

# J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 26

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NBA I/27; BC A162

24. S. after Trinity (BWV 60, 26)

\*Col. 1:9-14 (Paul's prayer for the Colossians)

\*Mt. 9:18-26 (Jesus raises Jairus's daughter from the dead; on the way, he heals the woman who touched his garment)

Librettist: Unknown

FP: 19 November 1724 (St. Thomas): part of the chorale cantata cycle.

Form: Chorus/Fantasia - Aria (T) - Recit (A) - Aria (B) - Recit (S) - Chorale  
 Unusually, the libretto does not relate much to the Gospel reading, other than the fact that Jairus's daughter was young when she died. This facet of the Gospel reading may have resonated with Bach because of his own losses, especially the death of his young wife in 1720 (see record of deaths opposite). The cantata is based on the 13-stanza hymn by Melchior [Michael] Frank (1652), "whose first and last verses were adopted literally in the outer movements, whereas the remainder were so paraphrased by the anonymous librettist that a large number of hymn verses could be condensed into only a few cantata movements." See Dürr/Jones, "The Cantatas of J. S. Bach," 636. The hymn tune composer was Johann Crüger (1661). See "Bach's Musical Universe," 129.

J.S. Bach

## Cantata No. 26

### Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig

In addition to losing both parents when he was a young boy, Bach experienced much death later in life.

1713, 23 February: newborn twin son

1713, 15 March: newborn twin daughter

1719, 28 September: 1-year-old son

1720, July: wife

1726, 29 June: 3.5-year-old daughter

1727, 1 November: newborn son

1728, 21 September: 3.5-year-old son

1730, 4 January: newborn daughter

1732, 31 August: 1.5-year-old daughter

1733, 25 April: 4.5-year-old daughter

1733, 6 November: newborn son

(Chorale V. 1)

•Transience of life is like a mist that disappears (26/1).

### 1. Coro

26/1.

1. Fl/Ob I, Ob II, Ob III

Instrumentation:

Corno  
 Corno  
 Flauto traverso  
 Ob I, II, III  
 Vln I, II  
 Vla  
 SATB  
 Continuo, Organo

Corno  
 Fl. trav.  
 Ob. I, II, III  
 Viol. solo  
 Viol. I, II  
 Va.  
 Continuo

**Tutti** I-V progression, derived from chorale opening, forms basis for opening vocal motive.

A minor

Text painting: "Rapid ascending scalar figure derived from the text "Ach, wie flüchtig ist der Menschen Leben" (Ah, how fleeting is human life).

3

A minor

5

A7

D minor

7

G7

C major

A minor

G7

Sequentially descending bass figure, mm. 9-13, perhaps depicts descent to grave (compare mm. 57-60 and ascending counterpart in mm. 62-63).

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10

Fl. Ob. Viol. Va.

A minor G7 C major E7 A minor (C major) G7 G# dim.7

Tonal ambiguity (C major vs. A minor)...

13

Archi Fl. Ob.

G# dim.7 E7 A minor

For a word-for-word translation, see Unger, "Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts."

Soprano (col Corno)

Ach wie flüch - - - tig,  
 Ah! how wea - - - ry,  
 Om - - - bre vai - - - ne,

Alto

Ach wie flüchtig,  
 I-V chordal interjection, related to Ritornello opening

ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
 ah! how wea - ry, ah! how

1. Unison statement based on 1st line of chorale, at cadence.

Ach wie flüchtig,  
 Ah! how wea - ry,  
 Om bre vai - ne,

ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
 ah! how wea - ry, ah! how  
 om bre vai - ne, fu - gi -

Basso

Ach wie flüchtig,  
 Ah! how wea - ry,  
 Om bre vai - ne,

ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
 ah! how wea - ry, ah! how  
 om bre vai - ne, fu - gi -

16

Archi Fl. Ob. Viol.

