

These instructions are about sharing a vocal part in a certain voice, to easily and also better learn one's part, with the help of the scores I put online (<https://www.bach-chorales.info>).

What are the advantages of this method?

- Each singer gets his or her own part with its own notes and recording. He or she can practice that over and over again, without being distracted by other parts. That way he or she can easily learn it. It can really make a huge difference.
- The other advantage is that it also goes much faster this way.
- It also goes better and deeper into the memory of the singer.
- So the part will be rock solid in his or her head and when the other voices join, he or she will be very steady with his/her part and not be distracted. This promotes unity and tight connection among the whole choir.
- It improves the quality of the singing of the choir with very tight and secure singing, and better, on pitch performance, because the hesitation is completely gone. What conductor/director would not like that?

I really can't think of any downsides. One may think that a singer may get used to the tempo and way of singing of the recording and that he or she can't do anything else anymore, but that is not the case. He or she will just know the notes and realize very well that, with a real choir, the dynamic is different and then adjust to that, looking close at the conductor then. It just works very well (I experienced that myself when I was a guest singer once for a performance with the Roder boys choir, for a jubilee concert, and had to study a whole year of choir-scores and it was done in a similar way, I received (bass) recordings and scores of the separate parts; that way I was able to learn it very well and very rapidly; no MuseScore back then yet).

Steps:

Create contact groups

First, make sure that in your email program, or WhatsApp group, you have created separate groups for the Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and Basses. That way you can easily send them what they need. Basically, we have to do that in the score as well.

Download and install the software (if you haven't already) and download a score.

Download MuseScore, the software, if you haven't installed it already. It is freely available for Windows, macOS, and Linux. It is Open Source software (it will always stay free; look it up). It can be downloaded from here: <https://musescore.org/en/download>

Next, download a score from <https://bach-chorales.info/>, for example no. 195: *Jesu, meine Freude*; <https://bach-chorales.info/BachChorales/B195.html> (I finished the example for this tutorial, so maybe try another score if you indeed want to try it yourself). When you press the orange button 'score', the top of the orange button, at the bottom left of the play page (those are the MuseScore, .mscz, format downloads), a download pop-up will open. Save it, and it will be put in your Downloads folder on your computer (if you already have notation software and want to use that, you should download the XML format and open that in, for example for Sibelius; but I won't cover that here any further).

Open the software and open the score

After installing it, open MuseScore and, after making some initial settings, open the score you just downloaded from your Downloads folder. If you downloaded the example above, it will be called: **B195_B195.mscz**.

Now, the score is in hymn notation (that is because it is not all that complicated to reformat it for separate staves and this way it can also easily be played by the organ), which means that it is a closed score, with two staves, one for the women and one for the men (the scores are intended as SATB, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass scores).

Give each singer his or her own staff and part

What we want to create is one tab with the full score and four tabs for each voice separately.

First we add two staves and copy and paste all the notes over from the chorale staves to those two newly created staves.

Press 'i' (instruments) on your keyboard, and that will open a pop-up window. You can see that there also is a Contrabass part, which is hidden (the checkbox is empty). This was done to accentuate the bass and give it a sort of Continuo accompaniment; (it just sounds better and sometimes the bass-line has to be more clear, because of crossing voices appearing between Tenor and Bass).

Now go to **vocals**, in the left pane and add two voices, a 'Soprano'- and a 'Tenor' staff and then click 'Ok'. After having added the tenor, you should change its clef to a bass clef. In the Palette, at the left, go to 'clefs' and drag and drop the bass clef on the first tenor measure (to match the full score). Also the tenor will ultimately have to deal with that later in the hymn/chorale score and so should not get used to the tenor clef for this. It should look like this:

The image shows a musical score for the chorale '195. Jesu, meine Freude' by J.S. Bach. The score is in G minor, 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 63$. The piano part is written on two staves (treble and bass clef). The lyrics are: 'Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de, ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,'. Below the piano part, there are two empty vocal staves: 'Soprano' (treble clef) and 'Tenor' (bass clef). The score is attributed to Joh. Franck, 1653, and Joh. Crüger, Praxis piet. 1653.

