

Lig van Waarheid - An Analysis

Written by Chris Vale based on notes by Franco Prinsloo.

Introduction

The title of the Christmas oratorio, *Lig van Waarheid*, 2022, was created to match the linguistic pattern of the first oratorio by Franco Prinsloo, *Kruis van Liefde*, 2021. *Lig van Waarheid*, (Christmas), *Kruis van Liefde* (Easter), and *Kroon van Wonders* (Pentecost), all follow this pattern because each of the nouns used in the titles (Lig, Kruis, Kroon) represent a significant symbol relevant to the story of Christ, while the abstract noun descriptors (Waarheid, Liefde, Wonders) denote the effect of Christ's story on the world, defining each story respectively.

Lig van Waarheid as a title comes from a passage in the bible prophesying the coming of the Messiah. In Afrikaans it states: "Die volk wat in donkerte geleef het, het 'n groot lig gesien, oor dié wat in die donker land was, het 'n lig geskyn." (The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light) (Jes. 9:1). This establishes the themes of light and dark in the oratorio as a whole, but specifically in the first two movements. The first movement, or prologue "Ia. Proloog: U, Heer vir ons gebore", establishes important musical themes within the oratorio as a whole, while the second movement, the prophecy "Ib. Voorspelling van die Messiasryk", uses the text quoted above (Jes. 9:1) and more from the same passage to illustrate the themes of light and dark. Many of these established themes are repeated in the final movements, albeit more dramatically, affirming Christ as the bringer of light to the world. The final movement's central lyric reads: "O, môrester vol glans en prag, U verlig die wêreldnag" (O morning star, shining and beautiful, you light the world of night).

Instrumentation

In terms of instrumentation, *Lig van Waarheid* is specifically written for choir, solo soprano, solo baritone, solo bassoon, two trumpets, string orchestra, celesta, and percussion. Prinsloo's choice of instrumentation here is motivated by the percussive element of the celesta in contrast with the warmth of the string orchestra. More thematically, the shimmering quality that the celesta brings to the sound world is evocative of bringing light into the darkness (not to mention that the word "celeste" is derived from the French word "céleste", meaning "heavenly"). In the

version for organ and celesta, the contrast between light and dark is equally striking. Prinsloo finds the timbre of the organ rather dark, and with the correct registration this is achievable on most instruments, while the celesta again brings an element of shimmering stars. The choice of percussion is equally deliberate, incorporating sleigh bells (with their overt Christmas connotations) to accentuate the shimmer of the celesta; the tubular bells and triangle were chosen for these same reasons, adding another layer to this shimmering sound world. The use of timpani will be elaborated on in subsequent sections of this analysis.

A solo bassoon is included to evoke a sense of sweet longing and melancholy. The bassoon's predecessor, the "Dulcien", is a medieval instrument known for its sweet timbre. Derived from the French word "dulce", later "douce", the instrument is literally called "sweet one". The bassoon was therefore deliberately chosen for these qualities to accentuate the medieval connotations evoked by Prinsloo's use of chant in the choral writing, one of the most ancient choral traditions in western classical music.

Prinsloo additionally uses two trumpets in the oratorio. In ancient Israel, a shofar was used to signal gatherings during times of war or celebration. During feasts or the anointing of a new king, this instrument played a significant role. Prinsloo deliberately employs the trumpets to signify this. In western classical repertoire, the trumpet has played a big part in baroque oratorio with a great focus on portraying "holy" or "kingly" concepts, often in the form of fanfares. In *Lig van Waarheid*, Prinsloo uses the trumpets to great effect, using fanfare-style motives to announce the coming of the Lord, evoking a sense of majesty and victory.

1a. Proloog: U, Heer vir ons gebore

The first movement begins in A minor, the shimmering sound of the celesta predicting the light of the Bethlehem star. The bassoon is the first instrument to play melodic material, which will become a thematic anchor throughout the work.



Fig. 1 - The opening theme of *Lig van Waarheid* played by a solo bassoon

The choir's entry with long, weeping, yearning lines, along with the entry of the bass drum on the strong beat and triangle on the offbeat, becomes a religious processional or pilgrimage. A minor key is used as this signifies the yearning and sadness of the Messiah not having been born yet and thus the pilgrimage is in search of the Messiah. The choir's first textual entry, "U, Heer vir ons gebore sy", is an echo of the bassoon's opening theme:

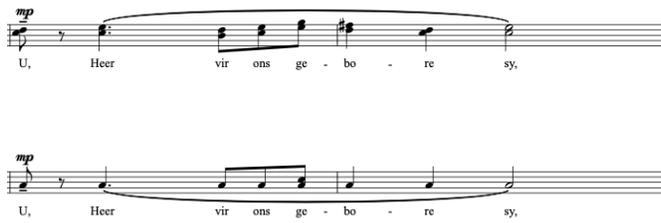


Fig. 2 - Soprano and alto parts echoing the bassoon's opening theme

This pilgrimage image is accentuated by the cello entry, which is a marcato bass line, driving the procession forward, amplified by the double bass entrance a few bars later. Underscoring the sense of anticipation for what is to come, the high strings enter with a sigh motive on a sustained tremolo, also suggestive of a cold winter's night.



Fig. 3 - Tremolo strings suggestive of a cold winter's night

Following this passage, the strings confirm the choral statement, mirroring the choral harmonies. This melodic material is followed by a sudden minor third modulation from A minor to C-sharp minor, which illustrates the holiness that we have yet to experience; there is trepidation as we have not yet heard the good news or seen the light, and this mysterious, unexpected modulation creates a sense of expectation for the harmonic and thematic scale of the story being unfolded.

