

Bach Choruses for General Use

Herr gib, daß ich dein Ehre *(from S. 107)*

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685 - 1750)

Arranged for
SATB chorus and organ
by Gary Harney

Text and Translation

Herr, gib, dass ich dein Ehre
Ja all mein Leben lang
Von Herzensgrund vermehre,
Dir sage Lob und Dank!
O Vater, Sohn und Geist,
Der du aus lauter Gnade
Abwendest Not und Schaden,
Sei immerdar gepreist.

Lord, grant that I your honour
throughout my life
may increase from the bottom of my heart,
and give you praise and thanks
O Father, Son and Spirit
you who out of pure mercy
turn away distress and harm,
be praised for evermore!

Text by Johann Heermann (1630)

Translation by Francis Browne. Used by permission.

Presented by *Bach on a Budget*
<http://www.immanuelbachconsort.org>

“Herr gib, daß ich dein Ehre” (from S. 107)

The Cantata

Composed for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, *Was willst du dich betrüben?* (Why do you want to distress yourself?) was part of the Leipzig “chorale cantata cycle” of 1724-5, receiving its first performance on 23 July 1724. The text of the work moves from pain and suffering at the beginning to faith in God at the end.

The typical structure of a chorale cantata is to use the chorale text and music for an opening chorus and for a closing chorale. Between these two are normally free text verses which paraphrase or interpret the chorale or Gospel for the day. S. 107 is unusual in that Bach chose to use the text (but not necessarily the music) of the chorale for every movement. Neither scriptural text nor free text is included in the cantata.

Commentators have speculated on why Bach took this approach, many surmising perhaps he had an issue with the librettist. It is worth noting, however, that in the cantata Bach wrote just before this one, *Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten* (S. 93), he chose to use the *melody* (but not the text) of the chorale in every movement, just as in S. 107 he chose to use the *text* of the chorale (but not the music) in every movement. Could Bach have been experimenting in these two cantatas to see if he might find a new approach he liked? We will never know, but the use of these two unusual practices in consecutive cantatas is suggestive.

The Chorus

“Herr, gib, daß ich dein Ehre” is the concluding movement of S. 107, and as does the opening chorus, uses the chorale tune *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*. By-and-large, the melody is plainly laid-out; however, at a few points some embellishment (including an occasional trill) is added.

The most noticeable feature of this movement is its use of the siciliano rhythm (see below). Bach favored the sound of the siciliano, employing it regularly in his cantatas. He uses it here beautifully to lift the mood, ending the cantata with a sense of faith and hope.

The Accompaniment

This chorus was originally scored for violin I/flute I-II/oboe d’amore I on the top obbligato line, with oboe d’amore II/violin II, viola, and continuo completing the accompanying parts. The soprano *cantus firmus* was doubled by horn.

For this organ version, the obbligato line is presented on a solo stop, unaltered. The bass line of the continuo is generally preserved in the pedal, with adjustments in order to make the line more idiomatic for organ. In particular, the siciliano pattern



is often replaced by



or



Between the obbligato and pedal lines, the left hand completes the harmony as needed. Since the left hand is essentially playing the role of the continuo, the player should feel free to add or subtract voices as suits the instrument and room.

Created for performance by the Immanuel Bach Consort,
and dedicated to Dr. Gerre Hancock (1934-2012)

Herr, gib, daß ich dein Ehre

(from Cantata #107)

Johann Heermann, 1630

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Manuals, and Pedal. The score is in G major and 6/8 time. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are currently silent, indicated by a horizontal line with a fermata. The keyboard parts (Manuals and Pedal) are active. The Manuals part is divided into two staves: Man. I (Solo stop) and Man. II. The Pedal part is in the bass clef.

Musical score for vocal parts and keyboard accompaniment. The score is in G major and 6/8 time. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are active, with lyrics: Herr, gib, daß ich dein Eh - - von Her - zen - grund ver - meh - - tr. The keyboard parts (Manuals and Pedal) are active. The Manuals part is in the treble clef, and the Pedal part is in the bass clef. The score includes a measure number '6' at the beginning of the vocal entry.

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-re ja all mein Le - - - ben lang
-re, dir sa - ge Lob und Dank!

-re ja all mein Le - ben lang
-re, dir sa - ge Lob und Dank!

-re ja all mein Le - - - ben lang
-re, dir sa - ge Lob und Dank!

-re ja all mein Le - - - ben lang
-re, dir sa - ge Lob und Dank!

16

O
O
O
O

32

wen - dest Not und Scha - - den, sei im - mer -

wen - dest Not und Scha - - den, sei im - mer -

wen - dest Not und Scha - - den, sei im - mer -

wen - dest Not und Scha - - den, sei im - mer -

tr

tr

tr

37

dar ge - preist!

dar ge - preist!

dar ge - preist!

dar ge - preist!

tr