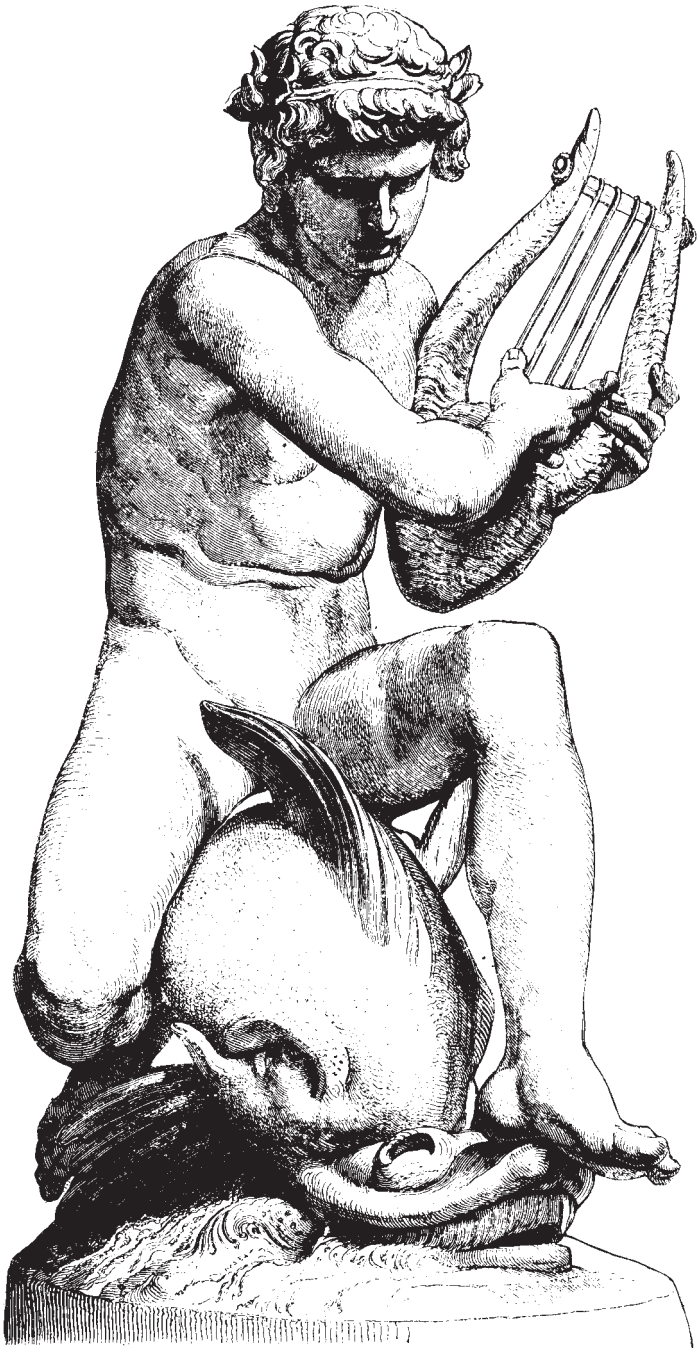
Johann Sebastian Bach



Chorale Prelude *In dulci jubilo*

BWV 729 for Organ (2 Manuals)