The image shows a musical score for four voices, likely soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Each voice part is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are 'Ha - - - le lu - - - - - ja!'. The music is marked with dynamics: *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). There is a key signature change from one sharp (F#) to two sharps (F# and C#), indicating a modulation from A minor to C-sharp minor. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

Fig. 4 - Modulation from A minor to C-sharp minor in the choral part

This section harmonically speaks with another movement, “XV. Duet en Koraal: Ek hoor ‘n kindjie wenend” (I hear a weeping child). The trepidation of the first movement’s harmonic language is echoed in the melodic lines of Mary and Joseph, who speak of the unknown trials and pain that Jesus will endure later (*Kruis van Liefde*). In the first movement, the tonic-dominant bass line indicates a processional, but in movement XV. on the text “die beeste staan daar swyend” (the cattle stand there swaying), the intent is more light-hearted, depicting the cattle swaying while simultaneously depicting the pilgrimage of the shepherds and wise men as they make their way towards Bethlehem. The harmonic language in both these sections is designed to evoke the doubtfulness of the people of the time as to who the king referred to could truly be (in movement Ia. the text is “Juig mensdom, loof u koning saam”); is it Jesus, Herod, Augustus Caesar, or indeed another prophet? In the first movement the word “koning” occurs on a dissonant chord designed to instill this doubt.

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The music is in A major (three sharps) and features a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Juig, mens - dom loof u ko - ning saam,". The dissonance is highlighted by the use of tritone intervals (F# and C) in the chords for the word "koning".

Fig. 5 - Dissonant choral harmonies on the word “koning”

By contrast, the chords on the phrase “lofsing sy nooit volprese naam” (praise His name, never fully praised) are consonant to illustrate that humankind will never understand the extent of this name’s power (in XV. the harmonic dissonance is omitted). The succeeding passages play with consonance and dissonance on specific words, while also maintaining a very strong chant influence through the use of 4ths and 5ths in the harmonic structure. These sections are conceived more vertically than horizontally, maintaining the integrity of the harmonic structure while maintaining melodic viability. At the end of the movement, three soprano soloists enter on the word “halleluja”, representing the angels who will proclaim the news to humankind.

Ib. Voorspelling van die Messiasryk

The next section is “Ib. Voorspelling van die Messiasryk” (Prophecy of the Messiah’s kingdom). It starts in the style of a recitative. Most recitatives in *Lig van Waarheid* begin with the same tremolo pattern in the strings. This is done to imbue the recitatives with a sense of anticipation, moving the story forward. Most of these movements begin in the key of A, in this case A minor, bringing us back to the beginning of the story. The words “Die volk wat in donkerte geleef het” (The people who lived in darkness) are deliberately sung on the same ascending 5th interval as the opening of *Kruis van Liefde* (“Kom laat ons sing”; Come let us sing), and the descending minor melodic scale on the word “donkerte” also references this (many themes from Prinsloo’s first oratorio are referenced in this work, binding the two works together thematically).

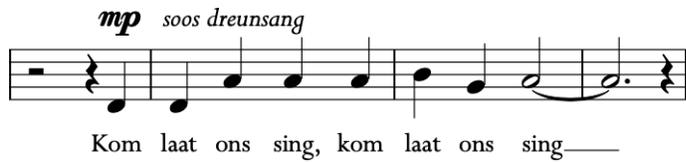


Fig. 6 - Central theme of Kruis van Liefde

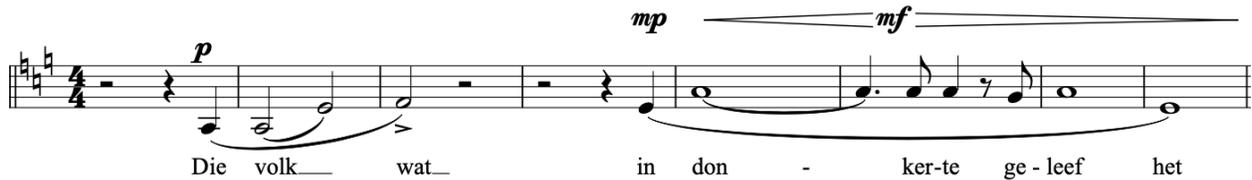


Fig. 7 - Opening statement from “Ib. Proloog: Voorspelling van die Messiasryk”

The movement builds to a climax, at which point it modulates to A major at the words “wonderbare raadsman” and “vredevors” (wonderful counselor; prince of peace). It returns to the minor on the words “magtige God” to illustrate God’s inscrutable nature, and a perfect 5th interval on the words “ewige Vader”, showing God’s authority. The trumpets stand out over the orchestration in this major section, playing a fanfare to indicate the arrival of a king as trumpets are often associated with the arrival of royalty and holiness, as in the works of Bach and Handel. This is particularly notable in Handel’s Messiah, and Prinsloo wanted to reference this to further contribute to a musical tradition stretching back hundreds of years.



Fig. 9 - Trumpet fanfare in the opening movement of *Lig van Waarheid*

To depict the size and import of the statement “het ‘n groot lig gesien” (have seen a great light), the harmony grows from a unison ascending line into 6-part and 8-part harmony on the word “groot” (great), becoming a 9-part chord on the word “lig” (light). The same device is used on the next phrase, “oor die wat in die die duister was het ‘n lig geskyn” (on those that walked in darkness a light has shone), similarly using extended harmony on the word “lig” to depict a ray of light. In the accompaniment, on the same phrase as above, there is a musical quotation from *Kruis van Liefde* (“II. Daarop sê Pilatus”; Then Pilate said), seen in the musical example below.



Fig. 10 - Theme from Kruis van Liefde (“Daarop sê Pilatus”)

The rhythmic pattern in the cello section is used to indicate the triumphal, majestic nature of Christ’s arrival, occurring before and after the climax of this movement (“wonderbare raadsman”, A Major).

II. Resitatief: En in die sesde maand

This recitative begins with a modulation to A major (as formerly stated) with the same tremolo used in the previous movement, to instill expectation in the listener. The celesta is used to punctuate each bar and indicate harmonic shifts, comparable to the use of harpsichord in baroque and classical recitatives (both in opera and oratorio). The natural speech rhythms of Afrikaans dictate the rhythm of the text, which is expositional, describing the angel Gabriel’s appearance to Mary announcing the birth of Jesus (exposition and natural language rhythm are two of the defining features of recitative as a compositional device). In his recitatives, Prinsloo uses what he describes as “word themes”, which recur throughout the work on key phrases and words, such as “Nasaret” (Nazareth), “met die naam” (with the name), “uit die huis van Dawid” (from the house of David), and “Galilea” (Galilee).

