

Choose two contrasting arias from the music you have studied and write informatively about each.

1. Handel: The Messiah, 48: The Trumpet Shall Sound
2. No. 6 (tenor) from Ich Elender Mensch, Cantata 48, Bach

'The trumpet shall sound' is a Da Capo aria written for bass voice, a trumpet obbligato, strings and a continuo. This piece is hugely triumphant and demonstrates a sense of victory and celebration. Perhaps the most fundamental contribution towards this is it being based in a major key, and with a march like tempo. The tempo marking is aptly labelled as 'pomposo', meaning *pompously* and 'ma non allegro' which means *but not allegro*. This would help ensure the piece is performed with magnificence and majesty. The rhythms of the notes are also very basic being mostly crotchets with quavers for decoration and to add a sense of movement. Semiquavers are only used in conjunction with a dotted quaver and never consecutively as this would distort the picture that Handel has so carefully painted by added speed, which would remove some of the sense of exultancy.

The dance-like aria from "Ich Elender Mensch" is scored for similar instruments (oboes, bassoon, trumpets, timpani, strings, and basso continuo) however with the solo voice this time being a tenor. Perhaps the most noticeable difference is the change of tonality. This aria is set within a minor key, which thoroughly emphasises what it is trying to impel upon the listener - a sense of sorrow and mourning. This is reflected in the lyrics, where the tenor is asking for forgiveness. The piece is marked as *lento*. This slow tempo adds to the sorrow by making it seem much more solemn. Whilst the piece is mostly set in a minor key, there are times where modulation to the relative major provides us with what may be seen as a glimmer of hope within this mostly remorseful aria. What could be seen as a similarity between the two is their overall movement. Both have rhythmic bass lines. This aria has a bass line composed of almost entirely crotchets, which drives the piece forward (known as *moto perpetuo*). Its main function is to reinforce the pulse and provide foundations for the harmonic ideas Bach has set. The bass line in 'The trumpet shall sound' is similarly emphasising rhythm and adds momentum by emphasising rhythmical ideas.

The use of harmony in 'The trumpet shall sound' possesses quite a simple quality. Starting in D major, it has quite a strong relation with the dominant (A major). Other than modulating to this, it rarely strays away from D or A, except for at the end where it has a section entirely in B minor. This section only has the basso continuo and the voice sounding, presenting an entirely new texture that we had not heard before within the piece. The sense of grandeur that was stated so thoroughly before has been lost and the listener is left with a feeling of emptiness and sadness. The "Piano" dynamic markings add to the gloom of this section and bring us to the end of the piece (the major section is however repeated due to the fact this is a Da Capo aria, in which the piece is repeated from the sign).

Whilst the use of harmony and chordal progressions within 'the trumpet shall sound' is fairly basic, in the aria for tenor, Bach explores chromaticism and modulation to a much larger extent than Handel. The piece starts in the key of G minor but within 7 bars it has briefly modulated to F major. It explores harmony to a much greater depth than the Handel aria. This is reflective of the periods in which they were written, and the message they are trying to communicate. In this aria, the tenor is asking for forgiveness, which would imply a sad and solemn nature. This is indeed the case in most parts with use of the minor key and diminished 7th chords. There are parts where the modulation to major keys adds a sense of hope brings us out of the darkness. Overall, the use of harmony within this aria is much more explorative than that in Handel's aria. This is because 'The trumpet shall sound' is like a

celebration. Using a minor key for most of it, and diminished chords would not be appropriate in this situation.

With regards to the melody within the pieces, the two possess some different and similar qualities. Within 'The trumpet shall sound', the melody of the voice is predominately rising. This is to add a feeling of us rising, something one may do in a situation of celebration (which is what this piece is implying). Whilst the trumpet provides an obbligato, it also makes use of question and answer with melodic ideas. For instance, at "and we shall be chang'd" the trumpet has already stated the harmonic ideas that the singer will use (the dotted quavers) and the singer then answers this call but a third down. They have a strong relationship with each other in this piece. In the Bach aria there is also a use of question and answer between the violins and the voice. At the very start of the piece, the violins play a melody over the rest of the ensemble. When the voice enters with "Ver giebt mir Jesus..." it is singing exactly the same melody that the violins stated earlier. Both pieces also make use of ritornello. Whilst both of the melodies in the pieces seem quite controlled, there are some instances in the Bach aria where the gentle nature is questionable. There is an instance when the voice leaps a 7th, up to an Ab which provides quite a striking change (as it is to a diminished chord). This could be to show anguish and pain. It is only brief, however there some other such instances that follow, perhaps to convey the same emotion.

The setting of words and word-painting is something that Handel is often acknowledged for. His melismatic phrases within this aria are quite common. The first such instance is to the word "chang'd" where the voice takes part in producing an elaborate run of quavers in a sequential pattern. The word change is used as the notes are also changing. Less uses of melisma occur in the Bach aria except for in the small cases of two consecutive rising semiquavers that are used near the beginning of the phrases. Other such word painting is the use of seventh leaps.