



Music & Mysticism: Christ Symbolism in Bach's Music

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- On European soil are found the oldest musical instruments in the world:
- The Neanderthal flute, which has been found in Divje Babe in Slovenia, is circa 60 000 year old

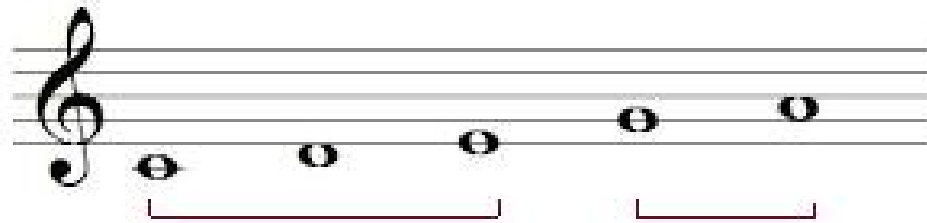


- In Hohle Fels Cave in south-west Germany, has been found the second oldest world instrument:
 - 40 000 year old flute made by the homo sapiens. It has five holes and on it can be played the pentatonic scale as it sounds today.



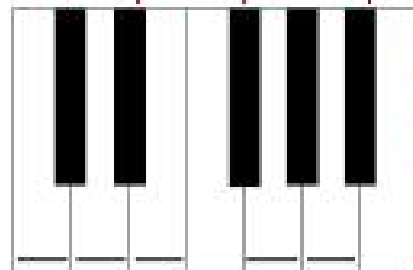
Pentatonic scale

penta - five



$$3 + 2 = 5$$

$$2 + 3 = 5$$



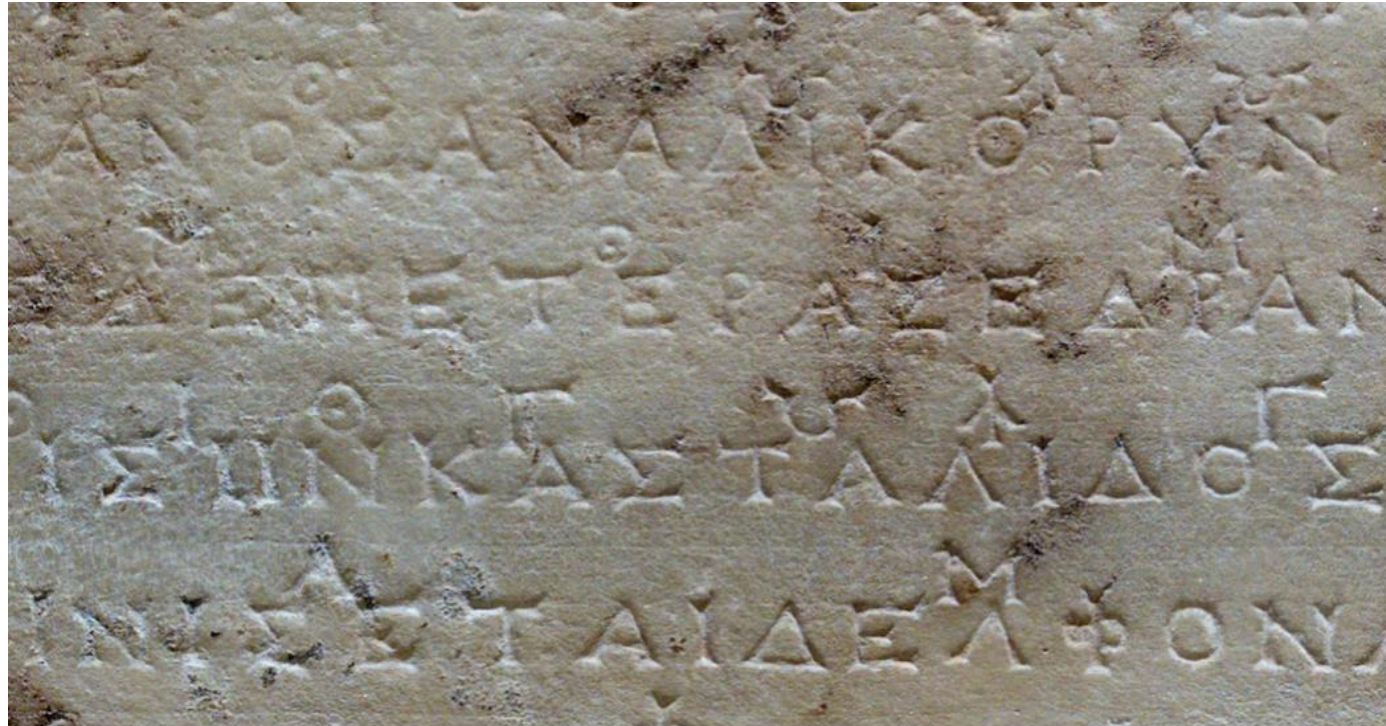
2 - first female number
according to
Pythagoreans
yin in Chinese
philosophy

