



# Six Chorales with Descant

*Johann Sebastian Bach*

*Arranged by Peter Billam*

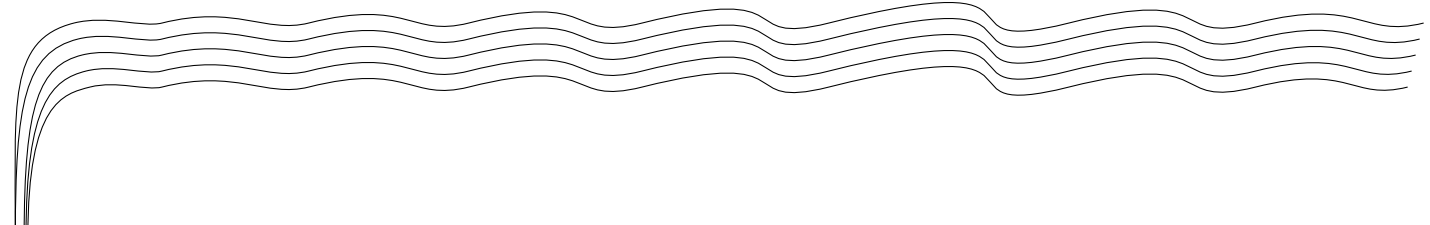
*for melody instrument and keyboard*

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## Bach Chorales, for piano and melody instrument

It is the chorales, not his trademark fugues, that lie at the heart of Bach's technique. Wolff refers to Bach's *collection of 370 four-part chorales that charted the course for tonal harmony*. Donald Francis Tovey observes: *Counterpoint, the art defined by Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley as that of 'combining melodies' . . . This definition is not quite complete. Classical counterpoint is the conveying of a mass of harmony by means of a combination of melodies. Thus the three melodies combined by Wagner in the Meistersinger prelude do not make classical counterpoint, for they require a mass of accompanying harmony to explain them.*

Forkel recounts, in Ernest Newman's translation: *Bach began teaching composition not with dry counterpoint that led nowhere, as was the way with other music teachers of his time; . . . He went immediately to pure four-part thorough-bass, laying much stress on the setting-out of the voices, since in this way the conception of the pure progression of the harmony was made most intelligible. From there he went to the chorale. In these exercises he himself set the original bass, and made his pupils add only the alto and the tenor. Gradually he let them make the bass also. Everywhere he insisted not only on the utmost purity of the harmony in itself, but also on naturalness of progression and a melodic flow of all the separate voices.*

Bach, in other words, was exploring the frontier between voice-leading and harmony; he worked out how voice-leading should be done so as to give the impression of harmony.

The chorales chosen here all use a melody instrument as a descant above the SATB voices; they come from his cantatas BWV's 12 31 85 136 161 and 172. They are offered here for players of flute, oboe, and violin. The vocal parts have been arranged for keyboard. For ease of sight-reading, and with some regret, crossed voices in the keyboard part have been uncrossed.

- *J. S. Bach, 388 Four-Part Chorales* edited by János Dobra, Editio Musica Budapest
- *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Albert Schweizer, Breitkopf and Härtel
- *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Albert Schweizer, translated by Ernest Newmann, Dover
- *The Forms of Music*, Donald Francis Tovey, Oxford University Press
- *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Christoph Wolff, Oxford University Press

## BWV 12

Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Oboe (Ob, VI) in G major, 4/4 time, with a treble clef. The middle and bottom staves are for keyboard accompaniment, with a treble and bass clef respectively. The music begins with a whole note chord in the right hand and a half note chord in the left hand, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in the oboe line.

The second system continues the musical score with three staves. The oboe line features a melodic line with various intervals and rests. The keyboard accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

The third system concludes the piece. The oboe line ends with a trill (tr) on a note. The keyboard accompaniment features a final cadence with sustained chords in both hands.

**BWV 31**

Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist

VI, Tr

The first system of the musical score for BWV 31. It consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff for the violin and two grand staff staves (treble and bass clefs) for the piano. The time signature is 4/4. The violin part begins with a melodic line featuring a slur over the first four measures and a trill in the fifth measure. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

The second system of the musical score. The violin part continues its melodic line with slurs and a trill. The piano accompaniment features more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs in the bass line.

The third system of the musical score, concluding the piece. The violin part ends with a final melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment concludes with a series of chords and a final cadence.

# BWV 85

Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist

The musical score for BWV 85, 'Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist', is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into six systems. The first system includes a 'VI' fingering in the vocal line and a 'tr' (trill) marking in the piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords and moving lines in the right hand. The vocal line consists of a series of notes, some with slurs and fermatas, following the text. The score concludes with a final cadence in the sixth system.

**BWV 136** Auf meinem lieben Gott

VI.

Musical score for BWV 136, measures 1-4. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features three staves: a vocal line (VI.) and two piano accompaniment staves (treble and bass clef). The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands.

Musical score for BWV 136, measures 5-8. The vocal line continues with quarter notes D5, E5, F5, and G5. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

Musical score for BWV 136, measures 9-12. The vocal line concludes with quarter notes A5, B5, and C6. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord in G major.

# BWV 161 Herzlich tut mich verlangen

The image displays a musical score for BWV 161, 'Herzlich tut mich verlangen'. It is arranged for a Flute (Fl.) and keyboard. The score is written in 4/4 time and G major. It consists of six systems of music. Each system includes a single staff for the Flute and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the keyboard. The Flute part is characterized by intricate sixteenth-note passages and melodic lines. The keyboard accompaniment provides a steady harmonic and rhythmic foundation with chords and moving lines in both hands. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the keyboard part.

**BWV 172**

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

The musical score is presented in a standard format with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (F major), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into five systems, each with a vocal staff and a piano staff. The piano part is characterized by a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes in the right hand and a more melodic bass line. The vocal line is a simple, lyrical melody with some grace notes and a trill at the end. The score includes a repeat sign at the end of the second system and a trill marking (*tr*) above the final note of the vocal line.

**Peter Billam** was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, lectured in composition at the Conservatorium, conducted recorder ensembles and choirs, studied recorder, voice and harpsichord. He founded **www.pjb.com.au**, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, with on-line delivery, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Www.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

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**Arrangements** include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* transposed into G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3*, from the *Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; *Fuga Canonica in Epidiapente* for keyboard and melody instrument; from the *Art of Fugue: Contrapuncti 1* and *4* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I, II* and *III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Johannes Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* with previous settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. By Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Schubert Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Schubert Dances*, piano 4 hands. By G. F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. By other composers: *Claudio Monteverdi, Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders; *Twelve Italian Songs*, voice and guitar; *John Wilbye, Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir; *Telemann, Twelve Flute Fantasias*, recorder; *John Carr, Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano.

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