

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 133

Form: Chorus/Fantasia - Aria (A) - Recit (T) - Aria (S) - Recit (B) - Chorale.

The underlying chorale by Caspar Ziegler (1621–1690), published after his death, was usually sung to other melodies. The ca. 1714 tune used here was apparently little known. Perhaps that is why Bach notated it at the bottom of a sketch of the Sanctus first performed on Christmas Day in 1724 and later incorporated in his Mass in B minor. Usually Bach used older chorales.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/3; BC A16

3. Day of Christmas (BWV 64, 133, 151, 248-III)

Odd years: *Hebrews 1:1–14 (God spoke through his Son, who is superior to the angels)

Odd years: *John 1:1–14 (Prologue: In the beginning was the Word...and the Word became flesh)

Even years (celebrated as Feast of St. John the Apostle):

*John 21:20–24 (Jesus's words to Peter about John)

*1 John 1:1–10 (God is light, the blood of Christ cleanses from sin)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: 27 December 1724

(Leipzig: St. Nicolaos)

This cantata belongs to Bach's chorale cantata cycle (see note for more).

Instrumentation:

Cornetto

Oboe d'amore I, II

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo, Organo

J.S. Bach Cantata No. 133 Ich freue mich in dir



Vers 1. (Coro.)

133/1.

(Allegro moderato)

For Alfred Dürr's comments, including explanations of Bach's sketch, see note. (Chorale Verse 1) • Christ's birth: A glad welcome to Jesus, my brother (133/1).

Note: For the 3rd day of Christmas, Bach used fewer instruments and even simplified the choral writing, perhaps for practical reasons.

Virtuosic Vln I (perpetuum mobile)

3.

D major

6.

D major

8.

E7 A major

A major

11.

A major

Most of Bach's ritornellos close in their opening key. But Bach also wrote some tonally open ritornellos. Kayoung Lee concludes that "Bach's use of tonally open ritornellos is more likely a musical (or even technical) choice than a theological one...motivated by the nature of the musical materials rather than the text,

13.

A major

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 13, 14, and 15. The music is in A major and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand. Measure 15 ends with a cadence in A major.

16.

A major

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 16, 17, and 18. The music continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the previous block, ending with a cadence in A major.

18. **Soprano. Line 1.** (Der Cantus firmus: „Ich freue mich in dir“ im Sopran.)

Alto. +Cornetto Ich freu - e mich in - dir

Tenore. Ich freu - e mich in dir

Basso. Ich freu - e mich in dir

A Ich freu - e mich in dir

Chorus: (C O R O.)

Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form.

Ritornello

A major A major D major D7

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal score for measures 18, 19, and 20. It includes parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, and a Chorus (C O R O.). The lyrics are "Ich freu - e mich in dir". A red box highlights the first measure of the Alto part, labeled "Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form." The piano accompaniment is shown below the vocal parts. Measure 20 features a "Ritornello" section with yellow circles under the notes. The key signature changes from A major to D major in measure 20.

21.

G major A7

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 21 and 22. The music is in G major and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand. Measure 22 ends with a cadence in A7.

23.

D major D major

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 23 and 24. The music is in D major and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand. Measure 24 ends with a cadence in D major.

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25. Line 2.

und heisse dich will
und heisse dich will
und heisse dich will
und heisse dich will

D7 G major E minor F#7 B minor

27.

kommen.
kommen.
kommen.
kommen.

Ritornello

B minor A7 D major

30.

D major D major

33.

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35.

D major

B 38. Line 3. Other hymnals have "zartes" ("tender"), "wertes" ("precious"), or "liebstes" ("dearest") (see note).

Stollen 2

Mein lie - bes Je - su - lein!

Mein lie - bes Je - su - lein!

Mein lie - bes Je - su - lein!

Mein lie - bes Je - su - lein!



B

= m. 19.

= m. 20. Ritornello

D major D major D major D7

41.

= m. 21.

= m. 22.

= m. 23.

G major A7 D major

44. Line 4.

Du

Du

Du

Du

= m. 24.

= m. 25.

D major D7

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46.

hast dir vor - ge - nom - men,
hast dir vor - ge - nom - men,
hast dir vor - ge - nom - men,
hast dir vor - ge - nom - men,

Ritornello

= m. 26. = m. 27.

G major E minor F#7 B minor B minor

48.

B minor

50.

B minor

52.

B minor A7 D major

54.

E7 A major

At the Abgesang becomes more animated and differentiated as the text reaches the theological heart of the stanza: Jesus' incarnation makes him a brother to believers. This idea is expounded in Hebrews 2:11-12, where the writer quotes Psalm 22:22: "He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, 'I will proclaim thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee.'"