Now we're going to copy/paste all the notes to the two newly created (empty) staves. Click with your mouse in the first measure of the top staff that has the lyrics. Now do **Ctrl+Shift+End** (select to the end) (**fn+Shift+Cmd+ →** on a Mac). Hold down the Shift key and use the arrow down key to

include also the male voices in the selection. Then do **Ctrl+C** (copy, **Cmd+C** on a Mac). Press the 'Home' key on your keyboard to return to the beginning of the score.

Click on the first measure of the newly created 'Soprano' staff and then do **Ctrl+V**. Now all the notes will be pasted at once and it should look like this:

195. Jesu, meine Freude
(B.A. 39, No. 105, BWV 358) J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Joh. Franck. 1653 Joh. Crüger. Praxis piet. 1653

Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Soprano
Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Tenor

Now we are going to 'explode' those newly created two staves (temporarily called Soprano and Tenor) with its notes and turn it into four separate staves, for all voices, with their own notes.

To do that, we have yet to add 2 staves, an Alto staff, below the soprano staff and a Bass staff below the Tenor staff. Press 'i' (instruments) on your keyboard again and add those voices (Alto/Bass).

Use the arrow key (I marked it with a red circle below) in the middle to move the Alto staff up:

Staves	Visible	Clef	Linked	Staff type
▼ Soprano/Alto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Staff 1		Treble clef		Standard
▼ Tenor/Bass	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Staff 1		Bass clef		Standard
▼ Contrabass	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Staff 1		Bass clef		Standard
▼ Soprano	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Staff 1		Treble clef		Standard
▼ Tenor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Staff 1		Treble clef 8va bassa		Standard
▼ Alto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Staff 1		Treble clef		Standard

After you again added 2 staves, it should look like this:

195. Jesu, meine Freude
(B.A. 39, No. 105, BWV 358)

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Joh. Crüger. Praxis piet. 1653

Joh. Franck. 1653

Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Now we are going to use the 'Explode' tool in MuseScore. Click on the first Soprano note of the Soprano staff and then do **Ctrl+Shift+End** (select to the end). Now go to 'Tools' in the menu bar at the top, in MuseScore and then press 'Explode'. Then press the 'Home' button on your keyboard. What happens now is that the Alto notes are moved to the Alto staff. Repeat that for the male voices. Click on the first tenor note in the tenor staff right above the yet empty Bass staff. then do **Ctrl+Shift+End** again. Once more go to 'Tools' in the menu bar at the top, in MuseScore and then press 'Explode'. Now the bass notes should be visible in the lowest staff. It should look like this:

195. Jesu, meine Freude

(B.A. 39, No. 105, BWV 358)

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Joh. Franck. 1653

Joh. Crüger. Praxis piet. 1653

The image shows a musical score for the chorale 'Jesu, meine Freude' by J.S. Bach. It includes a piano accompaniment and four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The score is in G major and common time (C). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 63. The lyrics are: 'Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de, ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge.' The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The vocal parts are arranged in a four-part setting, with the Soprano and Alto parts having the most complex melodic lines.

Now all the notes are in place, we have to give the other voices the lyrics as well; otherwise it is hard to practice. One should take into account however, that other voices may sing the words differently. So, they may have to be adjusted.

For example, if a soprano sings a whole note where an alto sings 2 quarter notes, the lyrics cannot one on one be copied. So, what I always do is; look at the syllables that are sung equally the same by both and copy those and adjust for the rest, and so on.

So, that would mean, for example that I first would copy *Je-su, mei-ne-Freu* from the Soprano to the Alto, because they are sung the same by both. That is done by clicking on the first note, hitting **Ctrl+L** and then start typing. Press the space bar to go to the next syllable/note.

With the copy/pasting method, just copy the lyrics until where they are sung the same by both Soprano and Alto and past that to the Alto part (clicking the first note and then **Ctrl+V**). Depending on the difference, it may be faster to just type the lyrics in again. That is done by clicking on the first note, hitting **Ctrl+L** and then start typing. Press the space bar to go to the next syllable/note.

