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Tracing the Development of Vivaldi's "L' Estro Armonico" Concerto No.8 in A Minor through J.S. Bach and Samuil Feinberg's Keyboard Transcriptions: Exploring the Possibilities of a Modern Authentic Performance

Andreas Xenopoulos
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, xenopoulosa@gmail.com

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TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIVALDI’S “L’ESTRO ARMONICO”
CONCERTO NO. 8 IN A MINOR THROUGH J. S. BACH AND SAMUIL
FEINBERG’S KEYBOARD TRANSCRIPTIONS: EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES
OF A MODERN AUTHENTIC PERFORMANCE

by

Andreas Xenopoulos

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This document explores the development of the Concerto No.8 in A minor from the collection *L’Estro Armonico* by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) through the transcriptions by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) and Samuil Feinberg (1890–1962). Feinberg was a Russian and Soviet pianist, composer and piano pedagogue, highly influenced by the teaching of Franz Liszt and the principles of the new, modern ‘piano school’ during the end of the 19th century. Biographical information about Samuil Feinberg along with the influences Franz Liszt had upon piano education in Russia and the Moscow conservatory in particular is offered. Two comprehensive comparisons between the two transcriptions and the original work comprise the main core of this document. The analysis of the transcriptions revealed that both Bach and Feinberg embellished the original music in order to accommodate it to a new medium. Moreover, Feinberg changed the texture significantly in order to emphasize virtuosity, characteristic of the romantic solo concerto. A presentation of the challenges each composer had to consider, the problems needed to be solved while transcribing the composition is
provided. An important component of this document is to explore the possibilities of creating a modern, authentic performance based on Feinberg’s piano transcription. Finally, a third transcriptions by August Stradal is discussed and compared briefly as an example of over-romanticism.
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INTRODUCTION

My interest in piano transcriptions dates back to my undergraduate years when I first started my piano education professionally under the guidance of the pianist Lambis Vassiliadis. During that time in 2004 Mr. Vassiliadis was starting a series of performances and recordings of selected Beethoven symphonies transcribed by Franz Liszt for solo piano. Since then, I have been exposed to many piano transcriptions, including their technical difficulties and the problems the transcriber has to solve when transferring an orchestral score to a smaller medium such as the piano. Moreover, issues such as the performance choices the pianist has to make while trying to imitate specific timbres and sounds from the orchestra, the balance and the voicing between a multi-layer texture need to be considered. Finally the technical challenges and adjustments during the performance that need to be made, are all issues that captured my interest and led me to explore and perform piano transcriptions. The piece I will be discussing throughout this paper is the concerto grosso for two violins and string ensemble Op.3 No.8 in A minor by Antonio Vivaldi from his collection L’Estro Armonico. Johann Sebastian Bach later transcribed this work as a solo organ concerto (BWV 593). Later, the Russian pianist Samuil Feinberg and Bohemian pianist August Stradal transcribed the piece for solo piano, both having as a starting source the score by J.S. Bach. I first heard this piece in 2008 performed by pianist Lambis Vassiliadis. Mr. Vassiliadis studied piano at the Musikhochschule Trossingen in Germany under the pianist Victor Karpovich Merzhanov, who himself was a student of Samuil Feinberg at the Moscow Conservatory in Russia. Feinberg was a student of Alexander Goldenweiser who studied with Pavel Pabst, a
student of Franz Liszt. We will discuss the influence of Liszt in the Russian piano education system and these pianists’ education in particular, later in this document in a separate chapter.

This document will also provide a thorough examination of the two different transcriptions and compare them with the original composition. I will focus on the treatment of this early baroque music in different musical periods and also how each composer treated the challenges and solved problems arising from transferring the instrumentation to another medium. I will also offer a short comparison with the arrangement by August Stradal to provide an example of an over–romantic approach to this particular piece. Moreover I will be examining performance practice principles of the baroque concerto grosso and compare these practices to each transcription. Technical problems arising from each transcription will be examined thoroughly.

After discussing the performance practice of each period, an important question will be which of those principles a performer playing on the modern piano should follow in order to create an accurate performance according to the artistic goals of each composer.
CHAPTER 1: THE ORIGINAL COMPOSITION BY ANTONIO VIVALDI

_L’estro Armonico – Background Information_

What was the inspiration behind this set of concertos and what historical information do we know about the A minor concerto in particular? How were these works received by the audience and fellow composers and performers of the time? This background information is important in order to understand why so many later composers and performers transcribed pieces from this collection.

Vivaldi became the master of the concerto during the years 1711 and 1729 publishing nine collections of concertos both for solo instruments and different combinations such as two violins, four violins, small ensemble and also concertos for double orchestra. _L’ Estro Armonico_ was the first of those concerto sets to appear in 1711 through Vivaldi’s Amsterdam publisher and friend Estienne Roger. They quickly became known through performances by virtuoso musicians who traveled in the northern European countries. This particular set is responsible for the expansion of Antonio Vivaldi’s reputation and his characterization as “Il Prete Rosso” (The Red Priest).

Michael Talbot, a Vivaldi scholar, characterizes _L’ Estro Armonico_ as "perhaps the most influential collection of instrumental music to appear during the whole of the eighteenth century."¹ Behind the success and reputation these concertos brought to Vivaldi—labeling him as the father of the concerto grosso—it seems that the composer had his own source of inspiration borrowing ideas from a number of composers of the time. As Robert Layton points out, _L’Estro Armonico_ expands its stylistic territory both in Roman and Venetian camps, though not always in similar respects. Vivaldi’s Roman model must

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have been a set of concertos by Arcangelo Corelli (Opus 6) published three years after
*L’Estro Armonico*, but as in the case of the last one, they were already well known
through performances of touring virtuosos. H.C. Robbins Landon though refers to the
enormous differences between the Concerti Grossi Op.6 by Corelli and those in the
*L’Estro Armonico* by Vivaldi, comparing the two to Haydn (Corelli) and Mozart
(Vivaldi) characterizing the Corelli concertos as rather impersonal, “a certain stately
impersonality in Corelli’s music.”