56. Line 5.

mein Brü - der - lein zu sein.

mein Brü - der - lein zu sein.

mein Brü - der - lein zu sein.

mein Brü - der - lein zu sein.

C

Ritornello

A major A major A7

59.

D major E7 A major

62. Line 6 (elaborated).

Ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton!

Ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton, ach, wie ein

Ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton, ach, wie ein

Ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton, ach, wie ein

A major C#7 F# minor

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Echo-like repetition of "Ah, what a sweet sound!" while last note of cantus firmus is held.

65.

sü - sser Ton, ein süs - ser Ton, ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton!

sü - sser Ton, ein süs - ser Ton, ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton!

sü - sser Ton, ein süs - ser Ton, ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton! Ritornello

F# minor F# minor

Detailed description: This system contains measures 65 through 67. It features three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) and a grand staff for piano accompaniment. The vocal parts sing the lyrics 'sü - sser Ton, ein süs - ser Ton, ach, wie ein sü - sser Ton!'. The piano accompaniment includes a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The key signature is one sharp (F# minor). The word 'Ritornello' is written in red at the end of measure 67. Chord labels 'F# minor' are placed below the piano accompaniment in red.

68.

B7 E major E minor A7 D major

Detailed description: This system contains measures 68 through 70. It shows the piano accompaniment for these measures. The right hand has a busy, rhythmic texture, while the left hand provides harmonic support. Chord labels are written in red below the piano part: B7, E major, E minor, A7, and D major.

71.

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

Detailed description: This system contains measures 71 and 72. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns. Chord labels are written in red below the piano part: C#7, F# minor, B7, C#7, (F# minor), B minor, and N6.

73.

C#7 F# minor D major F# minor

Opening motive returns.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 73 through 75. In measure 75, a specific musical phrase is highlighted with a red box and yellow circles, with the text 'Opening motive returns.' written in red above it. Chord labels are written in red below the piano part: C#7, F# minor, D major, and F# minor.

76.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 76 and 77. The piano accompaniment concludes with a final cadence. The right hand has a few notes, and the left hand has a simple bass line. The key signature remains one sharp.

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D 78. Line 7.

Wie freund - lich sieht er — aus,
Wie freund - lich sieht er — aus,
Wie freund - lich sieht er — aus,
Wie freund - lich sieht er — aus,

D

D major D major

81.

Ritornello

F#7 B minor

83.

B minor

86.

B minor E7 A major D7 G major

88.

A7 D major

90. Line 8 (elaborated).

der gro - sse Got - tes -
der gro - sse Got - tes -
der gro - sse Got - tes -
der gro - sse Got - tes -

D major

93.

sohn!
sohn, der gro
sohn, der gro
sohn, der gro

Text painting: Wide-ranging melismas (adopting the swirling 16ths of the instruments) for "the great Son of God".

D7 G major

96. D major

sse Got - tes - sohn!
sse Got - tes - sohn!
sse Got - tes - sohn! Ritornello = m. 4.

D major

98. = m. 5. = m. 6.

100. = m. 7. D major

102. A7 D major D major

133/2. **Aria.** (Tempo giusto ♩ = 80.) (Based on Chorale Verse 2) • Incarnation: We see God face to face! (133/2). Parallel 3rds and 6ths suggest sweetness...

Ob d'am f & II. Ritornello derived from vocal line. *mf* Ge - trost, ge - trost, ge - trost

4. Figura circulatorio (see m. 38). *p* The dynamic differentiations are by Bach. A# dim. B minor G# dim. A major

6. *mf* Figura corta (see note). A major A major

effects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature (Luther 1545: das Ebenbild seines Wesens)." The trinitarian interpretation of this verse is reflected in the 3-fold call, "Getrost!" The text also alludes to the first Gospel reading, John 1:14, 18. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father...No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known."

Alto. 9.

Alto is often the voice of faith.

Ge_trost, getrost, ge_trost! es fasst ein

Be-of-good cheer!

A major A major A major A major

12.

heil' - ger Leib des Höchsten un-be - greif - lich's We - sen;

Figura circulatio (see m. 38).

Ritornello

A major A# dim. B minor

15.

B minor G# dim. A major A major

Coloratura on "getrost" gives rhetorical weight to the imperative.

