

Chorale Prelude BWV 639 *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*

[I call to you, Lord Jesus Christ]

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Bach was an accomplished organist, playing the most demanding repertoire of the period by the time he was 15 years old. He soon became organist at St. Boniface's Church (now called the Bachkirche or Bach church). He was granted leave to study with the organist and composer [Dieterich Buxtehude](#) in Lübeck, a 250 mile pilgrimage Bach famously made on foot. Bach was admonished for returning four months late and then further upbraided for introducing "sundry curious embellishments in the chorales" and mingling "many strange notes" in them, thus confusing the congregation!. Albert Schweitzer, the great humanitarian and organist who quipped "There are two means of refuge from the miseries of life: music and cats" also wrote that the Dürer-like character of Bach's musical method is exemplified by the simplicity and perfection of these small chorale preludes. "Simply by the precision and the characteristic quality of each line of the contrapuntal motive he expresses all that has to be said, and so makes clear the relation of the music to the text whose title it bears."



Autograph manuscript of *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, BWV 639