The concerto grosso reached its full development by the 1700s and is
categorized essentially by the use of two orchestral forces, unequal in size and
sometimes quality, “fighting” musically with each other. This dialogue offers the
audience a unique experience of bold contrasts between the two ensembles and
sometimes within the larger ensemble itself. These two forces are the concertino, and the
concerto grosso. The first consists of a small number of soloists, most frequently three,
two violins and cello, or two flutes, oboes, or trumpets and a bassoon, accompanied by a
harpsichord realizing the bass line known as the continuo. The second force is the large
orchestra, or a string ensemble in our case, with another harpsichord serving as the
continuo. The members of this group are called ripieni. In many cases a single
harpsichord can serve both the concertino and the concerto grosso.

Marc Pincherle, another Vivaldi scholar, describes the genesis of the concerto
grosso:

As early as 1600, in a concert given at Avignon for the arrival of Marie de
Medici, there appears the genuine plan of the concerto grosso. “There was,”
reports an anonymous account, *Le Labyrinthe royal de l Hercule Gaulois*, which
was brought to light in 1904 by Amédée Gastoué, “a chorus of music for voices
and instruments, under the direction of M. l’ Æschirol [Antoine Esquirol]… They

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2 H. C. Robbins Landon, 43.
began graciously to sing a hymn for two choruses, the one having four select voices, the other full, reinforced chorus.” This plan passed from vocal music with or without instruments to purely instrumental music under the influences of the trio sonata, the opera sinfonia, and after that, the concert sinfonia.³

Although Vivaldi based his concertos for *L’Estro Armonico* on the genre of the concerto grosso, his treatment of the concertino reaches far beyond its time, foreshadowing those principles of the classical concerto and the aesthetics of romanticism.⁴ The soloists of the concertino deviate from the standards of the time, monopolizing interest in terms of range, virtuosity and expressivity. This forces the audience into a more guided listening experience through cohesive lines and multiple layers, all spread out brilliantly using very thoughtful instrumentation. For the concerto No.8 in A minor in particular, Marc Pincherle states:

…The two violins are treated in a soloistic spirit, far removed from that of the Concerto Grosso. Their virtuosity is more venturesome than that displayed in the concertos for solo violin; they give themselves up to the job of arpeggios and brisures that are just as difficult, and they ascend further into the upper range of the instrument.⁵

**Structure and Instrumentation**

The *Concerto Grosso* No.8 in A minor from Vivaldi’s collection *L’Estro Armonico* is scored for two violin solos, strings ensemble and continuo. The three movements carry the following character markings: I. Allegro, II. Larghetto e spiritoso, and III. Allegro, thus following the characteristic fast–slow–fast tempo relationship. The instrumentation calls for two obbligato violin parts functioning as soloists, and also Violins I and II, Violas I and II, Cello and basso continuo for the large ensemble (concerto grosso). The first movement is in ritornello form beginning with three tutti

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⁴ Marc Pincherle, 143.
⁵ Marc Pincherle, 142.
chords setting up the tonality (I–V–i) and recalling the Italian opera-overture of the three initial “hammer strokes” at the head of the ritornello. The middle movement, in free form, is a slow, short composition in the key of D minor where the two violin soloists interact with each other through a melancholic cantabile melody. The string ensemble accompanies them playing a more stable and less decorative melodic line, mainly in unison. The third movement, similar to the first one also in the home key, also contains alternating tutti ritornellos and solo sections. In the third movement, the main ritornello theme, which provides unity throughout the movement, is a scalar figuration in A minor embellished sometimes in thirds and sometimes in sixths descending in parallel motion.

An interesting and effective device, typical for Vivaldi, can be found in this last movement. In the fourth solo episode the second solo violin takes over, playing a cantilena against the accompanying arpeggiated figurations of the first solo violin. This entire section is supported by a minimal accompaniment of the string ensemble.

The overall structure of the two ritornellos of the first and third movements along with their key areas is provided in the following tables:

### I. Allegro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritornello I</th>
<th>Orchestra with soloists</th>
<th>i (tonic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solo I</td>
<td>Soloists (with upper strings</td>
<td>i – III (mediant, C major)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accompaniment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritornello II</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td>VII – iv (sub–dominant, D minor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

| Solo II | Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment) | iv |
| Ritornello III | Orchestra | iv |
| Solo III | Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment) | iv – i |
| Ritornello IV | Orchestra | i (shortened) |
| Solo | Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment) | i |
| Ritornello V | Orchestra with soloists | i |

### III. Allegro

<p>| Ritornello I | Orchestra with soloists | i |
| Solo I | Soloists (with cello and continuo accompaniment) | i |
| Ritornello II | Orchestra | i |
| Solo II | Soloists (no accompaniment) | i – v (E minor) |
| Ritornello III | Orchestra (new thematic material) | v – i |
| Solo III | Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment) | i – III (C major) – i |
| Ritornello IV | Orchestra | i |
| Solo IV | Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment) – cantilena | i |
| Ritornello V | Orchestra | i |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solo V</th>
<th>Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment)</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ritornello VI</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td>i (shortened and accelerated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo VI</td>
<td>Soloists (with upper strings accompaniment)</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritornello VII</td>
<td>Orchestra with soloists</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance Practice in Vivaldi’s Concertos**

Let’s now explore the ways these concertos have been performed during Vivaldi’s time. Questions that we will have to answer are not so much about the technicalities of the performance practice themselves. How the performers realized and executed specific ornaments, how they would improvise in the slow movement, or in which specific parts they would add decorations, is not the main purpose of this analysis. All this information would be very important for a performer or a conductor trying to reproduce the piece in its original form. Bach, as we will see later in this document, didn’t leave much space for uncertainty or performance freedom unlike Vivaldi who expected his performers to embellish the musical score. Things we need to address are the actual sound and timbre of the orchestra, the dynamic contrast options the performers were able to produce, the possibilities of the instruments that a composer had available at the time, and the resonance of the concert hall, which was a crucial variable for a tempo choice, etc. Those are elements that can be partially transferred to another medium. Composers and
performers consequently have to consider these when creating a transcription faithful to the original sound.