A minor

ach wie  
ah! how  
fu - - - gi - - -

nich - tig,  
fleet - ing,  
ti - ve,

ach wie nichtig,  
ah! how fleet.ing,  
fu - gi - ti - ve,

nich .tig,  
fleet - ing,  
ti .ve,

ach wie nichtig,  
ah! how fleet.ing,  
fu - gi - ti - ve,

nich - tig,  
fleet - ing,  
ti .ve,

ach wie nichtig,  
ah! how fleet.ing,  
fu - gi - ti - ve,

19

A minor G major

nich - - - - - tig  
fleet - - - - - ing,  
ti - - - - - ve,

ach wie flüch.tig, ach wie nicht - tig,  
ah! how wea - ry, ah! how fleet - ing,  
2. Unison statement based on 1st line of chorale, at cadence.

ach wie flüch.tig, ach wie nicht - tig,  
ah! how wea - ry, ah! how fleet - ing,  
om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi - ti - ve,

ach wie flüch.tig, ach wie nicht - tig,  
ah! how wea - ry, ah! how fleet - ing,  
om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi - ti - ve,

22

C major

ist der Men - - - schen  
is the life we  
telle est no - - - tre

ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
ah! how wea - ry, om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi -

Text painting: Rising series of entries suggests the life dissipating like mist, as referenced in the upcoming text.

ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
ah! how wea - ry, om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi -

Cadenential statement in imitation before final unison statement.

ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nich - tig, ach wie nich - tig,  
ah! how wea - ry, ah! how fleet - ing, ah! how fleet - ing  
om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi - ti - ve, fu - gi - ti - ve,

24

C major

E7 A minor

Le - - - - - ben!  
cher - - - - - ish!  
vi - - - - - e!

nich - tig ist der Men - schen Le - - - - - ben, ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
fleet - ing is the life we cher - - - - - ish! ah! how wea - ry, ah! how  
- ti - ve, telle est no - tre vi - - - - - e,

3. Unison statement based on 1st line of chorale, at cadence.

nich - tig ist der Men - schen Le - - - - - ben, ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
fleet - ing is the life we cher - - - - - ish! ah! how wea - ry, ah! how  
ti - ve, telle est no - tre vi - - - - - e, om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi -

ist der Men - schen Le - - - - - ben, ach wie flüchtig, ach wie  
is the life we cher - - - - - ish! ah! how wea - ry, ah! how  
telle est no - tre vi - - - - - e, om - bre vai - ne, fu - gi -

27

A minor

nich.tig!  
fleet.ing!  
ti - ve!

nich.tig!  
fleet.ing!  
ti - ve!

nich.tig!  
fleet.ing!  
ti - ve!

29

A minor

**A**

Apparent allusion to Wisdom (Apocrypha) 2:4: "...Our life will pass away like the traces of a cloud, and be scattered like mist that is chased by the rays of the sun and overcome by its heat."

Wie ein Ne. .bel  
As a va. .pour  
Comme un brouil. lard

Wie ein Ne. .bel  
As a va. .pour  
Comme un brouil. lard

Wie ein Ne. .bel  
As a va. .pour  
Comme un brouil. lard

Wie ein Ne. .bel  
As a va. .pour  
Comme un brouil. lard

**A**

32

A minor

A major

A7

Ne - - - bel bald ent - - - -  
 va - - - - pour it ap - - - -  
 brouil - - - lard naît sur

bald ent - ste - het und auch wie - der bald ver - ge - het  
 it ap - pear - eth, and as swift - ly dis - ap - pear - eth,  
 naît sur l'heu - re, et sur l'heu - re se dis - si - pe,

bald ent - ste - het und auch wie - der bald ver - ge - het  
 it ap - pear - eth, and as swift - ly dis - ap - pear - eth,  
 naît sur l'heu - re, et sur l'heu - re se dis - si - pe,

bald ent - ste - het und auch wie - der bald ver - ge - het  
 it ap - pear - eth, and as swift - ly dis - ap - pear - eth,  
 naît sur l'heu - re, et sur l'heu - re se dis - si - pe,

