A quasi-narrative Easter cantata without biblical or chorale texts, the arias reusing music from a congratulatory birthday cantata, BWV 249a (music lost), which was reused again for arias on a third text in a second birthday cantata, BWV 249b (music lost). Instead of incorporating the Gospel reading specified for Easter Sunday, the libretto presents a poetic dialogue.

„Kommt, eilet und laufet."

In the foreword to the 2003 Carus edition of BWV 249, Ulrich Leisinger (with translation by J. Bradford Robinson) writes, "Like the Ascension Oratorio BW 11, Johann Sebastian Bach's Easter Oratorio BWV 249 is entirely and unjustly overshadowed by his two great Passion settings and the Christmas Oratorio. It was given its first hearing on 1 April 1725, three days after the second version of the St. John Passion. Thereafter Bach performed the work for his Leipzig congregations on at least three Easter Sundays, touching up the composition each time. The starting point for the Easter Oratorio was a congratulatory piece composed for a performance on 23 February 1725 for Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels: a pastoral cantata entitled "Entfliehet, entweichet, entschwindet, ihr Sorgen" BWV 249a. From the very outset Bach probably envisioned reusing the piece as a festive composition. The person most likely to have supplied the libretto— a sacred parody of the original congratulatory poem—was Christian Friedrich Henrici (also known as Picander), who not only wrote the words of the original cantata but helped Bach one year later to recast it for the birthday of Count Joachim Friedrich von Flemming, governor of Leipzig and commander of the Pleissenburg, at which time it was given a new text and the title "Verjaget, zerstreuet, zerrüttet ihr Sterne," BWV 249b. As experience has shown that it was easier to compose new recitatives than to underlay existing ones with new words, we may safely assume that the original secular recitatives are lost. In contrast, the arias and choruses can, in principle, be reconstructed from the Easter Oratorio."

…

"The source situation for the Easter Oratorio is extraordinarily complex. The fair full score…was completed roughly fifteen years later than the bulk of the performance material. We may assume that the performance on Easter of 1725 made use of a draft score of the congratulatory cantata in which Bach entered the new textual underlay and wrote out the sacred recitatives on loose leaves

….

"The surviving parts capture four different stages in the work's genesis and performance history:

1. A complete set of fourteen parts belongs to the earliest layer of 1725. The instrumental parts (except for the new continuo part necessitated by the altered recitatives) were probably taken from the Weissentels congratulatory cantata. This theory is based on the fact that the recorder parts for no. 7 are entered in the oboe parts, i.e. the Flauto I/Oboe I and Flauto II/Oboe II parts were each meant to be taken by a single player. In Leipzig, where Bach could draw on separate players for his recorder parts, he regularly had parts specifically written out for the recorder players.
2. Additional copies of the two violin parts were prepared around 1738 in connection with the revision, as was a new part for bassoon. The "pizzicato" instruction in no. 4 makes it clear that the part was also used by a cellist. The question thus arises whether the bassoon should really play along in all movements or only in those scored for oboe. Bach made a significant change in the original alto part by inserting a new version of the middle section of no. 7.
3. Bach wrote out a fresh set of vocal parts for a revival dating from the first half of the 1740s, when no. 3 was expanded from a duet to a chorus. At the same time, and in his own hand, he entered no. 2 in the earlier transverse flute part, thereby carrying out the alternative scoring for this movement as noted in his revised score.
4. In the final years of his life Bach prepared a new *principale part*, probably to replace a lost part for third trumpet. The new part bears witness to a performance held on 6 April 1749, when, as in 1725, the oratorio was preceded by a performance of the St. John Passion on Good Friday."

See *Johann Sebastian Bach. The Sacred Vocal Music Complete Edition. Masses, Passions, and Oratorios* (Stuttgart: Carus Verlag, 2017), vol. 6, pp. 12–13 (Ulrich Leisinger, with translation by J. Bradford Robinson).

The 3rd edition of the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (2022) identifies the versions as 249.1=249a, 249.2=240b, 249.3 (1725), 249.4 (1738), 249.5 (ca. 1743 or later) = versions of the Easter work.

Form: Sinfonia 1 - Adagio - Duet (T/B) - Recit (A/S/T/B) - Aria (S) - Recit (A/T/B) - Aria (T) - Recit (S/A) - Aria (A) - Recit (B) - Chorus.

NBA II/7; BC D8a/b
Easter Sunday (BWV 4, 31, 249)
*1 Corinthians 5:6–8 (Christ, our paschal lamb has been sacrificed.)
*Mark 16:1–8 (The resurrection of Christ)

Librettist: perhaps Picander (Christian Friedrich Henrici), based on Johannes Bugenhagen's *Harmony*, "the combination of the Passion and Easter stories of all four Gospels into a coherent narrative that was printed in every hymnbook appendix, but also in every liturgy [Agende] of the time. It provides the narrative background for the recitatives; these are joined by the arias, which turn to individual theological and contemplative themes from the context just recounted in the recitative. This is comparable to Bach's Passions and oratorios. However, no other work by Bach is so strongly developed into an oratorio in the contemporary sense, in which the *Historia* is rewritten by the author of the text, thereby transforming the oratorical work into an oratorio. The Easter Oratorio contains neither literal Bible texts nor hymns. It also makes very sparing use of intra-biblical Easter typology. In this respect, its text draft is expressly progressive in comparison with its contemporaries." (Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 2:693, translated from the German original.)

First Performance: 1 April 1725 (St. Nicholas in the morning & St. Thomas at afternoon Vespers). With the exception of the recitatives, which are newly composed, this cantata is an adaptation of secular cantata BWV 249a. It was later titled an "oratorio" (essentially a sacred "dramma per musica") when roles were assigned, perhaps 1735. Compare dates for: Christmas Oratorio (Christmas/New Year's Eve 1734/35), Easter Oratorio (10 April 1735), Ascension Oratorio (19 May 1735). Richard Jones writes, "As a piece of genuinely theatrical music, [the Easter Oratorio] belongs to a type that Bach was expressly told not to write at the 1723 council meeting in which he was elected to his Leipzig post." See Richard D. P. Jones, *The Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 163; *Bach Dokumente* II, no. 129; *New Bach Reader*, no. 98. Unlike Bach's two other oratorios, however, it has no biblical recitatives or narrator/evangelist. With little action other than the discovery of the empty tomb, it presents contemplative poetic texts.

Christoph Wolff writes, "On February 23, 1725 [Bach] performed the *Tafel-Music* BWV 249.1 [music lost] at the Weissenfels court for the birthday of Duke Christian; this was the original version of the *Easter Oratorio* BWV 249.3, first given at Leipzig the following April 1. BWV 249 represents the beginning of a long-standing collaboration with the fluent Leipzig poet Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander), the chief supplier of texts for Bach's later Leipzig vocal works.." See Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach. Grove Dictionary Online*, accessed 10 June 2025.

Martin Petzoldt writes, "A few weeks before the first performance of our work on Easter Day 1725, Bach wrote a tribute cantata entitled "Entfliehet, verschwindet, entweichet ihr Sorgen" (BWV 249a) for the birthday of Duke Christian of Weißenfels (1682–1736) on February 23. Since five movements were parodied and incorporated into the work for Easter Day, it can be assumed that Bach composed the birthday cantata with a view to reusing it for Easter." … Since the Weißenfels cantata was written by the Leipzig occasional poet Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700-1761), known as Picander, it can be assumed that the Easter work was also penned by him. See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:692–693, translated from the German original.

Concerning the overall form of the work, Petzoldt writes, "As in other oratorio works by Bach, three levels of text—the framework, the plot, and the contemplative level—must be differentiated for a sufficient understanding, and the clearly recognizable symmetrical structure centered on the aria in movement 6 [sic; this should be 7] must be taken into account as a theological key: The movements of the framework (movements 1–3 and 11) allude to the theme of the disciples' race to the tomb in John 20:4, "Come, hurry, run," but otherwise have their own character in their confession and praise of the risen Lord. Insofar as the texts are concerned, this is achieved by confessional statements (8 [Denn unser Heil ist auferweckt.]) and those of the Old and New Testament Easter typology, especially regarding the Lion of Judah (Gen 49:9–10; [final line]). The plot (movements 4, 6, 8, 10), later assigned to specific characters, is based on Bugenhagen's *Harmony*: the dialogue initially revolves around the empty tomb, later around the proclamation of the message of the resurrection. The dialogue begins with a rather un-Easter-like dispute about the meaning of anointing (movement 4), moves on to the discovery of the empty tomb (movement 5) and the longing for the risen Lord (movement 8), and ends with the confession of the resurrection (movement 10). The action level in the sense of a logical narrative structure should not be co-mingled with the contemplative level formed by the arias (movements 5, 7, 9): They accentuate the idea of honoring the dead through the anointing with myrrh and that of being honored in eternity with laurel (movement 5), the idea of forgiveness of sin through faith (movement 7), and the idea of a yearning love for the risen Christ, using phrases from the Song of Solomon (movement 9). Movement 7 is the center, the resurrection of Christ comes to fruition in believers' hope of the resurrection, as shown in the example of the believing Peter; incidentally, a small factual error has crept in here, for according to John 20:7–8, it is not Peter but John who already believed on the basis of seeing the empty tomb. However, there may be an underlying reference to the repentant Peter and the typology of Revelation 21 in the Passion story, as the middle section of the aria shows ['Ja, das wird mich dort erfrischen und die Zähren meiner Pein von den Wangen tröstlich wischen'].

Contemplative level:
7. Transformation of sorrow into consolation (T aria)

Action level:
8. Desire to see him (soprano/alto recitative/arioso)
6. Seeing the shroud (ATB recitative)

Contemplative level:
9. Swift reply of the believing soul (A aria)
5. Anxious longing of the fearful soul (S aria)

Action level:
10. Joy, forgetting the pain (B recitative)
4. Grief, heartache, tears (SATB recitative)

Frame
11. Lasting song of praise (Chorus)
1–3. Hurrying feet (Sinfonia, Adagio, TB aria & chorus)

The cantata is in chiastic form. Bach often used chiastic (x-shaped/symmetrical) forms, in which center movements (where the mirror image begins) provide the crux of the matter. There antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text).

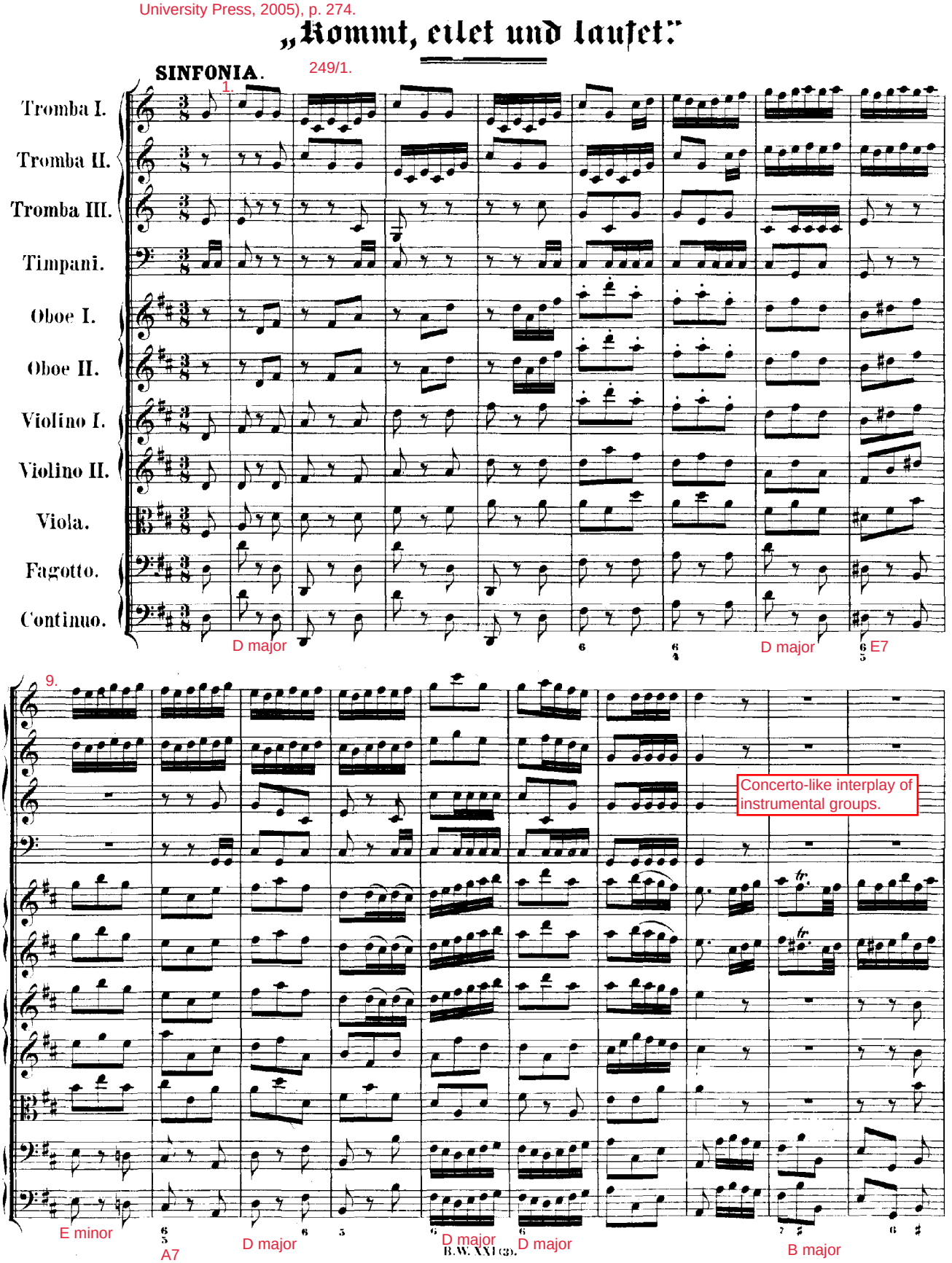
"With regard to the passages used in the Easter Oratorio, Bugenhagen's Gospel harmony links the following content (omissions in parentheses): John 20:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; Matthew 28:2–4; Mark 16:3, 4b, 4a; Luke 24:3; John 20:2a; Luke 24:4–9, 10d, 11; John 20:2–10; Luke 24:12d; John 20:11–17; Mark 16:9–11 (Mark 16:5; Matthew 28:2b; Mark 16:6; Matthew 28:6–7); Matthew 28:8 (Mark 16:8b; Matthew 28:8c.9–15); Luke 24:13–35; Luke 24:36–48."

See Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 2:693–694, translated from the German original.

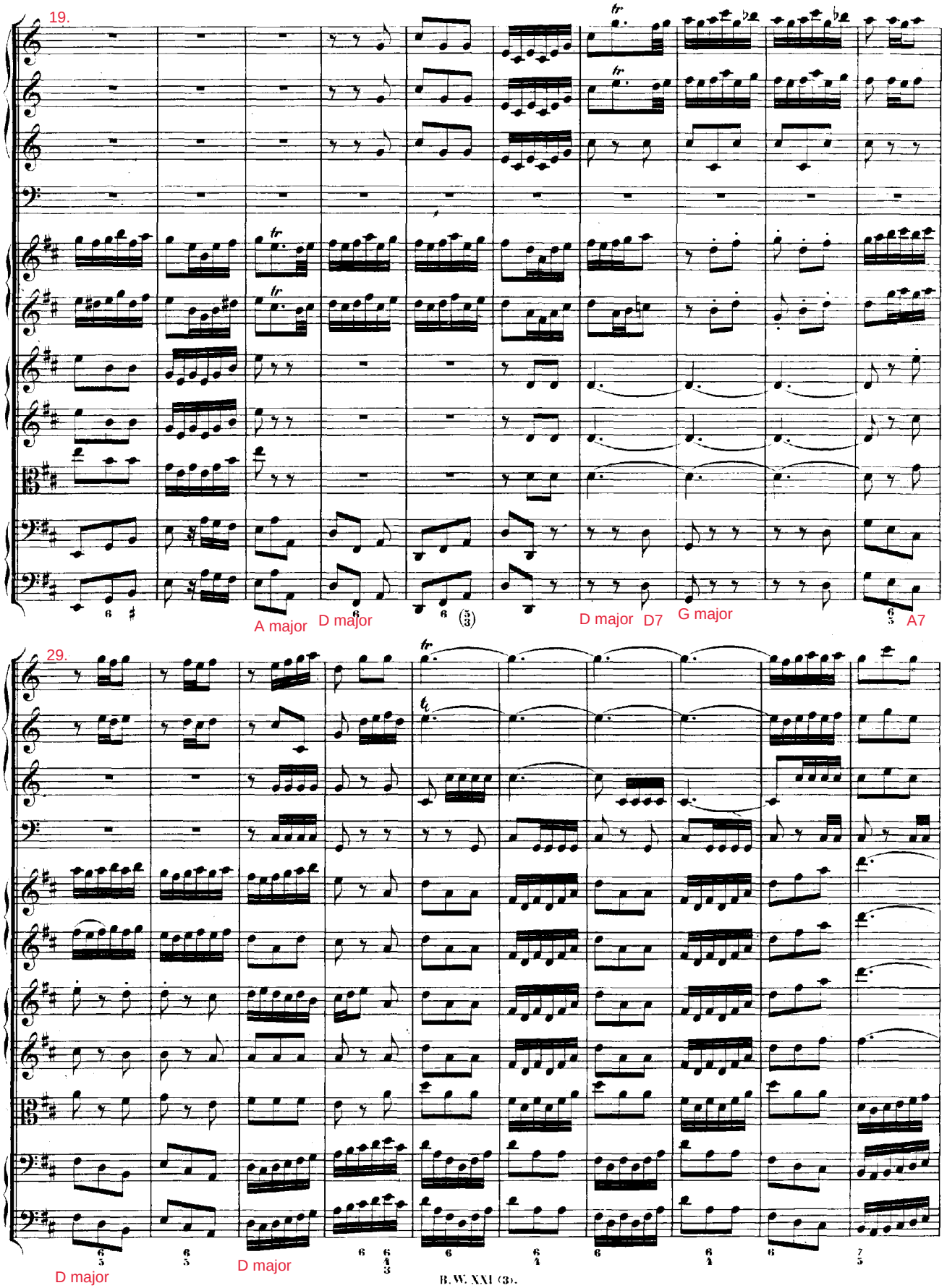
Alfred Dürr writes, "The sacred paraphrase…follows its [secular] model so closely that the arias and the closing chorus could be adopted in the same order, and only the recitatives had to be composed afresh. The shepherds and shepherdesses who congratulated Duke Christian on his birthday now become the disciples who hasten to Jesus's grave." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 273–274.

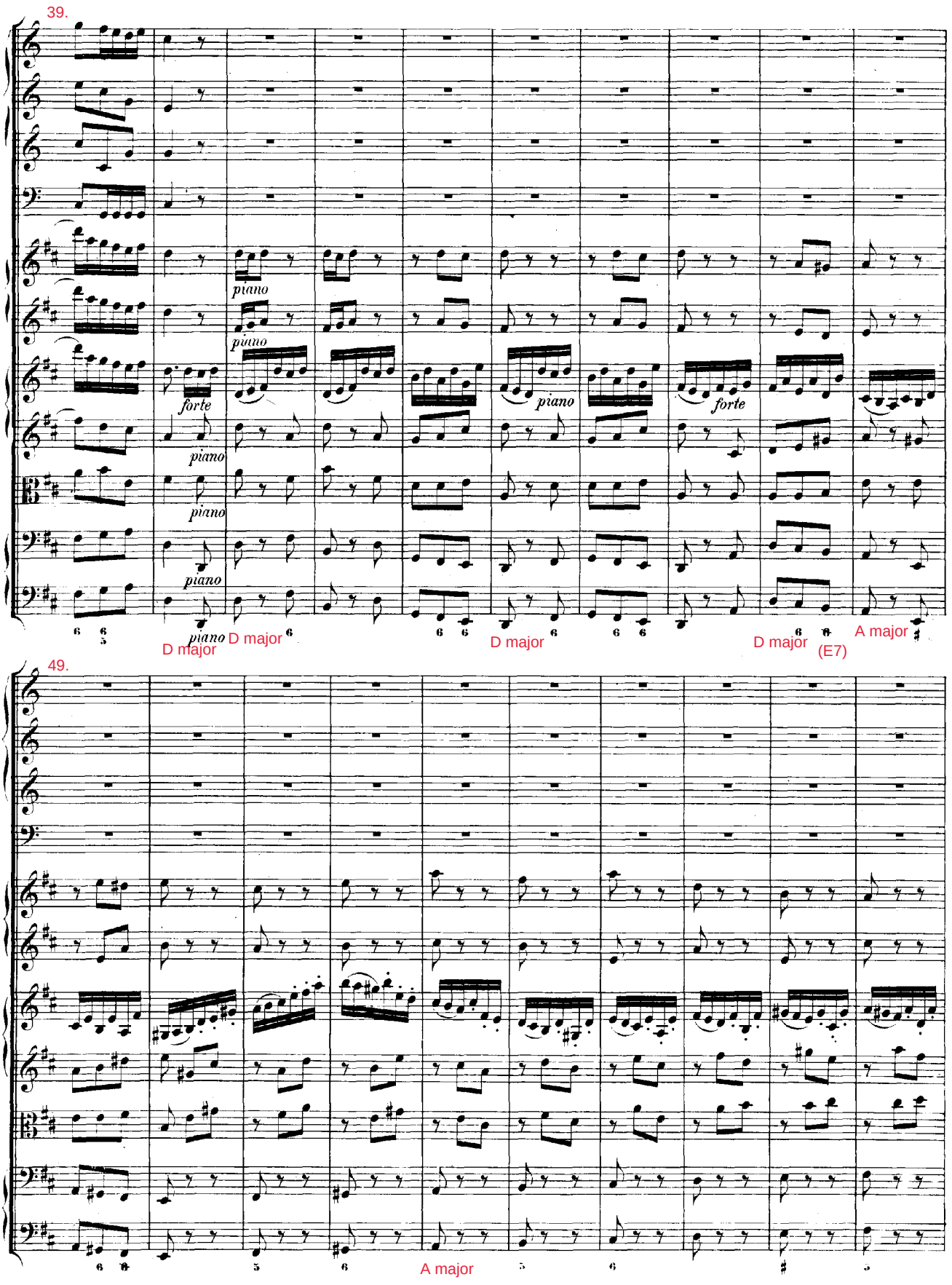
Instrumentation:
Tromba I, II, III
Timp
Flauto dolce (recorder) I, II
Flauto traverso
Oboe I, II, also Oboe d'amore I
Vln I, II
Vla
SATB
Fagotto
Continuo

Alfred Dürr writes, “The work is introduced by two concerto-like movements, formerly considered remnants of a lost instrumental work from the Cöthen period, of which the third movement of the oratorio was thought to have formed the finale. This view has recently been rejected, however, on the grounds that the internal structure of the three movements concerned is quite unlike that of Bach’s concertos. See J. Rifkin, ‘Verlorene Quellen, verlorene Werke: Miszellen zu Bachs Instrumentalkomposition,’ in M. Geck and W. Breig, eds, *Bachs Orchesterwerke* [conference report, Dortmund, 1996) (Witten, 1997), 59–75 (specifically 74, note 57). See also the more recent discussion in S. Rampe and D. Sackmann, *Bachs Orchestermusik: Entstehung – Klangwelt – Interpretation* (Kassel, 2000), 466, note 2.” See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 274.

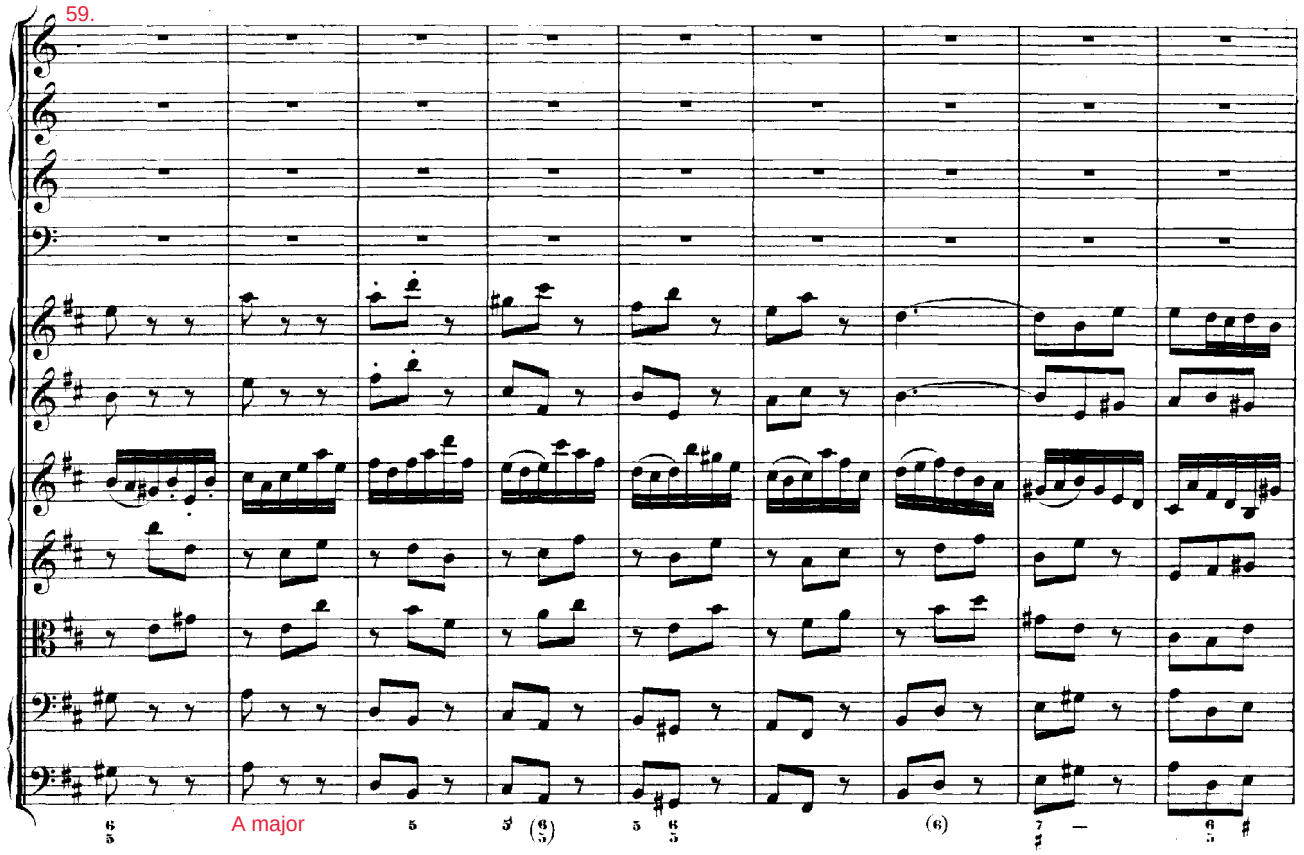


Konrad Küster writes, "The music pursues various harmonic goals, but each of these phases is opened in the same key of D major with a ritornello motive. A first episode, in which the solo function falls to the first violin, aims at A major [mm. 40–72], while a second, dominated by the typical wind trio of the French overture (2 oboes, bassoon), aims at F-sharp minor [mm. 85–121); immediately afterwards, Bach brings back the D major motive of the ritornello opening. The music of a third episode, which leads to the final ritornello, is later loosened up and also includes the trumpets (bars 157ff, 192ff). In any case, the structure is designed with this in mind: “Its almost rondo-like structure, with its constant return to the tonic key (that of the trumpets), becomes understandable only in view of the limited tonal possibilities of a natural-tone instrument.” (See Konrad Küster, ed., *Bach Handbuch* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999), p. 472, translated from the German original.

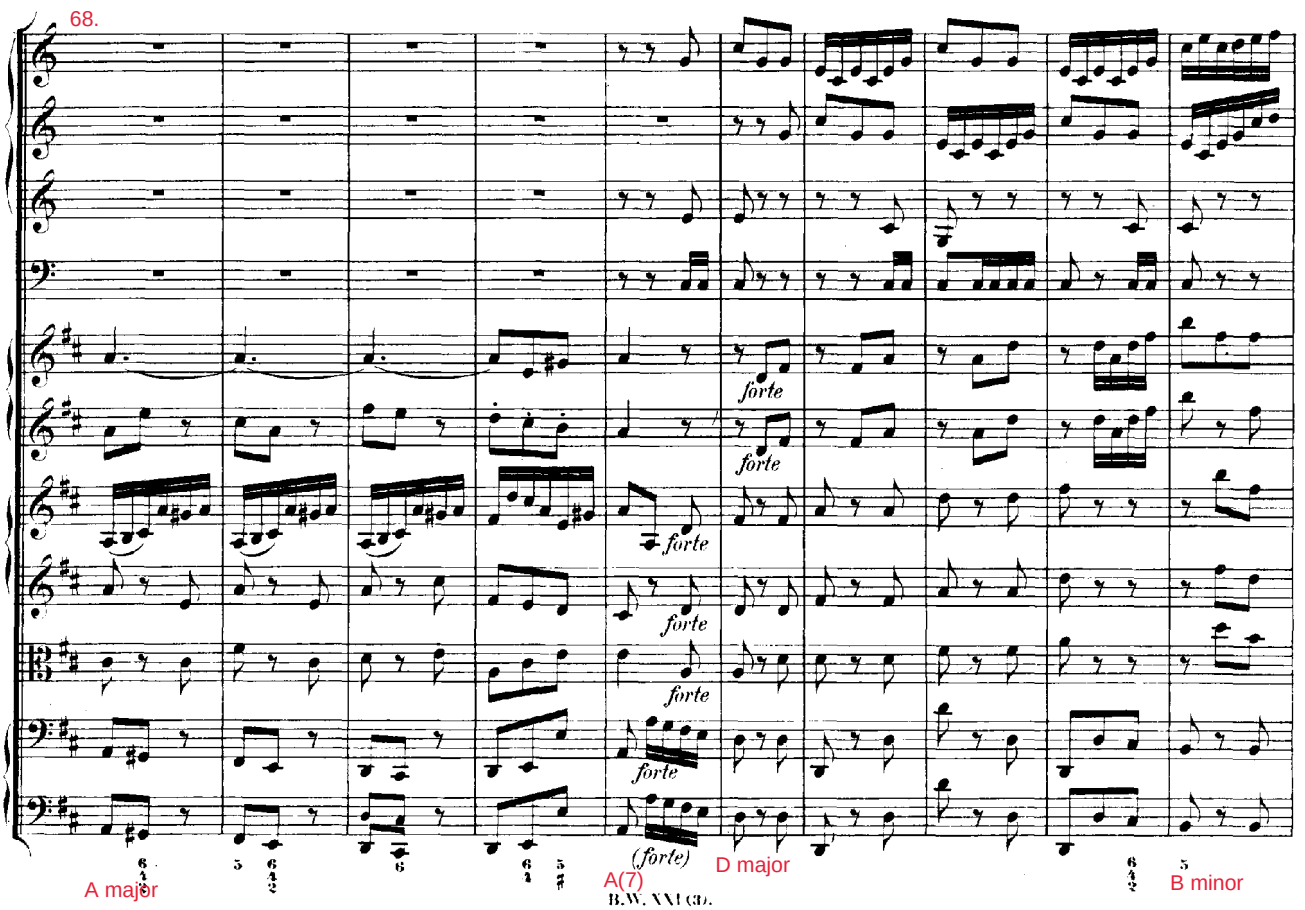

19.
A major
D major
D major
D7
G major
A7
29.
D major
D major

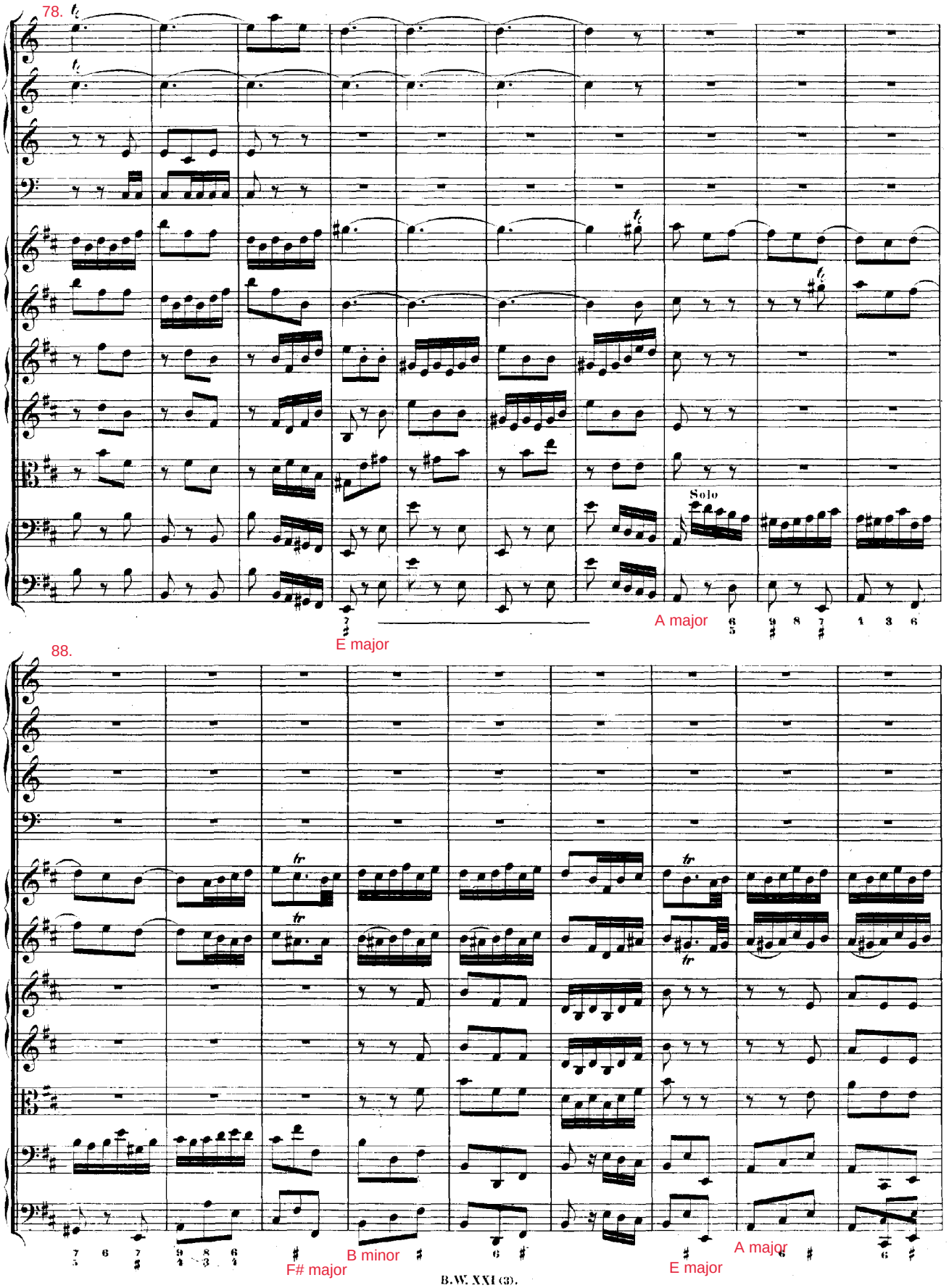

39.
piano
forte
piano
piano
piano
piano
forte
D major
D major
D major
D major
(E7)
A major
49.
A major

59.


A major

68.


forte
forte
forte
forte
forte
forte
(forte)
A major
A(7)
D major
B minor

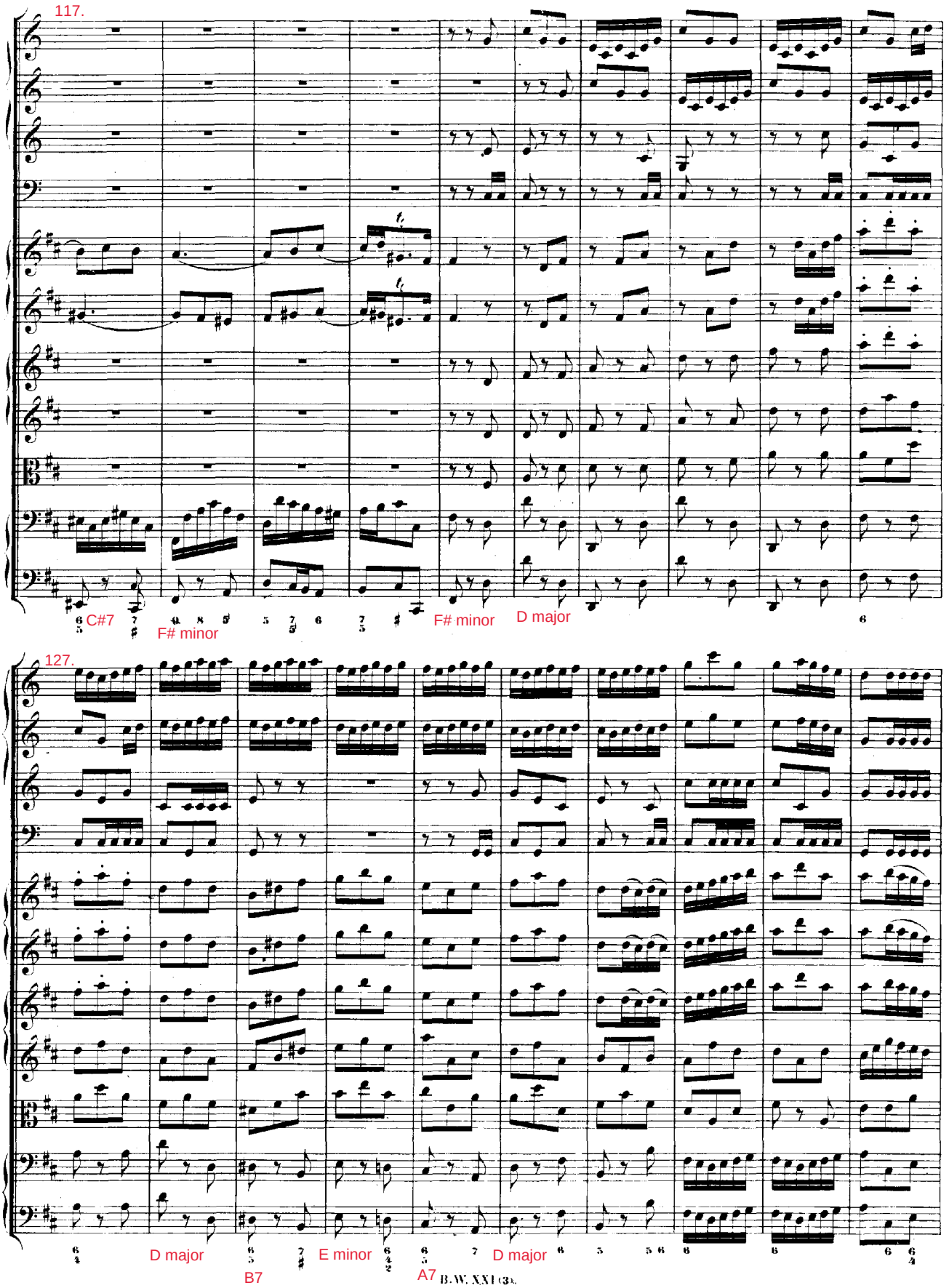

78.
Solo
E major
A major
88.
F# major
B minor
E major
A major

97.

