

= Liebster Jesu , mein Verlangen , BWV 32 =

Liebster Jesu , mein Verlangen (Dearest Jesus , my desire) , BWV 32 , is a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . He composed the dialogue cantata (Concerto in Dialogo) in Leipzig for the first Sunday after Epiphany and first performed it on 13 January 1726 .

Bach composed the cantata in his third year as Thomaskantor on a text which Georg Christian Lehms , a court poet in Darmstadt , had published already in 1711 . Lehms derived from the prescribed gospel , the finding in the Temple , a dialogue . Instead of a parent missing a son , as in the gospel , an allegorical Soul (soprano) misses Jesus (bass) . The motifs of the story , the loss and anxious search , are placed in a more general situation in which the listener can identify with the Soul . As Lehms did not provide a closing chorale , Bach chose the twelfth and final stanza of Paul Gerhardt 's hymn " Weg , mein Herz , mit den Gedanken " .

Bach structured the cantata in six movements , first alternating arias and recitative , then uniting the voices in recitative and aria , finally a chorale . The two soloists are supported by an intimate Baroque instrumental ensemble of oboe , strings and continuo . The oboe accompanies the soprano , a solo violin the bass , both play when the voices are united .

= = History and words = =

Bach composed the cantata in his third year as Thomaskantor (director of church music) in Leipzig for the First Sunday after Epiphany . The prescribed readings for the Sunday were taken from the Epistle to the Romans , speaking of the duties of a Christian (Romans 12 : 1 ? 6) , and from the Gospel of Luke , the finding in the Temple (Luke 2 : 41 ? 52) . Bach composed a text written by Georg Christian Lehms , court poet in Darmstadt , who published it in 1711 . Bach had set texts by Lehms already when he composed cantatas for the Weimar court from 1714 to 1717 . He had set a similar work by Lehms a few weeks earlier , Selig ist der Mann , BWV 57 for the second day of Christmas .

Lehms treated the Gospel to an allegorical dialogue of Jesus and the Soul . In the Concerto in Dialogo (Concerto in dialogue) , Bach assigned the Soul to the soprano voice and gave the words of Jesus to the bass as the vox Christi , the voice of Christ , disregarding that the Jesus in the Gospel is still a boy . Lehms imagines not a parent searching for a missing son , but more generally the Christian Soul " with whom we are expected to identify " , as John Eliot Gardiner notes . The Bach scholar Klaus Hofmann comments that the poet " takes up the general motifs of the story : the loss , the search for Jesus and his rediscovery , and places them in the context of the believer 's relationship with Jesus " . The dialogue also refers to medieval mysticism and to imagery of the Song of Songs . Lehms did not provide a closing chorale ; Bach added the twelfth and final stanza of Paul Gerhardt 's hymn " Weg , mein Herz , mit den Gedanken " (1647) . It is sung to the melody of " Freu dich sehr , o meine Seele " , which was codified by Louis Bourgeois when setting the Geneva Psalm 42 in his collection of Pseaumes octante trios de David (Geneva , 1551) . Bourgeois seems to have been influenced by the secular song Ne l'oseray je dire contained in the Manuscrit de Bayeux published around 1510 .

Bach led the first performance of the cantata on 13 January 1726 .

= = Scoring and structure = =

Bach structured the cantata in six movements , four movements of alternating arias and recitatives , then the voices united in a duet and finally a closing chorale . He scored the intimate dialogue for soprano and bass soloist , a four @-@ part choir only in the chorale , and a Baroque instrumental ensemble of oboe (Ob) , two violins (VI) , viola (Va) and basso continuo . The duration is given as 22 minutes .

In the following table of the movements , the scoring follows the Neue Bach @-@ Ausgabe . The keys and time signatures are taken from the book on all cantatas by the Bach scholar Alfred Dürr , using the symbols for common time (4 / 4) and alla breve (2 / 2) . The continuo , playing

throughout , is not shown .

= = Music = =

The dialogue , set in arias and recitatives for a solo voice and in duets , shows that Bach was familiar with Italian contemporary opera .

= = = 1 = = =

The dialogue is opened by the soprano as the Soul in an aria in E minor , marked lento , " Liebster Jesu , mein Verlangen " (Dearest Jesus , my desire) , The voice is complemented by an obbligato oboe , described by John Eliot Gardiner as " a solo oboe as her accomplice in spinning the most ravishing cantilena in the manner of one of Bach ? s concerto slow movements " . Julian Mincham distinguishes in the oboe line two different " ideas " , in the first five measures a " sense of striving , effort and stretching upwards " , then " garlands " of content in achieving a union , as the last lines of the text say " Ach ! mein Hort , erfreue mich , laß dich höchst vergnügt umfassen " (Ah ! My treasure , bring me joy , let me embrace You with greatest delight) .

= = = 2 = = =

The bass answers in a short recitative , " Was ists , daß du mich gesucht ? " (How is it , that you sought Me ?) , a paraphrase of Jesus saying in the gospel that he has to be in his Father 's place .

= = = 3 = = =

He expands the reasoning in a da capo aria in B minor , " Hier , in meines Vaters Stätte " (Here , in My Father 's place) . embellished by a solo violin , which " encircles the voice with triplets and trills " . The words " betrübter Geist (troubled spirit) appear whenever mentioned in " minor @-@ mode colourings in the melody and harmony " .

= = = 4 = = =

In the following dialogue recitative , " Ach ! heiliger und großer Gott " (Ah ! Holy and great God) , the soul answers with a paraphrase of the opening line of Psalm 84 , " Wie lieblich ist doch deine Wohnung " (How amiable is Thy dwelling) , which both Heinrich Schütz and Johannes Brahms set to music , Brahms as the central movement of Ein deutsches Requiem . Bach sets the text as an " evocative arioso with a pulsating string accompaniment " . The two voices never sing at the same time .

= = = 5 = = =

A duet , " Nun verschwinden alle Plagen " (Now all trouble disappears) , finally unites both voices and also their " associated obbligato instruments (oboe and violin) , so far heard only separately " . Gardiner writes : " It is one of those duets ? in which he seems to throw caution to the winds , rivalling the lieto fine conclusions to the operas of his day , but with far more skill , substance and even panache " .

= = = 6 = = =

A four @-@ part setting of Paul Gerhardt 's hymn , " Mein Gott , öffne mir die Pforten " (My God , open the gates) , " returns the cantata ? also in terms of style ? to the sphere of reverence appropriate for a church service " .

= = Selected recordings = =

The selection is taken from the listing on the Bach @-@ Cantatas website . Choirs and orchestras are roughly marked as large by red background ; instrumental groups playing period instruments in historically informed performances are highlighted green under the header Instr ..