

# *J. S. Bach*

## *Sinfonia to Cantata 29*

*(Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir)*



Transcribed for Symphonic Wind Ensemble  
(featuring clarinets, flutes, piccolo)

by

*David Avshalomov*



Transcription, arrangement, and scoring © 2013 Raven Music



## INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo  
 Flutes 1. 2.  
 Oboes 1. 2.  
 English Horn in F (optional)  
 Bassoon 1 (high; optional)  
 Bassoon 2  
 Contrabassoon (optional)  
 Eb Clarinet  
 Bb Clarinet 1. 2. 3.  
 Eb Alto Clarinet (optional)  
 Bb Bass Clarinet  
 Eb Contra-Alto Clarinet (optional)  
 Bb Soprano Saxophone (optional—may be taken by Alto Sax 1 player)  
 Eb Alto Saxophone 1. 2.  
 Bb Tenor Saxophone  
 Eb Baritone Saxophone  
 Horn in F, 1. 2. 3. 4.  
 Bb Trumpet 1. 2. 3. (Trumpet 1 part in D also provided)  
 Trombone 1. 2.  
 Bass Trombone  
 Euphonium (Baritone treble clef Bb part also provided)  
 Tuba  
 String Bass  
 Timpani  
 4-5 Percussion:  
     Glockenspiel  
     Xylophone  
     Bass Drum  
     Large Tam Tam  
     Suspended Cymbal  
     Triangle



**BACH, SINFONIA TO CANTATA 29**  
**Transcription for Band featuring CLARINETS/FLUTES & PICCOLO**  
**by David Avshalomov**

**NOTES**

- This transcription is based on Bach's manuscripts (in holograph): The *Preludio* to the third *Partia* (*sic. in ms.*) for solo violin, BWV 1006 (1720), and the score to the *Sinfonia* to Cantata 29, *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir* (We thank you, God, we thank you), BWV 29, a sacred cantata which Bach composed in Leipzig in 1731 for the *Ratswechsel*, the inauguration of a new town council, on 27 August of that year. This is one of his few sacred cantatas opened by an orchestral *sinfonia*. The music is Bach's arrangement of the selfsame violin solo *Preludio* from the third *Partia*. The solo organ plays the original violin part, while the orchestra adds an accompaniment.
- This *sinfonia* had appeared as a middle movement in his Wedding Cantata BWV 120a (1729), also in D and with solo organ but accompanied by only strings and continuo, with oboes doubling the violins.
- Bach distinctly modified the original solo violin part in several places to create the solo part for organ (without changing the implied harmonies); how and why is an instructive study for composers and arrangers, and best explained by an organist. The solo line notes here are from the organ part of the orchestral version; I have added some dynamics (especially echoes) and phrasing slurs to the solo line, taken from the violin part.
- Thus the final result in the band solo part for the clarinets/flutes is a hybrid combining the organ version of the melody with the details of a more expressive rendition possible on violin.
- The division of the solo line between Clarinet 1 and 2 sections, and the few echo passages allocated to the Flutes/Piccolo, are based on
  - Bach's dynamics/echoes
  - Normal tension/relaxation releases in paired bars of dissonance/resolution
  - Series of sequences—taking turns.
- A few of the phrase alternations were also needed to give the two clarinet sections in turn a chance to breathe and rest the embouchure and mental concentration. The result, however, has been deliberately designed to work musically and illuminate Bach's marvelous phrase structure.
- The echo phrases are scored to mimic an organist's typical use of two manuals, one for normal or full organ, the other for echos (or special solo voicings). It is not established that Bach would necessarily have done this in performing the organ part with his orchestral version (it could be argued that the accompaniment suggests otherwise), but he certainly would have in his solo organ works.
- All the accompaniment notes have been transcribed from the orchestral version.
- Additionally, the continuo harmony (figured bass) markings from the orchestral score's continuo line were realized (fleshed out) in muted horns.
- The bass line parts assume both 32 and 64 foot stops in the organ's bass pedals; hence the tuba and bass trombone parts are often in the growly range. This also helps prevent them (especially the tuba) from obtruding.
  - Adding a contrabassoon doubling the string bass part provides a nice optional enhancement.
- Some slurs, localized phrasing swells, and staccato and tenuto marks have been added in the accompaniment to reflect modern scholarly/practical thinking about Baroque performance practice and phrasing. They reflect just one way to phrase these passages (the arranger's taste).
  - These marks have been applied to the bass instruments that represent the organ pedals as well. Though the quick localized swell was not normally possible on organ (nor likely in Bach's own rendition, even "under expression") it was possible and suitable on string bass and cello then as now, and these would have doubled the organ bass line if present.
- The slightly "band-istic" richness of the ending is greater than Bach's scoring but is inspired and to some extent implied by his own wonderful orchestral flowering there in trumpets (their only melodic passage), oboes, violins, etc.