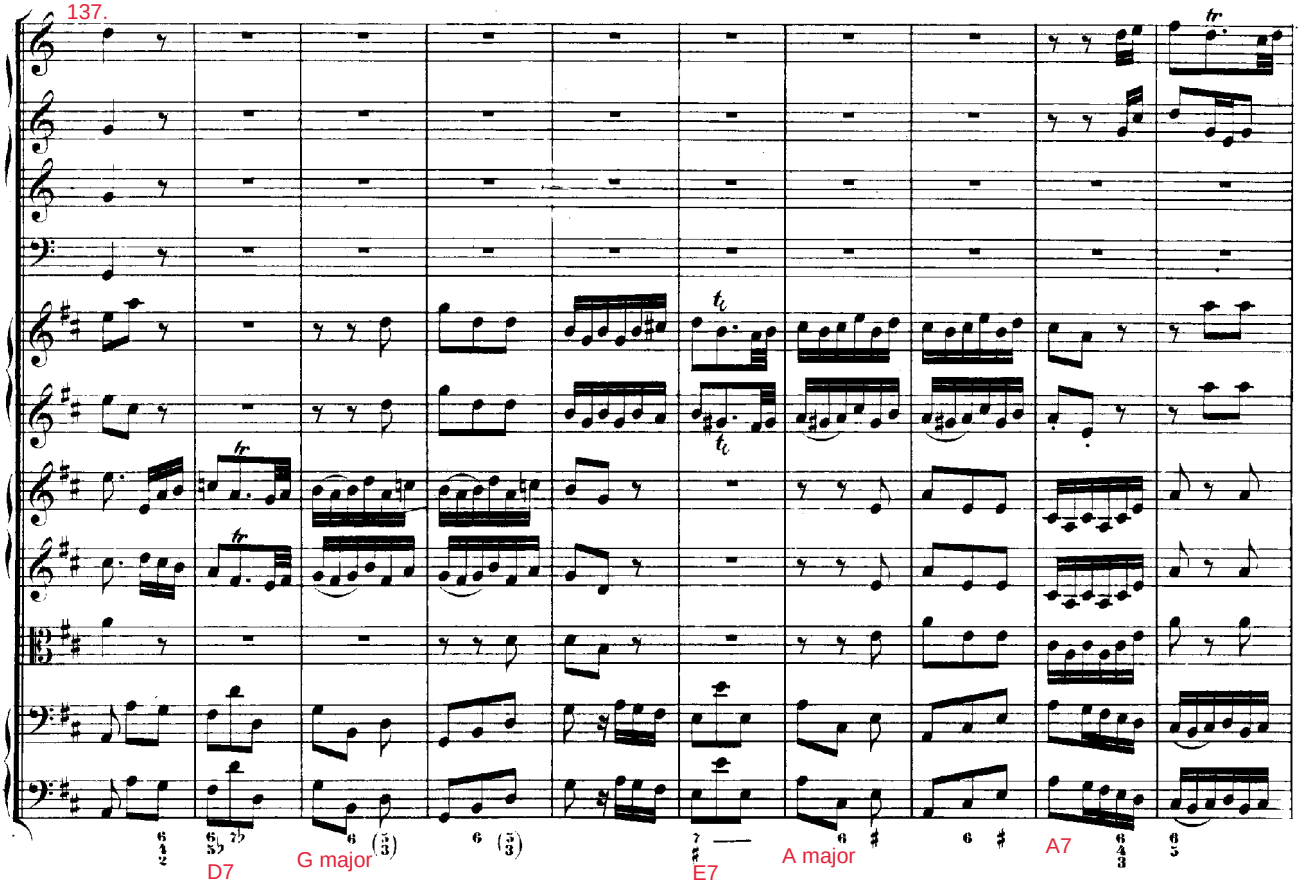
A major

107.

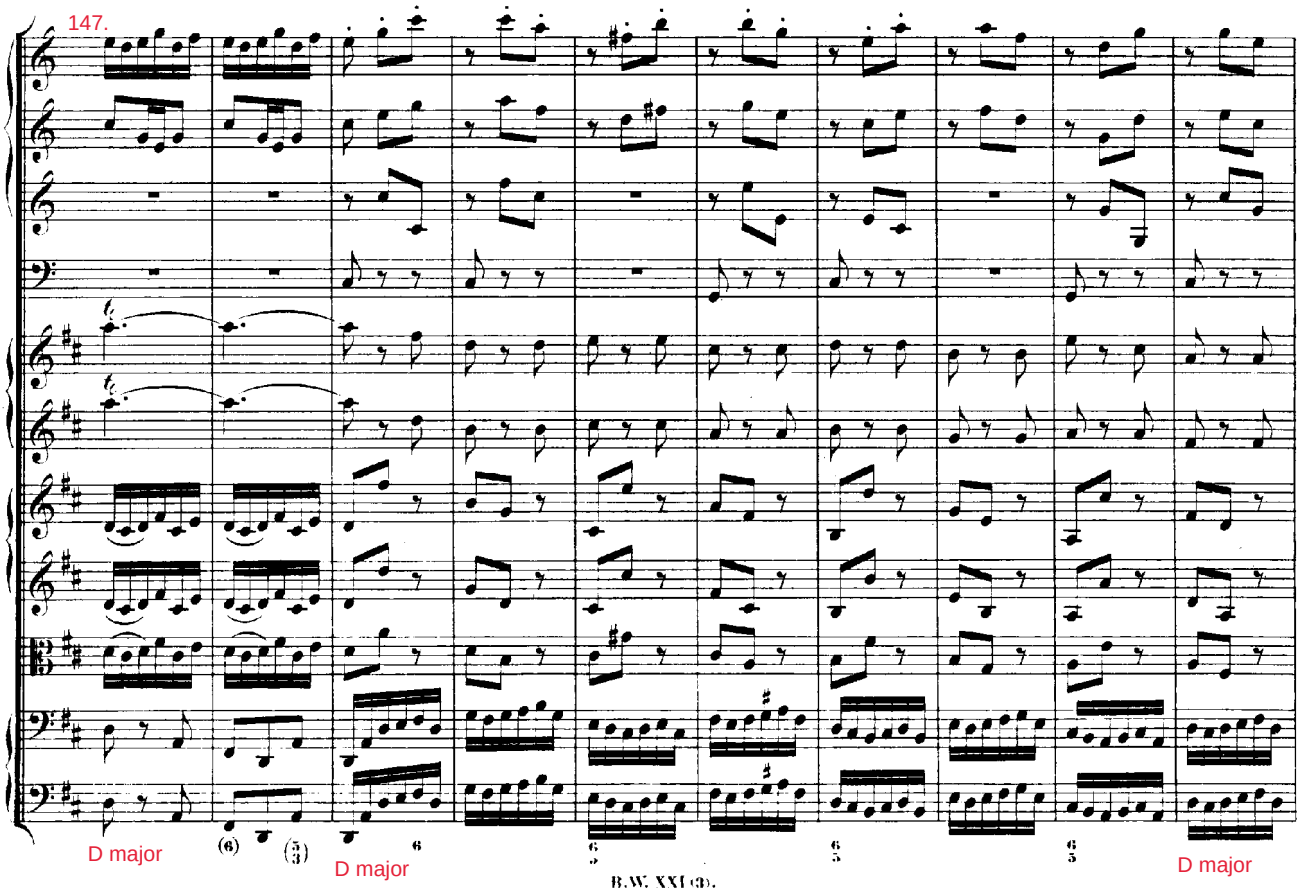
C#7 F# minor B minor E7 A major

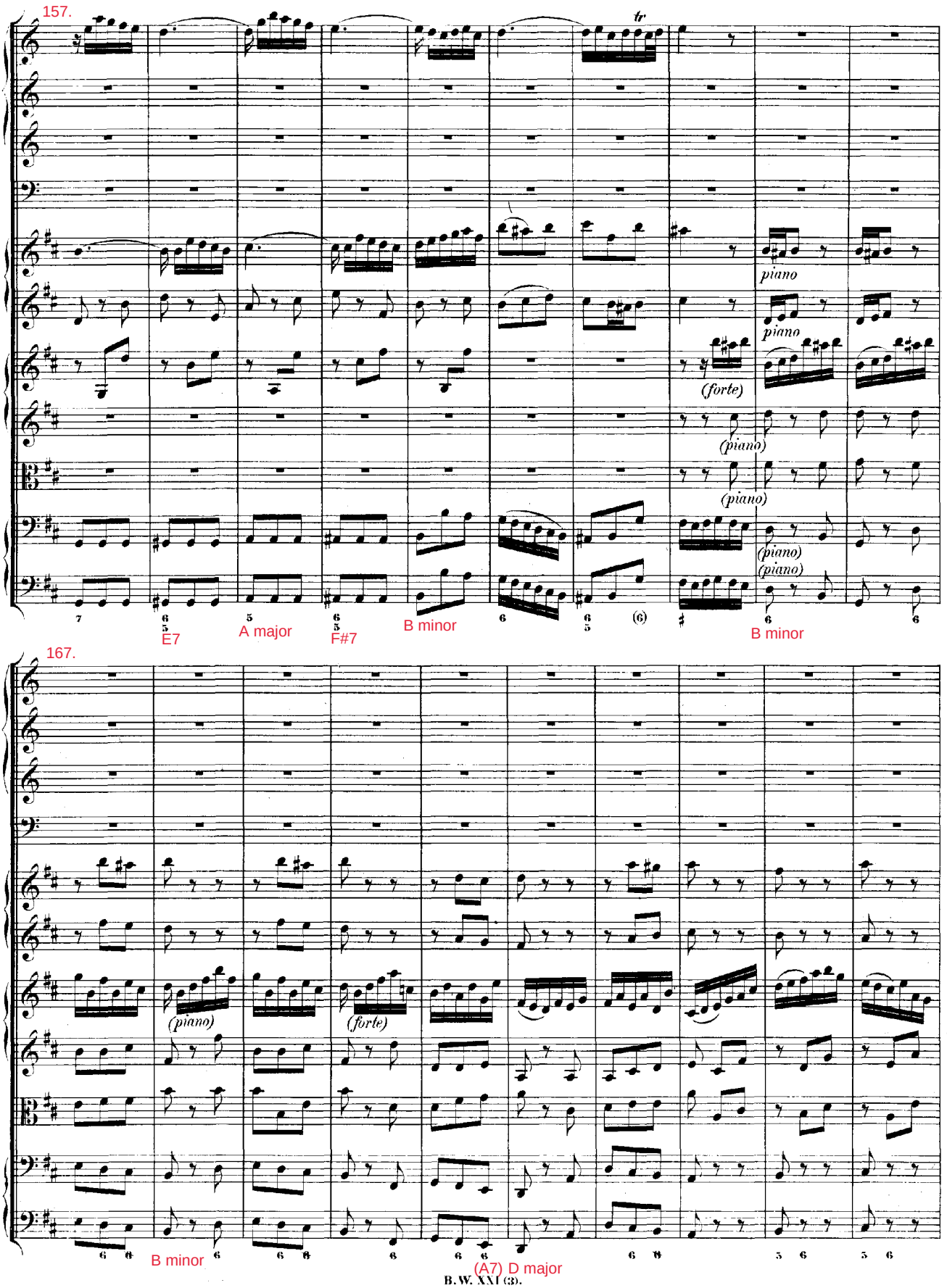

117.
C#7
F# minor
F# minor
D major
127.
D major
E minor
B7
D major
A7

137.

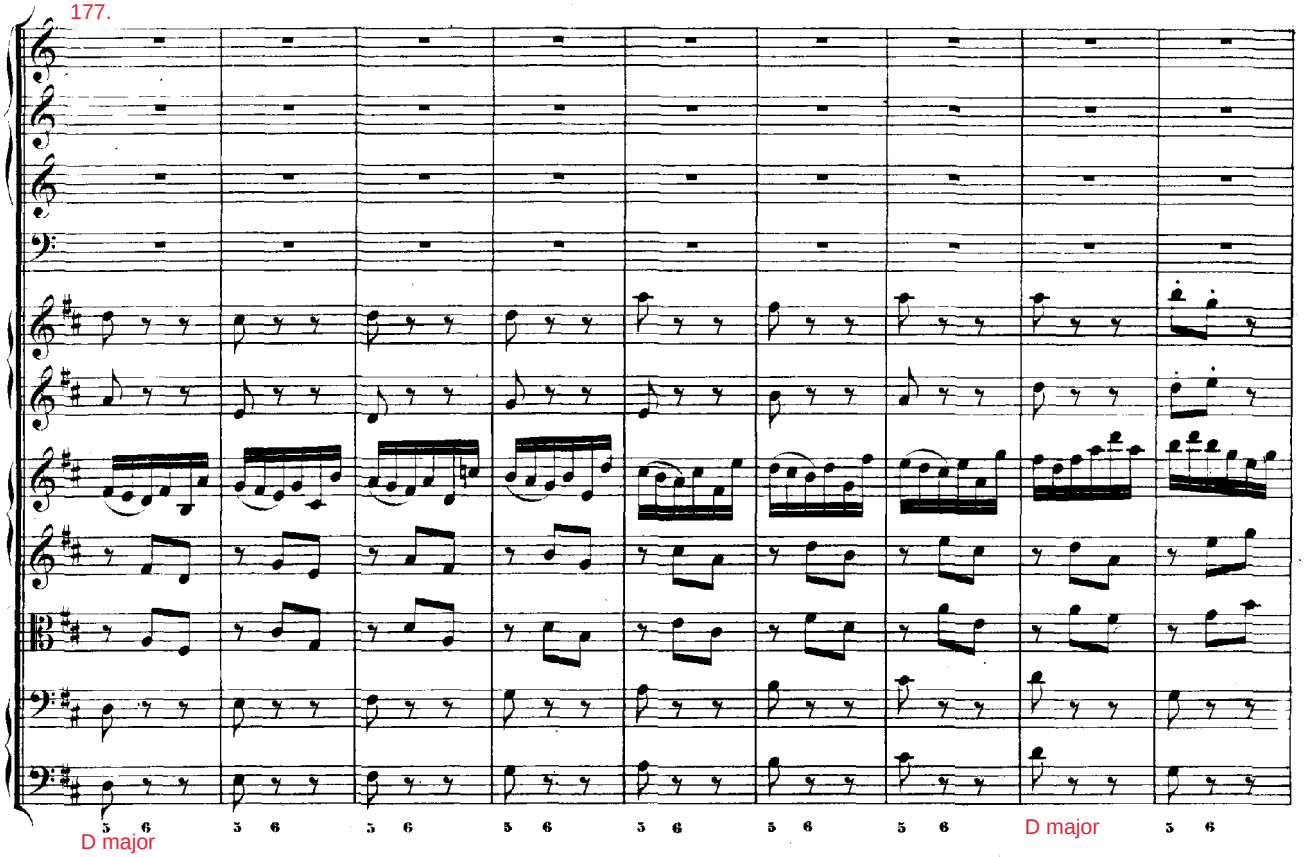


147.

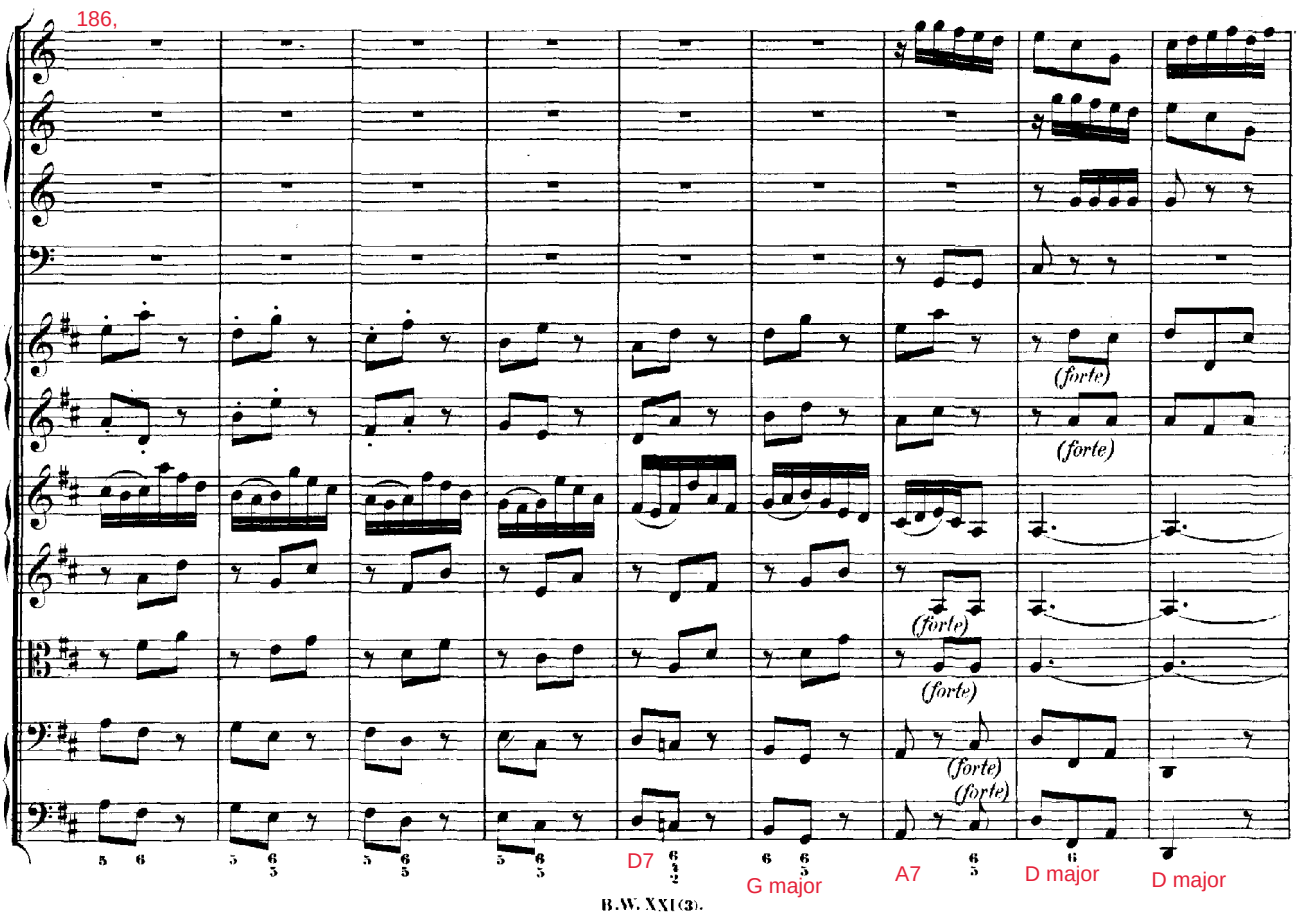


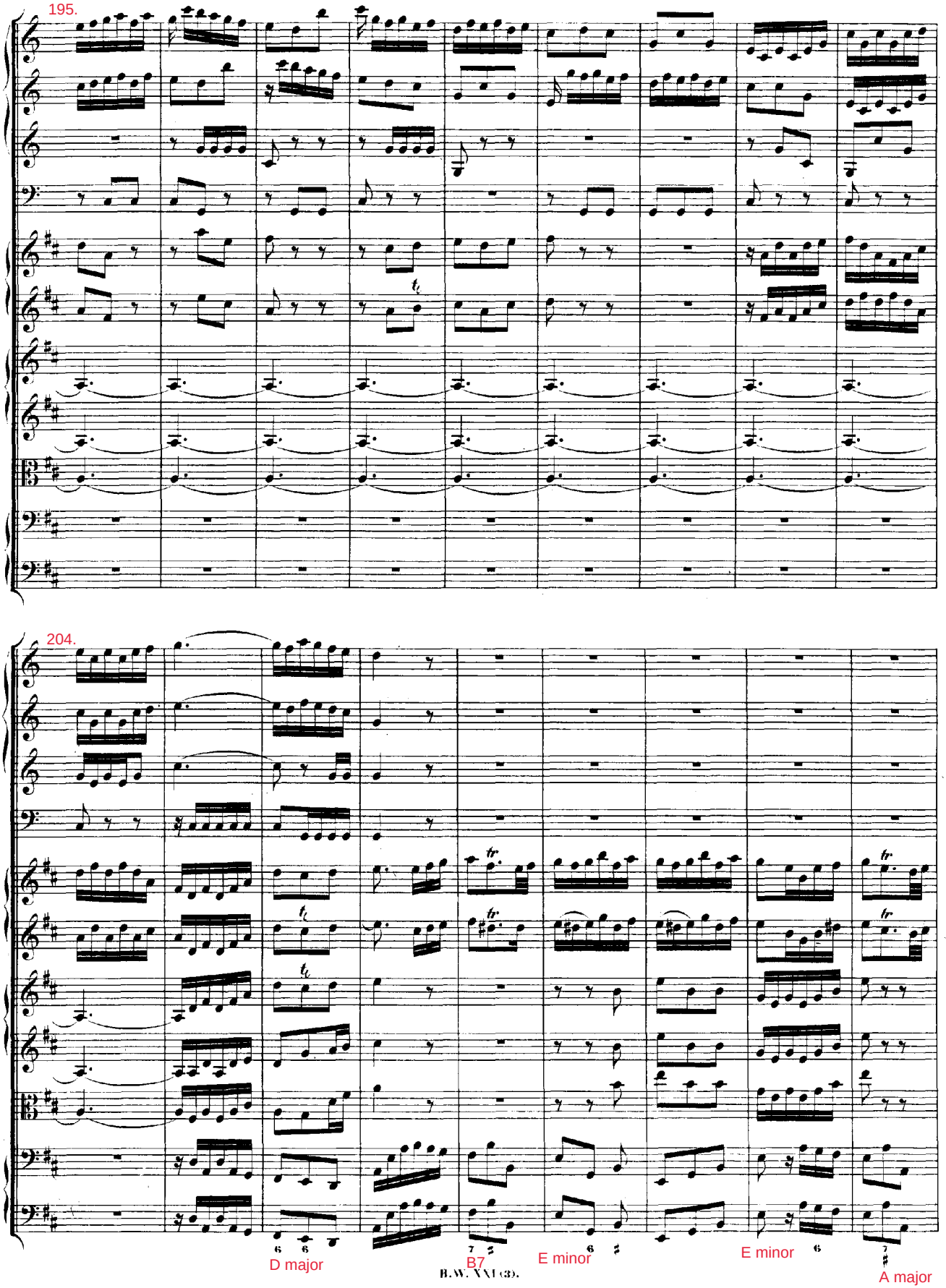

157.
tr
piano
piano
(forte)
(piano)
(piano)
(piano)
(piano)
E7
A major
F#7
B minor
B minor
167.
(piano)
(forte)
B minor
(A7) D major

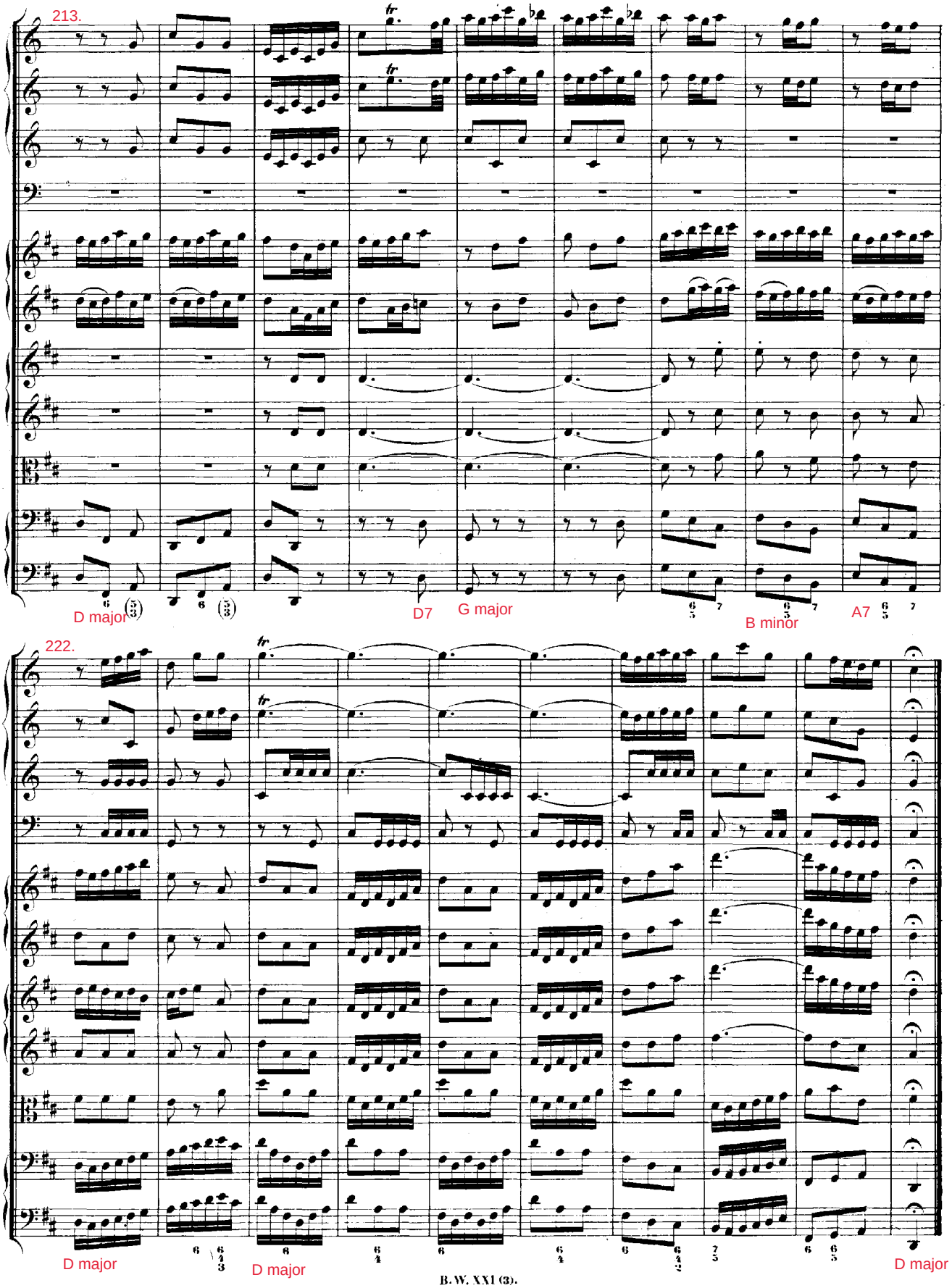
177.


D major
D major

186.


(forte)
(forte)
(forte)
(forte)
(forte)
(forte)
D7
G major
A7
D major
D major


195.
204.
D major
B7
E minor
E minor
A major

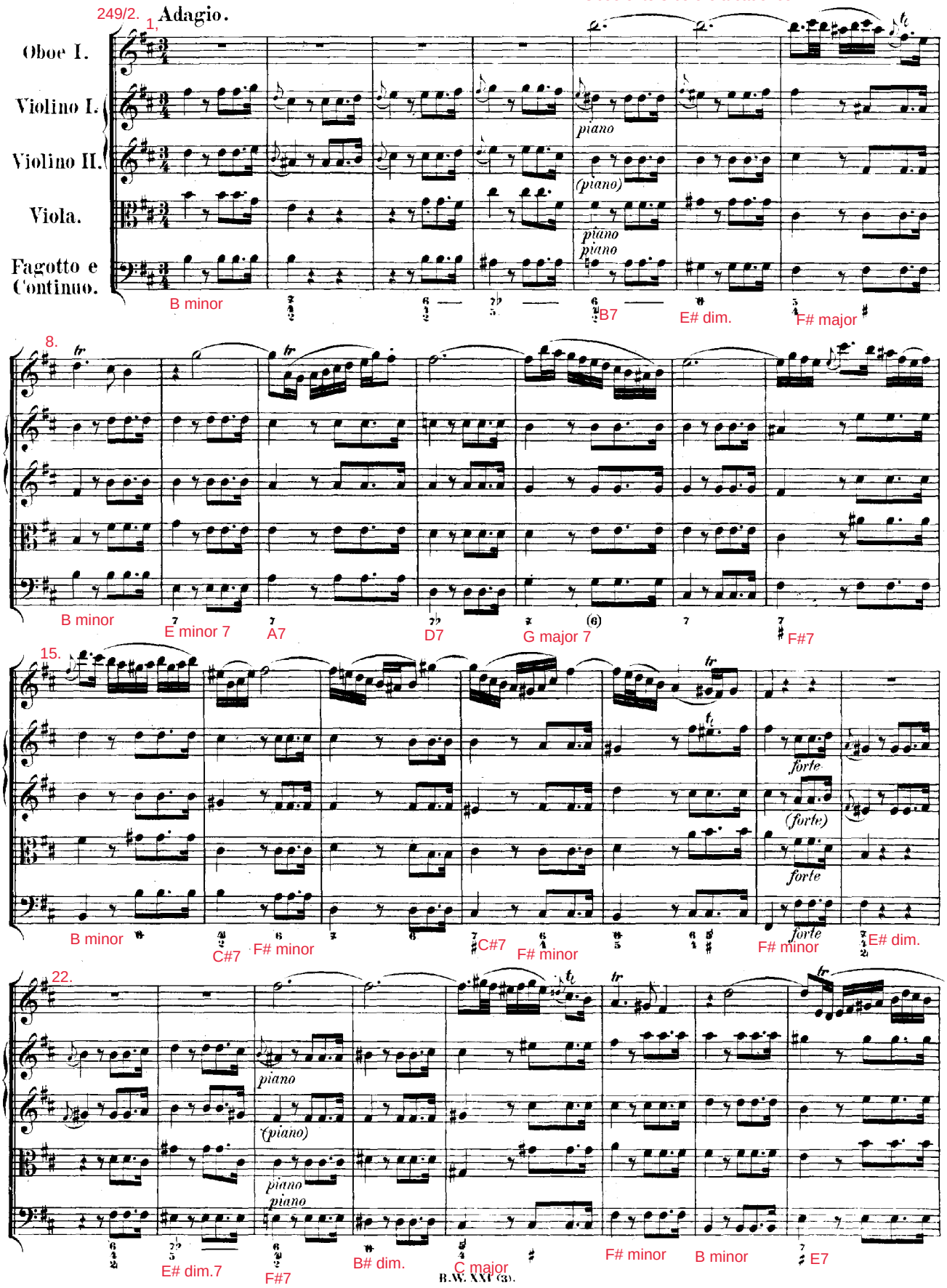


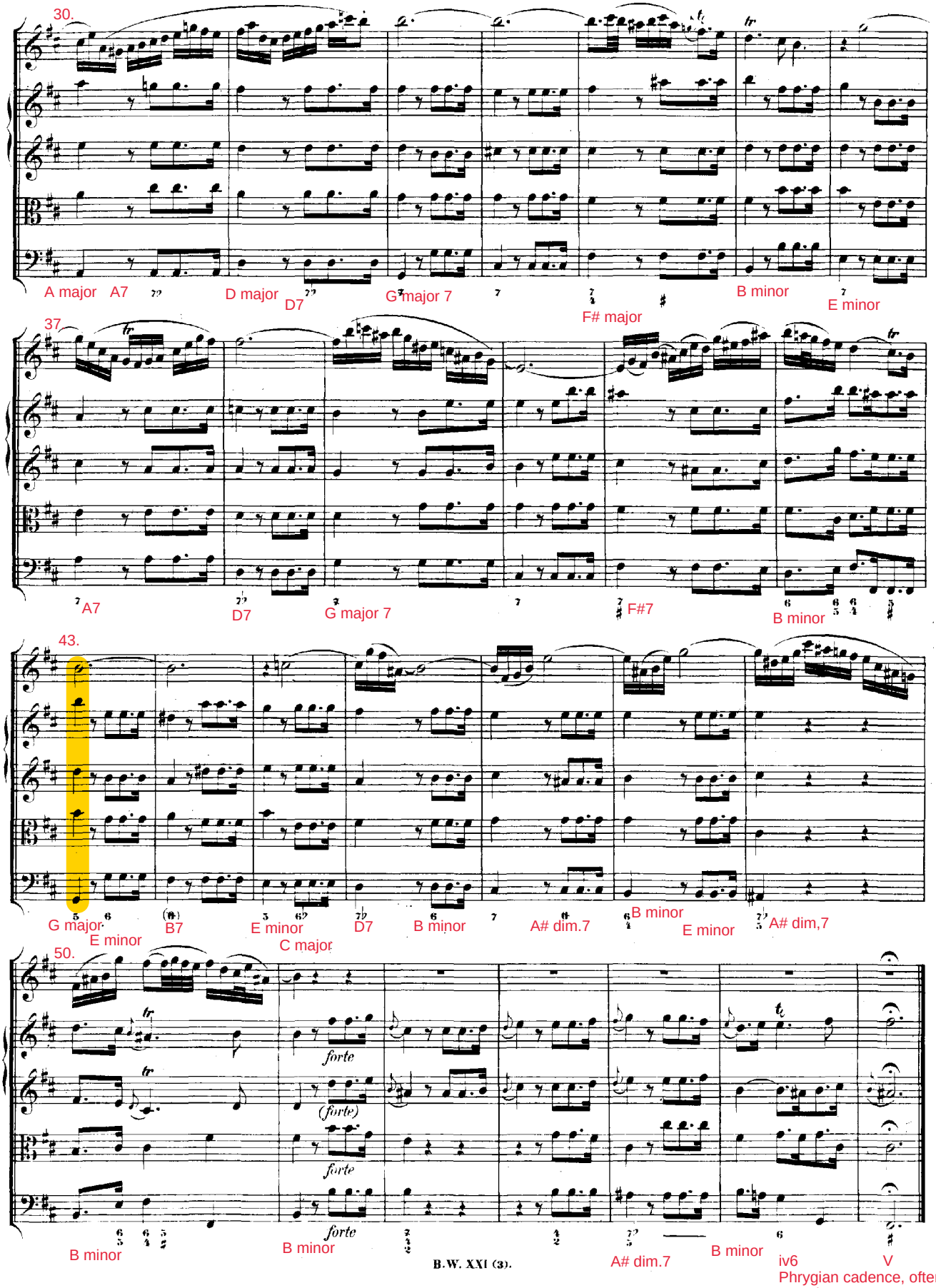
Martin Petzoldt writes, “[A] first choral movement could follow immediately, but instead we have movement 2, Adagio, another instrumental movement in the parallel key of B minor, contrasting in rhythm and compositional technique. In four bars, the strings provide a dotted basic rhythm with harmonic shifts, which then continues unabated throughout the entire movement. The continuo part soon breaks away from the organ-point-like fundamental tone and descends in semitones. From bar 5, an obbligato oboe part spreads out over this texture (the later version between 1743 and 1746 uses a transverse flute), whose part consists partly of long sustained notes and ornamented coloratura motives, creating a mood in “wide-ranging, expressive melodic lines” [Küster] that will recur throughout the oratorio

contrast to the previous movement. Unlike in Cantata BWV 31, which is a theologically balanced presentation of the theme of resurrection, the librettist of our in cantata draws his essential statements from the emotional contrast between sorrow and joy; however, he combines this functional emotionality with the theological and biblical content of the Easter message. This is represented by these two instrumental movements." See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:695, translated from the German original.

While the first movement aptly portrays the joy of Easter, the second movement appears to reflect the bereft sorrow that preceded the resurrection.

Oboe enters before a cadence.



