

"Angenehmes Wiederau" BWV 30.1 (30a)

Drama per Musica.

Schicksal, Glück, Zeit und der Elster-Fluss

Musical drama

Fate, Fortune, Time, and the River Elster

1. (Zeit, Glück, Elster, Schicksal)

Angenehmes Wiederau,

Freue dich in deinen Auen!

Das Gedeihen legt itzund

Einen neuen festen Grund,

Wie ein Eden dich zu bauen.

1. (Time, Fortune, the River Elster,¹ Fate)

Pleasant [manor of] Wiederau,²

Rejoice over your meadows.³

Flourishing now lays

Its new secure foundation,⁴

To tend⁵ you [Wiederau] as an Eden.⁶

2. (Schicksal)

So ziehen wir

In diesem Hause hier

Mit Freuden ein;

Nichts soll uns hier von dannen reißen.

Du bleibst zwar, schönes Wiederau,

Der Anmut Sitz, des Segens Au;

Allein

(Zeit, Glück, Elster, Schicksal)

Dein Name soll geändert sein,

Du sollst nun Hennicks-Ruhe heissen!

(Schicksal)

Nimm dieses Haupt, dem du nun untertan,

Frohlockend also an:

2. (Fate)

Thus we gather⁷ here

In this house,

With joy;

Nothing shall tear [those of] us here away from there.

You remain, indeed, lovely Wiederau,

Charm's seat, blessing's meadow.

But

(Time, Fortune, the River Elster, Fate)

Your name shall be changed;

You shall now be called⁸ "Hennicke's⁹ Tranquility."

(Fate)

This master [Hennicke], to whom you are now subject,

Thus accept exultantly:

3. (Schicksal)

3. (Fate)

GENERAL NOTE: It is perhaps worth mentioning that this cantata libretto is extraordinarily difficult to translate, as the German text shows all signs of having been written rather hastily and carelessly.

¹The "[White] Elster River" was near the "Wiederau" country estate (see fn. 2, below).

²Wiederau was a "Rittergut" ("manor") about 14 miles south of Leipzig. This cantata was composed for the celebrations surrounding the installation in 1737 of Johann Christian von Hennicke (1681–1752) as new owner and lord of the Wiederau manor, which had been built on low, soft ground near the White Elster River.

³The sense of the line is not "Go out into your meadows and rejoice there."

⁴This is probably, in part, an allusion to the Wiederau estate's location on insecure ground (see fn. 2 above), and the need for an elaborate pile foundation to ensure stability.

⁵The verb "bauen" in this context means not "to build" but "to tend" or "to cultivate"; see fn. 6, below.

⁶This sentiment is apparently adapted from Genesis 2:15, which in the Luther Bibles of Bach's day reads "Und Gott der HERR nahm den Menschen und setzte ihn in den Garten Eden, dass er ihn baut und bewahrt" ("And God the LORD took the man [that he had created, Adam] and put him into the garden, Eden, that he [Adam] might tend and ward it [the garden]").

⁷"The verb "einziehen," with dative (where accusative might have been expected?), seems to be used here in the sense of "to draw together" or "to gather."

⁸This language is apparently based on the common biblical formula, "du sollst nicht mehr [X] heissen, sondern [Y]" ("you shall no longer be called [X] but [Y]"), for example, in Genesis 17:5, 17:15, 32:28, 35:10; Isaiah 47:5, 62:4. Such language in the cantata apparently suggests divine blessing.

⁹Regarding "Hennicke," see fn. 2, above.

Willkommen im Heil, willkommen in Freuden,
Wir segnen die Ankunft, wir segnen das Haus.
Sei stets wie unsre Auen munter,
Dir¹⁰ breiten sich die Herzen unter,
Die Allmacht aber Flügel aus.

4. (Glück)

Da heute dir, gepriesner Henniecke,
Dein Wiedrau sich verpflichtet,
So schwör¹⁴ auch ich,
Dir unveränderlich
Getreu und hold zu sein.
Ich wanke nicht, ich weiche nicht,
An deine Seite mich zu binden.
Du sollst mich allenthalben finden.

5. (Glück)

Was die Seele kann ergötzen,
Was vergnügt und hoch zu schätzen,
Soll dir lehn¹⁶ und erblich sein.
Meine Fülle soll nichts sparen
Und dir reichlich offenbaren,
Dass mein ganzer Vorrat dein.

6. (Schicksal)

Und wie ich jederzeit bedacht
Mit aller Sorg und Macht,
Weil du es wert bist, dich zu schützen
Und wider alles dich zu unterstützen,

Be welcome in prosperity,¹¹ be welcome in joy;
[Henniecke,] we bless your arrival, we bless your house.
Be ever hale like our meadows;
[Our] hearts submit themselves to you,
But [God's] omnipotence¹² spreads [its] wings over
you.¹³

4. (Fortune)

Because today,¹⁵ vaunted Henniecke,
Your Wiederau pledges itself to you,
So I [Fortune], too, swear
To be unvaryingly
Faithful and kind to you.
I do not waver, I do not yield
In binding myself to your side.
You shall find me everywhere.