arranged for 5-part String Orchestra

Full Score

edited by Alan Bonds

PREFACE

About the Chorale Prelude

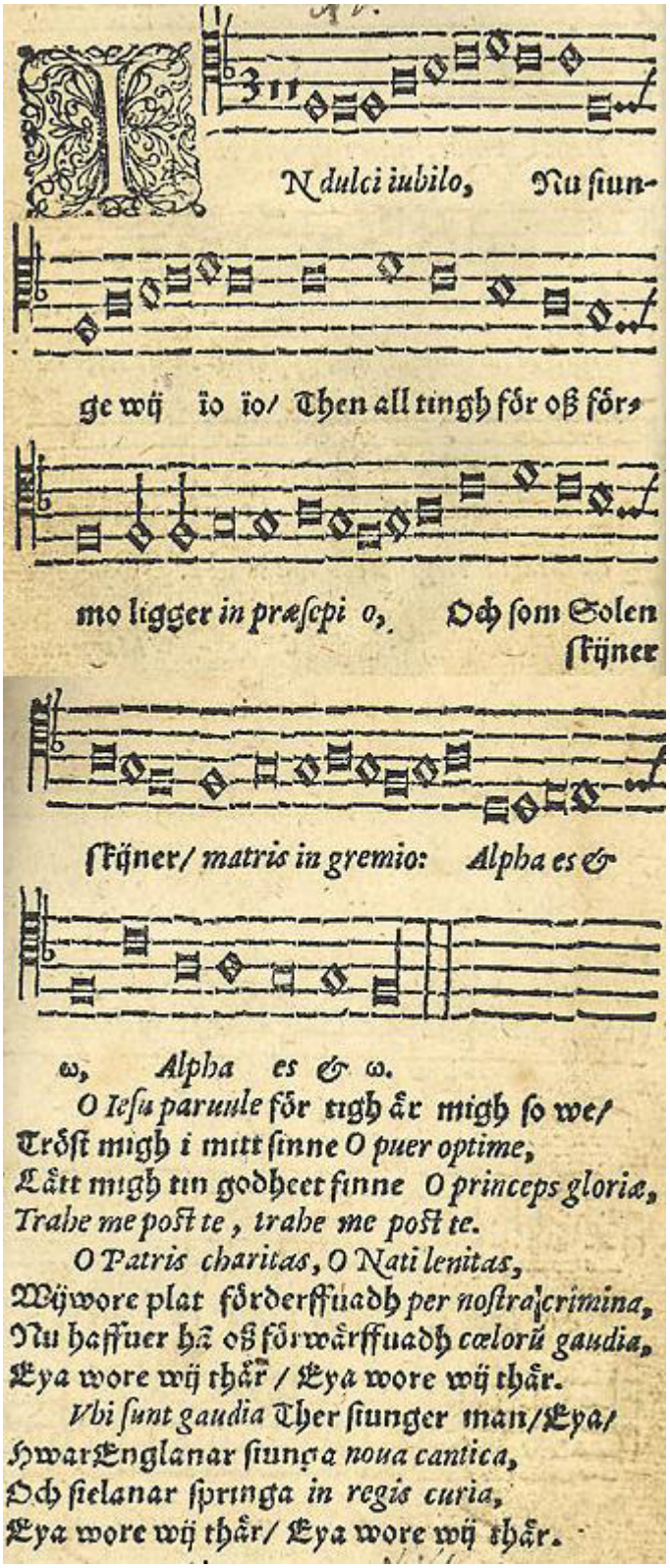
Bach wrote more than 200 examples of the chorale prelude – a type of composition based on a Lutheran chorale. They form a thread which runs throughout Bach's career. The genre had a history stretching back to Pachelbel, Buxtehude and Samuel Scheidt. One of its various possible functions was to introduce a chorale to be sung by a church congregation, or it may have been played as an interlude between verses. The Lutheran chorale itself was central to Bach's work, multiple examples being included in his 200–300 church cantatas and his Passions.
It has been suggested that *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her* BWV700 and *Gott, durch deine Güte* BWV724 may be among Bach's very earliest works.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:
In music, a chorale prelude or chorale setting is a short liturgical composition for organ using a chorale tune as its basis. It was a predominant style of the German Baroque era and reached its culmination in the works of J.S. Bach, who wrote 46 (with a 47th unfinished) examples of the form in his Orgelbüchlein, along with multiple other works of the type in other collections.

Function:
The precise liturgical function of a chorale prelude in the Baroque period is uncertain and is a subject of debate. One possibility is that they were used to introduce the hymn about to be sung by the congregation, usually in a Protestant, and originally in a Lutheran, church. This assumption may be valid for the shorter chorale preludes (Bach's setting of 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 731, for example), but many chorale preludes are very long. It could be the case that these were played during extended ceremonial in church or in cathedrals.