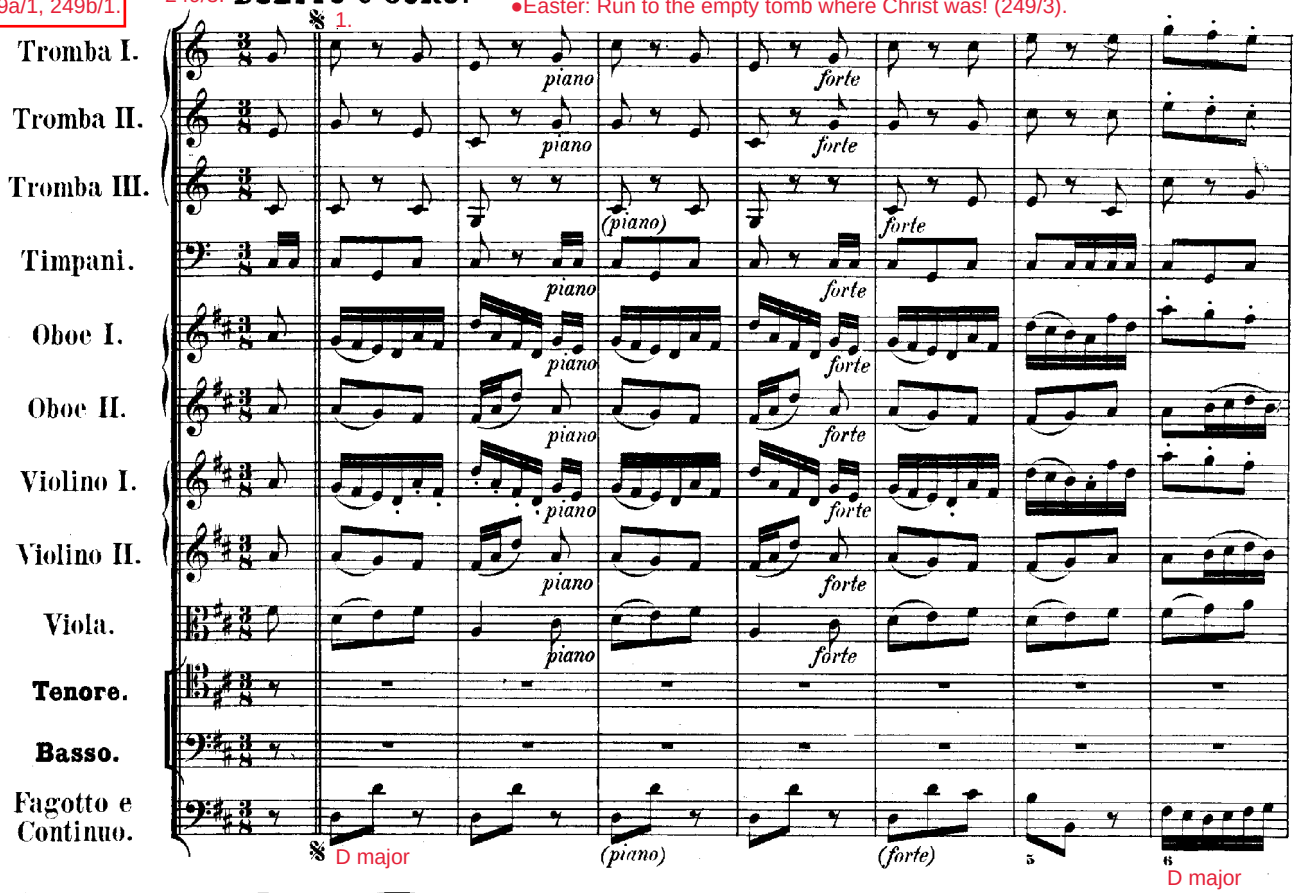


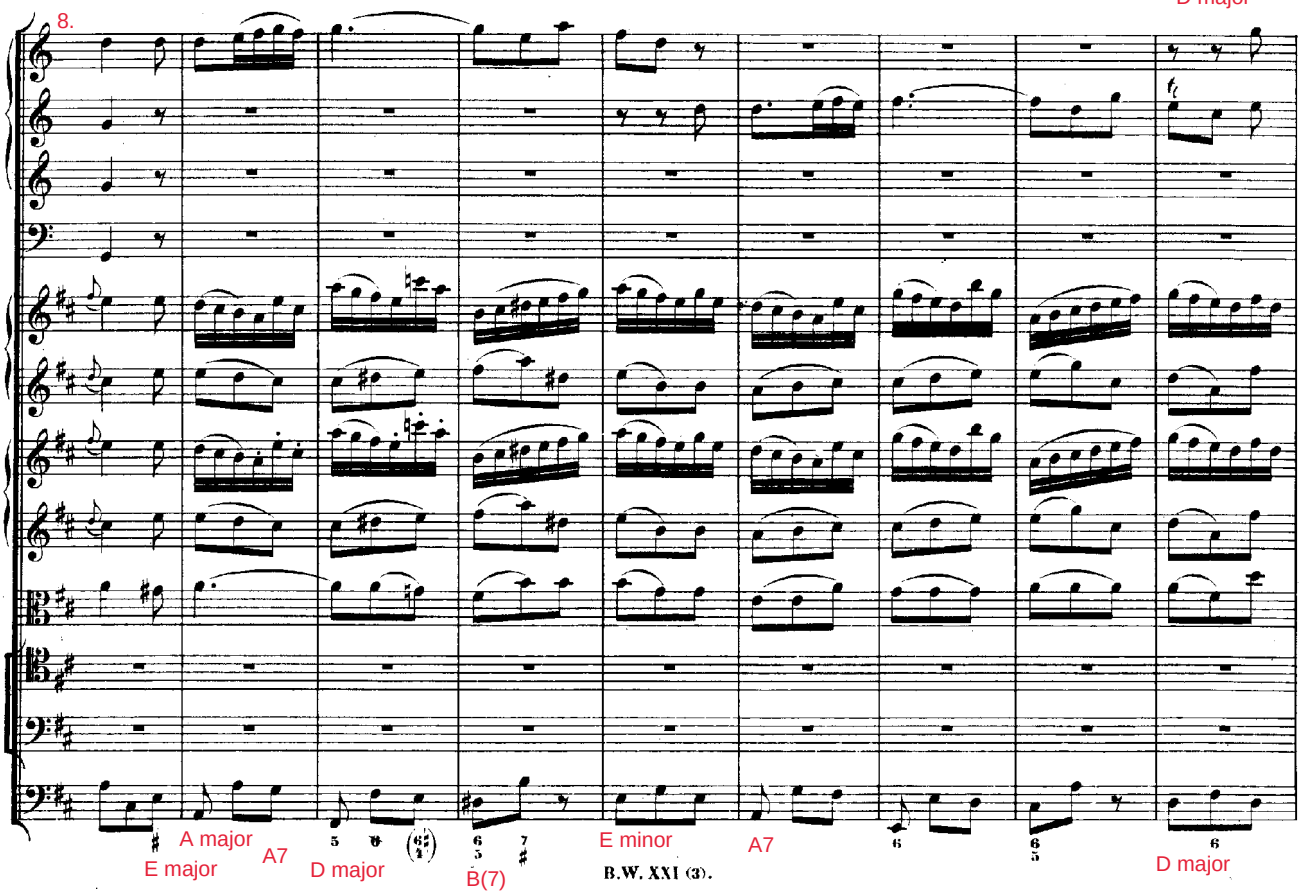
Note: In the 1725 version, no. 3 is a duet. Bach later rearranged the duet for SATB chorus (ca. 1743–1746). In the 19th-century edition Wilhelm Rust edited the work for the Bach-Gesellschaft, "[uniting] the two versions, but only to avoid printing the work twice, not to establish an unauthorized version for our use." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 273. Other cantatas that include movements in which Bach added voices to a previous work include BWV 173, 184, and 74.

As noted, this Bach-Gesellschaft edition attaches the choral version, which should be excised (beginning at m. 161).
From the perspective of a chronological narrative, the movement is illogical because the text implies that the disciples already understand Jesus' resurrection to have occurred. It was perhaps to mitigate this impression and clarify the movement's framing function in a symmetrical form that Bach later rearranged the movement as a chorus (see Petzoldt's outline above). Still, the running 16th notes seem to depict the fleet feet of Peter and John (perhaps also Mary Magdalene). See note.

Compare 249a/1, 249b/1.

249/3. **DUETTO ~~e CORO~~.** (Peter & John) (Later version SATB)
●Easter: Run to the empty tomb where Christ was! (249/3).





Since the work served three different occasions, with three different librettos, a comparison of the texts for this movement is illuminating (see note). Narrative context for the two secular cantatas is presented in Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 2:696–697.

"Fine" should be at m. 120 (see note regarding correct da capo marking at m. 160).

17.

piano

piano

piano

piano

piano

Kommt, ei – –

D major

G# dim.7

G7

D major

A7

D major

D major

D major

26.

Kommt, ei – – let und lau – – fet, kommt,

– let und lau – – fet, kommt, ei – – let und

D major

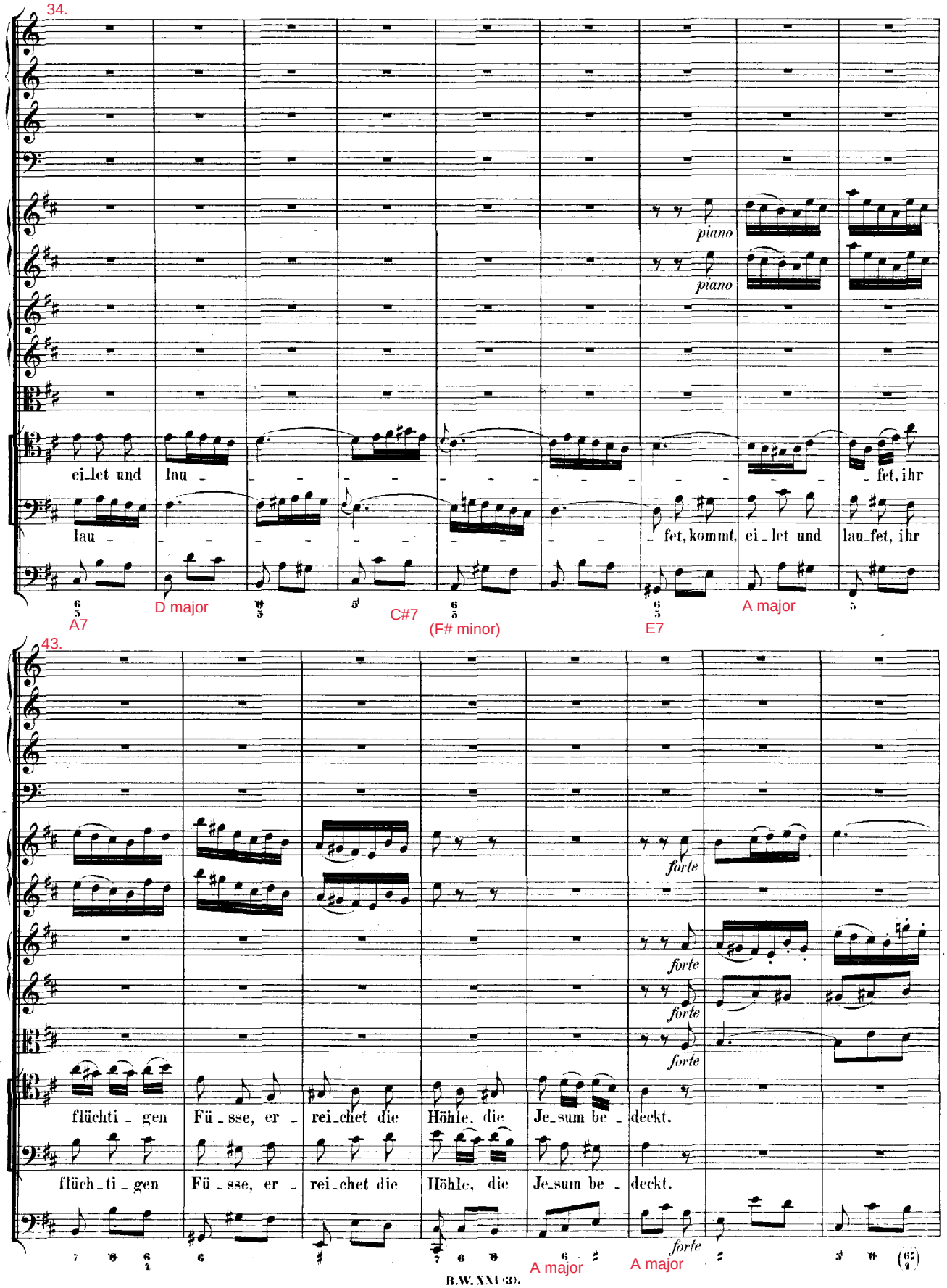
(E7)

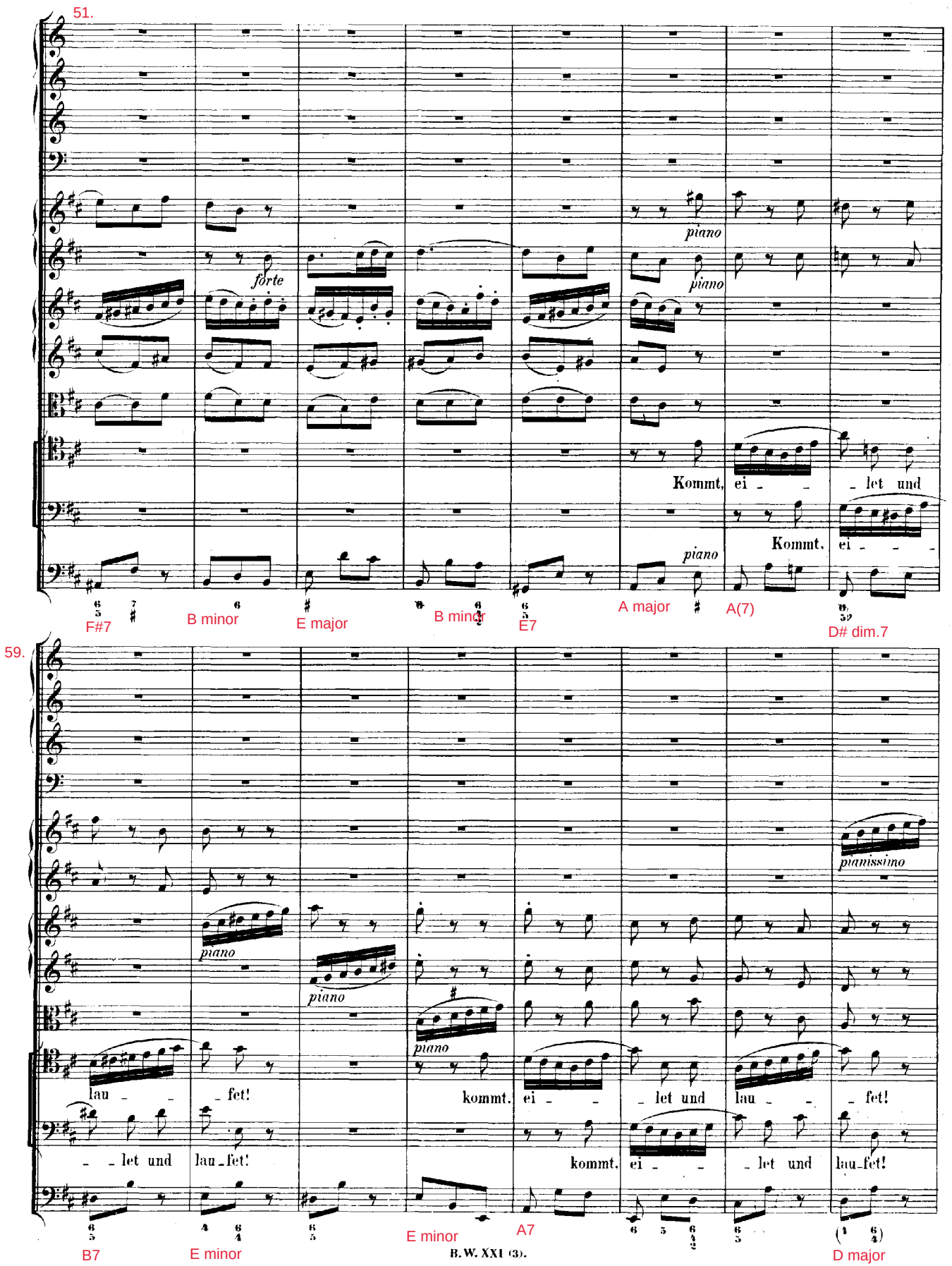
A major

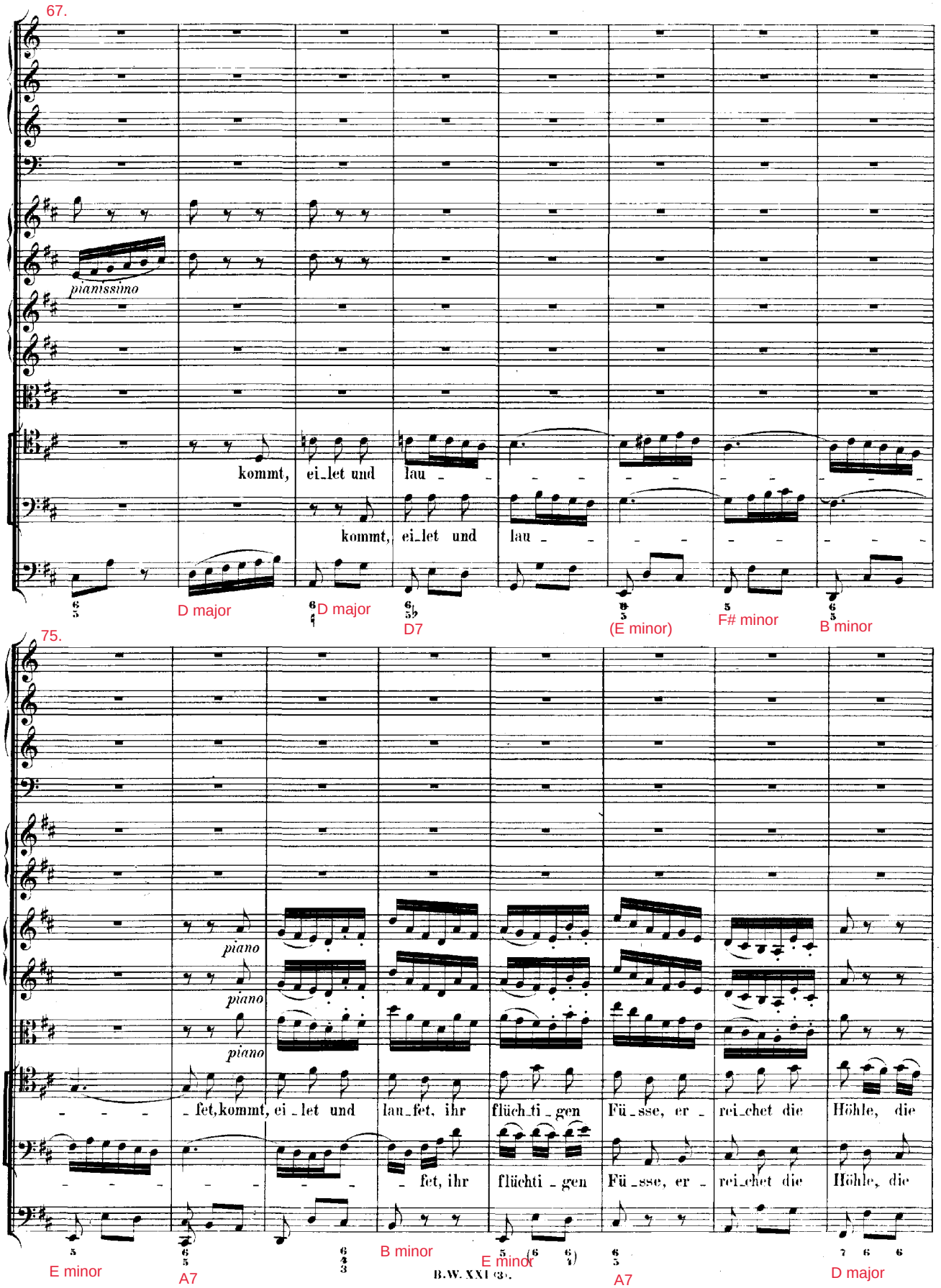
A major

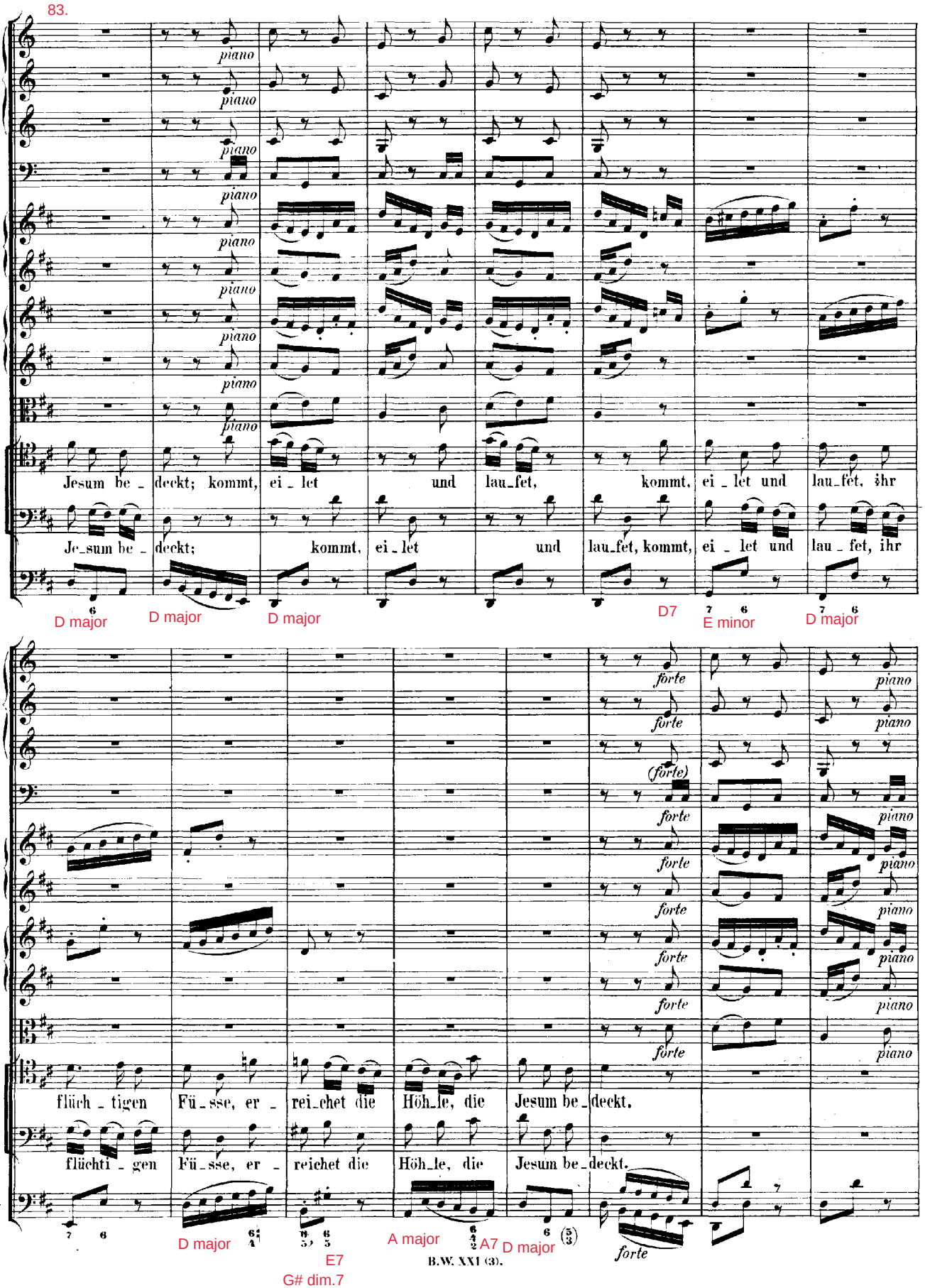
(B7)

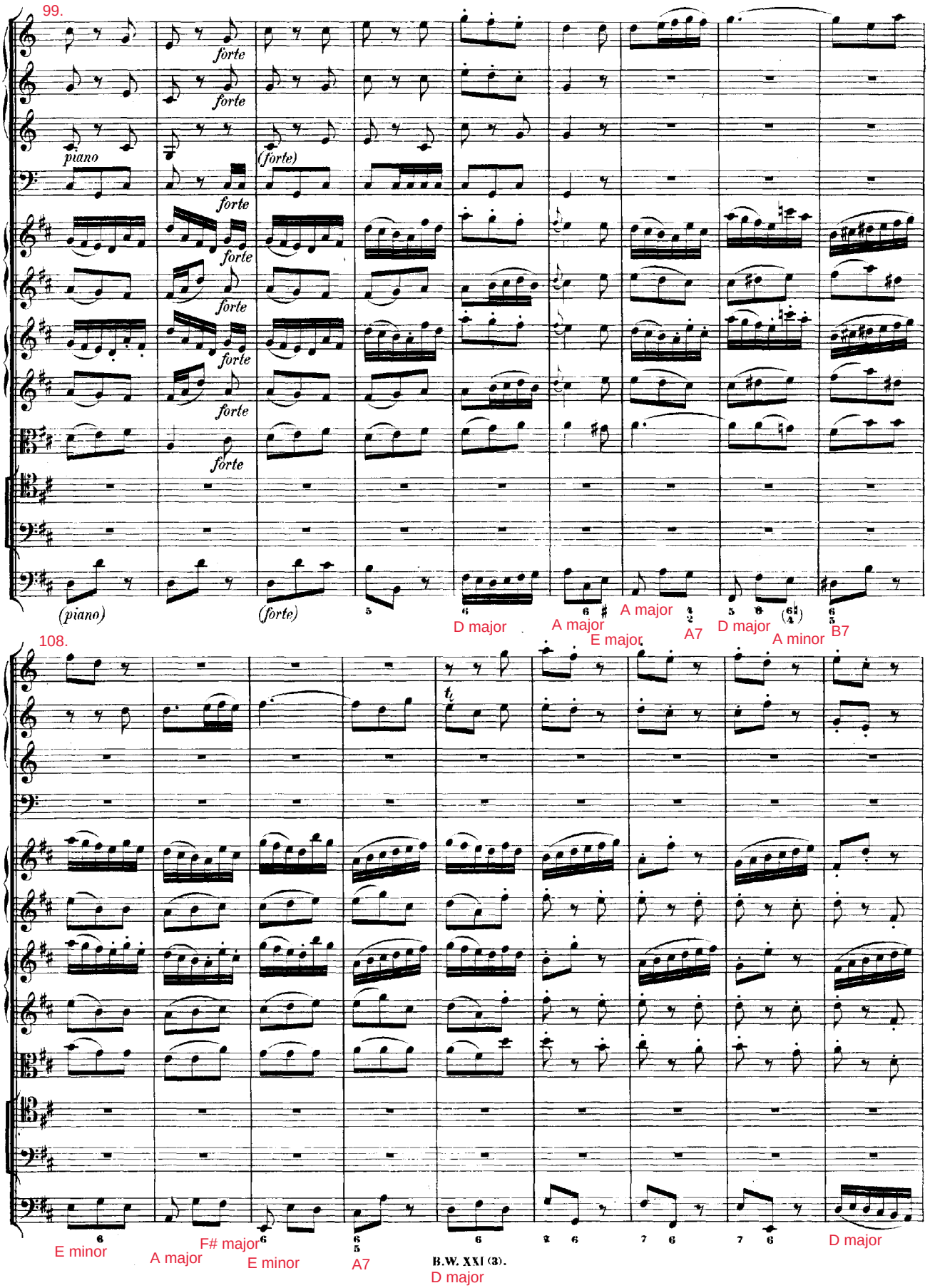
E minor


34.
piano
piano
ei_let und
lau _
_ fet, ihr
lau _
_ fet, kommt,
ei _ let und
lau_fet, ihr
A7
D major
C#7
(F# minor)
E7
A major
43.
forte
forte
forte
forte
flüchti _ gen
Fü _ sse, er _
rei_chet die
Höhle, die
Je_sum be _
deckt.
flüch_ti _ gen
Fü _ sse, er _
rei_chet die
Höhle, die
Je_sum be _
deckt.
A major
A major


51.
forte
piano
piano
piano
Kommt, ei - - let und
Kommt, ei - - -
59.
piano
piano
piano
pianissimo
lau - - fet!
kommt, ei - - let und lau - - fet!
- - let und lau - fet!
kommt, ei - - let und lau - fet!
F#7
B minor
E major
B minor
E7
A major
A(7)
D# dim.7
B7
E minor
E minor
A7
D major


67.
pianissimo
kommt, ei_let und lau _ _
kommt, ei_let und lau _ _
D major
D major
D7
(E minor)
F# minor
B minor
75.
piano
piano
piano
_ fet, kommt, ei _ let und lau_fet, ihr flüch_ti _ gen Fü _ sse, er _ rei_chet die Höhle, die
_ fet, ihr flüchti _ gen Fü _ sse, er _ rei_chet die Höhle, die
E minor
A7
B minor
E minor
A7
D major


83.
piano
Jesum be - deckt; kommt, ei - let und lau-fet, kommt, ei - let und lau-fet, ihr
Je-sum be - deckt; kommt, ei - let und lau-fet, kommt, ei - let und lau - fet, ihr
D major
D major
D major
D7
E minor
D major
91.
forte
piano
(forte)
flüch - tigen Fü - sse, er - rei-chet die Höh-le, die Jesum be-deckt.
flüchti - gen Fü - sse, er - reichet die Höh-le, die Jesum be-deckt.
D major
E7
G# dim.7
A major
A7
D major
forte


99.
forte
piano
(forte)
(piano)
D major
A major
E major
A major
A7
D major
A minor
B7
108.
E minor
A major
F# major
E minor
A7
D major
D major

(Fine) B Section.

117.

piano

piano

Text painting: Melismas in parallel 3rds suggest sweet laughter.

La - - - - - - chen und Scher - -

La - - - - - - chen und Scher - -

piano

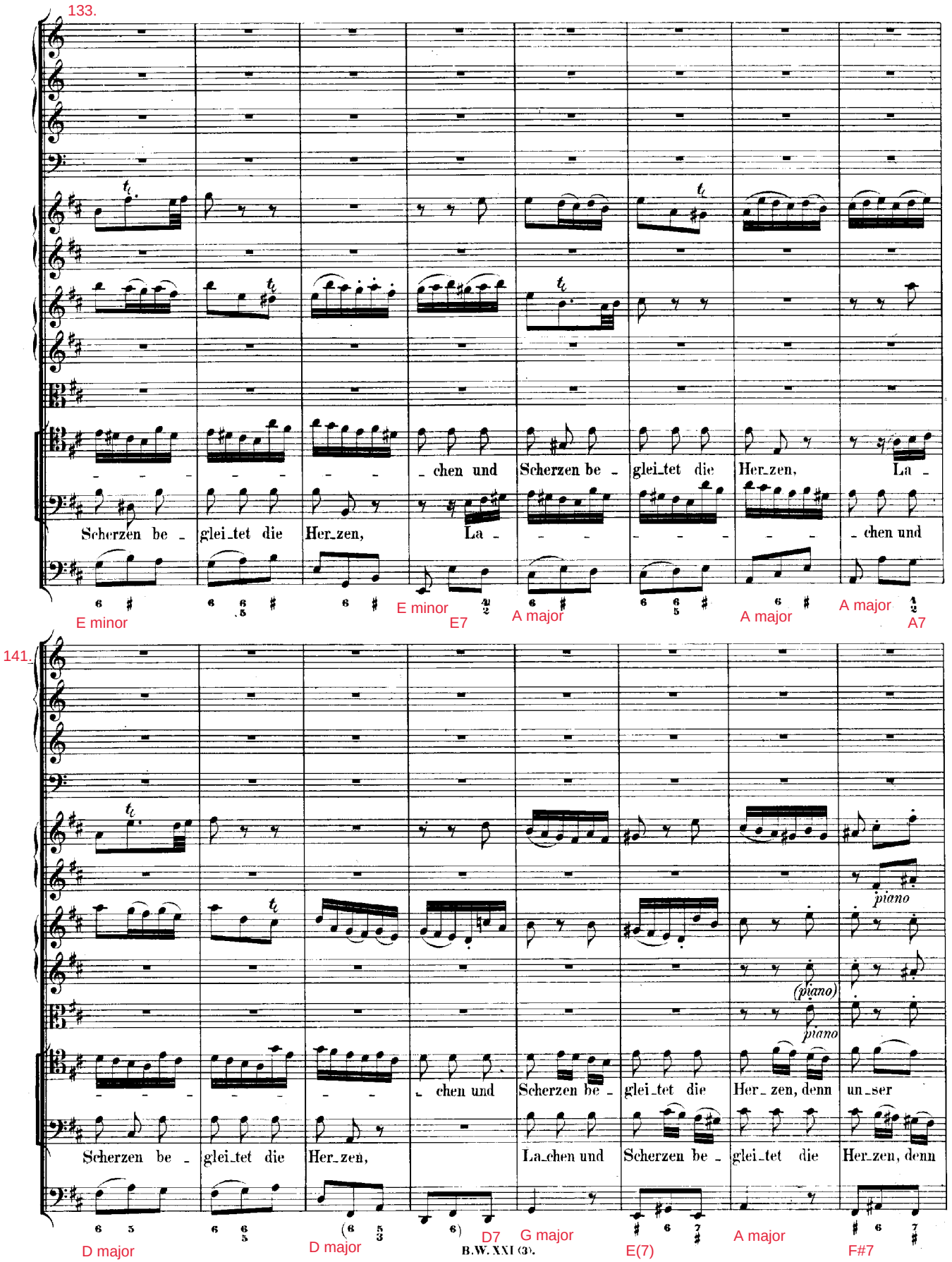
G# dim.7 A major A7 D major D major B minor B minor B minor

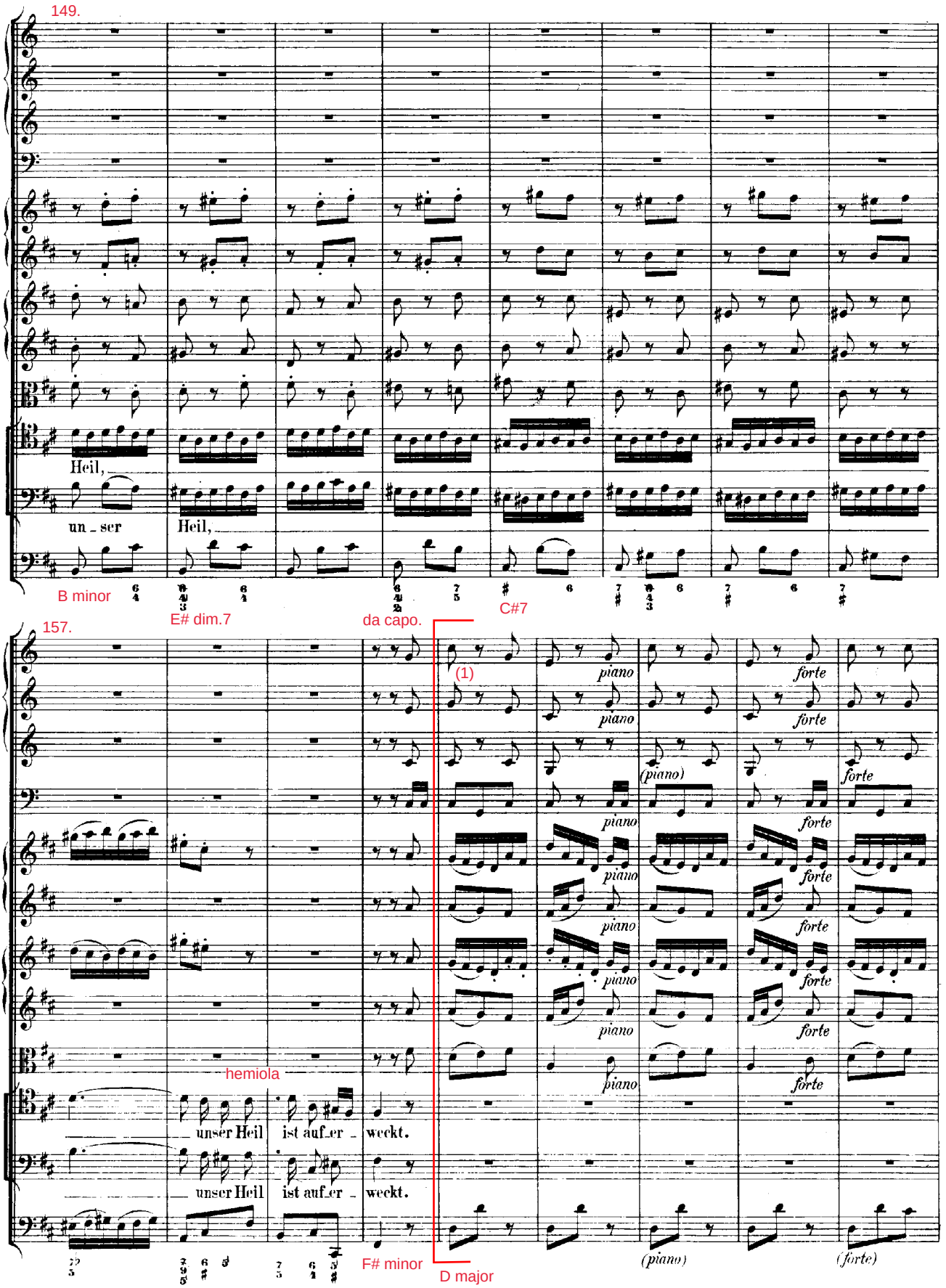
125.

