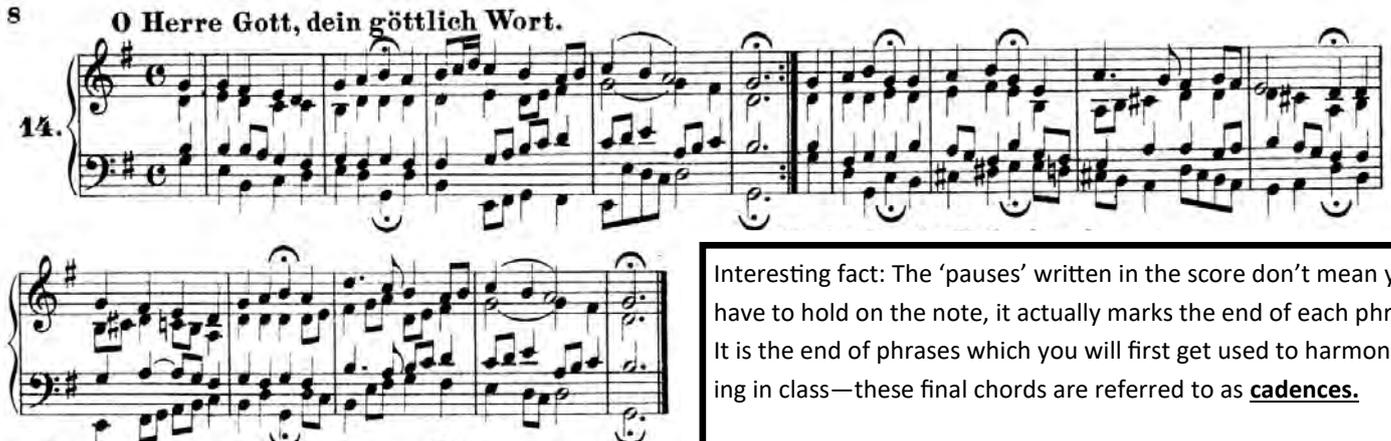


# Bach Chorale Examples

In the module *Composition to a brief: brief 1—chorales* you will be expected to write chorale in the style of J.S. Bach. This exercise helps you to understand functional harmony and notes of melodic decoration. These skills can be transferred to your analytical and composition skills so they provide a good workout for your general musicianship. No matter what your level on the piano, you should try to learn to play these chorales so you can get a feel for the sound of them. This will help improve your ability to write them in the long run!

## Major key examples

8 **O Herre Gott, dein göttlich Wort.**



14.

Interesting fact: The 'pauses' written in the score don't mean you have to hold on the note, it actually marks the end of each phrase. It is the end of phrases which you will first get used to harmonising in class—these final chords are referred to as **cadences**.

Don't worry, you won't be expected to write anything as complicated as this at the start of the course! You will slowly build the skills to achieve the level required. It takes a lot of effort but it's very satisfying hearing a good chorale that you wrote!

**Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.**



20.

24.

12 **Valet will ich dir geben.**



24.

Vater unser im Himmelreich.

47.

Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig.

48.

V. A. 40

Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ.

71.

## Writing Extended Answers (5 and 10 marks)

- Make sure every sentence you write has a point and don't repeat yourself.
- Make your point very clearly and provide robust evidence—don't be woolly!

Read the model answers below to see how you should write these and 5 and 10 mark questions.

Extract 1) In the Ballade in F major, how does Chopin treat melody, harmony and rhythm to create a sense of contrast?

6/8  
The A section of this piece is *andantino*, featuring gentle siciliano rhythms which evoke pastoral thoughts. This section is also in calm F major in *soffo voce* (in our undertone).  
In contrast, the B section (bar 46) is frenetic and tumultuous. Whereas the A section features lyrical melodies, the B section has *allegro* descending diminished 7ths. In this section there is little melody, only these rapid runs. In terms of harmony, the A section is all diatonic and functional, like a hymn, however the B section has *very* much chromaticism suspensions and unresolved dissonances (bar 47, beat 1).  
In addition, the B section is generally much louder beginning with an *ff* marking at bar 46. Chopin also uses *morendo* (dying away) at the end of the A section to make the dynamic change to *ff* more striking.