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**PERFORMANCE NOTES**

**SETUP**

If there is time to shift seating slightly before playing this transcription in concert (especially as an encore), and it is not too much of a disruption, the “stereo” effect of trading phrases between sections will be greatly enhanced if the Clarinet 1 and Clarinet 2 sections are separated from one another by some distance onstage, rather than seated together in a wedge as is common. If the flutes are front and center, this will solidify the effect for their echoes.

**TEMPO**

The 120 tempo may be relaxed to 110, but no slower or it will become stodgy. Please have the courage *not* to slow down at the end. In the violin version the last note is an eighth note! It is a quick, brilliant, throwaway ending.

**DOUBLINGS/CROSS-CUES**

- Multiple players are needed for Clarinets 1. and 2. Even if you have a very large clarinet section, this will not be a problem as long as they can all play the part.
- It is best if you have at least four flute players total, for the passages that echo clarinet phrases, unless you have very few clarinets (say two per section).
- Clarinet 3. part should have fewer players than 1. or 2. (perhaps as few as two ). They play the "for balance" cues if there is no Alto Clarinet, no Bassoon 1, *and* no English Horn (those all cover the original viola part)
- All the other accompaniment parts work best with one player on a part
- The high Bassoon 1 part is intended only for a player with a lot of facility in the top octave. Lacking such a player, simply omit and use only the Bassoon 2 part.
- If there are several players on each sax part (and only single oboes), the optional Soprano Sax part, which doubles Oboe 1 exactly, can be added to help the top (violin I) part be heard in balance.
- Trumpet 1 top notes (concert C, C#, D, Eb) are cued in Eb Clarinet (and a few high Trumpet 2. notes in Flute 1). If you do not have a high trumpeter, use the cues.
  - Alternatively, an (additional) Soprano Sax in Bb could play the Trumpet 1 part instead of trumpet, with the dynamics all one level higher. (This was Pablo Casal’s idea for the 2nd Brandenburg Concerto.) A separate part is provided for this substitution. In this case the Eb Clarinet does not play the Trumpet 1 cues.
  - In either case, however, best not to have the idle trumpeter double 2. or 3. as it will throw off the balance.
- An alternate part for piccolo Trumpet in D is provided for the Trumpet 1 part only.
- For Baritone Saxophone, Bass Clarinet, Euphonium/Baritone, Tuba, and String Bass, low notes that may be out of range for some models of the instrument are clearly marked either to be taken *8va* (*ossia*) or omitted, if the player lacks the note. Bass Trombone part should only be played by an instrument with the low extension, otherwise omit it. *In no case should any player arbitrarily play anything an octave higher—only if it is so marked in the score. Voicings matter.*

**TRILLS**

The notations at the end represent one authentic way to realize the trills marked in Bach’s original solo parts and trumpets. Do not improvise the trills; play them as written, including the slight diminuendo on the second one—relax into the harmonic resolution.

**DYNAMICS**

Dynamics are absolute for each part and reflect the normal relative volume/dynamic range of various instruments, winds vs. brass, etc. Thus, a Saxophone marked *forte* against a trumpet marked *mezzo forte* should be roughly equivalent in volume (give or take). Obviously the conductor may make adjustments to clarify foreground/background, blend unison parts in different instruments, and accommodate the hall. The accompaniment is deliberately marked with moderate dynamics to ensure that the clarinets (and flutes/piccolo) are heard as totally predominant throughout except for the very last passage.

Horizontal wedges under single long tones are not for a big expressive crescendo or diminuendo. They are a way of reminding the players to make every long tone live, to grow and die a little, by pressing it out. At most, gain one dynamic level, perhaps less. Sometimes the top dynamic of a longer swell is marked.

**ROLES AND FOCUS BY SECTIONS**

The key to an effective presentation of this transcription is to fine-tune the balance of sections/roles, one period at a time.

- Clarinets 1. and 2. do not play the small (gray) notes in their parts. These are included simply to help them follow what the other clarinet section is playing. (Occasional optional notes are made small *and* put in parentheses.)
- After the opening tutti phrases, all the accompaniment parts need to back off a little, listen sharply, and support the overall perpetual motion part of Clarinets 1. 2. and occasional Flute echoes, and never to overpower them.
- Bach’s orchestral first violin part is variously given to Oboe 1 plus Alto Sax. 1 or, when too high for the Alto sax, to both oboes. It is occasionally supplemented by Eb clarinet.
  - An optional Soprano Sax 1 part has been added to help ensure that the violin I part predominates in that group.
- Trumpets 1. 2. 3. are Bach’s original parts (but a half step higher here). Despite the high writing, trumpets need to make a fairly light sound. They need to be heard throughout but not predominate until the final section (see previous note about cues of high notes).
- The bass line group plus the instruments representing the string group need to be in balance with one another; dynamics have been correlated to help with this.
- At the end, the low brass, timpani, and percussion need to add strength but not overpower the overall structure.