3 - first male number
yang

2 + 3 = 5 Perfect marriage of the
Pythagoreans
five elements

(Plutarch: On the letter E at Delphy)

- The oldest musical notation in Europe is found in Greece:
 - Three Hymns by Mesomed of Crete and Two Delphic Hymns



Delphic Hymn dedicated to Apollo

- The earliest archeological example of pipe organ is found in Dion (Greece):



Hidraulis of Dion



- The **Greek doctrine of ethos** where characteristics of octave species were discussed among Plato, Aristotle, pseudo-Aristotle, Aristides and others, made its impact thorough the revival of the neoplatonism in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque era.
- **Plato** believed that octave species as the Dorian can influence the moral development. Octave species were also associated with mysticism. For ancient Greeks music was not only socially valuable and entertaining, but also an entity that reflected the gods creation and their perfect beauty.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNBfy1tjJXk>

- By 1440 Gutenberg has established the basics of his printing press
- 1455 – first printed Bible in Latin by Gutenberg and Johann Fust in Mainz



Gutenberg Bible

- Earliest published printed texts on music are also from German musicians:
- 1511 – **Musica getuscht und ausgezogen** by Sebastian Virdung
- 1529 – **Musica instrumentalis deudsch** by Martin Agricola
- 1536 - **Musurgia seu praxis musicae** by Ottmar Luscinius

- 1517- Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation by publishing a printed document he called *Disputation on the Power of Indulgences*, or 95 Theses.



- “Before printing, the Reformation would just have been a schism; printing made it a revolution.” (Victor Hugo)

Martin Luther quotes:

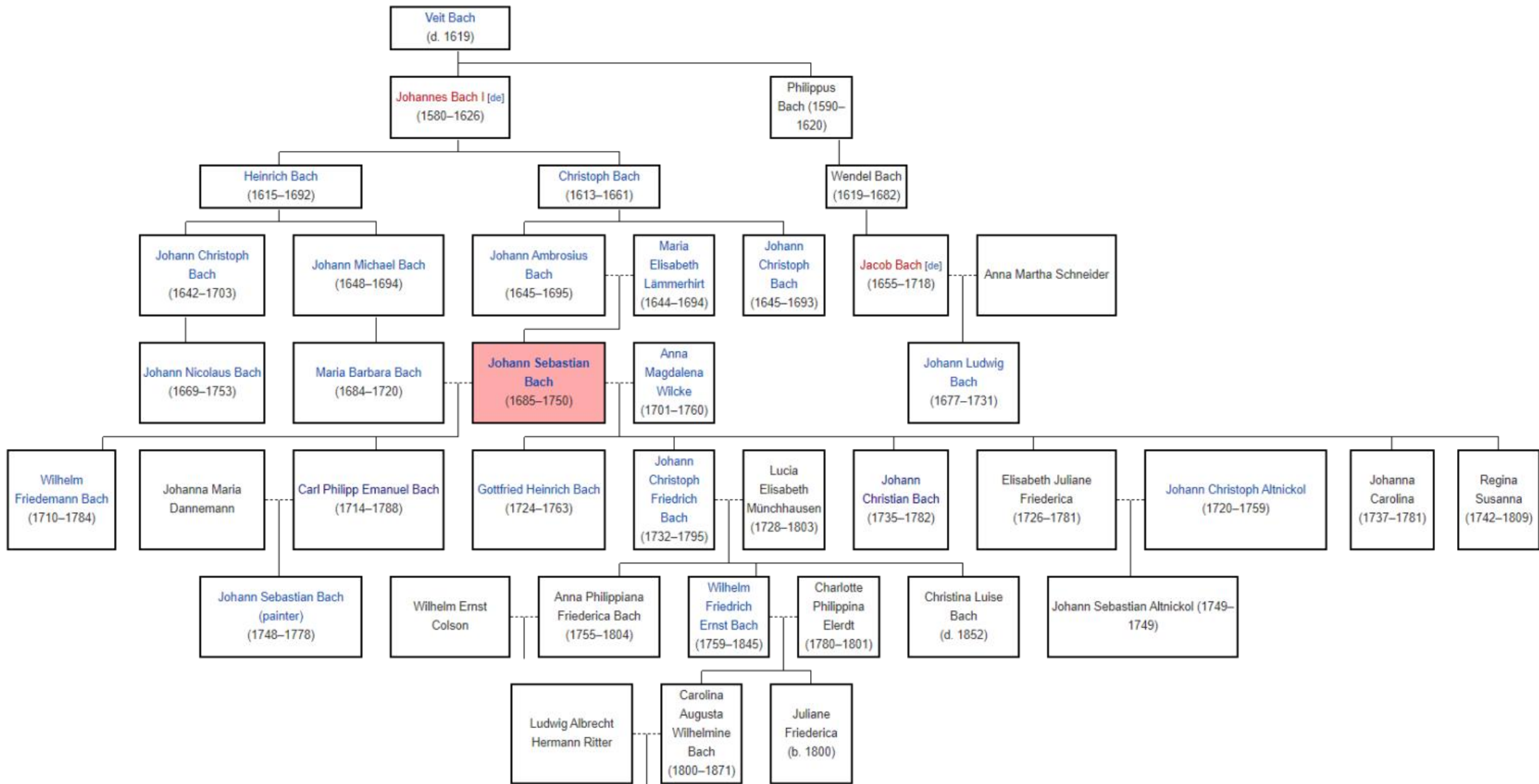
- *The ears are the only organs of the Christian.*
- *Music is God's greatest gift. It has often so stimulated and stirred me that I felt the desire to preach.*
- *Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through Music.*

