

**DEATH, BE NOT PROUD**  
**John Donne's Holy Sonnet, No. 167**

by

**DONALD BUSAROW**

This work was composed in 1980 as an entry to a contest sponsored by the International Horn Society, for which the first prize was awarded. The basis of the musical material lies in two Easter chorales (related in their Latin origin), *Christ lag in Todesbanden* ("Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands") and *Christ ist erstanden* ("Christ Is Arisen"). These tunes, or fragments of them, appear in the above order with the first four-note motif in the horn taken from the first chorale. The soprano responds with the same pattern in the opening words "Death, be not proud". The horn extends the chorale line under the words "for thou art not so", and finally states the entire opening phrase of the chorale melody at the conclusion of the first section, "Poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me". The two middle sections of the composition are based entirely upon free material.

Immediately following the question "Why swellest thou then?", the first stanza of *Christ ist erstanden* is played by the muted horn and is heard the second time with the soprano counter-melody. The piece concludes with "Hallelujahs" added to the Donne text by the composer.

# Death Be Not Proud - 1980

Published IHS Manuscript Press  
UMKC  
KC, MO

Int. War  
Strick  
1st page

John Donne  
(1571-1631)  
(1609)

Statement of faith  
Story of Easter -

Hymn To God the Father  
1990 - Chautauque  
Chamber Singers, NY

Death, Be not proud - - - ← "Christ not understand"  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more,  
Death, thou shalt die.

declamatory

Dramatic works

restful { From rest + sleep ...  
rest of their lives ...

Because of this association, I have incorporated  
"Christ not understand" - (Christ is alive) 1/80  
sequence hymn for Easter

agitated { From not slave ...  
fate, chance, king  
& desperate man  
prison, war, sickness ...

The piece ends in "Alleluia" - not in the poem.  
Come out of the chancel

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1572-63

John Donne, in the latter stage of his life, wrote works which challenged death. His Holy Sonnet X "Death, Be Not Proud", comes from this period. Being a member of the clergy of the Church of England, he held firmly to the belief of an after life in the Resurrection. This belief, which to our folk, attracted me to the poem. I added the Easter motif to the music with the term "Christ ist erstanden" (Christ is arisen) an eleventh century hymn with music from the hymn of the Reformation period. The opening for voice of the hymn serves as the horn motif. Near the end of the piece the chorale is heard in its entirety with the muted brass, heard a second time with the soprano, concluding with the choir "alleluia".

opening

# NAG NOTE

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FROM:

PLEASE:  DO  REMEMBER  FIX  BUY  PICK UP

Won the  
International Horn Society  
Compos. Competition

THANK YOU

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DEATH, BE NOT PROUD

A COMPOSITION FOR

SOPRANO, HORN, AND PIANO

By

DONALD BUSAROW

ON A TEXT BY

JOHN DONNE  
(HOLY SONNET # 167)

# DEATH, BE NOT PROUD

John Donne

Declamando (1.54)

Donald Busarow

Voice

Horn  
(Actual pitch)  
*f*

Piano  
*f*

**A** Tempo I  
*mp* Death, be not proud, though some have called thee might-y and dread-ful

for, thou art not so,

mp f mp

Energie (Ja 96)

mf For, those whom thou thinkest thou dost o-ver-throw,

mf f

pp

f die not. pp

ff rit. P PP

ff mp PP

ped.

Tempo I

*f* (brassed)      *P* (brassed)      *P*

Poor death, nor yet

*mp*      *P*      *pp*

canst thou kill me;

*Più mosso* (♩ = 76)

From rest and sleep, which

*rit.*      *P*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics 'Poor death, nor yet'. The second and third staves are piano accompaniment. The fourth staff is another vocal line with lyrics 'canst thou kill me;'. The fifth and sixth staves are piano accompaniment. The seventh staff is a vocal line with lyrics 'From rest and sleep, which'. The eighth and ninth staves are piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (brassed), *P* (brassed), *P*, *mp*, *pp*, and *P*. Performance instructions include 'Tempo I', 'rit.', and 'Piu mosso (♩ = 76)'. There are also some handwritten annotations like '+' above notes in the piano part.

broadly

but thy pic-tures be, much plea-sure, then from thee, much

f

broadly,

dim.

