

Four Chamber Arias by Johann Sartorius junior (1712–1787), dedicated to the time before Lent, preceeding the Holy Easter

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Abstract: *The sacred music dedicated to the religious celebrations of the Evangelical Lutheran liturgical year corresponds to the musical and theological principles of Martin Luther, each musical work being based on a specific biblical quotation previously chosen by Luther himself. Lent and the Holy Week, when the Passion of Jesus is commemorated, precede the Holy Easter, which in turn is followed by the Feast of Ascension and the Pentecost. The 4 arias of the Transylvanian composer Johann Sartorius junior are dedicated to the three Sundays of the Shrovetide, or the Pre-Lenten Season: Septuagesimae, Sexagesimae and Quinquagesimae or Estomihi.*

Keywords: *sacred music from Transylvania, chamber aria, liturgical year, Easter*

1. Introduction

Johann Sartorius the son (1712–1787) and Johann Sartorius the father (1682–1756) are representative composers of the Transylvanian Baroque. The *70 arias for Sundays and holydays in the liturgical year for treble voice, 2 violins and basso continuo* by Johann Sartorius junior are meant for the holydays in the liturgical year of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Augsburg Confession, each aria has its well established place within the church year through its main idea, based on Biblical lectures.

The Sartorian arias and their sources are described in detail in the autor's article *Vesper Arias of the Transylvanian author Johann Sartorius junior (1712–1787), dedicated to the Christmas holidays* (Hanke, 2015,113–134) [1].

They were published for the first time by Erhard Franke, having the title *70 Arien auf die Sonn- und Festtage des Kirchenjahres für hohe Singstimme, 2 Violinen und Basso continuo nach Texten von Benjamin Schmolck* (Sartorius 1995, Booklets I–III) [2] after a material donated by the Evangelical Church community in Deutsch-Kreuz (Criş) to the Brukenthal collection (Sibiu), in 1908. They have not been preserved in their autograph version and according to Franke, the Sartorian arias

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were probably created after 1741 (Franke 1995, 17–18).

The 1995 edition divides the arias into three booklets, according to the holidays of the liturgical year:

- Booklet I: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, / Holydays of the Virgin Mary
- Booklet II: The time before Lent, Lent and Holy Easter, / Ascension and Pentecost
- Booklet III: The Holy Trinity and the Sundays after the Holy Trinity

This article limits itself to four arias included in the second booklet, particularly those dedicated to the three Sundays of the season before Lent (Shrovetide): *Septuagesimae*, *Sexagesimae* and *Quinquagesimae* or *Estomihi*.

2. The Sartorian Arias dedicated to the time before Lent

Regarding the religious celebrations related to the Holy Easter, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Augsburg Confession has preserved the names given to these holy days in accordance with the Latin biblical verses, even after the worship services had begun to be celebrated using the native language.

The first three Sundays which precede the season before Lent are given a specific title according to the approximate number of days left until the Holy Easter:

1. Dominica in Septuagesimae – 70 days
2. Dominica in Sexagesimae – 60 days
3. Dominica in Quinquagesimae – 50 days

The third Sunday, *Quinquagesimae*, corresponds to *Estomihi* Sunday, both names being used by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Augsburg Confession. The difference resides in the fact that the title *Estomihi* is based on a biblical verse (see Table 1):

The name of the holydays in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Augsburg Confession	Biblical verse from which the name is derived ²	Biblical verse in LATIN	Biblical verse in GERMAN
Sunday <i>Estomihi</i>	Psalm 30 (31): 3	„ Esto mihi in Deum protectorem”	„Sei mir ein starker Fels”

Table 1. Sunday *Estomihi*

² The number of the Psalms corresponds to the Latin text (BIBLIA SACRORUM 1959). The number of Luther's German translation can be found in the brackets. The difference in the numbering of the Psalms is due to the fact that the Masoretic Text (the Hebrew text from the 10th century) divides Psalm 9 in two parts, thus becoming 9 and 10. The Latin *Vulgata* contains the long version of this Psalm, while the translation of Luther is, according to the Masoretic Text, divided. Thus, the first number of the Psalms refers to the BIBLIA SACRORUM 1959 (in Latin), while the number in brackets to the BIBEL 1978 (in German).

The printed version of the *70 arias* of Johann Sartorius junior, edited by Erhard Franke, contains the attachment of the pericopes – the pre-set Bible lectures for the Church holidays. There is a synoptic table with the Gospel pericopes according to Luther, as they appear in the Bible, and the title of the arias by Johann Sartorius junior, with the respective Gospel pericopes as they appear in the beginning of the arias (see Figure 2).

