic coloring. The line “Frost and wind, go to rest!” is repeatedly set with a slowly descending line. The oboe obbligato, like the soprano, is extremely fluid and covers a wide range for the instrument. Depicting the mysterious emergence of springtime, the oboe and soprano intertwine contrapuntally over a slow-moving bass line and the wash of sound created by the strings.

The second section twice moves from minor to major, depicting with this tonal transformation the change from winter to spring. Its beginning is marked by a reduction to soprano and continuo, and then the texture grows as the text is repeated with the full ensemble. The continuo is more active in this section and the trio of strings reenters with bouncy, dotted rhythms, leaping in octaves. With the line “For she comes bearing flowers,” the word *träget* (‘bearing’) is set twice with long, sequential melismas (Figure 1). The oboe imitates the soprano with similar figures. This exchange between soprano and oboe during the melismas suggests swinging a basket of flowers back and forth (Figure 1, mm. 29-34). Everyone’s lines are similar in rhythm, but become offset from each other before arriving together at the end. This bright setting of the second stanza closes in the dominant key of D Major.

29
stat-ten, nichts als fro-hes Glück ver-stat-ten, denn sie trä-
31
get Blu-men zu, denn sie trä- get Blu-men zu.
Da capo

Figure 1. Cantata 202, *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, measures 28-34.²²

A da capo sign at this point directs the ensemble to return to the beginning and restate the entire *Adagio* portion. Among the other arias to be examined, the da capos are abbreviated or truncated. This aria states the entire *Adagio* a second time, resulting in an opulent beginning for the Cantata.

BWV 21 Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, *I had much affliction*
(1713) Weimar—Cantata for the Third Sunday after Trinity
Performed 3 times: 1713 in Weimar, 1717 in Cöthen, 1723 in Leipzig
Part 1—1. Sinfonia, 2. Chorus, 3. Aria (S), 4. Recitative (T), 6. Chorus
Part 2—7. Recitative (S, B), 8. Aria (S, B), 9. Chorale (T, S), 10. Aria (T), 11. Chorus²³

²² Johann Sebastian Bach, “Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten,” *Neue Bach Ausgabe*, v. 40, ed. Werner Neumann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1969), 7.

²³ SATB, located in each aria description, refers to the different voice types: soprano, alto, tenor, or bass.

BWV 21/3 with Oboe Obligato
Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not,
Sighs, tears, grief, distress
Ängstlichs Sehnen, Furcht und Tod
anxious longing, fear and death
Nagen mein beklemmtes Herz,
gnaw at/prey upon my oppressed heart
Ich empfinde Jammer, Schmerz.
I feel misery, pain.

Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not and the next aria have very dark tone and lamenting texts. This aria comes from one of Bach's early cantatas, composed in 1714. At that time, Cantata 21 contained only nine movements, which Bach later expanded to eleven. There are original parts from Bach's time in Cöthen (1717-1723) that include these revisions of the Weimar version. The cantata was performed at least three times during Bach's life, and for the final location, Leipzig, he added new material.²⁴ By revisiting older cantatas and expanding them, Bach, in Otto Bettmann's description, "transformed homey religious messages into artistic creations of the highest order."²⁵ During the course of revising this cantata, Bach transposed *Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not* from D minor to C minor, then moved it back and forth between these two keys, until the final edition settled in C minor.²⁶ The text of the aria is another most likely by Salomo Franck.

This cantata overall is longer than the others and divides into two parts. The text throughout the first part is very sorrowful, lamenting the "affliction in my heart"

²⁴ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 409.

²⁵ Otto L. Bettmann, "Bach the Rhetorician," *The American Scholar* 55 (1986): 118, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41211296>.

²⁶ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 409.

[*Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen*]. In the second part of the cantata the narrator moves away from this suffering through faith and trust in God. The aria at hand is squarely in the middle of the misery of the first part. As a personal expression of anguish, the aria is in a single affect, with no relief or contrast.²⁷ The first two lines of the text consist of a list of items—sighs, tears, grief, and so on. Bach’s setting of these words divides the soprano’s line into short fragments, as if the singer is sobbing. The oboe fills in the silences and often imitates the soprano, as though the oboe is representing the grief the narrator is outwardly describing. The aria is prevailing in minor mode and is loaded with expressive dissonances, such as “sighing” appoggiaturas. These pianto figures in both the oboe obbligato and soprano transform simple motions into musical metaphors that amplify the text’s meaning.

