Wer sich selbst erhöhet
(Who himself exalted)

1. Chorus:
Wer sich selbst erhöhet
Whoever exalts himself shall be abased, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

2. Aria (soprano):
Wer ein wahrer Christ will heißen
Whoever would be called a true Christian

3. Recitative (bass):
Der Mensch ist Kot, Staub, Asch und Erde
Man is excrement, stench, ashes, and earth;

4. Aria (bass):
Jesu, beuge doch mein Herze
Gott, bow down my heart

5. Choral:
Der zeitlichen Ehrn will ich gern entbehrn
In due time He will exalt you again.

Notes on the Program

Wer sich selbst erhöhet, der soll erniedriget werden (BWV 47) was written for a performance on October 13, 1726 in Leipzig. The text refers to Jesus’s warning against pride, which is recounted in the Gospel reading for the corresponding Sunday. The bulk of the libretto comes from Johann Friedrich Helbig, whose texts were often set by Telemann. Movement one quotes the Gospel text word for word and what follows is a Draconian sermon on the dangers of pride and arrogance.

The first movement begins with an instrumental sinfonia that first states a homophonic phrase in alternation, recalling the old polyphonic tradition. Within the sinfonia, however, we also find a continuation in the flute parts that becomes the kernel of the fugue subject later presented by the voices.

Flute continuation that forms the bulk of the fugue subject:

The voices enter on a melismatic fugue subject that rises and falls, graphically depicting the self-exaltation and abasement in the text. Likewise, the countersubject clearly portrays the humility-pride antitheses of the text. A particularly lengthy aria, the main section deals with humility and is characterized by a simple flowing melody, elaborated upon by the violin. The middle section, concerned with pride, contrasts by employing a marked, ostinato rhythm in the voice accompanied by double-stops in the obbligato part. A da capo aria, the music returns to the A section material.

Text and Translations

I. Chorus
Wer sich selbst erhöhet, der soll erniedriget werden, und wer sich selbst erniedriget, der soll erhöhet werden.

II. Aria - soprano
Wer ein wahrer Christ will heißen, der Mut der Demut sich befleißet. Must study humility.

III. Recitativo - bass
Der Mensch ist Kot, Staub, Asch und Erde; Ist’s möglich, daß vom Übermut, als einer Teufelsbrut, er noch bezaubert werde? Geh, schäme dich, du stolze Kreatur, Geh, seid euch so schämmich, und ihr höret, das ihr nicht zu behalten habt. Gehört sich das vor einen Christen? Geh, schäme dich, du stolze Kreatur, Geh, seid euch so schämmich, und ihr höret, das ihr nicht zu behalten habt.

IV. Aria - bass
Jesu, beuge doch mein Herze

V. Choral
Der zeitlichen Ehrn will ich gern entbehrn, Temporal honours I would gladly forgo,
Du wollst mir nur das Ewge gewährn, If you would but grant me what is eternal,
Das du erworben hast, Which You have purchased
Durch deinen herben, bittern Tod. With Your harsh, bitter Death
Du wollst mir nur das Ewge gewährn, If you would but grant me what is eternal,
Das du erworben hast, Which You have purchased
Durch deinen herben, bittern Tod.
Notes on the Program (continued)

Though the bass recitative is fully scored for strings, the voice part proclaims the colorful text in plain syllabic style. The aria that follows creates an imitative trio texture with the flute, violin, and continuo. The texture is further homogenized as the vocal material is derived directly from the instrumental obbligato parts. Unlike many arias found in Bach cantatas, there is a substantial amount of text. As a result, Bach refrains from setting this as a true da capo aria. While tripartite in form due to the return of the opening instrumental material, the vocal line does not repeat the opening music.

The cantata concludes with a relatively plain chorale set as a prayer requesting humility.

- adapted from Alfred Dürr, The Cantatas of J. S. Bach

Upcoming School of Music Performances —

Guest Artist Recital: Virginia Broffitt, flute
Monday, October 24, 2011
6:00pm; Davis Hall
Free Admission

Faculty Artist Recital: Julia Bullard, viola
Tuesday, October 24, 2011
8:00pm; Davis Hall
Free Admission

Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra
Friday, October 28, 2011
7:30pm; Great Hall, GBPAC
This event is ticketed. For tickets, call (319) 273-4TIX

UNI Jazz Band One
Friday, November 4, 2011
7:30pm; Bengston Auditorium
Free Admission

Northern Iowa Wind Symphony
Wednesday, November 9, 2011
7:30pm; Great Hall, GBPAC
Free Admission

Faculty Artist Recital: Jeff Brich, tenor
Thursday, November 10, 2011
6:00pm; Davis Hall
Free Admission

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