


## Arias from Bach Cantatas with English Horn Obligato


By Frederick Meyer  
Charleston, West Virginia

In examining the church cantatas of J. S. Bach, nine have been located that have arias with English horn obligato. There are three cantatas with soprano: No. 1, 74, and 177; two with tenor: No. 16 and 186; and two with alto: No. 6 and 27. Two cantatas have duets: No. 80 is for alto and tenor, and No. 167 is for soprano and alto.

“Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen, göttlichen Flammen”, from Cantata No. 1, *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern!* is an aria for English horn and soprano. Composed for the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mood of the aria is one of complete happiness. The text tells us to fill our spirits with rapture and passion, and to glow on earth like heavenly fires. This is a great aria. There are many places one can practice the forked F fingering, and the articulation figure  is employed throughout.

### Ex. 1 “Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen, göttlichen Flammen”



Written for Easter Monday, “Hoch gelobter Gottes Sohn”, from Cantata No. 6, *Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden*, has a lovely aria for English horn and alto. This is an excellent work to perform especially if you need to practice trills. A very common rhythmic figure Bach uses is . A highly spirited aria in 3/8 time, the words tell us to present our requests, and God will show us the way.

### Ex. 2 “Hoch gelobter Gottes Sohn”



“Geliebter Jesu”, from Cantata No. 16, *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, is an aria for tenor and English horn. Written for the Feast of Circumcision, viola can also be used instead of English horn. This is a slow sustained aria with passages featuring the low register. It is rather long (about 150 measures), and if you need to test your endurance, this aria is one to try.

### Ex. 3 “Geliebter Jesu”



Characterized by great vigor and vitality, “Will kommen! will ich sagen” from Cantata No. 27, *Wer weiss, wie nahe mir mein Ende*, has an aria for English horn and alto with a lovely organ obligato. Written for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, the text tells us to greet death with a hearty welcome and to follow the gloom of the tomb with happiness. This is an aria that every English horn player should perform.

**Ex. 4 “Will kommen! will ich sagen”**

Composed for the first day of Pentecost, (Whit Sunday), Cantata No. 74, *Wer mich liebet, der mein Wort halten*, has an aria for English horn and soprano, “Komm, komm, mein Herze”. A very beautiful stately aria in 4/4 time, it is rather short (only 42 measures), and the melody is characterized by long phrases.

**Ex. 5 “Komm, komm mein Herze”**

Composed for the Feast of the Reformation, Cantata No. 80, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, features an aria for English horn and violin obligato, and tenor and alto, “Wie selig sind doch die”. In a stately triple meter, this cantata was originally composed for the third Sunday in Lent. The text tells us that those who praise God will be rewarded.

**Ex. 6 “Wie selig sind doch die”**


“Gottes Wort das trüget nicht”, from Cantata No. 167, *Ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes liebe!*, has an aria for soprano and alto with English horn obligato. Written for the Feast of St. John, the mood is slow and sustained. The text tells us that God is true and his word endures. He will welcome us in the end.

**Ex. 7 “Gottes Wort das trüget nicht”**

Cantata No. 177, *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, has an aria for soprano and English horn, “Verleih, dass ich aus Herzens Grund”. It was composed for the fourth Sunday after Trinity. Written in 6/8 time, it should be performed so that it feels in a lilting two.

**Ex. 8 “Verleih, dass ich aus Herzens Grund”**

“Mein Heiland lässt sich merken”, is an aria for tenor and English horn from Cantata No. 186, *Ärge*

*dich, O Seele, nicht.* Bach makes considerable use of the rhythmic figure  in this aria. Written for the seventh Sunday after Trinity, this aria is in a slow sustained four. The text tells us that God will help us grow and flourish.

**Ex. 9 “Mein Heiland lässt sich merken”**



These cantatas present some of the greatest literature for English horn. All are well worth studying.

**About the author:**

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