

# Prelude in C Major

*from "The Well-Tempered Clavier"*

Violin Part added by Vanessa McClintock

by  
Vanessa McClintock

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Perhaps one of the more famous of all J.S. Bach's works is this first entry into his study on "equal temperament" or "well-tempered" tuning composed in 1722. The work consists of 12 preludes followed by 12 fugues in all of the major keys, which in turn are followed by the same in all of the minor keys for a total of 24 pairs.

It is an intriguing short piece that appears simply to be an accompaniment, without a solo part. French composer Charles Gounod thought so and composed a melody of haunting beauty in 1853, using this prelude as a legendary accompaniment; that piece is the now famous *Ave Maria*.

Gounod was not the only composer to do so, and I certainly will not be the last. Of note, John Snelson, biographer of Andrew Lloyd Webber, claims the song "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" is based on both the Bach and the Bach-Gounod.

In this version, I chose the violin, but any solo instrument will suffice, making allowances for range and transpositions.

Of note: this version includes the "Schwencke measure", a measure inserted supposedly to "fix" or "smooth out" the harmonic progression within the piece. The extra measure commonly is attributed to Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke, a German composer, pianist and music editor, but its origin has not been authenticated.

Vanessa McClintock  
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# SCORE

## Prelude in C Major

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Johann Sebastian Bach

**Piano**

$\text{♩} = 84$

*mf*

*rit.*

**Cantabile e molto espressivo**  
*a tempo*

*mf*

3

5

7

9

The musical score is presented in a standard format with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano and a single staff for the violin. The piano part is marked 'Piano' and 'mf'. The violin part is marked 'Cantabile e molto espressivo' and 'a tempo'. The score includes a tempo change to 'rit.' at measure 3. The piano part features a repeating eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The violin part features a melodic line with a trill at measure 9.

11

13

15

17

19

21

23

25 *mp*

27

29 *mf*

31

33

35

37

39

*poco rall.*