

**BWV 97 In allem meinen Taten (In all my doings)***Chorale cantata composed for an unknown occasion in July 1734.***1. Chorale**

In allem meinen Taten  
 Laß ich den Höchsten raten,  
 Der alles kann und hat;  
 Er muß zu allen Dingen,  
 Soll's anders wohl gelingen,  
 Selbst geben Rat und Tat.

**2. Arie B**

Nichts ist es spät und frühe  
 Um alle sein Mühe,  
 Mein Sorgen ist umsonst.  
 Er mag's mit meinen Sachen  
 Nach seinem Willen machen,  
 Ich stells in seine Gunst.

**3. Rezitativ T**

Es kann mir nichts geschehen,  
 Als was er hat ersehen,  
 Und was mir selig ist:  
 Ich nehm es, wie ers gibet;  
 Was ihm von mir beliebt,  
 Das hab ich auch erkiest.

**4. Arie T**

Ich traue seiner Gnaden,  
 Die mich vor allem Schaden,  
 Vor allem Übel schützt.  
 Leb ich nach seinen Gesetzen,  
 So wird mich nichts verletzen,  
 Nichts fehlen, was mir nützt.

**5. Rezitativ A**

Er wolle meiner Sünden  
 In Gnaden mich entbinden,  
 Durchstreichen meine Schuld!  
 Er wird auf mein Verbrechen  
 Nicht stracks das Urteil sprechen  
 Und haben noch Geduld.

**6. Arie A**

Leg ich mich späte nieder,  
 Erwache frühe wieder,  
 Lieg oder ziehe fort,  
 In Schwachheit und in Banden,  
 Und was mir stößt zuhanden,  
 So tröstet mich sein Wort.

**1. Chorale**

In all my doings  
 I let the Most-High counsel me,  
 He who knows all and does everything;  
 He must in all things—  
 that they may prosper—  
 give counsel and judgement.

**2. Aria B**

Nothing comes, early or late,  
 of all my toil,  
 my anxieties are in vain.  
 He may do with my affairs  
 according to His will,  
 I trust them to His goodwill.

**3. Recitative T**

Nothing can happen to me  
 other than what He has foreseen,  
 and whatever he has blessed for me:  
 I take as He gives  
 whatever pleases Him on my behalf,  
 that is what I have also chosen.

**4. Aria T**

I trust in His grace  
 which protects me from all harm,  
 from all evil.  
 If I live by His commandments,  
 then nothing will harm me,  
 nothing will I lack.

**5. Recitative A**

He will, from my sins,  
 release me with grace,  
 cancel my guilt!  
 For my transgression  
 He will pronounce no swift judgment  
 but will have patience.

**6. Aria A**

Whether I lie down late,  
 or awaken again early,  
 stay or go forth,  
 in weakness and in bondage,  
 whatever afflicts me close at hand,  
 His word comforts me.

Prov 8:14 “counsel and  
 sound judgment are mine”  
 (*Rat und Tat* in Luther bible)

The church's instruction to  
 the faithful.

Ps 127:2 In vain you rise up  
 early and go to rest late,  
 eating the bread of toil—for  
 he gives to his beloved sleep.

Anxiety has no place in the  
 life of the faithful.

Ps 121:7. The Lord will keep  
 you from harm...

Meditation on God's grace.

Ps 127:2 (see #2 above).  
 Also Ps 119:47 I rise before  
 dawn and cry for help, I hope  
 in thy words.

Meditation on finding  
 comfort in God's word.

**7. Arie (Duett) S B**

Hat er es denn beschlossen,  
So will ich unverdrossen  
An mein Verhängnis gehn!  
Kein Unfall unter allen  
Soll mir zu harte fallen,  
Ich will ihn überstehn.

**8. Arie S**

Ich hab mich ihm ergeben  
Zu sterben und zu leben,  
Sobald er mir gebeut.  
Es sei heut oder morgen,  
Dafür laß ich ihn sorgen;  
Er weiß die rechte Zeit.

**9. Choral**

So sein nun, Seele, deine  
Und traue dem alleine,  
Der ich erschaffen hat;  
Es gehe, wie es gehe,  
Dein Vater in der Höhe  
Weiß allen Sachen Rat.

**7. Aria (Duet) S B**

As He has resolved,  
So will I willingly,  
go to my destiny!  
No misfortune  
will fall so heavily on me  
but that I will overcome it.

**8. Aria S**

I have given myself to Him  
To die or to live,  
whenever He commands me.  
Be it today or tomorrow,  
I leave worry to Him;  
He knows the right time.

**9. Chorale**

So be true to yourself, my soul,  
and trust only in Him  
who has created you;  
However it goes, let it go;  
your Father on high  
knows what to do.

Meditation on overcoming  
misfortune by following  
God's counsel.

Meditation on complete  
surrender to God's counsel.

The Church and the faithful  
in one voice: always follow  
God's counsel.

