

= Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes , BWV 40 =

Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes (For this the Son of God appeared) , BWV 40 , is a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . He composed it in 1723 , his first year in Leipzig , for the Second Day of Christmas , and first performed it on 26 December that year in both main churches , Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche . It was the first Christmas cantata Bach composed for Leipzig . The title of the cantata also appears in more modern German as Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes .

The theme of the work is Jesus as the conqueror of the works of the devil , who is frequently mentioned as the serpent . The music is festively scored , using two horns , similar to Part IV of Bach 's later Christmas Oratorio . The text by an unknown poet is organised in eight movements , beginning with a choral movement on the biblical text , followed by a sequence of recitatives and arias which is structured as three stanzas from three different hymns . Only two of these hymns are Christmas carols .

Bach used the opening chorus for the concluding Cum Sancto Spiritu in his 1738 Missa in F major , BWV 233 .

= = History = =

Bach composed the cantata in his first year in Leipzig , for the Second Day of Christmas . On this day Leipzig celebrated Christmas and St. Stephen 's Day in alternating years , with different readings . In 1723 , St. Stephen 's Day was remembered , with the prescribed readings for the feast day from the Acts of the Apostles , the Martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 6 : 8 ? 7 @, @ 22 , Acts 7 : 51 ? 59) , and from the Gospel of Matthew , Jerusalem killing her prophets (Matthew 23 : 35 ? 39) . The cantata text by an unknown author is not related to the martyrdom , but generally reflects Jesus as the conqueror of sin and the works of the devil . The text quotes the Bible in movement 1 , a verse from the First Epistle of John (1 John 3 : 8) . The contemporary poetry alludes to the Bible several times . Movement 2 is based on the Gospel of John (John 1 : 14) . Movement 5 reflects the creation narrative (Genesis 3 : 15) ; the image of the serpent is also used in movements 4 and 6 . Movement 7 finally picks up a line from the day 's Gospel , verse 37 , " how often would I have gathered thy children together , even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings " .

No fewer than three chorale stanzas from three different hymns are part of the structure : movement 3 is stanza 3 from Kaspar Föger 's " Wir Christenleut " (1592) ; movement 6 is stanza 2 from Paul Gerhardt 's " Schwing dich auf zu deinem Gott " (1648) ; and the closing chorale is the fourth (final) stanza from Christian Keymann 's " Freuet euch , ihr Christen alle " (1646) . This is unusual ; many of Bach 's cantatas include only one chorale stanza for a conclusion , and the cantata performed a day before , Christen , ätzt diesen Tag , BWV 63 , an early work composed in Weimar , contained no chorale at all . During the 1723 Christmas season , Bach used the structural device of three chorale stanzas , otherwise rare in his cantatas , twice more , in Sehnet , welch eine Liebe hat uns der Vater erzeiget , BWV 64 , and in Schau , lieber Gott , wie meine Feind , BWV 153 . He used the structuring of major works in scenes which are closed by chorale later in his Passions and in his Christmas Oratorio . In this cantata , the first insertion is from a hymn that Bach would later use at the end of Part III of his Christmas Oratorio , sung to the earlier melody (1589) by an anonymous composer . The second insertion is not from a Christmas hymn , but its addressing the " alte Schlange " (old serpent) matches the context . It is sung to a melody possibly composed by Friedrich Funcke . The closing chorale is sung to a melody by Andreas Hammerschmidt , published in his collection Vierter Theill Musicalischer Andachten (Fourth part of musical meditations) in Freiberg , Saxony (1646) .

The cantata was the first Christmas cantata composed for Leipzig . Bach first performed it on 26 December 1723 , and once more , in either 1746 or 1747 . For the Christmas season of 1723 , from the First Day of Christmas to Epiphany , Bach had performed a program of six cantatas , five of them new compositions , and two major other choral works :

25 December

Main service : Christen , ätzt diesen Tag , BWV 63 and a new Sanctus in D major , BWV 238

vespers service , BWV 63 and the Magnificat in E @-@ flat major , BWV 243a

26 December : this cantata

27 December : Sehnet , welch eine Liebe hat uns der Vater erzeiget , BWV 64

1 January : Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied , BWV 190

2 January : Schau , lieber Gott , wie meine Feind , BWV 153

6 January : Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen , BWV 65

The cantatas were performed twice on the principal feast days , in the main service , alternating in one of the two major churches of Leipzig Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche , and in the vespers service in the other .

Bach parodied the first movement of this cantata for the Cum Sancto Spiritu fugue in his 1738 Missa in F major , BWV 233 .