- *Everybody knows that not only the prophets and kings of Israel (who praised God with vocal and instrumental music, with songs and stringed instruments), but also the early Christians, who sang especially psalms, used music already in the early stages of the Church's history. Indeed, St. Paul encouraged the use of music 1 Cor. 14, and in his Epistle to the Colossians he insists that Christians appear before God with psalms and spiritual songs which emanate from the heart, in order that through these the Word of God and Christian doctrine may be preached, taught, and put into practice.*





Bach Family Tree, c.1750-1770
 German School Private Collection



Bach's life

- Bach was born on 21st March 1685 in Eisenach and lived here until the age of ten.
- At age of 10 he lost his both parents and went to live and study with his older brother Johann Christoph Bach in Ohrdurf.
- In 1703 he began his professional career as organist in Arnstadt. He also fell in love with his first wife Maria Barbara.
- In 1707 Bach held his second post as organist in Mühlhausen. This period is called Bach's early mastery due to the significant number of written compositions.
- In 1708 Bach returned to Weimar and became Court Organist.
- In 1717 Bach became Capellmeister and Director at the Court of the Prince of Cöthen.
- In 1723 he became Music Director and Cantor in Leipzig.

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland BWV 61

(Now come, Savior of the heathens)

1. Ouverture

Violino I

Violino II

Viola I

Viola II

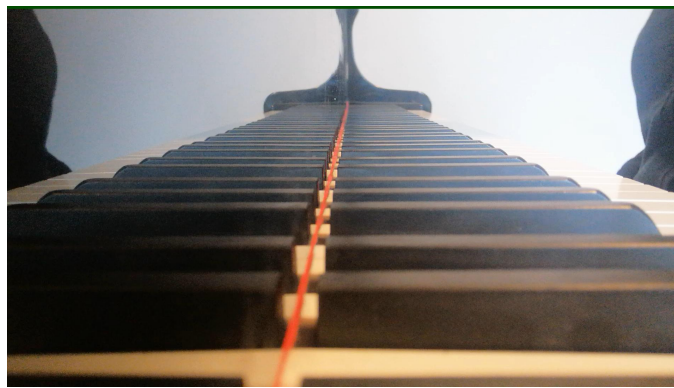
Violoncello e Fagotto

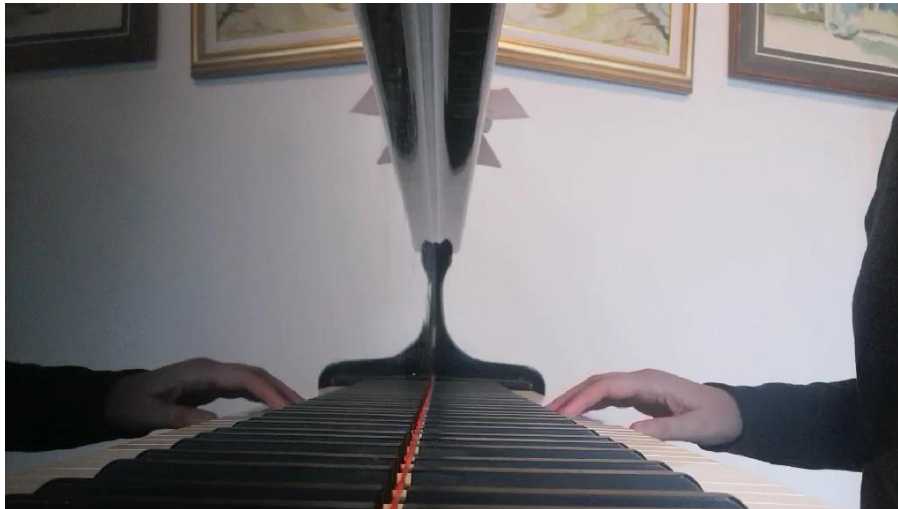
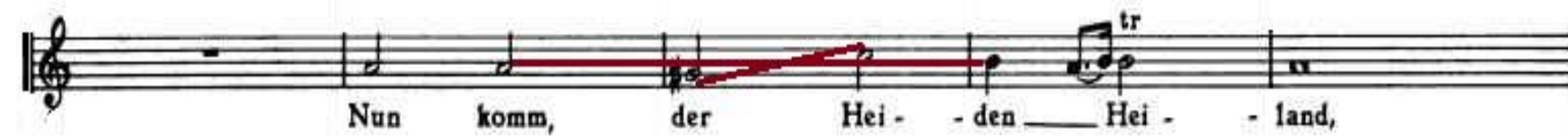
Soprano

Nun komm,

1. Savior of the nations, come;
Virgin's Son, here make Thy home!
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

2. Not by human flesh and blood;
By the Spirit of our God
Was the Word of God made flesh,
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh





The birth of Jesus is announced first in the soprano voice (highest voice – representing higher celestial realms) than in alto voice tenor and bass (lowest voice representing the material world)

a-minor harmonic scale has one sharp # in german sharp # is called Kreuz Kreuz in English means Cross

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4d7M4lb_7c