34

D minor

ste - - - - het,  
 pear - - - - eth,  
 l'heu - - - - re,

wie ein Ne - bel bald ent - ste - het,  
 as a va - pour it ap - pear eth,  
 4. Unison statement based on 1st line of chorale, at cadence.

wie ein Ne - bel bald ent - ste het,  
 as a va - pour it ap - pear eth,  
 comme un brouillard naît sur l'heu - re,

wie ein Ne - bel bald ent - ste - het,  
 as a va - pour it ap - pear eth,  
 comme un brouillard naît sur l'heu - re,

36

D minor

D minor

6

und auch wie - - - - der  
*and as swift - - - - ly*  
 et sur l'heu - - - - re

wie ein Ne. bel bald ent - ste. het und auch  
*as a va. pour it ap - pear - eth, and as*  
 comme un brouil.lard naît sur l'heu - re, et sur

wie ein Ne. bel bald ent - ste. het und auch  
*as a va. pour it ap - pear - eth, and as*  
 comme un brouil.lard naît sur l'heu - re, et sur

wie ein Ne. bel bald ent - ste. het und auch  
*as a va. pour it ap - pear - eth, and as*  
 comme un brouil.lard naît sur l'heu - re, et sur

39

G7 C major C7

bald ver. - - - - ge - - - - het,  
*dis - - - - ap - - - - pear - - - - eth;*  
 se dis. - - - - si - - - - pe,

wie - der bald ver. ge. het, und auch wie - der bald ver. ge. het,  
*swift. ly dis. ap. pear. eth, and as swift. ly dis. ap. pear. eth;*  
 l'heu. re se dis. si. pe,

wie - der bald ver. ge. het, und auch wie - der bald ver. ge. het,  
*swift. ly dis. ap. pear. eth, and as swift. ly dis. ap. pear. eth;*  
 l'heu. re se dis. si. pe, et sur l'heu. re se dis. si. pe,

wie - der bald ver. ge. het, und auch wie - der bald ver. ge. het,  
*swift. ly dis. ap. pear. eth, and as swift. ly dis. ap. pear. eth;*  
 l'heu. re se dis. si. pe, et sur l'heu. re se dis. si. pe,

41

F major G7 C major C major

5. Unison statement based on 1st line of chorale, at cadence.

44

so ist un-ser Le-ben,  
when, and where, no mor-tal  
tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent,

so, when, tels, so, where, tels, so ist un-ser Le-ben,  
when and where, no mor-tal know-eth,  
tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent,

so, when, tels, so, where, tels, so ist un-ser Le-ben,  
when and where, no mor-tal know-eth,  
tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent,

so, when, tels, so, where, tels, so ist un-ser Le-ben,  
when and where, no mor-tal know-eth,  
tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent,

E7 A minor A minor

47

Le-ben, se-het!  
mor-tal know-eth!  
hé-las, s'é-cou-lent!

se-het, un-ser Le-ben, se-het, so ist un-ser Le-ben, se-het!  
know-eth, when and where, no mor-tal know-eth, when and where, no mor-tal know-eth!  
hé-las, tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent, tels nos jours, hé-las, s'é-cou-lent!

se-het, un-ser Le-ben, se-het, so ist un-ser Le-ben, se-het!  
know-eth, when and where, no mor-tal know-eth, when and where, no mor-tal know-eth!  
hé-las, tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent, tels nos jours, hé-las, s'é-cou-lent!

se-het, un-ser Le-ben, se-het, so ist un-ser Le-ben, se-het!  
know-eth, when and where, no mor-tal know-eth, when and where, no mor-tal know-eth!  
hé-las, tels nos jours s'é-cou-lent, tels nos jours, hé-las, s'é-cou-lent!

Ritornello

A minor A minor



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Sequentially descending bass figure, mm. 57-60, perhaps depicts descent to grave (compare mm. 9-13 and ascending counterpart in mm. 62-63).