Holidays in the liturgical year of the Evangelical Church C.A. (Lutherische Agende, 1957)	Pericopes appropriate for holidays (according to Luther): (Bible NIV, 1978)	Title of the arias by Johann Sartorius junior, with the respective Gospel pericopes (Bibel, 1979)
Sonntag Septuagesimae 70th Sunday Septuagesimae	Epistle: <u>1 Corinthians 9:24-10:5.</u> <u>The Need for Self-Discipline.</u> Gospel: <u>Matthew 20:1-16.</u> <u>The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard.</u>	<u>Mein Gott, dein</u> <u>Weinberg ist vor mir</u> Ev: <u>Matthäus 20:1-16.</u> <u>Die Arbeiter im</u> <u>Weinberg.</u>
Sonntag Sexagesimae 60th Sunday Sexagesimae	Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:19-12:9. Suffering for Christ. The Vision of Paradise. The Thorn in the Flesh. Gospel: <u>Luke 8:4-15.</u> <u>The Parable of the Sower.</u>	<u>Mein Jesus führt den</u> <u>Namen</u> Ev: <u>Lukas 8:4-15.</u> <u>Vom Sämann.</u>
Sonntag Quinquagesimae oder Estomihi Sunday Quinquagesimae or Estomihi	Epistle: <u>1 Corinthians 13:1-13.</u> <u>The Greatest Gift.</u> Gospel: <u>Luke 18:31-43.</u> Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time. A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight.	<u>Jesu geht zu seinem</u> <u>Leiden</u> Ev: <u>Lukas 18:31-43.</u> <u>Dritte</u> <u>Leidensankündigung.</u>

Table 2. Synoptic table dedicated to three Sundays, the time before Lent: “Septuagesimae”, “Sexagesimae” and “Quinquagesimae” or “Estomihi” in the liturgical year of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession

Johann Sartorius junior anticipates and prepares the religious celebrations related to the Holy Easter through the use of the bright and hopeful key of F Major in the

Septuagesimae Sunday (the aria dedicated to the celebration and welcome of the New Year is written in this same key).

The works of Sartorius junior are related to the liturgical year, while the use of the various musical keys, as well as the succession of these keys seems deliberate. The three Sundays preceding the Lent and the Easter, *Septuagesimae*, *Sexagesimae* and *Quinquagesimae* or *Estomihi* succeed each other in a very interesting manner. A descending chromatic movement can be observed regarding the keys of these 4 arias, composed for the three Sundays:

Sunday <i>Septuagesimae</i>	– F Major
Sunday <i>Sexagesimae</i>	– E Major
1. Sunday <i>Estomihi</i>	– E flat Major
2. Sunday <i>Estomihi</i>	– d minor.

The fact that Johann Sartorius junior composed two arias on the same text for the third Sunday, *Estomihi*, is not coincidental. The chromatic descent through keys which were unusual for that time (*E Major* with four sharps, which was preferred by Johann Mattheson «Mattheson 1713, 231-252» for the expression of great desperation and *E flat Major* with three flats), as well as the fact that *Estomihi* is the sole celebration for which Johann Sartorius junior composed two arias, can lead to the conclusion that this descending chromatic movement can symbolize the difficult path towards redemption.

3. Analyses with examples

Sonntag Sexagesimä
Sunday *Septuagesimae*

Ev: Matthäus 20:1-16.

Die Arbeiter im Weinberg.

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16.

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

The melody of this work is distinguished by the dotted rhythmic motif, the gentle swaying of which is characteristic of the siciliana.

The musical means employed for the description of the vineyard created by the Redeemer are those familiar from other arias: the melody commences in the

height, on the fifth of the tonic chord, on the words *Mein Gott* (My God), descending to the tonic, to the earth, *von mir* (in front of me); on the words *den Du* (which You have – related to the Lord) the melody ascends to the superior third of the first movement, and this time the musical discourse pauses on the third of the tonic chord, suggesting that this vineyard is “from above”, from a realm above the earth. Thus, through his music the composer illustrates the image expressed in the text, „Mein Gott, dein Weinberg ist vor mir [My Lord, Thy vineyard is before me]” (see Figure 1):



Fig. 1. Bars 24–25, voice: stanza 1

This “vineyard” of the Redeemer promises, to those who work hard, the light of the afterlife, an idea musically emphasized by a certain brightness in the line of the violin, accomplished through the use of the *echo effect*, *f-p-f* (see Figure 2):



Fig. 2. Bars 28–29, 1st violin

The parable of the pericope on which the ideas expressed in the text are based, promises that, in the same way as the labourers who were hired to work at the vineyard were all equally payed, regardless of the moment of their employment, all those who return and seek the face of God shall be redeemed: “So the last will be first, and the first will be last [...]” (Matthew 20:16)

The image of the people who linger idle, without finding the purpose of their lives and whom the Redeemer must guide on the right path, is musically evoked through the monotonous repetition, in *piano* and in unison (except the 2nd violin, which is silent), of a fragment which consists of two measures (see Figure 3):

The image shows a musical score for three parts: voice, 1st violin, and basso continuo. The voice part is on the top staff, the 1st violin on the middle staff, and the basso continuo on the bottom staff. The lyrics under the voice part are: "wo Leu - te stehn, die mü - ßig gehn, daß". The music is in a common time signature and features a descending melodic line in the voice part.

