

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 32

Form: Aria (S) - Recit (B) - Aria (B) - Duet (S/B) - Chorale
 The cantata is in symmetrical form: two outer framing movements present prayers by the believing soul. Between these movements are two recitative-aria pairs. The first pair (nos. 2 & 3) presents the voice of Jesus, the second pair (nos. 4 & 5) presents dialogues between Jesus and the believing soul.

J.S. Bach

Cantata No. 32

Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen

"Concerto in Dialogo" See side note.

The work opens with a striking solo aria for soprano, with oboe obbligato, strings, and continuo (Dürr/Jones, 190: "the overall expression arises of a concerto slow movement"). To an accompaniment of soft, detached chords in the strings, the oboe spins "broadly sweeping, richly embellished melodic arches" of 16th and 32nd notes, highly chromatic, which the singer takes up, expressing the tender yearning of the questioning text.

Aria.

32/1. Adagio. (♩ = 56.) • Voice of believing soul: Where shall I find thee, Jesus? (32/1).

Instrumentation:
 Ob
 Vln I, II
 Vla
 SATB
 Continuo, Organo

Clarinets taken up by the soprano

Pianoforte.

The text of the aria is in chiasmic rhyme scheme (ABC-CBA). Bach sets it in 3 groups, with many word repetitions: AB-CC-BA. He thus highlights the middle section (the "crux" of the matter), which presents the rhetorical question (marked with a phrygian cadence) of whether communion with Jesus can be lost.

Long, rising line suggests unremitting yearning.

E minor Strings play unvarying 3-note figure marked "piano e spiccato," producing a sense of resigned melancholy.

A7

Rising lines suggests yearning.

Soprano.

Text lines 1 & 2.
 Rhyme: A-B

Lieb - - - ster Je - - - su, lieb - - - ster

Oboe imitates voice concertato-like.

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12. Word painting: Sighing figures and chromaticism used to depict "mein Verlangen" (my desire/longing). 14.

Je - su, mein Ver - langen, mein Ver - lan - gen, sa - ge mir, wo find' ich dich? Wo,

E minor A7 D major D# dim.7 E minor phrygian cadence for question

Biblical allusion to Song of Solomon 3:1 [Bride]: "I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer."

15.

wo? Wo find' ich dich? Lieb - - - ster

D# dim.7 B7 E minor A7 D major F# major F#7

Chromaticism used to depict mein "Verlangen" (my longing).

17. 19.

Je - su, mein Ver - lan - gen, mein Ver - lan - gen, sa - ge mir, wo find' ich dich? Lieb.

Right hand is editorial realization.

B minor B minor E7 A major C# minor A# dim.7 E minor B minor F#7

20.

- - - ster Je - su, mein Ver - lan - gen, liebster Je - su, mein Ver -

Ob plays halting, rising figure (see full score).

B7 E7 A major A7 D major E7 D# dim.7 (F#7) A major E minor

cresc.

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22. 24.

langen, sage mir, wofind'ich dich? Wofind' ich dich? Soll ich

Text lines 3 & 4. Rhyme: C-C.

B minor E# dim.7 F# major B minor B7 E minor E minor E minor B minor B minor

25.

dich so bald ver - lie - ren, sobald, so bald, und nicht fer - ner bei mir

Rising line reinforces idea of yearning.

E# dim.7 C#7 F# minor A minor B7 E major E# dim.7 F# minor B minor

Phrygian cadence for question.

27. NBA: spüren 29.

föh - ren, soll ich dich so - bald ver - lie - ren und nicht

C# major F# major F#7 B major B7 E major E7 A minor

30.

fer - ner - bei mir föhren, soll ich dich so bald ver - lie - ren, so bald, sobald ver.

NBA: spüren Long rising lines by the oboe and singer.

cresc.

(G7) C major C7 A7 D minor G7 E minor C# dim.7 D major D# dim.7

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32.

 lie - ren und nicht fer - ner bei mir **füh - ren**, nicht fer - ner
 NBA: spüren
 E minor E minor C# dim.7 D minor G# dim.7 A minor D# dim.7 E major A minor A7 D minor
 dim.