Let’s first consider the tempi and its relation to the venues in which the concertos were performed. Performance venues of the baroque era were completely different than the concert halls as we know them today. The resonance was extremely rich and the reverb very long considering the different materials of the walls—usually stone—or the marble panels covering them. Moreover, the height of the ceiling and the shape of the rooms were also significantly different. Nikolaus Harnoncourt mentions:

These architectural characteristics lead to blending sounds together in much more pronounced way. In such a hall, broken chords in fast notes, as found in almost all allegros of the time, sound like dramatically vibrating chords, rather than finely chiseled, as in modern concert halls.\(^7\)

Such a large echo in the concert hall would make someone assume that in order for a performer to be able to produce a clear sound and be able to articulate the notes, they would have to play in a much slower tempo. But this is not true, since many sources report the fact that music in the beginning of the eighteenth century was actually being played with almost metronomical precision, and the choices of the tempi were faster than the ones chosen for the same music nowadays. Harnoncourt explains that our modern conceptions about tempo about music coming from the Baroque period come from the monumentalization of this music through the romantic era and also from our mistrust in the performance skills of musicians of the time.\(^8\) But we also have to consider Johann Mattheson’s point that “Rules are based on aural perceptions (“observations aurium”) of what produces euphony and what discordancy, and the ideas of what sounds well and


\(^8\) Nikolaus Harnoncourt, 112
what not, differs with time and taste.”

But how was it possible to play in a faster tempo and have the listener hear the different instrumental qualities and musical phrases? At this point we have to consider that the instruments were built in very different ways than the modern ones. During the nineteenth century, the orchestra went through a dramatic reformation in order to be able to support the musical ideas and characteristics of romantic music. The orchestra became larger and the idea of blending all the instruments of each category under one unified sound came to the forefront. The principle of a homophonic, integrated sound in the strings section for example, where the audience would listen to the entire first violin section as one, was something developed during the romantic era. This ideal of blending was not an element of the ensemble in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The sound of the orchestra was much smaller due to the construction of the instruments of the time, which had a much sharper, more aggressive and colorful sound. Each instrument had its own character and could be easily identified. Two major instruments in the baroque ensemble were the violin and the harpsichord, with the last one realizing the continuo harmony. Its role can be compared to that of the double basses in the modern orchestra and also the conductor, since there wasn’t one, by providing the rhythm section through its characteristic wiry sound. As Harnoncourt reports, the violins of the baroque era had a weak sound compared to modern ones. Even the master violins, so called “Baroque Violins,” built around the beginning of the eighteenth century—and still in use—were rebuilt around 1800 in order to serve the qualities of the romantic standards.

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10 Nikolaus Harnoncourt, 117
11 Nikolaus Harnoncourt, 113
The beginning and middle of the eighteenth century is also the period where music expressiveness was enriched with a greater pallet of dynamics. We typically think that music during this time was characterized by so called “terrace dynamics.” The term characterizes dynamics moving from loud to soft and back to loud with no levels in between. Moreover, the lack of crescendos and decrescendos is another contemporary belief. Later, towards the middle of the century, the Mannheim School emphasized these sudden dynamic changes even more, making the perception about “terrace dynamics” even greater. Such a belief about dynamics is not truly correct, especially in Vivaldi’s music. If we go through Vivaldi’s compositions we can record a great range of dynamic markings includingpp. Its meaning in the baroque period was not pianissimo, but rather più piano.  

Walter Kolneder in his book *Performance practice in Vivaldi*, offers two examples, the first one from the last movement of PV 111 (Ex.1.1) and the second from the end of the first movement in PV 344 (Op.10 No.3) (Ex. 1.2) that provide evidence of what we would call today crescendo and diminuendo.

*Ex.1.1*

![Ex.1.1](image)

*Ex.1.2*

![Ex.1.2](image)

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These are elements that a transcriber needs to take into consideration when transferring those pieces to a different medium. In examining Vivaldi’s works, we can report the following range in dynamic markings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynamic Marking</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pianissimo</td>
<td>pp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mezzo forte</td>
<td>più f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano molto</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un poco forte</td>
<td>ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano assai</td>
<td>quasi p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzo p</td>
<td>f molto(^{13})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This short table contradicts the perception of “terrace dynamics” in the particular Italian framework in which Vivaldi created his works.

One last instruction that can also be found in this particular concerto to explore is the cantabile style. As Walter Kolneder suggests it should be understood to mean “molto espressivo” with free dynamics; originally it probably meant “in imitation of the singing style.”\(^{14}\) Later in his treatise on performance practice in Vivaldi’s music, Kolneder refers to the “inherent crescendos” or “Crescendowalzen” and diminuendos respectively. Those are crescendo or diminuendo effects implied by the harmonic line or the orchestration. An ascending basso continuo formula in Ex.1.3 would suggest that the performer increase dynamics while a descending line as in the Ex.1.4 would imply a hidden diminuendo.

\(^{13}\) Walter Kolneder, 19
\(^{14}\) Walter Kolneder, 21
Ex. 1.3

Such a representative line from the concerto No.8 in A minor with an “inherent diminuendo” can be found in the passage starting on measure 14 of the first movement Allegro. The dynamic marking preceding the phrase is $f$ (forte) leading to a $p$ (piano) marking on m.16:

Another example, even more representative of a diminuendo effect occurs in the beginning of the second movement at measures 1 through 5 where Vivaldi suggests a gradual diminuendo from a $p$ marking in measure 1 to the pianissimo sempre in measure 5:
Finally, the last point I want to mention in this performance practice section concerns the realization of the continuo. For the notation and numbering of the basso continuo, Vivaldi used a practice already well known in Italy in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Amsterdam publisher Estienne Roger was already aware of those practices. There is no doubt that in these premier editions the figurations were added by the publisher himself or under Vivaldi’s orders through a collaborator.\textsuperscript{15} Kolneder mentions that we have only one example of how Vivaldi wanted the figured bass realized. In the second movement of the concerto for violin and organ PV 311, where the violin is accompanied only by the organ, the figured bass is realized and written out by Vivaldi himself (Ex.1.5). From this particular example we get extremely valuable information. If we look closely we will discover that the realized figured bass is written out in the same register as the violin, resulting in unusual sound combinations. Vivaldi would also have the option to realize the figured base in a lower register. Such practice would have probably offered a much clearer distribution of voices, making the accompaniment more recognizable by the listener. The placement in the same register makes the texture much more unified and gives the accompaniment a more coherent,

\textsuperscript{15} Walter Kolneder, 61
prominent and collaborative role along with the solo line. This is probably a practice that Vivaldi had favored and used quite often.\textsuperscript{16} This element makes the later Bach transcription very ‘reliable’ and the task itself so much easier. By placing the realized harmony in the same register as the two violin parts, Bach stayed faithful to the original score.