- zen be - glei - - tet die Her - zen, La -

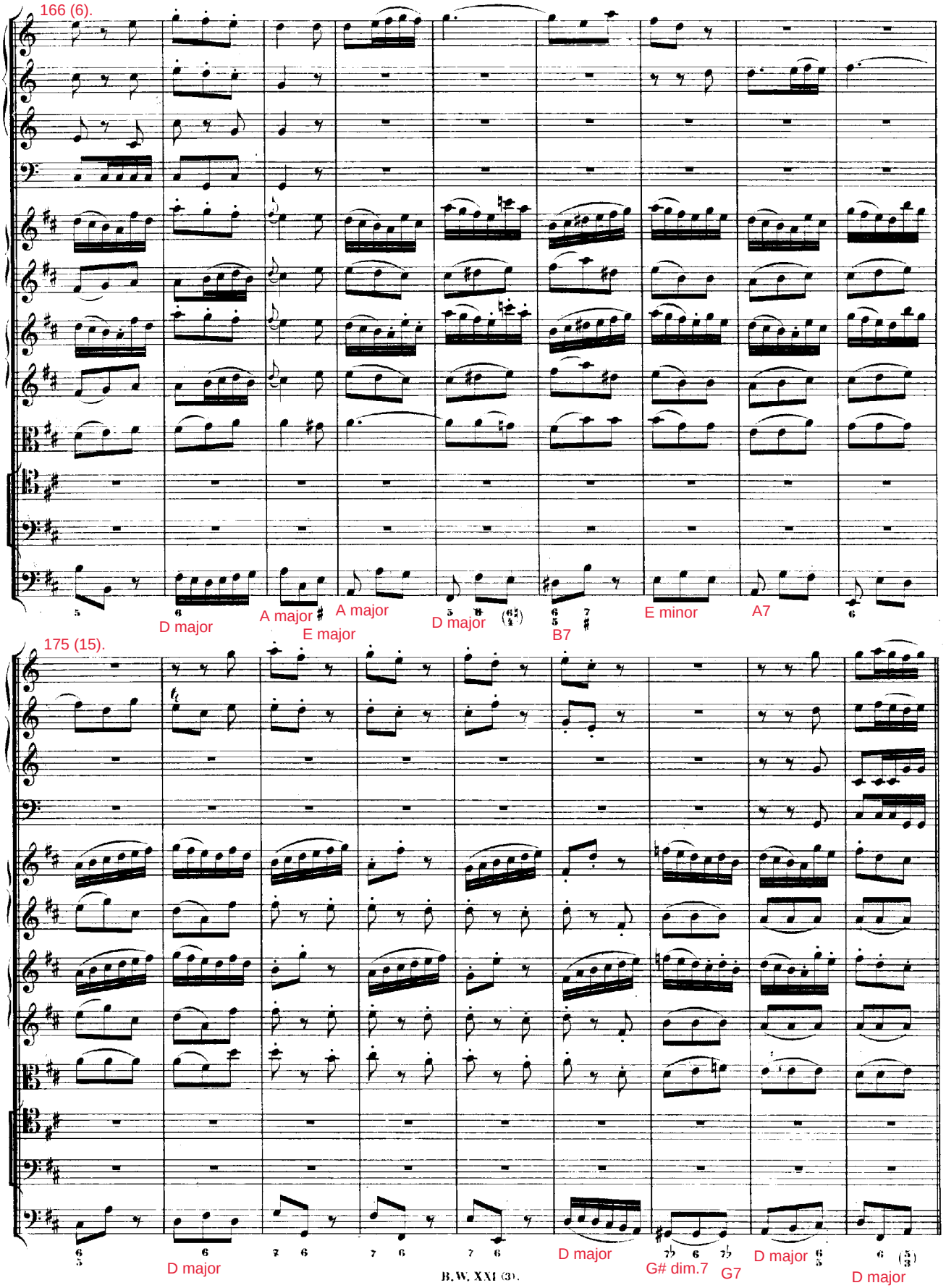
- zen be - glei - tet die Herzen, La - - - - - - - - chen und

B minor B minor B minor B7

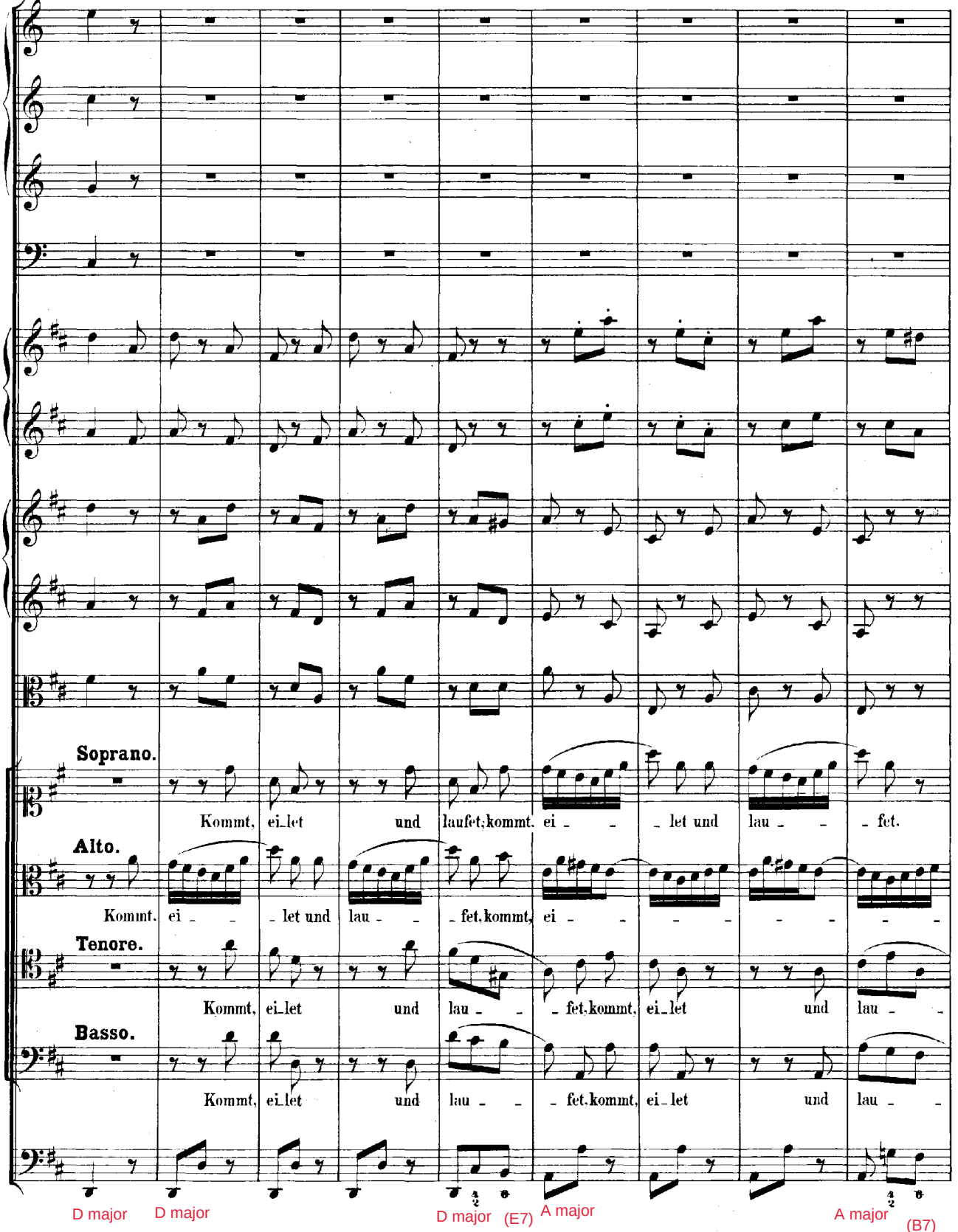

133.
Scherzen be - glei_tet die Her_zen, La - chen und
Scherzen be - glei_tet die Her_zen, La - chen und
E minor
E minor
E7
A major
A major
A major
A7
141.
Scherzen be - glei_tet die Her_zen,
chen und Scherzen be - glei_tet die Her_zen, denn un_ser
La_chen und Scherzen be - glei_tet die Her_zen, denn
piano
(piano)
piano
D major
D major
D7
G major
E(7)
A major
F#7



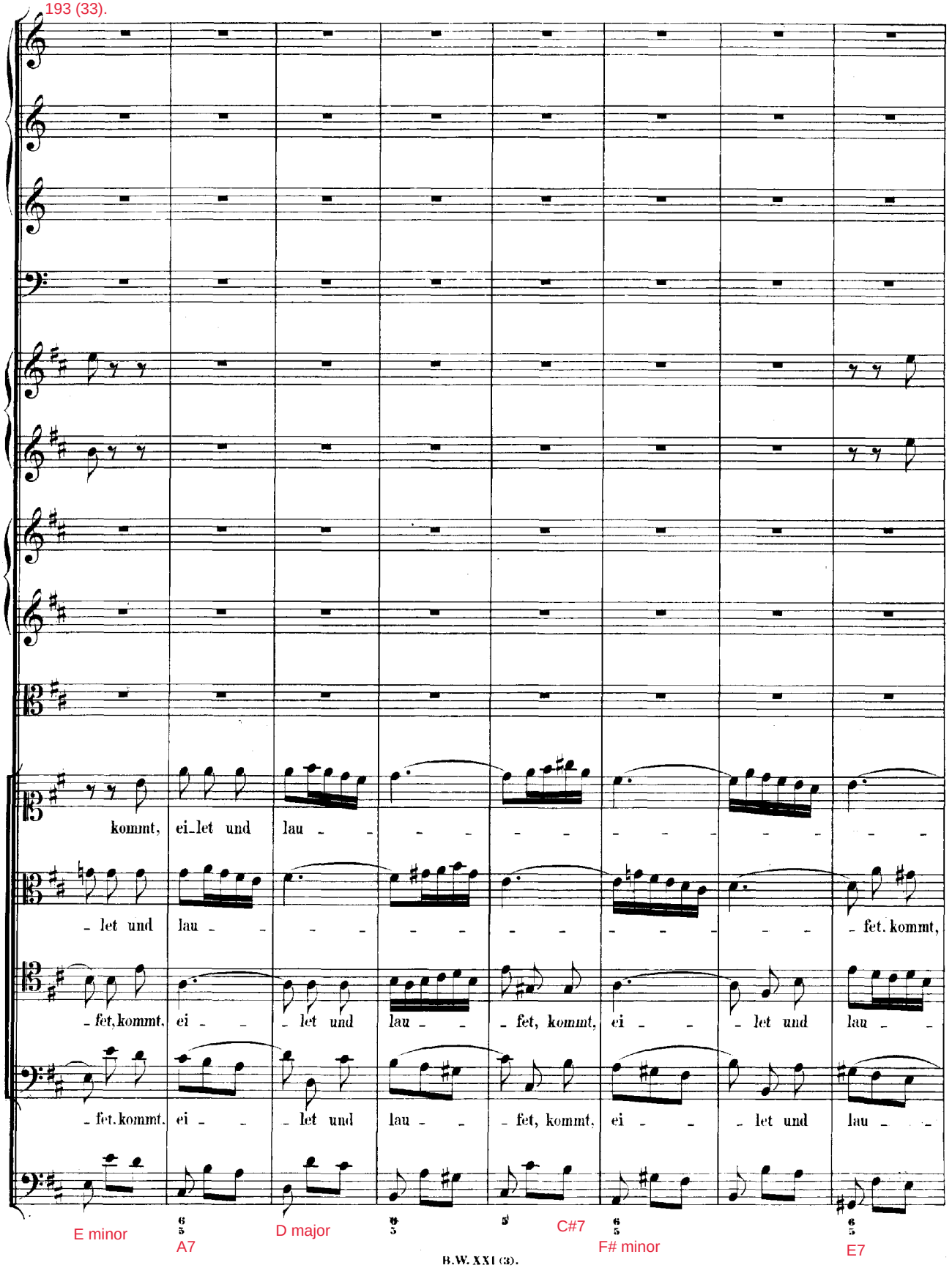
"Da capo" should be at m. 160. The rest of these measures plus the beginning to m. 20 constitute Bach's later SATB version. See the Carus edition in *Johann Sebastian Bach. The Sacred Vocal Music Complete Edition. Masses, Passions, and Oratorios* (Stuttgart: Carus Verlag, 2017), vol. 6, pp. 86–98 (Appendix I). Alfred Dürr notes, “Bach performed this work for the first time on 1 April 1725 as the Easter cantata *Kommt, gehet und eilet* (the first line originally read ‘Kommt, fliehet und eilet,’ but it was probably altered before the first performance). It was first described as an ‘Oratorium’ when performed in a revised version (with the opening line as we know it today) around 1738. Still later, around 1743/6, Bach made further alterations, rearranging the duet ‘Kommt, eilet und laufet’, no. 3, for four-part choir…. The usual practice today of starting the movement as a duet and ending it as a chorus is based on a pure misunderstanding which originated with Wilhelm Rust. In the BG edition (21/3, 1874) he united the two versions, but only to avoid printing the work twice, not to establish an unauthorized version for our use.” See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 273.

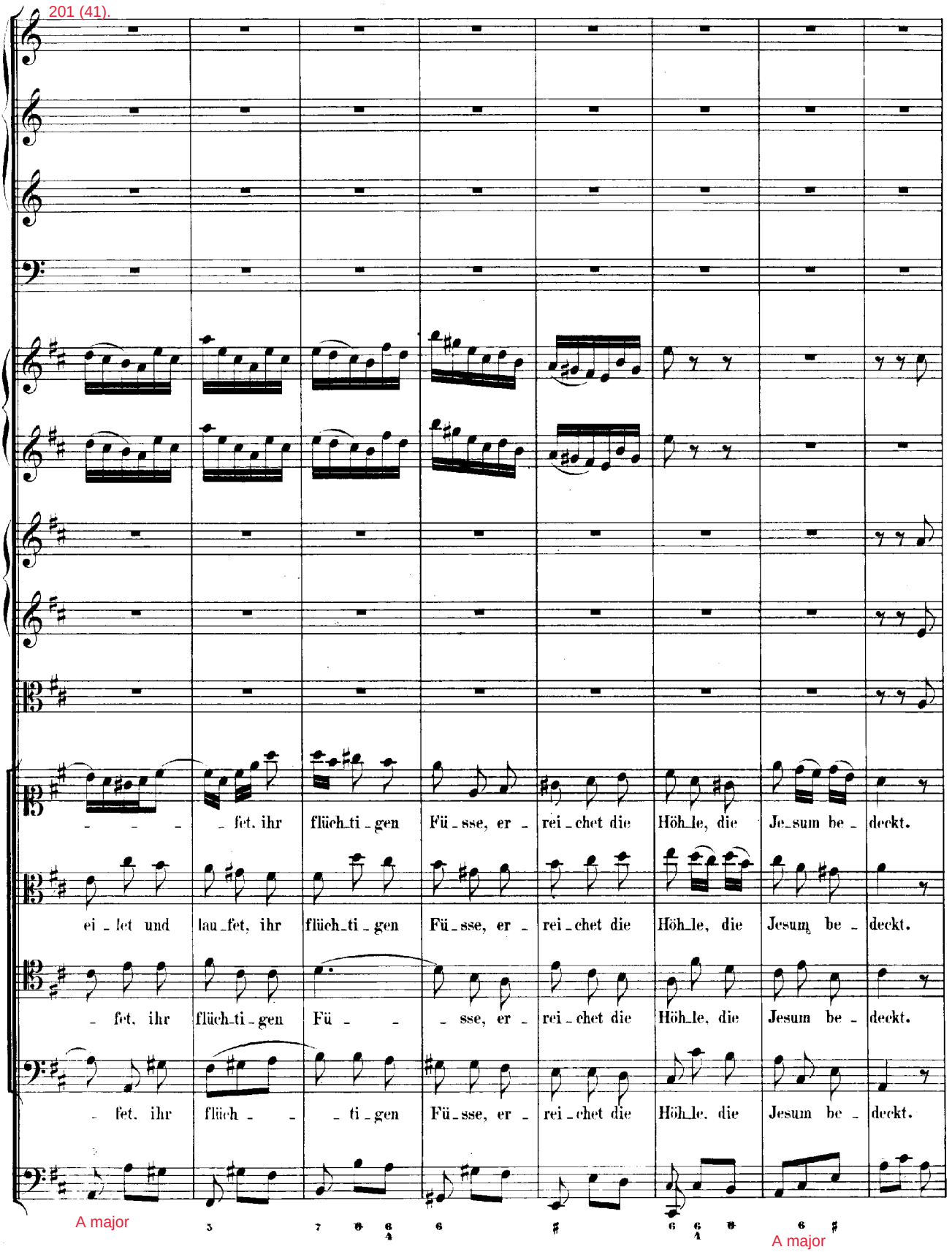

166 (6).
D major
A major
A major
E major
D major
B7
E minor
A7
175 (15).
D major
D major
G# dim.7
G7
D major
D major

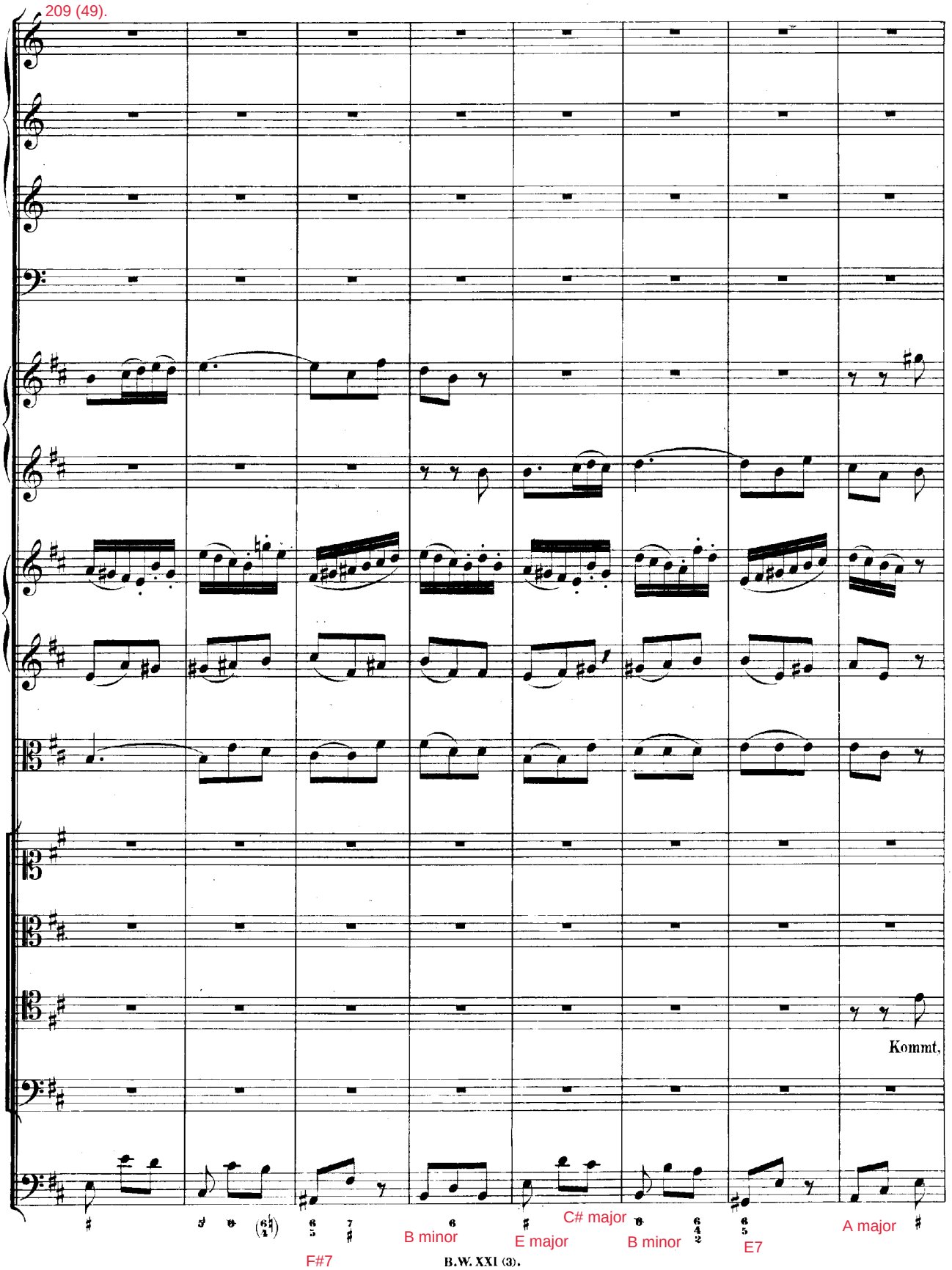
184 (24). **CORO.**

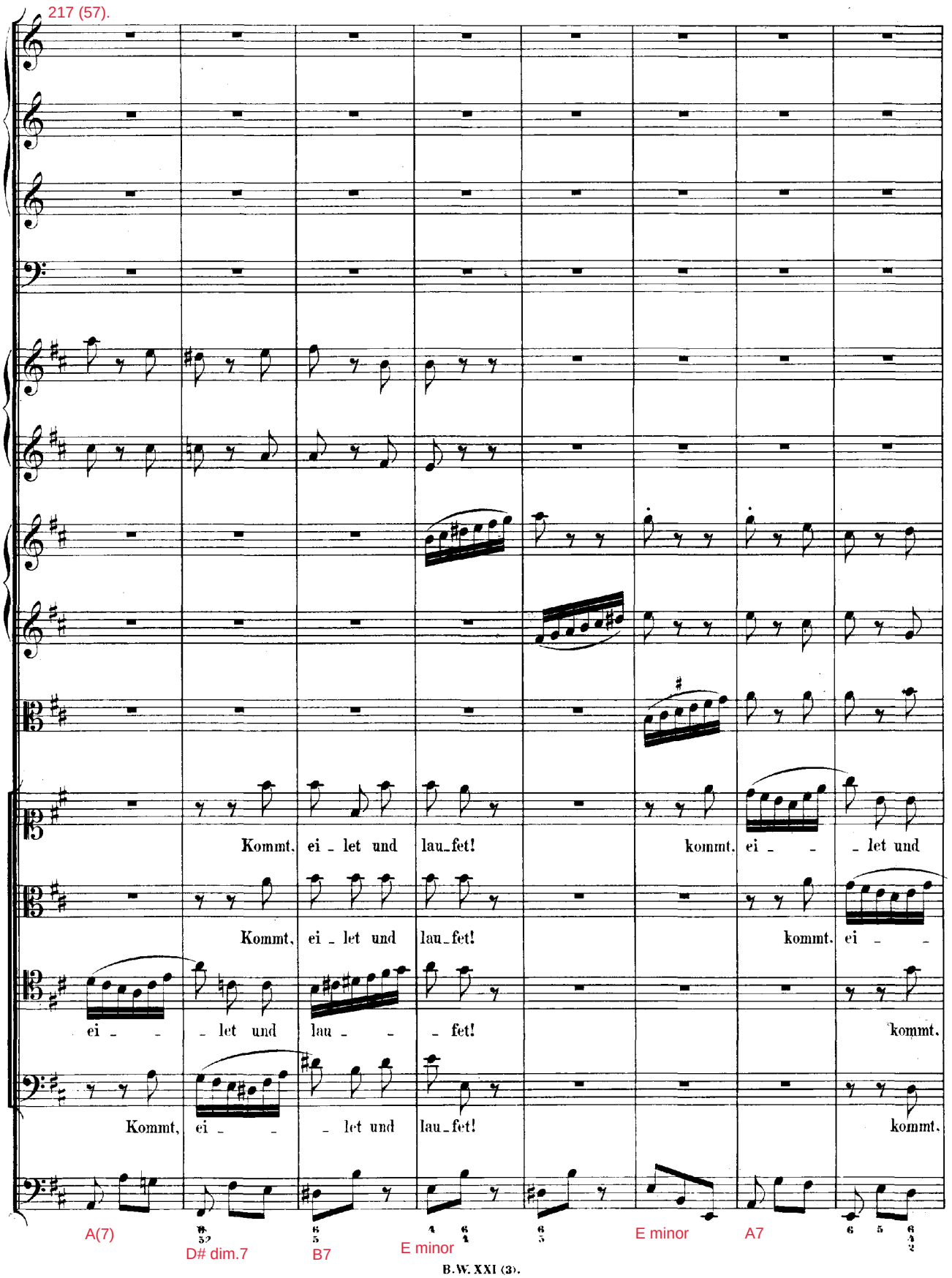

Soprano.
Kommt, ei_let und laufet,kommt, ei - - let und lau - - fet.
Alto.
Kommt, ei - - let und lau - - fet,kommt, ei - - - - - -
Tenore.
Kommt, ei_let und lau - - fet,kommt, ei_let und lau - -
Basso.
Kommt, ei_let und lau - - fet,kommt, ei_let und lau - -
D major
D major
D major
(E7)
A major
A major
(B7)

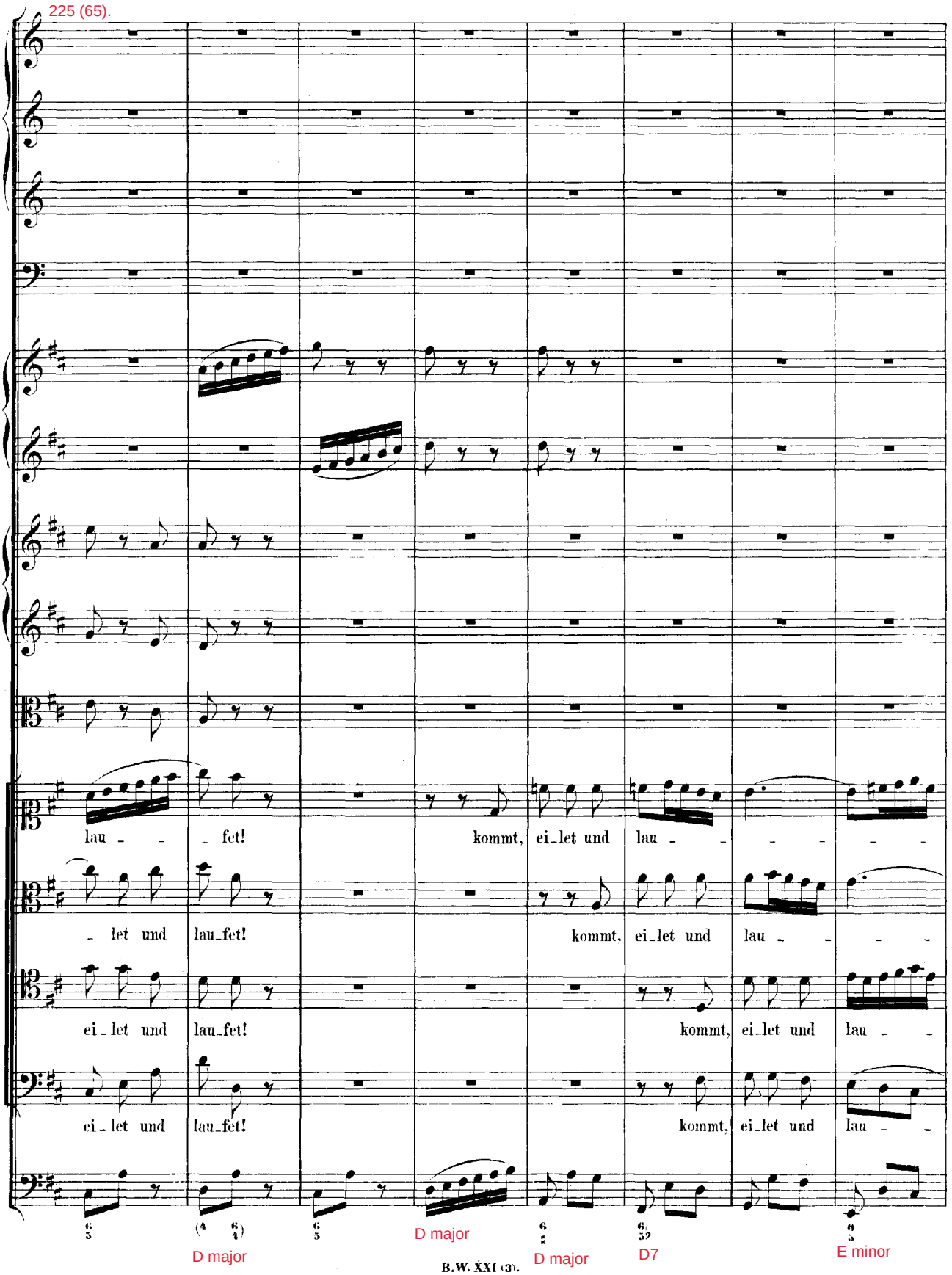
193 (33).

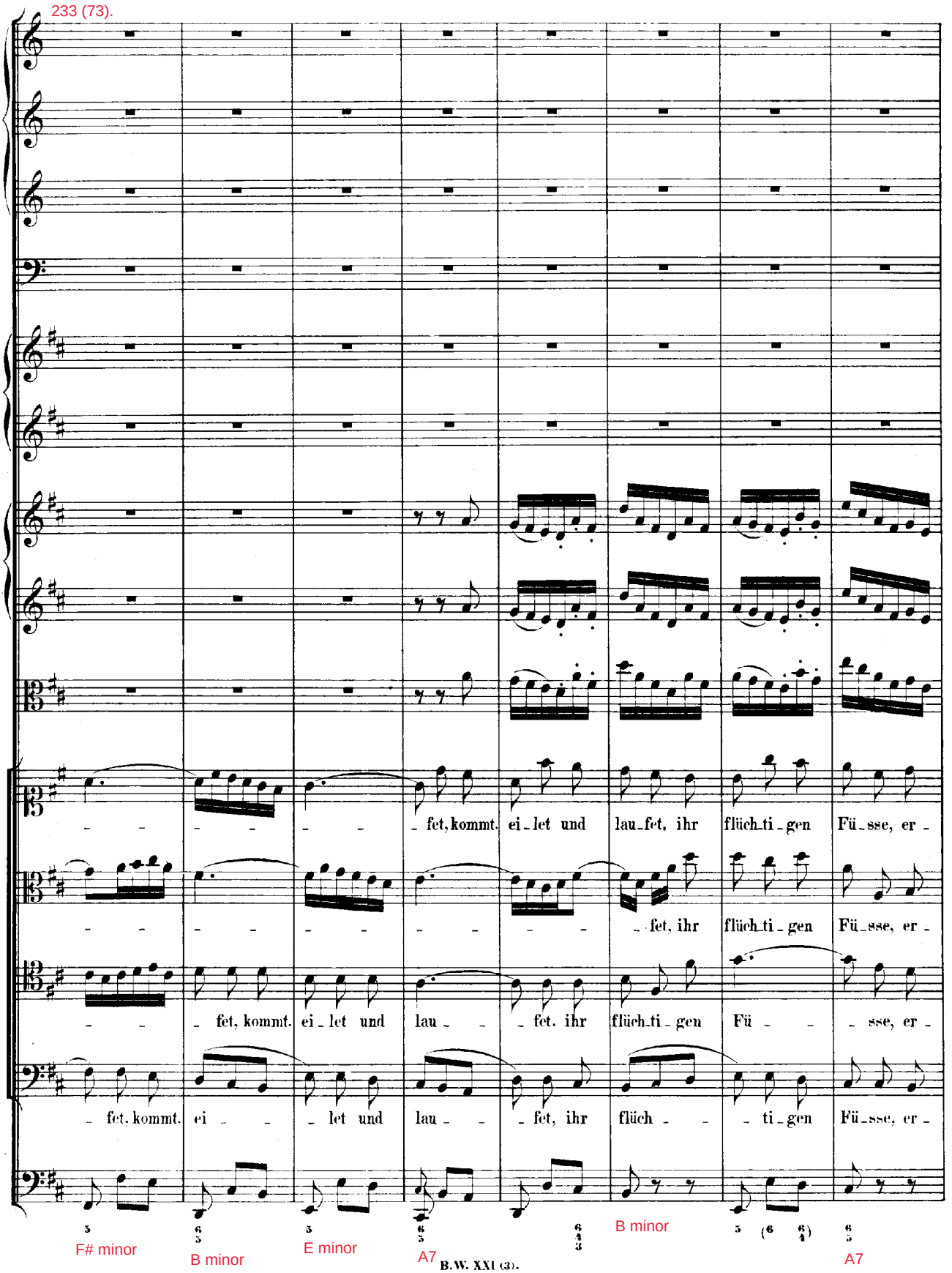

kommt, ei_let und lau
let und lau
fet. kommt,
fet, kommt, ei
let und lau
fet. kommt, ei
let und lau
fet, kommt, ei
let und lau
E minor
A7
D major
C#7
F# minor
E7


201 (41).
- - - fet. ihr flüch-ti-gen Fü-sse, er-rei-chet die Höh-le, die Je-sum be-deckt.
ei-let und lau-fet, ihr flüch-ti-gen Fü-sse, er-rei-chet die Höh-le, die Jesum be-deckt.
- fet, ihr flüch-ti-gen Fü- - sse, er-rei-chet die Höh-le, die Jesum be-deckt.
- fet. ihr flüch- - ti-gen Fü-sse, er-rei-chet die Höh-le, die Jesum be-deckt.
A major
A major

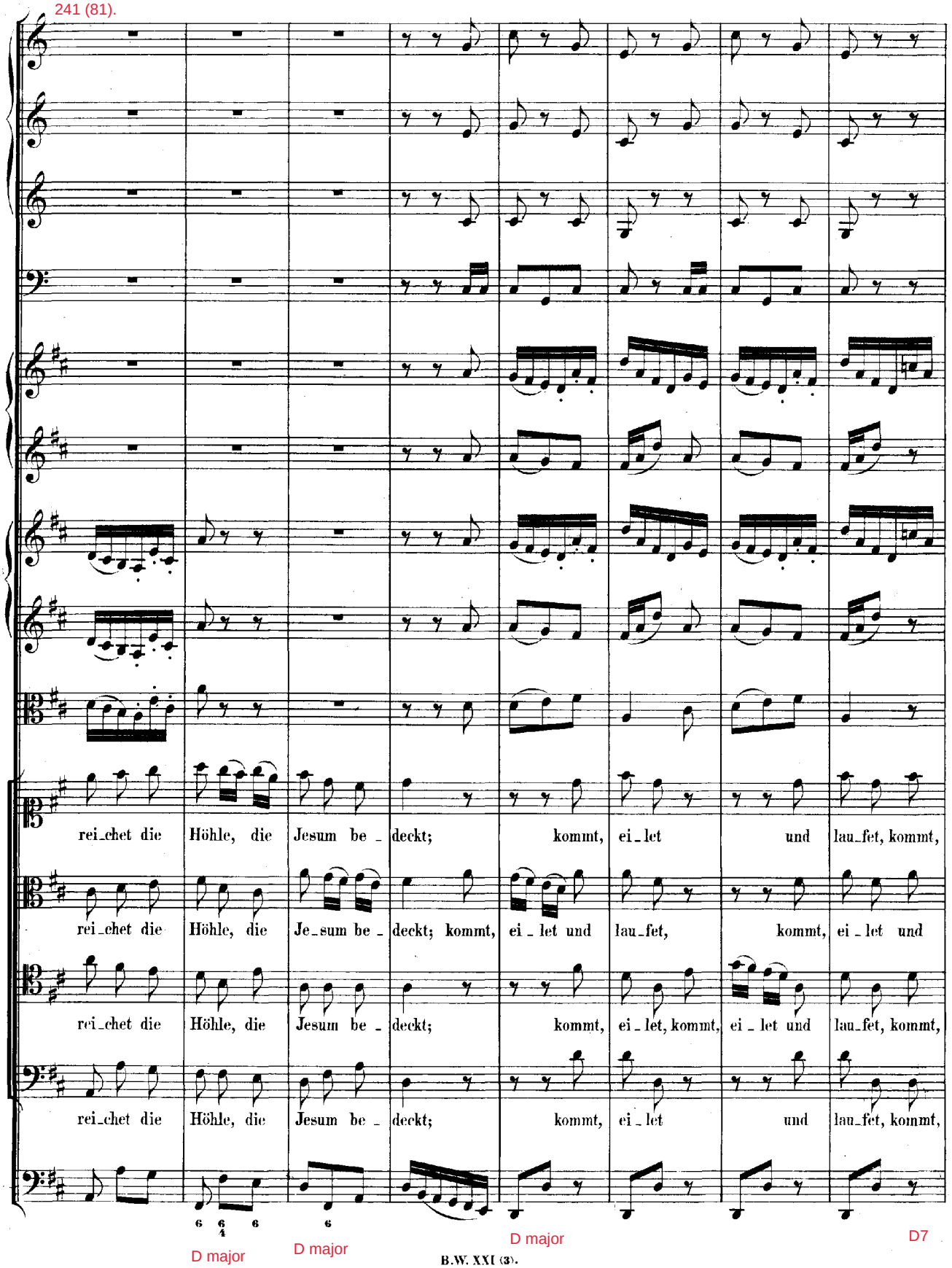

209 (49).
F#7
B minor
E major
C# major
B minor
E7
A major
Kommt,

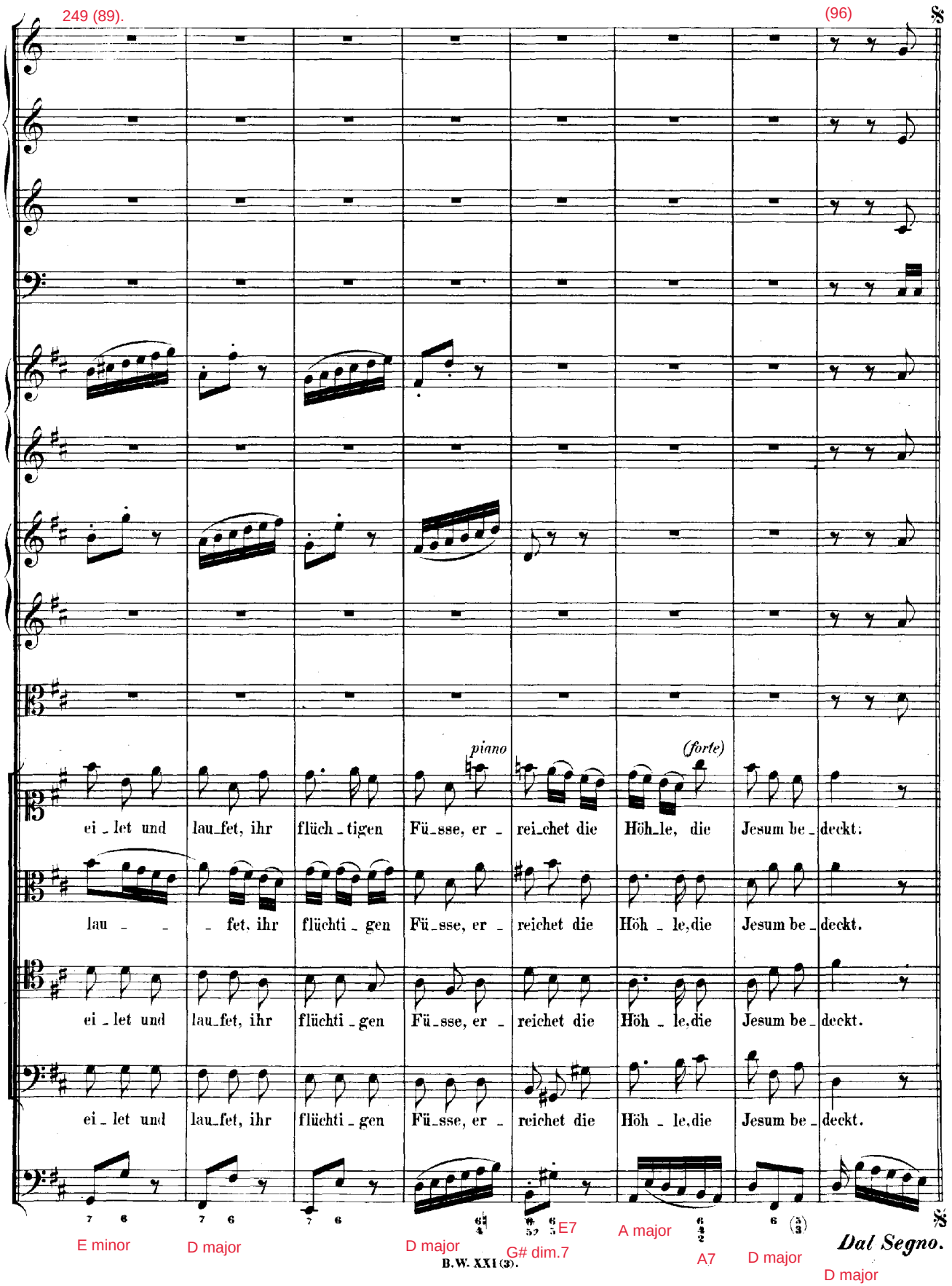

217 (57).
Kommt, ei - let und lau-fet!
kommt, ei - - let und
Kommt, ei - let und lau-fet!
kommt. ei - -
ei - - let und lau - - fet!
kommt.
Kommt, ei - - let und lau-fet!
kommt.
A(7)
D# dim.7
B7
E minor
E minor
A7


225 (65).
lau - - fet!
kommt, ei-let und
lau - - - - -
- let und
lau-fet!
kommt, ei-let und
lau - - - -
ei-let und
lau-fet!
kommt, ei-let und
lau - -
ei-let und
lau-fet!
kommt, ei-let und
lau - -
D major
D major
D7
E minor


233 (73).
fet, kommt. ei - let und lau - fet, ihr flüch - ti - gen Fü - sse, er -
fet, ihr flüch - ti - gen Fü - sse, er -
fet, kommt. ei - let und lau - fet. ihr flüch - ti - gen Fü - sse, er -
fet, kommt. ei - let und lau - fet, ihr flüch - ti - gen Fü - sse, er -
F# minor
B minor
E minor
A7
B minor
A7
B.W. XXI (3).