Style:
Chorale preludes are typically polyphonic settings, with a chorale tune, plainly audible and often ornamented, used as cantus firmus. Accompanying motifs are usually derived from contrapuntal manipulations of the chorale melody.
Notable composers of chorale preludes during the Baroque period include Dieterich Buxtehude, Johann Pachelbel and Johann Sebastian Bach. After this period, the form fell out of favour and virtually none were written by subsequent composers, such as Stamitz, J C Bach, Haydn and Mozart, until examples from the late 19th century, including works by Johannes Brahms and Max Reger.

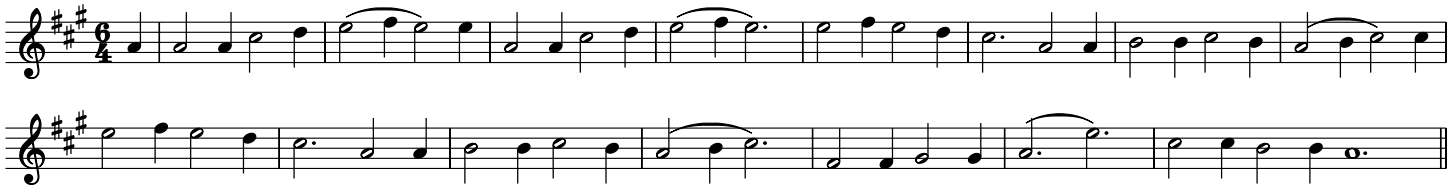
Baroque period:Among the old masters who wrote chorale preludes is Samuel Scheidt. His Tabulatura Nova, containing several such works, was published in 1624. Sweelinck is also typical of the early Baroque period. Chorale preludes also appear in the works of Dieterich Buxtehude and Georg Böhm. Over 40 chorale preludes by Buxtehude have survived to this day.
Johann Pachelbel's compositions are another example of the form, with many of his chorale preludes elaborating upon Protestant chorale melodies.
The best-known composer of chorale preludes is Johann Sebastian Bach. His earliest extant compositions, works for organ which he possibly wrote before his fifteenth birthday, include the chorale preludes BWV 700, 724, 1091, 1094, 1097, 1112, 1113 and 1119.



The melody as published in the 1582 Finnish music collection *Piae Cantiones*. In 1545 Martin Luther had added an extra verse and it is likely Bach used this version.

In dulci jubilo

(In modern notation) "a joyous song about the infant Jesus" Piae Cantiones (1582)



From Wikipedia:

"In dulci jubilo" (Latin for "In sweet rejoicing") is a traditional Christmas carol. In its original setting, the carol is a macaronic (mixture) text of German and Latin dating from the Middle Ages. Subsequent translations into English, such as J. M. Neale's arrangement "Good Christian Men, Rejoice" have increased its popularity, and Robert Pearsall's 1837 macaronic translation is a mainstay of the Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols repertoire. J. S. Bach's chorale prelude based on the tune (BWV 729) is also a traditional postlude for Christmas services.

History and translations

The original song text, a macaronic alternation of Medieval German and Latin, is thought to have been written by the German mystic Heinrich Seuse circa 1328. According to folklore, Seuse heard angels sing these words and joined them in a dance of worship. In his biography (or perhaps autobiography), it was written:

> Now this same angel came up to the Servant (Suso) brightly, and said that God had sent him down to him, to bring him heavenly joys amid his sufferings; adding that he must cast off all his sorrows from his mind and bear them company, and that he must also dance with them in heavenly fashion. Then they drew the Servant by the hand into the dance, and the youth began a joyous song about the infant Jesus ...

The tune, Zahn No. 4947, first appears in Codex 1305, a manuscript in Leipzig University Library dating from c. 1400, although it has been suggested that the melody may have existed in Europe prior to this date. In print, the tune was included in Geistliche Lieder, a 1533 Lutheran hymnal by Joseph Klug. It also appears in Michael Vehe's Gesangbuch of 1537. In 1545, another verse was added, possibly by Martin Luther. This was included in Valentin Babst's Geistliche Lieder, printed in Leipzig. The melody was also popular elsewhere in Europe, and appears in a Swedish/Latin version in the 1582 Finnish songbook Piae Cantiones, a collection of sacred and secular medieval songs."

