

Von ewiger Freude (Of Eternal Joy)

Cantata for four solo women's voices (SSAA) and double female choir, with organ and two harps · Opus 1 · 1912

Duration	30 minutes
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Publisher	Universal Edition (1916)
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Availability	available for hire
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First performance	Ges. d. Musikfreunde, Vienna 16th Feb.1913 (Choir of Albine Mandyczewski; cond. Mandyczewski; organ Alois Kofler)
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Other performances	Gera: Geraer Damenchor/Gertrud Müller, 31st Oct. 1913; 1st Feb. 1914 Frankfurt: Dessooff choir/Gretchen Dessooff, 11th Dec.1913 Darmstadt: Dessooff choir/Gretchen Dessooff, 14th Jan. 1914 Amsterdam: Groot Omroepkoor/Simon Halsey, Oct 2004
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About the work	This cantata-like composition consists of a single movement, divided into many parts corresponding to the text. The organ begins with an extended prelude. This prelude develops the two motives that appear in the first chorus to the words "Ach arme Seel, wie magst hie wohn'?" and also in the accompaniment, and dominate the whole first part. Chorus and soloists are divided here. A new section begins with the entry of the two harps, which produce a tender, ethereal music in the accompaniment to the double chorus: "B'hüt Gott, wie soll ich das verstehn?" The soul flies up to heaven. An interlude by the harps and organ is also tuned to this ethereal
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note. There follows a soprano solo with harp: "Ach Petre, der du d'Schlüssel hast", the soul's address to Peter. The chorus takes up the request in more insistent tones. Heightened tension in the development of this part: "Wohl steht mein Sach', Gott sei gelobt". The gate opens: "Drum noch einmal ruf ich: Gott sei gelobt". This is the climax. There follows the depiction of the magnificent heavenly palace. The alto voices begin in unison: "O Christe, was Wunder ich find", alto solo follows, finally the whole choir with a fresh, dance-like tune: "Den ganzen Saal Gott selb versicht". Soloists and chorus alternate in the further development. A new section begins with the sopranos in unison: "Der Teufel selb sein Schwachheit weiß". Then follows an instrumental transition to the final chorus. This chorus is in the form of a kind of passacaglia; it builds up over a constantly repeated eight-bar phrase in the bass, which appears all in all seven times, with the upper parts different every time. A coda is appended, leading the whole work to a close with brilliant sounds of joy and bliss.'

Dr. Hugo Leichtentritt (Berlin).

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