

1504. Ave Maria

Backgrounds Of S. Radic

The Ave Maria by "Bach/Gounod" is one of the most famous pieces of classical music. It was composed in 1852 by the French composer Charles Gounod as *Méditation sur le premier prélude de Bach* and in 1859 it was accompanied by the text of the Latin prayer Ave Maria. It arose from an improvisation exercise during his studies.

The work is based on Prelude No. 1 in C major from J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* (BWV 846), a harmonic study in broken chords. Gounod took over the movement largely unchanged - in contrast to his late successor James Last, who added a strange - but great - orchestral accompaniment to the whole thing.

He prefaced the first four bars, a C major cadence, as a prelude, only to then repeat it with the entry of his melody. In the process he inserted (after the original bar 22) a newly created bar that mediates between two diminished seventh chords and gives the voice space for another expressive "Maria!". He also added a tempo indication (*Moderato*), pedal indications for the piano and dynamic markings. Over the accompaniment thus gained, he set his own melody with the prayer text.

This puts Gounod in the long line of composers who approached Bach by using his works as a basis for their own compositions (other examples are the *Ten Preludes* after the *Well-Tempered Clavier* Opus 137a for cello and piano by Ignaz Moscheles or the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* by Ferruccio Busoni). The hybrid composition thus represents a combination of the harmonic development and movement pattern of Bach's Prelude, which is degraded to a pure accompaniment, and Gounod's melody, with its wide tonal range and wide-ranging dynamics, which stylistically pushes the result strongly into the romantic idiom. "Bach/Gounod" is usually given as the composer here – also in order to distinguish the composition from Gounod's own Ave Maria setting.

The work is still very popular today, especially among people who otherwise have little access to classical music. So are next to the Original-



version for piano and voice, there have been numerous arrangements for practically every conceivable combination of instruments. In particular, many pop musicians have included the piece in their repertoire.

Ave Maria (Hail, Mary) is the Latin beginning and at the same time the designation of a basic prayer to invoke Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Ave is a Semitic loan word that has penetrated into Latin and probably originally comes from Carthage (Phoenician-Punic *hawe* means live).

The Orthodox Church also knows a prayer that essentially corresponds to the Ave Maria.

The invocation consists of two parts:

1. The first part consists of the biblical address to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation of the Lord (1.28 EU) (English greeting) and by Elizabeth when Mary visits (Lk 1.42). This part has been prayed in the Liturgy of the Hours and in devotions since the 11th century.

2. The second part is a request added in the 13th century, which has the content of assistance at the hour of death.

After the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria is one of the most commonly spoken prayers in Christianity and is also part of the Angelus and the Rosary.

Special-4Beat, T=100

Main 1

Main 2

The musical score is presented in a multi-staff format. The top two staves are for the Chor and Strings, both in treble clef. The E-Piano staff is in treble clef and shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with piano (P) and accent (*) markings. The Guitar staff is in bass clef and shows two chord impulses per bar. The Bass staff is in bass clef and shows a simple bass line. The Drums staff is in 4/4 time and shows a Ride-Cymbal pattern with a crotchet accompaniment and a Bass Drum (BD) pattern.

Programming instruction

This programming consists of two parts: Main 1 is just the piano accompaniment with a broken root chord, similar to the first two bars of the original. In addition, only a ride cymbal with the crotchet accompaniment is played in the drum area - nothing more! A complete style accompaniment then sounds in Main 2, but without a snare aftermath. A tambourine could possibly be entered here in the adv. area as a quarter turn. The basic bass and the bass drum complement each other. The guitar does not play a continuous accompaniment rhythm, but only emits two chord impulses per bar. The basic broken piano chord provides the only accompaniment identifiable as a "Bach Prelude" and should be heard relatively loudly, along with the two chord pads with the strings and choir as a quiet background.