ABOUT THIS TRANSCRIPTION

The original chorale is included for pure interest - it could be played before the Prelude - either in unison or by a solo instrument.

.Alan Bonds
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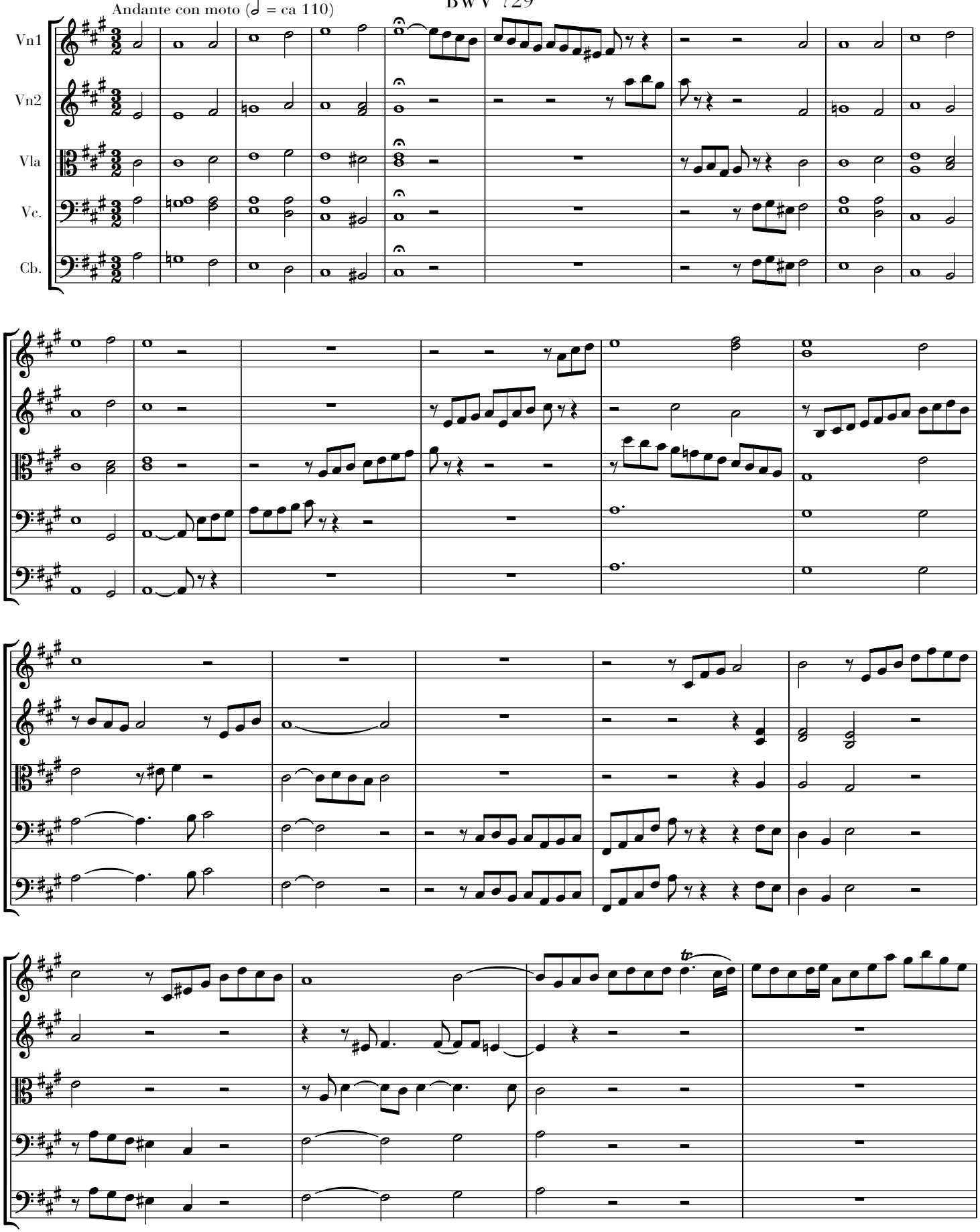
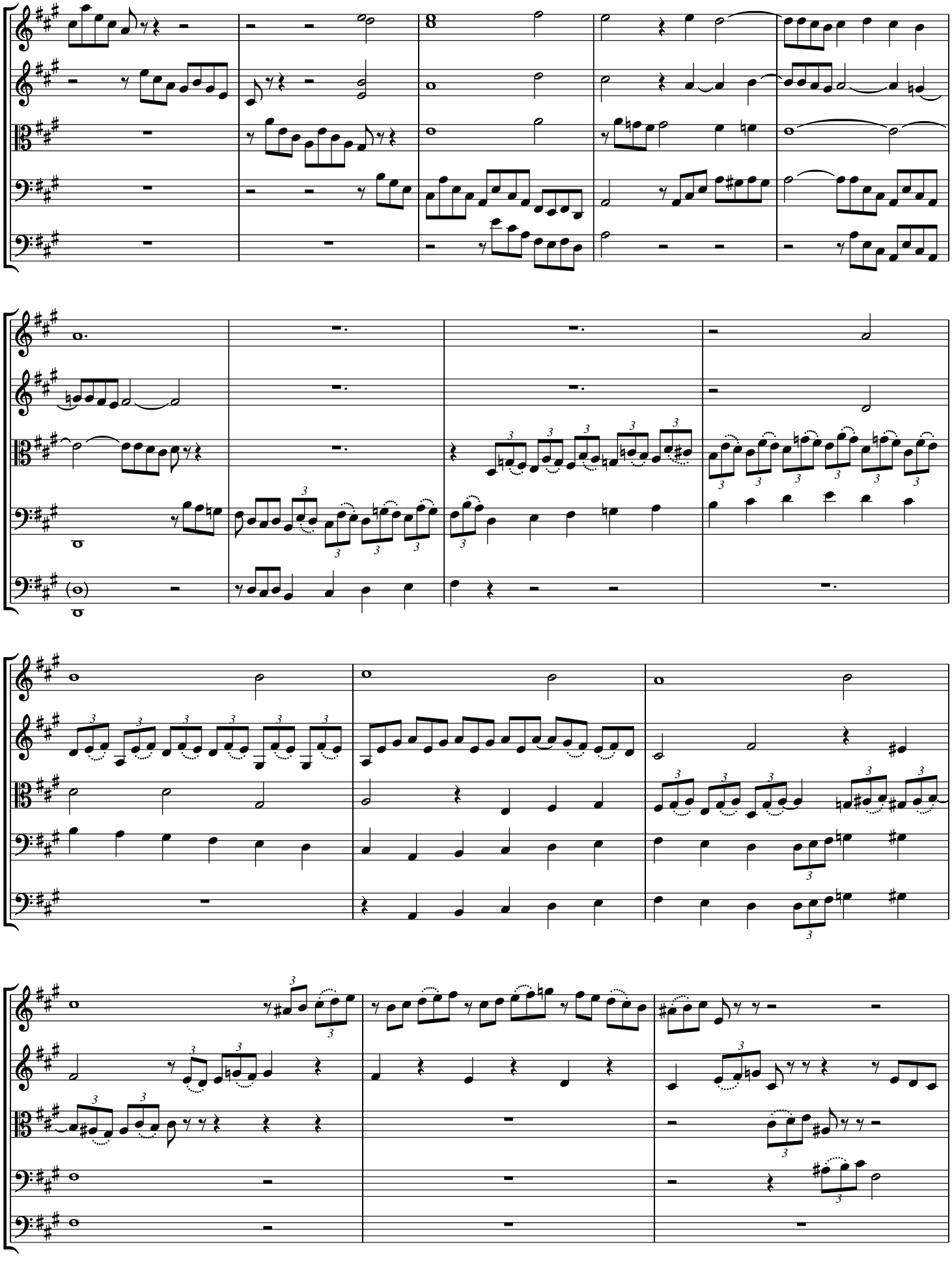