18.

ge_trost,

ge - trost ge - trost ge -

A major A major A major

21.

ge_trost, getrost, ge_trost! es fasst ein

trost ge - trost

A major A major A major

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24.

heil - ger Leib, es fasst — ein heil - ger Leib des Höchsten unbe -

B major E major E major A major

27.

greif - lich's We - sen; getrost! es fasst — ein heil - ger

A major B(7)

Coloratura gives rhetorical weight to "unbegreiflich's" ("incomprehensible").

30.

Leib des Höchsten un - be - greif

E major

33.

- lich's We - sen.

E major E major E major E major

The second part of the aria makes reference to Genesis 32:30: Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." (Luther 1545: Ich habe Gott von Angesicht gesehen, und meine Seele ist genesen.) A figura circulatio is often used for the image of a crown), here for this parenthetical remark (the piano marking is by Bach), see note.

36.

 Ich ha - be Gott (wie wohl ist mir geschehen!) von
 I have God how well it to-me has-happened -
 (how well I have fared/how blessed I am)

E major E major E7 A major E# dim. F# minor

Text painting: Sequential treatment for the phrase "face to face."

39.

 An - ge - sicht zu An - ge - sicht, von Ange - sicht zu An - gesicht ge -
 face to face, - face to face seen.

E7 A major C#7 F# minor

Ob d'am I

42.

 se - - hen.

F# minor F# minor

Ritornello

45.

 Ich ha - be Gott (wie

F# minor F# minor

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48. *mf*

wohl ist mir geschehen, wie wohl ist mir geschehen, wie wohl ist mir geschehen!) von
faux bourdon suggests sweetness

E7 A major F#7 B minor B minor G#7 C# minor C# minor

51.

An - ge - sicht zu An - ge - sicht, von Ange-sicht zu Angesicht ge -

B major E major C# minor C# minor

54. *mf*

st - hen.

C# minor C# minor

57.

Ach! ach, — mei - ne Seele muss ge -

C# minor C# minor F#7 B minor

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60. *ne - sen, ach! ach, mei - ne Seele muss ge -*

B minor A7 D major D7 G major

63. *ne - sen.*

D major D major D major G# dim. A major

65. */f*

A major A major

68. *Ge_trost, getrost, ge_trost! es*

Free da capo.

A major A major A major A major

71. *fasst ein heil' - ger Leib des Höchsten un - be - greif - lich's*

A major A major

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73. We - sen;

mf Ritornello
Figura corta...

A major A major

76. ge - trost! es

Long coloratura gives weight to "getrost" ("be of good cheer").

p ge - trost ge - trost ge - trost ge - trost

A major A major Av A major

79. fasst ein heil' - ger Leib, es fasst ein heil' - ger

Reference to heraldic motive

A major B major E major E major

82. Leib, es fasst ein heil' - ger Leib des Höch - sten

E major A major E7 A major A7 D major

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Long coloratura gives rhetorical weight to "unbegreiflich's" ("incomprehensible").

84. un - be - greif

E major A major C#7 F# minor A7 D major

87. lich's We - sen, des H"och - sten

Ob d'am I

E7 A major A major A major

89. un - begreiflich's We - sen.

Ritornello

A major A major A major

92.

p

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

95.

mf

A major A major A major A major

133/3.

Recitativo.
Secco
Tenore.

(Based on Chorale Verse 2) • Christmas: God has come; we will not hide like Adam (133/3).

Alfred Dürr writes, "The secco recitativo, no. 3, with its two arioso chorale insertions ('adagio'), is a relative of the trope, though neither text nor melody of the chorale is very strictly preserved. The melody is recognizable only at the line 'Kehrt selber bei uns ein' ('Himself lodges with us'), whereas the other lines are restricted to thematic allusions. See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 128.

1. **Ein Adam mag sich voller Schrecken vor Gottes Angesicht im Paradies verstecken! Der**
An Adam may, - filled-with terror (from) God's face in paradise hide (himself)! The

Intermittent playing style makes these chords implied rather than played.

F# minor F#7 B minor

Adagio. (♩ = 60.)

The line approximates the second phrase of the chorale melody.

4. **al - ler - höch - ste Gott kehrt sel - ber bei uns**
Most-High (Choral.) God lodges himself with us

Editorial addition of first chorale phrase.

G# dim.7 C# major F# minor a major E7

Recit.

6. **ein: und so ent - setzet sich mein Herze nicht; es ken - net sein er - barmen - des Ge -**
and thus is-alarmed my heart not; it knows his compassionate

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

Adagio.
(♩ = 60.)

Chorale text verbatim.

8. **mü - the. Aus un - er - mess' - ner Gü - te wird**
disposition, out-of unmeasured kindness becomes

E minor A major

10. The last lines approximate the chorale melody.

er ein klei - nes Kind und heisst: mein Je - su - lein!
he a little child (Choral.) and is-called my little-Jesus!

