

Bach Choruses for General Use

Jesus bleibet meine Freude *(from S. 147)*

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685 - 1750)

Arranged for
SATB chorus and organ
by Gary Harney

Text and Translation

Jesus bleibet meine Freude,
Meines Herzens Trost und Saft,
Jesus wehret allem Leide,
Er ist meines Lebens Kraft,
Meiner Augen Lust und Sonne,
Meiner Seele Schatz und Wonne;
Darum lass ich Jesum nicht
Aus dem Herzen und Gesicht.

Jesus remains my joy,
the comfort and life's blood of my heart,
Jesus defends me against all sorrows,
he is my life's strength,
the delight and sun of my eyes
my soul's treasure and joy;
therefore I shall not let Jesus go
from my heart and sight.

Text by Martin Jahn (1661)

Translation by Francis Browne. Used by permission.

Presented by *Bach on a Budget*
<http://www.immanuelbachconsort.org>

“Jesus bleibet meine Freude” (from S. 147)

The Cantata

Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben (Heart and Mouth and Deed and Life) existed in two forms during Bach’s life. It began in Weimar as a cantata for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, based on a libretto by Salomo Franck. In this form it contained six movements. This use did not fit Leipzig liturgical practice, however, since in Leipzig Advent was considered penitential, with no concerted music heard on the Second through Fourth Sundays of the season.

Desiring to revive the work, Bach re-purposed the cantata as a piece for the Feast of the Visitation (first sung in Leipzig on 2 July 1723), adding two recitatives and two appearances of the chorale *Werde munter, mein Gemüte*. The additional text links the work more closely to the *Magnificat*, reinforcing its new use. It is in this form that we know the cantata today, as there are no extant scores for the Weimar version.

The Leipzig version is in two parts (movements 1-6, and movements 7-10), in which each half ends with the chorale, musically identical in both sections but to different verses of the text. The cantata is scored for trumpet, two oboes, bassoon, strings and continuo and is among the longer of Bach’s cantatas, but richly deserves the place it occupies in the genre.

The Chorus

It is hard to know what to say about this chorus that hasn’t already been said. In an English version (*Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring*), this movement is easily Bach’s best-known choral work today, whether in the original scoring, or for piano or organ, or in any number of other arrangements.

In the original, the vocal lines are a simple and straight-forward harmonized presentation of the chorale. The principal interest comes from the obbligato line, played by violins and oboes in unison. What might not be immediately obvious is that the flowing instrumental line takes as its root the chorale tune, thus further unifying the movement. The version here is as it appears at the end of the cantata.

The Accompaniment

One of the many attractions of this chorus is that little needs to be altered to make it suitable for performance by chorus and organ. The obbligato line is retained as in the original and can be played either on the same manual as the left hand, or on a separate manual with a different registration. With the exception of one octave transposition, the bass line in the pedal is retained as well. Between the outer voices, harmonic support is provided in the left hand. Any number of registration possibilities present themselves, depending on the instrument at hand.

Created for performance by the Immanuel Bach Consort,
and dedicated to Dr. Gerre Hancock (1934-2012)

Jesus bleibet meine Freude (from Cantata #147)

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Musical score for the first system of 'Jesus bleibet meine Freude'. It features five staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Pedals. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts are currently silent, indicated by horizontal lines. The Bass part is also silent. The Manuals section consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a complex melodic line in the treble staff featuring many triplets and a steady accompaniment in the bass staff. The Pedals part is a simple bass line in the bass clef.

Musical score for the second system of 'Jesus bleibet meine Freude'. It features five staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Pedals. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts are currently silent, indicated by horizontal lines. The Bass part is also silent. The Manuals section consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a complex melodic line in the treble staff featuring many triplets and a steady accompaniment in the bass staff. The Pedals part is a simple bass line in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves:

Je - sus blei - bet
Je - sus weh - ret

Je - sus blei - bet
Je - sus weh - ret

Je - sus blei - bet
Je - sus weh - ret

Je - sus blei - bet
Je - sus weh - ret

21

mei - ner
mei - ner
mei - ner
mei - ner

26

Au - gen Lust und Son - ne,
Au - gen Lust und Son - ne,
Au - gen Lust und Son - ne,
Au - gen Lust und Son - ne,

31

mei - ner See - le Schatz und Won - ne;

mei - ner See - le Schatz und Won - ne;

mei - ner See - le Schatz und Won - ne;

mei - ner See - le Schatz und Won - ne;

36

dar - um laß ich Je - sum nicht, *tr*

dar - um laß ich Je - sum nicht,

dar - um laß ich Je - sum nicht,

dar - um laß ich Je - sum nicht,

41

aus dem Her - zen und Ge - sicht.

aus dem Her - zen und Ge - sicht.

aus dem Her - zen und Ge - sicht.

aus dem Her - zen und Ge - sicht.

aus dem Her - zen und Ge - sicht.

46

46

51

51