I entered in the lyrics for the Tenor and the Bass 'by hand', because they sing it too differently from the Soprano. When done correctly, the score should now look like this. By the way, one can and should hide the extra voices from the main score by hitting **i** again, and then unchecking the extra staves and press 'OK', to make it look like the original score again (the extra staves are still there and will sound when not muted with F10; mixer).

195. Jesu, meine Freude
(B.A. 39, No. 105, BWV 358)

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Joh. Crüger. Praxis piet. 1653

Joh. Franck. 1653

Piano:
Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Soprano:
Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Alto:
Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Tenor:
Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - ne Her - zens Wei - de,
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Bass:
Je - su mei - ne Freu - de, mei - ne Her - zens Wei - de,
ach we lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge,

Now, to create separate parts for the individual voices, in the Menu go to **File, Parts**. Click on Single part. Give it the Part Title 'Soprano' and then Select Soprano from the Instruments list. Then keep repeating adding single parts this way until you have all the four separate parts. Once done, you should see this (see the extra tabs at the top; I marked them with a red circle):

B195 X

B195 Soprano Alto Tenor Bass

195. Jesu, meine Freude
(B.A. 39, No. 105, BWV 358)

Joh. Franck. 1653

Piano:
Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - nes Her - zens V
ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen b

If you click on a tab, for example the **Tenor** tab, you should see this (I manually added the system breaks, which show as grey 'Enter' signs, by dragging and dropping it on to the measure, to give it the same layout as the main score; also slurs and beam properties should be made like in the full score):

The screenshot shows a music score for Tenor in MuseScore. The score is for '195. Jesu, meine Freude' by J.S. Bach (B.A. 39, No. 105, BWV 358). The score is in bass clef, 3/4 time, and features lyrics in German. The score is divided into systems with measure numbers 1-13. The lyrics are: 'Je - su, mei - ne Freu - de, mei - ne Her - zens Wei - de, ach wie lang', ach lan - ge ist dem Her - zen ban - ge, Je - su mei - ne Zier. und ver - langn nach dir. Got - tes Lamm, mein Bräu - ti - gam au - sser dir soll mir auf Er - den nichts sonst lie - bers wer - den'.

In this tab you should only have the Tenor notes with the lyrics and each tab has its own notes, if all was done correctly. You can play that separately, or export it, or send it by email directly to the email group that needs it. If you have selected this tab and see it in front of you and then save the score, MuseScore will automatically save it with the part name added to the file name, for example: **195_Jesu_meine_Freude-Tenor.mscz**. When opened it will immediately show the tenor tab (but also the others), as when saved. But it will still be the same (full) score, with all the extra tabs (which is an advantage). If you want to send a separate MuseScore file, with only the score for the tenor, and nothing else, use 'export'. But it would be better to also have the other parts, because then one can enhance the practicing by adding other voices, for example the basses, once they know their part, could add the tenors to it and then practice that and so on. This can be done with F10, the mixer, in the main score (solo the parts you want to play back). One can, for example, reduce the volume of the accompanying voices and instrumentation, leaving the part of interest at full volume.

You can also export a part as a PDF and/or make a recording of it as an mp3. I would recommend that all choristers should install MuseScore, but if that is too much to ask, I would export a PDF of a part and an mp3 and send both to them by email. But to serve all best, one should send the full score (**.mscz**) with all the parts, the PDF and the mp3 (3 attachments in total) of the specific part and send that to the entire chorus mail group (sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses receiving their own parts and recordings). Exporting can be done through the menu, going to **File, Export** and then, like this:



Export



Export To: MP3 Audio

What to export

- Full Score
- Soprano
- Alto
- Tenor
- Bass

Select all

Clear selection

Export options

Normalize

Sample rate: 48000 Hz

MP3 Bitrate: 128 kBit/s

Each selected score will be exported as a separate audio file.

× Cancel

✔ Export...