5. (Fortune)

That which the soul can enjoy,
That which pleases and is to be highly cherished,
Shall be manorial¹⁷ and hereditary to you.
My abundance shall spare nothing
And shall richly reveal to you
That my whole store [of fortune is] yours.

6. (Fate)

And just as I have ever been mindful,
With all care and might,
To protect you, because you are worthy of it,
And to support you against all things,

¹⁰The printed libretto distributed to the original audience reads not “dir” (“you”) but “hier” (“here”).

¹¹The noun “Heil” has a wide variety of meanings; in this libretto it is apparently used in its general sense of “Wohlstand” (“prosperity”).

¹²“Die Allmacht” means “the omnipotence [of God].” The German equivalent of “the Almighty” (a name for God) would be “der Allmächtige.”

¹³Literally, the last two lines would read “The hearts spread themselves under you, but omnipotence spread[s] wings over you.” The challenge is that the poet uses two separable verbs with a common root: “*unterbreiten*” (“to submit to”; hyperliterally, “to spread under”) and “*ausbreiten*” (“to spread over”). The poet’s grammar is not pristine, either. The separable “breiten” is plural and here has to do work for “die Herzen” (plural, “the hearts”) and “die Allmacht” (singular, “the omnipotence”); i.e., the latter requires “breitet . . . aus,” not “[breiten] . . . aus.”

¹⁴Both the printed libretto distributed to the original audience and the original Bach sources read “schwer,” which is simply an older spelling of “schwör.”

¹⁵This cantata was performed on Saturday, September 28, 1737, at an “Erbhuldigung,” a feudal ceremony in which an oath of fealty was sworn by subjects upon the arrival of a new manorial lord.

¹⁶In Bach’s handwriting it is often unclear whether the “L” at the beginning of a word is uppercase or lowercase. Modern editions of the cantata give “Lehn” (a noun) here, but the printed libretto distributed to the original audience gives “lehn” (an adjective), understood as a clipped version of “lehnbar” (“feudal/manorial”). The adjectives “lehn” and “erblich” in this line would correspond to the dedication formulation on the title page of the original printed libretto: “dem . . . Johann Christian von Henniecke, Erb- Lehn- und Gerichts-Herr auf Wiederau” (“to . . . Johann Christian von Henniecke, Hereditary Lord, Feudal/Manorial Lord, and Justice of the Peace [literally, “Tribunal Lord”] in Wiederau”).

¹⁷On this word being an adjective, see fn. 16, above.

So hör ich auch nicht ferner auf,
Vor dich zu wachen
Und deines Ruhmes Ehrenlauf
Erweiterter und blühender zu machen.

7. (Schicksal)

Ich will dich halten
Und mit dir walten,
Wie man ein Auge zärtlich hält.
Ich habe dein Erhöhen,
Dein Heil und Wohlergehen
Auf Marmorsäulen aufgestellt.

8. (Zeit)

Und obwohl sonst der Unbestand
Mit mir verschwistert und verwandt,
So sei hiermit doch zugesagt:
So oft die Morgenröte tagt,
So lang ein Tag den andern folgen lässt,
So lange will ich steif und fest,
Mein Hennicke, dein Wohl
Auf meine Flügel ferner bauen.
Dich soll die Ewigkeit zuletzt,
Wenn sie mir selbst die Schranken setzt,
Nach mir noch übrig schauen.

9. (Zeit)

Eilt, ihr Stunden, wie ihr wollt,
Rottet aus und stosst zurücke!
Aber merket dies allein,
Dass ihr diesen Schmuck und Schein,
Dass ihr Hennicks Ruhm und Glücke
Allezeit verschonen sollt!

10. (Elster)

So recht! ihr seid mir werte Gäste.
Ich räum euch Au und Ufer ein.
Hier baut eure Hütten
Und eure Wohnung feste;
Hier wollt, hier sollet ihr beständig sein!
Vergesst keinen Fleiss,
All eure Gaben haufenweis
Auf diese Fluren auszuschütten!

11. (Elster)

So, wie ich die Tropfen zolle,
Dass mein Wiedrau grünen solle,
So fügt auch euern Segen bei!
Pfleget sorgsam Frucht und Samen,
Zeiget, dass euch Hennicks Namen

So I will also henceforth not cease
To watch over you,
And to make your renown's path of honor
More extended and more thriving.

