

STRING EXPLORER SERIES

Sheep May Safely Graze

Johann Sebastian Bach

Arranged by Andrew H. Dabczynski

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score.....	1
Violin I.....	8
Violin II.....	8
Violin III (Viola 	3
Viola.....	5
Cello.....	5
String Bass.....	5
Piano Accompaniment.....	1

A new and welcome treatment of one of Bach's most memorable works. Sensitive arrangement for young orchestra, the gentle essence of Bach's original aria is maintained while all the sections of the orchestra have an opportunity to play the rich melodies and counterpoint. Concert audiences and students alike will be touched by the lyricism and musicality of this piece, yet it is remarkably uncomplicated to rehearse and perform. Here is an arrangement that almost plays itself, all with a peaceful spirit that your beginning students will surely remember long after the concert is over.



PROGRAM NOTES

In 1716, the great German Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) was employed as a musician and composer for Duke Ernst Wilhelm in the court at Weimar. Bach was asked to compose a special piece to mark the 53rd birthday of the Duke's good friend, Duke Christian von Sachsen-Weissenfels. The birthday was to be celebrated with a large hunting party followed by a banquet and musical entertainment. Bach responded with his Cantata #208 (a cantata is a large work for chorus, soloists and orchestra performed without staging). It was the first cantata that Bach wrote that was not focused on a church theme, and became known as the "Hunting Cantata." Nearly 40 minutes in length, it was one of Bach's longest cantatas, almost a one-act opera. The work featured four characters in a Greek setting. One of the characters is Pales, goddess of the flocks, who sings a haunting soprano aria titled "Schafe können sicher weiden" ("Sheep may safely graze when a good shepherd keeps watch [and] good rulers govern"). This serene aria has become one of Bach's most recognized works. It conveys a Baroque vision of pastoral simplicity, earthly beauty, and peace that resonates with listeners even today.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

The essential beauty of J.S. Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze* lies in the poignant joining of the primary aria melody with an exquisite countermelody. All of this is enhanced by the work's marvelous ground bass line and pedal foundation. The arrangement begins with the countermelody presented in thirds in the violins (in the place of the original flutes) over a bass pedal tonic. The violas and cello maintain an inner "heartbeat-like" accompaniment that provides a rhythmic pulse as well as harmony. Note that the repeated quarter notes in this voice should remain very steady whenever the figure appears. The notes may be played separately, or with a gently-separated hooked bowing pattern (down-down, up-up). The main melody appears at m.9 in the three lower voices, with the violins now taking over the rhythmic/harmonic function. Roles are reversed at m.17 when the violins complete the second half of the theme. At m.28, the countermelody pattern returns from the beginning. Violins restate the primary melody at m.36, with the other instruments serving the rhythmic accompaniment. The second half of this melody is then stated by the violas and cello, with the violins simultaneously performing the countermelody, all over a rich bass line. The arrangement closes with the same melodic material with which it began, enhanced this time by a final fading ritardando.

Sheep May Safely Graze

CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 2:10

Johann Sebastian Bach
Arranged by Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

Moderato (♩ = 112)

Violins I
Violins II
Viola (Violin III)
Cello
String Bass
Piano Accompaniment

Measures 1-5 are shown. The score includes staves for Violins I and II, Viola (Violin III), Cello, String Bass, and Piano Accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is Moderato with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. Dynamics include *mp*. There are bowing marks (V) and fingering numbers (4) in the string parts.

Violins I
Violins II
Viola (Vln. III)
Cello
Str. Bass
Piano Accomp.

Measures 6-10 are shown. The score continues with the same instrumentation. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*. There are bowing marks (V) and fingering numbers (4, 9) in the string parts.

* Alternate bowing for separate quarter note patterns (♩ ♩ ♩)

I
Vlns.

II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano
Accomp.

11 12 13 14 15 16

I
Vlns.

II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano
Accomp.

17 18 19 20 21 22

mp *cresc.* *mf*

mp *cresc.* *mf*

p *cresc.* *mf*

p *cresc.* *mf*

mp *cresc.* *mf*

Vlns. I *p* *cresc.* *V*

Vlns. II *p* *cresc.* *V*

Vla. (Vln. III) *p* *cresc.*

Cello *p* *cresc.*

Str. Bass *p* *cresc.*

Piano Accomp. *p* *cresc.*

23 24 25 26 27

Vlns. I *mp* *V*

Vlns. II *mp* *V*

Vla. (Vln. III) *mp* 4

Cello *mp*


Str. Bass *mp*

Piano Accomp. *mp*

28 28 29 30 31 32

Musical score for measures 33-37. The score includes parts for Violins I and II, Viola (Violin III), Cello, String Bass, and Piano Accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 36 is marked with a box containing the number 36. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*. A red watermark "Preview Only" is overlaid on the score.

Musical score for measures 38-43. The score includes parts for Violins I and II, Viola (Violin III), Cello, String Bass, and Piano Accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 40 is marked with a box containing the number 36. Dynamics include *p*. A red watermark "Preview Only" is overlaid on the score.

* Alternate bowing for separate quarter note patterns ()

44

Vlns. I *p* *mf*

Vlns. II *p* *mf*

Vla. (Vln. III) *mf*

Cello *mf*

Str. Bass *mf*

Piano Accomp. *mf*

44 45 46 47 48

Vlns. I *p* *cresc.*

Vlns. II *p* *cresc.*

Vla. (Vln. III) *p* *cresc.*

Cello *p* *cresc.*

Str. Bass *p* *cresc.*

Piano Accomp. *p* *cresc.*

49 50 51 52 53

55

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano Accomp.

54 55 56 57 58

rit.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano Accomp.

59 60 61 62 63