= = Scoring and structure = =

For the festive occasion , the cantata is scored for three vocal soloists ? alto , tenor and bass ? a four @-@ part choir , two horns (corno da caccia) , two oboes , two violins , viola and basso continuo . Bach later used a similar scoring in Part IV of his Christmas Oratorio , to be performed on New Year 's Day .

The cantata consists of eight movements :

Chorus : Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes

Recitative (tenor) : Das Wort ward Fleisch

Chorale : Die Sünd macht Leid

Aria (bass) : Höllische Schlange , wird dir nicht bange ?

Recitative (alto) : Die Schlange , so im Paradies

Chorale : Schüttle deinen Kopf und sprich

Aria (tenor) : Christenkinder , freuet euch !

Chorale : Jesu , nimm dich deiner Glieder

= = Music = =

According to musicologist Julian Mincham , the cantata has three sections , each concluded by a chorale :

Chorus , recitative , chorale ? " Christ 's purpose in a world of sin "

Aria , recitative , chorale ? " Christ 's actions in dispelling Satan "

Aria , chorale ? " consequential Christian delight "

Bach used material from the chorales in his own composition , for example deriving the first horn motif from the beginning of the chorale tune of the first chorale . This suggests that he had chosen the structure before he began the composition .

The opening chorus in F major is a setting of the short text " Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes , daß er die Werke des Teufels zerstöre . " (For this the Son of God appeared , that he might destroy the works of the Devil .) Klaus Hofmann notes : " This work of destruction is portrayed in the chorus by repeated percussive notes and extended coloratura , but all these illustrative elements are subordinated to a festive Christmas spirit " . The horns open the ritornello with a short signal @-@ like motif that is picked up by the oboes and the strings . The movement resembles a prelude and fugue , because the text is first presented in homophony to a repeat of the beginning of the ritornello , then repeated as a fugue , and finally repeated in madrigal style similar to the first section .

John Eliot Gardiner , who conducted this and other Christmas cantatas during the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage with the Monteverdi Choir in 2000 , compares the movement 's style to the stilo concitato (excited style) of Claudio Monteverdi and notes its " vigorous endorsement to the military campaign against sin and the devil instituted with Jesus ' birth " . The text speaking of the " works of the devil " is rendered on repeated notes both in the prelude section as in the fugue section ; the destruction is pictured in a twisted , almost snake @-@ like , coloraturas in both sections , but the text " Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes " is graced by a new calm theme that is introduced by the tenor ,

followed by bass , soprano and alto , only accompanied by the continuo . Then the theme contrasts with the two other elements depicting the works of the devil and destruction ; it shines almost throughout the fugue .

The short secco recitative , sung by the tenor , the typical voice for Evangelist narration , delivers the message " Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnet in der Welt " (The word became flesh and lived in the world) . The chorale , set for four parts , returns to the thought of sin , " Die Sünd macht Leid " (Sin makes suffering) . The bass line rises to affirm the last line " Wer ist , der uns als Christen kann verdammen ? " (Who could condemn us as Christians ?) .

The bass aria " Höllische Schlange , wird dir nicht bange ? " (Hellish serpent , are you not afraid) is accompanied by oboes and strings . Hofmann describes it as a " wide @-@ ranging , operatic bass solo , triumphant about the ' hellish snake ' " . The accompagnato recitative " Die Schlange , so im Paradies " (The serpent that in Paradise) explains that sin has been redeemed . The second chorale " Schüttle deinen Kopf und sprich " (Shake your head and say) is also a four @-@ part setting . The vivid bass line illustrates the crushing of the serpent 's head .

The tenor aria " Christenkinder , freuet euch ! " (Christian children , rejoice !) is accompanied by both horns and oboes and stresses the words " freuet " (be glad) by extended coloraturas and " erschrecken " (terrify) by sudden rests . It reflects the joyful mood of the opening chorus . The cantata is closed by " Jesu , nimm dich deiner Glieder " (Jesu , take to Yourself Your members) , the third four @-@ part chorale , asking Jesus for further support in the new year . For several passages , the bass line is moving to illustrate joy and bliss . The harmonisation begins in F minor , changes several times according to the words and reaches F major on the final word " Genadensonne " (Sun of mercy) .

= = Selected recordings = =

A list of recordings is provided by Aryeh Oron on the Bach @-@ Cantatas website . The type of choir and orchestra is roughly shown as a large group by red background , and as an ensemble with period instruments in historically informed performance by green background .