

Cantata BWV 78 by J.S. Bach
'Jesu der du meine Seele' Jesus by Thy Cross and Passion

First Movement: Chorus

*Jesus You are my soul.
Through Your bitter death You powerfully saved me
from the devil's wicked hell and the serious misery of my soul.
And through Your pleasant word You let me know this.
You are now, Oh Lord, my redemption.*

This work was composed for 4 Solo Voices, Chorus and Chamber Orchestra: Flute, 2 Oboes, Horn, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Continuo (Organ, Cello and Bass).

Bach crafted this chorus to the strict form of a *chaconne*, a technique where a bass figure is used repeatedly as the foundation of the movement. It starts in the continuo, and appears 27 times. To avoid monotony, Bach uses inversion, imitation, combines it with the other themes, gives it to all the voices and instruments except Soprano, Horn and flute, who are the only parts to have the chorale melody.



This theme (1b) was not composed by Bach, it appears in Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'. Bach also used it in some other of his compositions eg. Crucifixus from the B minor Mass. It may be described as a lamento theme used to describe the suffering of Christ. A feature of this theme is its descending chromatic line based on the scale of g minor (note: to avoid the awkward interval of the augmented 2nd, F# to E flat, the gaps are filled in chromatically.) The first 3 bars are then repeated, the fourth bar consists of three crotchets on D with the leap of an octave followed by G, thus producing a perfect cadence. (V-I) Note: in the inversion the same chromatic notes are used and there is a brief modulation to c minor.(A flat)



Ritornello or 'Grief motif' 1a, (instrumental), appears at the beginning, end and between phrases of the Chorale tune. At bar 85 it changes from g minor to F major.



The Chorale melody from the final movement (7th) is broken down into 8 separate phrases, varying from five bars to four bars, and changed from 4/4 to 3/4 time, is sung by Soprano, doubled by flute and horn between Ritornello sections (orchestral only).

