

Jesu, der du meine Seele (BWV 78, 1724)

chorale – Luther’s replacement for plainchant; refers to both the tune and the poetic German text; the most common form is AAB, with a much longer B. (Wagner called this the “bar form”.)

cantata – a “sung” piece; in Bach’s time, church cantatas were usually called “concerto” because they used instruments; the genre was heavily influenced by Italian opera; occasionally it employs a more serious polyphonic style (“motet style”).

Bach’s Sacred Cantatas – Bach’s primary duty at Leipzig was the performance of church music; during his first years there he composed/recycled at least three complete cantata “cycles”; the second annual cycle is very interesting – it consists of “chorale cantatas”, in which the text and music are both derived from the week’s chorale.

Je - su der du me - ine See - le, hasst durch Dei - nen bit - tern Tod
Aus des Teu - fels fin - stern Hö -hle, und der schwer - en Seel - en - not.

Kräft - ig - lich her - aus - ge - riss - en, und mich sol - ches las - sen wis - sen

Durch dein ang - en - eh - mes Wort, Sei doch itzt, o Gott, mein Hort!

Jesu, der du meine Seele
Hast durch deinen bitter Tod
Aus des Teufels finstern Höhle
Und der schweren Seelennot
Kräftiglich herausgerissen
Und mich solches lassen wissen
Durch dein angenehmes Wort,
Sei doch itzt, o Gott, mein Hort!

Jesus, thou who this my spirit
Hast through thy most bitter death
From the devil's murky cavern
And that grief which plagues the soul
Forcefully brought forth to freedom
And of this hast well assured me
Through thy most endearing word,
Be e'en now, O God, my shield!