The aria begins with an eight-measure ritornello (Figure 2) that later returns to end the movement, resulting in an abbreviated da capo structure. The oboe depicts despair with expressive leaps, such as the diminished fourth in the opening beat and the descending major seventh from the leading tone to the tonic that ends the ritornello melody (Figure 2, mm 1 and 7-8). Appoggiatura pairs appear on strong beats, breaking up the flow of the eighth note arpeggios.²⁸

²⁷ Bruce Haynes and Geoffrey Burgess, *The Pathetick Musician: Moving an Audience in the Age of Eloquence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 43.

²⁸ Joel Lester, “Heightening Levels of Activity and J. S. Bach’s Parallel-Section Constructions,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 54 (2001): 72.

ARIA.

The image shows a musical score for an aria. It consists of three staves: Oboe, Soprano, and Organo e Continuo. The Oboe staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano staff has a soprano clef and is mostly empty. The Organ and Continuo staff has a bass clef and includes figured bass notation below the notes. The score is divided into two systems, each containing measures 1 through 8.

Figure 2. Cantata 21, *Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not*, measures 1-8.²⁹

An emotional high point of the aria is toward the end, with a pause on the word *Schmerz* (pain), as shown in Figure 3. The soprano leaps a wrenching minor seventh into this high note, which has an unexpected, half-diminished seventh chord supporting it, and slowly falls from this peak to the final cadence. A brief modulation to G minor (mm. 18-22) is abruptly terminated with this poignant pause, and what follows will close in the tonic key, C minor, as if in resignation. The voice ends with one last utterance of *Seufzer—Tränen—Kummer—Not*. Skillfully fashioning the musical rhetoric to express such a melancholy passion, Bach would have strengthened this church service’s spiritual message.³⁰

²⁹ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not,” *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 5, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1855), 13.

³⁰ Bettmann, “Bach the Rhetorician,” 116.

Herz, ich empfinde Jammer, Schmerz. Seufzer, Thränen, Kummer, Kummer, Noth!

Figure 3. Cantata 21, *Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not*, measures 21-24.³¹

BWV 199 Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut, *My heart swims in blood*
 (1713) Weimar—Soprano Cantata for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity
 Performed 3 times: 1714 in Weimar, 1718 in Cöthen, 1723 in Leipzig
 All with soprano: 1. Recitative, 2. Aria/Recitative, 3. Recitative, 4. Aria, 5.
 Recitative, 6. Chorale, 7. Recitative, 8. Aria

BWV 199/2 with Oboe Obbligato
Stumme Seufzer, stille Klagen,
Mute sighs, silent cries,
Ihr mögt meine Schmerzen sagen,
you may tell of my pains
Weil der Mund geschlossen ist.
since my mouth is shut.
Und ihr nassen Tränenquellen
And you wet springs of tears
Könnt ein sichres Zeugnis stellen,
can bear certain witness
Wie mein sündlich Herz gebüßt.
to how my sinful heart has repented.
Mein Herz ist itzt ein Tränenbrunn,
My heart is now a well of tears,
Die Augen heiße Quellen.
my eyes hot fountains.
Ach Gott! wer wird dich doch zufriedenstellen?
Ah God! Who then will give you satisfaction!

³¹ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not,” *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 5, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1855), 15.

Cantata 199 was composed in 1713 for the 11th Sunday after Trinity. The text for this soprano aria, *Stumme Seufzer, stille Klagen*, comes from the work of Georg Christian Lehms (1684-1717). Lehms was the court poet and librarian in Darmstadt and wrote novels, opera librettos, and a dictionary, *Teuschlands galante Poetinnen*. From Lehms' church-year cycle, cantata texts written for the Kapellmeisters at the Darmstadt court, Christoph Graupner and Gottfried Grunewald, Bach set eleven cantatas of his own.³²

The score for BWV 199 originally positions the oboe in D minor and the work was later performed in Cöthen and Leipzig in this key. However, the publication in 1714 moves the oboe part to C minor, the key that will be used here for the purposes of discussion.³³

Like the Wedding Cantata, BWV 199 is for solo soprano. There are seven cantatas of Bach for soprano soloist; of these, three include the oboe and one the oboe d'amore. The text of this cantata is all in the first person, and like Cantata 21, it moves from remorse and repentance to salvation and joy. This aria is at the beginning of the cantata and is preceded by a long recitative with statements like, "Ah! Unheard of pain! My withered heart [finds no comfort]." A dark atmosphere is set even before the aria begins.

The first and fourth lines of the poem have similar meaning: words do not express my sorrow, but rather "mute sighs, silent cries," and "moist springs of tears" convey it. The soprano and the oboe stand out above a basic accompaniment. The two melodic lines can be understood to represent the two layers alluded to in the text: the soprano conveys

³² Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 16.