\textsuperscript{16} Walter Kolneder, 63
CHAPTER 2: TRANSFERRING THE COMPOSITION FROM THE ORCHESTRA TO
THE ORGAN

Why did Bach Transcribe the Concerto?

How did Bach discover Vivaldi’s *L’ Estro Armonico*? Robert Layton reports that Bach probably heard part of the set in performances in Weimar, played by touring musicians even before those concertos were published.\(^{17}\) Hans–Joachim Schulze reports on the opportunities Bach had to listen, perform and study Vivaldi’s concertos when Prince Johann Ernst of Sachsen–Weimar returned from his university studies in Utrecht.\(^{18}\) Thanks to the Prince, it seems that Weimar built a reputation as a center of concerto performances. Philipp David Kräuter, a student of Bach, in a letter written in 1713, mentions the opportunity of listening to performances of concertos in the Italian and French style. Such an experience during this time would be invaluable for a young musician to learn how to compose concertos and overtures.\(^{19}\) Bach must have been fascinated by these works as they were a great opportunity to discover the Venetian style concerto. Forkel explains how drastically Bach’s compositional style changed due to the great influence of Vivaldi’s works.

Between 1713 and 1714, Bach is believed to have transcribed over twenty pieces by various composers for the keyboard. These composers included Vivaldi, Benedetto Marcello, Telemann, the talented Prince of Weimar Johann Ernst, and some that still remain unknown. The first editions of these keyboard transcriptions would either imply

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\(^{17}\) Robert Layton, 12.
that all these works had a starting point of one single source (probably Vivaldi), or they would just name the set as Keyboard Transcriptions without mentioning any sources. Only the organ concertos carried the subtitle “Nach Vivaldi.” It was the Peters and then the Bachgesellschaft editions of the sixteen harpsichord concertos and the four organ concertos that led historians to seek for the originals. The original sources gradually came to life many years later. In 1850 C. L. Hilgenfeldt (in his book Johann Sebastian Bach’s Leven, Wirken und Werke) revealed that the fourth harpsichord concerto was the tenth from L’ Estro Armonico. Julius Rühlmann traced the second harpsichord concerto to Vivaldi’s Opus 7 Book 2, No.2, and finally Philipp Spitta and Count Waldersee supplied information about other works from the set.20

Forkel mentions that it was through these transcriptions that Bach developed his musical language. He started shaping his organized idiomatic writing based upon a much more clear structure and started “to think musically.”21 In Marc’s Pincherle’s book about Vivaldi, we find an important statement by Forkel, referring to the drastic change of Bach’s style after studying and transcribing the concertos:

Bach’s first attempts at composition, like all early efforts, were unsatisfactory. Lacking any special instruction that would have directed him toward a goal, he was compelled to do what he could in his own way, like others who have set out upon such a career without guidance. […] Bach does not long follow this course. He early sensed that this endless rushing and leaping would lead to nothing. He realized that musical ideas need to be brought into other and logical relationship, and that, to attain this end, one needs a model. Vivaldi’s violin concertos, just then being published, gave him the guidance he needed. He so often heard them cited as outstanding compositions that he thereby hit upon the happy idea of transcribing them as a group for the keyboard. Hence he studied the progression of the ideas and their relations, variety in modulation, and many other things. The process of adapting the ideas and phrases that were conceived for the violin and which were not suited to the keyboard taught him to think musically, so that, after completing his work, he no longer had to receive his ideas from his fingers

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20 David Schulenberg, 230.
21 David Schulenberg, 90.
but could draw them from his own imagination.\textsuperscript{22}

But what was the actual motivation and inspiration behind Bach’s task of transcribing the concertos? It seems that the answer is rather practical. For many years, and during the end of the seventeenth century, the music publication industry was still in embryonic stages. Most of the scores by contemporary composers were circulated in their original manuscript form. When \textit{L’Estro Armonico} concertos were first published, they appeared only in parts and not as a three–part score with a basso continuo, which was the common practice of the time. So it was not only the fascinating comments and critiques Bach heard about those concertos that brought them to his attention, but also the practical challenge of putting all the parts together in a single score. Because of those separate parts, Bach challenged himself in a very artistic way: he filled “gaps” between voices and at the same time practiced the Italian galant style. Additionally, realization of the harmony from the provided \textit{figured bass} would have been a great pedagogical study for his sons and pupils.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, from an artistic perspective, the Vivaldi pieces, as Peter Barley suggests, “translate idiomatically to the organ, offering a variety of different texture that suit contrasting sonorities.”\textsuperscript{24}

Howard–Jones also provides practical reasons why Bach decided to transfer these concertos to the organ. He supports the idea that Bach didn’t have access to a modern orchestra during his years in Weimar and the ensembles available were rather haphazard in their construction. With a poor execution of sound, mainly because of the instruments and the abilities of the performers, those pieces would have taken a great amount of preparation for a public performance. Moreover, by putting these effective pieces into his

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Marc Pincherle, 224–225.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Marc Pincherle, 226.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Peter Barley. “A handful of transcriptions”, \textit{Choir and Organ}. 9 No.3 (May/Jun 2001): 75
\end{itemize}
own hands he was able to make all the artistic choices immediately and come up with a first-rate performance available at any time.\textsuperscript{25}

Valuable musical information can be found in those original concertos, which are priceless to a young developing composer such as Bach. The twenty–year old Bach must have gained ideas mostly about motivic structure and how figuration works in the Baroque period. These concertos were a great opportunity for a study in form and large movement architecture in the ritornello form, with regular periodic phrasing and the idea of repetition. This last element taught Bach how to provide unity in a large–scale work, how small structural units form large sections, and how recurring themes unify movements. One more impressive element that can be found in those concertos, No.8 in particular, is the idea of recapitulation. This structural element transforms the ritornello form into an early, expanded binary, sonata–like form,\textsuperscript{26} which can be found later in the classical concertos by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