Sequentially ascending bass figure, mm. 62-63, perhaps depicts ascent after death (compare descending counterparts in mm. 9-12 and 57-60).

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## 26/2. 2. Aria (Based on Chorale Vs. 2)

• Time passes like a rushing stream of water (26/2).

Regarding demanding flute parts in Bach's cantatas of 1724, see side note.



Fl. trav.  
Viol. solo  
Continuo

Text painting: Obligato of "bubbling" 16th notes played by solo flute (doubled periodically by solo violin as if providing an echo) depicts the rushing water referenced in the singer's coming melisma.

Pulsing bass line associated with later text: "so the days of our life hasten" (see also mm. 17-19, 28-30, 32-33, 40-43, 69-71, 73-76, 79-81, 98-99). Perhaps the pulsing line depicts rising water or the inexorable passage of time.

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

Pulsing bass line: Mm. 8-11, 17-19, 28-30, 32-33, 40-43, 69-71, 73-76, 79-81, 98-99. For possible significance, see note at m. 8.

so schnell ein rau - schend  
 as swift as rush - ing  
 tor - rent qui rou - les

20

*piano*

C major C major

Text painting: Downward scurrying melisma now on word "hasten."

Was - serschießt, so ei -  
 wa - ters flow, so hast -  
 vers la mer, nos jours

24

C major (G major) D7

- - - len un - sers Le - bens Ta - - - ge, un - sers Le - bens  
 - - - ens life's short jour - ney on - - - wards, life's short jour - ney  
 res - semblent à - - - tes on - - - des, res - semblent à - - - tes

28

G major C major D7 G major

Pulsing bass line: Mm. 8-11, 17-19, 28-30, 32-33, 40-43, 69-71, 73-76, 79-81, 98-99. For possible significance, see note at m. 8.

Ta - - - ge, un - sers Le - bens  
 on - - - wards life's short jour - ney  
 on - - - des, à - - - tes

32

G major D7

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**B**

Ta - ge.  
on - wards.  
on - des.

Fl. Viol. *forte*

Vln pauses at times, then provides a kind of echo.

Ritornello

G major

40

C major D7 G major

Pulsing bass line: Mm. 8-11, 17-19, 28-30, 32-33, 40-43, 69-71, 73-76, 79-81, 98-99. For possible significance, see note at m. 8.

44

So schnell, so schnell,  
As swift, as swift,  
Tor - rent, tor - rent,

G7 C major A7

G major

48

so schnell ein rau - schend  
as swift as rus - ing  
tor - rent qui rou - les

Cross relation

D minor G7 C major

Continuo bass outlines first notes of the chorale "Herzlich tut mich verlangen," which creates the cross relation.

**C** Text painting: Melisma on "hasten."

52

Was ser schießt, so ei - - -  
 wa ters flow, so hast - - -  
 vers la mer, nos jours

C major

55

- - len un sers Le bens Ta ge, so ei - - -  
 - - ens life's short jour ney on wards so hast - - -  
 res sem blent à tes on des, nos jours

C major

58

- - - - - len un sers Le bens  
 - - - - - ens life's short jour ney  
 res sem blent à tes

61

Ta ge, so schnell, so schnell, so schnell ein rau - - -  
 on - - - wards, as swift, as swift as rush - - -  
 on des, tor.rent, tor - - - rent, tor.rent qui rou - - -

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Florid passages for singer get even more demanding.

64

schend Was ser schießt, so ei  
 ing wa ters flow, so hast  
 les vers la mer, nos jours

C major

67

len  
 ens  
 res

C major

70

un sers Le bens Ta ge, un sers Le bens  
 life's short jour ney on wards, life's short jour ney  
 sem blent à tes on des, res semblent, à tes

C major

Pulsing bass line: Mm. 8-11, 17-19, 28-30, 32-33, 40-43, 69-71, 73-76, 79-81, 98-99. For possible significance, see note at m. 8.

