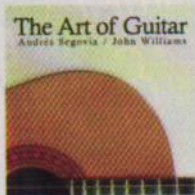


Prelude from the Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major

Music by Johann Sebastian Bach, arranged by Patrick Francis



The music of Johann Sebastian Bach has been widely transcribed for classical guitar, including a vast array of pieces originally written for solo cello, solo violin, lute, and keyboard. Over the years, Bach's suites for solo cello have been a favorite source of material for transcribers, not only because of Bach's compositional genius and the suites' beauty, but also because the works transfer relatively easily to the guitar. Such is the case with the Prelude from the Cello Suite No. 1 in G major, transcribed here and found on plenty of recorded interpretations by great classical players like Andrés Segovia and John Williams.

Bach's brilliance, mastery of counterpoint, and single-line writing are highlighted in his solo string works, where a single line may imply two or three voices.

The sparseness of this single-line texture invites guitarists to add bass notes, displace octaves in the bass line, and "fill in" chords. In this arrangement, the Prelude is transposed from the original key of G major to D major, using dropped-D tuning.

I've tried to strike a balance between adhering to the original score and adapting the work as a transcription for solo guitar. Where notes have been added, they appear within parentheses in the notation.

In the original version, Bach made frequent use of the cello's resonant open strings, which often appear often as pedal tones. On the guitar, dropped-D tuning affords guitarists a similar luxury of employing the open fifth and sixth strings. Some players choose to phrase the measures with repeated figures (like those in measures 1 through 8) with an echo effect, making the first two beats loud, followed by a quieter dynamic on beats three and four. At measure 31, the melody moves into the lower voice. Here, playing the low notes with the thumb will really bring out the moving line until the texture changes at measure 37. Finally, to end with a "bang," crescendo over measures 37 and 38 and maintain the dynamic intensity until the end of the piece, culminating at the final chord, strummed loudly. To make the ending more compelling, the player might try a slight ritard on the final beat of measure 41.

—PATRICK FRANCIS

See video of Patrick Francis playing the Prelude from the Cello Suite No. 1 in G major at acousticguitar.com/prelude
PASSWORD: **prelude**

Dropped-D Tuning: D A D G B E

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