**Tracing the Classical Concerto Structure**

If we take a closer look at the overall concerto structure according to the table provided earlier in this document, it would not be misleading to make the case that, in this particular composition, we can trace an embryonic form of the later classical keyboard concerto. The idea of the fast–slow–fast movement order, with the first movement organized as a Sonata Allegro Form and the last one as a Rondo, is present, but only in terms of theme appearances and not on a harmonic structural basis. In fact, in the first movement we find some of the “appropriate” keys that a Sonata Allegro Form would


\textsuperscript{26} David Schulenberg, 92.
explore, with a middle, development–like section exploring the subdominant key area. An emphasis on the dominant with a pedal point in E can be found in measure 62, serving as a Retransition section before the theme reappears in the tonic. We can even find a Coda at the sections serving as the last solo and ritornello episodes. With the last movement, which can serve as the Rondo in a classical concert, things are much easier and assumptions can be made more convincingly. The ritornello theme appears always—with only one exception where it is shortened—in its entirety and always in the home key between each episode. In the following table a comparison between the ritornello form and Sonata Allegro Form is provided for the first movement, along with the form elements, themes and key areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Ritornello Form</th>
<th>Sonata Allegro Form</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Key Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>P (m. 1–4)</td>
<td>A minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td></td>
<td>S (m. 16–18)</td>
<td>A minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>A minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modulation to C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C major -&gt; PAC to E minor on m.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>New Lyrical</td>
<td>D minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Transcription Method

Before exploring the methods Bach used for his organ transcription of the concerto, I would like to offer the definition that Evlyn Howard–Jones provides about the distinction between transcriptions and arrangements:
By the time of Bach and Handel we find the growth of the instrumental idiom so far advanced that transference from one medium to another was a definite act of differentiation, and Bach in the Vivaldi case acknowledged the fact of the re-writing contained in his version. [...] The distinction between an arrangement and a transcription—the first being as far as possible a transference to the keyboard of the actual notes of the original, the second a new conception or recreation of the idea in terms of the new medium…

Bach’s methods for his transcriptions of these concertos by Vivaldi for the keyboard range from literal keyboard reductions from the orchestral parts to more liberal practices including embellishments of the treble, bass and inner voices. More complex practices include new counter melodies and imitation and filling out “blanks”—where rests can be found originally—between blocks of chords serving only as modulatory passages. Bach leaves no space for extra improvisation, the common performance practice of the time, and completes the score with very clear instructions on where and how embellishments or ornaments should be executed. Usually the slow movements of these concertos were the appropriate and most common place for the soloists to present their ideas and abilities to create embellishments and improvisatory passages. Some of these slow movements in Vivaldi’s concertos are already heavily embellished by the composer himself. In such cases Bach did not interfere with the original and transferred these sections to the keyboard as they were. Examples of this can be found in the organ concertos No.1, 2 and 7.

**Performance Practice in the Transcription**

By transferring the original work to the keyboard, Bach had to resolve many problems arising from performance practice issues of the time. For example, orchestral effects had to be transferred and be as effective on the keyboard and the organ in...
particular as they were originally when played by the ensemble. Arranging the music from an orchestral ensemble to a smaller medium is challenging by itself. If we also consider that this medium is the organ—an instrument where someone needs to be able to switch between different registers, control multiple manuals and play the pedals at the same time—that makes the whole process much less flexible and complicated. Organs of that time also lacked electrical air support for immediate register switching unlike the response of modern organs. This was also something that Bach needed to consider.

Certain gestures of the Italian orchestra of the time, such as the repeated notes and chords on the strings, were not only ineffective on the keyboard but were also impossible to execute as originally written by a single hand. This particular element, known as “bow vibrato” or “slurred tremolo,” was presented by Bach in his orchestral works with a slur above each of those gestures, indicating that the player should not rearticulate each note but instead pulse the bow above those notes and create something like a short measured shimmer.\(^{28}\) Translating this technique to the keyboard, Bach intended for all of these gestures not to be forced but rather performed with a light, crisp articulation in order to avoid a heavy texture. That seemed to be the best solution in order to be as close as possible to the original orchestral effect.

Range and timbre of the instrument was another issue challenging Bach when transferring the string parts to the organ. In many of his transcriptions we see that Bach transposes the whole composition down to another key. In Howard Shanet’s article in *The Musical Quarterly* we find an explanatory quote by the musicologist Hans T. David, sharing his thoughts about the transposition process in Bach’s transcriptions:

> Whenever Bach arranged a violin concerto for the keyboard instrument

\(^{28}\) David Schulenberg, 93.
(harpsichord) he transposed it down a full tone. This astonishing fact is hard to explain. As Bach transposed the scores, not single parts, we can be sure that the transposition was not due to differences in pitch or notation. One might be inclined to think that Bach carried out the transposition because the harpsichord had a restricted range but the change of details rather than of the entire composition would have solved this problem more easily. Thus we must conclude that considerations of sonority impelled him to change the tonality of the concertos. By the transposition, in fact, he achieved a considerably better balance, since the harpsichord was more brilliant in the lower pitch while the strings lost their piercing quality. 29

The next important feature of the new medium to transcribe the original music was the use of two manuals. This would not only be useful to the performer during the execution of overlapping melodic lines, but would also help the representation of dynamic differences between the tutti and the solo sections of the ritornello form. This also raises a rather technical performance challenge for the player, namely how to pair the manuals together (in the case of a harpsichord) or change the registers on the organ while performing such a complicated text often in a fast movement. Bach in many cases had to double the parts in unison and thicken the texture by inserting the realized harmony from the continuo into the upper voices. The following chapter will examine specific solutions that the composer provided in the concerto No.8 in A minor.

**From the Orchestra to the Organ**

A quote by Sir Donald Tovey highlights an important element in Bach’s perception about music: “Bach always wrote on the principle, not that music is written for instruments but that instruments (including the human voice) are made for music.” 30

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A comprehensive comparison between the original composition by Vivaldi and the organ transcription by Bach will be provided next. A comparison between different editions has been made before choosing the final editions for this comparison, and no significant alterations has been found between them. In Bach’s case, the 2008 Les Éditions Outremontaises refers to the original work by Vivaldi in a short introductory preface, but other than that, the music itself is the same. The editions chosen for this comparison are: Antonio Vivaldi, *L’Estro Armonico Concerto for Two Violins in A minor Op.3 No.8 (RV 522)*, Edited by Alfred Einstein. Masters Music Publications, Inc. – Master Study Score Series, and Johan Sebastian Bach, *Organ Concerto in A minor BWV 593*, Edited by Ernst Naumann (1832–1910). Bach–Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 38, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig: 1891.