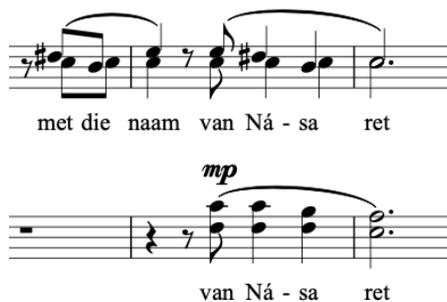


Fig. 11 - “met die naam van Nasaret” theme

uit die huis van Da - vid

uit die huis van Da - vid

Fig. 12 - "uit die huis van Dawid" theme

in Ga-li - lé - a

Fig. 13 - "in Galilea" theme

In these instances, the same chords or chord progressions are used to establish continuity. The first vocal entry is the tenor line, establishing the tonal language of the recitative. They are joined on the phrase "van Nasaret" (from Nazareth) by the bass line, relieved by the soprano and alto lines when the text refers to "n maagd" (a virgin), the text elaborating on the betrothal of Mary and Joseph. Introducing the character of Mary, the alto line sings a sustained note (B) on the name "Maria", which is held into the next movement. Throughout this recitative, Prinsloo uses several tonal shifts to erode the harmony, making it possible to modulate to E major for the joyous next movement, "III. Koraal: Op Gabriël's woord".

III. Koraal: Op Gabriël's woord

Here, the introduction of the sleigh bells illustrates a joyous celebration with a matching 6/8 rhythmic pattern. The cello part accentuates this idea beginning with pizzicati on an ascending 5th interval, moving to 7th, 9th, and octave intervals to establish a harmonic bassline for the movement. The upper note does not move, creating an anchor point for the harmonic movement.

F Andante ma non troppo (♩ = 140)
Met blydschap

Fig. 14 - The string accompaniment with specific reference to the bass line in the cello section

The opening soprano statement “Op Gabriël’s woord deur God bemind” (On Gabriel’s word, beloved of God) is affirmed by the rest of the choir with a matching “Halleluja” using call and response as a compositional device. The sopranos are later joined by the altos on the words “Ook ons vereer met hart en stem” (We praise with heart and voice), the tenors and basses continuing their response, until the choir becomes the metaphorical “choir of angels” which will announce the news to the shepherds in a later movement, repeating the word “halleluja”.

Fig. 15 - Call and response compositional device

Thematically speaking, 7th intervals and movements towards the 7th degree of the scale are important in this movement; these usages depict the presence of angels or “holiness”. An upward movement accentuates joyousness, while holiness is depicted by the downward movements. The 7th resolution is particularly stressed here, indicating completion or the fulfilment of a promise. At the end of the movement, the tutti string section plays a polyphonic pizzicato link into the next movement, signifying the joy of the annunciation.

S. ons ver - eer met hart en stem

A. ons ver - eer met hart en stem

Fig. 16 - The soprano and alto lines, illustrating the 7th interval jumps in the melodic line

Sleigh bells have become short-hand for the festive season, a fact that Prinsloo uses to enhance the sense of joy and nostalgia in *Lig van Waarheid*. Far from trying to accentuate any negative connotations or clichés, it is an attempt to incorporate a signifier of Christmas culture into this work with a sense of innovation.

pp

Fig. 17 - Sleigh bell figure

In this movement, the bassoon introduces a theme which occurs throughout the work to signify joy and contentment, often repeated in the choir on the word “halleluja”. Prinsloo uses the bassoon throughout the work much as Bach used the oboe, often to comment on a textual statement, or polyphonically (in conversation with another instrument or soloist).



Fig. 18 - "Halleluja" theme played by the bassoon, later repeated in the choral parts

IV. Resitatief: Wees gegroet begenadigde!

As with previous recitatives, tremolo strings and celesta are used to create anticipation and form a harmonic base, respectively. Additionally, the tremolo expresses anxiety in the character of Mary at the appearance of an angel in her presence (a prospect which would give any sane person pause). The upper voices sing the phrase, "En die engel het by haar binnegekomen gesê" (and the angel came to Mary, saying). On the word "engel", the voices split into a shimmering clashing chord, indicating both her fear and the angel's holiness, a thematic device used throughout the work. As the choir sings "binnegekomen" (entered) a C major chord is sung over the established key of E minor, introducing a 7th to the harmony. The final syllable of the word "gesê" (said) is sung on a perfect 5th interval, providing a sense of suspense as to what the angel will say. At this moment the strings change their bowing style from tremolo to "arco sul tasto" playing "flageolet", a technique which creates overtones, accentuating the holiness of the moment.

Fig. 19 - String section transition from tremolo to "arco sul tasto", producing "flageolet" overtones

The harmonic progression used in this movement (E minor, G major, A major, harmonic erosion into E major) recurs later in the work and is an important thematic device. Gabriel's identity is immediately established in this character's first melodic entry, and while later recitatives are not identical to this one, they are linked by a distinct melodic language. Themes sung by the baritone in earlier recitatives are often echoed in the bassoon part in later ones. To create this

effect Prinsloo uses the Dorian mode, which is also present in the opening statement of the bassoon in the first movement, establishing a thematic link between Gabriel and the bassoon. The bassoon is also in constant conversation with the solo baritone during this movement.



Fig. 20 - Baritone solo entry, illustrating the use of the Dorian mode

Fig. 21 - The baritone solo (the angel Gabriel) in duet with the bassoon soloist

During Gabriel's solo, the use of the Dorian mode's unique harmonic context within the harmonic shifts of the underlying accompaniment (specifically the raised C-sharp, which does not occur in E minor, the establishing key) allows Prinsloo the freedom to modulate through several tonalities before establishing the key of E major for the succeeding movement.

Gabriel's vocal line begins in a declamatory style (each word with its own note) with the consoling words:

"Wees gegroet begenadigde! Die Heer is met jou. Geseënd is jy onder die vroue. Moenie vrees nie, Maria, want jy het genade by God gevind."