241 (81).

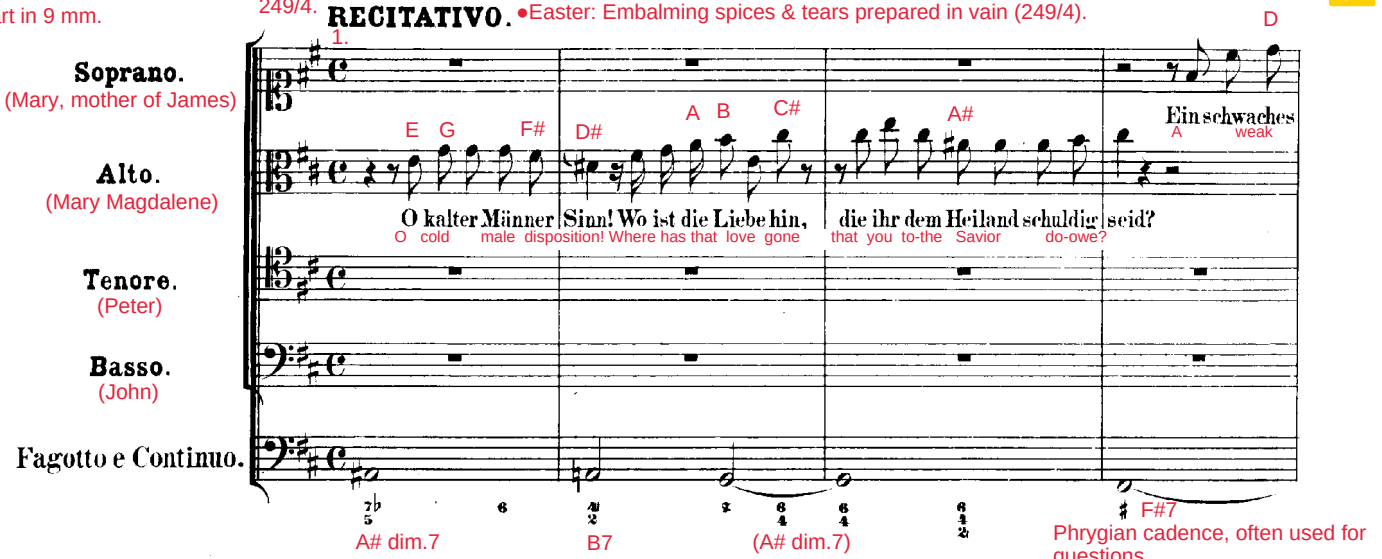

rei_chet die Höhle, die Jesum be_deckt; kommt, ei_let und lau_fet, kommt,
rei_chet die Höhle, die Je_sum be_deckt; kommt, ei_let und lau_fet, kommt, ei_let und
rei_chet die Höhle, die Jesum be_deckt; kommt, ei_let, kommt, ei_let und lau_fet, kommt,
rei_chet die Höhle, die Jesum be_deckt; kommt, ei_let und lau_fet, kommt,
6 6/4 6
6
D major
D major
D major
D7


249 (89).
(96)
piano
(forte)
ei - let und lau-fet, ihr flüch - tigen Fü-sse, er - rei-chet die Höh-le, die Jesum be - deckt.
lau - - - fet, ihr flüchti - gen Fü-sse, er - reichet die Höh - le, die Jesum be - deckt.
ei - let und lau-fet, ihr flüchti - gen Fü-sse, er - reichet die Höh - le, die Jesum be - deckt.
ei - let und lau-fet, ihr flüchti - gen Fü-sse, er - reichet die Höh - le, die Jesum be - deckt.
E minor
D major
D major
G# dim.7
E7
A major
A7
D major
D major
Dal Segno.

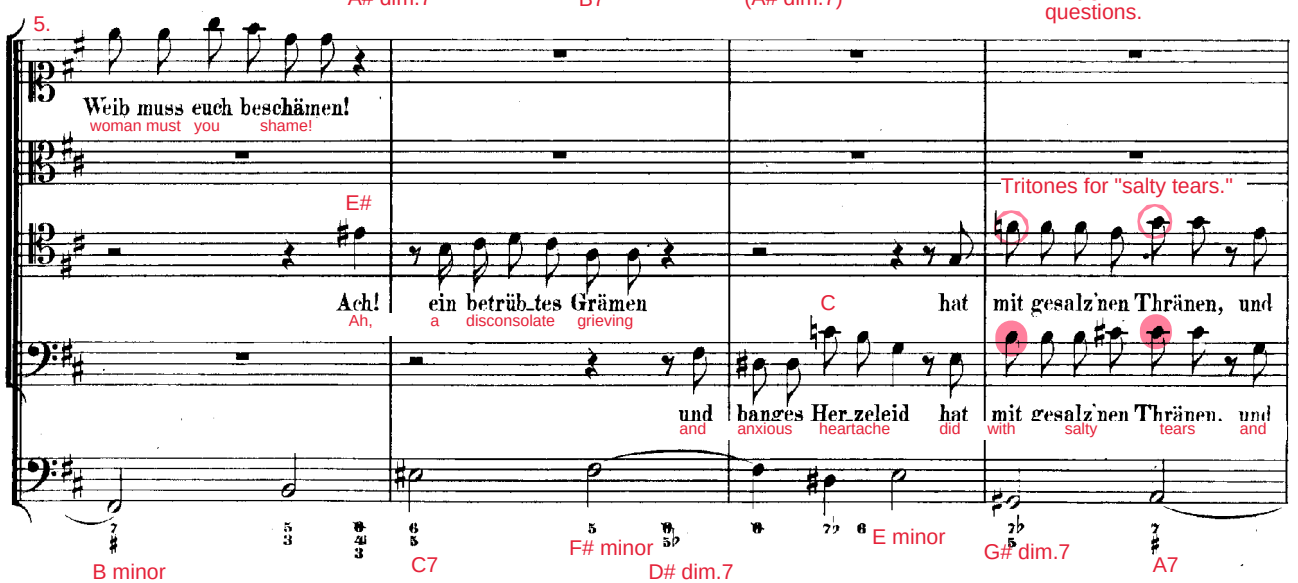
With movement no. 4, the action begins. Mary Magdalene scolds Peter and John with language borrowed from the "Little Apocalyse," Jesus' prediction of the end times (see Matthew 24–25, with parallel accounts in Mark 13 and Luke 21). The narrative then continues, following the biblical account (see note).

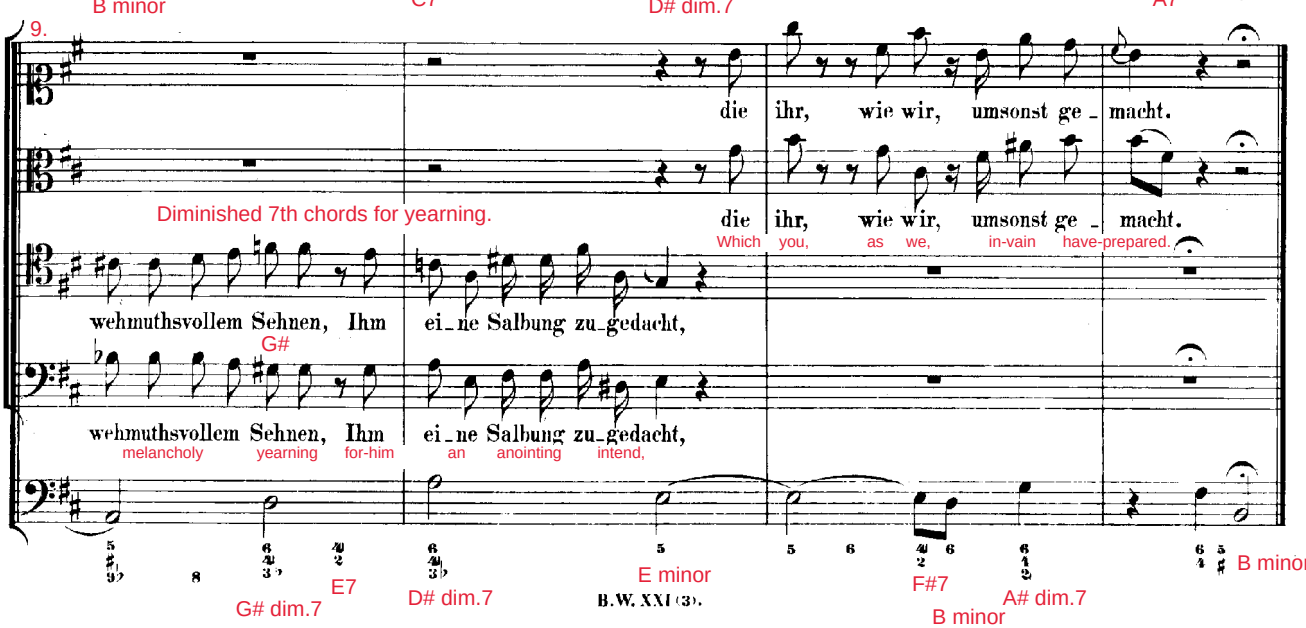
Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 9 mm.

249/4. **RECITATIVO.** •Easter: Embalming spices & tears prepared in vain (249/4).



Phrygian cadence, often used for questions.





B.W. XXI (3).

Martin Petzoldt writes, "The following aria…pauses the action, as is the case with every aria, and actively addresses the reproach of the futility of the anointing, arguing that it is no longer the spice of futility (myrrh) that should prevail, but solely the spice of hope (a laurel wreath). All exegetical interpretations of 'myrrh' with a biblical meaning are of no help here, as these always establish a connection with the bitterness of Jesus' suffering; here it is described as comforting and strengthening…In contrast [to the usual exegetical interpretation of myrrh], the text contemplates the concept of eternal life and its hope, adorning it with the "laurel wreath," but now interpreted in the sense of the crown of honor (1 Peter 5:4) or the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)." See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:687–698, translated from the German original. Martin Petzoldt continues, "The intimate, withdrawn character of the aria also impressively expresses musically the 'anxious longing' and its hoped-for reassurance (1 Peter 5:4, 1 John 3:19–20). The text as a whole draws on the idea of anointing

(Luke 24:1), i.e., the honoring of the dead, which is transformed into the eternal honor of the believer with the laurel wreath, i.e., the crown of righteousness. This idea is expanded in the middle section (m. 79ff.) and can draw musical benefit from the [parallel line in the secular original], BWV 249a, movement 4, middle section: “delight that tendernesses show." While the text of the aria in the Easter cantata expresses a contrast, the parodied movements are much more cohesive in terms of their text.” (Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 2:698, translated from the German original. See also the side note for a comparison of the three texts). The A section is disproportionately long, comprising more than 8/10 of the aria's length.

249/5. **ARIA.** (Mary, mother of James)

Compare 249a/4, 249b/3.

Adagio.

•Easter promise: Myrrh will be exchanged for laurel (249/5).

Flauto traverso o Violino Solo.

Soprano.

Fagotto e Continuo.

1.

Ritornello

pizzicato

B minor

B minor

D# dim.7

B major

6.

E minor

A# dim.7

F#7

B minor

N6

D7

B minor

11.

A# dim.7

F# major

B minor

15.

hemiola

See_le, dei_ne Spe_ce _ rei _ _ en

B minor

19,

sol _ len nicht mehr Myrrhen sein,

See _ le,

See _ le,

B minor

G major

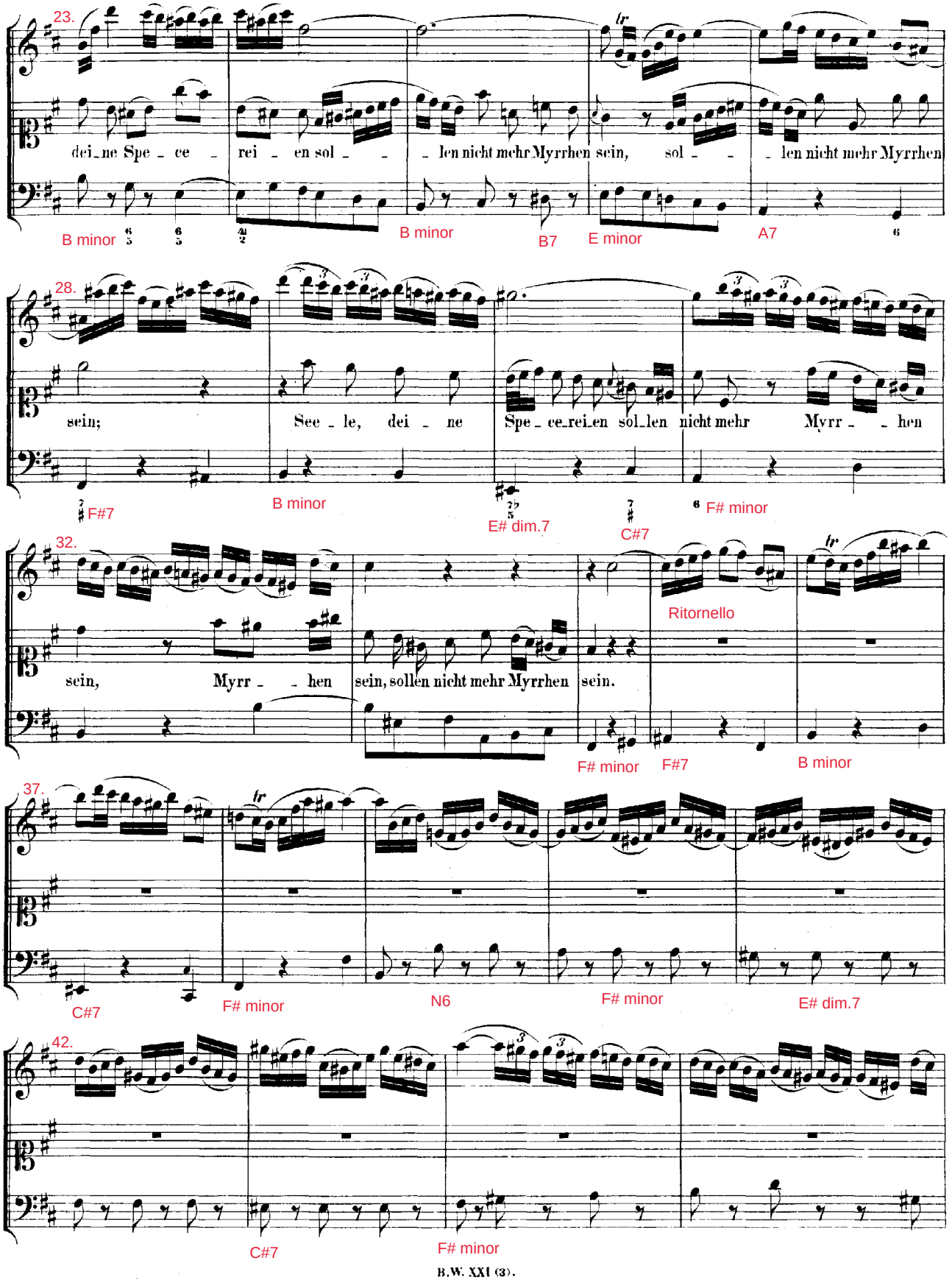
A7

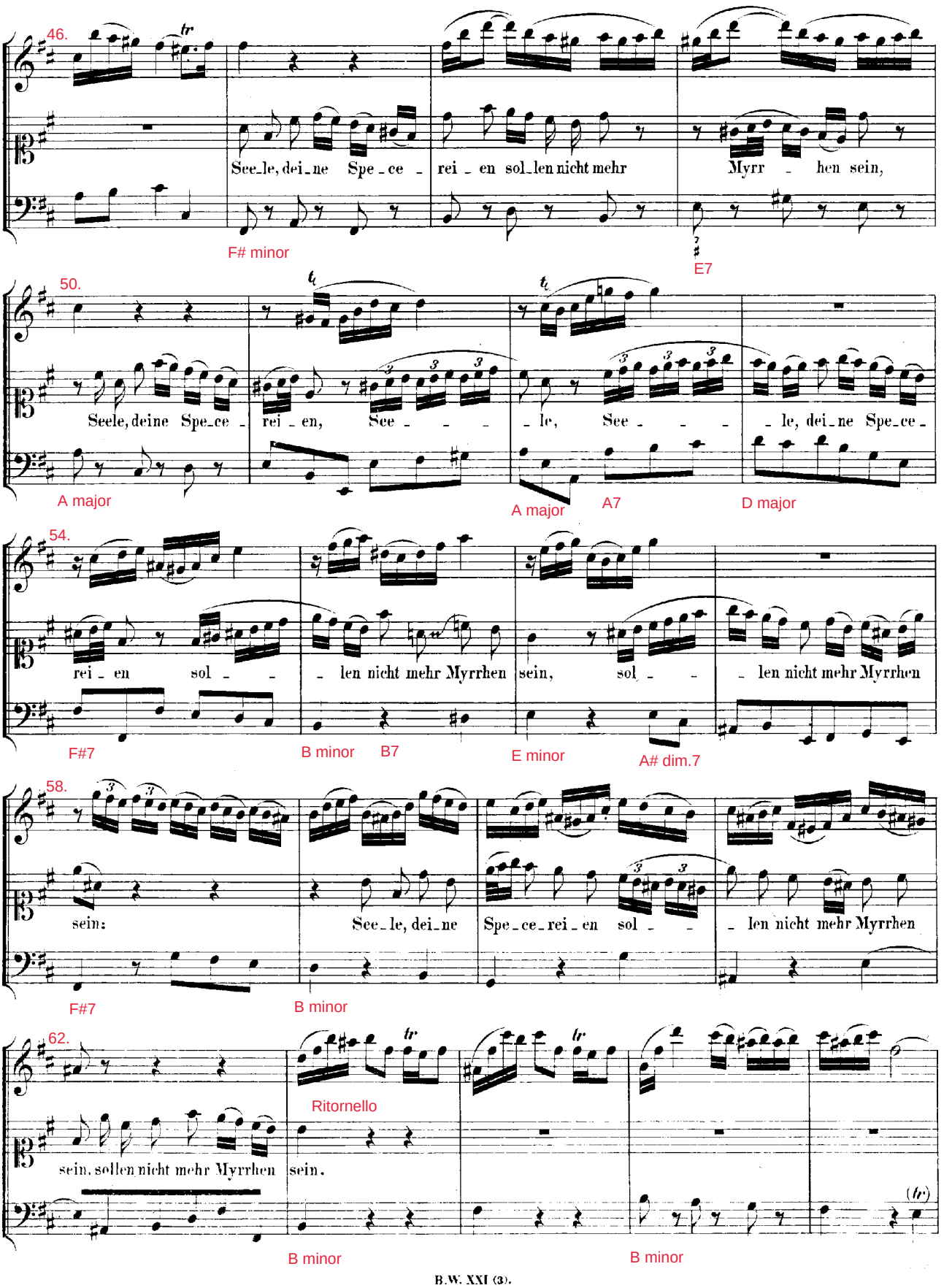
D major

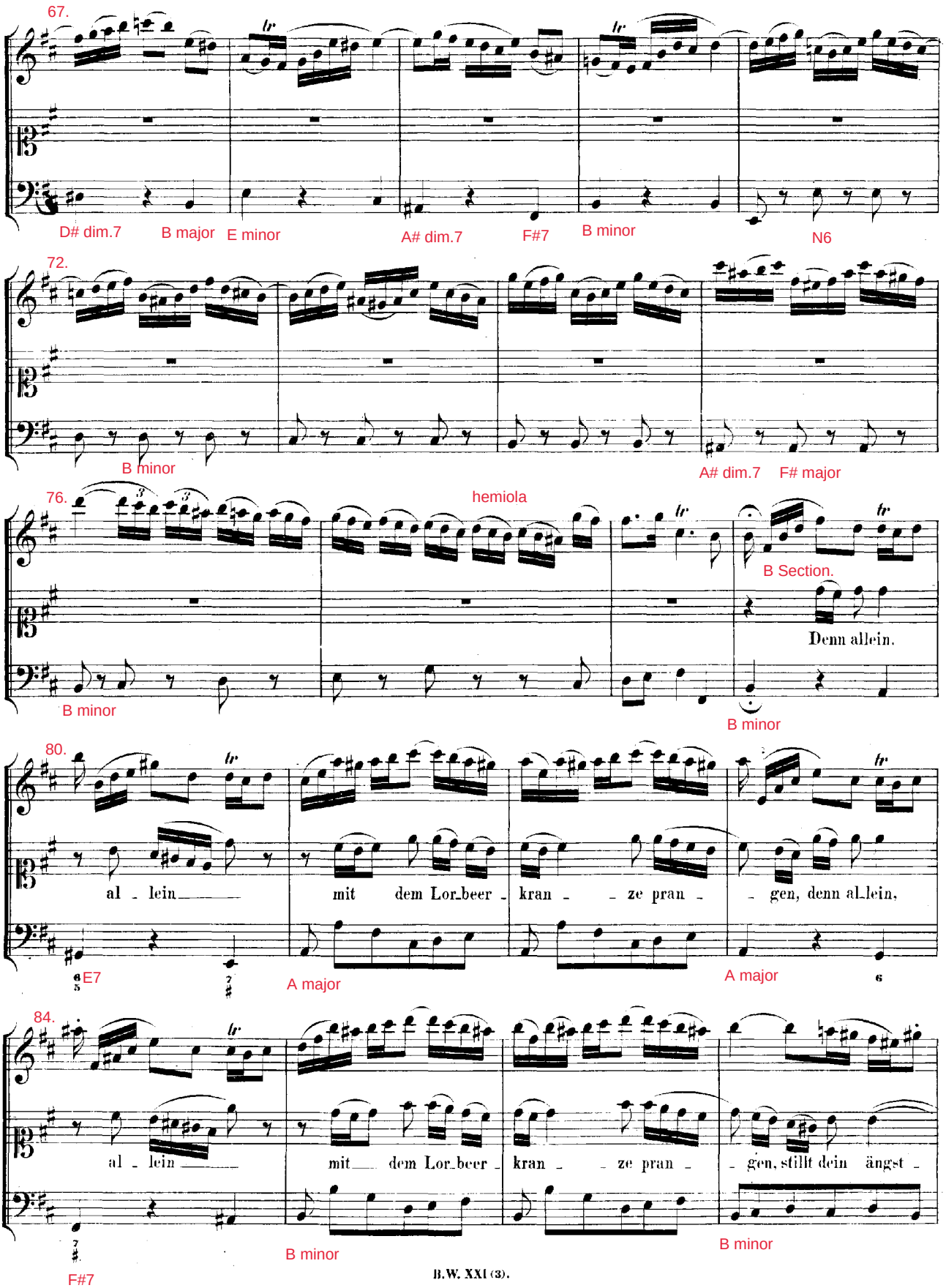
F#7

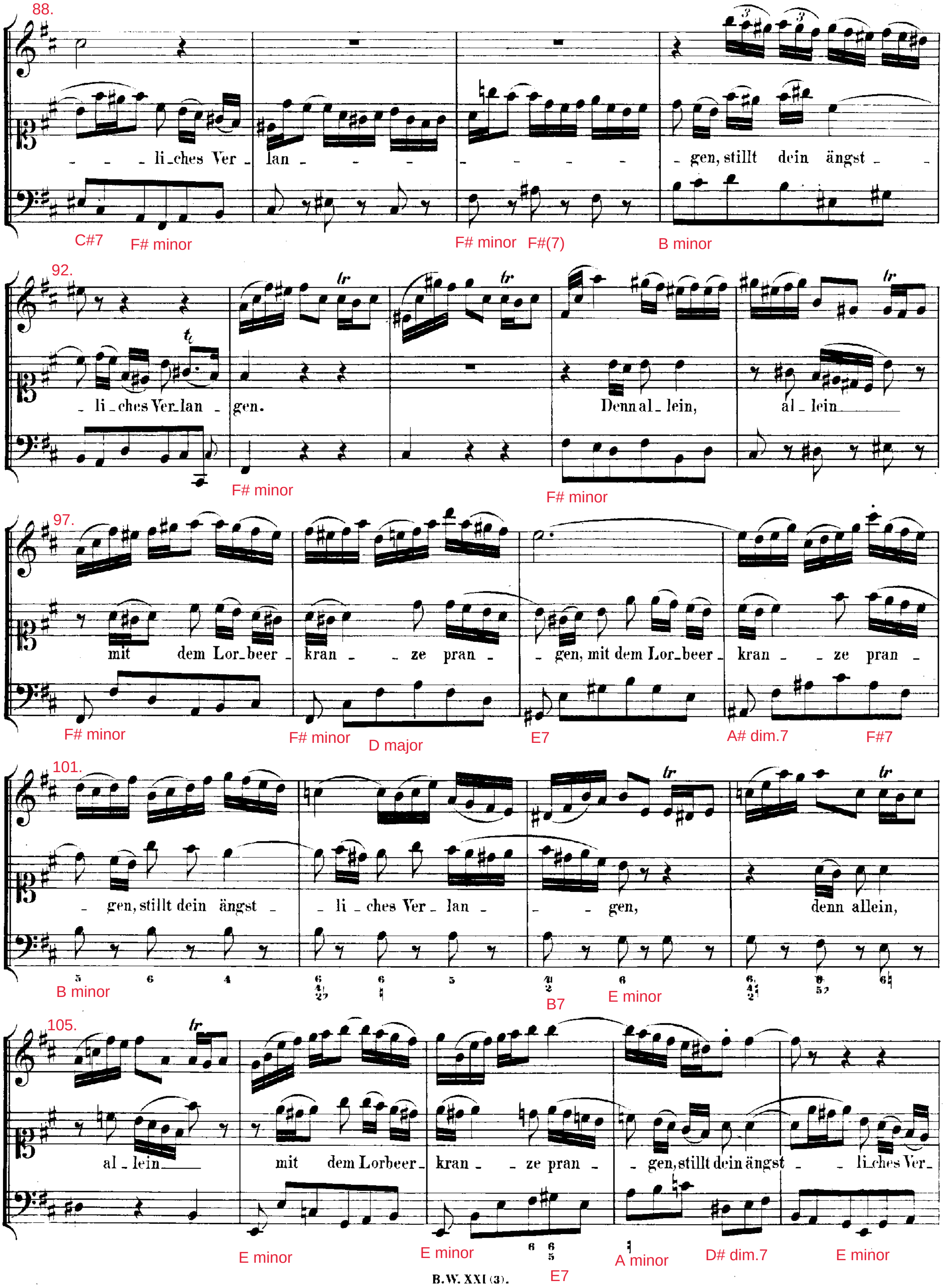
B minor

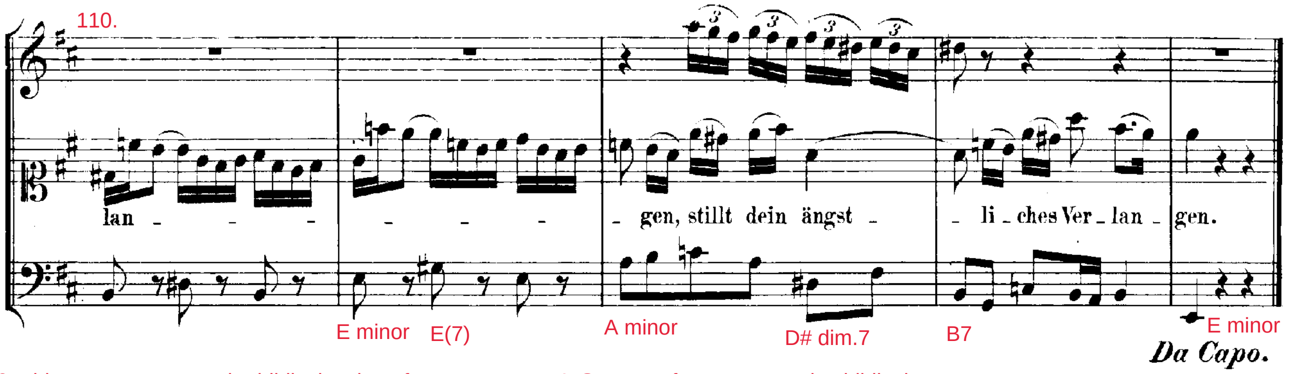
B.W. XXI (3).


23.
dei_ne Spe_ce_rei_en sol_len nicht mehr Myrrhen sein, sol_len nicht mehr Myrrhen
B minor
B minor
B7
E minor
A7
28.
sein; See_le, dei_ne Spe_ce_rei_en sol_len nicht mehr Myrr_hen
F#7
B minor
E# dim.7
C#7
F# minor
32.
sein, Myrr_hen sein, sollen nicht mehr Myrrhen sein.
Ritornello
F# minor
F#7
B minor
37.
C#7
F# minor
N6
F# minor
E# dim.7
42.
C#7
F# minor

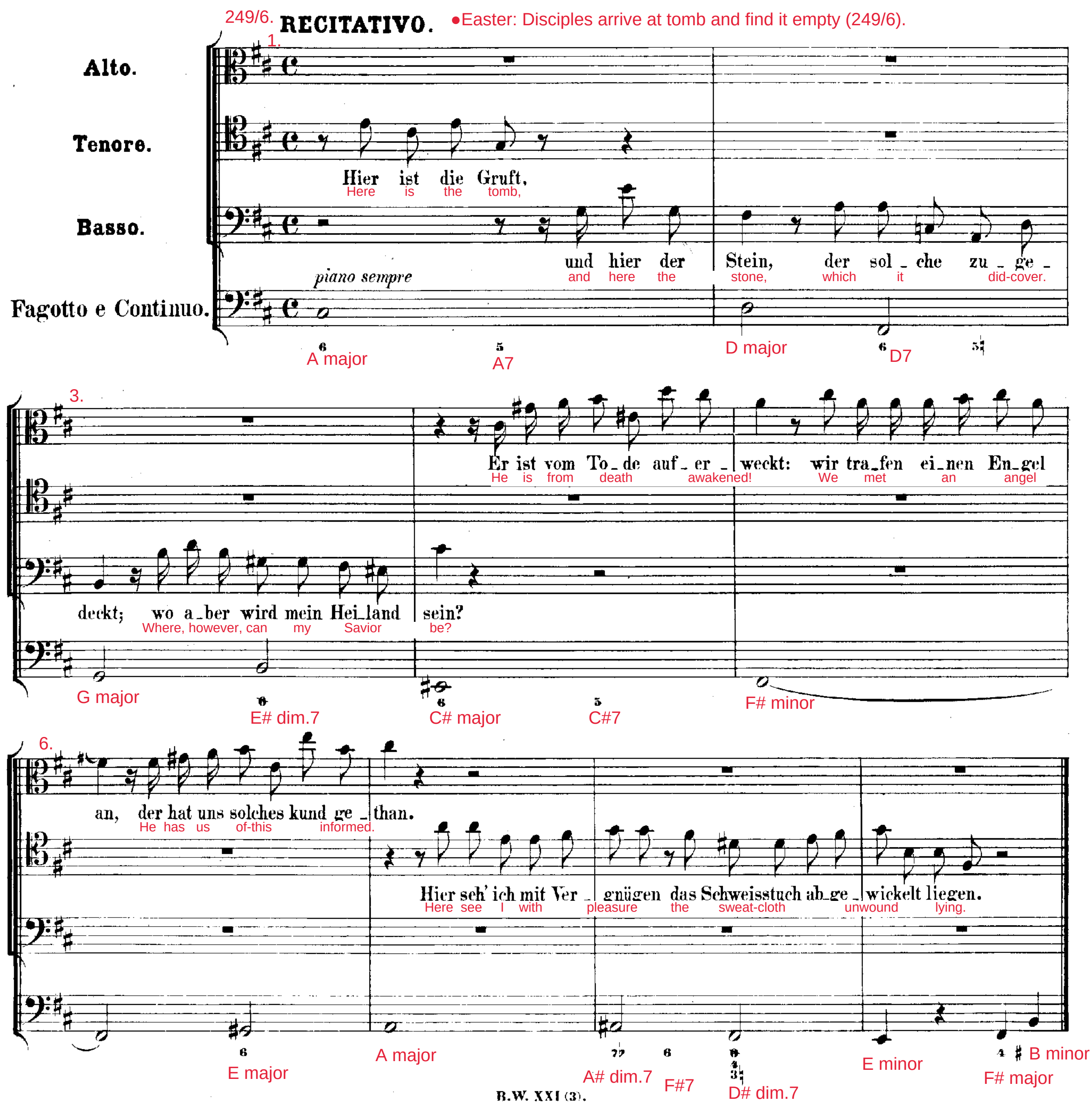

46.
See_le, dei_ne Spe_ce _
rei _ en sol_len nicht mehr
Myrr _ hen sein,
F# minor
E7
50.
Seele, deine Spe_ce _
rei _ en, See _ _ _
_ le, See _ _ _
_ le, dei_ne Spe_ce _
A major
A major
A7
D major
54.
rei _ en sol _ _
_ len nicht mehr Myrrhen
sein, sol _ _
_ len nicht mehr Myrrhen
F#7
B minor
B7
E minor
A# dim.7
58.
sein:
See_le, dei_ne
Spe_ce_rei_en sol _ _
_ len nicht mehr Myrrhen
F#7
B minor
62.
Ritornello
sein, sollen nicht mehr Myrrhen
sein.
B minor
B minor


67.
D# dim.7
B major
E minor
A# dim.7
F#7
B minor
N6
72.
B minor
A# dim.7
F# major
76.
hemiola
B Section.
Denn allein.
B minor
B minor
80.
al - lein
mit dem Lor-beer -
kran - - ze pran -
- gen, denn al-lein,
E7
A major
A major
84.
al - lein
mit dem Lor-beer -
kran - - ze pran -
- gen, stillt dein ängst -
F#7
B minor
B minor


88.
li_ches Ver_ lan_ gen, stillt dein ängst
C#7 F# minor F# minor F#(7) B minor
92.
li_ches Ver_lan_ gen. Denn al_ lein, al_ lein
F# minor F# minor
97.
mit dem Lor_beer kran_ ze pran_ gen, mit dem Lor_beer kran_ ze pran_
F# minor F# minor D major E7 A# dim.7 F#7
101.
gen, stillt dein ängst li_ ches Ver_ lan_ gen, denn allein,
B minor B7 E minor
105.
al_ lein mit dem Lorbeer kran_ ze pran_ gen, stillt dein ängst li_ches Ver_
E minor E minor E7 A minor D# dim.7 E minor



Movement 6 adds a new aspect to the biblical action of movement no. 4. See note for representative biblical passages.

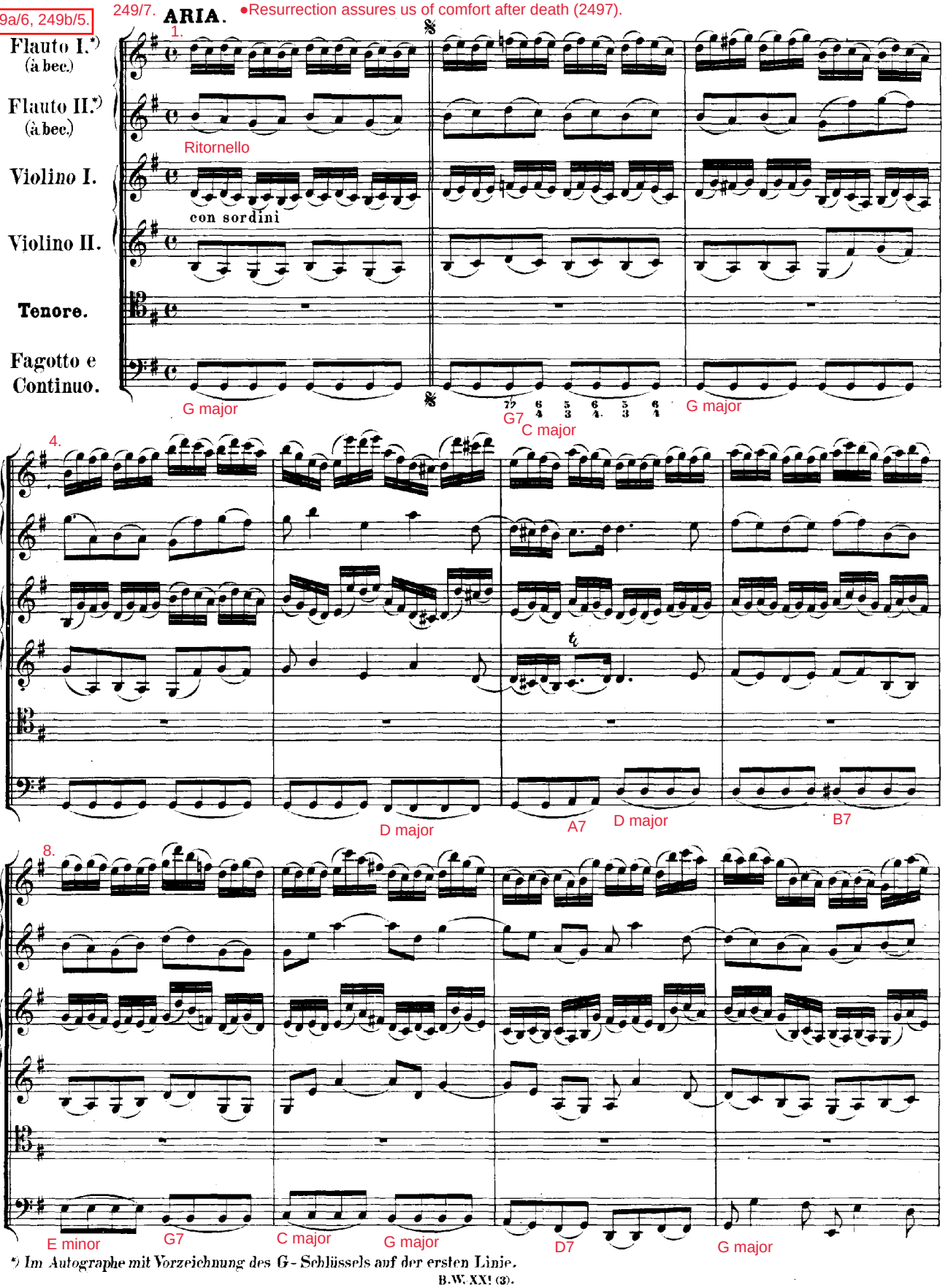


The tenor aria, no. 7, is the central (pivot) movement in the cantata's chiastic form, where antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text). Here sorrow is transformed into consolation.