**Movement I – Allegro:**

The first thing we observe in the organ score, right from the first measure, is that the basso continuo line has been realized by Bach.

In *mm. 2–3* the notes C and D have been added in Bach’s score to keep the 6\(^{\text{th}}\) interval. In *mm.4–5* the notes from the basso continuo are missing. The relationship in thirds of the Violin I parts has been broken and only Violin I has been kept. The same happens in the viola parts. Finally a simple harmonic movement of the bass line played by the pedal has replaced the basso continuo line:
Ex. 2.1 (Vivaldi – Bach)

In mm. 6–8 Bach again breaks the relationship of thirds in the violin parts, giving more importance to the Violin I melodic line. In the bass line he writes out the continuo harmony with a broken chord figuration, creating a counter melody with the second half of the measure (beats 3 and 4). The pedal has the basso continuo line. Following that, on m.9, Bach’s note on the pedal is E instead of G# that can be found in Vivaldi’s continuo:

Ex. 2.2 – m.9 (Vivaldi – Bach)

In m.12 in Vivaldi’s score, the full A minor chord enters an eighth earlier than in Bach’s score (beat 4). Bach probably made this choice to increase the dramatic effect. In the following measure the melodic line has being changed. Violin II and Violin II solo lines have been omitted. Retardation of the rhythm in Bach’s score has been applied. On beats
3 and 4 the viola and continuo contrasting lines have been replaced by a simpler walking bass line played by the pedal. In m.16 Bach has applied the same treatment of the melodic line as in m. 13. Moreover, the viola rhythm has been changed to a more syncopated one in Bach’s score. In the following measure, the trill on beat 4 in missing in Bach’s score.

In mm. 19–21 a new counter melody has been added in the organ transcription:

Ex. 2.3 – mm.19–21 (Vivaldi – Bach)

In the section, starting on m. 25, Bach transposed the Violin II Solo part an octave lower to create a relationship of a sixth with Violin I Solo:
Following m.25 the trills are missing on mm.26–27 (Ex.2.4).

In mm. 28–29 a new counter melody has been added in the bass line in Bach’s score.

The note G is added to emphasize the harmony and the note B on beat 4 is introduced earlier probably for a better keyboard writing:

*Ex. 2.5 (Vivaldi – Bach)*
In mm. 30–34 Bach does not reintroduce the continuo in the pedal line. Instead he introduces a counter melody in the left hand that corresponds with the melodic line of the right hand (Violin I Solo). Skipping to mm. 37–39 Bach adds the root note on beats 1 and 3 to emphasize the harmony. At the end of the phrase again he simplifies the Basso Continuo and Viola parts (final statement of m. 39):

Ex. 2.6 – mm.37–39 (Bach)

In the next section in mm.40–42 we find the same treatment as in mm. 6 through 8. On beats 3 and 4 of measure 42, we see a relation of a sixth between the continuo and violin solos in Bach’s score instead of the original third relation.

In m. 43 on beats 1 and two the Violin II solo part has been transposed an octave lower and on beats 3 and 4 the Violin II of the string ensemble has been omitted. In the next measure on beats 1 and two Violin I notes are omitted and Bach breaks the scalar pattern altering it to prepare the diminished broken chord descending pattern. Moreover, on beats 3 and 4 the Violin II part has been transposed an octave lower:
In m. 46 on beats 1 and two the Violin II part has been extended all the way to the note B and on beats 3 and 4 a new counter melody has been added in Bach’s score in the middle voices (Ex.2.8). Following that, in m.47 Bach has connected the direct modulation to D minor and filled out the eighth rest by adding a counter scalar melody:

Ex.2.8 – mm.46–47 (Vivaldi – Bach)
In m. 48 the Violin II part has been transposed an octave lower in Bach’s score. Jumping to m. 51 Bach has replaced the trill symbol with a mordent. Moreover, in the same measure, the first ritornello reappears in D minor with both soloists and orchestra playing tutti. Bach omits the basso continuo line here and instead adds the indication *organo pleno* to suggest a switch to full dynamics on the organ stops. In m.54, the basso continuo and viola parts have been omitted in Bach’s score. In m.62 the basso continuo and Viola parts have been simplified to the point where they just provide the harmony. In Vivaldi’s score we see the dynamic marking *forte*, which has been replaced by the indication *organo pleno* referring to a shifting of the stops of the organ to provide full dynamics. Bach, in m.65 has omitted the second violin line (so–fa–mi–re–do) that can originally be found on beat two:

*Ex. 2.9 – m.65 (Vivaldi – Bach)*
Mm.68–71 is the same as the beginning, and it is also the place where we have the concept of recapitulation to which Marc Pincherle referred earlier. The only difference here is that in Bach’s transcription we find the indication *oberwerk*, which refers to a more powerful sound required from the organ stops. In the section in mm.71–78 the viola part has been moved to the Pedal and Violin II part to the right hand, while for the violin I part Bach provides a slight variation, probably for better keyboard writing and introduces it into the left hand.

*Ex. 2.10 – measures 73–74 (Vivaldi – Bach)*

Continuing in m.89, the trill found in the original is missing in Bach’s score. Finally in m.93 a full A minor chord has replaced the original notes A and C.
Movement II – Larghetto e spirituoso (Adagio)

The first major difference we need to address here is that Vivaldi’s tempo indication is Larghetto e spirituoso while Bach has changed that to Adagio, which is slightly faster. In the Oxford Music Dictionary, David Fallows explains that the word Larghetto found in Vivaldi’s score seems to have come into use early in the 18th century. Brossard, in his 1703 *Dictionnaire*, did not mention it at all. Rousseau, on the other hand, in his 1768 article ‘Mouvement’ presented it as one of the main adjustments of tempo and described it as being ‘a little less slow than largo.’ H.C. Koch: in his 1802 *Musikalisches Lexikon* said it was ‘normally the same as andante.’ 31 About the Adagio marking now, things seem to be more vague since according to the performance practice during the seventeenth century any piano section was meant to be played slow, and in many cases such as in Frescobaldi’s music, *adagio* was a style of playing rather than a tempo marking. 32 Brossard, again in the 1703 *Dictionnaire* translated the Adagio as ‘comfortable, at one's ease, without hurrying,’ but added that it usually meant ‘slowly, dragging the beat a little.’ 33 It is also worth mentioning that Quantz in 1752 explained that *adagio* can be executed differently according to which style of embellishment the performer is going to apply to the movement:

The adagio may be viewed in two ways with respect to the manner in which it should be played and embellished; that is, it may be viewed in accordance with the French or the Italian style. The first requires a clean and sustained execution of the air, and embellishment with the essential graces, such as appoggiaturas,

whole and half–shakes, mordents, turns, battemens, flattemens etc., but no extensive passage–work or significant addition of extempore embellishments. [...] In the second manner, that is, the Italian, extensive artificial graces that accord with the harmony are introduced in the adagio in addition to the little French embellishments.  