³³ Bruce Haynes, *Music for Oboe, 1650 to 1800: a Bibliography*, first pub. in 1985, second ed. revised and expanded (Berkeley, California: Fallen Leaf Press, 1992), 36.

the outward indicators such as mute sighs and silent cries, and the oboe personifies the distraught inner feelings these signs signify.

Stumme Seufzer, stille Klagen is in three musical sections, dividing the text above into three stanzas. The first part stays close to the tonic key of C minor. It is quite repetitive, with long instrumental interludes that occasionally overlap with the next line of text. The ritornello introduces melodic material with upper and lower neighbor motions. This motivic characteristic is not found within the soprano's line; the neighboring motions are a type of instrumental sighing figure and perhaps also the portrayal of a heavy heartbeat.

Reinforcing the text throughout the aria are gestures typical of Bach's lamenting works. Text relating to tears and sighs is expressed by the downward "sigh" gesture of the sixteenth note pairs, as in the first measure of the ritornello. Slower rhythms on *stumme* ('mute') and *stille* ('silent') act as miniature breaks in the vocal line that set off the more ornate settings of *Seufzer* and *Klagen*. The trill added to *Klagen* increases the expression of grief. This tremolo-like figure is found in both the oboe and voice and represents a heightened emotional state. The oboe also includes a different type of ornament, the turns found in measures 4, 15, and 25 (Figure 4, m. 15). While ornaments such as trills and appoggiaturas are common forms of embellishment, Cantata 199 is the only instance of turns written into the oboe line.³⁴

After the first line of text is stated three times, the phrases lengthen as the voice's groupings of paired sixteenth note slurs slowly ascend with the reference to 'sorrow' and

³⁴ William J. Denton, "The Oboe and the Oboe d'amore in Bach's Church Cantatas: An examination of Bach's oboists as well as range and notational problems," *The Journal of The International Double Reed Society*, 6 (1978): 56.

consequently descend as the ‘mouth is shut’ (Figure 4). The oboe during these measures has its own expansive line, with large leaps that complement the many step figures in the soprano.

Figure 4. Cantata 199, *Stumme Seufzer, stille Klagen*, measures 15-21.³⁵

Intensity grows with the second section (mm. 28-39), which modulates precipitously to other minor keys, including the distant one of B-flat minor. Jean-Philippe Rameau characterized B-flat minor as appropriate for mournful music.³⁶ As in *Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Not*, Bach slows the momentum in preparation for the ending by pausing on a dissonant chord, here with the word “repented” [*gebüßt*]. The third stanza of

³⁵ From the vocal score to Johann Sebastian Bach, “Stumme Seufzer, stille Klagen,” arr. Bernhard Todt (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1895), 4.

³⁶ Haynes and Burgess, *Pathetick*, 61.

the text changes poetic meter and becomes speech-like. Bach sets this text in recitative style, with no oboe. The text ends with a question, which is appropriately set with a half cadence that prepares the da capo return of the first part of the aria. Incorporating a recitative into the aria itself is unusual for all of Bach's arias, not just the ones presented here. This musical anomaly is a result of Bach's sensitivity to the change of dramatic meaning within the poem.

BWV 1 *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, How beautifully shines the morning star*

(1725) Leipzig—Chorale Cantata for Feast of Annunciation of Mary

1. Chorale, 2. Recitative (T), 3. Aria (S), 4. Recitative (B), 5. Aria (T), 6. Chorale

BWV 1/3 with Oboe da caccia Obbligato

Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen,

Fill, you divine flames of heaven,

Die nach euch verlangende gläubige Brust!

the faithful hearts longing for you!

Die Seelen empfinden die kräftigsten Triebe

Our souls feel the mightiest impulses

Der brünstigsten Liebe

of the most ardent love

Und schmecken auf Erden die himmlische Lust.

and taste on earth the delight of heaven.

Cantata 1 is a chorale cantata for the Feast of the Annunciation of Mary and was first performed in Leipzig on Palm Sunday in 1725. The texts of Cantata 1 are consistently full of praise and proclamations of the joys of faith. *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* comes from a hymn written in 1599 by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608), although Bach's anonymous librettist paraphrased all but the first and last chorales.³⁷ Nicolai was a German theologian, poet, and composer. This work by Nicolai is

³⁷ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 668.

considered by Walter Blankenburg to be a perfect combination of the Meistersinger tradition and Protestant sacred music.³⁸ The poetry of *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* was so well-known that it is alluded to in other cantatas of Bach, including BWV 172 (1714) and BWV 36 (1731).³⁹

The virtuosity of the oboe da caccia part in the aria, *Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen*, reflects Bach's trust in his skilled oboe players. While the specific performers for Cantata 1 are unknown, Bach had worked in Leipzig long enough to believe Gleditsch capable of the challenging passages, which include continuous sixteenth notes and register changes. Bach's use of this instrument for obligatos was mainly to convey texts expressing darker affections. However, the two oboe da caccia arias selected for this study provide contrast to the somber oboe arias, having a more jovial quality.

