

# JS Bach Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring



**Bridget Mermikides** arranges one of Johann Sebastian Bach's most famous pieces for you to play on the guitar.

## ABILITY RATING



**Moderate**

INFO	WILL IMPROVE YOUR
<b>KEY:</b> G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simultaneous voicing
<b>TEMPO:</b> 65 bpm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plucking hand fluency
<b>CD:</b> TRACK 10-11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> String crossing


JS BACH (1685-1750) is one of the greatest composers of all time. Although not hugely popular in his life his incredible legacy of works had a crucial influence on the development of 'Western High Art' music as well as being a great inspiration for contemporary musicians.

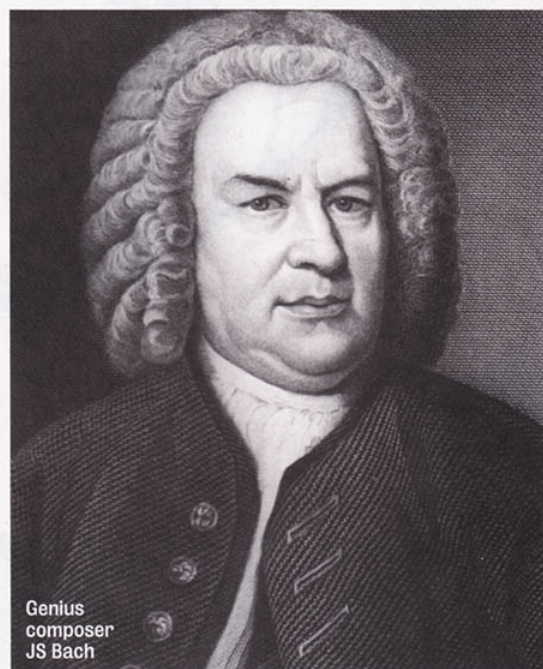
Jesu, Joy Of Man's Desiring is commonly used in wedding ceremonies and has been transcribed from its original arrangement of trumpets, strings, oboes and continuo, to all kinds of instruments and ensembles. Transcribing it for guitar is challenging, as there are up to nine simultaneous parts in the original, so you may find some questionable arrangements out there. I've done my best to preserve the most important material that captures the spirit of the piece while keeping the arrangement idiomatic and playable. I've managed to keep the original key of G major using standard tuning, which allows for some open strings and natural resonances. The piece uses a 9/8 metre, which has three beats in a bar, with each beat subdivided into three

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quavers, creating a graceful lilting quality that you should aim to evoke.

The main theme is the triplet melody with single note bass line. The melody moves mainly around the top three strings, occasionally reaching the fourth, so there is a good deal of string crossing. Alternate with your plucking hand's first and second fingers using mainly free stroke. This alternation helps to produce a 'flow' in the sound. When crossing from a lower to a higher string it is more ergonomic to play i followed by m – the longer finger falls more naturally to the higher sounding string. The opposite is also true so when playing from a higher to a lower string it is nicer to play m i. This is not always possible given the complexity of the melody and number of times it crosses the strings so we have to learn to cross both ways comfortably and/or occasionally bring in the 'a' finger (ring finger) to bring us back to ergonomic string crossing. I found myself bringing in the 'a' finger a good deal when recording this. There are suggested indicated examples of this at bars 3, 6, 7, 19, 22 and 23. The thing to try to avoid is the very bad habit of plucking repeatedly with the same finger.

Another important point is the articulation of the bass notes. These should (when possible) be given their full rhythmic value of a dotted crotchet. To achieve this keep hold – as much as is possible – of the fretting hand finger for the full duration of each note, and only release the finger as the bass note changes to create a well connected (legato) bass line. Whenever this is not completely possible the aim is to at least not clip or staccato the note too short. 



Genius composer JS Bach

## TECHNIQUE FOCUS

### TONE AND NAILS

Professional classical guitarists use fingernails to pluck the strings. Given that the nails are producing the tone it is essential to take care of them and learn the best shape for a good technique. In general the nail can follow the natural curve of the fingertip and should be just long enough to be seen poking over the ends of the fingers when looking at the your hand palm side facing you. A nail file – not too rough – plus very fine sand paper should be used to shape and polish the edges of the nails. When plucking the string there can be contact with both the nail and flesh of the finger combined; the more flesh the warmer the tone, the less flesh the more brittle the tone.



**TRACK RECORD** As well as being recorded by classical musicians such as the Kings College Choir, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and pianist Angela Hewitt, Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring has also been recorded by instrumentalists from a wider range of styles: acoustic guitarist Leo Kottke, pop singer Josh Groban, jazz-funk saxophonist Grover Washington Jr, electronic artist Wendy Carlos and rockabilly guitarist Brian Setzer.



PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 11

**[Bars 1-9]** There is some suggested fretting hand fingering by the note heads: bar 1 going to bar 2 shows a fourth finger on the D changing to a third finger on the same note. This is to accommodate the different chord shapes of the first two bars - C followed by G. Organising the fingers this way is technically tidy, ergonomic and less tiring than reaching the third finger for the first D.

**[Bar 10]** At bar 10 slide to the third position and reach the fourth finger for the E note on the fifth string while keeping hold of the melody D note with your first finger. Following the fretting hand fingering for the remainder of this bar will bring you nicely back to the first position on bar 11. These instructions may seem overly specific but following them will help you play the piece much more tidily.

♩. = 65

**Chords:** G, C/E, G/B, Em7, Am, G/B, Am/C, D, D7, G, Em, C, G/B, Em7, G/D, C, C#9, D7, G, G/D, G, G/F#, C/E, D/F#, D/E, D, C/E, C/F#, G, D/F#, D, D7, G, G/F#, C/E, G/B, Em, Am/C, G/D, D, G, C/E, G/B, Em, Am, G/B, Am/C, D, D7.

**Fingering:** 1 p i m a m i p a i a m 9, 24 13, 28 17, 32 a m i p

## PLAYING TIPS

## CD TRACK 11

[Bar 44] There are various other suggested fingerings throughout the piece that are all designed to help with technical and musical ease. For example, the 6th quaver at bar 44 makes use of the third finger as a guide to get you back to open position with the fingers ready on the correct strings.

Chords: G, Em, C, G/B, Em7, G/D, C, A7/C#, D7, G

21, 36

Chords: D, D/C, E/B, Am, F, Dm6, Dm6/B, E, Am, F, Dm

40

Chords: Am/C, Fmaj7, Am/E, Dm, D#dim7, Esus4, Am, G/B, C

44

Chords: Dm/F, Dm, G, C, C/E, C7, F, Dm7, G7, C, G/B

48

Chords: G, C/E, G/B, Em7, Am, G/B, Cmaj7, D, D/F#, D7

52



PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 11

[Bar 45] Here the fretting hand requires a bit of stretch because it needs to keep hold of and sustain the pedal bass note G. As ever, take your time learning this fantastic piece and I hope it will become an enjoyable addition to your repertoire.

Chords: G, Gmaj7/F#, C/E, G/B, Em, Am/C, G/D, D

56

Chords: G, G7, Am/G, D7/G, G, Em/G, D7/G

60

Chords: G, C/E, G/B, Em7, Em, Am, G/B, Am/C, D, D7

64

Chords: G, Em, C, G/B, Em7, G/D, C, A7/C#, D, G

68

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