D7 G major B minor A major D major

The harmonic progression from F# minor to D major underscores the contrasting ideas in the text.

In 133/4, unity of affect gives way to Bach's interest in a differentiated portrayal of individual text passages. In this da capo aria for soprano aria for soprano, the whole B section without continuo. Bach often uses *bassetto* technique (removing continuo support) to depict something heavenly, unearthly, incomprehensible, or without foundation. Here it symbolizes how incomprehensible the poet finds hard-hearted people.

Aria. (Da capo)

133/4. (Moderato $\text{♩} = 84.$) (Based on Chorale Verse 3) • Christ's birth: How sweet the news is! (133/4).

Alfred Dürr writes, "The second aria, no. 4, is an invention of graceful tenderness. Its string texture is dominated by the first violin, the middle parts receding into the background; and an oft-recurring ostinato motive is conspicuous in the continuo. The middle section provides a contrast of time (12/8 instead of *alla breve*), tempo ('largo') and scoring—the continuo is tacet and the second violin and viola unite to form the lowest part of a trio with soprano and first violin. In the main section, echo effects, *bariolage* (alternating stopped and open strings) and a solo violin *passaggio* all serve to interpret the text 'How lovely they sound in my ears...'" See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 128.

7. Soprano.



16. *klingt es in den Ohren, wie*
rings - in (my) ears

Violin Solo

B minor F#(7) F# pedal...

19. *lieblich klingt es in den Ohren, wie lieblich*

Tutti bariolage (like bells)

B minor B7

21. *klingt es in den Ohren, wie lieblich klingt es in den*

E minor E7

24. *Ohren dies Wort, dies Wort,*
this Word Rhetorical repetition and separation for "dies Wort" ("this word").

A7 B7 E major

26.

dies Wort: mein Je - sus ist ge - bo -

"dies Wort" "dies Wort" "dies Wort" "dies Wort" "dies Wort"

C#7 F# minor F# major F#7 B major E7

up 8va (see full score).

29.

ren, ge - bo - ren, wie dringt es in das Herz - hin -

"dies Wort" "dies Wort" "dies Wort"

E# dim.7 F# minor

Dramatic pause, then the meaning of the ostinato is identified with "dringt" ("penetrates or bores into").

32.

ein, in - das Herz - hin - ein!

Vln I tr mf p

F# minor F# minor

35.

Mein Je - sus ist ge - bo - ren! wie klingt es in den Oh - ren, wie

F# minor E7 A major F#7 B minor B7

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38. *Vln I echoes the singer.*

lieb - lich *Vln I echoes the singer.* klingt es, wie lieb - lich klingt es in den

E minor A7 D major F#7

41.

Oh - ren, wie lieb - lich klingt es in den Oh - ren, wie lieb - lich klingt es in den

B minor F#7
F# pedal... B7
B pedal...

44.

Oh - ren dies Wort, *Vln II echoes singer.* dies Wort, dies Wort:

L.H. L.H.

E minor A7 D major

Heraldic motive (reminiscent of the first movement) for the "lovely news" ("lieblich Wort"): "Jesus is born" while the continuo repeats the "dies Wort" figure.

47.

mein Je - sus ist ge - bo - - - ren, ge -

F#7 B7 E major A# dim.7

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50.

bo - ren, wie dringt es in das Herz hin - ein, in das

Dramatic pause.

B minor B minor

53.

Herz hin - ein!

mf Ritornello *p*

B minor B minor B minor

55.

mf

B minor B7 E minor A7 D major E7

58.

A# dim.7 B minor

The B section is without continuo. Bach often uses *bassetto* technique (removing continuo support) to depict something heavenly, unearthly, incomprehensible, or without foundation. Here it symbolizes how incomprehensible the poet finds hard-hearted people don't comprehend the significance of Jesus' name. Sharps predominate.

61. **Largo.** (♩ = 50.)

While 12/8 meter is often used for pastoral effect, here it serves to lengthen the accented syllable of the poetry's iambic meter, resulting in a certain insistency. This effect is reinforced by "knocking" viola notes.

Wer Je - su Na - men nicht ver - steht, und wem es

Whoever Jesus' name (does) not understand and whomever it

Vln I

Vln II & Vla

p Pulsing 8ths suggest knocking against the "harter Felsen" ("hard rock") of hard hearts.

B minor G major G# dim.7 E7 A major

The language appears borrowed from Acts 2:37: When they heard [Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost] they were cut to the heart (Luther 1545: ging's ihnen durchs Herz).