34.

 bei mir **füh - ren?** Ach! mein Hort, er - freu - -
 NBA: spüren
 Text lines 5 & 6.
 Rhyme: B-A
 B-flat major D minor E7 A minor A minor D7
 D minor

36.

 e mich, lass dich höchst vergnügt um - fan - - gen, lass dich höchst ver.
 Text painting: Melisma for "gladden," the oboe responding with descending 32nds.
 G major D7

38.

 e mich, lass dich höchst vergnügt um - fan - - gen, lass dich höchst ver.
 Oboe plays halting, rising figure (see full score).
 B7 E minor E minor A7

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Text painting: Melisma for "embrace."

Chromatic inflection for "ach."

40.

gnügt um - fan - - - gen; ach! mein Hort, er - freu - -

D major D# dim.7 E minor B7 B minor E major E7 (E7) E7

Annotations: Red arrows indicate melisma and chromatic inflection. Yellow circles highlight notes in the piano accompaniment.

42.

- e mich, lass dich höchst vergnügt um -

A minor D7 G major (A7) D major A major B7

Annotations: Red arrows indicate melisma and chromatic inflection.

44.

fan - - - gen, höchst vergnügt um - fan - -

crese. E7 F major D# dim.7 B7 E minor

Annotations: Red arrows indicate melisma and chromatic inflection.

46.

gen!

Ritornello E minor D7 G major (A7) D major G# dim.7 A minor (B7)

Annotations: Red arrows indicate melisma and chromatic inflection.

48.

A# dim.7 B major E minor E7 A minor F major A minor D# dim.7 E minor B7 E major

(deceptive cadence)

Annotations: Red arrows indicate melisma and chromatic inflection.

Despite the fact that Jesus is still a child in the biblical account, the bass answers as the Vox Christi, singing Jesus' words from the day's Gospel reading (biblical dictum), but changed to second person singular (instead of plural).

Secco **Recitativo.**
32/2. **Basso.**

•Vox Christi: Why did you seek me? I am found in my Father's house Lk. 2:49 (32/2).

Although Jesus is only 12 years old in the Gospel reading, it was liturgical tradition to give the vox Christi to the bass voice. Bach provides emphasis to the question by repeating the first 2 words with an upward-inflected leap, almost as if the singer is scolding.

1.

Was ist's? was ist's, dass ihr mich ge - suchet? Weisst du nicht, dass ich sein muss in

B minor iv6 V
Phrygian cadence for question

3.

dem, in dem, das mei - nes Va - ters ist?

Choosing the low octave adds emphasis (compare low held note on "Stätte" in m. 53 of the following aria.)

F#7 B minor A# dim.7 B minor B minor

In the bass aria that follows, the singer (in the voice of Christ) elaborates on his previous statement: a downcast soul can find Jesus in his Father's house. Bach provides a lengthy da capo minuet, in which the singer is accompanied by a solo violin playing an intricate, embellishing obbligato, characterized by triplets. The use of triple meter and triplets suggest the Trinity.

The solo violin plays a theme derived from the opening vocal motto. Periodic phrases and minuet rhythms give Jesus' words the manner of a courtier wooing the soul.

32/3. (Lento $\text{♩} = 104$.)

1. **Aria.**

Ritornello *mf* G major

mf G major

Triple stops for Vln.

G major A7 E7

For expressive purpose, Bach chooses not the relative major of B minor but a 6th above. See side note.)

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.

7.

Triple stops for Vln.

A minor D7 G major A7 D major

12. Unexpected phrase division concludes the ritornello.

D major D major

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Basso.

17. Hier, in meines Va - ters Stät - te,

G major

The solo violin and (for a bit), the continuo imitate the Vox Christi; the voice/violin duet perhaps suggesting the meeting of the soul with Jesus. The 3-fold imitation perhaps suggests the involvement of all three members of the Trinity in the "unio mystica."

