



***Andante* from Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, BWV 1049
J.S. Bach**

Arranged for Piano Solo by Eleonor Bindman

Andante from Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, BWV 1049.

While transcribing the complete Brandenburg Concertos for piano duet, I realized that some of the slow movements could work really well for solo piano. Not having been familiar with them previously, I was enchanted by their lyricism. The *Andante* from the 4th concerto was the first one I transcribed for solo piano because, as with all of my transcriptions, I wanted to be able to play it myself.

This movement is built on echoes between the orchestra (*tutti*) and the soloists which easily translate onto the keyboard. *Tutti* passages are louder and lower in register than the solos. Some *tutti* phrases are luxuriously long and need to be pedaled carefully to help sustain the legato effect without muddling the harmony. Listening to an orchestral recording is the best reference as it will clearly delineate the different parts in your mind. Since this complex texture can seem daunting to non-professional pianists, I would like to offer some guidance below.

The first question which normally arises is: “How do I hold all the long notes?” The answer is that they don’t have to be held “exactly” in a transcription. An arranger’s job is to faithfully convey the composer’s intentions (in my opinion) and I try to present the layers of orchestral parts as Bach wrote them. When the flute or violin holds long notes they have to be notated accordingly so that a pianist understands the polyphony. They are either sustained with the help of the pedals or just sounded for as long as possible. Another issue is reaching all the inner voices despite the important melodic treble and foundational bass lines being far apart. Most of the time it should be clear which hand takes the middle notes. But if a stretch is too wide you may need to “break” that chord or interval.

If a section is challenging, you may omit some doubled notes or put them in another octave as an alternative. For example, the C and B octaves in mm. 28 and 30 can’t be played “verbatim” but they can be sustained by using the middle, “sostenuto” pedal if your piano has one. If not, the right pedal will sustain it for at least one beat and that’s good enough. To further simplify things, you can skip the upper notes and just hold one C and one B in the right hand. The slow tempo gives you time to manage all the voices and create the needed sound balance.

I don’t indicate fingerings for most of my transcriptions because I strongly believe that one has to learn (by trial and error) to figure them out without help. Keeping a flexible wrist/hand will facilitate many different positions and angles which you should experiment with in order to arrive at the most comfortable fingering. I wrote in only a few fingerings which work for the inner voice of m. 28 as an example but since the pedals eliminate the need for “finger legato” there can be many other options. The pedal can be used as often as 6 times in each measure here; without it the orchestral sound can’t be approximated. Embellishments should be slow at this tempo - feel free to play more or less of them, as appeals to you. Remember: since this is an arrangement, nothing is written in stone. What matters is the overall sound and your enjoyment.

This *Andante* ends on the dominant chord, an unresolved harmony. The next movement is in the key of G major, leaving us with this open question. I hope that you will enjoy the sound of this last chord and let it linger for a while.

Eleonor Bindman
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Andante from Brandenburg Concerto No. 4

For piano solo

J.S. Bach

Arr. E. Bindman

Andante

Flauti

Musical score for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is written for piano solo. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with a slur over measures 1-5. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf* Tutti, *p*, and *mf* Tutti. A *Con Ped.* instruction is present at the beginning. A trill (*tr*) is marked in measure 5.

Musical score for measures 6-10. The right hand continues the melodic line with a slur. The left hand accompaniment is consistent. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, and *p*. A *Flauti* marking is present above the right hand in measure 7.

Musical score for measures 11-15. The right hand features a more active melodic line. The left hand accompaniment includes some rests. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *f*.

Musical score for measures 16-20. The right hand continues with a melodic line. The left hand accompaniment is active. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mf*. A trill (*tr*) is marked in measure 17.

22

p *f* molto legato

This system contains measures 22 through 25. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano) and *f* molto legato (forte, very legato).

26

tr *mf* *p* *mf*

5 3 4 2

This system contains measures 26 through 30. It includes a trill (*tr*) in measure 27 and a fingering sequence (5 3 4 2) above a note in measure 29. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

31

p *mf* *tr*

This system contains measures 31 through 35. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs, and the left hand has a bass line with slurs. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and a trill (*tr*) in measure 34.

36

f

This system contains measures 36 through 40. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs, and the left hand has a bass line with slurs. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in measure 39.

41

tr

This system contains measures 41 through 45. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs, and the left hand has a bass line with slurs. A trill (*tr*) is marked in measure 44.

45

mf *p* *mf*

Musical score for measures 45-49. The piece is in G major (one sharp). The right hand features a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment. Dynamics are marked *mf*, *p*, and *mf*.

50

p *f molto legato* *tr*

Musical score for measures 50-54. The right hand continues with arpeggiated patterns, and the left hand has a more active line. Dynamics include *p*, *f molto legato*, and a trill (*tr*) in the right hand.

55

p *mf* *rit. ad libitum* *mf legato*

Musical score for measures 55-60. The right hand has a melodic line with some grace notes, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics are *p*, *mf*, *rit. ad libitum*, and *mf legato*.

61

p a tempo *mf*

Musical score for measures 61-65. The right hand features a melodic line with grace notes, and the left hand has a simple accompaniment. Dynamics are *p a tempo* and *mf*.

66

p flauto *tr* *mf*

Musical score for measures 66-70. The right hand has a melodic line with grace notes, and the left hand has a simple accompaniment. Dynamics are *p flauto*, *tr*, and *mf*.