

= Schwingt freudig euch empor , BWV 36 =

Schwingt freudig euch empor (Soar joyfully upwards) , BWV 36 , is a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach . He composed it in Leipzig in 1731 for the first Sunday in Advent , drawing on material from previous congratulatory cantatas , beginning with Schwingt freudig euch empor , BWV 36c (1725) . The Gospel for the Sunday was the Entry into Jerusalem , thus the mood of the secular work matched " the people 's jubilant shouts of Hosanna " . In a unique structure in Bach 's cantatas , he interpolated four movements derived from the former works with four stanzas from two important hymns for Advent , to add liturgical focus , three from Luther 's " Nun komm , der Heiden Heiland " and one from Nicolai 's " Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern " . He first performed the cantata in its final form of two parts , eight movements , on 2 December 1731 .

= = History and words = =

Bach composed the cantata in 1731 in Leipzig , for the first Sunday of Advent , the beginning of the Lutheran church year . In Leipzig this was the only Sunday in Advent when a cantata was performed , whereas tempus clausum (quiet time) was observed on the other three Sundays . The prescribed readings for the Sunday were from the Epistle to the Romans , " night is advanced , day will come " (Romans 13 : 11 ? 14) , and from the Gospel of Matthew , the Entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21 : 1 ? 9) .

Bach based parts of the music on a homage cantata of the same name , Schwingt freudig euch empor , BWV 36c , which he had composed for the birthday of a Leipzig University teacher and first performed in spring 1725 . The text was probably written by Picander , who modified it to a congratulatory cantata for Countess Charlotte Friederike Wilhelmine of Anhalt @-@ Köthen , Steigt freudig in die Luft , BWV 36a , first performed on 30 November 1726 . Another version was a congratulatory cantata for a member of the Rivinius family from Leipzig , Die Freude reget sich , BWV 36b , probably in 1735 .

Bach transformed the secular music to a cantata for the first Sunday in Advent , first by combining four movements and simply adding a chorale , the final stanza of " Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern " . The librettist of this adaptation , who stayed close to the secular cantata without reference to the readings , is unknown . Klaus Hofmann notes that the jubilant opening matches the Gospel of the entry into Jerusalem " with the people 's jubilant shouts of Hosanna " . The date of the adaptation is not certain , because the version is extant only in a copy by Bach 's student Christoph Nichelmann .

Finally in 1731 , Bach reworked the cantata considerably and wrote a new score . He interpolated the arias not with recitatives , but with three stanzas from Luther 's hymn for Advent , " Nun komm , der Heiden Heiland " . This main hymn for the first Sunday in Advent had already opened his cantata for the same occasion in 1714 , Nun komm , der Heiden Heiland , BWV 61 , and he had used it as the base for his chorale cantata Nun komm , der Heiden Heiland , BWV 62 , in 1724 . The hymn stanzas " serve to anchor the cantata to some extent in the Advent story , and to give it liturgical purpose and a clear focus " . John Eliot Gardiner terms it " structurally unusual " . Bach divided the cantata in two parts to be performed before and after the sermon , closing part I with a stanza from Nicolai 's hymn . For context , he replaced stanza 7 , which had closed the whole cantata , by stanza 6 , and closed part II by the final stanza of Luther 's hymn .

Bach first performed the cantata on 2 December 1731 , one week after Wachet auf , ruft uns die Stimme , BWV 140 .

= = Scoring and structure = =

The cantata is scored for four soloists ? soprano , alto , tenor and bass ? a four @-@ part choir , two oboes d 'amore , two violins , viola and basso continuo . It is structured in two parts of four movements each . Its interpolation of chorus and arias with chorales is unique in Bach 's cantatas .