**VIBRATO**

Vibrato is not generally part of the Baroque sound picture in works of this character. Play with a straight tone throughout.

## SLURS

Dotted slurs in the Clarinets 1, 2, Flutes, Piccolo are *alternate* phrasings. Where they appear, the whole section should play either the several solid slurs in the bar, or the long dotted slur. **Section Leaders:** Confer, decide, mark it, and stick with it, case by case. Execute parallel passages the same way both times. Tell the conductor what you decide.

## REHEARSAL SUGGESTIONS.

It is recommended to take these steps (you would probably do this on your own):

1. Give the Clarinets 1 and 2 their parts a week in advance and ask them to learn the part like a solo or etude. Flutes and piccolo, too.
2. Run (or perhaps have the principal Clarinet 1 run) a sectional rehearsal on the piece; the Flutes and Piccolo could join them.
3. At full rehearsal, have the Clarinets 1. 2. and Flutes and Piccolo play their parts all together while the rest of the band listens and follows their own parts. This gives the accompaniment group a picture of what needs to be heard.
4. Walk the band through the changes of dynamic in the accompaniment.
5. Run the piece with full band, *slightly* under tempo.
6. Then work it up to the best tempo the clarinets can manage, polishing the accompaniment and phrasing as needed.
7. Enjoy.

# Sinfonia BWV 29

(Transcr. D. Avshalomov)

**Vivo** ♩ = 120

Transcription © Raven Music 2013

*p*





Bach Sinfonia , Cantata 29 (Eb)

Bach Sinfonia , Cantata 29 (Eb) Transcr. D. Avshalomov

Bach Sinfonia , Cantata 29 (Eb)



[illegible]



65

Picc.



*f*

Fl. 1



*f*

Fl. 2



*f*

Ob. 1



*mp*

Ob. 2



*mp*

Eng. Hn.



*pp*

E♭ Cl.



*p*

Cl. 1



*mp*

Cl. 2



*mp*

Cl. 3



*pp*

Alto Cl.



*pp*

B. Cl.



*pp*

C. A. Cl.



*pp*

Bsn. 1



*pp*

Bsn. 2



*pp*

Sop. Sax.



*mp*

Alto Sax. 1



*pp*

Alto Sax. 2



*pp*

Ten. Sax.



*pp*

Bari. Sax.



*pp*

Hn. 1



*pp*

Hn. 2



*pp*

Hn. 3



*pp*

Hn. 4



Trpt. 1



*mp*

Trpt. 2. 3.



*mp*

Tbn. 1



Tbn. 2



B. Tbn.



Euph.



Tba.



*pp*

Str. B.  
(+ Cbn.)



*pp*

Timp.



*mp*

(cue Crnt. 2)



*mf*

(cue Crnt. 1)



*mf*

(cued)



*mp*

(2. cued)



*mp*

Bach Sinfonia , Cantata 29 (Eb)

81

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Eng. Hn.

E♭ Cl.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Cl. 3

Alto Cl.

B. Cl.

C. A. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Hn. 3

Hn. 4

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2. 3.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba.

Str. B. (+ Cbn.)

Timp.

Catch a breath individually twice between here and 108--preferably at the





104

This page contains musical staves for various instruments. The Piccolo part has whole rests. Flutes 1 and 2 play sixteenth-note patterns. Oboes 1 and 2 have melodic lines starting at measure 104. English Horn plays a sustained note. Clarinets 1 and 2 play rapid sixteenth-note passages. Clarinet 3 and Alto Clarinet play sustained notes. Bassoon 1 and 2 have melodic lines. Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophones 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone all play similar melodic lines. Horns 1 through 4 have specific rhythmic patterns. Trumpets 1, 2, and 3 are silent. Trombones 1, 2, and Bass Trombone are silent. Euphonium and Tuba play sustained notes. String Bass (+ Contrabass) plays a rhythmic pattern. Timpani is silent.

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Eng. Hn.

E♭ Cl.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Cl. 3

Alto Cl.

B. Cl.

C. A. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Hn. 3

Hn. 4

Trpt. 1

Trpt. 2. 3.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba.

Str. B.  
(+ Cbn.)

Timp.



**I**

**Bach Sinfonia , Cantata 29 (Eb)**

Transcr. D. Avshalomov

**Senza Rit.**



# DAVID AVSHALOMOV

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### TRANSCRIPTIONS

*Bach, Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29, transcribed for:*

- Symphonic Wind Ensemble with Clarinets 1. 2. on the solo part (Eb)
- Solo Marimba (or Xylophone, or duet) and Wind Ensemble (D)

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