2. Recitativo The savior has come

Tenore

Der Hei-land ist ge - kom-men, hat un-ser ar-mes Fleisch und Blut an sich ge -

Continuo (Organo)

C - note C - first letter of Christ

Detailed description: This image shows a musical score for a recitativo. The top staff is for the Tenore (Tenor) in a soprano clef, and the bottom staff is for the Continuo (Organo) in a bass clef. The lyrics are 'Der Hei-land ist ge - kom-men, hat un-ser ar-mes Fleisch und Blut an sich ge -'. A red box highlights the first note of the Tenore staff, which is a C. A red line underlines the word 'kom-men' in the lyrics. A red arrow points from the text 'C - note C - first letter of Christ' to the C note in the Tenore staff.

RECITATIVO.

Tenore.

Der Hei-land ist

Organo e Continuo.

Detailed description: This image shows a similar musical score. The top staff is for the Tenore (Tenor) and the bottom staff is for the Organo e Continuo (Organ and Continuo). The lyrics are 'Der Hei-land ist'. The score is in a recitativo style.

C-Major scale is a symbol of the Kingdom of God
C- is the first letter of Christ

Where the King is, there is the Kingdom.



Sighing motif as motif of joy



5. Aria.

Soprano solo

6

Öffne dich, meingan-zes

"Step" motive expressing the conception of faith as absolute confidence in Jesus

Open yourself,
my whole heart;

Jesus comes and enters
[God's "temple," my heart]



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4d7M4lb_7c

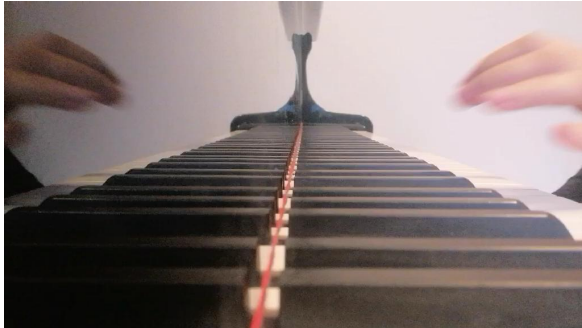
Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen BWV 65

(All they from Sheba shall come)

1. (Chor)

Musical score for 'Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen BWV 65' (All they from Sheba shall come), Part 1 (Chor). The score is written for a large ensemble, including two Horns (Corno I and II), two Flutes (Flauto dolce I and II), two Hunting Horns (Oboe da caccia I and II), two Violins (Violino I and II), Viola, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Basso continuo. The time signature is 12/8. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is arranged in a system with 13 staves. The first staff (Corno I) has a red box around the first measure. The last staff (Basso continuo) has a red box around the first measure and the text 'Christ is born C - note' written in red above it.