10

[10 marks]

Extract 2) Comment on how Grieg creates a both a calm and lyrical mood as well as impassioned motion through the use of harmony, melody, texture and rhythm in this extract.

The piece begins *andante* and *piano* (walking pace and quiet), which creates a calm mood. Sustain pedal is used (b.1) to create a colourful sonority and make the melody more lyrical.

In bars 1-4, the bass line descends chromatically, having a relaxing effect. This chromaticism blues the harmony, adding harmonic interest to the piece.

The texture is mainly melody-dominated homophony, allowing the <sup>lyrical</sup> melody to remain prominent. There is large use of *crescendos* and *diminuendos*, usually paired with increasing and decreasing harmonic tension (e.g. 11-14), to create an impassioned motion with a feeling sense of tension and release.

Grieg increases intensity by gradually a gradual *crescendo* from 5.21-28, climaxing with *ff* repeated notes in the right hand and rising *marcato* quavers in the left hand. At this climax, Grieg releases the quiet pedal (for code), having put it down at '*pizz. mosso*'. This gives a further fuller sonority, adding to the impassioned motion.

+ See my harmonic points of interest.

8 [10 marks]

Mark Scheme

### Extended response

**Award marks according to the following band descriptions:**

**9-10** A comprehensive and authoritative response which is consistently coherent and logically structured

**7-8** A wide-ranging and confident response which is mostly coherent and well structured

**5-6** A relevant response despite some inaccuracy/omission and weaknesses in terms of coherency and structure

**3-4** A limited response with some significant inaccuracy/omission and a lack of clarity

**1-2** A rudimentary response

**0** No work submitted or worthy of credit.

## Essay Writing Help for Section C

Some tips for writing the essay in section C:

- Structure

Introduction = Tell them what you are going to tell them

Main = Tell them

Conclusion = Tell them what you told them

- Spend 5 minutes of your available 40 minutes doing a plan. Think of which artists and which songs you will mention and note as much evidence as you can. This will make sure you don't ramble on!
- Make sure every sentence you write has a point and don't repeat yourself.
- Make your point very clearly and provide robust evidence—don't be woolly! See below.

Example question: *Comment on the use of studio techniques in songs by two set artists.*

A clear point = The use of studio techniques is very apparent in this song, evidenced through the use of filter sweeps in the build up to the chorus at 00:30 on the words 'once again'.

It's very obvious that you know where this occurs so the examiner can check it. You know the technical name of the studio effect (filter sweep), the part of the song in which it occurs (chorus), timing (00:30) and the lyric. This would be a dream response to read.

A woolly point = The use of studio techniques is very apparent because the song uses electronic sound e.g. the synthesiser and echo effects.

The synthesiser is an electronic instrument, not a studio effect. This shows the writer is confused by the term 'studio effect'.

Echo may well occur in the song but the correct technical term is 'reverb'.

Electronic sounds? It has its place but here it sounds too general. We are looking at way of altering sound rather than producing it.

Read the essay over the page to see a high grade response to the given question. How do you think it could be improved?

## Section C – Essay

The examples given from the 'Essay' section of the exam were all awarded a mark in the top band of 25–30 marks out of 30. The descriptors for this band are as follows:

- The essay shows a commanding grasp of relevant issues and an assured and comprehensive musical understanding.
- There is a convincing sense of conveying the aural experience of the music under consideration.
- The writing utilises a wide range of appropriate musical examples.
- Technical vocabulary is comprehensive, accurately used and incorporated into a mature writing style.

The original examiner's comments have been added below each essay.