The poetry of the third movement of Cantata 1, *Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen*, consists of two sentences, which are set in separate sections that are filled out with multiple and various repetitions of the text. In keeping with the joyous message, the aria is prevailing in major keys (B-flat and F Major) with some brief movements to the minor keys of G and C minor when the second sentence describes the soul's longing. The soprano sings the first sentence in m. 9-12 and again in mm. 17-26, first in the tonic key, then with modulation to F Major and a close on its dominant. The third iteration of the first sentence, mm. 27-30, ends with cadential affirmation of F Major after a patch of secondary dominants and a long melisma, appropriately, on the

³⁸ Walter Blankenburg and Friedhelm Brusniak, "Nicolai, Philipp," *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19886>.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

word *verlangende* ('longing'). After the middle ritornello, mm. 41-44, the second section presents two settings, with word repetitions, of the second sentence of the text. These settings explore new keys, cadencing in C minor and G minor. The ritornello that follows duplicates the opening ritornello, and a new version of the first section ensues, this one remaining in tonic rather than modulating to the dominant. A new ending for the voice includes a big flourish on the word *Flammen* ('flames'). The aria is then given even greater length, despite its short text, by yet another presentation of the opening ritornello, now for closure.

The joyful message of this aria is carried also by its dance-like quality. It is in the rhythm and style of the *bourée*, an 18th-century French dance type that was popular for ballets. This style became more commonly used by German composers, and Bach wrote many *bourées*, twenty-nine of them labelled as such.⁴⁰ Characteristics of the *bourée* in this aria include the 4/4 time signature, balanced phrases, and lighthearted affect.⁴¹ The opening ritornello (Figure 5) and the first setting of the first sentence are consistently in four-measure groups and contain two complete *bourée* patterns. The *bourée* typically begins with a light and lifted upbeat, which the oboe da caccia and singer demonstrate with all their entrances.⁴² Bach conveys the joyous nature of the text not simply by evoking a dance type associated with good spirits, but also by the implication that the yearnings of the heart and soul as described in the text are joyful dances in praise of God.

⁴⁰ Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach: Expanded Edition* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 42-44.

⁴¹ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music*, 206.

⁴² Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music*, 42.

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Oboe da caccia, Soprano, and Continuo. The Oboe part is the main focus, labeled 'ARIA'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures, and the second system has four measures. The Oboe part is highly rhythmic and melodic. The Soprano part is mostly silent, with a few notes in the second system. The Continuo part provides a steady bass line with some ornamentation. The score is in G major and 3/4 time.

Figure 5. Cantata 1, *Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen*, measures 1-8.⁴³

BWV 74 Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten, *Whoever loves me will keep my word*

(1725) Leipzig—Cantata for First day of Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

1. Chorus, 2. Aria (S), 3. Recitative (A), 4. Aria (B), 5. Aria (T), 6. Recitative (B), 7. Aria (A), 8. Chorale

BWV 74/2 with Oboe da caccia Obligato

Komm, komm, mein Herze steht dir offen,

Come, come, my heart lies open to you,

Ach, lass es deine Wohnung sein!

Ah, grant that it may be your dwellingplace!

Ich liebe dich, so muss ich hoffen:

I love you, therefore I must hope:

Dein Wort trifft itzo bei mir ein;

your word is now fulfilled in me;

Denn wer dich sucht, fürcht', liebt und ehret,

for whoever seeks, fears, loves and honors you,

Dem ist der Vater zugetan.

to him is the Father devoted.

Ich zweifle nicht, ich bin erhöret,

I do not doubt that I have been heard,

Dass ich mich dein getrösten kann.

so that I can find consolation in you.

The entirety of the oboe da caccia obligato in Cantata 74's first aria, *Komm, komm, mein Herze steht dir offen*, was recycled from a cantata that Bach composed in

⁴³ Johann Sebastian Bach, "Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen," *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 1, ed. Moritz Hauptmann (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1851), 36.

Leipzig two years prior for the same church calendar event. This earlier work, Cantata 59, has four movements, and the fourth is a bass aria with violin obbligato and continuo (Figure 6). The violin obbligato from the earlier cantata is the same as BWV 74's oboe da caccia obbligato (Figure 7). The soprano aria is written in F Major, while the bass aria is in C Major. The text is different and the vocal line is modified to suit the soprano, as is the continuo part. Nonetheless, the declamation of the text is at times imperfect, as Bach simply put new words to the old music. The text for BWV 74 comes from the poet Christiane Mariane von Ziegler (1695-1760), and the text for the bass aria in BWV 59 is by poet and theologian Erdmann Neumeister (1671-1756). Ziegler was from a prominent family in Leipzig and studied poetry with Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766), who was a prominent figure in the reform of the German language and literature. In 1725, Bach set nine cantatas with librettos by Ziegler, with many alterations to the text.⁴⁴ Neumeister studied theology in Leipzig and during his career produced nine cycles of cantata texts.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 33.