12/8 signature is representing a crowd of people coming to adore baby Jesus. In Eastern Christianity sometimes 12 is the number of the magi

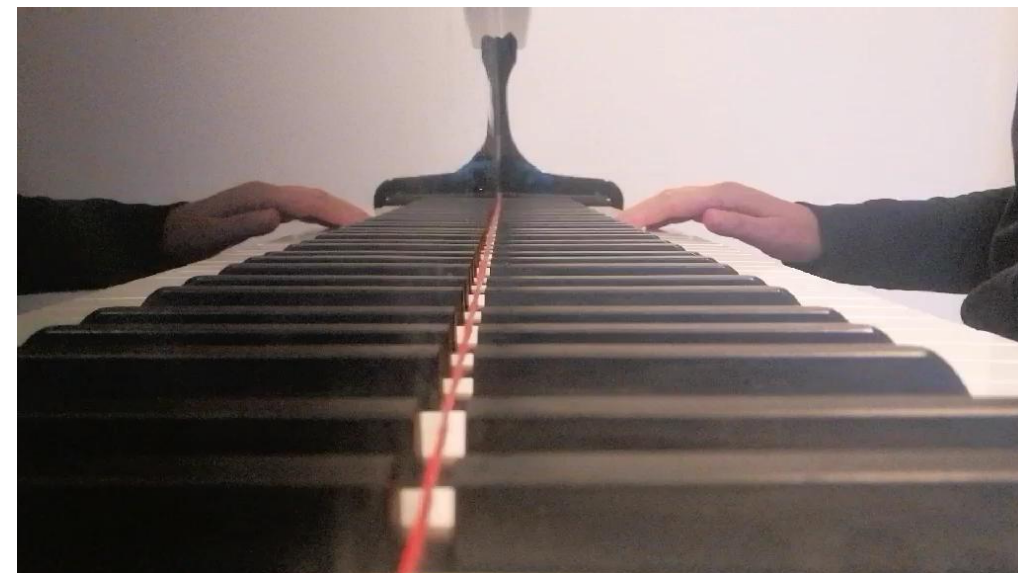


Isaiah 60:6:

*Herds of camels will cover your land,
young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense and
proclaiming the praise of the LORD.*



Two systems of a musical score for the hymn "Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen". Each system consists of three staves: a vocal line (treble clef), a piano accompaniment line (treble clef), and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are: "sie wer-den aus Sa - ba al - le kom - - - - - men, Gold und Weih - rauch brin - - - - - gen und des Her - ren Lob ver - kün - - - - - di - gen, ver -". In both systems, a red oval highlights a specific passage in the vocal line, which is a sixteenth-note scale-like run starting on the word "kom".



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhzh7EU6XS8>

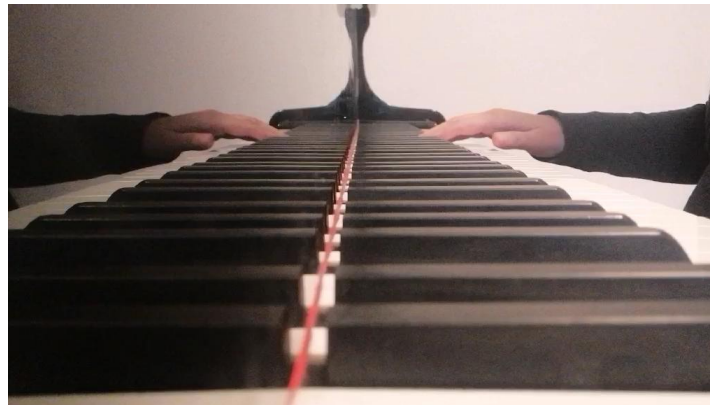
Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam BWV 7 (Christ our Lord to Jordan came)

***Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam
Nach seines Vaters Willen,
Von Sanct Johann's die Taufe nahm,
Sein Werk und Amt zu 'rfüllen.
Da wollt' er stiften uns ein Bad,
Zu waschen uns von Sünden,
Ersäufen auch den bitteren Tod
Durch sein selbst Blut und Wunden,
Es galt ein neues Leben.***

The beginning theme is in the style of a French overture because the King (Jesus) is coming

The orchestral accompaniment has motifs which represent the motion of waves of the river Jordan (**colored** slurs)

Christ our Lord came to the Jordan in accordance with his father's will, he received baptism from Saint John, to fulfil his work and ministry. By this he wanted to establish for us a bath to wash us from our sins, to drown also bitter death through his own blood and wounds. This meant a new life.