63.

nicht durch's Her - ze geht, der muss ein har - ter Fel -

does-not penetrate-the heart, he must a hard - ter rock,

Vln I

A minor

The unyielding heart (hard as a rock) is depicted with an immoveable note.

65.

- sen, ein har - ter Fel - sen sein! Wer

a hard - ter rock be!

B7 E minor B7 G# dim.(7)

67.

Je - su Na - men nicht ver - steht, und wem es nicht durch's Her - ze

A major B7 C#7

F# minor D#7

69.

geht, der muss ein har - ter Fel -

C#7 F# minor D major E# dim.7 A# dim.7

G# minor

Chromaticism underscores the perversity described.

71.

- sen, ein har - ter Fel - sen sein, der

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

72. *tr*
muss ein har - - - ter Fel - - - sen sein!

Da Capo. F# major

133/5. **Recitativo** (Based on Chorale Verse 3) • Christ's coming to earth takes away fear of death (133/5).

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 6 mm.

Bass is often the voice of authority. The quotation from John's gospel at the end suggests that the entire text is spoken by the Apostle (see note for more).

1. Basso. F# C#

Wohlan! des Todes Furcht und Schmerz erwägt nicht mein ge-tröstet Herz. Will
Well-then, - death fear and pain considers not my comforted heart. Would

Chromatic chords color the references to the fear and pain of death.

F# major A# dim.7 B7 D# dim.7 B(7) E minor



4. *tr*

er vom Himmel sich bis zu der Erde lenken, so wird er auch an mich in meiner Gruft ge-
he from heaven - - to the earth journey, then will he also of me in my tomb

Descending vocal line for Incarnation.

Ascending/descending vocal lines for "Christ remembering me in my tomb."

E7 A minor A7 F#7

Adagio. Phrase 6 (down a 5th). This text refers to John 11:25-26. Jesus said to [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

7. *tr* Line 7.

den-ken. Wer Je-sum recht er-kennt, der stirbt nicht, wenn er
be-mindful. Whoever Jesus truly recognizes, he dies not when he

B minor A(7)

The last 3 lines quote the chorale stanza verbatim.

9. *tr* Phrase 8. D major

stirbt: - - - so - bald, so bald er Je-sum nennt.
dies: - - - as-soon-as, as-soon-as he Jesus names.

B7 E minor D major E minor E7 A major D major

The final phrases are reminiscent of John 17:3 [Christ]: This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent (Luther 1545: daß sie...den du gesandt hast, Jesum Christum, erkennen). Romans 10:9: If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

133/6.

Vers 4. Choral. (Mel.: „Ich freue mich in dir“.)

Chorale original: diesem ("this"). The change to the second person corresponds with the Abgesang, mm. 9-4.

Soprano. 1/5. Stücken

+Cornetto
Ob d'am I
Vln I

Alto.

+Ob d'am II
Vln II

+Vla

Basso.

Wohl - an! so will ich mich an dich, o Je - su, hal - ten,
und soll - te gleich die Welt in tau - send Stük - ken spal - ten.)

Wohl - an! so will ich mich an dich, o Je - su, hal - ten,
und soll - te gleich die Welt in tau - send Stük - ke spal - ten.)

Wohl - an! so will ich mich an dich, o Je - su, hal - ten,
und soll - te gleich die Welt in tau - send Stük - ke spal - ten.)

Wohl - an! so will ich mich an dich, o Je - su, hal - ten,
und soll - te gleich die Welt in tau - send Stük - ke spal - ten.)

9. D major D major E7 A major F#(7) B minor

O Je - su! dir, nur dir, dir leb' ich ganz al - lein; auf
O Je - su! dir, nur dir, dir leb' ich ganz al - lein; auf
O Je - su! dir, nur dir, dir leb' ich ganz al - lein; auf
O Je - su! dir, nur dir, dir leb' ich ganz al - lein; auf

13. E7 A major A major A major A7

The idea of "living and dying to the Lord" is reminiscent of Romans 14:8: If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

dich, al - lein auf dich, o Je - su, schlaf' ich ein!
dich, al - lein auf dich, o Je - su, schlaf' ich ein!
dich, al - lein auf dich, o Je - su, schlaf' ich ein!
dich, al - lein auf dich, o Je - su, schlaf' ich ein!

"mein" (Chorale original: "o").

D major A7 B minor D major G major E7 A(7) D major

The metaphor of death as sleep suggests biblical passages such as John 11 and 1 Corinthians 15 (see note).

