

= Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn , BWV 23 =

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn (You true God and Son of David) , BWV 23 , is a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . He composed it in Köthen between 1717 and 1723 for Quinquagesima Sunday and performed it as an audition piece for the position of Thomaskantor in Leipzig on 7 February 1723 . The Sunday was the last occasion for music at church before the quiet time of Lent .

Bach had at least the first three movements ready for the audition in Leipzig and may have added the substantial last movement , derived from the lost Weimarer Passion , rather late . The cantata deals with healing the blind near Jericho . An anonymous author stayed close to the gospel , having the blind man call Jesus in the first movement , and begging Jesus not to pass in the second . In the last movement Bach presents an extended version of " Christe , du Lamm Gottes " , the German Agnus Dei of the Lutheran mass . He scored the cantata for three vocal soloists , a four @-@ part choir , and a Baroque instrumental ensemble with oboes , strings and continuo .

Bach possibly led the audition performance of the work in Leipzig in the Thomaskirche on 7 February 1723 , probably after the sermon . He performed the cantata again for the same occasion on 20 February 1724 , this time reinforcing the voices by a brass choir in the final movement .

= = History and words = =

Bach probably composed the cantata in Köthen between 1717 and 1723 for Quinquagesima Sunday , the last Sunday before Lent , also known as Estomihi . He revised it , transposing it from C minor to B minor and possibly adding the last movement , to be a test piece , together with Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe , BWV 22 , for his application for the position of Thomaskantor , director of church music in Leipzig . The prescribed readings for the Sunday were taken from the First Epistle to the Corinthians , " praise of love " (1 Corinthians 13 : 1 ? 13) , and from the Gospel of Luke , healing the blind near Jericho (Luke 18 : 31 ? 43) . The authorship of the poetry is unknown . The Sunday was meaningful because it was the last chance to perform cantata music before the quiet time of Lent began .

The chorale theme assigned to Christe , du Lamm Gottes , first appeared in print in Johannes Bugenhagen 's Braunschweig church order , published in Wittenberg in 1525 . Luther assigned it then to the Kyrie eleison of his Deutsche Messe .

Bach possibly led the audition performance of the work in Leipzig in the Thomaskirche on 7 February 1723 , probably after the sermon . It is unclear whether a " test " performance of the 1723 revised version took place in Köthen before Bach 's audition . Bach performed the cantata again for the same occasion on 20 February 1724 , reinforcing the voices by a brass choir in the final movement . When he performed the cantata again between 1728 and 1731 , he returned to the original Köthen key and performed without brass .

= = Structure and scoring = =

Bach structured the cantata in four movements : a duet for soprano (S) and alto (A) , a recitative for tenor (T) , a chorus , and a closing chorale . He scored it for the three vocal soloists , a four @-@ part choir and a Baroque instrumental ensemble . The duration is given as 20 minutes .

In the following table of the movements , the scoring and keys follow the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe for the version performed in 1724 , which is in B minor , uses oboes d 'amore in the first movement and brass playing colla parte with the voices in the last movement , a choir of cornett (Ct) and three trombones (Tb) (or trombe (Tr)) . According to the Bach scholar Alfred Dürr , the audition version of 1723 had no reinforcement by brass , matching the scoring of the other audition piece . The originally composed version , which was not performed until 1728 , was in C minor , had oboes in the opening movement and no brass . The time signatures are taken from the book on all cantatas by the Bach scholar Alfred Dürr , using the symbol for common time (4 / 4) . The continuo , played throughout , is not shown .

= = Music = =

In this cantata , Bach combines elements of ritornello and concerto writing to expand his range of structural experimentation . Although the closing chorale was a later addition , its melody is incorporated earlier in the piece , unifying the form . The theme of the text is optimistic , but the music throughout has a sense of underlying sadness . Craig Smith describes the cantata as " one of the densest and greatest " . The Bach scholar Christoph Wolff notes that the opening duet and also the duet passages on the chorus are in the style of Bach 's secular cantatas written in Köthen .

= = = 1 = = =

The opening movement , " Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn " (You true God and Son of David) , is " a sinewy and somewhat enigmatic quintet " for soprano and alto voices (assuming the role of the blind man addressing Jesus) with low active oboes and continuo . The movement is in adapted ternary form with an opening and closing " Italianate " ritornello . The soprano line includes a " drooping " motive , hinting at later harmonic and emotional development . There is a " thorny , even awkward juxtaposition of triple and duple meters " throughout the duet .

= = = 2 = = =

The tenor recitative , " Ach ! gehe nicht vorüber " (Ah ! do not pass by) , is similar to that for bass in Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe : they are both in major mode and accompanied by chordal strings underlying the vocal line . This movement adds an instrumental rendition of the melody of the closing chorale in oboe and violin .

= = = 3 = = =

The chorus , " Aller Augen warten , Herr " (All eyes wait , Lord) , is , according to the musicologist Julian Mincham , " dance @-@ like but not toe @-@ tapping , major but not ebulliently so , employing the full chorus but restrained throughout " . The form is a free rondo with interspersed extended episodes of tenor and bass duet . The opening includes the BACH motif .

= = = 4 = = =

The last movement , " Christe , du Lamm Gottes " (Christ , Lamb of God) , is probably older than the first three movements and may have originated in the lost Weimarer Passion from 1717 . The three calls of the Agnus Dei are all set differently , with an independent prelude and interludes by the oboes and strings , between the verses . The first verse is marked " adagio " . Instrumental motifs are derived from the hymn tune , which appears in the soprano and mostly chordal support by the lower voices . In the second verse , marked " andante " , the tune appears in a three @-@ part canon in soprano , oboes and first violin . The third verse returns to B minor . It has the tune in the soprano with polyphony in the lower voices and the instruments . The oboes play a syncopated independent role , while the strings support the voices , and the oboes in the interludes . The complex artful composition is a good preparation for Lent , the time of the Passion . Bach used it again to conclude the second version of his St John Passion in 1725 .

= = Recordings = =

The selection is taken from the listing on the Bach @-@ Cantatas website .