One more difference between the first and the third movements, and the second as well, is that Bach has chosen not to use the pedal and therefore transfered all the parts to the keyboard (Senza Pedale a due Clav.).

Let’s now continue with the thorough comparison between Vivaldi’s original work and Bach’s transcription for the organ.

In m. 8 the trill is missing in Bach’s score. In the next measure Violins I, II and Violin II solo have been transposed an octave lower. Continuing in m.12 the trill is missing in Bach’s score. In m.13 Violin I, II and Viola part are back to their original octave. Violin II Solo notes are missing on the third beat in m.19 in Bach’s score:

Ex. 2.11 – m.19 (Vivaldi – Bach)

In m.21 note A is added as an ornament and in m.23 instead of the trill of the solo Violins I and II, Bach has written out a similar version without the trill:

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Ex. 2.12 (Vivaldi – Bach)

In m. 26 Violin I Solo has been transposed an octave lower. Because of this transposition the two voices are now in sixths instead of thirds in m.30. In the next measure the note D has been added as an ornament and the Violin Solo I part has been transposed back to its original octave in Bach’s score. In m.32 Violin I Solo, Violin I, II and Viola parts have been transposed an octave lower and in the next measure Violin I Solo, Violin I, II and Viola parts have been transferred back to their original octave. The trills are missing in Bach’s score in m.36 and m.40.

Movement III – Allegro

In the section of mm.14–16 Bach has replaced all the trills with mordents. In measure 16, an extra mordent ornament has been added on the note G#. Extra notes on beat 3 of those measures have been added in order to emphasize the arrival of the next chord:
In m.17: The note E has been added and in m.22 and .24 the trill has been replaced by a mordent. The Violin II Solo has been transposed an octave lower in mm.23–25.

In the section starting on measure 37, the accompaniment pattern has been altered. This results in a retardation of the rhythm probably to provide a better figuration for the keyboard:
Ex. 2.14 – m.37–38 (Vivaldi – Bach)

In mm.45–50 Bach has transcribed the chords in the close position, again to make the whole texture more accessible for the hand. Continuing in mm.51–59 Bach has transferred the Viola part to the left hand of the keyboard. Moreover, he has also thickened out the bass line of the basso continuo by splitting it into a two-octave movement:

Ex. 2.15 – mm.51–61 (Bach)

In mm.59–63 Bach has filled out the space between the chords by adding a motion in
thirds from the one chord to the next (Ex.2.16). In the harmonic chain found on mm.66–74, Bach has used the motion in thirds that he introduced in mm. 59–63 to create a counter melody in the left hand while he also incorporated all the instrumental lines of the repeated chords into the right hand.

*Ex. 2.16 – mm. 66–73 (Bach)*

In mm. 75–81 Bach has introduced the sixteenth–note figuration a bit later (beat two) and has added a short melodic line on the first beat. Finally he splits the pattern in both hands. The transcriber here has chosen to introduce these three notes in m75 to provide continuity with the previous ritornello section and ease the transition between the ritornello and solo sections. By splitting the texture between the hands, Bach makes the pattern much easier to execute and he manages to keep the articulation as clear as in the original. Moreover, by placing the melody in different manuals, Bach provides even more clarity since the quality of the sound created by the two manuals is different.
In mm. 83 and 85 the line has become more complicated by the addition of sixteenth notes moving in thirds on beats 2 and 3, something that we will later observe in Feinberg’s transcription:

In mm. 86–113 the Violin I and II parts have been transposed an octave lower. The melodic line has been altered in mm. 103–104 and mm. 110–113. In mm. 128–131 the basso continuo has been transposed an octave higher. Bach has omitted the violin figurations of Violin I Solo in mm. 132–141 and instead had introduced a new accompaniment for the left hand, which follows the harmony (Ex. 2.19). In the final statement of m. 142 and m. 143 instead of the original unison notes by Vivaldi, Bach has written this descending scalar line with full chords in parallel motion split between the
two hands:

Ex. 2.19 – mm. 130–148 (Vivaldi – Bach)
The Bach Approach

After the completion of this detailed comparison we realize that Bach managed to create a very effective and faithful transcription of the original concerto. He tried to accommodate most of the performance practice of this concerto when played by the string ensemble and the soloists. The organ, a versatile instrument capable of producing numerous sound qualities, served the composer appropriately and helped him split the voices in different layers. Bach made use of the majority of capabilities of the new instrument by placing the voices in two different keyboards and the pedals. With the
organ’s stops, Bach was able to create a balanced outcome between each layer and bring out the leading voices by placing them on different keyboards or shifting between multiple stop settings. As we observed earlier in the comparison, the main principle of his transcription method is the placing of the solo or “singing” voice in the right hand, the reduction of the string instruments’ accompaniment in the left hand and a combination of the continuo and cello base lines on the pedals.

Moreover, Bach took the artistic freedom to enhance the composition in order to make it more effective on the organ. He was aware that the original tempo was not possible since one performer would now have to execute all different voices at the same time. This particular challenge gave him the opportunity of embellishing the original work in order to make it more effective while performed in this new medium. He added extra melodic lines, mainly in the third movement and filled out gaps between modulatory chord passages that originally would have been played in a faster tempo. These extra melodic lines to connect the chords in the third movement for example, would have not been necessary if played in a faster tempo as originally written. With this addition, Bach managed to support the flow of these passages and provided more continuity to the piece. Bach finally adopted many passages to fit the keyboard appropriately and make them easier to be executed. A perfect example of such treatment is the solo episode starting on m.75 of the last movement where Bach splits the texture between the two hands and presents it with a more chordal texture.