⁴⁵ Kerala J. Snyder, "Neumeister, Erdmann," *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19789>.

Figure 6. Cantata 59, *Die Welt mit allen Königreichen*, measures 1-5.⁴⁶

Figure 7. Cantata 74, *Komm, komm, mein Herze steht dir offen*, measures 1-7.⁴⁷

Bach's workload was so demanding that he, like many of his contemporaries, would sometimes use preexisting materials and recycle them. For instance, there are four oboe concertos by Bach, but they were made of reused music from his violin and harpsichord concertos and from various cantatas.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Johann Sebastian Bach, "Die Welt mit allen Königreichen," *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 12, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1863), 166.

⁴⁷ Johann Sebastian Bach, "Komm, komm, mein Herze steht dir offen," *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 18, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1863), 102.

⁴⁸ Haynes, *Eloquent Oboe*, 387.

The affect of this and the previous oboe da caccia aria is joyful. Both works speak of the faithful whose hearts yearn for God to enter in. The arias are similar also in their consistent, dance-like, four-measure phrasing and major tonalities prevailing in the outside sections. In both cantatas 1 and 74, the soprano is as agile as the oboe da caccia.⁴⁹ The instrumental character of these lines, intertwining against an active continuo pattern, along with the evocation of dance, combine to create the texture of a trio sonata.⁵⁰

**BWV 144 Nimm was dein ist, und gehe hin, *Take what is yours and go on your way* (1724) Leipzig—Cantata for the Third Sunday before Lent (Septuagesima)
1. Chorus, 2. Aria (A), 3. Chorale, 4. Recitative (T), 5. Aria (S), 6. Chorale**

BWV 144/5 with Oboe d'amore Obbligato

Genügsamkeit

Contentment

Ist ein Schatz in diesem Leben,

is a treasure in this life,

Welcher kann Vergnügung geben

which can give pleasure

In der größten Traurigkeit,

in the greatest sorrow,

Genügsamkeit.

contentment.

Denn es lässet sich in allen

In everything this is well pleased

Gottes Fügung wohl gefallen,

with God's providence,

Genügsamkeit.

Contentment.

Bach composed Cantata 144 during his first year in Leipzig, 1724, and it was first performed on February 6 of that year. The librettist is unknown. Based on the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), the texts of Cantata 144 are instructional and moralizing. The fourth movement is a *secco* recitative that ends with the words *Was*

⁴⁹ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music*, 210.

⁵⁰ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music*, 212.

Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan ('What God does, that is done well').⁵¹ The subsequent soprano aria, *Genügsamkeit*, with oboe d'amore obbligato, emphasizes the recitative's message, declaring that one should be satisfied with all that God has provided. In support of this rather stern moral, the rhythm is march-like, emphasizing the larger beats, and most of the aria is in the minor keys of B, F-sharp, and E. The key word of the moral is *Genügsamkeit*, and in the poem, this word appears at the beginning, middle, and end.

This aria has a modified version of the da capo ABA in which the da capo of the first stanza of text (mm. 26-42) does not begin in the original key of B minor, but rather E minor. It returns to B minor in time for the final statement of the ritornello, which begins in the instruments while the soprano is still completing the text. As Alfred Dürr describes this closing passage, it restates the entire text "without literal reprise of the music, so that the movement acquires the character of a very free sequence of variations rather than a da capo aria."⁵² The rather free form of this aria is controlled by the bookends created by settings of the word *Genügsamkeit*, which mark beginnings and endings of sections. Although the word appears only three times in the poem, Bach sets it sixteen times during this three-minute aria.

Another striking aspect of the aria is the contrapuntal relationship of the oboe d'amore obbligato and soprano. As shown in Figure 8, the *Genügsamkeit* motive is passed from the soprano to the oboe d'amore, then back to the soprano, suggesting three rather than two enunciations of the word. Such musical emphasis on *Genügsamkeit* later becomes more developed, and the motive will be used to mark the beginning of new

⁵¹ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 221.

⁵² Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 222.

sections and key areas. For example, toward the end of the aria, mm. 34-38, the motive in the oboe d'amore marks the return of the ritornello, while the soprano overlaps this beginning with her closing settings of the word *Genügsamkeit*.