73

Ta ge,  
 on wards  
 on des,

G7 C major

**D**

77

un - sers Le - bens Ta - - ge.  
*life's short journey on - - wards.*  
 ressemblent à - - tes on - - des.

C major C7 F major G7

Pulsing bass line: See above.

81

Die Zeit ver - geht, die  
*The days de - part be -*  
 Le temps s'en - fuit, les

C major C major (Fine) A minor

Text painting: Droplet figures in voice and instruments  
 Literal text painting: Rests between 8ths for "parting into droplets."

85

Stun - den ei - - - - len, wie sich die Trop - fen  
*yond re - call - - - - ing, as wa - ter from the*  
 heu - res pas - - - - sent, les gout - tes ain - si

G major G7 C major F# half-dim.7 B7

Flute Vln

Text painting: Harmonic shift for sudden rainfall.  
 Text painting: Melisma for "all."

88

plötzlich tei - - - - len, wenn al - -  
*mountains fall - - - - ing, is lost*  
 tombent et se dis - per - - - - sent, quand l'eau

E minor B7 E minor E minor

Flute Vln

Parallel 6ths add sweetness.

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Text painting: Descending lines for "gushing into the abyss," finishing with continuo low E.

**E**

les in den Ab - - - grund schießt.  
with in the lake be - low.  
s'en gouf fre dans l'a - bî - - me.

92

E minor

Parallel 3rds add sweetness.

95

E minor

98

B7

Pulsing bass line: Mm. 8-11, 17-19, 28-30, 32-33, 40-43, 69-71, 73-76, 79-81, 98-99. For possible significance, see note at m. 8.

**F**

Die Zeit ver - geht,  
The days de - part  
Le temps s'en - fuit,

101

E minor E minor E minor E7



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Text painting: Ascending scales for "time passes, the hours hasten."

104

die Stun - den ei - - - len, wie  
 be - yond re - call - - - ing, as  
 les heu - res pas - - - sent, les

A minor

107

sich die Trop-fen plötz-lich tei- - - len, wie  
 wa-ter from the moun-tains fall- - - ing, as  
 gout-tes ain-si tom-bent et se dis-per- - - sent, quand l'eau

Vln Flute FI Vln

Droplet figures The droplets now come faster.

A minor A minor G7

In the references to "parting droplets" and "gushing into the abyss" Martin Petzold sees an allusion to the parting of the Red Sea. See "Bach Kommentar" 1:664-65 (questionable).

110

len, wenn al- - - ing, is lost - - - sent, quand l'eau

Fast droplets

C major E7 A minor A minor

Text painting: "Gushing into the abyss."

114

les in den Ab- - - grund schießt. - - -  
 with in the lake be - low. - - -  
 s'en gouf fre dans l'a - bi - - me.

E7 A minor dal segno

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(Based on Chorale Vv. 3-9: The librettist took one human possession or attainment from each of the 7 chorale stanzas (see side note.) • Time brings joy, beauty, learning, etc. to an end (26/3).

## Secco 3. Recitativo

Alto

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 6 mm.

CBAG FE D B-flat

Die Freu - - - - - de wird zur Traurigkeit, die  
 Our joy - - - - - is turned to mourning, and  
 La joi - - - - - e devient tris-tesse, la

Text painting: Melisma of 32nd notes in C major for "joy" followed by C# dim. 7th chord for "sadness."

6 C major 7b 5 C# dim.7

Text painting: Descending line to D minor for "falling like a flower."

C# E-flat

Schön - heit fällt als ei - ne Blu - me, die größ - te Stär - ke wird ge - schwächt, es  
 beau - ty, fad - eth as a flow'r; the strong, be - come as lit - tle children, good  
 beau - té tom - be comme une fleur, la for - ce s'af - fai - blit et meurt, for -

Text painting: Movement to C minor for "weakened."