(Greetings, you who are highly favoured. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. Do not fear, Mary, because you have received mercy from God.)

However, as the text begins to describe the promise of a child, the line becomes more melismatic on the text "Jy sal swanger word en 'n seun baar, en jy moet hom Jesus noem" (You

will become pregnant and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus). This is expressed using rapid melismas on the words “baar” (bear) and “moet” (must) with a long melisma on the name “Jesus”. These effects imbue the text with a sense of joy and anticipation.



Fig. 22 - Baritone solo illustrating the melisma on the name “Jesus”

This anticipation is accentuated by the return of the strings to an excited tremolo throughout the harmonic progression, ending in a triumphant E major. On the moment of the arrival in E major the bassoon plays the very distinct pattern that characterises the bassoon in the next movement. It forms a link between the two movements.

V. Koraal: Geluk op aard!

A majestic, non-legato string *passacaglia* (a baroque dance form with a distinctive descending bass line) underscores the bassoon’s floating melodic line. This establishes an important recurring theme for joy and peace, specifically associated with Mary and Gabriel as the bassoon’s theme echoes Gabriel’s melismatic material from the preceding recitative.



Fig. 23 - The bassoon’s theme in movement V.

The staccato motive in the string section is neo-baroque in style, designed to evoke a sense of royalty, precision and sophistication. The historical link between the baroque period in western classical music and the oratorio is ubiquitous; Prinsloo deliberately uses a neo-baroque compositional style to reinforce the link between *Lig van Waarheid* and its historical predecessors.

In duet with the bassoon's opening statement, the sopranos enter on a sustained legato line on the text "Hier waar niks as sonde woon" (Here where nothing lives as sin). This line is taken over by the tenors, who sing a more punctuated phrase on the words "Geluk op aard die mens gena" (Peace on earth to humankind), still in duet with the bassoon. The basses join the tenors on the phrase "so juig God's koor", and on the word "halleluja", the entire choir enters. The "halleluja" theme from movement "III. Koraal: Op Gabriël's Woord" recurs, and is transmuted by the use of a different time signature and the stateliness of the neo-baroque setting. The ascending vocal line in the soprano trio of angels echoes the bassoon's thematic material, representing a reaching upward towards God. The celesta re-enters with the same accompaniment figure as before, but in this context adding shimmer to the grandeur of this movement.



Fig. 24 - The "halleluja" theme in the soprano solo line

The timpani (which also gained widespread use during the baroque period) reinforce the majestic nature of this movement. Tubular bells on a descending E major scale mimic church bells announcing an important event, providing a ubiquitous celebratory element.



Fig. 25 - The tubular bell theme, mimicking church bells

To create suspense, this movement ends on an incomplete cadence but segues directly into the next recitative, a drumroll on the timpani strengthening the sense of expectation. It also evokes the sense of confusion that the character of Mary expresses in her first entry.

VI. Resitatief: "Hoe kan dit wees"

Starting in E major, this recitative intensifies the mystery of the incomplete cadence by omitting the major 3rd of the chord in either the choral part or accompaniment. The reference to medieval music is strengthened by the use of a major 7th resolution to the tonic in the upper voices, also intensifying the feeling of suspense. The same clash is used to evoke angelic

presence on the word “engel” in the phrase “Toe sê Maria vir die engel” (And Mary said to the angel). Entering on a perfect 5th interval, Mary begins her first solo recitative: “Hoe kan dit wees aangesien ek geen man het nie?” (How can this be since I have no husband?). In duet with the vocal line, the cello plays the same theme established by the angel Gabriel in his first recitative (“Wees gegroet, begunadigde”), signifying his ongoing presence and the conversation between the two characters.

The musical score for Figure 26 consists of three staves. The top staff is for the solo soprano (Mary), marked *pp* (pianissimo). It features a triplet of notes (G4, A4, B4) with the lyrics "Hoe kan dit wees" underneath. The middle staff is for the solo cello, marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). It features a triplet of notes (G2, A2, B2) with the lyrics "aan - ge sien" underneath. The bottom staff is for the cello's accompaniment, marked *p* (piano) and *arco* (arco). It features a triplet of notes (G2, A2, B2) with the lyrics "Hoe kan dit wees" underneath. The score is in 4/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#).

Fig. 26 - The cello solo and solo soprano (Mary) in duet

The upper voices of the choir re-enters, announcing the angel’s response, followed by the resumption of the duet between Gabriel and the bassoon in the next recitative. The tonal colour of the baritone voice and the bassoon in this specific range blend very well, creating the impression that the angel is singing his own harmonies, a supernatural being radiating holiness using the previously established angelic themes. A driving timpani along with a tutti cello accompaniment underscores this moment, where the angel sings the words “Die Heilige Gees sal oor jou spoel” (The Holy Spirit will wash over you). The interchange of thematic material between the baritone and bassoon recontextualises thematic material, but also reinforces the two instruments as a single character, that of an angel harmonising with himself.

The musical score for Figure 27 consists of two staves. The top staff is for the baritone (Bsn.), marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). It features a triplet of notes (G3, A3, B3) with the lyrics "Hei - li - ge gees" underneath. The bottom staff is for the bassoon (Die Engel Gabriël), marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). It features a triplet of notes (G2, A2, B2) with the lyrics "sal oor jou spoel" underneath. The score is in 4/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#).

Fig. 27 - Baritone and bassoon solos

On the words “en die krag van die Allerhoogste sal jou oorskadu” (and the power of the most high will overshadow you), the tremolo accompaniment intensifies, with the entry of the trumpets proclaiming a triumph. The choir re-enters on an extended harmonic sequence on the word “halleluja”, underscored by the orchestra playing the same theme sung by Gabriel on the words “sal jou oorskadu”. The clean parallel 10th harmonies in the strings almost overshadow the choir in this moment, echoing not only Gabriel’s thematic material but the musical expression of the text.