Alfred Dürr writes, “The aural charm of the aria ‘Wieget euch, ihr satten Schafe’, no. 6, derives from its scoring with muted violins, doubled by recorders at the upper octave, over a calmly pulsating, pedal-like continuo bass. [In the original model, BWV 249a/6,] it directly conveys the impression of a cradle song and of shepherds’ music, [the duke being likened to a shepherd caring for his sheep]. Despite its conventional type, the movement represents one of the most original inspirations among all Bach’s secular-cantata arias." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 809. For a comparison of the three texts employed for this aria's music, see note.

Compare 249a/6, 249b/5.

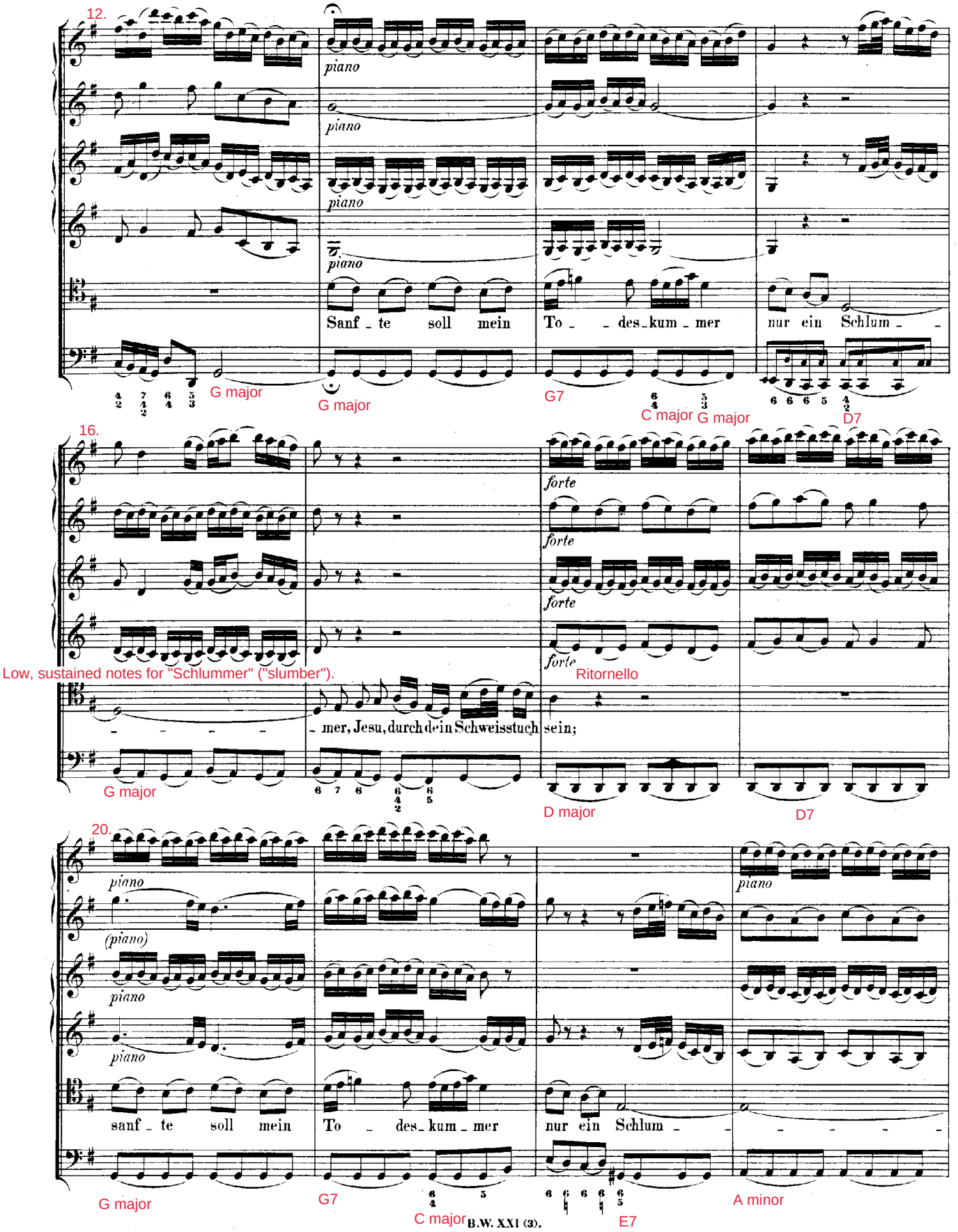
249/7. **ARIA.** ●Resurrection assures us of comfort after death (2497).

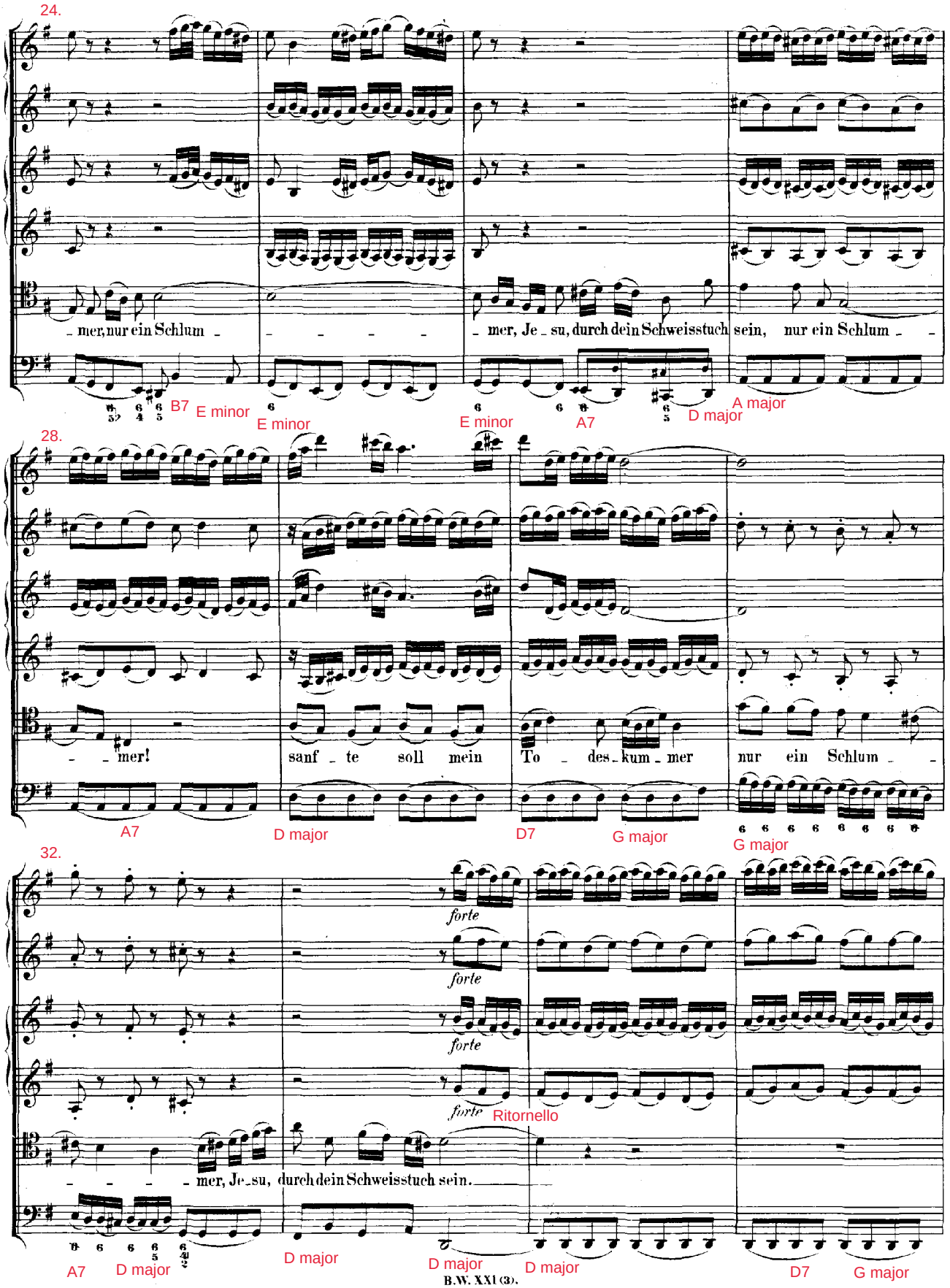


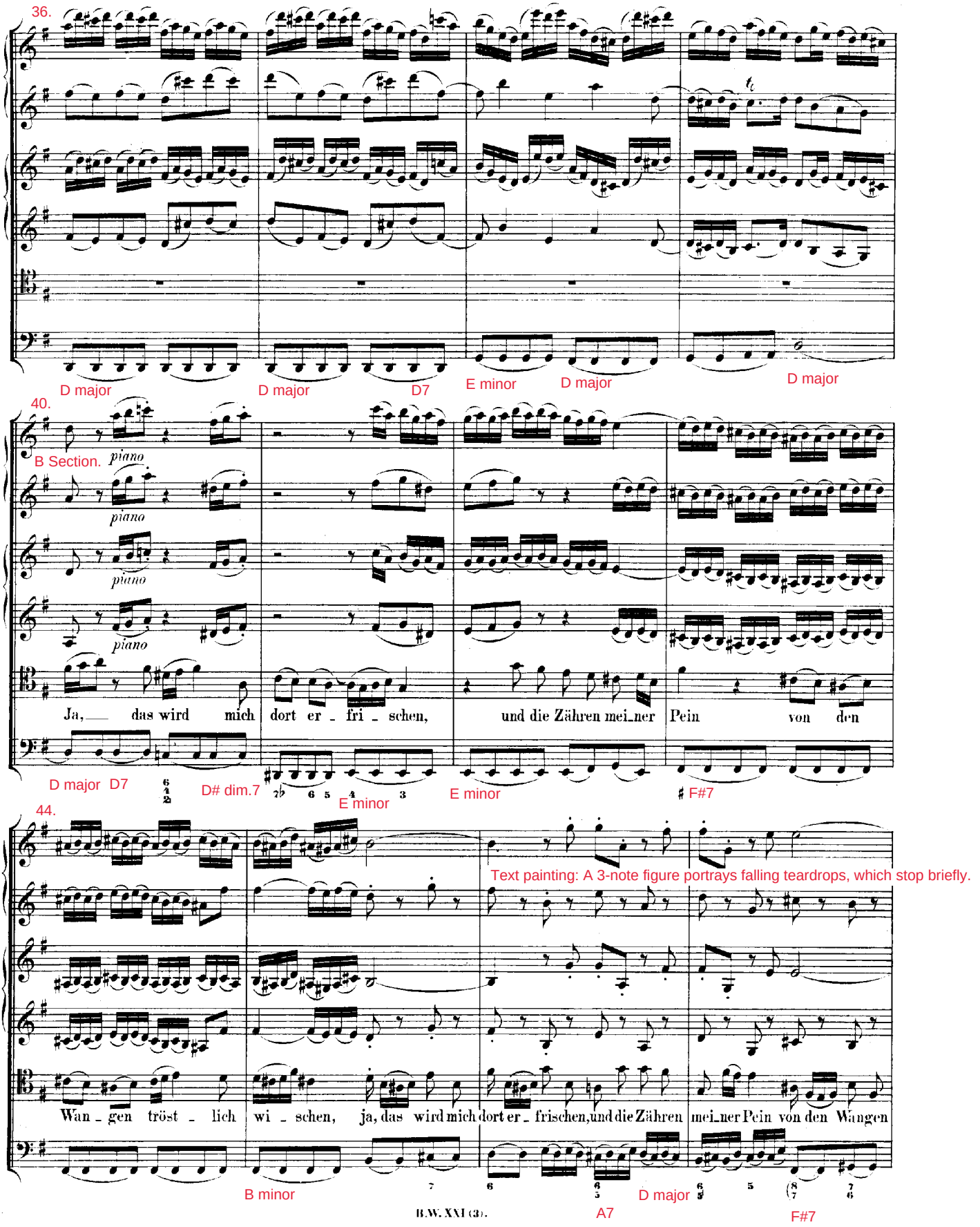
*) Im Autographe mit Vorzeichnung des G-Schlüssels auf der ersten Linie.

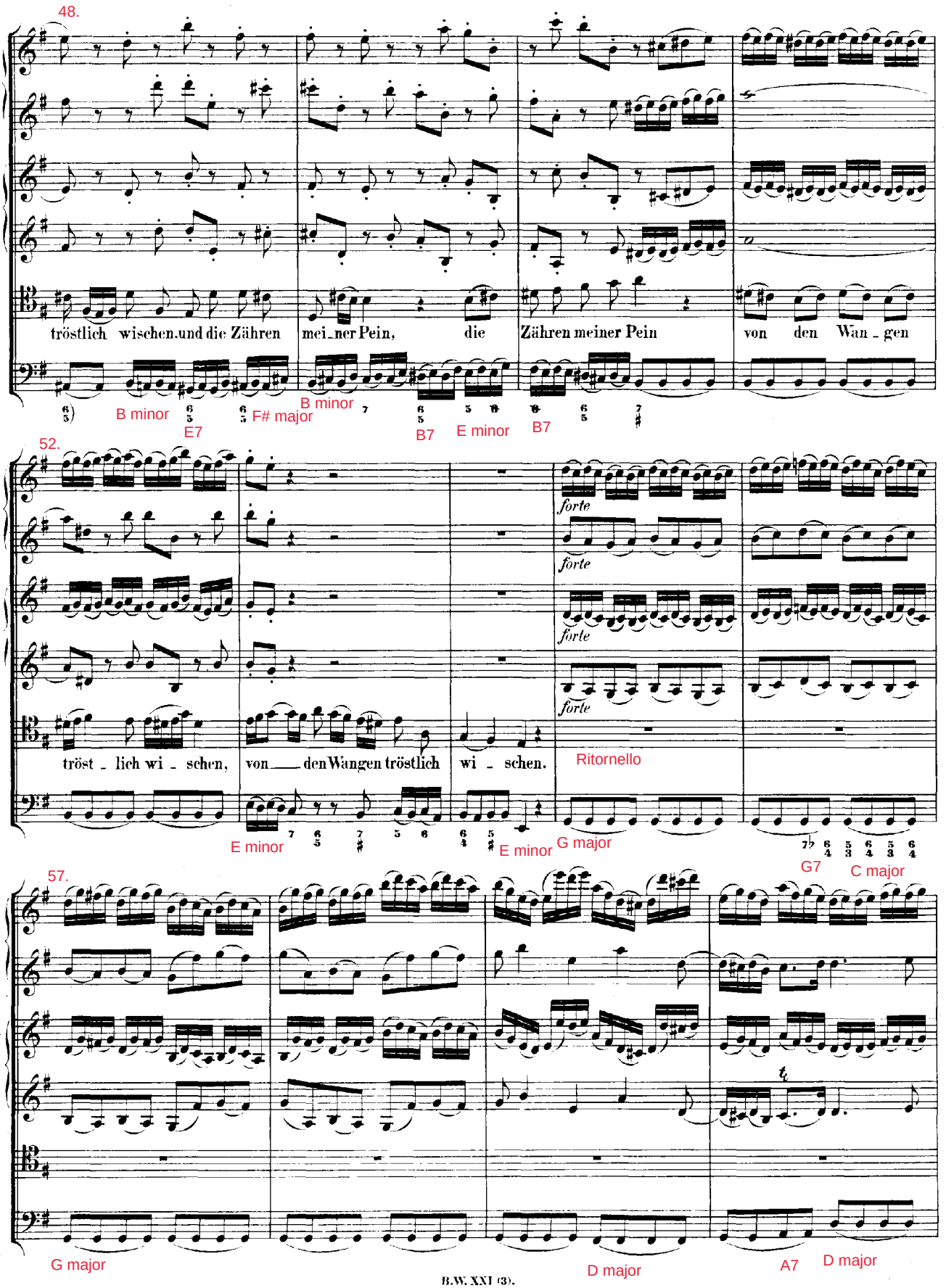
B.W. XXI (3).

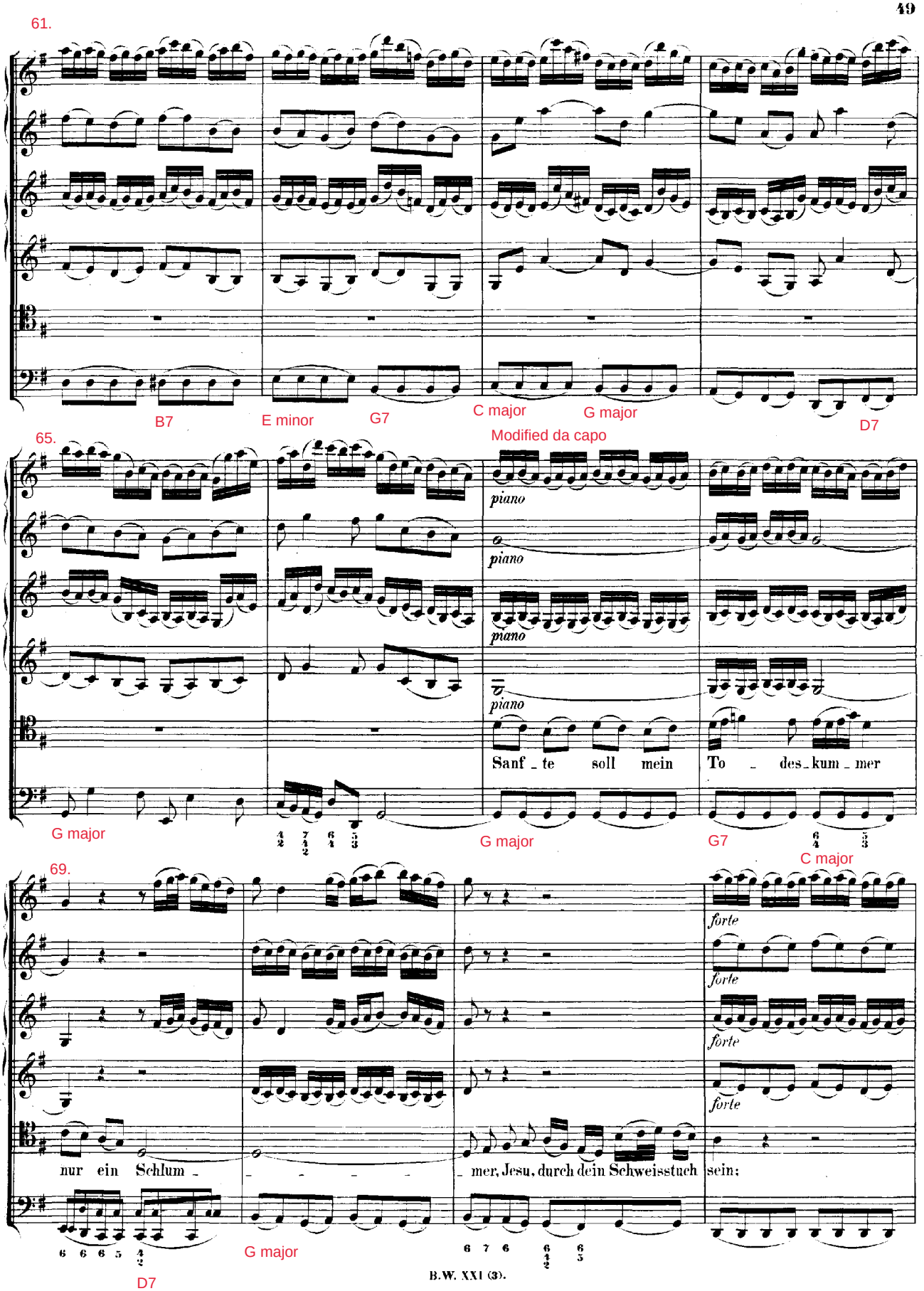
As noted above, the slumber song originally alluded to the duke taking care of his people like a shepherd caring for his sheep. Here Bach employs it to portray death as nothing more than sleep, with Jesus’ “Schweißtuch” (representing his death) becoming the means by which all tears will eventually be wiped away in heaven, as described in Revelation 21:3–4: I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” (Also Isaiah 25:8, Revelation 7:15–17.)

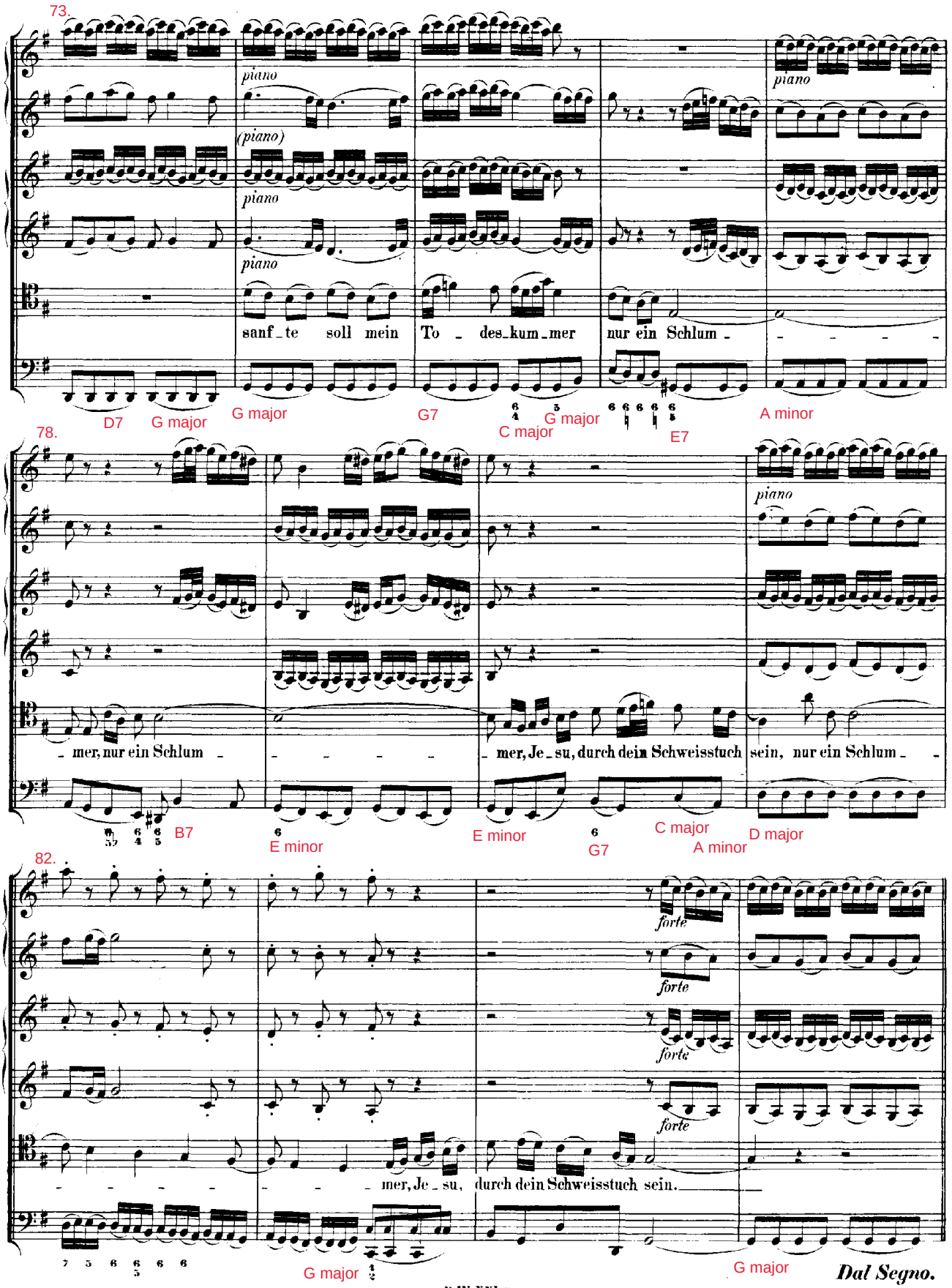

12.
piano
piano
piano
piano
Sanf - te soll mein
To - - des-kum - mer
nur ein Schlum - -
G major
G major
G7
C major
G major
D7
16.
forte
forte
forte
forte
Low, sustained notes for "Schlummer" ("slumber").
- mer, Jesu, durch dein Schweisstuch sein;
Ritornello
G major
D major
D7
20.
piano
(piano)
piano
piano
piano
sanf - te soll mein
To - des-kum - mer
nur ein Schlum - - - - - -
G major
G7
C major
E7
A minor


24.
mer, nur ein Schlum
mer, Je su, durch dein Schweisstuch sein, nur ein Schlum
B7
E minor
E minor
E minor
A7
D major
A major
28.
mer!
sanf te soll mein
To des kum mer
nur ein Schlum
A7
D major
D7
G major
G major
32.
forte
forte
forte
forte
Ritornello
mer, Je su, durch dein Schweisstuch sein.
A7
D major
D major
D major
D major
D7
G major


36.
D major
D major
D7
E minor
D major
D major
40.
B Section.
piano
piano
piano
Ja, das wird mich dort er - fri - schen, und die Zähren mei_ner Pein von den
D major D7
D# dim.7
E minor
E minor
♯ F#7
44.
Text painting: A 3-note figure portrays falling teardrops, which stop briefly.
Wan - gen tröst - lich wi - schen, ja, das wird mich dort er - frischen, und die Zähren mei_ner Pein von den Wangen
B minor
D major
A7
F#7


48.
tröstlich wischen.und die Zähren mei_ner Pein, die Zähren meiner Pein von den Wan_gen
B minor
F# major
B minor
B7
E minor
B7
E7
52.
forte
forte
forte
tröst_lich wi_schen, von___den Wangen tröstlich wi_schen.
Ritornello
E minor
E minor
G major
G7
C major
57.
G major
D major
A7
D major


61.
B7
E minor
G7
C major
G major
D7
65.
Modified da capo
piano
piano
piano
piano
Sanf _ te soll mein
To _ des _ kum _ mer
G major
G major
G7
C major
69.
forte
forte
forte
forte
nur ein Schlum _
_ mer, Jesu, durch dein Schweisstuch
sein:
G major
D7


73.
piano
(piano)
piano
piano
piano
sanf_te soll mein To_des_kum_mer nur ein Schlum_
D7 G major G major G7 C major G major E7 A minor
78.
piano
mer, nur ein Schlum _mer, Je_su, durch dein Schweisstuch sein, nur ein Schlum_
B7 E minor E minor G7 C major A minor D major
82.
forte
forte
forte
forte
_mer, Je_su, durch dein Schweisstuch sein.
G major G major
Dal Segno.

Two measures of secco recitative come to a pause, after which a lengthy arioso commences. The continuo introduces a line that the voices pick up in imitation, at which point the continuo repeats the two-beat motive that ended its phrase, suggesting the urgent words “bald geschehen” (“soon happen”). Diminished chords, rhetorical pauses, and interjections of "ah" depict the yearning of the text.

(Mary & Mary Magdalene) ●Yearning for death: We long to see the Savior soon! (249/8).

249/8, **RECITATIVO.**

a tempo. Meanwhile sigh we with burning desire:

1.

Soprano. In - des - sen seuf - zen wir mit bren-nen - der Be - gier;

Parallel 3rds suggest sweetness.

Alto. In - des - sen seuf - zen wir mit bren-nen - der Be - gier;

Fagotto e Continuo.

B minor

Arioso. Ah, might it indeed but soon happen, the

3.

Ach! ach! könnt' es doch nur bald ge - sche-hen, könnt' es doch nur bald ge - sche-hen, den

Ach! ach! könnt' es doch nur bald ge - sche-hen, könnt' es doch nur bald ge-

[bald ge - sche - hen]

E# dim.7 C#7 F# minor B minor E minor

Savior himself to see!

The word "selbst" ('him self') is repeatedly emphasized in the phrase "to see the Savior "himself."

6.

Hei - land selbst zu se - hen. Ach! ach! ach!

sche-hen, den Hei - land selbst zu se - hen. Ach! ach! ach! könnt' es

C major B major E minor E7 A7 D7

9.

könnt' es doch nur bald ge - sche - hen, könnt' es doch nur bald ge-

doch nur bald ge - sche - hen, könnt' es doch nur bald ge - sche - hen, den

F#(7) B minor

11.

sche-hen, den Hei - land selbst zu se - hen, den Hei - land selbst zu se - hen!

Hei - land selbst zu se - hen, den Hei - land selbst zu se - hen!

B minor E7 A major A major A major

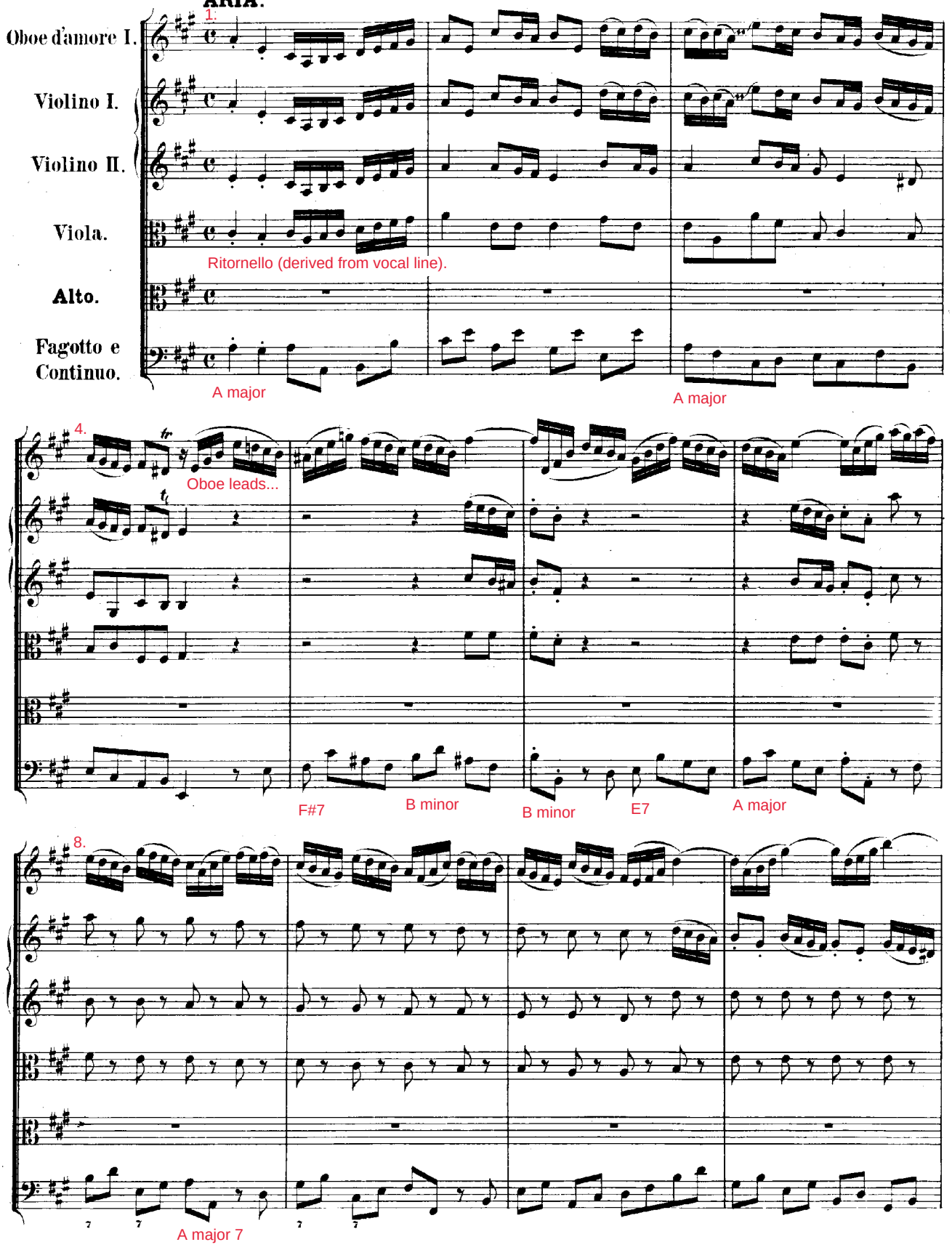
With language borrowed from the Song of Solomon, Mary Magdalene wonders where to find Jesus (see note for relevant biblical passages). Martin Petzoldt notes that the bride in the Song of Solomon was traditionally identified with Mary Magdalene seeking her savior in the Easter narrative as recorded in the Gospel of John.

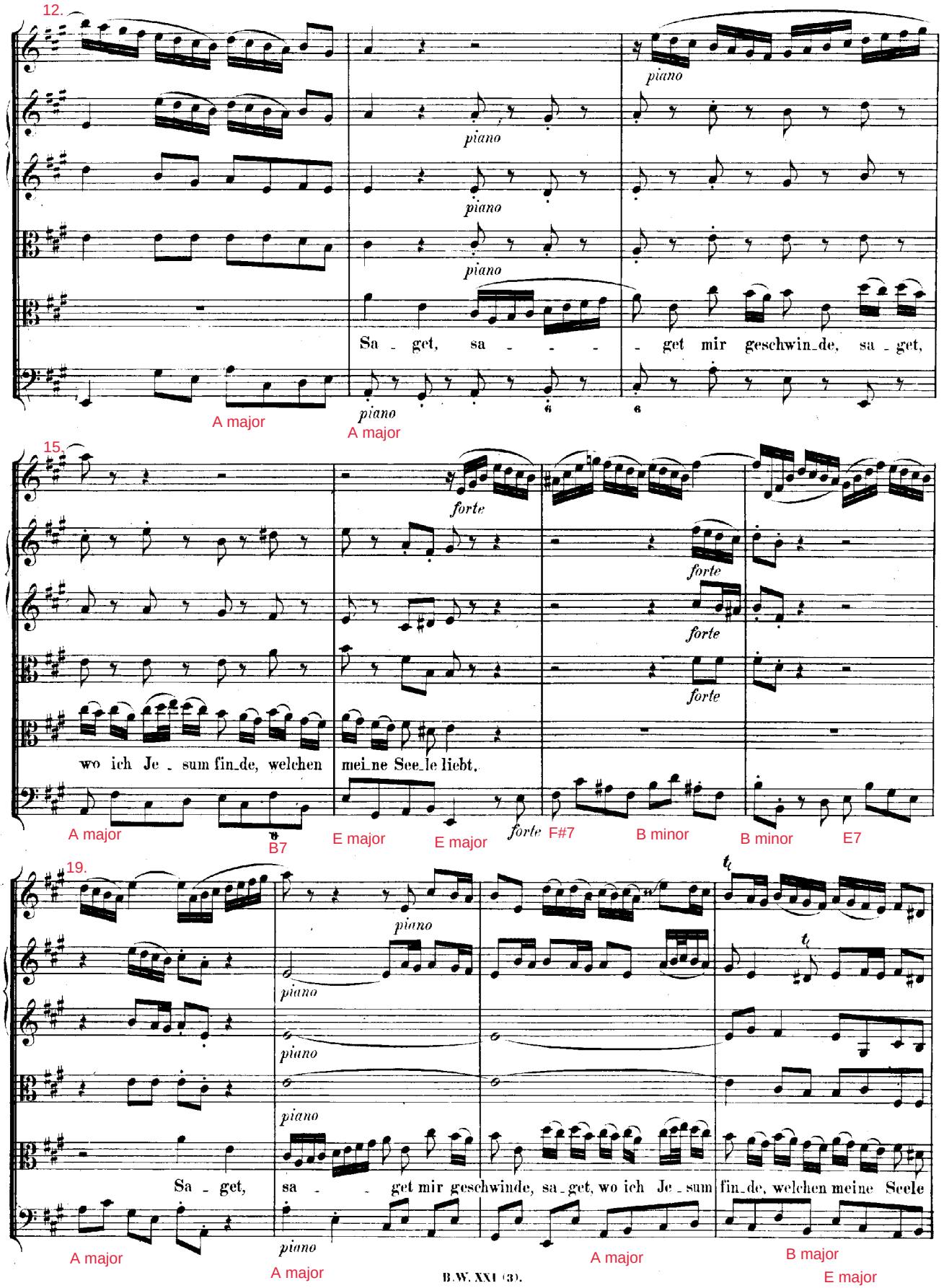
See *Bach-Kommentar* 2:701. For a comparison of the three texts employed for this aria's music, see note. All three texts suggest an "inner impatience…[that] may have its musical origin in the words “geschwinde” (quickly) [249 & 249a] and “behende” (swiftly) [249b]." See Petzoldt *Bach-Kommentar* 2:702. translated from the German original. Here the music fits the image of Mary running about in search of Jesus (just as the bride searches for her beloved in the Song of Solomon).

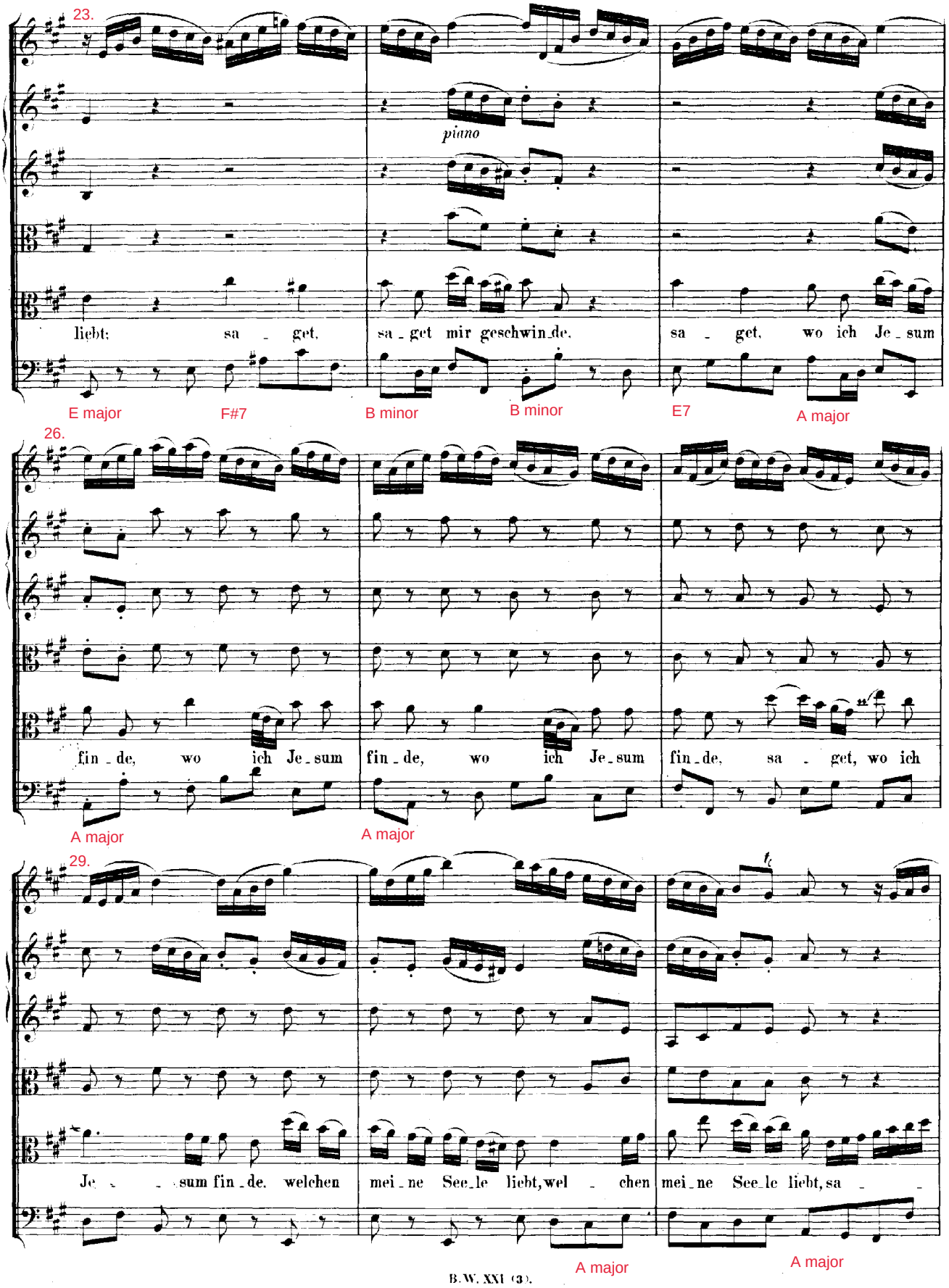
Compare 249a/8, 249b/7.