23. hier, in meines Va - ters Stät - te,

G major

The 3-fold repetition (in triple meter) of a swaying, 2-measure unit suggests the comfort of a cradle song (more below).

29. find't mich ein be - trüb - ter Geist, hier, in

Word painting: Harmonic clashes, minor mode, and descending chromatic scale for "downcast."

The voice of Christ says the down-cast soul will find him in his Father's house and thereby find comfort.

Triple stops for Vln.

(E7) A minor D7 G major A7 D major

The voice of Christ says the down-cast soul will find him in his Father's house and thereby find comfort.

The 3-fold structural repetition and triplets may symbolize the Trinity, expanding Jesus' statement about his identity to include Father, Son, and the Spirit, whom Jesus called the "Comforter," whom he would send after his death to dwell within the believer (John 14). The "filioque clause" in the Nicene Creed, which resulted from the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western Church in 1054, specifies that the Spirit "proceeds from Father and Son." Thus, the ascending and descending scales in the violin (often triplets) may represent the comforting, energizing activity of the Holy Spirit. Significantly, the voice never has the triplets.

34. mei - nes Va - ters Stät - te, find't mich ein be - trüb -

hemiola

Minor mode for "downcast"

E minor A7 D major 7 E minor D major D minor

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39.

- - ter Geist.

D major D major D major

45.

Hier,

D major D major

50.

hier, *tr* in mei-nes Va - ters Stät te,

Held low note on "abode" is reminiscent of the low note of "in dem" of the previous movement, perhaps suggesting God dwelling on earth.

D7 G major G major

57.

hier, in meines Va - ters Stätte, find't mich ein - be -

G major E7 A minor D7 D7

63.

trüb - ter Geist, hier, in mei - nes Va - - ters

Minor mode and chromatic inflection for "downcast spirit"

G minor C# dim.7 D7 G major

The 3-fold repetition (in triple meter) of a swaying, 2-measure unit with triplets may symbolize the Trinity, expanding Jesus' statement about his identity to include the comforting, energizing Spirit (see more above).

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68. *hemiola*

Stät-te, find't mich ein-be-trüb-ter Geist,

deceptive cadence

Minor mode for "downcast spirit"

G major G minor D7 E minor D7

Chromatic inflection for "downcast spirit"

73. ein be-trüb-ter Geist, ein be-trüb-ter Geist, find't mich hier,

cresc. *tr* *tr* *tr* *p*

5-bar phrase

G major (E7) A minor G7 C major D7

79. in mei-nes Va-ters Stät-te, hier, in mei-nes Va-ters

G# dim.7

G major E7 A minor D major D7 G major

85. Stät-te, find't mich ein-be-trüb-ter Geist.

Chromatic inflection for "downcast spirit"

G minor G major G major

91. *mf*

E7 A minor (D7)

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97.

D7 G major D7

101. Unexpected phrase division with deceptive cadence concludes the ritornello.

Deceptive cadence G major G major

Most immediately, the text alludes to the Gospel lesson, in which Jesus' parents find their 12-year-old son in the temple after searching for him for three days.

The minuet rhythm changes in the B Section. For Grove Dictionary's description of common minuet dance patterns, see side note.

106.

Da kannst du mich si - cher fin - den und dein

B7 E minor E7 A minor D major D7

The sentiment points to the "unio mystica" of Jesus with the believing soul, for the believer's heart is his abode. The biblical source appears to be John 14. See side note for more.

111.

Herz mit mir ver - bin - den, weil dies mei - ne

The pronoun "dies" refers to "Herz" (heart).

G major G major F# major F#7 B minor

116.

Woh - nung heisst.

B minor B minor

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121. *tr*

(F#7) B minor Hemiola B minor

125. Da kannst du mich si cher fin den und

Stream of accents on beat 3 (syncopations) for "verbinden" (bind together, i.e., in mystic union)

(D7) G major G major

130. dein Herz mit mir ver bin den, weil dies mei ne

Mystic Union

E7 A minor D7 G major G7 C major C7

135. Woh nung, dies mei ne Woh nung heisst, da kannst du mich

D minor G7 C major

4-fold repetition with accents on downbeats.

