

# **Bach Choruses for Feasts and Seasons**

## ***CHRISTMAS***

### **Das neugeborne Kindelein (from BWV 122)**

**Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685 - 1750)**

**Arranged for  
SATB chorus and organ  
by Gary Harney**

#### **Text and Translation**

Das neugeborne Kindelein,  
Das herzeliebe Jesulein  
Bringt abermal ein neues Jahr  
Der auserwählten Christenschar.

The new-born little child,  
the dearly loved little Jesus  
brings once more a new year  
to the chosen band of Christians.

*Text by Cyriakus Schneegaß (1597)  
Translation by Francis Browne. Used by permission.*

**Presented by *Bach on a Budget*  
<http://www.immanuelbachconsort.org>**

## “Das neugeborne Kindelein” (*from BWV 122*)

### The Cantata

*Das neugeborne Kindelein* (The new-born little child) was written for the First Sunday after Christmas, and first performed on 31 December 1724. 1724 was a year in which the First Sunday after Christmas was also New Year's Eve, so Bach chose to follow an ancient tradition by linking the two feasts. The libretto scarcely mentions the Gospel for the day, instead interweaving Christmas texts with words which exhort us to consider our sins and repent at the beginning of the new year.

The basis of movements 1, 3, 4, and 6 is a chorale by Melchior Vulpius, with words by Cyriacus Schneegaß. Each appearance features a different treatment, perhaps most notably in the terzetto, where the chorale is played by 3 recorders, symbolizing the angels.

The orchestration for the cantata is also distinctive, including not only the 3 recorders just mentioned, but 3 oboes as well, lending a decidedly pastoral quality to the overall work. The impression of BWV 122 is one of pastoral, quiet, restrained joy, rather than of overt jubilation and celebration. Due perhaps to the brevity of the chorale tune (only 4 phrases long), the cantata is among the more compact, taking less than fifteen minutes to perform. Further, the opening chorus is (atypically) not the longest movement. That distinction is reserved for the bass aria that follows the opening chorus.

### The Chorus

Our chorus is a compact chorale fantasia, with the *cantus firmus* laid out in the soprano, and while the music is in g minor, the dancelike rhythms reflect the quiet joy of the text. Bach has supplied fairly lengthy (relative to the vocal lines) instrumental ritornellos between phrases, as well as an introduction and instrumental conclusion to the work, perhaps to compensate for the brevity of the chorale. But (unexpectedly) he does not have the lower voices enter for each phrase *in anticipation of* the soprano *cf.*, which would have been another reasonable technique to extend the movement. Instead, in each case all voices enter at essentially the *same* time, the result being a brief but joyous opening chorus.

### The Accompaniment

This chorus was originally scored for two oboes, taille, strings, and continuo. Violin I doubles oboe I, violin II doubles oboe II, and viola doubles taille throughout. In order to retain the lightness of the original, the organ part has generally been set for 3-4 voices, including pedal. The top line has been retained intact, as has the harmony. The most significant aspect of the reduction is the considerable simplification of the bass line for pedal. In spots where the original bass contained an important sixteenth-note line, it has been moved to the left hand. The original also included a limited number of dynamics (usually involving a brief *piano* passage between more full sections). After careful consideration, these have been addressed largely through a slight thinning of the texture, rather than by using a secondary manual.

A light registration of 8' and 4' flutes (perhaps with the addition of a 2' flute), with 16' and 8' in the pedal provides suitable support for the voices while conveying the light and pastoral character of the original.

Created for performance by the Immanuel Bach Consort,  
and dedicated to Dr. Gerre Hancock (1934-2012)

# Das neugeborne Kindelein

(from Cantata #122)

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685 - 1750)

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes vocal staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, followed by Manual and Pedal staves for keyboard accompaniment. The second system continues the keyboard accompaniment. The score is in G minor, 3/8 time, and consists of 9 measures. The vocal parts are currently silent, indicated by horizontal lines with bar lines. The keyboard accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing grace notes (marked with a '7').

16

Das neu - ge - - bor - - - - - ne  
Das neu - ge - bor - - - - - ne Kin - de - lein, das neu - ge -  
Das neu - ge - bor - - - - - ne Kin - de - lein, - das  
Das neu - ge - bor - - - - - ne Kin -  
Das neu - ge - bor - - - - - ne Kin - de - lein,  
Das neu - ge - bor - - - - - ne Kin - de - lein,  
Das neu - ge - bor - - - - - ne Kin - de - lein,



23

Kin - - de - - lein,  
bor - ne Kin - - - de - lein,  
neu - ge - bor - ne Kin - de - lein,  
- - - - - de - lein,  
- - - - - de - lein,  
- - - - - de - lein,  
- - - - - de - lein,

29

37

44

das her - ze - lie - be Je - su -

das her - ze - lie - be Je - su - lein, das her - ze - lie - be Je - su -

das her - ze - lie - be Je - su - lein, das her - ze -

das her - ze - lie - be Je - su - lein, das her - ze - lie - be Je - su -

51

lein, das her-ze-lie - be Je - su - lein  
- lie - be, her - ze-lie - be Je - su - lein  
lein, das her-ze-lie - be Je - su - lein



58

65

bringt a -  
bringt a - ber - mal\_ ein  
bringt a - ber -

tr

Double bar line

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 65 through 70. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'bringt a -', 'bringt a - ber - mal\_ ein', and 'bringt a - ber -'. The piano part includes a trill (tr) in the right hand. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 70.

71

ber - - mal\_ ein neu - es  
neu - es Jahr, ein neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein  
mal\_ ein neu - - es, ein neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein  
bringt a - ber - mal\_ ein neu - es\_ Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 71 through 76. It features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'ber - - mal\_ ein neu - es', 'neu - es Jahr, ein neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein', 'mal\_ ein neu - - es, ein neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein', and 'bringt a - ber - mal\_ ein neu - es\_ Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein'. The piano part includes various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

78

Jahr.

neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr

neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr

neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr

The musical score for measures 78-84 consists of five systems. The first system contains a vocal line with a long note for the word 'Jahr.' followed by a rest. The second, third, and fourth systems each contain a vocal line with the lyrics 'neu - es Jahr, bringt a - ber - mal ein neu - es Jahr' and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with eighth-note patterns and a left-hand part with a steady bass line. A double bar line is located at the end of the fourth system.



85

The musical score for measures 85-91 consists of two systems. The first system contains four empty staves (treble, alto, tenor, and bass clefs). The second system contains a piano accompaniment with a right-hand part featuring eighth-note patterns and a left-hand part with a steady bass line. A double bar line is located at the end of the second system.



93

der

der aus - er -

(tr)



100

aus - er - wähl - - - - - ten Chri -

der aus - er - wähl - - - - - ten, der au - er - wähl - ten

der aus - er - wähl - - - - - ten Chri - sten - schar, der aus - er - wähl - ten

wähl - - - - - ten Chri - sten - schar.

(tr)

107

sten - schar.

Chri - sten - schar, der aus - er - wähl - ten Chri - sten - schar.

Chri - sten - schar, der aus - er - wähl - ten Chri - sten - schar.



114



122

(tr)