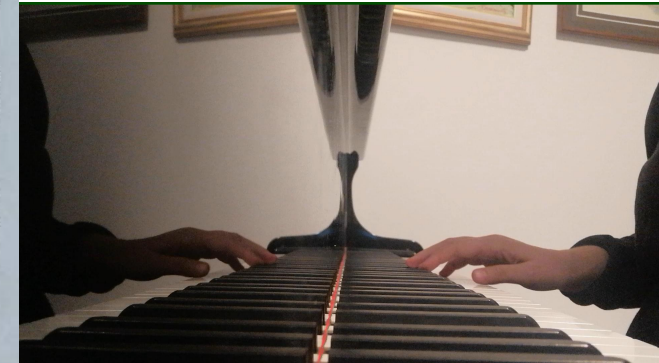


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RopDsw3weGQ&t=215s>

Siehe, ich will viel Fischer aussenden BWV 88 (Behold, I will send out many fishers)

Oboe d'amore I
Violino I
Oboe d'amore II
Violino II
Taille
Viola
Basso
Jesus
Continuo
Organo
Org.

6 Ob. d'am. I, Viol. I
Ob. d'am. II, Viol. II
Taille, Va.
Basso
Cont., Org.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=og316Fu9wDg>

Wer sich selbst erhöhet, der soll erniedriget werden BWV 47 (Whoever exalts himself, will be abased)



Wer sich selbst er-hö-



- - - - - het, der soll er - nie - dri - get



wer - den, und wer sich selbst er - nie-



- - - - - dri - get, der soll er-



hö - - - - - het wer - den

Matthew 23:12:

***Whoever exalts himself will be abased,
whoever abases himself will be exalted***

hül - fe - hat wer - den, der soll er - lö - se -
 hül - fe, er - lö - se - hül - fe, der
 soll er - nied - ri - get wer - den, und wer sich selbst er -
 nied - er - ten, und wer sich selbst er - nied - er - ten.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn, consisting of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle staff is the piano accompaniment, and the bottom staff is a bass line. The lyrics are in German and are written below the vocal line. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "ri - get, der soll er - hō - - - het wer -", "het, der soll er - nied - ri - get wer -".

ri - get, der soll er - hō - - - het wer -
het, der soll er - nied - ri - get wer -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwh0ai0LKME>

Du sollst Gott deinen Herrn lieben von ganzem Herzen BWV 77

You must love God, your Lord with your whole heart

Luke 10:27:
**You must love God, your Lord
 with your whole heart,
 with your whole soul,
 with all your strength
 and with your whole mind
 and your neighbour as yourself.**

(Matthew 22:35)

C-Major

Time signature C

- **These are the holy Ten Commandments**

(Hymn by Martin Luther) in G-Major

- The cantus firmus will appear 10 times
for each commandment

- The Chorus sings Christ's two most
important commandments.

- Augmentation of the cantus firmus
in C major

The image displays a musical score with four systems of staves. The first system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. A red oval highlights a sequence of notes in the treble staff, and a blue oval highlights a sequence of notes in the bass staff. The second system also has a treble and bass staff. A red oval highlights a note in the treble staff, and a large blue oval encompasses the entire bass staff. The third system has a treble and bass staff. A blue oval encompasses the entire bass staff. The fourth system has a treble and bass staff. A blue oval encompasses the entire bass staff. To the right of the first system, the text "G-Major" is written. To the right of the second system, the text "Augmentation in C Major" is written.

G-Major

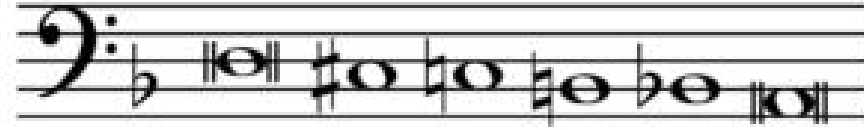
Augmentation in C Major

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5yg0BJSKdM>

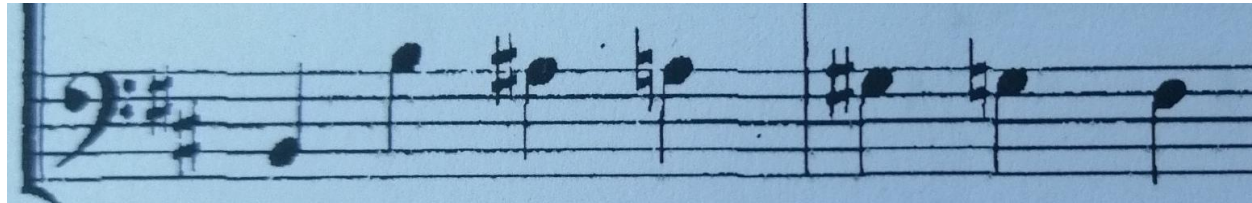
The motifs of grief

- To express grief, Bach employs two motifs:
 - 1) a chromatic progression of five or six notes, (typifying torturing grief)
 - 2) series of sighs, (usually as uniform sequence of notes in pairs)

