

# THE “RAINDROP” PRELUDE

Frederic Chopin  
Arranged Ryan E. Ellefsen

## INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

Chopin traveled to Spain to escape the damp Paris climate, but instead encountered persistent rain, which is reflected in this title and is heard in the repetition of the eighth notes that are passed from section to section. An intense work that features a string quartet at both the beginning and the end, as well as strong tutti sections that provide opportunities for controlled dissonances, the piece has been transposed into the key of D for greater accessibility. A great introduction to the piano literature of the Romantic Era, as well as an opportunity for deep emotional reflection for both younger and mature ensembles!



## PROGRAM NOTES

Inspired by Bach's "Well Tempered Clavier," Chopin wrote a series of 24 preludes for piano, one in each key, published in 1839. Composed in large part in Spain, Chopin's preludes vary in length and demeanor. With the shortest prelude a mere twelve measures, "The 'Raindrop' Prelude in D $\flat$  Major" is one of the longest and has become the most famous. Upon doctor's orders, Chopin had traveled to Majorca, Spain to escape the damp Paris climate, but instead encountered persistent rain. Throughout this work, the listener hears the rain as a relentless assault of eighth notes, in various ranges, instruments, and combinations around which Chopin composed the piece. His frustration with the weather is felt when the piece switches to D minor, but throughout the work, Chopin's intensity and emotion are easily transferred to a string ensemble.

## NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

The idea for this arrangement came to me when I was sitting in my office, listening to a student practice the piece on a daily basis. After a few days, I started to hear the piece in my head as played by a string orchestra, rather than the piano. Still, there are some uniquely pianistic qualities to this work that need careful attention. The beginning should start as a true string quartet, without any doubling, and without any conducting by the director. When the rest of the ensemble enters, the lightness provided by the string quartet must be maintained. Of special note are the "quasi-cadenzas" which occur throughout the piece. They should be played as if by a piano player—not necessarily in time; freely, but not at the expense of the momentum of the work. They are brief pauses of sunlight in a cloud-filled sky. It would be best for the soloist to listen to a variety of piano performances of this work to accurately perform these challenging bridges. There are some great opportunities for the students to become comfortable with controlled dissonance in the minor section. The divisi dissonances in the violins must be equal in volume and the performers cannot shy away from this opportunity. The F $\sharp$  in measure 55 is incredibly important because it foreshadows the eventual return to D major. Finally, if you have enough players, I found it to be a nice addition to allow half of the cellos and basses to play pizzicato in measures 28 to 43 and the other half to play those measures arco. Of course, all basses should play pizzicato from 40 to the repeat sign. Transposed to D for greater accessibility, the piece works very well for strings. I hope you enjoy this work!

# The "Raindrop" Prelude

CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 5:50

Sostenuto, con espressione e semplice (♩ = 60)

Frédéric Chopin

Arranged by Ryan E. Ellefsen

**Violins**

**Viola**

**Cello**

**String Bass**

1 2 3

**Vlns.**

**Vla.**

**Cello**

**Str. Bass**

4 5 6 7

I  
Vlns. *mp* *pp*  
Tutti

II  
Vlns. *mp* *pp*  
Tutti

Vla.  
*mp* *pp*  
Tutti

Cello  
*mp* *pp*  
Tutti

Str. Bass  
*pp*

8 9 10

I  
Vlns. *mf*  
3

II  
Vlns. *mf*  
3

Vla.  
*mf*

Cello  
*mf*

Str. Bass  
*mf*

11 12 13

Musical score for measures 14-16. The score is for five instruments: Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 14 shows the beginning of the section. Measure 15 features a triplet of eighth notes in the Violin parts and a similar triplet in the Viola. Measure 16 includes a *p* dynamic marking and a *div.* (divisi) instruction for the Viola. A red watermark 'Preview Only Requires Purchase' is overlaid on the score.

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is for five instruments: Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 17 continues the previous section. Measure 18 features a triplet of eighth notes in the Violin parts. Measure 19 includes a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking and a *pp* dynamic marking for the Viola. Measure 20 includes a *pp* dynamic marking for the Cello. A red watermark 'Preview Only Requires Purchase' is overlaid on the score.

I Vlns.

II Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

21 22 23

I Vlns.

II Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

24 25 26 27

28

Più mosso, non troppo

Vlns.

Violin I and II staves. Both are mostly empty with some rests and a few notes in the first measure.

Vla.

Viola staff. Continuous eighth-note accompaniment starting from measure 28.

Cello

Cello staff. Accompaniment with notes and rests, starting from measure 28.

Str. Bass

String Bass staff. Accompaniment with notes and rests, starting from measure 28.

*p* 28 29 30 31

Vlns.

Violin I and II staves. Violin II has a *div.* marking and a *p* dynamic in measure 35.

Vla.

Viola staff. Continues eighth-note accompaniment.

Cello

Cello staff. Accompaniment with notes and rests.

Str. Bass

String Bass staff. Accompaniment with notes and rests.

32 33 34 35

36

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

36 37 38 39

40

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*fff*

*fff*

*fff*

*fff*

*pizz.*

*fff*

40 41 42 43

*div.*



44

*mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

*div.*

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

44 45 46 47

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

48 49 50 51

52

*div.*

Vlns. I *ff*

Vlns. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Cello *ff* (V)

Str. Bass *ff* (V)

52 53 54 55

Vlns. I *rit.*

Vlns. II *rit.*

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

56 57 58 59

Tempo I  
Solo

60

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*p*

Solo

*p*

Solo

*p*

Solo

*p*

60 61 62

Cadenza - freely

V

Cadenza - freely

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

6 6

63 64 65

68 A tempo

I Vlns. *mp* Tutti  $\square$   $\vee$

II Vlns. *mp* Tutti  $\square$

Vla. *mp* Tutti  $\vee$

Cello *mp* Tutti  $\vee$

Str. Bass *mp*  $\square$

66 67 68 69

I Vlns. *f* *mp* *p*  $\square$

II Vlns. *f* *mp* *p*  $\square$

Vla. *f* *mp* *p*  $\square$

Cello *f* *mp* *p*  $\square$

Str. Bass *f* *mp* *p*  $\square$

70 71 72 73