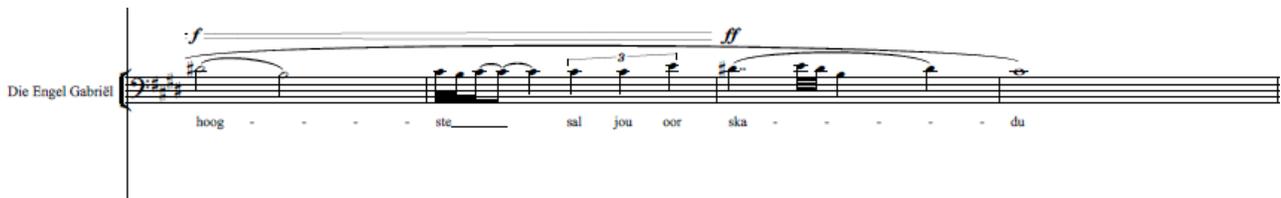


Fig. 28 - Baritone solo theme “Allerhoogste sal jou oorskadu”



Fig. 29 - String section echoing baritone theme “Allerhoogste sal jou oorskadu”

VII. Koraal: Laat ons nog eens die lied herhaal

The previous movement ends on a triumphal A major chord, but there is a sudden modulation to D minor, traditionally the key of death, which is the opening tonality of *Kruis van Liefde*. As if making another prophecy of what is to come, the celesta plays the same theme as in the opening movement of *Lig van Waarheid* as a reminder of the fear and insecurity of the opening. The choir enters using the same theme used throughout *Kruis van Liefde* (“kom laat ons sing”;

Come let us sing), a premonition of death and what is to come after the joy of Christmas, once again playing with light and dark both thematically and in the instrumentation. The percussion once again evokes the processional of the first movement. The text, “Laat ons nog eens die lied herhaal, die eng’lelied in mens se taal” (Let us repeat the song, the angel song in human language), refers to the angel’s song in the preceding recitative, in other words, the proclamation of Christ’s arrival on earth, followed by an affirmative “Halleluja”.



Fig. 30 - “Laat ons nog eens die lied herhaal”, echoing the theme from *Kruis van Liefde*

As the choir sings “O Seun van God die mens gelyk” (Oh, Son of God made human), the bassoon enters with an ostinato pattern which imbues this section with drama and an almost kinetic forward movement.



Fig. 31 - Bassoon ostinato

The drama is further intensified with marcato articulation on the phrase “U wat die groot heelal regeer” (You who rule the universe), contrasted by soft responses of “halleluja” from the soprano line, recalling the angel song earlier. Mary and Gabriel also sing this chorus of “halleluja” earlier in the work, signaling her assent.

The choir then makes a recitative-like statement: “Vir wie? Vir heil’ge eng’le? Nee!” (For whom? For holy angels? No!), followed by an exploration of the harmonic possibilities of the Dorian mode with an arc-like passage that ascends using the perfect 5th interval in the soprano and tenor lines (“Hul deel on slegs die boodskap mee”; They merely share the message with us).

The final vocal line of this section (“Vir arme sondaars daal Hy neer”; For poor sinners He descends) transitions into an extended instrumental interlude. The style changes from a more chant-based style with baroque references to a more chromatic style, with broad string accompaniment, building dramatic tension with an ascending chromatic progression to a

climactic release. A trumpet duo plays a fanfare characterised by a triplet motif, evoking royalty. In an earlier recitative, Gabriel says “die Heilige Gees sal oor jou spoel” (The Holy Spirit will wash over you), which is depicted in this moment. It can also be interpreted as the moment of immaculate conception.

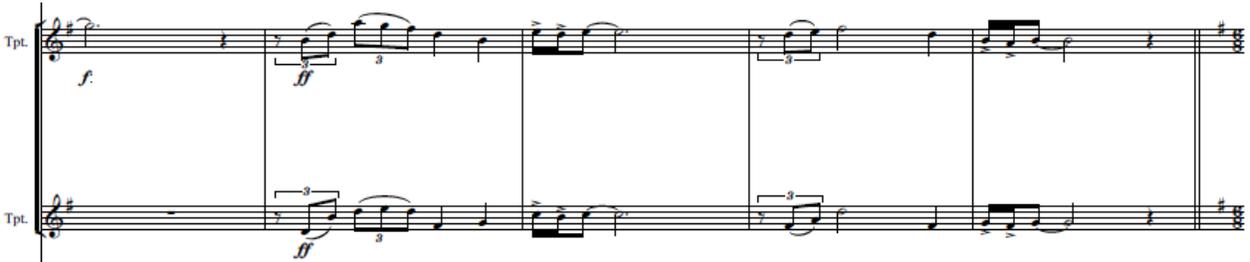


Fig. 32 - Trumpet theme signaling the immaculate conception

VIII. Aria: Die Lofsang van Maria

From this dramatic orchestral interlude, we have a sudden drop in dynamics to a pianissimo on the celesta, reintroducing the theme from “III. Koraal: Op Gabriëls woord” with the same harmonic progression in the bass line. The bassoon solo also binds these two movements together, playing the “halleluja” theme sung by the choir in III. The pizzicato strings were chosen very deliberately to illustrate Mary’s innocence and joy; this movement is a joyful dance, and the accompaniment supports this idea.

Mary’s long solo line is relayed by an entry by the soprano and alto lines, affirming and echoing Mary’s text (“My God en saligmaker, my redder en bewaker. God was my gedagtig, Hy wat heilig is en magtig”; “My God and comfort, my saviour and protector. God has been merciful to me, He who is holy and mighty”). In doing so, they represent humankind joining in with Mary’s celebration of God’s gift. This interplay between soloist and choir builds to a climax, at which point Mary’s establishing theme is taken over by the trumpets. Adding to the celebratory nature of the movement, the choir rejoins the ensemble, this time singing forte.



Fig. 32 - Soprano theme on “ek wil die hoogste Heer met blye roemtaal eer”

Here, percussion is also used to maximum effect with the tubular bells, timpani and sleigh bells all contributing to the depiction of joyous celebration. At the end of the movement, the celebration comes to an end with the celesta resuming its accompanimental figure, slowly dying away. As this happens, there is a sudden modulation into the next movement as the strings re-enter.