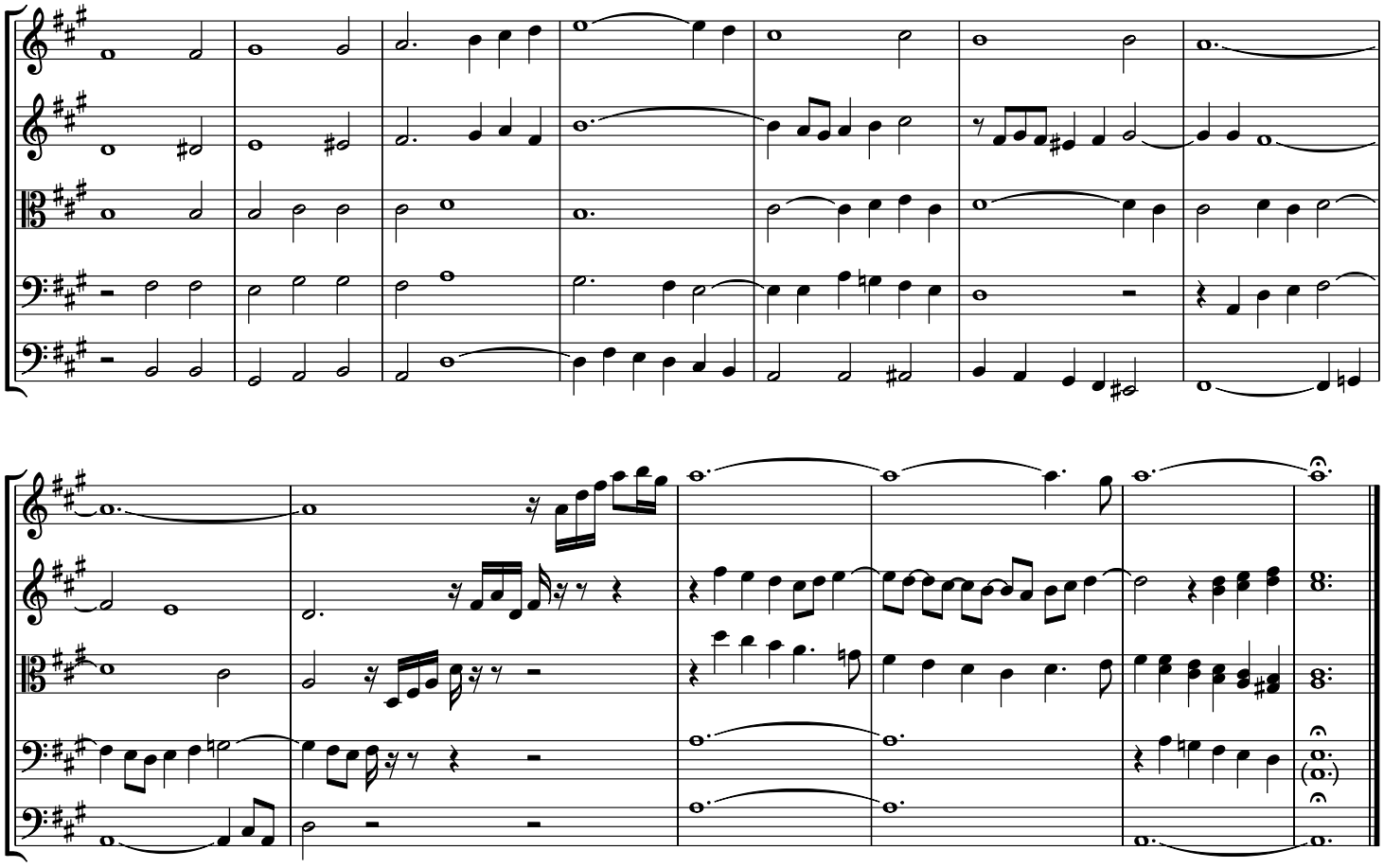
Perth, Western Australia,
May 2024

Chorale prelude on

In dulci jubilo

BWV 729

J.S. Bach