Figure 8. Cantata 144, *Genügsamkeit*, measures 7-9.⁵³

**BWV 94 Was frag ich nach der Welt, *What do I ask for from the world*
(1724) Leipzig—Chorale Cantata for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity
Performed 2 times: 1724 in Leipzig, 1732 in Leipzig**

1. Chorale, 2. Aria (B), 3. Chorus/Recitative (T), 4. Aria (A), 5. Chorale/Recitative (B), 6. Aria (T), 7. Aria (S), 8. Chorale

BWV 94/7 with Oboe d'amore Obbligato

Er halt es mit der blinden Welt,

Let him keep to the blind world

Wer nichts auf seine Seele hält,

who takes no care for his soul.

Mir ekelt vor der Erden.

I feel disgust at the earth.

Ich will nur meinen Jesum lieben

I want to love only my Jesus

Und mich in Buß und Glauben üben,

and act constantly in repentance and faith,

So kann ich reich und selig werden.

then I can be rich and blessed.

This chorale cantata, BWV 94, was composed in 1724. Bach's anonymous librettist based the cantata's text on an eight-verse hymn written in 1664 by Balthasar

⁵³ Johann Sebastian Bach, "Genügsamkeit," *Neue Bach Ausgabe*, v. 7, ed. Werner Neumann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1956), 17.

Kindermann (1636-1706). Kindermann was another German poet with a degree in theology. The preceding tenor aria and *Er halt es mit der blinden Welt* are paraphrased versions of Kindermann's sixth verse. Other verses are kept in their original state.⁵⁴

The text of this cantata was also used by Bach in one movement of Cantata 64 (1723).⁵⁵ Like the previous oboe d'amore aria discussed (BWV 144), *Er halt es mit der blinden Welt* encompasses moralizing themes and says we should reject worldly things, because true riches come from faith and repentance. The two oboe d'amore arias share duple rhythms in moderate tempo and minor keys in expression of lessons to be learned.

Although the da capo structure of this aria is uncomplicated, there are a few musical features that are intriguing. For one, this aria is another example that shares traits of the bourée. Also, the bouncy thirty-second note slurs at the beginning of the aria (Figure 9) are a distinctive rhythm. These delicate little touches lighten the upbeats and are usually followed by four sixteenth notes. As in mm. 3-4 in Figure 9, the appearances of this figure at times become very close together, contributing to increases in momentum.

⁵⁴ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 470.

⁵⁵ Aryeh Oron, "Text and Translations," *The Bach Cantatas Website*, last modified May 3, 2015, <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Texts/Chorale059-Eng3.htm>.

Figure 9. Cantata 94, *Er halt es mit der blinden Welt*, measures 1-6.⁵⁶

In contrast, during the settings of the first stanza, the momentum is slowed at times by long, sustained notes on the tonic or dominant, as shown in Figure 10. These long pedal points accompany lines 1-2, *Er halt es mit der blinden Welt/Wer nichts auf seine Seele hält*. Bach is evidently responding to the two uses here of the verb *halten*, which means to hold or keep. He makes the word-painting clear by initiating each long note with the beginning of line 1, *Er halt*.

Figure 10. Cantata 94, *Er halt es mit der blinden Welt*, measures 40-45.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Er halt es mit der blinden Welt,” *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 22, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1875), 124.

⁵⁷ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Er halt es mit der blinden Welt,” *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 22, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1875), 126.

**BWV 98 Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, *What God does, that is done well*
(1726) Leipzig—Chorale Cantata for the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity
1. Chorale, 2. Recitative (T), 3. Aria (S), 4. Recitative (A), 5. Aria (B)**

BWV 98/3 with Oboe Obbligato

Hört, ihr Augen, auf zu weinen!

Cease, you eyes, to weep!

Trag ich doch

For I bear

Mit Geduld mein schweres Joch.

with patience my heavy yoke.

Gott, der Vater, lebet noch,

God the Father still lives,

Von den Seinen

of those who are his people

Läßt er keinen.

he abandons no one.

Hört, ihr Augen, auf zu weinen!

Cease, you eyes, to weep!

The title of Cantata 98 gives an idea of its theme: What God does, that is done well. The soprano aria elaborates on this idea by saying, essentially, “Weep no more, because God the Father abandons no one.” Bach composed *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* in 1726 and used the same opening lines in two other cantatas, BWV 99 and 100.⁵⁸ The author of the libretto is unknown, but the texts are related to the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity and, according to Alfred Dürr, the Biblical verses John 4:46-54, “the healing of a nobleman’s son after his father shows faith in Jesus.”⁵⁹

Bach sets *Hört, ihr Augen, auf zu weinen!* in a joyous, dance-like character, despite the tonic key of C minor in the outer sections. According to the French theorist and composer Jean Rousseau (1644-1699), C minor could depict lamenting, which is

⁵⁸ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 606.