Part I

Chorus : Schwingt freudig euch empor
 Choral (soprano , alto) : Nun komm , der Heiden Heiland
 Aria (tenor) : Die Liebe zieht mit sanften Schritten
 Chorale : Zwingt die Saiten in Cythara
 Part II
 Aria (bass) : Willkommen , werter Schatz !
 Chorale (tenor) : Der du bist dem Vater gleich
 Aria (soprano) : Auch mit gedämpften , schwachen Stimmen
 Chorale : Lob sei Gott dem Vater ton

= = Music = =

The cantata is unique in Bach 's church cantatas in its structure of arias combined with chorale instead of recitatives . Performed one week after *Wachet auf , ruft uns die Stimme* , BWV 140 , it shows Bach 's emphasis on the chorale even beyond his second cycle of chorale cantatas , begun in 1724 .

The opening chorus is opened by a ritornello , dominated by two contrasting motifs : the strings play a short rising figure in triplets , the oboes d 'amore play an expansive melody . As in the secular model , the movement is in two similar parts , each consisting of two contrasting sections , " *Schwingt freudig euch empor zu den erhabnen Sternen* " (Soar joyfully upwards to the exalted stars) and " *Doch haltet ein !* " (Yet stop !) . The bass voice , the lowest register , enters first , followed by the tenors , altos , and sopranos . This ascending sequence also reflects the text : " soaring aloft " , literally " swinging upward " .

Gardiner , who conducted the three cantatas for the first Sunday in Advent during the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage with the Monteverdi Choir in 2000 , described the movement as a " spiritual madrigal ? capricious , light @-@ textured and deeply satisfying once all its virtuosic technical demands have been met : those tricky runs , divisions and chromatic intervals in all voices , and the chains of triplet figuration in the unison oboes d 'amore and first violins " . He compares the figures on " *haltet ein !* " (stop) in the middle section to " *Wohin ?* " (where) in the aria " *Eilt , eilt* " in Bach 's *St John Passion* .

All three settings of the stanzas from Luther 's chorale are different , beginning with a duet for soprano and alto for the first stanza . The voices are doubled by the oboes d 'amore and render the text in sections of different length , with sixteen measures for the final " *Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt* " (that God had ordained such a birth for Him) . Alfred Dürr notes the expressiveness of the music , especially in leaps of sixths on the urgent request " *nun komm* " (now come) , syncopated rhythm on " *des sich wundert alle Welt* " (over whom the whole world marvels) , and daring chromatic on the final line . The tenor aria reflects " *Die Liebe zieht mit sanften Schritten* " (Love approaches with gentle steps) with oboe d 'amore as obbligato instrument , " the traditional musical symbol of love " , alluding to the concept of Jesus as the bride @-@ groom and the Soul as the bride , which is also the base for Nicolai 's hymn that closes part I in a " rousing four @-@ part harmonisation " .

The bass aria beginning part II , " *Willkommen , werter Schatz !* " (Welcome , worthy treasure !) shows " echoes of the first movement " and avoids a regular da capo structure . The bass voice is the vox Christi , addressing the bride . The welcoming gesture from the secular cantata seems appropriate for the expressed sentiment . The next hymn stanza , " *Der du bist dem Vater gleich* " (You who are like the Father) , the sixth stanza from Luther 's hymn " dealing with the sins of the flesh and Christ 's mission to redeem humankind " , is marked " *molt ' allegro* " . The tenor sings the chorale melody unadorned as a cantus firmus , but the oboes d 'amore play with " the urgent surging of semi @-@ quaver activity " . Dürr sees the expression of " *Kampf und Sieg des Gottessohnes* " (fight and victory of the Son of God) over " *das krank Fleisch* " (weak / sick flesh) of man . Gardiner compares it to a trio sonata movement . He terms the last aria " a berceuse of pure enchantment " and compares it to the " echo aria " from part IV of Bach 's *Christmas Oratorio* . The text " *Auch mit gedämpften , schwachen Stimmen* " (Also with muted , weak voices) is illustrated by a muted (con

sordino) solo violin . The closing choral , the final stanza of Luther 's hymn , " Lob sei Gott dem Vater ton " (Praise be to God , the Father) is a four @-@ part setting .

= = 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 or a choir of one voice per part (OVPP) by green background .