

= Was willst du dich betrüben , BWV 107 =

Was willst du dich betrüben ( Why would you grieve ) , BWV 107 , is a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . It was composed in Leipzig for the seventh Sunday after Trinity and first performed on 23 July 1724 . The chorale cantata is based on the words of Johann Heermann 's hymn in seven stanzas " Was willst du dich betrüben " ( 1630 ) .

Bach structured the cantata , the seventh work in his chorale cantata cycle , in seven movements : two framing choral movements , a recitative and an unusual sequence of four bipartite arias . He scored the work for three vocal soloists , a four @-@ part choir , and a Baroque chamber ensemble of a horn to reinforce the hymn tune in the outer movements , two transverse flutes , two oboes d 'amore , strings and continuo . It is the only known work from his chorale cantata cycle that kept the original words unchanged .

= = History and words = =

Bach composed the chorale cantata in Leipzig for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity . The prescribed readings for the Sunday are from the Epistle to the Romans , " I speak in human terms because of your human limitations ... the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life " ( Romans 6 : 19 ? 23 ) , and from the Gospel of Mark , the feeding of the 4000 ( Mark 8 : 1 ? 9 ) .

The cantata is based on Johann Heermann 's hymn in seven stanzas , " Was willst du dich betrüben " ( 1630 ) , which is focused on trust in God , even when facing adversaries including the devil . Trust in God is also a theme of the Gospel . Unusually for a chorale cantata of the second cycle , the text is not changed in the middle movements , but kept " per omnes versus " ( for all stanzas ) . The middle movements are , however , composed as a recitative and four arias . The treatment was decidedly old @-@ fashioned in Bach 's time . He had used it once much earlier in Christ lag in Todes Banden , BWV 4 ( 1707 ) , and then again later , as in Gelobet sei der Herr , mein Gott , BWV 129 ( 1726 ) , though it was not repeated during the second cycle . John Eliot Gardiner assumes that Bach imposed this restriction on himself , as he had done with the restriction to place the cantus firmus in soprano , alto , tenor and bass in the first four cantatas of the cycle . Gardiner comments on the " seventeenth @-@ century design " of composing the unchanged chorale text , compared to settings of Stölzel , Telemann and Graupner :

But only Bach is prepared to make life consistently difficult for himself , as here , for example , by choosing to incorporate verbatim all seven stanzas of a rather obscure chorale by Johann Heermann from 1630 . ? Bach rises to the challenge : to overcome the limitations of being confined to a rigidly structured hymn without monotony or repetitiveness .

The chorales in Heermann 's 1630 publication *Devoti musica cordis* ( Music of a devoted heart ) , which also included " Herzliefster Jesu , was hast du verbochen " , the first chorale in Bach 's St Matthew Passion , have been described as " the first in which the correct and elegant versification of Opitz was applied to religious subjects , ? distinguished by great depth and tenderness of feeling , by an intense love of the Saviour , and earnest but not self @-@ conscious humility " .

Bach first performed the cantata , the seventh extant cantata of his second annual cycle , on 23 July 1724 .

= = Scoring and structure = =

Bach structured the cantata in seven movements , beginning with a chorale fantasia and ending in a closing chorale , as usually in his chorale cantatas , but with an unusual sequence of only one recitative and four arias , setting the poetic hymn stanzas . He scored it for three vocal soloists ( soprano ( S ) , tenor ( T ) and bass ) ( B ) , a four @-@ part choir , and a Baroque chamber ensemble of corno da caccia ( Co ) to support the chorale tune in the outer movements , two flauti traversi ( Ft ) , two oboes d 'amore ( Oa ) , two violins ( VI ) , two violas ( Va ) and basso continuo ( Bc ) .

In the following table of the movements , the scoring follows the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe , the

keys are given for the Weimar version . The time signature is provided using the symbol for common time ( 4 / 4 ) .

= = Music = =

= = = 1 = = =

The opening chorus , " Was willst du dich betrüben " ( Why do you wish to trouble yourself ) , is a chorale fantasia , with the vocal part embedded in an independent concerto of the instruments . The cantus firmus on the melody of " Von Gott will ich nicht lassen " is in long notes , partly embellished , in the soprano and horn ; the lower voices are mostly set in homophony . The lines of the chorale are not rendered separately , but accenting the bar form ( Stollen ? Stollen ? Abgesang ) of the text , 1 and 2 are combined , 3 and 4 are combined , 5 is single and 6 to 8 are combined . The scoring is relatively rich in woodwinds .

= = = 2 = = =

The only recitative , " Denn Gott verlässet keinen , der sich auf ihn verläßt " ( For God abandons none who entrust themselves to Him ) , is accompanied by the oboes d 'amore , shows an extended melisma on the word " Freuden " ( joy ) and culminates in an arioso in the final line , with a melisma on " retten " ( rescue ) . The following four stanzas are composed as arias , not as the typical da capo arias , but mostly in two parts . Bach achieves variation by changing voice type , key and time signature . He also varies the mode , alternating major and minor keys , expresses different affekts , and he successfully " blurs " the bar form of the stanzas .

= = = 3 = = =

The first aria , " Auf ihn magst du es wagen " ( In Him you can dare all ) , depicts a " hunting scene " for bass and strings . Bach plays on the double meaning of the German word " erjagen " , which in the text has the sense " achieve by great exertion " , but he expresses the word 's literal meaning ( " to hunt " ) by an " outrageous hunting call trill " of the bass . This aria and those following are not da capo arias , but follow the bar form of the poem as bipartite structures .

= = = 4 = = =

The second aria , " Wenn auch gleich aus der Höllen " ( Even if , out of hell ) , for tenor and continuo begins with strong words on Satan as an enemy : " Wenn auch gleich aus der Höllen / der Satan wollte sich / dir selbst entgegenstellen / und toben wider dich " ( " Even if , out of hell , Satan wishes to set himself against you , and vent his rage on you " ) . Gardiner calls the music " a vivid pen @-@ portrait of Satan and his wiles , delivered with typically Lutheran relish " . The rhythm alternates between 6 / 8 and 3 / 4 one measure to the next , but the change is irregular and unpredictable . The bass line ( marked " organo e continuo " ) is " extravagantly animated and angular . Albert Schweitzer likens it to the contortions of a huge dragon " .

= = = 5 = = =

The third aria , " Er richt 's zu seinen Ehren " ( He arranges for your honor ) , for soprano and the two oboes d 'amore begins with an embellished version of the chorale tune , and the last line quotes the tune exactly on the words " was Gott will , das geschicht " ( " What God wants , that happens " ) .

= = = 6 = = =

The fourth aria , " Drum ich mich ihm ergebe " ( Therefore I devote myself to Him ) , is scored for tenor , the flutes in unison and muted violin . The melodic style is significantly different to the chorale melody , being song @-@ like .

= = = 7 = = =

The closing chorale , " Herr , gib , daß ich dein Ehre " ( Lord , grant that Your honor ) , is set in four parts for the voices , but embedded in a rich orchestral Siciliano concerto . The lines of the chorale are grouped as in the first stanza , again highlighting line 5 , " O Vater , Sohn und Geist " ( " Oh Father , Son and Spirit " ) as a miniature doxology .

= = Selected recordings = =

The table entries are excerpted from the list of recordings from the selection on the Bach @-@ Cantatas website . Choirs are roughly marked as large by red background , orchestras playing period instruments in historically informed performances are marked green .