⁵⁹ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 597.

what the narrator of the aria is declaring to stop.⁶⁰ The aria is like a *passepied*, a dance type resembling the minuet, but more spirited.⁶¹ The dance traits of this aria are its 3/8 time signature and eight-measure, flowing phrases that include hemiolas and *appoggiaturas* to enhance melodic pacing. Rhythms beginning with an eighth note downbeat followed by a dotted eighth note, as in Figure 11, mm. 65 and 69, create a halting and breathless sense of restlessness.⁶² Little and Jenne's description of Bach's *passepieds* as containing "long, elegant phrases replete with... slightly off-balance rhythmic effects" is appropriate here.⁶³

In addition to this mood-painting created by the dance, there are specific instances of word-painting. The soprano sings *weinen* ('to weep') three times over the course of the aria with increasingly longer descending melismas, the final and most elaborate appearing from m. 94 to m.101, right before the *da capo*. In the B section, the verb *lebet* ('he lives') is similarly emphasized (Figure 11). It is sung four times overall, twice with long, elaborate melismas as in mm. 68-71.

⁶⁰ Haynes, *Pathetick*, 61.

⁶¹ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music*, 83.

⁶² Haynes, *Pathetick*, 96.

⁶³ Little and Jenne, *Dance and the Music*, 88.



Figure 11. Cantata 98, *Hört, ihr Augen, auf zu weinen*, measures 63-75.⁶⁴

More variation occurs in the B section, as the singer now incorporates triplets into her melismas (Figure 8 above, mm. 69-71) and the changes of key become more interesting. The modulation to F minor, the subdominant key, toward the end of the section (in m. 85) leads us away from the standard dominant and relative keys, which have already been reached in this aria. From a Baroque oboe player's standpoint, F minor would require more cross-fingerings and difficult trills, which would result in a muted and strained sound.⁶⁵ These new elements of the B section build intensity and anxiety that are dismissed by the familiar reassurance of the closing ritornello.

**BWV 187, Es wartet alles auf dich, *Everything depends on you*
 (1726) Leipzig—Cantata for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity
 Performed 3 times: 1726 in Leipzig, 1735 in Leipzig, 1749 in Leipzig
 Part 1—1. Chorus, 2. Recitative (B), 3. Aria (A)
 Part 2—4. Aria (B), 5. Aria (S), 6. Recitative (S), 7. Chorale**

⁶⁴ Johann Sebastian Bach, "Hört, ihr Augen, auf zu weinen," *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 22, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1875), 244.

⁶⁵ Haynes, *Pathetick*, 265.

BWV 187/5 with Oboe Obligato
Gott versorget alles Leben,
God cares for all life
Was hienieden Odem hegt.
that draws breath here below
Sollt er mir allein nicht geben,
Would he not give to me alone
Was er allen zugesagt?
what he has promised to all?
Weicht, ihr Sorgen, seine Treue
Worries, be gone, his faithfulness
Ist auch meiner eingedenk
Is my one and only consideration
Und wird ob mir täglich neue
and is renewed for me daily
Durch manch Vaterliebs Geschenk.
through the many gifts of a Father's love.

The texts of *Es wartet alles auf dich* have the theme of faith that God will provide us with what is needed. The soprano aria, *Gott versorget alles Leben*, is the fifth movement and was later quoted in Bach's Mass in G minor, BWV 235.⁶⁶ The instrumentation of each prior movement is reduced until this aria, which omits the strings and is down to just soprano, oboe, and continuo. This reduction of forces parallels the progression of ideas in the texts, which move from the very general praise of "Everything depends on you" to the personal perspective shown in the text of this aria. The sources of the texts range from Psalm 104 to Matthew 6:31-32 to Hans Vogel's hymn *Singen wir aus Herzensgrund* (1563).⁶⁷

The aria divides into two contrasting sections, in the keys of E-flat Major and C minor. The first, in *Adagio* tempo (mm. 1-20), is in the style of a French overture, replete with the double dotting and elaborate rhythms that create this style's regal quality. The

⁶⁶ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 450.

⁶⁷ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 451.

message of this text is conveyed in a serious, but pleasant, tone, and the impression of breadth created by the style is appropriate for the sweeping image of the first two lines, “God cares for all life that draws breath here below.”