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics 'but thy pic-tures be, much plea-sure, then from thee, much'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. Dynamics include 'f' (forte) and 'dim.' (diminuendo). The word 'broadly' is written above the vocal line in two places.

more must flow, and soon our best men with

mp

pp

mp

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics 'more must flow, and soon our best men with'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. Dynamics include 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and 'pp' (pianissimo). The word 'our' is circled in the lyrics.

thee do go, Rest of their bones, and

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics 'thee do go, Rest of their bones, and'. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The music concludes with a final chord in the piano part.



U -

souls de-liv-er - - y.

decresc. p

decresc. p

mf cresc.

**D** Agitato (♩=80)

Thou art slave to fate,

f ff Holding back f sfz

chance, kings, and des-per-ate men, and dost with poi-son, war, and

sick-ness dwell, and pop-pie, nor charms can make us sleep as well,

This system contains the first two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *pp* and a fermata over the final measure.

and bet-ter than thy stroke; why swell-est thou

This system contains the third and fourth systems of music. The third system has a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *pp* and a fermata over the final measure.

then?

(Christ ist erstanden)  
lontano + + +  
(mute) *pp*

This system contains the fifth and sixth systems of music. The fifth system has a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The sixth system continues the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *pp* and a fermata over the final measure. A tempo change to *lontano* is indicated above the piano part, and a *(mute)* instruction is placed below it.

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a melodic line and a 'sim.' (simile) marking above it. The middle and bottom staves are for piano accompaniment, showing chords and bass lines. The piano part includes a 'pp' (pianissimo) dynamic marking.

The second system of the musical score includes the lyrics "One short sleep past, we" under the vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a '(open) pp' marking. The system continues with several measures of music for both parts.

The third system of the musical score includes the lyrics "wake e-ter-nal-ly, And death shall be no more," under the vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with several measures of music.

Death, thou shalt die! Hal - le - lu - ia!

*cresc.* *f* *cresc.* *ff*

Hal - - le - lu - - -

*accel.* *fff*

jah!

*rall.* *fff*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a rest, then enters with the lyrics 'Death, thou shalt die!' followed by 'Hal - le - lu - ia!'. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic line in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with 'Hal - - le - lu - - -' and the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line with 'jah!' and the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (f, ff, fff, cresc., accel., rall.), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions like '(b. 92)'. The piano part has a complex texture with many notes and rests.

HORN IN F

DEATH, BE NOT PROUD

Donald Busarow

Declamando (♩=66)

**f**

**sfz** **sfz** **rit.** **mp** **mf** **f**

**A** **Tempo I** (actual pitch)

Death, be not proud

**B** **Energico** (♩=96)

**mp** **f** **mp** **mf** **rit.**

**f** **cresc.** **ff** **p**

**Tempo I**

**pp** **f** (brass) **p** (brass) **p** **pp**

**C** **Piu mosso** (♩=76)

From rest and sleep **p** **cresc.** **f** **dim.** **pp**

**p** **pp** **mp**

**mp** **dim.** **p**

**D** **Agitato** (♩=80)

**E** **♩=66**

(mute) **Lontano** **pp**

**(open)** **pp**

Three staves of musical notation. The first staff contains a melodic line with a crescendo marking (*cresc.*). The second staff contains a melodic line with a forte marking (*f*), an acceleration marking (*accel.*), and a fortissimo marking (*ff*), along with a tempo marking of quarter notes equal to 92 (*(♩ = 92)*). The third staff contains a melodic line with a rallentando marking (*rall.*) and a double bar line.

Ten blank musical staves, each consisting of five horizontal lines, arranged vertically for writing.