### Question 25

**Discuss how two of the named artists have used musical elements to create social or political commentary in their work.**

**[30 marks]**

#### Example 12

Beyoncé's 'Listen' from the musical 'Dream Girls' has a strong message about standing up for one's self and following your own voice and heart. The song opens on a B major sus2 chord which evokes a feeling of unresolved yearning – her want for better. There is a melody and accompaniment texture of just piano and voice plus a light cymbal roll on the first beat to create a 'wash'. Beyoncé sings in her low register with a light vibrato and quietly to show her restrained emotions. The piano part is descending and thin, including a 4-3 suspension in bar 4 (B A# G# F#) which is reminiscent of gospel/church music – hence inspiring. Also, the extended C# minor 7 chord in bar 3 is an example of romantic harmony used to create richer emotions. The verse ends with a tertiary modulation to D major for the pre-chorus. This has an uplifting effect and shows her confidence grow. Along with the triplet on 'into your heart' the pulsing violin crotchets help to increase the temperature, as well as the instrumental gliss. The triplets reflect Beyoncé's newly found freedom. All this helps the chorus to sound more acclaimed when it arrives. Here, it modulates back to the tonic of B major and Beyoncé has finally moved up into her head voice and uses her strong voice with embellishments via melisma and large intervals. This broadening is further developed by crescendo and full use of drum kit. Bass on 1 & 3, and snare on 2 & 4. Also the strings are more prominent. Overall, this development is to signify how the character will no longer let herself be oppressed by society. Also, the modulation up a semitone at the Bridge further allows a sense of uplift and so inspires the listener to 'listen' to her message.

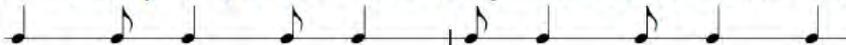
Stevie Wonder's 'Superstition' also critiques society's view of superstition. The piece is distinctly

funk and opens with  which propels us into the light rhythmic groove where bass plays the drum beats of 1 & 3 snare is on the back beats of 2 & 4. The snare's harsher tone allows the off beats to be accented achieving a funk-rhythm which shows his relaxed attitude towards conspiracy and society's beliefs. Over this, the closed hi-hat plays an intricate changeable rhythm of swung semiquavers and quavers. The swung rhythm further shows his mocking of superstition because it sounds so casual. On the 4<sup>th</sup> bar, the Moog synth and 2 clavinet come in. The first clavinet and hi-hat play an interlocking rhythm which follows the pentatonic scale. The 2<sup>nd</sup> comps an Eb (b7#9) chord, and the bass and kit provide a strong rhythmic anchor. The light interlocking groove is typical of funk. Stevie enters on the third beat serving as an anacrusis, amounting to a significantly stressed down beat. His line is syncopated due to the tied Gb over the bar line, and explores the pentatonic mode. The lines come in pairs, following an arch shape overall falling a perfect fifth. This has a declamatory mood – showing his relaxed attitude. On the third line, the saxophone and trumpet come in in octaves, playing a syncopated riff:

 (Notice the vibrato on the last 3 notes. This adds an improvisatory feel and so further adds to the relaxed character.)

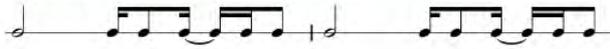
The climax of the song happens midway through the chorus when the sax and trumpet play an augmented V+ of Bb and Gb on a repeated sextuplet. This is significant because it is the shortest note value so far, and dissonance is created between the brass instruments – not the octaves we have had so far. Altogether, this alerts the listener to the next line 'Superstition...' as the brass immediately tacet causing this line to stand out monophonically. The line however is a falling figure and so helps to immediately regain the relaxed original character. Overall this allows Stevie to show his view of how silly society is when it comes to beliefs.

'You are the Sunshine of My Life' is soul and shows a positive outlook on relationships in society. The piece is much more still and focused on melody and harmony rather than rhythm – like in funk. It opens with  $\text{I}^{\flat} - \text{I}^{\flat} - \text{V}^{\sharp 5} - \text{V}^{\sharp 5}$ . The use of 7<sup>th</sup> chords has a happy content feel – reflecting how happy the 'lover' is. The Fender Rhodes comps as the hi-hat plays the back beat. At the end of each 2 bar phrase, a bossa-nova-like rhythm is introduced on the Rhodes in parallel thirds:

 This is rhythmically

interesting and adds a Latin tinge. Furthermore, the congas provide semiquaver fills. To reflect the song's lyrics, Stevie chose the first 2 lines of Verse 1 to be sung by the male backing singer and the line 3 & 4 to be sung by the female backing singer – to show union. The lines come in pairs, like question and answer phrases. The song builds by the addition of semiquavers and backing vocals on line 3 – 'oohs' which helps to create the warm rich tone – reflecting the happiness of love. Stevie enters on verse 1 (after the chorus) and changes the tone to a more articulated one. This is due to the addition of 'stabbed' 'ba ba's, plosives which thus help to achieve greater articulation. The cymbal provides constant quavers which adds a shimmer to the warm texture. The piece modulates up a semitone to add to the sense of uplift and so highlight what love can do. Overall, the addition of more prominent backing singers on 'love has joined us' and 'ooh's help to 'open' the sound, along with the crescendo.

'Crazy in Love' by Beyoncé and Jay-Z is very different to 'Listen' as it is all about Beyoncé's new found love for the rapper Jay-Z. It shows her dependency on him – as she is going 'crazy' which is shown through the repetition of lyrics and motifs. The song starts with drum machine and a sample from the Chi-Lites 'Are You My Woman?' which is very catchy as it has a diatonic phrase which is repeated, but the second time rises:



The sustained D minim helps to show her insistent and constant desire for him. Beyoncé enters with an ostinato of 'uh-oh'. This covers a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> and the repetition further shows how this love is making her go mad. The structure is simple verse/chorus, but also has the addition of Jay-Z rapping over the intro and middle verse and chorus. Similar to the Stevie Wonder duet at the beginning – this is to reflect the love they feel for each other. The tonality is major, flicking between Bb major and G minor. However the use of E natural instead of Eb creates an augmented 4<sup>th</sup>. This raised fourth makes it in the Lydian mode – creating a bright, major, happy sound. The rapping by Jay-Z makes use of short rapid note values – this shows us how he too is infatuated by love as there is so much to say. It is repetitive which further makes it catchy and shows that relationships within society can make them completely dependent on each other. Cowbell use may be to reference the sample, but also adds to the rhythmic excitement of the piece and create an energised ecstatic character.

Mark: 28/30

In spite of wandering away from the question in the latter stages, this essay is very impressive in the degree of musical detail included. There is a real sense of involvement, plus the ability to represent the aural experience of the music.

Mark Scheme

| Marking guidance  | Total marks      |
|---|------------------|
| <p><b>25–30 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the essay shows a commanding grasp of relevant issues and an assured and comprehensive musical understanding</li> <li>• there is a convincing sense of conveying the aural experience of the music under consideration</li> <li>• the writing utilises a wide range of appropriate musical examples</li> <li>• technical vocabulary is comprehensive, accurately used, and incorporated into a mature writing style.</li> </ul> <p><b>19–24 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the essay has a confident involvement with relevant issues and a clear and largely complete musical understanding</li> <li>• there is a good sense of conveying the aural experience of the music under consideration</li> <li>• the writing utilises a varied selection of appropriate musical examples</li> <li>• technical vocabulary is frequently and well used, within a consistent writing style.</li> </ul> <p><b>13–18 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the essay shows some involvement with relevant issues and a partial musical understanding</li> <li>• some awareness of the aural experience for the music under consideration is conveyed</li> <li>• there are some appropriate musical examples, though the selection is somewhat restricted</li> <li>• technical vocabulary is used quite frequently, though not always successfully, within a somewhat uneven writing style.</li> </ul> <p><b>7–12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the essay shows some acknowledgement of relevant issues, though musical understanding tends to be superficial</li> <li>• there is occasional awareness of the aural experience for some of the music under consideration</li> <li>• appropriate musical examples are sparse</li> <li>• technical vocabulary is used at times, though sometimes inaccurately, within a limited writing style.</li> </ul> <p><b>1–6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is no clear awareness of relevant issues, and musical understanding is rudimentary</li> <li>• there is no convincing sense that the aural experience of the music under consideration is familiar</li> <li>• no effective musical examples are given</li> <li>• technical vocabulary is not used appropriately, within an overall rudimentary writing style.</li> </ul> <p><b>0</b> No work submitted or worthy of credit.</p> | <p><b>30</b></p> |