6 4 2 A7 3 D minor 6 4 2 G7 b C minor

F#

G#

än - dert sich das Glück - ke mit der Zeit, bald ist es aus mit Ehr und Ruh - me, die  
 for - tune and suc - cess must have an end, e'en so it is with fame and hon - our, with  
 tu - ne, tes fa - veurs ne sont qu'un mot, honneur et gloi - re que men - son - ge: la

Text painting: G# diminished 7th chord for "change of fortune."

6 4 2 D7 G# dim.7 6 5 E7 5 3 A minor

Wis - senschaft, und was ein Mensche dichtet, wird endlich durch das Grab vernichtet.  
 know - ledge, and all of mans in - vention. All, all with in the grave must perish.  
 science hu - maine, la pensée al - tiè - re dans l'ombre de la mort s'é - teignent.

6 4 2 B7 7b 5 D# dim.7 5 E minor 6b 4 2 F major B7 7b 5 A# diim.7 # E minor

Text painting: Circuitous harmonic progression with diminished 7th chords for the perishing of human ambitions and accomplishments.

in Em (1-16)  
 Lines 1&2 (17-30)+(31-36)  
 Rit (37-44)  
 Lines 2-5 (45-63)  
 Rit in Em (64-79)  
 Lines 1&2 (80-93)+(94-103) A (mm. 1-16+17-30).  
 Rit in Em (1-16)



26/4. Ritornello  
 Ob I, II, III, Continuo

Concerning the significance of E minor in the tonal scheme of the cantata, see side note.

E minor E minor

Portion of "Totentanz" by Bernt Notke (ca. 1460) in St. Mary's Church, Lübeck (restored in 1942 air raid); representatives of all ages and ranks have death as their final destiny.

Bach's choice of instrumentation (3 oboes) reflects the day's Gospel reading in which Jesus goes to the house of Jairus, a synagogue ruler, to heal his daughter. Upon arriving, Jesus encounters pipers ("Pfeiffer") along with a crowd lamenting the death of the little girl. See Matthew 9:23. Parallel accounts identifying the ruler as Jairus are found in Mark 5:21-42 and Luke 8:41-56. See side note for more.

Ritornello (mm. 1-16) repeated in middle of movement (mm. 64-79) and at end (mm. 1-16 repeated).

D major D7 G major A major B major G major

D7 G# dim. A major B major E minor

Biblical allusion (Matthew 6:19-21): "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In the libretto this sentiment is a paraphrase of Luther's exegesis of the first commandment in the Larger Catechism (see side note).

**Basso** Lines 1-2 of the poem.

The bass voice is often used either as Vox Christe, Vox Dei, or as the pastoral voice of authority.

An ir - di - sche Schät - ze das Her - ze zu hän - gen ist  
 Set not thy - heart on the things of the world, for -  
 Aux biens de la ter - re, fra - gi - les ri - ches - ses, c'est

The bass singer's line appears to be derived from the first phrase of the closing chorale.

*piano*

(Fine) E minor  
 (col oct. bassa ad lib.) E minor

"Threatening" figure is associated with the singer's warning about being led astray.

Dynamic contrast in instruments for rhetorical effect.

"Seduction of the foolish world" alludes to Revelation 12:9: "The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.... (Luther 1545 Bible: "der die gantze Welt verführet")"

ei - ne Ver - füh - rung der tö - rich - ten Welt, ist ei - ne Ver - füh - rung,  
 vain are its pleas - ures and fleet - ing its joys, for vain are its pleas - ures,  
 pu - re fo - li - e d'at - ta - cher son coeur, c'est pu - re fo - li - e,

*forte* *forte*

Voice still soft

For a word-for-word translation, see Unger, "Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts." E minor E7

Bach repeats the vocal line with contrasting dynamics to reinforce the warning (mm. 17-21 = mm. 25-29) but varies the accompaniment, using motives from the ritornello in both voice and accompanying parts.

ist ei - ne Ver - füh - rung. An ir - di - sche Schät - ze das  
for. vain are its pleas - ures. Set not thy - heart on the  
c'est pu - re fo - li - e. Aux biens de la ter - re fra -

22

A minor D major D7 G major

piano

Voice still soft; upper instruments suddenly loud, emphasizing the seriousness of the warning.