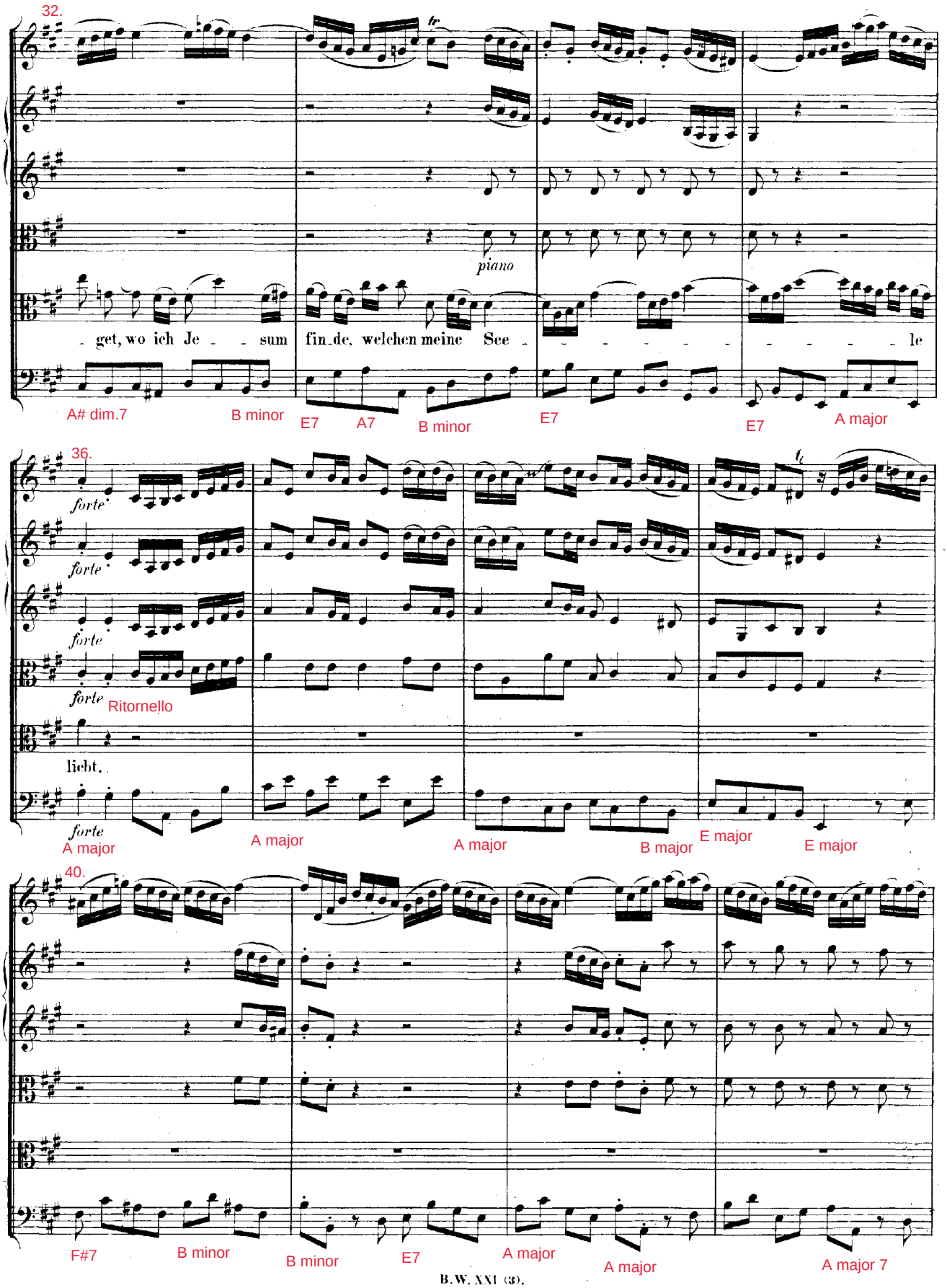
249/9.

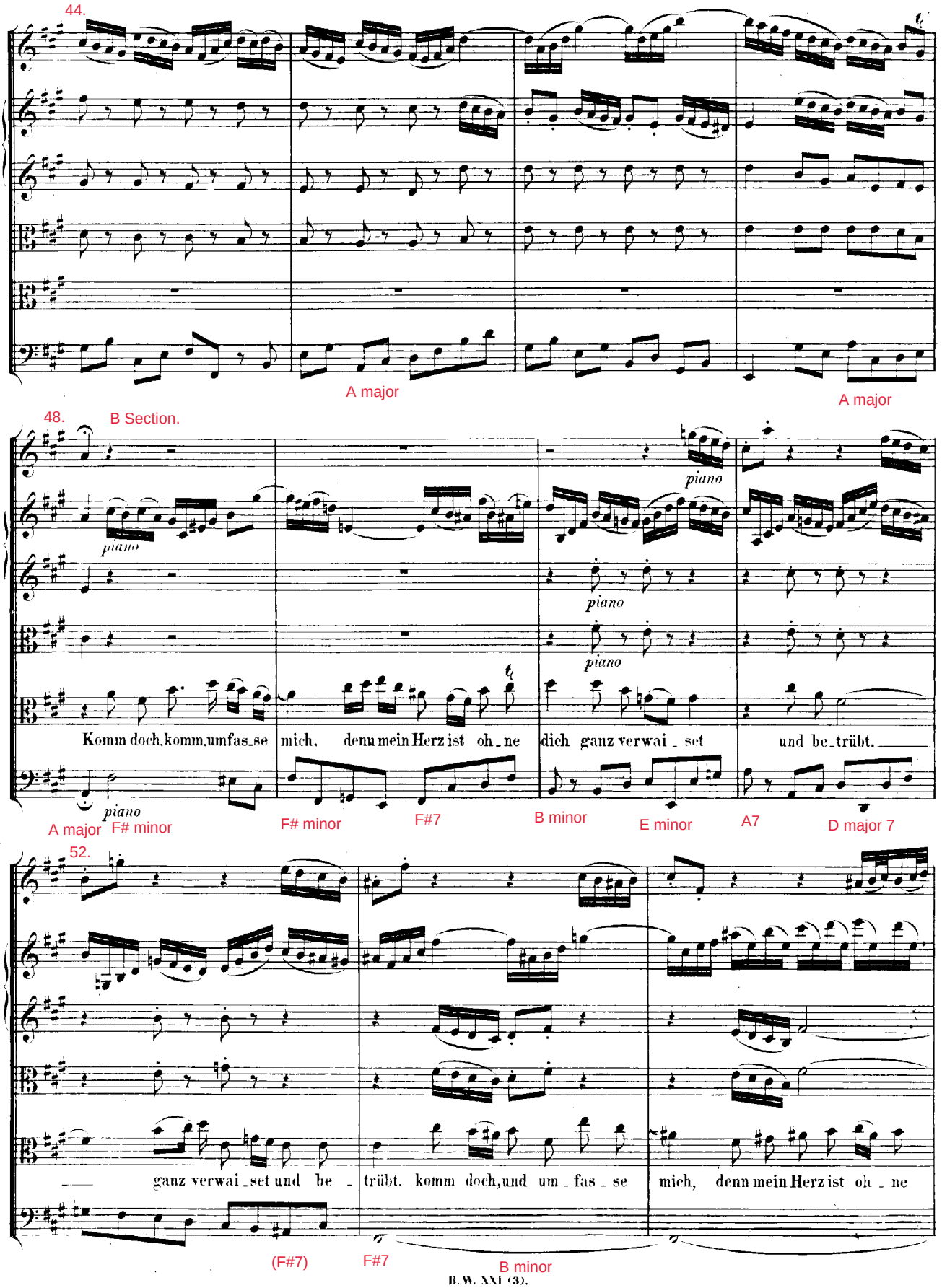
(Mary Magdalene)
●Easter: Where can I find him whom my soul loves? (249/9).

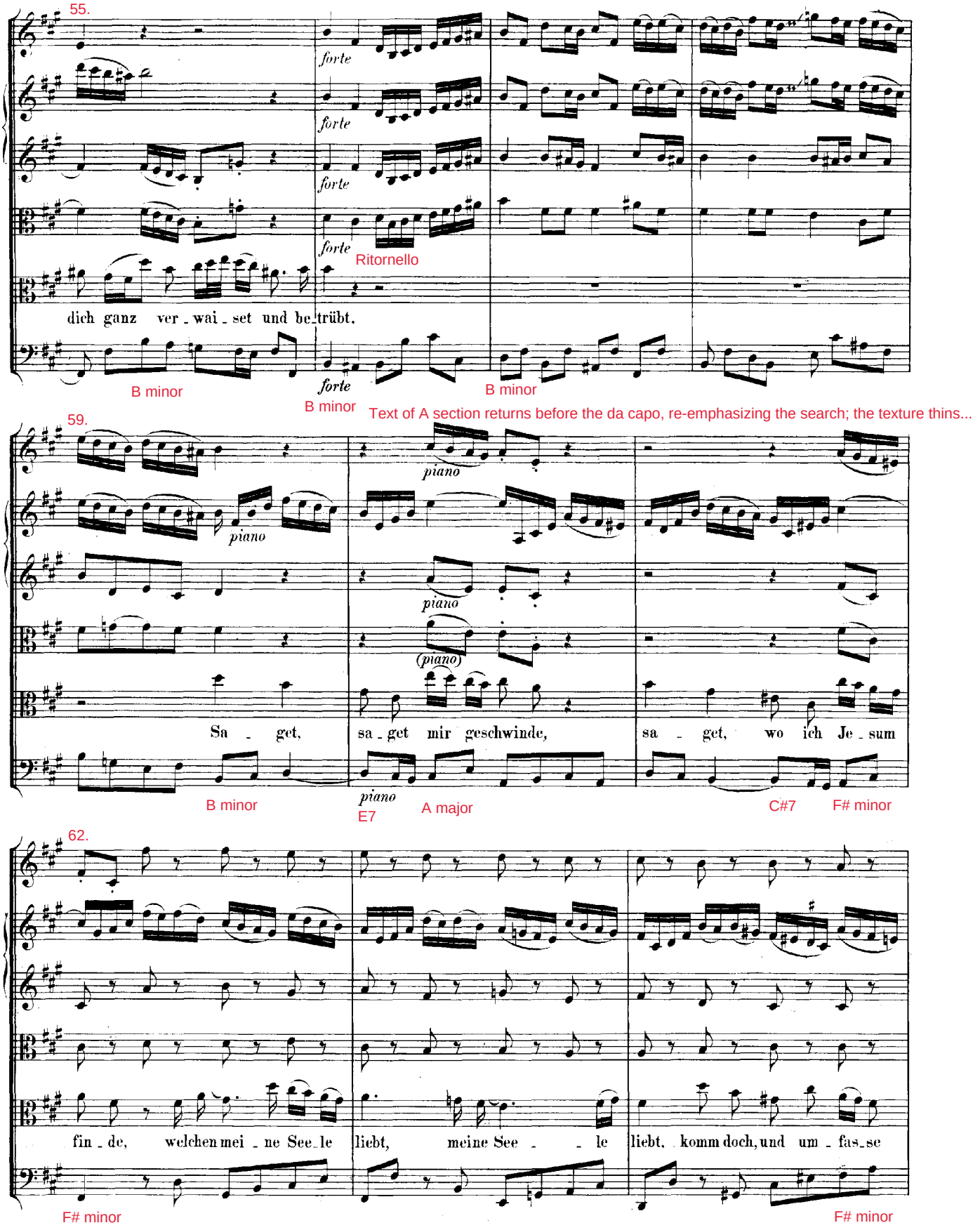


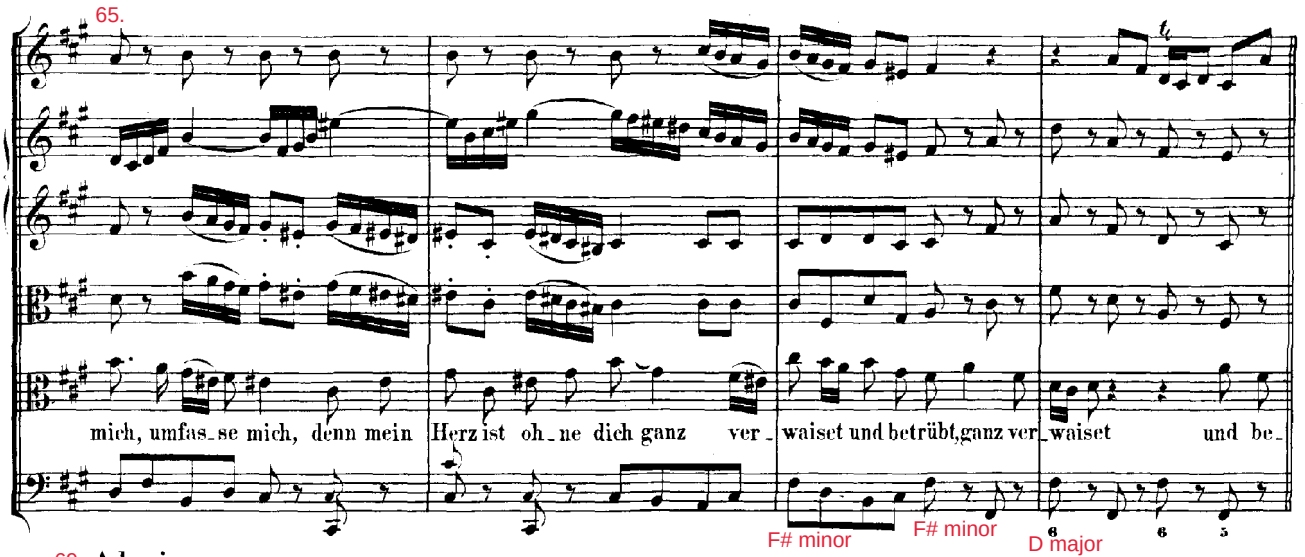

12.
piano
Sa - get, sa - - - - get mir geschwin-de, sa - get,
A major
A major
15.
forte
wo ich Je - sum fin-de, welchen mei-ne See-le liebt,
A major
B7
E major
E major
F#7
B minor
B minor
E7
19.
piano
Sa - get,
sa - - get mir geschwinde, sa-get, wo ich Je - sum fin-de, welchen meine Seele
A major
A major
A major
B major
E major


23.
piano
liebt; sa - get, sa - get mir geschwin-de, sa - get, wo ich Je - sum
E major
F#7
B minor
B minor
E7
A major
26.
fin - de, wo ich Je - sum fin - de, wo ich Je - sum fin - de, sa - get, wo ich
A major
A major
29.
Je - - sum fin - de, welchen mei - ne See - le liebt, wel - chen mei - ne See - le liebt, sa - -
A major
A major

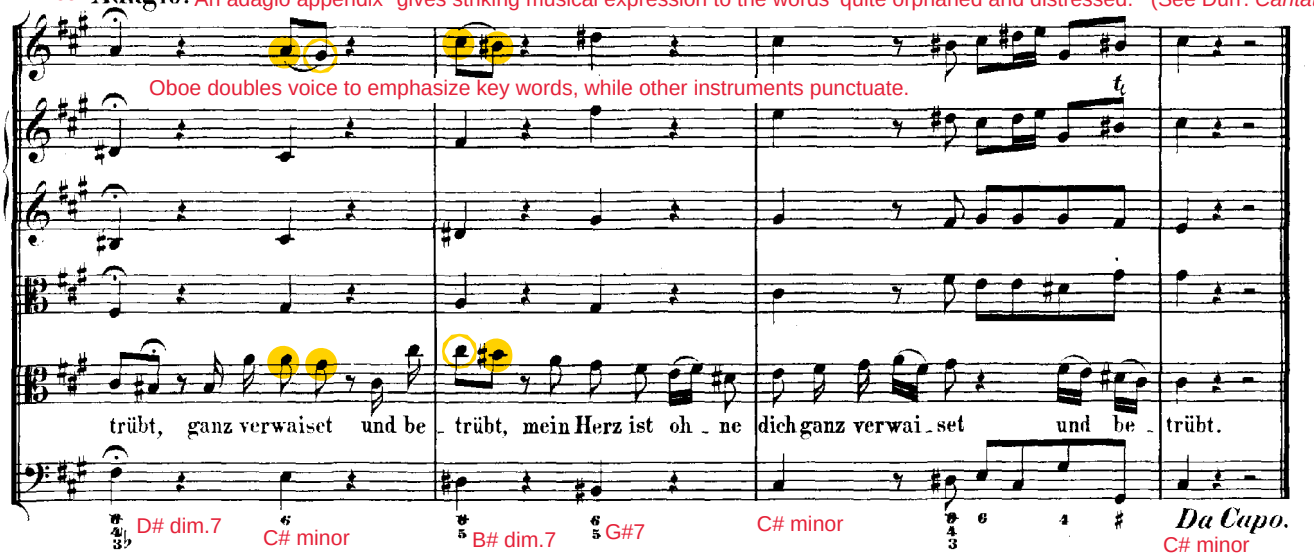

32.
piano
get, wo ich Je - sum
fin-de, welchen meine See - le
A# dim.7
B minor
E7
A7
B minor
E7
E7
A major
36.
forte
forte
forte
forte
Ritornello
liebt.
forte
A major
A major
A major
B major
E major
E major
40.
F#7
B minor
B minor
E7
A major
A major
A major 7


44.
A major
A major
48.
B Section.
piano
piano
piano
piano
piano
Komm doch, komm, umfas_se mich, denn mein Herz ist oh_ne dich ganz verwai_set und be_trübt.
A major
F# minor
F# minor
F#7
B minor
E minor
A7
D major 7
52.
ganz verwai_set und be_trübt. komm doch, und um_fas_se mich, denn mein Herz ist oh_ne
(F#7)
F#7
B minor

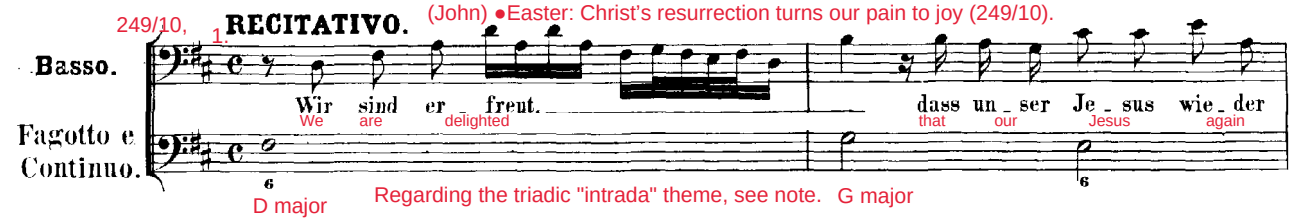

55.
forte
forte
forte
forte
Ritornello
dich ganz ver - wai - set und be - trübt.
B minor
forte
B minor
B minor
Text of A section returns before the da capo, re-emphasizing the search; the texture thins...
59.
piano
piano
piano
(piano)
Sa - get,
sa - get mir geschwinde,
sa - get, wo ich Je - sum
B minor
piano
E7
A major
C#7
F# minor
62.
fin - de, welchen mei - ne See - le
liebt, meine See - - le
liebt, komm doch, und um - fas - se
F# minor
F# minor



69. **Adagio.** An adagio appendix "gives striking musical expression to the words 'quite orphaned and distressed.'" (See Dürr. *Cantatas*, p. 274.)

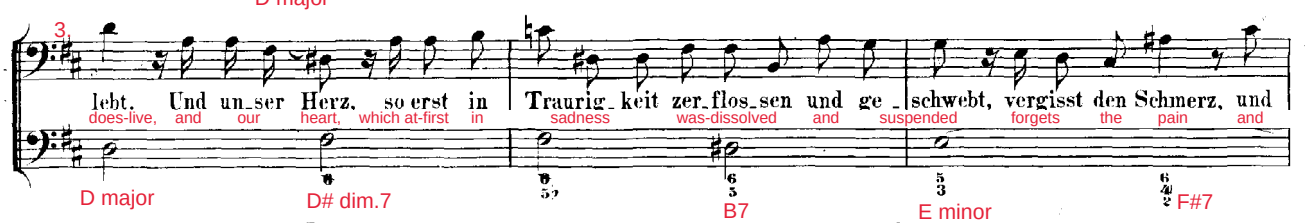


249/10, 1 **RECITATIVO.** (John) ●Easter: Christ's resurrection turns our pain to joy (249/10).

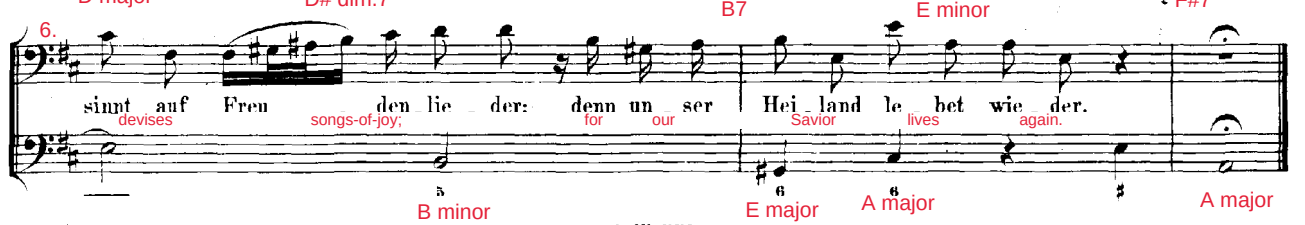


Regarding the triadic "intrada" theme, see note.

3



6.



B.W. XXI (3).

The text is reminiscent of John 16:16, 20–22. [Jesus said], "A little while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me…Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

At his point, a chronological narrative has long been abandoned in favor of theological argument and integration. See note for Martin Petzoldt's comments.

Alfred Dürr writes, "The concluding chorus, with its bipartite contrast, forms a curious counterpart to the Sanctus that originated around the same time and was later incorporated in the B minor Mass (BWV 232III). Both pieces open with a section in common time characterized by triplet rhythms. The voice parts constitute a

largely chordal texture, only lightly broken up into polyphony. The second section, a fugato in quick 3/8 time, provides the 'Pastoral' Cantata with a strikingly brief conclusion." See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, revised and translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 809. The text alludes to a range of biblical passages and themes (see note).

Compare 249a/8, 249b/7.

(Mary, Mary Magdalene, Peter, & John)
●Praise God for Christ's victory over hell & devil! (249/11).

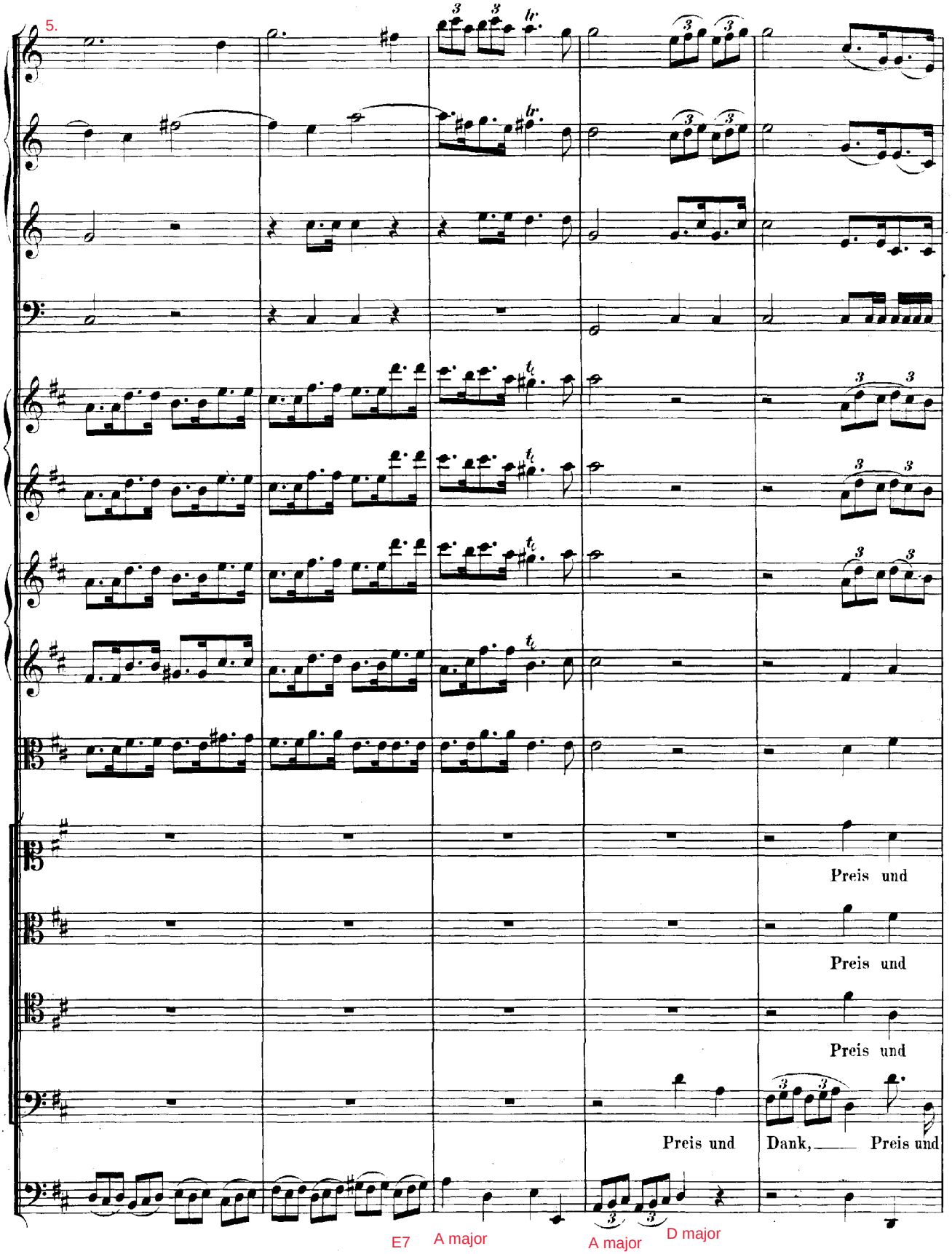
See side note for a comparison of the three texts for which this music was used.

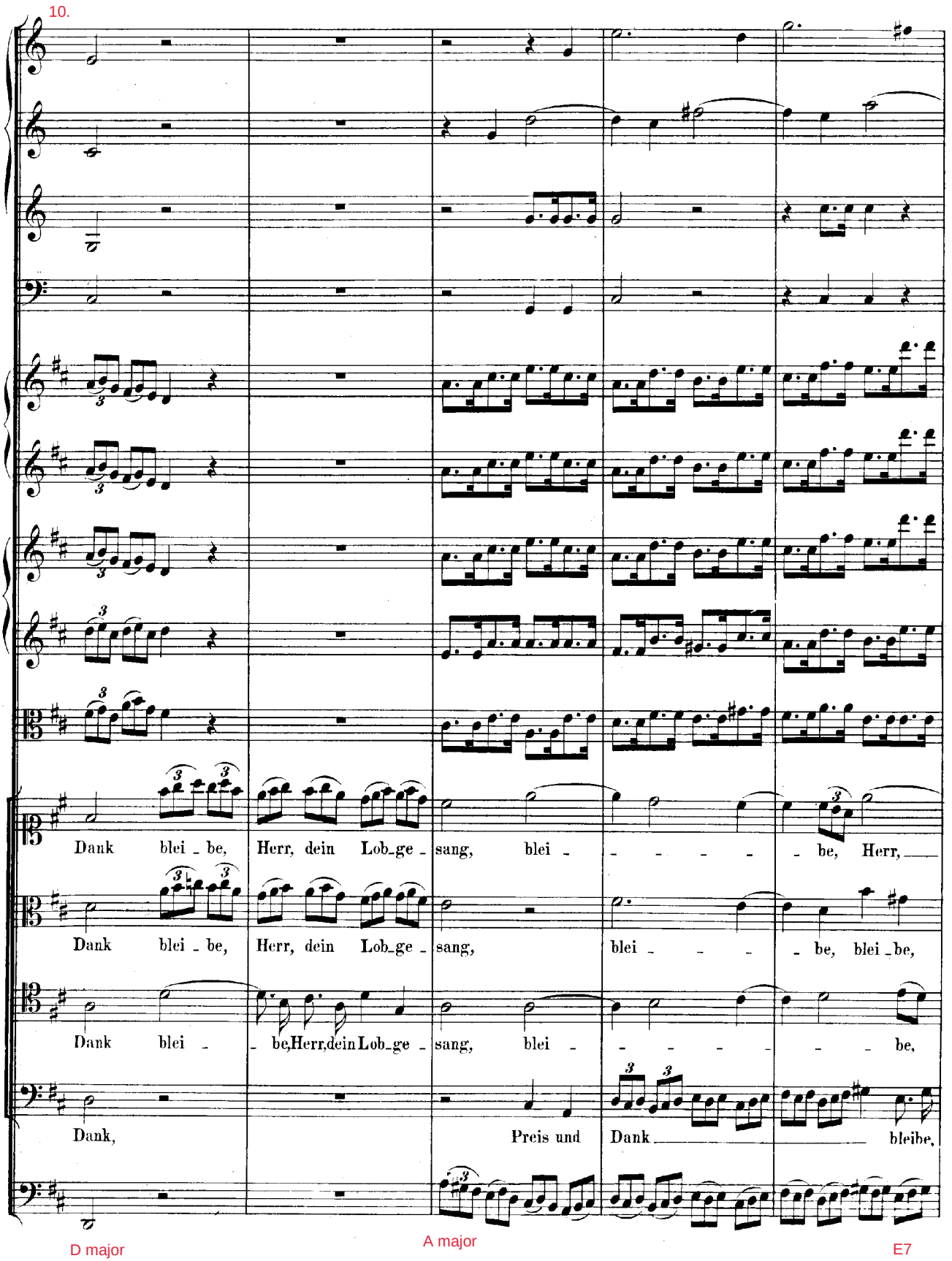
249/11. **CORO.** 1.

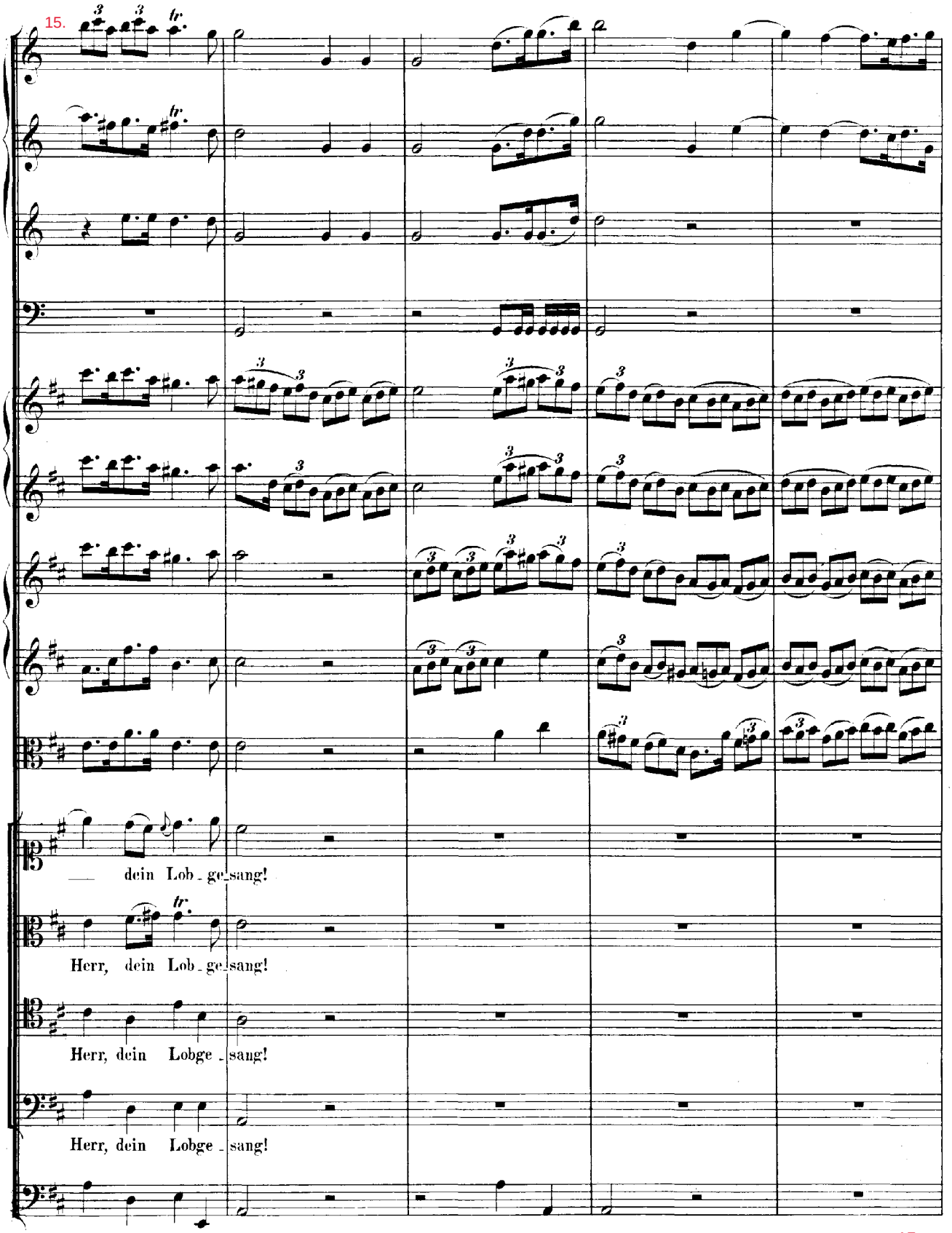
Tromba I.
Tromba II.
Tromba III.
Timpani.
Oboe I.
Oboe II.
Violino I.
Violino II.
Viola.
Soprano.
Alto.
Tenore.
Basso.
Fagotto e Continuo.

