

Prelude

Lute Suite No. 4, BWV 1006a
J.S. Bach

Transcribed for guitar
by
Richard Yates

About this edition

This edition of the Bach Prelude to Lute Suite No. 4 is experimental in several ways. The original key was E major. Nearly all guitar transcriptions are in that key rather than in D major as I am presenting here. D major has the advantage that the scale includes more open strings, especially in the sections that modulate to other keys. In E major these sections more often require full barré fingering for arpeggios and have fewer open strings with which to smoothly shift positions up and down the neck in scale passages.

Overall, D major allows a fuller resonance through sympathetic vibration of non-plucked strings that is especially suitable both for the texture of a Baroque prelude, and for an imitation of the Baroque lute with its open D minor tuning.

Fingering has been selected with two priorities: 1) efficiency of movement and, 2) resonance of sound. To this end, wherever practical, lines that outline chords have been assigned across several strings rather than along one string. It is not always possible to completely reconcile these two priorities.

To contrast scale movement with arpeggios, an unusually large number of slurs have been marked. They are there to indicate the places that slurs are possible given the fingering rather than as indicating that they all necessarily be played. One particular scale figure, as exemplified by the first three notes of the prelude, is nearly always assigned to one string. This is in contrast to other editions in which that figure is fingered in a more haphazard way.

Also not usually seen in other editions is the separation, through the notation, of embedded voices that are shown as a single line in the original. While this may clarify the texture it also has the risk of complicating the appearance of the score.

Concerning the right-hand, the texture and lute analogs suggest frequent use of the thumb in alteration with first or second finger in scale passages, especially those involving the lower strings. This will frequently resolve string-crossing puzzles.

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J.S. Bach
(1685–1750)

⑥ =D

4

piano

7

forte

p

a

i

9

piano

VII₃

V₂

12

forte

15

piano

② *forte*

18

①

21

24

8

27

8

30

8

32

8

34

8

36

8

38

8

40

8

42

1# II₄ 3#

45

piano

II₄ 1#

48

forte

4# II₄

51

forte

2# 4#

53

m a i

1# 4# 3#

56

a m

4# 3# 4#

59

piano

1# 4# 3#

62

forte

4# 2# 3#

65

68

71

74

77

80

82

84

86

88 *a i m* ② ③ ④

90 ③ *a m i* IV *m*

92 *m i m i* ⑥ ⑤

94 ① ③

96 ②

98 *a m* II₅

100 *m i* ⑤ ④ ⑤ ⑥

102 *p* ③

104

②

i m a i m i m a

106

II₅

108

m

111

113

p i m

115

m m m

118

120

122

Musical notation for measures 122-123. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 122 starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with various fingerings: 1, 3, 2, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4. A slur covers the last four notes, with a II_2 marking above it. The bass line has whole notes with stems pointing down.

124

Musical notation for measures 124-125. Measure 124 has a slur over the first four notes with a II_3 marking above. Measure 125 has a slur over the first four notes with a II_3 marking above. Fingerings include 4, 2, 4, 3, 2.

126

Musical notation for measures 126-127. Measure 126 has a slur over the first four notes. Measure 127 has a slur over the first four notes with a $m a m$ marking above. Fingerings include 1, 2, 3, 2, 0, 2, 3.

128

Musical notation for measures 128-129. Measure 128 has a slur over the first four notes with a II_3 marking above. Measure 129 has a slur over the first four notes with a VII_3 marking above. Fingerings include 3, 3, 2.

130

Musical notation for measures 130-131. Measure 130 has a slur over the first four notes with a VII_4 marking above. Measure 131 has a slur over the first four notes with a circled 2 above. Fingerings include 3, 0, 3.

132

Musical notation for measures 132-133. Measure 132 has a slur over the first four notes. Measure 133 has a slur over the first four notes with a $m a$ marking above and a II_5 marking above. Fingerings include 1, 4, 4, 2, 3.

134

Musical notation for measures 134-135. Measure 134 has a slur over the first four notes with a tr marking above. Measure 135 has a slur over the first four notes. Fingerings include 2, 3.

137

Musical notation for measures 137-138. Measure 137 has a slur over the first four notes with a II_3 marking above. Measure 138 has a slur over the first four notes with a VII_3 marking above. Fingerings include 1, 2, 1, 0, 4, 3, 2, 3, 4.