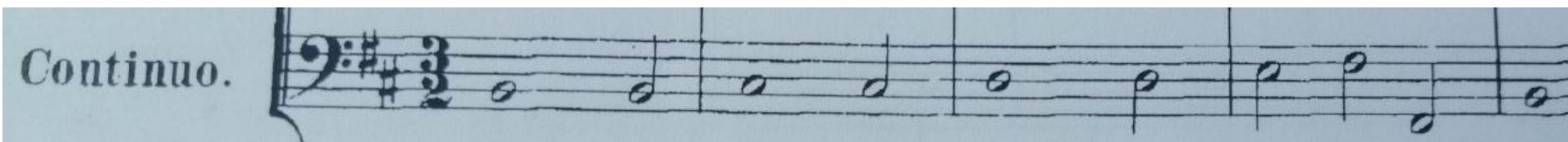
- The first motif of grief may be present as **Lament bass** in the bassline and it expresses tragedy, sorrow, suffering of Christ on the Cross etc:



- Bach uses it as lament bass at the beginning of his first cantata “**Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich**“ (For Thee, O Lord, I long):



(In the last Ciaccona of this Cantata, Bach creates an inversion of the lamento bass. From a theological point of view, both the inversion of the lamento bass and the series of modulations in this movement express in baroque musical affect how Christ leads us from sorrow to joy.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIL_3RZwrbY

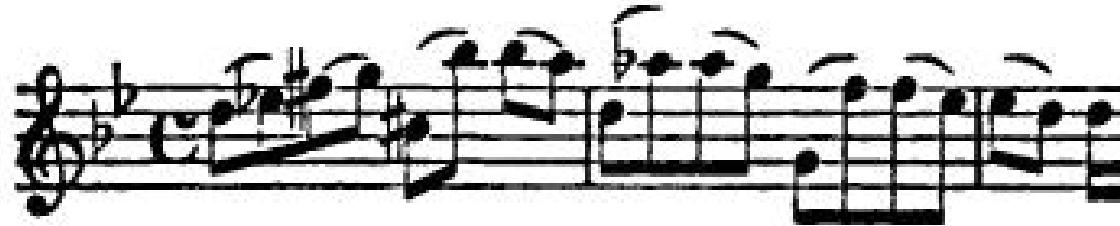
- Another example is the passacaglia ground bass in Bach's **Crucifixus** from the Mass in B minor, based on the first choral movement of his 1714 cantata **Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen**, BWV 12



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQ100hvHYpl>

- Both works are in B-minor, which is a special key. It always stands for something otherworldly, something intangible, something that inspires awe. The music writer Johann Mattheson (a contemporary of Bach) described B minor as “bizarre, unfunny, and melancholy.”

- The **sighing motive** appears in two forms:
- - one realistic, which represents actual sighs as in the Aria **Ächzen und erbärmlich Weinen** (Sighs and piteous weeping) from the Cantata **Meine Seufzer, meine Tränen**.

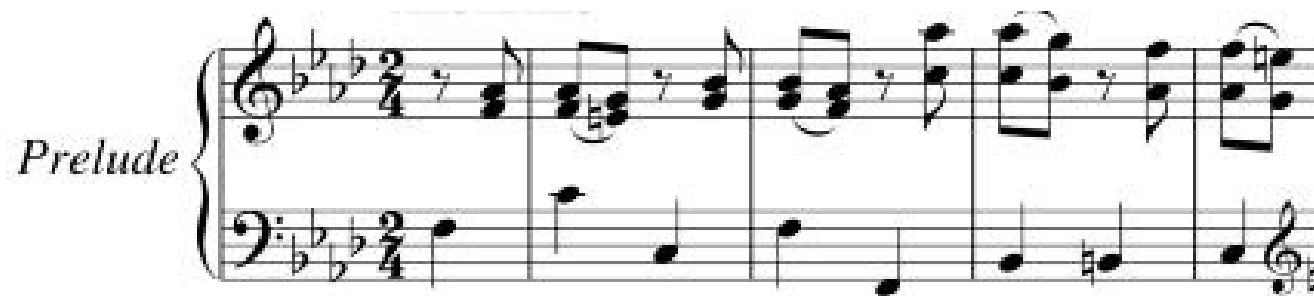


- (Gospel of John, Chapter 7) Therefore Jesus told them, “Although your time is always at hand, My time has not yet come. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me, because I testify that its works are evil. Go up to the feast on your own. I am not going up to this feast, because My time has not yet come.”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hekpAAogzEk>

- - the other form of sighing motif is more idealistic, the sighing is more spiritual and it is used more in instrumental music.