IX. Resitatief: Hier is U diensmaagd Here

This modulation is done using the dominant (a D major triad, the 3rd of which is F-sharp) of G major into the key of F-sharp major. This modulation is unexpected, but decisive, signifying Mary's decision to surrender to God's will. This contrast between this and the previous movement is heightened with the re-introduction of the *passacaglia* first used in the movement "V. Koraal: Geluk op aard". In this iteration this device is used much more strongly and triumphally. The upper voices of the choir re-enters on the words "En Maria sê aan die engel" (And Mary said to the angel) with an ascending line in the soprano line. On the second repetition of this phrase, the sopranos echo the bassoon solo from movement V. with the same embellishments.



Fig. 33 - Soprano lines echo the bassoon's theme from movement V.

Mary's acceptance of God's will with the words "Hier is U diensmaagd Here. Laat dit met my gaan volgens U woord" (I am your handmaiden, Lord. Let be with me according to your Word) echoes the surrender expressed by Jesus in Kruis van Liefde when He says "Vader, in U hande gee ek my gees oor" (Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit). The bassoon accompanies Mary with the same theme as in movement V. There is then an immediate segue into the next movement without any modulation, maintaining the *passacaglia* character.

X. Kanon: Net soos 'n seldsaam skone blom

This movement is a type of canon in which each voice part is allowed to introduce a part of the extended melody. On the repetition, all the voices sing their melodic section simultaneously. The

melodies are rooted in natural language inflection, creating a sense of linguistic harmony as well as tonal harmony. The text is also depicted aurally; for example, the tenors sing the text:

“Die Heiland kom in need’righeid. Daar staan geen ereboog, en sy gedaante het geen prag of skoonheid in ons oog.”

The Saviour comes humbly. There is no arch of honour, and his form has no splendour or beauty in our eyes.

On the word “ereboog” (arch of honour), the tenors sing a melodic arch embellished in the same way as the bassoon solo. Even though the words state that there is no “ereboog”, the music creates one in Jesus’s honour. On the tutti choir entry, the basses echo the passacaglia bass line played by the low strings.



Fig. 34 - The tenor line depicting an “arch of honour” or “ereboog”.

XI. Resitatief: En in daardie dae het daar ‘n bevel uitgegaan

The opening of this recitative uses the same format as the recitative “En in die sesde maand”, the tenor line making the opening statement with an almost identical chord progression in the celesta, and tremolo strings to create a sense of anticipation. This changes on the phrase “elkeen na sy eie stad” (each to his own city), at which point each voice part enters repeating this text, starting with the tenors, followed by the basses, altos and sopranos. This is designed to signify the people of Judea returning to their ancestral cities for the census ordered by Caesar Augustus. The timpani enter here, once again depicting a pilgrimage.

S. *met dringendheid*
mf Elk - een na sy eie stad *f*

A. *met dringendheid*
mf Elk - een na sy eie stad *f*

Fig. 35 - The staggered entries of the alto and soprano parts on “elkeen na sy eie stad”

The musical motifs for the phrases “Galilea”, “uit die stad Nasaret”, and “na die stad van Dawid” are restated here. On the word “Betlehem” there is a big crescendo leading into the next movement, climaxing on the word “heil!” (hail!).

XIII. Koraal: Heil ons! Daar is ‘n Kind gebore

The triumphal nature of this music and the importance placed on the “Betlehem” crescendo preceding this movement signify the fulfilment of Micah’s prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). This is portrayed by way of a distinctive ostinato in the Violin I and II parts, played staccato, almost marcato.

Vln. I *ff sempre staccato*

Vln. II *ff sempre staccato*

Fig. 36 - Ostinato string motif in the Violin I and II parts

The high strings are joined by the violas, cellos and double basses, whose entry on a long note ascending to a perfect 5th interval anchors this movement within the thematic world of the oratorio. This dramatic bass line is a grounding force for the perpetual motion of the ostinato violins. This theme is echoed in double time by the trumpets, reinforcing the sense of triumph evoked in this section.

The image shows three staves of music for Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The notes are held for the duration of the measure. The Viola part starts with a half note G4, followed by a half note A4. The Cello part starts with a half note G2, followed by a half note A2. The Double Bass part starts with a half note G1, followed by a half note A1. In the final measure, there are dynamic markings: *ff div.* for the Viola, *ff* for the Cello, and *ff* for the Double Bass.

Fig. 37 - Held bass notes in the Viola, Cello and Double bass parts.

The image shows a single staff of music for Trumpets in D major. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5, each with an accent (>) and a dynamic marking of *ff*. The notes are separated by a whole rest, indicating they are played simultaneously.

Fig. 38 - The trumpets echo the ascending 5ths played by the bass instruments

During this section, the tubular bells are struck seven times, a number usually associated with God, to announce the coming of Jesus. The choir re-enters with the text “Heil ons!” (Redeem us!), as if announcing a triumphal entry parade into an ancient city. A theme played throughout this movement by the entire orchestra is echoed in the choir on the text “Daar is ‘n kind gebore” (A child is born), extended on the words “‘n wonder van God’s liefdesmag” (a wonder of the love of God). While the choir sings this text, the tubular bells play another seven bell tolls, signifying the holiness of the moment.

The image shows four staves of music for the choir: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The key signature is D major and the time signature is 4/4. Each staff has the lyrics: "Ons! Heil! 'n won - der van God's lief - des mag". The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5, each with an accent (>) and a dynamic marking of *mf*, *ff*, *f*, and *ff* respectively. The notes are separated by a whole rest, indicating they are played simultaneously.

Fig. 39 - The choir echoes the ascending 5th theme on the phrase “‘n wonder van God’s liefdesmag”

In contrast to the ostinato in the strings and the dramatic 5th interval jumps of the aforementioned theme, a gentle legato line is introduced on the words “Sy las is lig sy juk is sag” (His burden is light, his yoke is easy). Stab chords on the word “Heil” continue to drive the movement towards its climactic conclusion. On the words “Wonderbaar!” and “Vredevors!”, the choir sings a dotted rhythm, repeated in the tubular bells and celesta.