**Conductor's Notes** © 2011 Ellen Frye

The autograph for BWV 97, now part of the New York Public Library collection, is dated July 1734, six months before the first performance of the Christmas Oratorio. Bach did not designate an occasion for the cantata; commentators have suggested that it might be a wedding cantata. Robert Marshall suggests that Bach may have intended BWV 97 as an addition to his chorale-cantata cycle, which was left unfinished in the spring of 1725.

The libretto is unchanged from Paul Fleming's poem written in 1642, with each verse assigned to a separate movement. The chorale melody is the well-known Heinrich Isaac tune to which both the secular *Innsbruch, I must leave thee* and the sacred *O World, I must leave thee* were sung.

1. The first movement opens with a broad French Overture with dotted rhythms that move among upper strings, continuo, and oboes. The ensuing *vivace* introduces the ascending and descending scales that the lower voices sing against the held-note chorale melody in the sopranos. The text of this verse—indeed of the entire chorale—urges Christians to entrust all human activity to God's wise counsel. I think Bach may have intended the sopranos to be the voice of the Church and the lower voices to express the scurrying nature of humans who forget just that in their busy doings. The two layers are further separated by the chorale melody being sung in B $\flat$  major while the lower voices and instrumental accompaniment are in G minor. In the final line of the verse—God's counsel and judgment (*Rat und Tat*)—the lower voices and instruments move under the sopranos' sustained note into a plagal (church) cadence in B $\flat$ . This line is repeated with all voices in eighth note homophony ending in a modern dominant-tonic cadence. The final bar of the instrumental ritornello echoes the dotted rhythms of the opening.
2. Dürr calls the bass-continuo aria "relatively undemanding" and indeed, on first reading, it seems just that. But the shifting pulses in both lines make for challenging polyrhythms while the crossing and re-crossing of the two lines often create startling dissonances. The text points to the futility of human toil

without faith and Bach sets the “Sorgen” of “My anxieties are in vain” to a 4-bar melisma, again with shifting pulses but set over the solid gigue rhythm of the continuo, contrasting the uncertainty that anxiety creates with the steady beat of Christian faith.

3. The recitative is a straightforward setting of the verse.
4. Marshall, noting that the autograph contains both newly composed movements and ones that appear to be “clean copies” of earlier compositions, thinks that this violin-tenor-continuo aria is based on an unknown composition and suggests that the violin part may have been written with a particular virtuoso in mind. In the vocal line, Bach sets “trust” to a sustained note and “all (harms)” to a twisting melisma, contrasting faith with the worldly harms from which faith protects us. In the second section, the melisma on “comfort” rises with confidence, even triumph.
5. The second recitative is also a straightforward setting.
6. In the aria for alto and strings, Bach transforms the descending and ascending scale motifs of the first movement into rhythmically strong themes for the “lying down” and “rising up” of the text. Bach sets the final line (“I find comfort in his word”) to a triumphant ascent.
7. The duet for soprano and bass also uses the rising and falling scales as motifs. Each section of the *da capo* aria begins with a single voice that leads to both voices singing in a canon so strict that the voicing includes parallel fourths and even fifths (see, for example, mm. 18 and 19). In addition to the surprising voice leading, the rhythms of the two lines segue from on-beat to off-beat pulses over a steady continuo that jumps precipitously between the lower and higher ranges of the cello. Each section, however, ends with voices and continuo in unison (octaves), as if to say that following God’s counsel may lead one through misfortune but in the end the faithful find perfection.
8. The last aria of this cantata, for two oboes, soprano and continuo, is a dance that celebrates the Christian’s full surrender to God’s wise counsel. In contrast to the “Sorgen” of the second movement, the anxieties of this movement are now safely in God’s care and Bach sets this “Sorgen” to sustained notes with brief ascent-descent triplet figures. The triplets are also in the oboe lines but each of these pairings mix triple and duple rhythm: no matter how complicated human affairs, in God’s hands, such difficulties resolve themselves.
9. The closing chorale is set in typical chorale harmony but with the strings soaring like guardian angels over humanity’s pledge to leave all things to God’s wise counsel.

### Tonal structure

b								8. Aria	
bb	1. Chor	2. Aria	3. Recit	4. Aria	5. Recit				9. Chorale
bbb						6. Aria	7. Duet		

Dances*	Prelude	Gigue		Allemande		Bouree	Saraband	Gavotte	
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Bach, in setting the first five movements in and around B $\flat$  major/G minor, seems to be offsetting the certainty of the text with the idea that humans may falter in applying God’s will to life’s activities. For the sixth and seventh movements, he moves into deeper flats, suggesting doubt even in the face of the strong statements on the efficacy of faith. The turning point comes in the final aria, in F major, which places the faithful closer to God and therefore closer to the submission that places all things in God’s hands. The B $\flat$  major chorale completes the circle.

\* Craig Smith suggests that the structure of this cantata might be called a dance suite and identifies the first two movements as above. I have added possible dance forms for the other aria movements.