The second section introduces a new time signature of 3/8 and the tempo quickens to *Un poco Allegro* (mm. 21-57). The French overture style of the first section sets up expectation of something grand, like a fugue. However, what follows is a quick dance through which worries are banished (Figure 12). This dance quality is immediately displayed, as the oboe and continuo pass off sixteenth notes while the soprano offers a slower, more independent line. The staccato figures reflect happiness in receiving God’s gifts. With no transition, the French-overture ritornello returns to close the aria. The first four lines of text do not return in a da capo. These four lines end with a question that is answered in the next four lines, and so returning to the question would not be appropriate. Instead, an abbreviated version of the instrumental opening serves as a final reminder of God’s care for all.



Figure 12. Cantata 187, *Gott versorget alles Leben*, measures 21-27.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Gott versorget alles Leben,” *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 18, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1870), 189.

**BWV 248 Fallt mit Danken, fallt mit Loben (Weihnachts Oratorium IV), *Fall with thanks, fall with praise (Christmas Oratorio Part IV out of VI)*
(1734) Leipzig—Performed on New Year's Day 1735**

**Part 4—36. Chorus, 37. Recitative (T), 38. Recitative (B)/Chorale (S), 39. Aria (S),
40. Recitative (B)/Chorale (S), 41. Aria (T), 42. Chorale**

BWV 248/39 with Oboe Obbligato

Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen

Does your name instill, my saviour, does it instill

Auch den allerkleinsten Samen

Even the tiniest seed

Jenes strengen Schreckens ein?

Of that fierce terror?

Nein, du sagst ja selber nein. (Nein!)

No, you yourself say (No!)

Sollt ich nun das Sterben scheuen?

Shall I now be afraid of death?

Nein, dein süßes Wort ist da!

No, your sweet word is there!

Oder sollt ich mich erfreuen?

Or should I rejoice?

Ja, du Heiland sprichst selbst ja. (Ja!)

Yes, you my saviour say it yourself (Yes!)

The final aria discussed is a special and rather different piece. It is a movement from the Christmas Oratorio, which is made up of six cantata-length parts that begin on Christmas Day and end on the Feast of Epiphany. *Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen* is the fourth movement from the fourth part of the oratorio, or number thirty-nine from the entire set, and was performed on New Year's Day in 1735. The poet Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700-1764), also known by his pseudonym Picander, was the possible author of this text, since he is known as the poet for other of Bach's large works, including the St. Matthew and St. Mark Passions.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 40.

The style of this aria is that of a pastorale in gentle 6/8 meter and moderate tempo. The use of the oboe is appropriate, as it often represents the shepherds in the fields, who witnessed the nativity. The texts from this part of the oratorio exalt the baby-naming celebration for Jesus, and therefore the rejoicing key of C Major is employed for most of the aria.⁷⁰ This aria incorporates a new voice into the mix, in the guise of an echo performed by a second soprano. The text consists of questions posed to Jesus, addressed as “my saviour,” who answers them with *Nein* or *Ja*. The oboe, too, reinforces these responses with its own echoes.

As shown in Figure 13, the echoes range from single notes, to sighing motives of ascending and descending half steps, to groups of three eighth notes, to articulated leaps of thirds and fourths. The idea of the echo is first introduced in the opening ritornello when the oboe echoes itself. With the entrance of the primary soprano, a fluid connection from the voice to echoes by the oboe begins. It is not until Jesus responds with *Nein* that the second soprano joins the commentary. As Bach develops the echoes, he cleverly plays with the order in which the three respond.



Figure 13. Cantata 248/4, *Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen*, measures 55-57, mm.

85-89, mm. 78-81.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Haynes, *Pathetick*, 61.

⁷¹ Johann Sebastian Bach, “Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen,” *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*, v. 5, ed. Wilhelm Rust (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1856), 155-156.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This study of ten arias of J. S. Bach makes clear how important the oboe and the development of the oboe da caccia and oboe d'amore were to his output of choral works, and in turn to the repertoire of modern-day oboists. Bach's large production of cantatas during his time in Leipzig yielded most of his arias with oboe obbligato, the only original works of Bach to feature the solo oboe. Bach's relationship with Johann Caspar Gleditsch and the instrument-makers there led to his incorporation of the oboe and the two tenor oboes into his large works for the church, providing oboists today with a rich source of repertoire. The oboe in these arias acts not only as a soloist in the ritornellos, but also as an equal partner with the voice, sharing and complementing its character and intricacies. Furthermore, the oboe contributes to the musical conveyance of the text and its meaning, interacting with the voice to create a new level of expression. Although these arias share stylistic traits and on the surface may seem alike, this study brings out how Bach gives them individual personalities through variations of the da capo structure, musical interpretation of their texts, and the creation of musical characters suited to these texts, ranging from lamenting to joyous, from march- to dance-like, from lyrical to spirited.

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APPENDIX A

LECTURE RECITAL RECORDING

[Consult Attached Files]