Fig. 3. Bars 61–64, voice: stanza 1, 1st violin, Basso continuo

Sonntag Sexagesimä
Sunday Sexagesimae

„Mein Jesus führt den Namen“ (Iisus al meu poartă numele)

Ev.: Lukas 8:4–15.

Vom Sämann.

Gospel: Luke 8:4-15.

The Parable of the Sower.

The Redeemer appears in the role of the sower, the parable referring to the soil in which the seeds – the words of the Redeemer – fall.

In the instrumental introduction, repeated *Da Capo* in the conclusion, the 1st violin could suggest the chances of growth these words, “sowed” by the Redeemer, have (see Figure 4):

The image shows a musical score for the 1st violin, bars 1-8. The tempo is marked "Andante". The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. It features a complex, flowing melodic line with many slurs and accents, suggesting a sense of movement and growth.

Fig. 4. Bars 1–8, 1st violin

The descending motif at the beginning of the first section already anticipates the falling of the seeds (see Figure 5):



Fig. 5. Bars 9–10, voice: stanza 1

In the text this falling of the seeds to the soil appears only later (see Figure 8):

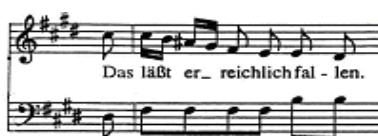


Fig. 6. Bar21, voice: stanza 1, Basso continuo

The aria is written in the controversial key of E Major, recommended by Mattheson for expressing the greatest despair. In this context it could suggest the regret for each seed that does not have the chance to yield, likewise to each lost word of the Redeemer. The instrumental interlude in measures 14-19 evokes, through the variety of motifs and changes in the dynamics of each type of these motifs, the various chances of growth (see Figure 7):

Fig. 7. Bars 13–19, instruments

The important statement (*und dieser ist sein Wort = and this is His word*), in a similar fashion to other examples, appears in a structure which includes a dotted note, the rhetorical character of which is perceptible. The composer's choice to write this passage not in *f*, but in *p* can be interpreted as a subtle manner in which Sartorius wishes to allegorically express something. This method is employed by public speakers as well: in order to capture the attention of the public, instead of raising the tone of the voice, this is suddenly reduced to a minimal intensity (see Figure 8):

The image shows a musical score for four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics 'und die-ser ist sein Wort.' are written below the third staff. A piano (*p*) dynamic marking is present at the beginning of the first staff.

Fig. 8. Bar 20, voice: stanza 1, instruments

The words of the Redeemer are generously „sowed”. The melisma which spans two measures in this aria, right before the conclusion of the text in a gentle movement of descending crotchets, expresses albeit the doubt and the fear that not every “seed” will fall to fertile soil (see Figure 9):

The image shows a single staff of music in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps. The lyrics 'auf... ei - - - - - nen gu - ten Ort.' are written below the staff. A melisma is indicated by a long horizontal line above the notes.

Fig. 9. Bars 24–26, voice: stanza 1

Sonntag Estomihi
Sunday Estomihi

Ev.: Lukas 18:31–43.

Dritte Leidensankündigung

Gospel: Luke 18:31-43.

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time.

„Jesu geht zu seinem Leiden“(Jesus walks towards His suffering)

This time the text does not ask compassion for the sufferings of the Redeemer, nor quiet contemplation of the events, but with an almost revolutionary character (*Auf, auf* = Up, up), all those who wish to be saved through Jesus are invited to take part in his sufferings: “Wo ihr wollt mit Christo erben, / auch zuvor mit ihm zu sterben! [If you wish through Christ to inherit, / before you must also die with Him!]”.

Jesu geht zu seinem Leiden, first version:

$\frac{3}{4}$ (begins on the downbeat), *Andante, E flat Major*,
69 measures, without *Da Capo*

The aria for this holy day is written in *E flat Major* (we must bear in mind that the aria dedicated to the first Christian martyr, Saint Archdeacon Stephen, was also composed in this key, and that in the cycle assigned to the liturgical year where this aria appears this was the first work), the character of the work is at the same time dramatic and heroic. The beginning phrase is formed by two sections of three measures each, divided by a break (and bound only through the quavers in the bass), the difference between the features of each section being emphasized by the contrasting dynamic shades: *p–f*.