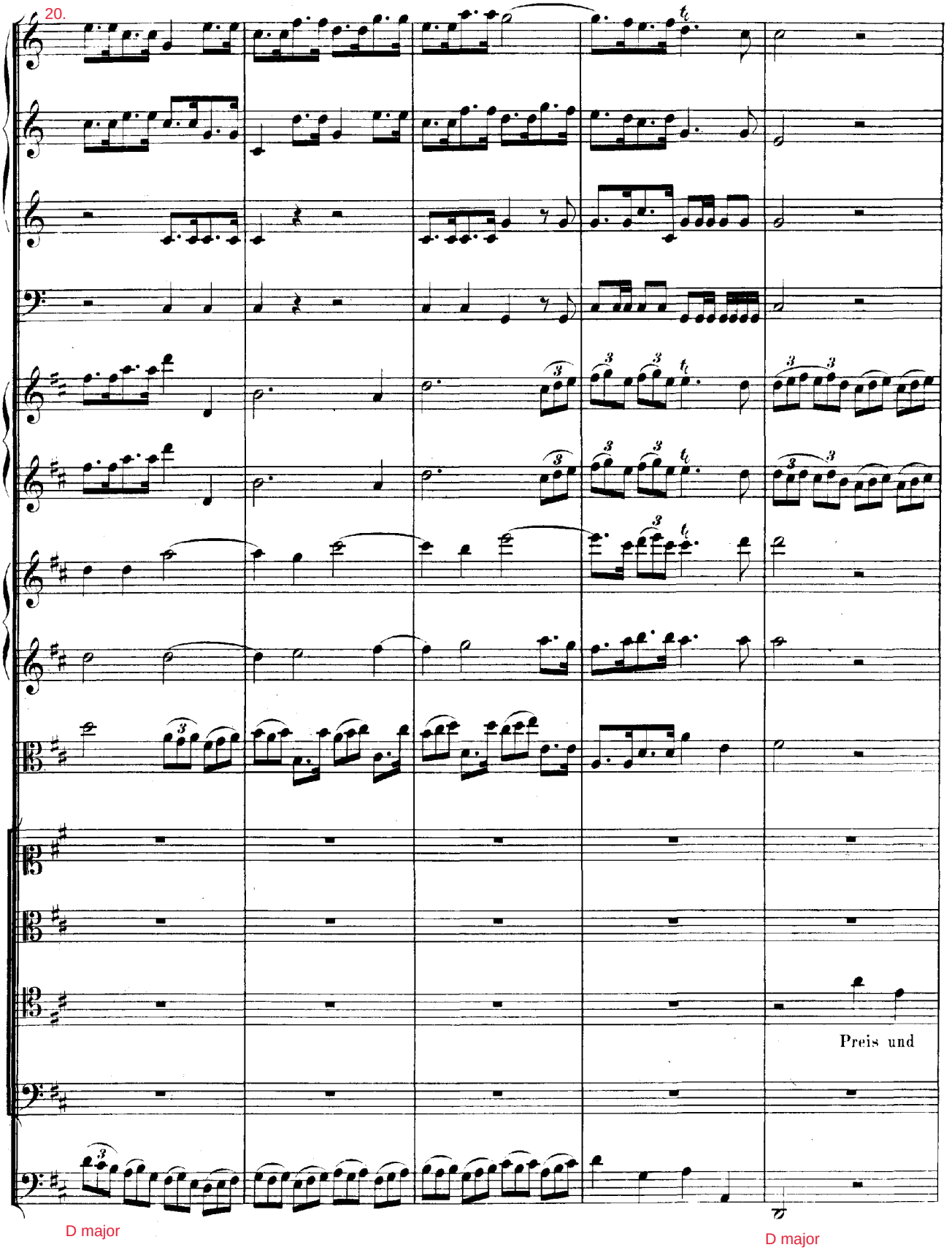
D major

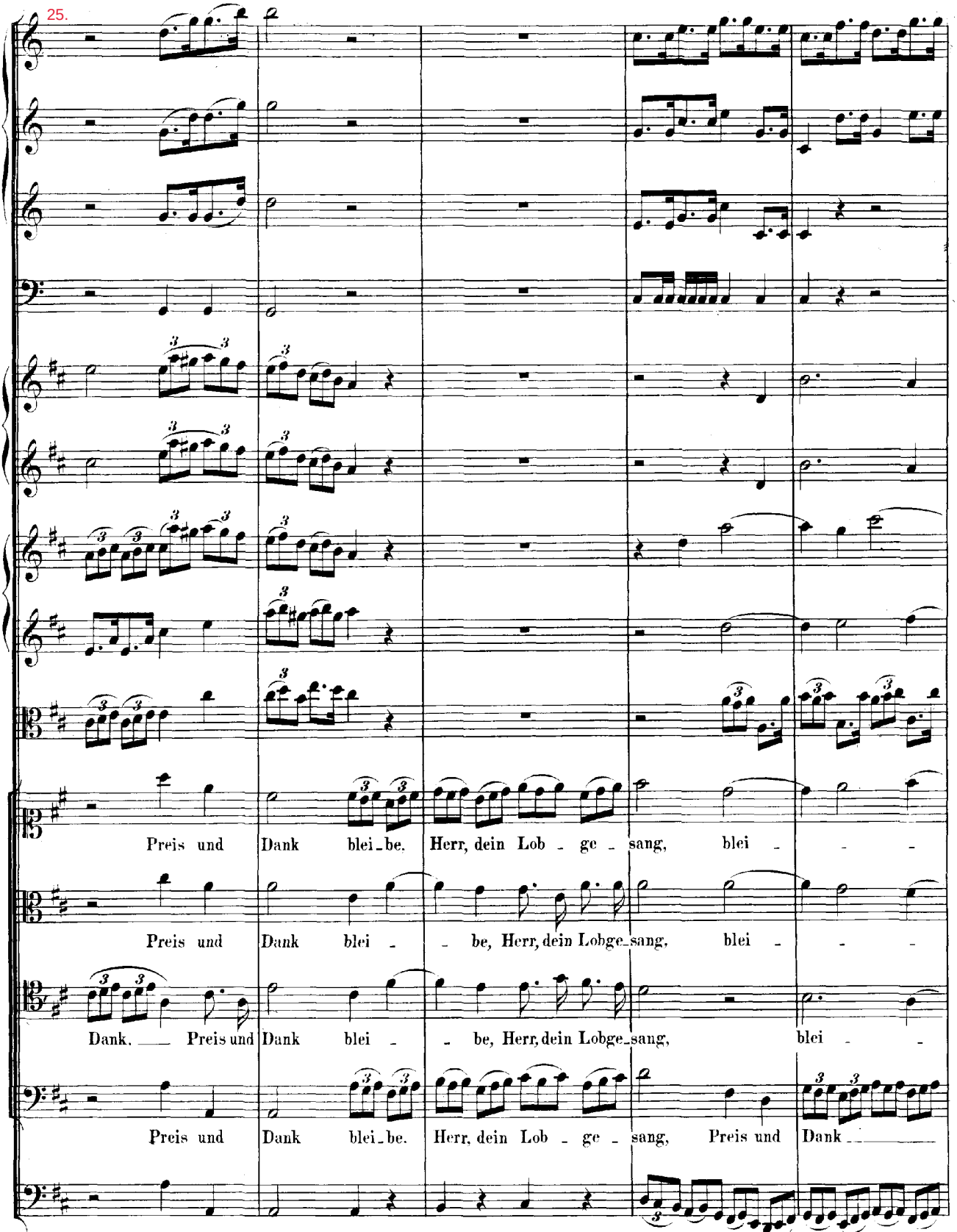
A major

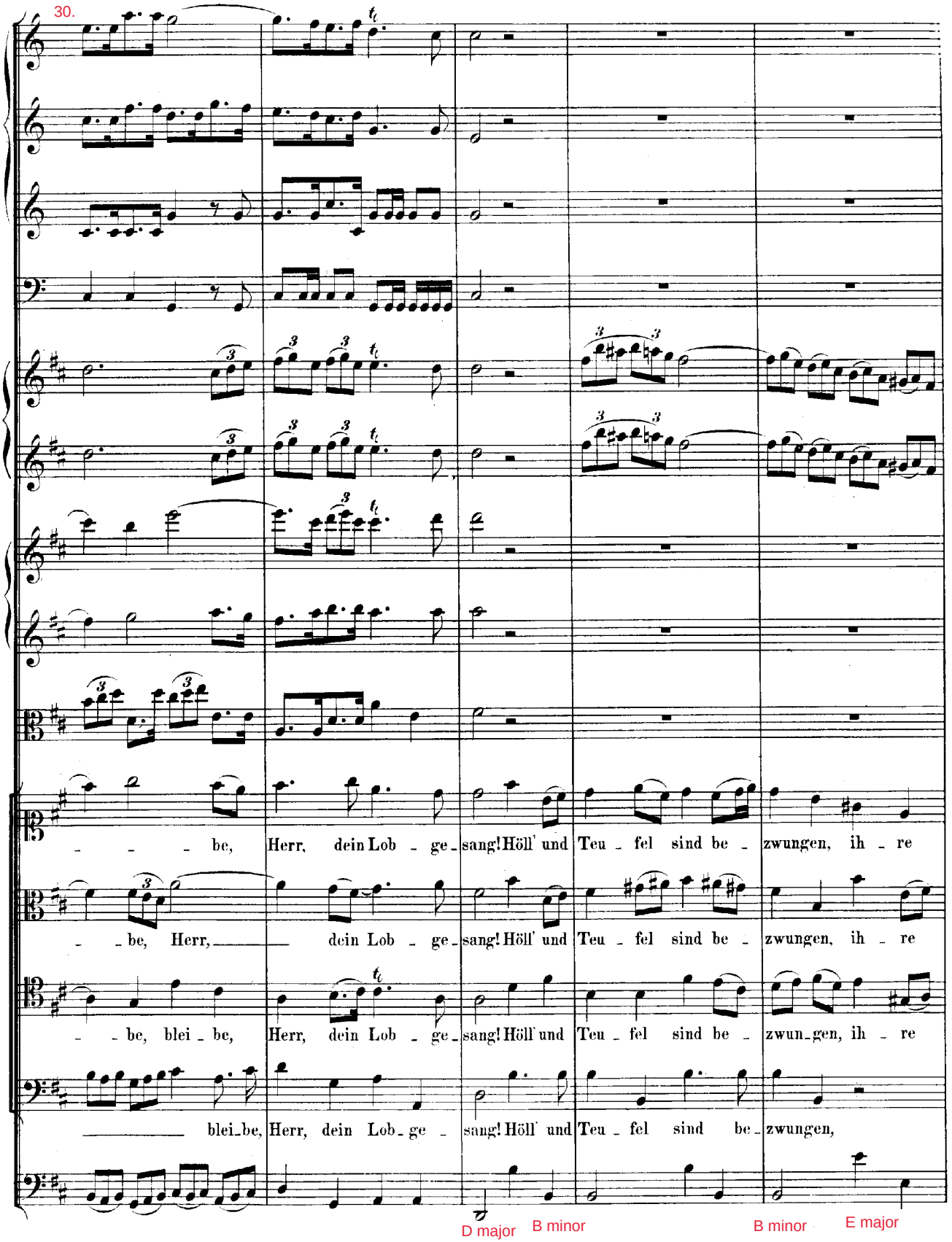

5.
Preis und
Preis und
Preis und
Preis und
Dank, Preis und
E7
A major
A major
D major


10.
Dank blei_be, Herr, dein Lob_ge_sang, blei_ _ _ _ _ be, Herr,
Dank blei_be, Herr, dein Lob_ge_sang, blei_ _ _ be, blei_be,
Dank blei_ _ be, Herr, dein Lob_ge_sang, blei_ _ _ _ _ _ be,
Dank, Preis und Dank bleibe,
D major
A major
E7


15.
dein Lob - ge - sang!
Herr, dein Lob - ge - sang!
Herr, dein Lobge - sang!
Herr, dein Lobge - sang!
A major
A major
A major
D major
A7


20.
Preis und
D major
D major

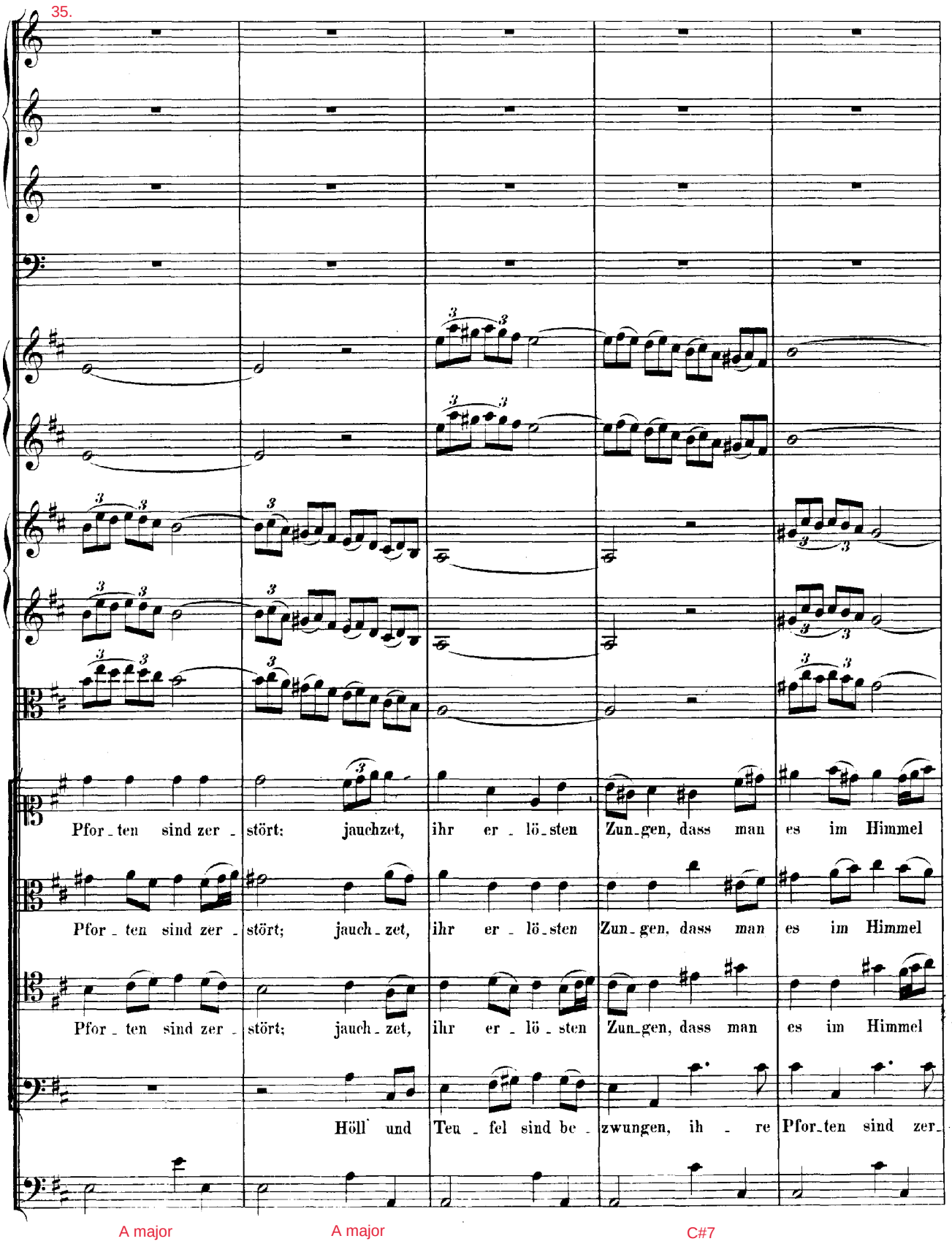

25.
Preis und Dank blei_be. Herr, dein Lob - ge - sang, blei - - -
Preis und Dank blei - - be, Herr, dein Lobge_sang, blei - - -
Dank. — Preis und Dank blei - - be, Herr, dein Lobge_sang, blei - -
Preis und Dank blei_be. Herr, dein Lob - ge - sang, Preis und Dank
A major
A major
A major
A7
D major

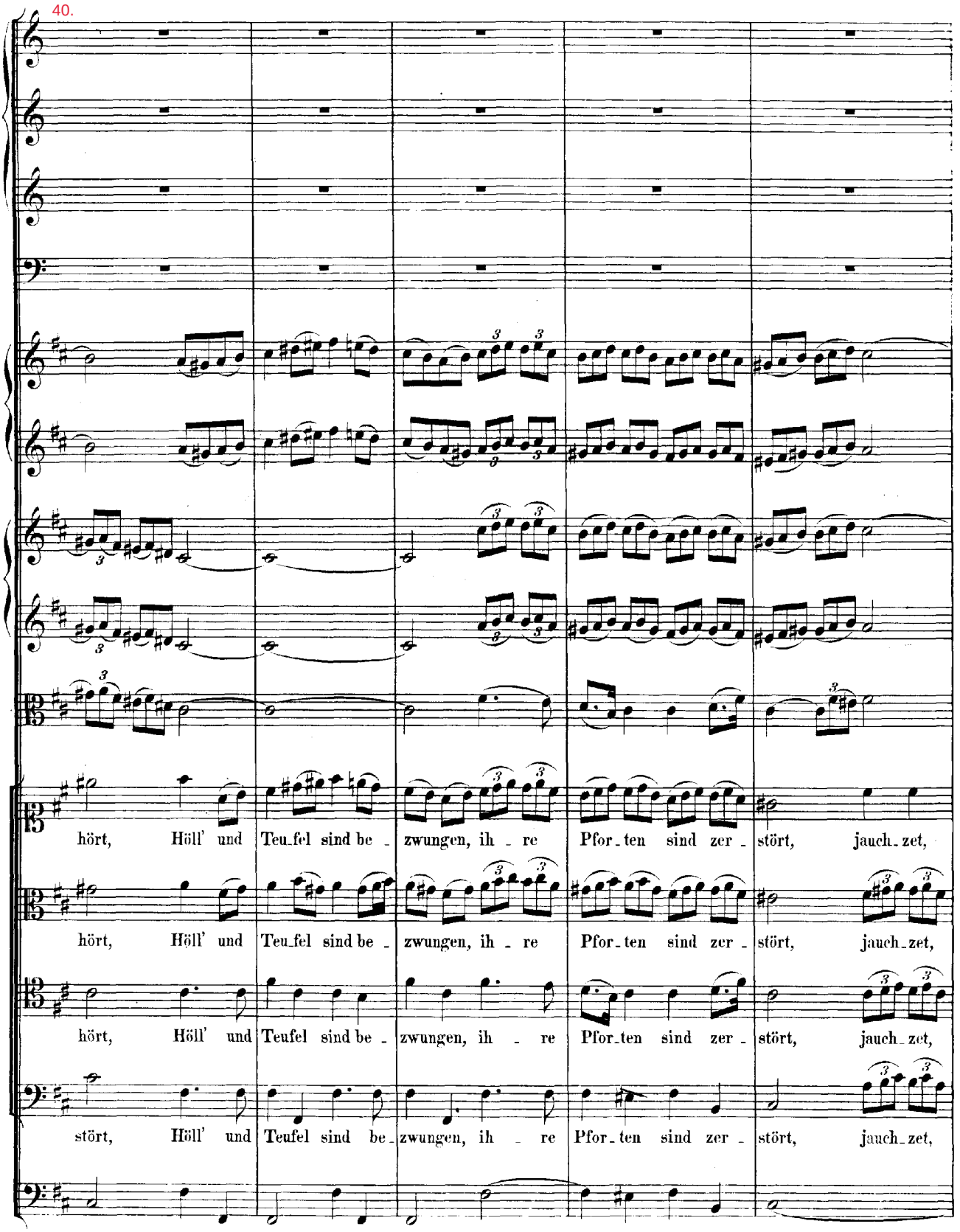


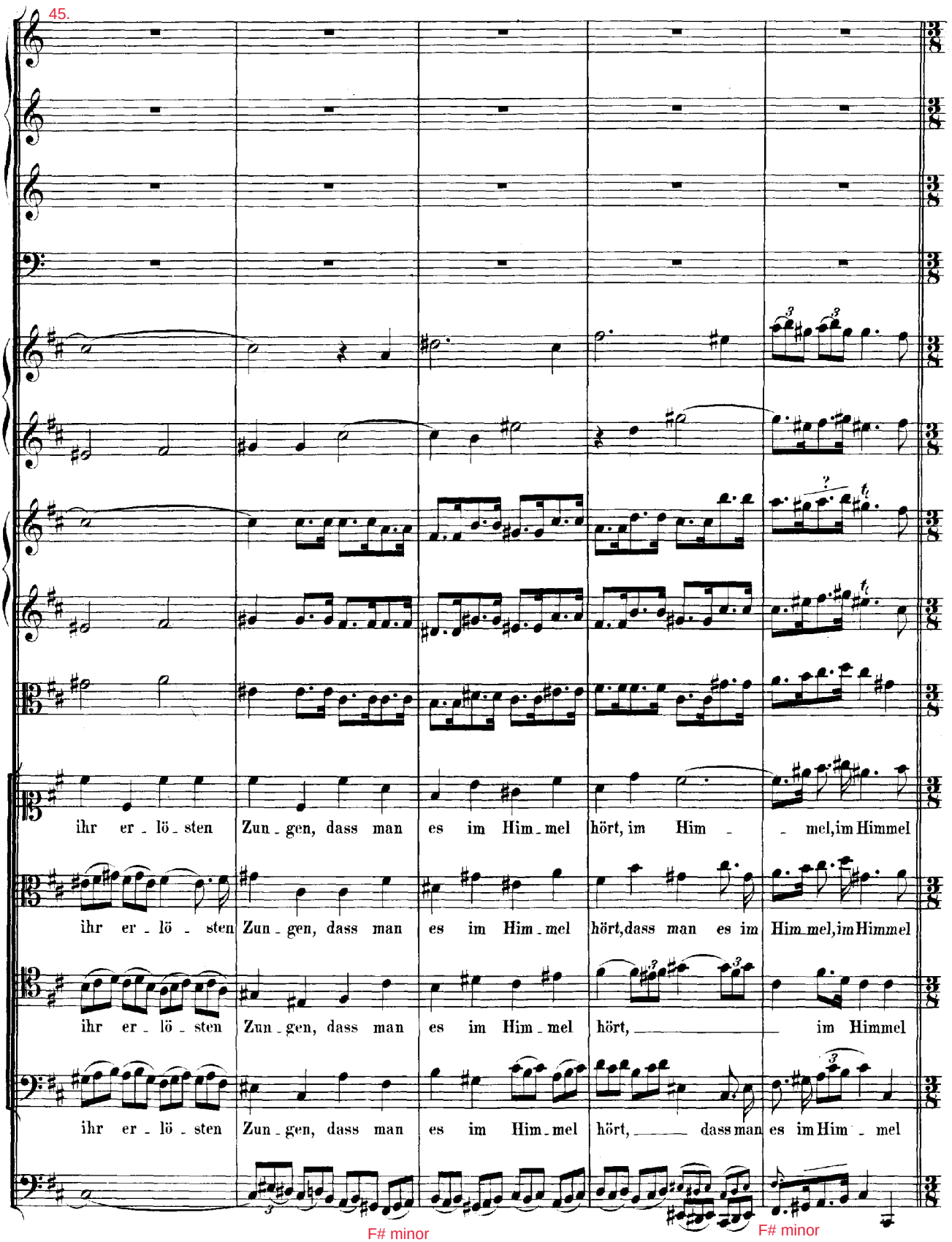
Martin Petzoldt writes, “The parts of the text referring to the palm tree [in the secular cantata counterparts] may also illustrate the origin of the musical invention, with the lines declaiming on the same tone being particularly striking:

Hell and the devil are defeated, (bass, mm. 32–34, 40–42)
Their gates are destroyed. (soprano, mm. 35–36; bass, mm. 38–40)
Rejoice, you redeemed tongues, (alto, mm. 37–38; soprano, mm. 44–46)
That it may be heard in heaven.

See Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-Kommentar* 2:704, translated from the German original.

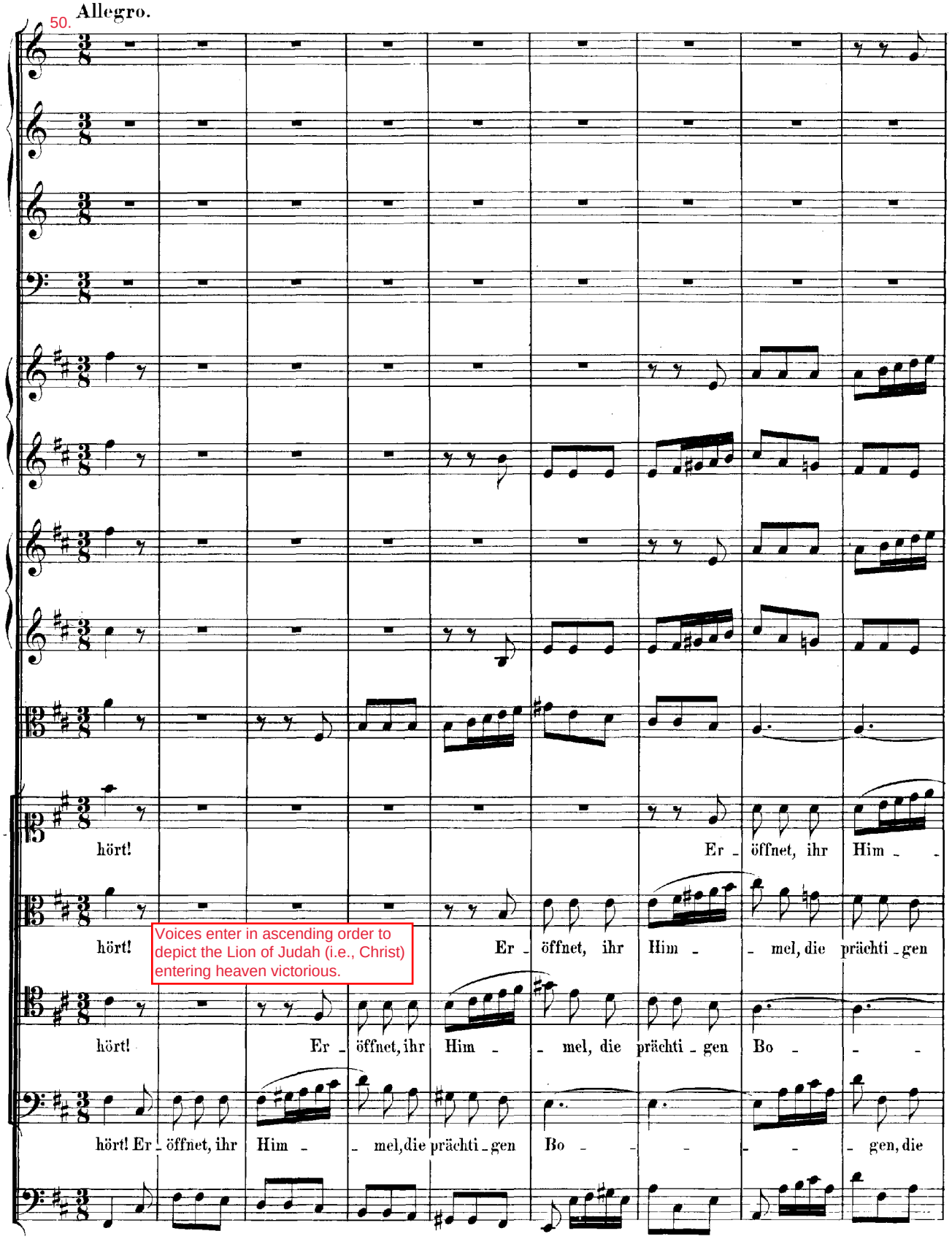

35.
Pfor_ten sind zer_ stört; jauchzet, ihr er_lö_sten Zun_gen, dass man es im Himmel
Pfor_ten sind zer_ stört; jauch_zet, ihr er_lö_sten Zun_gen, dass man es im Himmel
Pfor_ten sind zer_ stört; jauch_zet, ihr er_lö_sten Zun_gen, dass man es im Himmel
Höll' und Teu_fel sind be_zwungen, ih_re Pfor_ten sind zer_
A major
A major
C#7


40.
hört, Höll' und Teu_fel sind be_zwungen, ih_re Pfor_ten sind zer_stört, jauch_zet,
hört, Höll' und Teu_fel sind be_zwungen, ih_re Pfor_ten sind zer_stört, jauch_zet,
hört, Höll' und Teufel sind be_zwungen, ih_re Pfor_ten sind zer_stört, jauch_zet,
stört, Höll' und Teufel sind be_zwungen, ih_re Pfor_ten sind zer_stört, jauch_zet,
F# minor
F# minor

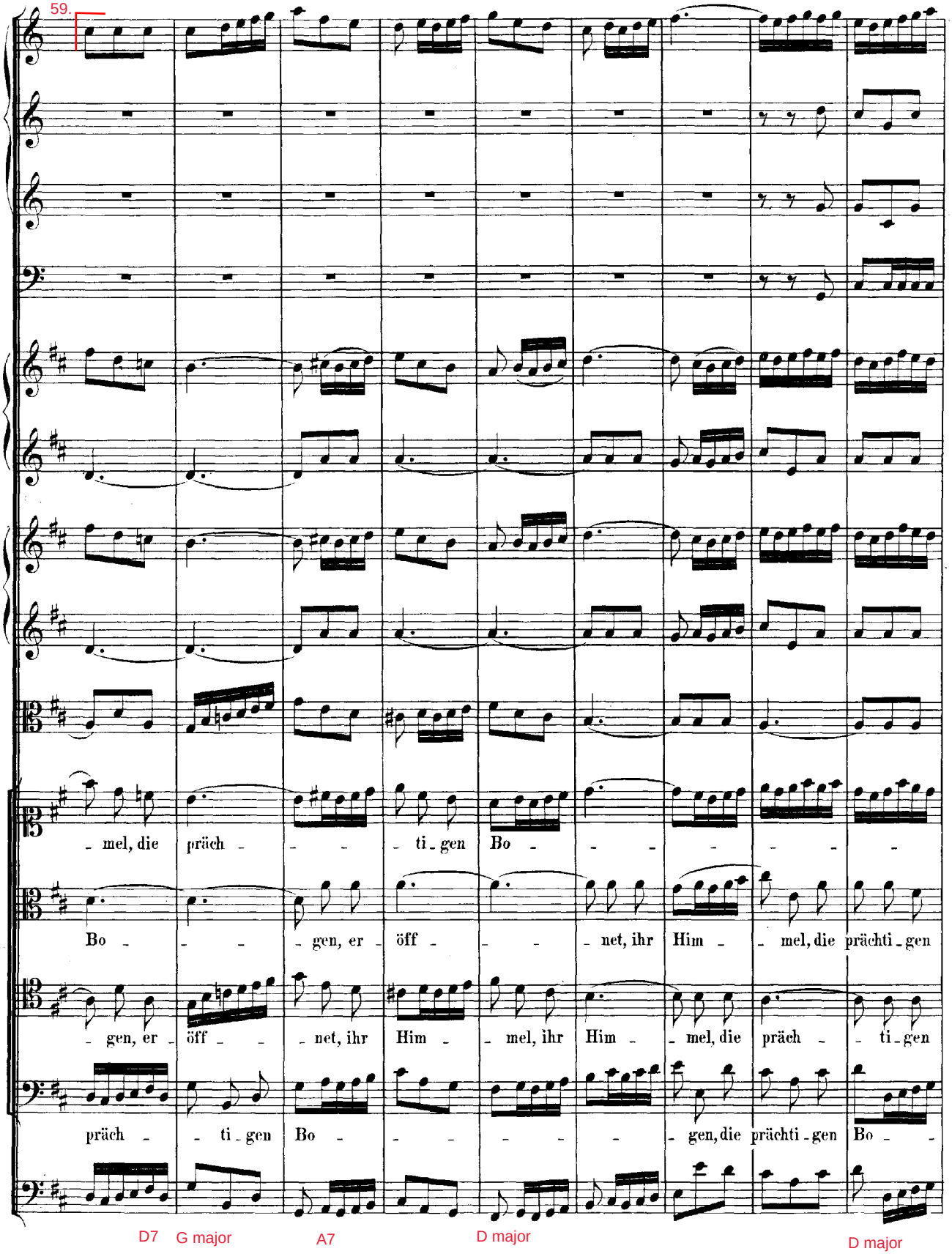


Martin Petzoldt writes, “The transition of the poem to dactylic meter leads to an appropriate change in time signature and rhythm: an imitative phrase in 3/8 time with an upward-striving motif cannot deny its origins in the congratulatory cantata, but at the same time it is perfectly suited to the first line of the final section. The instruments mostly play colla parte, but with the entry of the independent fifth voice of the trumpet (mm 59ff.), Bach achieves a climax and evokes associations with the Ascension and the Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Father. The added trumpets then also ensure cohesion with the second section of the movement (m. 69ff.), in which declamatory parts alternate with melismatic passages. The movement ends quite abruptly, without a ritornello or postlude, which in performance practice raises the question of an appropriate way to conclude (e.g., a significant reduction in volume in the last four measures).” See Martin Petzoldt, *Bach-kommentar* 2:704.

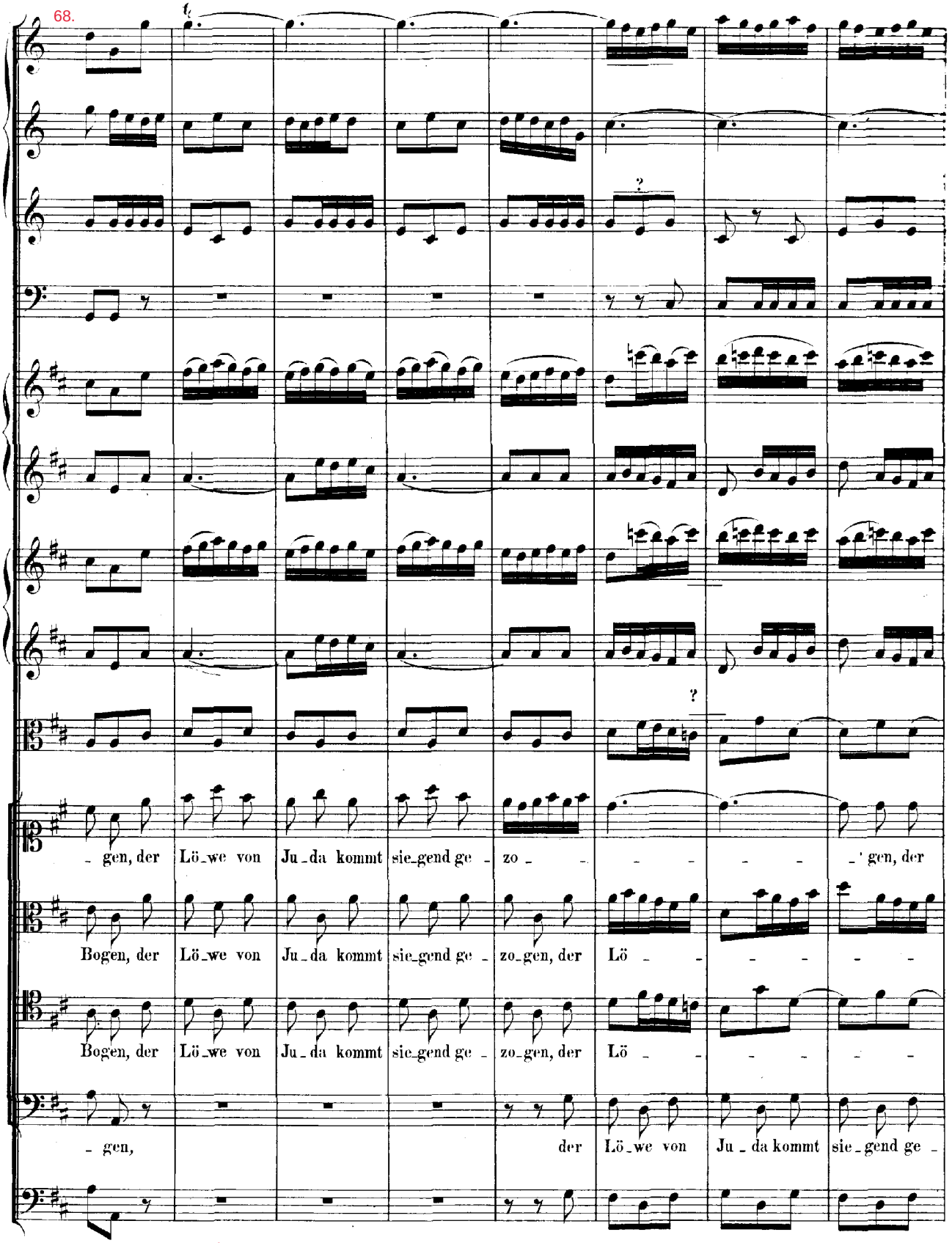
50. Allegro.


hört!
Er - öffnet, ihr Him - -
hört!
Er - öffnet, ihr Him - - mel, die prächti - gen
hört!
Er - öffnet, ihr Him - - mel, die prächti - gen Bo - - -
hört! Er - öffnet, ihr Him - - mel, die prächti - gen Bo - - - - - gen, die
Voices enter in ascending order to depict the Lion of Judah (i.e., Christ) entering heaven victorious.
F# minor
E7
A major
A7
D major

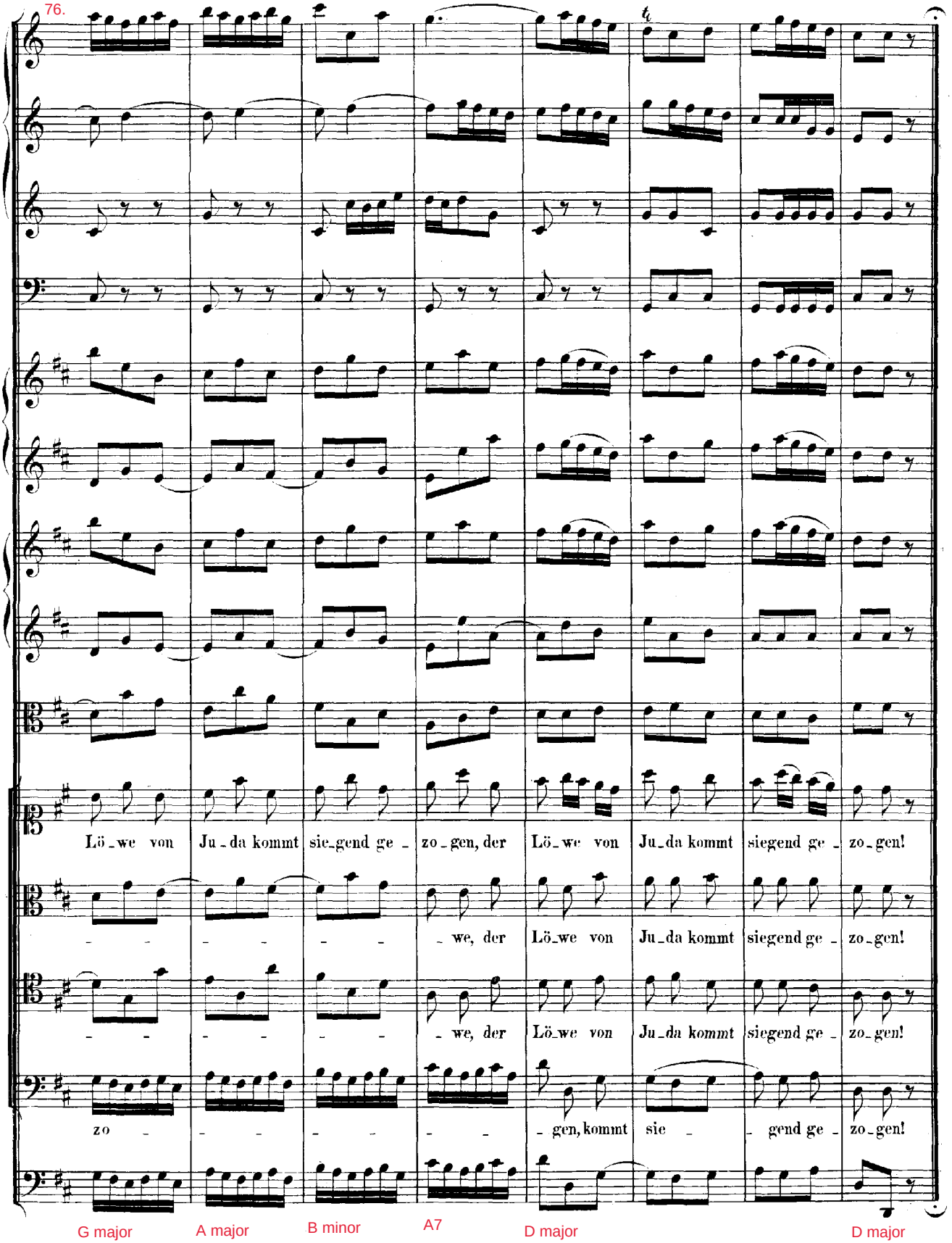
Added fifth entrance by trumpet creates climax for the reference to Christ's ascension into heaven as victor.



Declamatory parts alternate with melismatic passages.



D major D7 G major


76.
Lö_we von Ju_da kommt sie_gend ge_ zo_gen, der Lö_we von Ju_da kommt siegend ge_ zo_gen!
_ we, der Lö_we von Ju_da kommt siegend ge_ zo_gen!
_ we, der Lö_we von Ju_da kommt siegend ge_ zo_gen!
zo _ _ _ _ _ _ gen, kommt sie _ _ gend ge_ zo_gen!
G major
A major
B minor
A7
D major
D major