140. si cher fin den und dein Herz mit mir ver

C major A7 D minor

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145.

bin - - den, weil dies, dies mei - ne - Woh - nung heisst.

D minor G7 C major C major

Recitativo

In an accompanied dialogue (set as recitative) the Soul and Jesus meet—as Jesus and his parents did, in the House of God. In the middle section of the lengthy exchange (structured symmetrically), we hear the words from Psalm 84, familiar to many listeners from Brahms's Requiem. • Dialogue (Christ and Soul); they meet in God's house (32/4).

32/4.

1. „Ach, hei - liger und grosser Gott! so will ich mir denn hier, bei dir, be - ständig Trost und Hil - fe suchen.“ „Wirst du den Erdentand ver - fluchen und nur in diese Wohnung gehn, so kannst du hier und dort be - stehen.“ „Wie lieb - lich ist doch dei - ne - Wohnung, Herr, starker Ze - ba - oth! Mein Geist verlangt nach dem, was nur in

A Section „Ach, hei - liger und grosser Gott! so will ich mir denn hier, bei dir, be - ständig Trost und Hil - fe suchen.“

leap to high G for "great"

B minor A# dim.7 B minor D major

A-B-A structure in which the A sections is characterized by sustained string chords, while the B section has repeated 8th-note chords.

Note: At this point, the two voices sing in alternation; union is not achieved until the following aria.

4.

ständig Trost und Hil - fe suchen.“ „Wirst du den Erdentand ver - fluchen und nur in diese Wohnung gehn, so kannst du hier und dort be - stehen.“ „Wie lieb - lich ist doch dei - ne - Wohnung, Herr, starker Ze - ba - oth! Mein Geist verlangt nach dem, was nur in

The theme of comfort (and by implication the Spirit as Comforter) reappears.

The Vox Christe admonishes the soul to reject the world, a possible allusion to 1 John 2:15: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him." Or James 4:4 (see left).

"Verfluchen" (to curse) is set with wrenching harmonic progression.

Soprano sings the opening of Psalm 84, almost verbatim, as an arioso, ending with a declaration of love for Jesus.

E major A major B7

James 4:4: "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

The pulsing 8th-note chords by the strings suggest the sombre attitude of Passion music.

6.

ständig Trost und Hil - fe suchen.“ „Wirst du den Erdentand ver - fluchen und nur in diese Wohnung gehn, so kannst du hier und dort be - stehen.“ „Wie lieb - lich ist doch dei - ne - Wohnung, Herr, starker Ze - ba - oth! Mein Geist verlangt nach dem, was nur in

B Section „Wie lieb - lich ist doch dei - ne - Wohnung, Herr, starker Ze - ba - oth! Mein Geist verlangt nach dem, was nur in

C#7 F# minor F# minor

9.

ständig Trost und Hil - fe suchen.“ „Wirst du den Erdentand ver - fluchen und nur in diese Wohnung gehn, so kannst du hier und dort be - stehen.“ „Wie lieb - lich ist doch dei - ne - Wohnung, Herr, starker Ze - ba - oth! Mein Geist verlangt nach dem, was nur in

B7 E major F#7


Text painting: Melismas of fast notes for "rejoices" and "living" (with skip upward for "rejoices.")

12.

dei_nem Ho.fe prangt; mein Leib und See - le - - freu - - etsich in dem le -

B minor A major

14.



bend' - - gen Gott. Ach, Je-su! mei_ne Brust liebt dich nun e - - wiglich."