XIV. Resitatief: En terwyl hulle daar was is die dae vervul

A significant drop in dynamic level signals this recitative, and with the recitative preceding movement XIII., they act as bookends to the journey to Bethlehem. The bassoon returns with thematic material from movement “V. Koraal: Geluk op aard”. The choir affirms the ascending 5th theme on the phrase “ is die dae vervul” (the days were fulfilled). The celesta takes over the ostinato played by the strings in the previous movement.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Soprano (S.) and Alto (A.) parts. Both staves are in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody consists of a dotted quarter note, an eighth note, a triplet of eighth notes, and a dotted half note. The lyrics are: "En ter-wyl hul-le daar was, is die dae ver - vul".

Fig. 40 - Ascending 5th theme on “is die dae vervul”, sung in unison by the choir

XV. Duet en Koraal: Ek hoor ‘n kindjie wenend

In this movement the thematic material from the first movement returns, with the same accompanimental figure played by the celesta punctuated by triangle and drum beats. This time in E minor, the bassoon reprises its opening Dorian mode theme. Mary’s vocal line is characterised by a carol-like melody with a distinct Dorian mode inflection.



Fig. 41 - "Ek hoor 'n kindjie wenend", evocative of carols in the Dorian mode

After the solo verse, the soprano and alto lines answer Mary with the text "Kind Jesus sluimer soet" (Baby Jesus, slumber sweetly), and then repeated by the whole choir. Each time this is sung, there is a chord suspension on the first syllables of the words "Jesus" and "sluimer", resolving on the word "soet". Joseph then enters with a similarly carol-like melody for his verse. The cellos enter with a pizzicato tonic-dominant bass line, re-introducing the idea of a processional moving towards Bethlehem. As a character, both biblically and in oratorios on the subject of Christmas, Joseph is often mentioned and subsequently ignored. Here, he sings of the mortality of Christ's incarnation as the Jesus child, and of the innocence of a child who cannot know what awaits him as time passes. When Joseph's verse is finished, the tenors and basses enter in affirmation, again joined in the repetition by the rest of the choir.

Mary's next phrase "O lelie uit my gaarde, o vreugde van my hart" (O lily of my loins, o joy of my heart) expresses great joy, which is emphasised using a pizzicato pattern in the strings creating a playful duet with the already established celesta theme. Joseph enters with the text "O skoonste hier op aarde, wat weet jy nou van smart?" (O purest here on earth, what do you know of misery?), to which Mary responds "Kind Jesus sluimer soet" instead of the choir, joined by Joseph on the repetition.

The last verse is sung by the whole choir, beginning with the text "Die beeste staan daar swyend, die sterre bo hou wag" (The cattle stand there swaying, the stars above keep watch). Here, the second violins play phrased legato lines, strengthening the melodic material sung by the choir and amplifying the 4th and 5th intervals used in the harmonic structure of the choral part. The first violins play long, hanging notes that attempt to capture the atmosphere of this pastoral scene. The bass strings maintain their tonic-dominant pattern, emphasising the image of the cattle swaying in the fields.

The movement ends with a long pedal point in the bass strings, the celesta slowly diminishing, while the bassoon repeats its original theme. Once this theme has been played, pizzicato strings replace the pedal point, reintroducing the theme of expectation and beginning a short

instrumental interlude. This gives the bassoon the opportunity to play the trumpet theme from the “immaculate conception” moment during the first instrumental interlude. The repeated pizzicati build the tension, and modulate once again to the minor.



Fig. 42 - Bassoon solo using material from the “immaculate conception” interlude

XVI. Resitatief: En daar was herders in dieselfde landstreek

Here, the pedal point in the cello and timpani (a direct quote from *Kruis van Liefde*'s “Die volkleiers het aangehou om smalend te sê” theme) indicates a return to humanity; the story up until this point has dealt mainly with Jesus, Mary, angels and the “divine”. The celesta theme is characterised by suspensions on the first beat of every bar, building suspense. The basses and tenors make staggered entries on a chant, describing the shepherds in the fields: “En daar was herders in dieselfde landstreek”. As the soprano and alto lines enter, the harmonies become denser and more intense, using the same suspended chords as in the celesta at the beginning of this movement.

At the words “En meteens staan daar ‘n engel van die Here voor hulle” (And suddenly there stood an angel of the Lord before them), a cymbal scrape is used to depict the immediacy of the angel’s arrival. On the word “Here”, a 3-part cluster chord represents the triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). A small bell begins to ring signifying the presence of a supernatural being. The violins play a high, sustained G to instill suspense, changing to a tremolo on the phrase “en die heerlijkheid van God het om hulle geskyn” (and the glory of God shone all around them) depicting the fear of the shepherds. The percussion section enters in full force, reinforcing this terrifying moment.

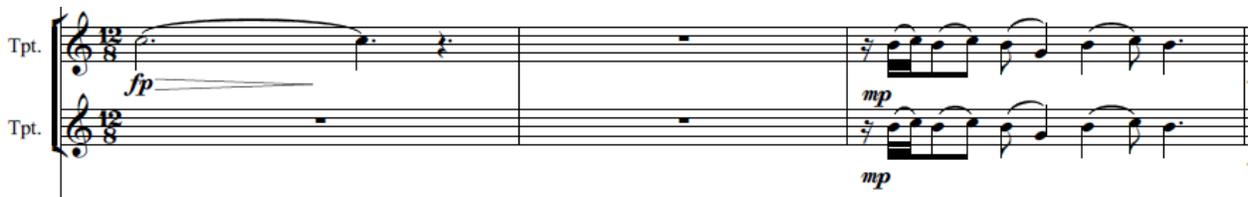
A high trill in the violins continues depicting the shepherds’ fear, and the choir sings a very dense harmony on the words “en ‘n groot vrees het hulle oorweldig” (and great fear overwhelmed them), resolving into a quieter moment before the angel enters with words of consolation. The strings again play “flageolet” harmonics, expressing the calmness that the angel brings.