Her - ze zu hän - gen ist ei - ne Ver - füh - rung der tö - rich - ten Welt, ist  
things of the world, for - vain are its pleas - ures and fleet - ing its joys, for  
gi - les ri - ches - ses, c'est pu - re fo - li - e d'at - ta - cher son coeur, c'est

26

E minor E minor

forte

Extension (mm. 31-36). Though repeating the foregoing text, the music departs from previous material, perhaps to depict the "being led astray" referenced in the text.

ei - ne Ver - füh - rung, ist ei - ne Ver - füh - rung der  
vain are its pleas - ures, for vain are its pleas - ures and  
pu - re fo - li - e, c'est pu - re fo - li - e, d'at -

29

E7 A minor F#7

forte piano

Chromatic neighbor tones.

Text painting: Chromatic neighbor tones for "setting the heart on earthly treasures is a seduction of the foolish world."

In this extension, Bach uses motives from the ritornello in various ways, sometimes composing new material.

tö - rich - ten Welt. An ir - di - sche Schät - ze das Her - ze zu hän - gen ist  
fleet - ing its joys. Set not thy - heart on the things of the world, for -  
ta - cher son coeur. Aux biens de la ter - re, fra - gi - les ri - ches - ses, c'est

32

B minor

35

ei - ne Ver - fñh - rung der tö - rich - ten Welt.  
*vain are its pleas - ures and fleet - ing its - joys.*  
 pu - re fo - li - e d'at - ta - cher son coeur.

Chromatic harmonic progression depicts the deceptiveness of earthly goals and treasures.  
 Ritornello (mm. 37-44)

*forte*

B minor E major F# major G7 E minor  
 C# dim. D major

39

A7 D# dim. E major F# major B minor

B. Lines 3-5 of the poem (mm. 45-63).

43

Wie leicht - lich ent - ste - hen ver -  
*By world - ly am - bi - tion thy*  
 La flam - me per - fi - de sur -

*piano*

B minor E# dim.7

Text painting: Long scalar passage of 16th notes in continuo for "torrents."

46

zeh - ren - de Glu - ten, wie rau - schen und rei - ßen die  
*soul is en - dan - gered, as floods, in the strength and the*  
 prend ta de - meu - re, les flots en - fu - ri - e - dé -

*forte* *piano*

C# major F# minor D# dim.7

48

wal - len - den Flu - ten, bis al - les zer - schmet -  
 might of their fu - ry, de - stroy - ing and rend -  
 bor - dent et gron - dent, tout tom - be s'ef - fon -

*forte* *piano*

B7 E minor E minor

50

tert in - ing, sweep - dre, tout

D7 G major

53

Trüm - mer zer - fällt. Wie  
 all things be - fore them. By  
 croule à l'in - stant. La

*forte*

Text painting: oboes play descending triads to depict disintegrating wreckage.

Continuation of the descending scalar figure.

G major G major

56

leicht - lich ent - ste - hen ver - zeh - ren - de Glu - ten, wie  
 world - ly am - bi - tion thy soul is en - dan - gered, as  
 flam - me per - fi - de sur - prend ta de - meu - re, les

Oboes play descending figure in unison, continued by continuo.

E7

58

rau - schen und rei - ßen die wal - len - den Flu - ten, bis  
*floods, in the strength and the might of their fu - ry, de -*  
 flots en - fu - ri - e dé - bor - dent et gron - dent, tout

A minor F#7

Text painting: Vocal melisma connects to descending scale in continuo at the word "shattered," in parallel 6ths with continuo.

61

al - les zer - schmet - tert in Trüm - mer zer -  
*stroy - ing and rend - ing, sweep all things be -*  
 tem - be, s'ef - fon - dre, tout croule à l'in -

62

*piano*

63

B minor F#7 B minor

**D** A (mm. 64-79+80-93). This repeats mm. 1-30.

64

fällt.  
*fore them.*  
 stant.