NBA: nur

B7 E7 A# dim.7 B minor

17. Basso.



„Sokannst du glück_lich sein, wenn Herz und Geist aus Lie-be ge-gen

"A" Section

B minor E7 A major

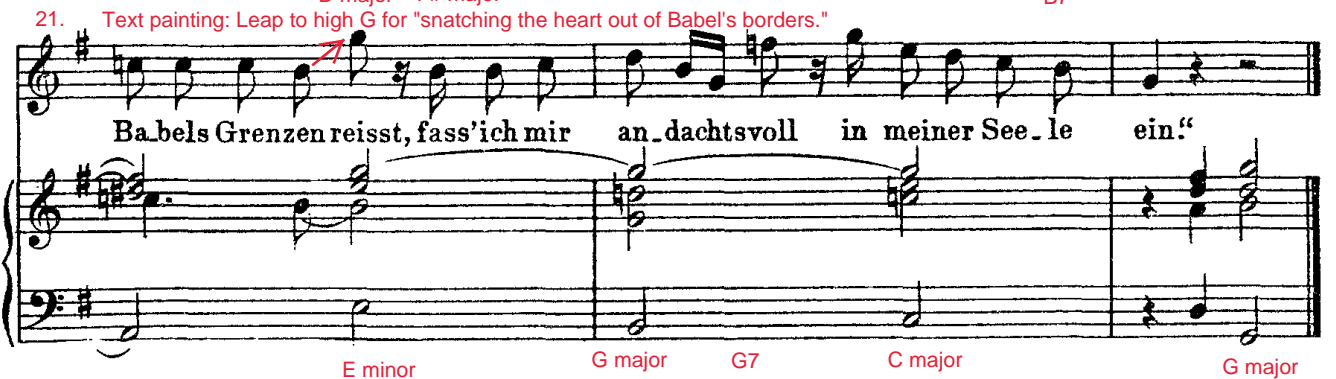
19. Soprano.



mich ent_zün-det heisst“ „Ach! die_ses Wort, das jet - zo schon mein Herz aus

A7 D major F# major B7

21. Text painting: Leap to high G for "snatching the heart out of Babel's borders."



Ba_bels Grenzen reisst, fass'ich mir an_dachtsvoll in meiner See - le ein."

E minor G major G7 C major G major

In a dancing (gavotte-like) da capo duet, the two lovers sing of their happiness (the two now joined), while the two obbligato instruments heard separately earlier join together in accompaniment (perhaps a reflection of the symbiotic union of Christ and the believer). The text recalls that of 154/7 (for the same Sunday 2 years before, which Bach set with unbridled joy. Here in Cantata 32, Bach colors a rustic, Appenzeller-like tune with chromatic chords, especially on the downbeat appoggiaturas.

The oboe melody is derived from the singer's line. It is characterized by leaps of a 6th, inflected/chromatic notes and is a simplified version of the concertante Vln I part (which plays biplanar 16ths and rising scalar 32nds). The rhythm is that of the gavotte, whose metrical structure is stressed with trills in the oboe and staccato figures in the lower strings and continuo.

32/5 Vivace. (♩ = 72.) • Dialogue (Christ and believing Soul): Mystical union (32/5).

Like the opening aria text, this text has a chiasmic rhyme scheme (ABC-CBA). However, Bach sets it as a da capo aria, in which the A section (consisting of the first two lines of text) is given more than 3/4 of the allotted music. Furthermore, the contrasting middle section ends with a "forestatement" of the opening words. See side note for more.

Petzoldt notes that the A section paraphrases Isaiah 35:10, which binds Old and New Testament eschatology: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and **sorrow and sighing shall flee away**" ("Bach Kommentar" 2:431).

11. **Soprano.** *figura corta* **Plagen,**

Text Lines 1 & 2. Rhyme: A-B

Figura corta **Nun verschwinden alle**

Basso **Nun verschwinden alle Plagen,**

The Vox Christi and Soul sing in imitation, taking the lead in alternation.

"...besteht aus drey geschwinden Noten, deren eine allein so lang ist, als die übrigen beyde"
 Johann Gottfried Walther "Musicalisches Lexicon..." [Leipzig, 1732]
 ["...consists of 3 fast notes, of which one has the same value as the other two taken together."]