“Jesu geht zu seinem Leiden [Jesus walks towards His suffering]” – is the text of the first section. The 1st violin accompanies the voice, while the 2nd violin proceeds following them, eventually joining the discourse at the interval of a third, “the road” being interrupted in the third measure by a delayed *sigh-motif* on the word “Leiden” (suffering). The ascending melody is disturbed by the forming of motifs each consisting in three quavers (thus, in the second part of the measure the first quaver acts as an anacrusis), as well as by the „nails” suggested by the sound of the violins. The basso repeats the *e flat* note in a monotonous fashion, resembling a drum which accompanies this procession, and in the third measure it sets off in leaps on the arpeggio of the *E flat Major* chord, cutting through the rhetorical silence of the higher voices, towards the second part of the phrase.

The second section contains a suggestion addressed to those afraid of suffering: “Auf, auf, und laßt uns mit ihm gehn! [Up, up, let us go with Him!]”. The text is accompanied by ascending passages of the instruments, played in unison, as if meant to propel those who hesitate and guide them towards the right path. Excepting the words *Auf, auf* (Up, up), placed on the note *e flat* in the second octave, the rest of the melody which accompanies the text has a descending direction (“und laßt uns mit ihm gehn! [let us go with Him!]” , suggesting that this

way will not be an easy one (see Figure 10):

Je - sus _ geht _ zu sei - nem Lei - den, auf, ... auf, und laßt uns mit ihm gehn!

Fig. 10. Bars 9–14, voice: stanza 1

The mistake made by the disciples, whom had left Jesus alone in his suffering, must not be repeated, therefore, all those who prove to be friends only during the good times must be avoided and removed from the way – according to the text. The first part of the musical phrase is identical with the one in the beginning, but in the second part, after the skip to the dominant (and not to the subdominant, as in the first phrase) the atmosphere becomes more tense. The utmost tension in measure 26, on the word *stehn* (stand – referring to those who stand in the way) is resolved by returning to the tonic key (see Figure 11) .

die, die euch _ in dem Wege stehn, _

Fig.11. Bars 23–26, voice: stanza 1, 1st violin

The repeated quavers in measures 36-39, resembling the *Orgelpunkt* or pedal, are employed in measures 42-43, 45-46 by the 2nd violin. The 1st violin accompanies the voice at the interval of a third, on the text: “Tretet zu der Jünger Schar [Walk to the group of the disciples]” (see Figure 12):

Tre - tet _ zu der Jünger Schar,

Fig.12. Bars 42–44, voice: stanza 1, 1st violin, 2nd violin



Fig.14. Bars 11–13, instruments

The voice commences with an upward leap of a sixth from the tonic, the dotted note emphasizing the word *Jesus* in three of the four strophes (in the last strophe the word is replaced with *Also* = so). On the text “*geht zu seinem Leiden* [walks towards His suffering]” the vocal line returns to its starting point



Fig.15. Bars 17–19, voice: stanza 1

The text “*Auf, und laßt uns mit ihm gehn!* [Up, let us go with Him!]” is displayed in the high register of the voice, the dotted rhythm has a rhetorical character and is often employed by Sartorius jr. with the purpose of underlining an important pronouncement. The same formula can be found seven measures before the vocal conclusion of the first strophe, only this time in *piano* and in the middle register.

The concluding text of the strophes is repeated in *forte*, likewise the first aria, but with a beginning which imitates the seemingly anxious interventions of the instruments. This is an unusual moment concerning the soloist voice: usually dynamic contrasts are characteristic for the instrumental parts, while at the intervention of the vocal soloist the instruments are required to play *piano*. Here, however, indications regarding the dynamics can be found only in the line of the vocal soloist, precisely 2 measures of *piano* accompanying the text “*auch zuvor mit ihm zu sterben!* [before to die together with Him!]”, repeated afterwards with an entirely different musical accompaniment and in *forte*. This aspect – the sole place in the cycle of arias which includes dynamic indications regarding the vocal soloist – seems to emphasize the unusual character of this single aria which occurs as a second musical version of the same text (see Figure 16).



Fig. 16. Bars 44–48, voice: stanza 1

4. Conclusion

In accordance with the two different names given to the 50th Sunday: *Quinquagesimae* or *Estomihi*, we find two arias composed by Sartorius for the same holy day – this is the sole case in the cycle of the sartorian arias, when two musical versions exist for the same text.

Johann Sartorius junior approaches the schmolckian texts with great musical sensitivity. The melodic contour closely follows and underlines every subtle detail of the text. Meanwhile, as a faithful priest, Sartorius draws attention to the dramatic content of the biblical text, previously established by the lutheran pericopes for each religious celebration.

As a result, the appropriate interpretation of these arias requires, alongside musical sensitivity, a careful analysis of the biblical texts related to each work. The treatment of musical works dedicated to the liturgical year, in the absence of information concerning the passages from the Bible, means ignorance of their true content.

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