

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

Words: Johann Rist 1641; translated from German to English by John Troutbeck, circa 1885; Music: "Ermuntre Dich," by Johann Schop, 1641; harmonies by Johann Sebastian Bach, 1734

C A^m G⁶ C D^{sus4} D G
 Break forth O beauteous heavenly light,
E⁷ D^{m7} C G⁶ C
 And ush-sher in the morning;
C A^m G⁶ C D^{sus4} D⁷ G
 O shepherds, shrink not with af-fright,
E⁷ D^{m7} C G⁶ C
 But hear the angels warning.

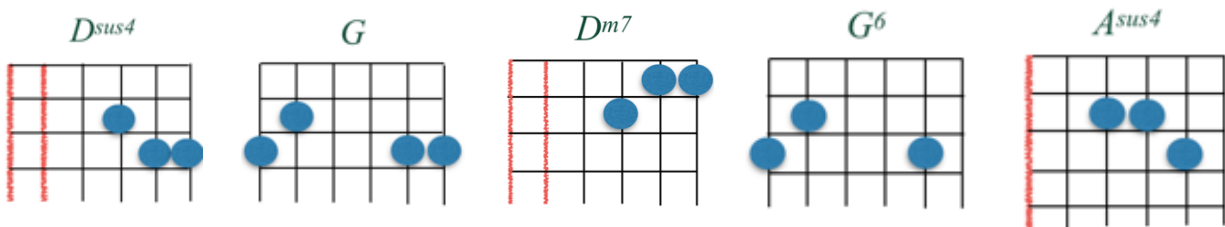
G⁶ D^m A A⁷ D^m
 This Child now weak in in-fan-cy,
A^{m7} A⁷ D^m A^{sus4} E A
 Our confidence and joy shall be,
G⁷ C F C D⁷ G
 The power of Satan breaking,
G F C D^{m7} C D^m G⁷ C
 Our peace e-tern-al ma---king.

C A^m G⁶ C D^{sus4} D G
 Break forth O beauteous heavenly light,
E⁷ D^{m7} C G⁶ C
 To her-ald our salvation;
C A^m G⁶ C D^{sus4} D⁷ G
 He stoops to earth the God of might,
E⁷ D^{m7} C G⁶ C
 Our hope and expectation.

G⁶ D^m A A⁷ D^m
 He comes in human flesh to dwell,
A^{m7} A⁷ D^m A^{sus4} E A
 Our God with us, Imman-u-el,
G⁷ C F C D⁷ G
 The night of darkness en-ding,
G F C D^{m7} C D^m G⁷ C
 Our fal-len race be-frien-ding.

C A^m G⁶ C D^{sus4} D G
 All blessing, thanks and praise to thee,
E⁷ D^{m7} C G⁶ C
 Lord Je--sus Christ, be given;
C A^m G⁶ C D^{sus4} D⁷ G
 Thou hast our brother deigned to be,
E⁷ D^{m7} C G⁶ C
 Our foes in sunder riven.

G⁶ D^m A A⁷ D^m
 O grant us through our day of grace,
A^m A⁷ D^m A^{sus4} E A
 With constant praise to seek Thy face;
G⁷ C F C D⁷ G
 Grant us ere long in glo-ry,
G F C D^{m7} C D^m G⁷ C
 With praises to a-do-re thee.



Play not upon the reddened strings.

Christmas as you go

Scripture and History

Stanza one allows us to internalize the meaning of Christ's birth. The paradox of a "weak child in infancy" who becomes "our confidence and joy" is central to this stanza. In classic Lutheran theology, this child breaks the power of Satan and gives us "peace eternal."

In stanza two the child, our brother, comes not to "destroy" but to "bid[s] us love each other." Once again the poet emphasizes the paradox of the incarnation as he "quit[s] his kingly state" for the "humiliation" of coming to a "world of greed and hate."

Stanza three is a prayer inviting this "dearest child into our hearts." The child will bring a "time of grace" to us. The final line is a petition to "come, conquer and deliver this world, and us, forever."

"Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light" by C. Michael Hawn; umcdiscipleship.org

Most prominent poets and musicians over the centuries have avoided diverting their talents to the direct composition of Christmas Carols. As a whole, carols are anonymous, or the most famous activity of an otherwise obscure person, or the incidental by-product of a famous person. In other words, carols are overall the domain of the obscure. There are some notable exceptions, for example, Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Adolphe Adam, Benjamin Britten, and Irving Berlin.

The incomparable master Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) is not one of the exceptions. Despite a prolific artistic output, Bach never directly composed a Christmas song. Yet his affiliation with the carol genre is more than casual or occasional. Among Bach's carol connections are: Isaac Watts' 1715 poem "Hush, My Dear, Lie Still and Slumber," which was attached to one of his tunes; Philipp Nicolai's famous 1599 carols "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" ("How Brightly Beams the Morning Star") and "Wachet auf! Ruft uns die Stimme" (Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying") which were incorporated into two of his cantatas; and several well-known carols which were integrated into his famous 1734 Christmas Oratorio. Luther's carol, "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her" ("From Heaven Above to Earth I Come") is the best known of these. "Brich an, du schönes Morgenlicht," whose dominant translation of

"Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light," by Englishman John Troutbeck (1833-1889), is perhaps the second most famous.

Johann Rist (1607-1667), the author of the lyrics for "Brich an," was a physician and pastor in Wedel, Germany, near Hamburg. Although he wrote about 680 hymns and was honored as poet laureate in 1645

by Emperor Ferdinand III, his carol is essentially his only historical legacy. The same almost applies to

Johann Schop (ca. 1590-ca. 1664), whose melody appeared with the text when it was published in

Rist's 1641 *Himmlische Leider*. Schop, a close

friend of Rist, was music editor for the 1641 collection as well as an accomplished performer on several varied instruments.

by William E. Studwell, The Christmas Carol Reader (Haworth Popular Culture) (p. 98). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.



Johann Rist
Bach
from
Wikipedia



Johann Schop
from

Musicalion.com



Johann Sebastian Bach
from www.deezer.com

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