14.

Cross relations created by inflected/chromatic notes depict the "woes" that are now gone.

nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und
- gen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und

D major E major A7 D major G# dim.7 E7 A minor D# dim.7 E7

17.

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!
Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

D major A major E7 A major

19.

E7 A major A minor

22.

Now Vox Christi leads,
echoed by the Soul.

Nun verschwinden alle Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und
Nun verschwinden alle Plagen, alle Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und

A major B7 E minor F#7 B minor

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25.

Schmerz, nun verschwinden al. le Plagen, al. le Pla - - - gen, nun verschwindet Ach und

Schmerz, nun verschwinden al. le Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und

B minor E7 A major B major B7 E minor

28.

Schmerz, nun ver - schwinden al - le Plagen, nun ver - schwin - det Ach und

Schmerz, nun ver - schwinden al - le Pla - gen, nun ver - schwin - det Ach und

Word panting: Sequential, rising flights of 32nd notes in Vln I depicts "verschwinden alle Plagen" (the vanishing of all plaguing troubles).

A7 (D major) D7 (G major) D major G# dim.7

Harmonic ambiguity for "Plagen"

30.

Schmerz, nun verschwinden alle Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und

Schmerz, nun verschwinden al. le Pla - - - - -

A major D major A7 D major D7

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33.

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und
- gen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, Ach und

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

36.

Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!
Schmerz, nun verschwin - - det Ach und Schmerz!

Ritornello

D major D major G# dim.7

39.

E7 A minor (B7) E major A major A major B major

42.

E minor D major E major

44.

A7 D7 G major A7 D major

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57.

Nun ver_gnüget sich mein Herz,
und kann voller Freude
sagen,
nun ver_gnüget sich mein Herz, nun verschwinden al_le
Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

p Continuo alone

F# major F#7 B minor B minor E major A minor D major

60.

Text and theme of the A section reappears before the A section proper returns.

sagen,
und kann voller Freude sagen:
nun verschwinden al_le
Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

Continuo takes up 16ths to prepare for da capo.

G# dim.7 C# major F# minor E7 A major A major A7 D major

63.

Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

nun verschwinden al_le Plagen, nun verschwindet Ach und Schmerz!

Ritornello (instruments enter)

D major Dal Segno.

The cantata ends with a simple four-part setting of a hymn (the twelfth and final stanza of a chorale—perhaps Bach), representing the corporate response of the congregation. Martin Petzoldt argues that adding a chorale to Lehms's libretto provided a necessary theological corrective: instead of understanding the relationship between Jesus and the believer as originating in a one-time event, it should be understood as the opening of a pathway to union with Jesus. See "Bach Kommentar 2:432. •Prayer: Open to me the portals of thy sweet blessing (32/6).

Soprano. 1/5. Tune: Freu' dich sehr, O meine Seele

Ob, Vln I

Alto. Mein Gott, öff-ne mir die Pfor-ten sol-cher Gnad'und Gü-tig-keit, }
lass mich all-zeit al-ler Or-ten schmecken dei-ne Sü-ssig-keit! }

Vln II

Tenore. Mein Gott, öff-ne mir die Pfor-ten sol-cher Gnad'und Gü-tig-keit, }
lass mich all-zeit al-ler Or-ten schmecken dei-ne Sü-ssig-keit! }

Vla

Basso. Mein Gott, öff-ne mir die Pfor-ten sol-cher Gnad'und Gü-tig-keit, }
lass mich all-zeit al-ler Or-ten schmecken dei-ne Sü-ssig-keit! }

Continuo, organo

G major

For the significance of G major, see the note on Johann Mattheson's view above at 32/3.

9.

Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,
Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,
Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,
Lie-be mich und treib' mich an, dass ich dich, so gut ich kann,

D major E minor G major

13. G major G major G major D major

wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.
wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.
wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.
wie-der-um um-fang'und lie-be und ja nun nicht mehr be-trü-be.

G major C major G major G major