

Bist du bei mir

(If You're with Me)

as found in the 1725 Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach

Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690-1749)

This well-known melody from Anna Magdalena's notebook has often been attributed to her husband, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). However, the melody, bass line and German text were probably written by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel. A German composer and theorist, Stölzel was highly regarded in his lifetime for his numerous musical accomplishments.

Stölzel's musical education began early in his life through private instruction and attendance at Leipzig University. Numerous trips through Germany and other countries on music assignments put him in contact with some of the outstanding composers of his time, such as Vivaldi and Scarlatti. After completing a number of commissioned works, he finally settled at the court at Saxe-Gothe, where he held the appointment of Kapellmeister for thirty years. It was there that he wrote music for the church, opera and court festivities. He continued to fulfill commissions while in that position and was regarded as a superb teacher and

theorist. In addition, he wrote the first significant treatise on recitative.

Anna Magdalena Wilcken Bach (1701-1760) became the second wife of Johann Sebastian Bach in 1721 after his first wife died. An excellent soprano who had been employed at the Cöthen court, she was responsible for copying much of her husband's music. He also instructed her in the art of playing figured bass. In 1725, he presented her with a notebook so that she could fill it with music of various kinds, including preludes, suites, chorales, and sacred and secular songs.

"*Bist du bei mir*" is found in this notebook. Only the German words, melody and bass line of this song are provided. To this framework, the editor has added a realization of the original music, an English version, and suggestions for tempo and dynamics. This version is presented a perfect fourth lower than the original key.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Bist du bei mir, geh' ich mit Freu-den,
bɪst du baɪ mi:r, ge: ɪç mɪt frɔɪ-dən,

zum Ster-ben und zu mei-ner Ruh',
tsum [stɛr]-bən unt tsu maɪ-nər ru: ,

zum Ster-ben und zu mei-ner Ruh'.
tsum [stɛr]-bən unt tsu: maɪ-nər ru: .

Ach, wie ver-gnügt wär so mein En-de,
ax, vi: fɛr-gny:kt vɛ:r zo main ɛn-də,

es drück-ten dei-ne schö-nen Hän-de
es drʏk- tən daɪ-nə ʃø - nən hɛn-də

mir die ge-treu-en Au-gen zu.
mɪr di gə-trɔɪ-ən au-gən tsu.

Footnotes to German Pronunciation

- In multiple syllable words, the syllables that should be stressed are underlined.
- [r] should be flipped.

TRANSLATION

*If you are with me,
I will gladly go to my death and my rest.
Ah, how pleasant will be my end,
if your dear hands will close my faithful eyes shut.*

7. Bist du bei mir

(If You're with Me)

English words by
PATRICK M. LIEBERGEN

from the 1725 Notebook of
ANNA MAGDALENA BACH*
Edited and arranged by PATRICK M. LIEBERGEN

Smoothly (♩ = ca. 76)

5 *mp*

Bist du bei mir, geh' ich mit Freu - den, zum Ster - ben—
If you're with me, I'll go out glad - ly, I'll go— out—

10

und zu mei - ner— Ruh', zum— Ster - ben und zu mei - ner Ruh'.
glad - ly to— my— rest, I'll— go out glad - ly to my rest.

*Melody, bass line and German text probably were probably written by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690–1749).

14

mf

Bist du bei mir, geh' ich mit Freuden, zum Sterben—
 If you're with me, I'll go out gladly, I'll go out—

19

und zu meiner Ruh', zum Sterben und zu meiner Ruh'.
 glad-ly to my rest, I'll go out gladly to my rest.

23

mp

Ach, wie vergnügt wär so mein Ende, es drückten—
 Ah, what great joy shall be my ending, if your dear—

28

deine schönen Hände mir die getreuen Augen
 hands shall now close my eyes, shall close my eyes forever—

zu. Ach, wie ver-gnügt wär so mein En - de, es drück - ten—
 more. Ah, what great joy shall be my end - ing, if your - dear—

dei - ne schö - nen— Hän - de mir— die ge - treu - en Au - gen zu.
 hands shall now— close— my— eyes, shall— close my eyes for - ev - er - more.

mf
 Bist du— bei— mir, geh' ich mit Freu - den, zum Ster - ben—
 If you're near— me, I'll go out glad - ly, I'll go— out—

und zu mei - ner— Ruh', zum— Ster - ben und zu mei - ner Ruh'.
 glad - ly to— my— rest, I'll— go out glad - ly to my rest.

rit. *mp*