XVII. Resitatief: Moenie vrees nie

The angels speak, saying “moenie vrees nie, want kyk, ek bring vir julle ‘n goeie tyding van groot blydskap wat vir die hele volk sal wees” (have no fear, for I bring you good tidings of great joy for the whole nation). These consoling words are sung, as before, in duet with the bassoon. As the angel announces the coming of the Messiah (“die Saligmaker”), the trumpets re-enter, building to a victorious climax on E major.

XVIII. Koraal: Wees bly! Wees bly!

The climactic arrival on E major is immediately broken as the tonality shifts abruptly to C major with an added 7th. The second violins and celesta re-enter, a trumpet duo playing a new theme in this C major 7th tonality.



The image shows a musical score for two trumpets (Tpt.) in 12/8 time. The first staff begins with a forte (fp) dynamic and a long note. The second staff begins with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern. Both staves end with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic.

Fig. 43 - Trumpet duo playing a new theme

The bassoon enters with an adapted theme this time using the jazz-like Lydian mode, depicting the mystery of the angelic presence with the Lydian mode. The theme is echoed by the sopranos with their entry “Wyl by ons kuddes op die wag, sweef daar ‘n engel deur die nag” (While watching our flocks by night, an angel floats through the night).



The image shows a musical score for a bassoon (Bsn.) in 12/8 time, starting at measure 667. The score shows a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics.

Fig. 44 - Bassoon playing an adapted theme in the Lydian mode

The staggered choral re-entry is characterised by clash chords and a distinctive jazz chord progression (F major 7, A minor, A-flat major 7, B-flat major 7 ending in C major 7). This choral development depicts the angelic host singing the words “Loof die Heer!” (Praise the Lord!).

The words “Vrede op aarde” (Peace on earth) cue a sleigh bell entry, depicting the joy of the announcement. The melodic line is sung by the tenors in the first section of this verse, but in the second section, the first and second sopranos sing this melody in staggered entries, echoing one another (this is also done in the first and second violin parts).

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Soprano I and II. The top staff (Soprano I) begins with a melodic phrase marked *mf* *molto legato*. The lyrics below are "Vre - de op aar - de, Loof Sy Naam. Vre - de op aar - de, Ha -". The bottom staff (Soprano II) enters later with the same melodic phrase, also marked *mf* *molto legato*, with the lyrics "Vre - de op aar - de, _____". A dynamic marking of *f* appears at the end of the bottom staff.

Fig. 45 - Thematic echoing in the soprano I and II parts

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Violin I and II. The top staff (Violin I) begins with a melodic phrase marked *mp* *molto legato*. The bottom staff (Violin II) enters later with the same melodic phrase, also marked *mp* *molto legato*. Both staves have a *cresc.* marking at the end of the phrase.

Fig. 46 - Thematic echoing in the Violin I and II parts

Before the next chorus of “Loof die Heer!”, the trumpets reiterate the Lydian melody established by the bassoon, depicting the holiness of the moment and escalating the scale of this movement and building to a great climax. There is then a return to calm with the celesta entry, and the bassoon reprises the Lydian theme from the beginning of the movement.

After a short interlude by the celesta and bassoon, the text “Die herders op die heuwels hoor die blye nuus van eng’le koor” (The shepherds on the hills hear the joyous news of the angel choir) is sung at a slower tempo. Melodic material from movement “III. Koraal: Op Gabriël’s woord” is reintroduced, along with the call and response device used in that movement. Here the bass line is supported by extended timpani rolls, creating expectation.

The text “Drie konings volg die helder ster, bring wierook, mirre, goud van ver” (Three kings follow the bright star, bring frankincense, myrrh, gold from far) introduces the story not told in the

Gospel of Luke, but which is inseparable from Christmas celebration. This adds an essential layer to the storytelling of the oratorio.

XIX. Resitatief: Laat ons dan na Bethlehem gaan

An abrupt time signature change conveys a new-found sense of purpose. The celesta enters with the accompanimental figure played by the strings in “XIII. Heil ons! Daar is ‘n kind gebore”. The same harmonic progression as in “Heil ons!” is also used here. Prinsloo also makes use of staggered choral entries on the words “Laat ons dan na Bethlehem gaan om te sien wat gebeur het” (Let us go to Bethlehem to see what has happened) to depict the shepherds’ decision to go and meet Jesus in person.

XX. Koraal: Kom laat ons saam ‘n loflied sing

The music calms down again, settling back into the original opening celesta motif, back in A minor. This reiterates the idea of a pilgrimage or processional. The bassoon theme in the Dorian mode is reiterated, and the choir re-enters as it did before, but the new text reexamines humankind’s relationship to the story of Jesus; it is no longer a choir of angels foreshadowing the news that is to come, but a human choir praising God for his magnanimous gift of Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

The dramatic modulation from the first movement remains intact, but this time, the ensemble is joined by trumpets playing in open 5ths with a fanfare in A minor. Here the trumpets depict the impending danger of King Herod (still a royal person), highlighting the danger of the holy family’s situation. While Herod’s slaughter of the first-borns is not mentioned in the text, the musical language in this section is designed to subtextually imbue the listener with a sense of danger.

The movement ends with a soft “halleluja” repetitions with the solo angels as before, but the final “halleluja” is a dramatic crescendo ending on a fortissimo. The double basses play forte pizzicato notes on every strong beat of this last passage, signaling the end of the story and this theme.

After this dramatic statement, the bassoon restates the theme very quietly for a last time. After this, tension is built by a held C-sharp in the pedals of the organ and the timpani. A theme from *Kruis van Liefde* is stated in anticipation of the next chapter of the story.



Fig. 49 - A central theme from *Kruis van Liefde*, restated in the Violin I, II, and Viola sections

This theme mutates from major to minor, another device used to build tension and anticipation. The final passage is an extended tutti “Amen”, beginning piano and building towards a very tense chordal suspension with a fortissimo resolution to a powerful C-sharp major chord.