65

*forte* Ritornello = mm. 1-16.

66

67

68

E minor E7 A minor D major D7 G major

72

A major B major G major D7 G# dim. A major B major E minor

77

**E**

An ir-di-sche Schät-ze das  
 Set not thy-heart on the  
 Aux biens de la ter-re, fra-

Repeat of mm. 17-30.

*piano*

E minor E minor  
*col octave bassa ad lib.*

81

Her-ze zu hän-gen ist ei-ne Ver-füh-rung der tö-richten Welt, ist  
*things of the world, for vain are its pleas-ures and fleet-ing its-joys, for*  
 gi-les ri-ches-ses, c'est pu-re fo-li-e d'at-ta-cher son coeur, c'est

*forte*

Threatening figure for warning about being led astray returns.

84

ei-ne Ver-füh-rung, ist ei-ne Ver-füh-rung. An  
*vain are its pleas-ures, for vain are its pleas-ures. Set*  
 pu-re fo-li-e, c'est pu-re fo-li-e. Aux

*piano*

E minor E7 D major D7 G major



88

ir . di . sche Schät . ze das Her . ze zu hän . gen ist ei . ne Ver . fuh . rung der  
 not thy heart on the things of the world, for vain are its pleas . ures and  
 biens de la ter . re, fra . gi . les ri . ches . ses, c'est pu . re fo . li . e d'at .

E minor  
 Extension (mm. 94-103). Music departs from previous material, perhaps to depict the "being led astray" referenced in the text.

91

tö . rich . ten Welt, ist ei . ne Ver . fuh . rung, ist ei . ne Ver . fuh . rung,  
 fleet . ing its joys, for vain are its pleas . ures, for vain are its pleas . ures,  
 ta . cher son coeur, c'est pu . re fo . li . e, c'est pu . re fo . li . e,

*forte*

E minor E7 A minor D minor D7

Text painting: Chromaticism for "being led astray" by foolish world."

95

ist ei . ne Ver . fuh . rung der tö . rich . ten Welt, der tö .  
 for vain are its pleas . ures and fleet . ing its joys, and fleet .  
 c'est pu . re fo . li . e d'at . ta . cher son coeur, d'at . ta .

G major D# dim.7 E minor D7 G# dim.

99

- rich . ten Welt, der tö . - rich . ten Welt.  
 - ing its joys, and fleet . - ing its joys.  
 - cher son coeur, d'at . ta . - cher son coeur.

A major D# dim.7 E minor B major

**dal segno**  
 E minor



J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 26

The closing chorale serves its usual catechismal function.

6. Choral (Vs. 13.)

•Transience of the earthly; whoever fears God abides (26/6).

**Sopr.**  
+Corno  
Fl, Ob I, II  
Vln I

**Alto**  
+Ob III  
Vln II

**Ten.**  
+Vla

**Basso**  
+Continuo

Corno  
Fl. trav.  
Ob. I, II, III  
Viol. solo  
Viol. I, II  
Va.  
Continuo

Ach wie flüch-tig, ach wie nich-tig sind der Men-schen  
Ah! how wea-ry, Ah! how fleet-ing is the life-we-  
Om-bre vai-ne, fu-gi-ti-ve, telle est-no-tre-

A minor A minor A minor C major

The active 8th-note lines reflect the fleetingness of human affairs referenced in the text (reminiscent of the rhythmic motion in earlier movements).

Sa-chen! Al-les, al-les, was wir se-hen, das muß fal-len  
cher-ish! Days of la-bour, days of sor-row; here to-day, and  
vi-e! Tout est-son-ge, rien n'est sta-ble, tout sur ter-re

A major A major D major G major

und ver-ge-hen; wer Gott fürcht't, bleibt e-wig ste-hen.  
gone to-mor-row, God a-lone can nev-er per-ish.  
meurt et pas-se; l'hom-me jus-te seul de-meu-re.

C major F major A major A major