Opening of Kreuzstab Cantata

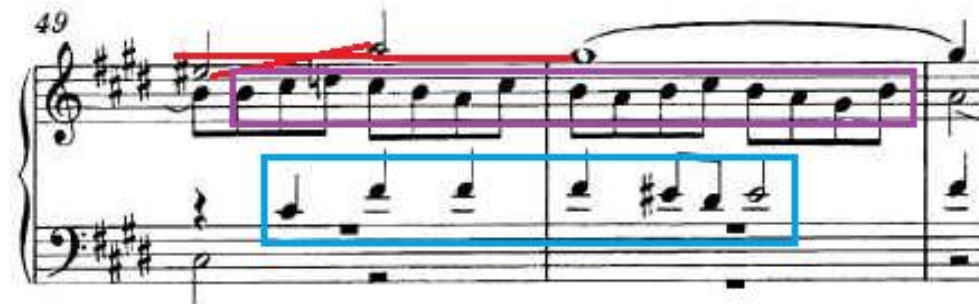
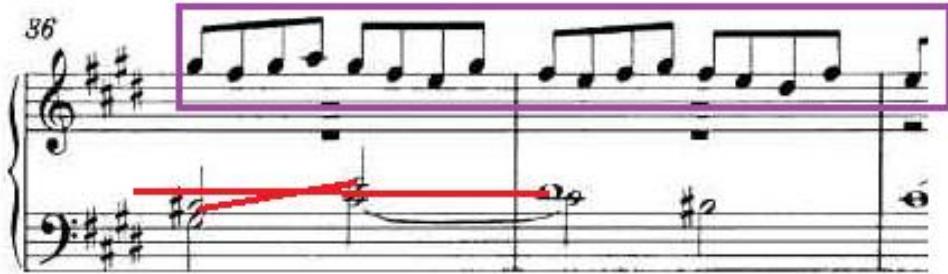


Symbol of the Cross

small Cross



Fugue C sharp - minor
(The Well Tempered Clavier I)
5 voices



Christ carrying the Cross

Martin Schongauer
ca. 1475–80

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrgrVcXm09o>

Big Cross Fugue a - minor WTC II

a 3.

Adam's Fall

63^a Evangelista

255

Tenor Evangelista
Und sa-he da, da der Vorhang im Tem - pel zer - rit in zwei Stück

Continuo Organo

3
von o - ben-un his un-ten-aus. Und die Er - de er -

St Matthew Passion

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two pieces from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the cliffs were rent, and the graves opened up, and many bodies of saints arose, who were sleeping, and came out of their graves after his resurrection and came into the Holy City and appeared to many people.



B

A

C

H

Resurrection

- "Et resurrexit" (And is risen) is expressed by a five-part choral movement with trumpets. The concerto on ascending motifs renders the resurrection, the ascension and the second coming, all separated by long instrumental interludes and followed by a postlude. "Et iterum venturus est" (and will come again) is given to the bass only, for Bach the vox Christi (voice of Christ). The movement seems as Réjouissance [de] dance, a "light festive movement in triple meter, upbeat three eighth notes".

Et re - sur - re - - - (xi t)

Alto

Et re - sur- (rexi t)

Ten

Takt 9

Et re - sur - re - - - - - - - (xi t)

131 Takte

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the 'Et resurrexit' movement. It features two vocal parts: Alto and Tenor. The Alto part is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The Tenor part is written in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics 'Et re - sur - re - - - (xi t)' are written above the Alto staff. The lyrics 'Et re - sur- (rexi t)' are written below the Alto staff. The lyrics 'Et re - sur - re - - - - - - - (xi t)' are written below the Tenor staff. The score is marked with 'Takt 9' at the beginning and '131 Takte' at the end.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxA05jxbMMU>



- The virgin birth, "Et incarnatus est" (And was incarnate), is a five-part movement. It is probably Bach's last vocal composition, dating from the end of 1749 or the first weeks of 1750.[57] Until then, the text had been included in the preceding duet. The late separate setting of the words which had been given special attention by previous composers of the mass, established the symmetry of the Credo. The humiliation of God, born as man, is illustrated by the violins in a pattern of one measure that descends and then combines the symbol of the cross and sighing motifs, alluding to the crucifixion. The voices sing a motif of descending triads. They enter in imitation starting in measure 4, one voice every measure in the sequence alto, soprano II, soprano I, tenor, bass, forming a rich texture. The text "ex Maria vergine" (out of the virgin Mary) appears in an upward movement, "et homo factus est" (and made man) is even in upward triads.[58]