7. (Fate)

I will sustain you
And will preside [over Wiederau] with you,
Just as one fondly keeps an eye out.
I have raised your elevation,
Your prosperity and welfare,
On marble columns.¹⁸

8. (Time)

And though otherwise inconstancy [is]
Sibling and kindred to me,
Let it hereby nonetheless be agreed:
As often as the daybreak dawns,
As long as one day is followed by the next,
This long do I wish absolutely,
My Hennicke, [for] your wellbeing
To rest henceforth on my wings ["of time"].
In the end, eternity shall—
When it sets its limits even on me—
Continue after me to watch [over you].

9. (Time)

Hasten, you hours, as you wish;
Wipe out and knock [things] back.
But just take note of this:
That this finery and luster,
That Hennicke's renown and fortune,
You shall always spare.

10. (The River Elster)

Right so! You [Wiederau] are my esteemed guests.
I cede meadow and riverbank to you.
Here build your dwellings
And your abode securely;
Here you would—here you shall—be long-enduring.
Forget no effort
In pouring out all your gifts heapingly
Upon these fields.

11. (The River Elster)

Just as I vouchsafe¹⁹ drops [of water],
That my Wiederau may grow verdant,
So [I command you to] add also your blessings:
Carefully cultivate fruit and seeds;
Show that to you Hennicke's name

¹⁸The "marble columns" metaphor is probably meant to suggest that Fate will see to the manorial lord's immortality.

¹⁹Normally, "zollen" means "to pay taxes," but in poetry the verb was often used simply as a synonym for "geben" ("to give") or "gewähren" ("to vouchsafe"), as the various forms of "zollen" accommodated many quick rhyme schemes.

Ein ganz besonders Kleinod sei!

Is a very special gem.

12. (Zeit)

Drum, angenehmes Wiederau,
Soll dich kein Blitz, kein Feuerstrahl,
Kein ungesunder Tau,
Kein Misswachs, kein Verderben schrecken!
(Schicksal)

Dein Haupt, den teuren Hennicke,
Will ich mit Ruhm und Wonne decken.

(Glück)

Dem wertesten Gemahl
Will ich kein Heil und keinen Wunsch versagen,
(Zeit, Glück, Elster, Schicksal)

Und beider Lust,²⁰

Den einigen und liebsten Stamm, August,
Will ich auf meinem Schosse tragen.

12. (Time)

Thus, pleasant Wiederau,
No lightning, no thunderbolt,
No unhealthy dew,
No crop failure, no [crop] spoilage shall alarm you.
(Fate)

Your master, the precious Hennicke,
I will bedeck with renown and gladness.

(Fortune)

The most esteemed wife [Sophia Elisabeth]²¹

Will I deny no prosperity and no wish.

(Time, Fortune, the River Elster, Fate)²²

And the delight of both [husband and wife],

The only and most beloved scion, [their son] August,²³

I will bear upon my bosom.

13. (Zeit, Glück, Elster, Schicksal)

Angenehmes Wiederau,

Prange nun in deinen Auen!

Deines Wachstums Herrlichkeit,

Deiner Selbstzufriedenheit

Soll die Zeit kein Ende schauen!

13. (Time, Fortune, the River Elster, Fate)

Pleasant Wiederau,

Boast²⁴ now over your meadows.²⁵

Of the glory of your increase,

Of your heart's content,

Time shall see no end.

Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander)²⁶

(transl. Michael Marissen and Daniel R. Melamed)



Scan or go to www.bachcantatatexts.org/BWV30.1 for an annotated translation

²⁰The printed libretto distributed to the original audience reads “Und beider Augen-Lust” (“And the eyes’ delight of both [husband and wife]”).

²¹The dative formulation “*dem* Gemahl” could refer to a male or female spouse, but the context here dictates that it refers to Hennicke’s wife, Countess Sophia Elisabeth, née (von) Götze (1686–1749). “*Das* Gemahl” can mean “the wife” or “the bride”; “*der* Gemahl” can mean “the husband,” or “the lord,” or “the male consort of a female monarch”; and “*die* Gemahlin” means “the female consort of a male monarch.”

²²Modern editions of the libretto often indicate that only Time, Fortune, and Fate sing here, but in fact the River Elster joins them.

²³Their only son, Friedrich August von Hennicke (1720–53), heir of the Wiederau manor. It is often mistakenly suggested that the “August” in this poem refers to the ruler who was called “Friedrich August II” as Elector of Saxony and “Augustus III” as King of Poland. (This ruler was Friedrich August von Hennicke’s namesake.)

²⁴“Prangen” seems to be used here in its sense as a synonym for “prahlen” (“to show off,” “to boast”).

²⁵The sense of the line is not “Go out into your meadows now and be resplendent there.”

²⁶Henrici was the librettist for several Bach works, and because his name is among the supporters listed on the title page of the printed libretto that was distributed to the original audience, it is assumed that he was the librettist.