



BACH'S CANTATA PAST PAPER
QUESTIONS



What features of Bach's Cantata show that it was written in the Baroque period?

- Use of a Hemiola rhythm – Final 2 bars of Section 1 (Bar 42)
- Use of the Trumpet – made without valves in the Baroque period, and uses crooks, therefore can only play notes within the harmonic series
- Instrumentation was tuned to 415Hz, rather than the 420Hz we use nowadays, therefore the tuning was nearly a semitone lower.
- Use of a continuo – Violone and organ
- Use of oboes – Sound slightly different due to the lower tuning
- Ritornello Structure – Movement 1, consists of ritornellos (recurring themes) and episodes.
- Canon texture – Cantus Firmus (choral melody); played by the trumpets first then played a 5th lower by the oboes
- Imitative texture – Vocal entries between the Soprano & Alto part at the beginning.
- Contrapuntal texture – Bar 35 onwards
- Fugal in style
- Mainly functional harmony – End of ritornello 1
- Some chromatic chords to heighten the emotional intensity of the piece – Diminished 7th, bar 2.
- Functional tonality, moves from G minor to D minor – Section 3 Bar 89.

Which elements of Bach's Cantata represents the meanings and intentions of the text?

- Follows natural speech rhythms – short phrases
- Db over an Eb chord – Represents pain – Movement 2, bar 2
- Diminished 7th interval – Displays misery, creates a flattened 9th chord
- Sustained chordal accompaniment highlights the text.
- Modulation to an unrelated key – E major – Movement 2, bar 11
- Angular, disjunct melody
- Minor 6th interval – Represents being unhappy
- False relations – Opening section of Movement 1, bars 4-5
- Melisma at bar 16, movement 1 – Word painting of the word 'deliver'
- Melodic repetition caused by imitation between vocal parts – E.g. S & A vocal entries in movement 1.

Identify features of Bach's Cantata No.48 which are characteristic of Lutheran Church music of the late Baroque era.

- Cantata form – This is a typical Baroque form
- Features choral, recitative, chorale and aria movements.
- Choral included in the cantata was written for congregational use – Movement III
- Cantus Firmus (choral melody) between the trumpet and the oboe – Movement I
- Uses typical Baroque performing forces, such as a small orchestra.
- Use of a continuo – Violone and Organ
- Use of an oboe obbligato in Movement IV
- Use of a Baroque counterpoint, e.g. imitative choral writing and canon in trumpet and oboe – Movement I
- Characteristic Baroque structures:
 - Ritornello form – Movements I and IV
 - Da capo structure – Aria/Ternary structure – Movement IV
- Stromentato string accompaniment – Movement II

In 'Cantata No.48', Bach is writing for a Lutheran Church Service.
Describe those features in the music which are suitable for such
an occasion.

- Bach was a Lutheran composer who created cantatas on a regular basis, usually every week, which were then performed after the sermon and linked to theme of it.
- Wealth of the St. Thomas' Church is displayed in the size of the performing group, which includes:
 - Oboes;
 - Trumpets;
 - Strings;
 - Continuo – Violone and organ;
 - Choir
- Regular produced cantatas meant that the vocalists did not have long to learn them, therefore singers had to be professionals. The Church had to be rich enough to pay for it as there were technically difficult areas in the movement.
- Grand scale work – consisting of 7 movements, including chorales, arias, recitatives and choral/instrumental pieces.
- Inclusion of the chorales – Hymns sung by the congregation, to which the orchestra doubled the parts.
- Use of the German Language – many sacred pieces were written in Latin (Roman Catholic Church)
- CANTUS FIRMUS – Movement I – Played in canon by trumpet and oboe. This melody is used again in the final movement of the cantata.
- Grand tone is set by the work beginning with a large scale choral and orchestral number in ritornello form.
- Uses recitative to make the message clear as it follows natural speech rhythms.
- Use of an Aria (movement IV) as it is used for reflection of the religious theme, using the Da Capo structure.

Bach's Cantata No.48 was intended for performance as part of a Lutheran Church service in an important German Church. What aspects of the work reflect these performance circumstances?

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