Although the organ served Bach’s intentions brilliantly—by being one of the most developed keyboard instruments of the baroque era—there are still limitations in the representation of the qualities of the original instruments. The organ is incapable of
producing different dynamics under the same keyboard and in gestures played very close to each other. The organist will have to switch between different manuals that their stops should have been set in advance in order to create a difference in dynamics and tone quality. The composer should be very careful to place the leading melodic line in a different register otherwise it will be lost under the complexity of the accompaniment and the powerful bass line of the pedals. In the piano transcriptions that we will examine later in this document, the performer has the unique ability to “shape” each phrase appropriately (most likely the way the original violins would do), build extra resonance using the sustain pedal, create a difference in tone quality by using not only a different touch on the keyboard but also by using the *una corda* pedal. However the piano lacks all the different manuals that the organ has and that makes the performance of a transcription even more complicated since the performer has to balance all the voices appropriately relying only on two hands. However the principles and the approach to the original work through piano transcriptions, especially during the romantic era are completely different and these will be presented later in this document.
CHAPTER 3: TRANSFERRING THE COMPOSITION FROM THE ORGAN TO PIANO

Samuil Feinberg – Background Information

In 1918, almost two centuries after Bach’s arrangement of Vivaldi’s concerto, Samuil Yevgenievich Feinberg was attracted to the beauty of this particular piece and decided to transcribe the work himself for piano. Samuil Feinberg was born in Odessa on May 26, 1880 and died in Moscow on October 22, 1962 due to a serious heart illness. Four years after his birth, his family moved to Moscow where Feinberg entered the conservatory after showing an extreme talent and attraction to the piano. After studying with the great pianist and teacher Alexander Goldenweiser, a student of Pavel Pabst (1854–1897) and promoter of Franz Liszt’s compositions and pedagogical work, Feinberg graduated from the Moscow conservatory in 1911 and started a successful career as a performer in Europe. During these years of study with Goldenweiser, Feinberg performed the fourth piano sonata by Alexander Scriabin for the composer himself, where Scriabin characterized his performance as one of the most convincing that had ever heard.\(^{35}\) Beside his beliefs against any form of self-promotion, during the 1920s Feinberg became extremely famous in Europe with his performances of Bach’s Well Tempered Clavier, Beethoven sonatas and Scriabin sonatas in Italy, Germany, Austria and Venice in particular. During these concerts, Feinberg also presented premieres of new works by contemporary Russian composers as well as his own compositions. He was a member of the Association of Contemporary Music in Russia (ASM)—although

according to his colleagues, he was the most conservative of all—and he was also the first to perform Prokofiev’s piano concerto No.3. Feinberg was also the first Russian to record the whole cycle of Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier and the second internationally after the recording by Edwin Fisher. His repertoire included most works by Frederic Chopin, Robert Schumann, all the Beethoven piano sonatas and all the Scriabin sonatas. Feinberg would typically perform the complete cycle of Scriabin sonatas in two programs.36

In 1922, Feinberg became a professor at the Moscow Conservatory and had a brilliant career as a teacher. His students included Victor Karpovich Merzhanov and Mikhail Sokolov, who both performed most of his compositional output during his lifetime.37 His major philosophical and pedagogical treatise, which was published after his death by his students, as part of his last will, was the book *Pianism as an Art*. In 1924, the American critic Carl Engel characterized Feinberg as a musical genius in the Musical Quarterly.38 In 1937 he was honored as Artist of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) and in 1946 he was awarded the Stalin Prize. Nowadays, Feinberg is considered among the great figures of piano performance equal to those of Sofronitsky and Neuhaus.39

Feinberg had to minimize his appearances as a solo performer after 1930 due to a heart illness and dedicated himself to teaching, studio recording and composing. He was also included in the juries of numerous international piano competitions. During his study at the conservatory, Feinberg took private compositional lessons with Nikolai Zhilyayev.

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37 Jonathan Powell
38 Christophe Sirodeau
39 Jonathan Powell
His compositional output includes 12 sonatas for solo piano, 3 concertos for piano and orchestra, transcriptions and arrangements, and numerous chamber works as well as many pieces for piano and voice. His pianistic compositional style is highly influenced by those of Alexander Scriabin, Robert Schumann, and Sergei Rachmaninoff especially up to his fourth piano sonata. From the fourth sonata and up to the end of his life, Feinberg developed his own compositional language, which fused the atonal sounds of the era with contrapuntal techniques. Christophe Sirodeau identifies two compositional periods in Feinberg’s life. The first from 1910 to 1933 is characterized by highly virtuosic writing, extreme use of chromaticism, use of violent and bold contrasting figurations, and the symbolism of nature, probably influenced by Scriabin’s works. In the second period from 1934 up to the end of his life, Feinberg progressively aimed towards simplicity, focusing more on melodic elements within a more diatonic style reminiscent of Sergei Prokofiev. His last piano sonata No.12, a homage to the composers Feinberg most appreciated, is a collage of different musical styles. The first movement represents the style of Chopin, the second of Ravel and Schumann, and the final movement of Johannes Brahms.

**From the Organ to the Piano**

Feinberg transcribed this concerto in A minor in 1918 and as his original source used Bach’s transcription for the organ as we will understand from the comparison between the two works. He included all the extra notes and passages that Bach had

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41 Christophe Sirodeau
42 Christophe Sirodeau
43 Leni Bogat
already added to the original music by Vivaldi. Examining his work in comparison with Bach’ reveals a gradual development of his musical language and personal involvement in the transcriptions. Feinberg stays more “faithful” to the original only in the first movement where he even indicates the melodic parts he adds. Soon after the start of the second movement Feinberg adds two extra voices to the overall movement and enriches the thickness of the texture by adding extra notes to complete the chordal passages. In the third movement, Feinberg uses the original text only as a tool to indicate the melody of the overall movement. He explores different pianistic textures and accompanimental possibilities in order to make this final section more dramatic, complex and technically challenging for the performer.

The Editions used for this comparison are:

**Movement I – Allegro:**

In m.1 Feinberg has realized the chords in a more ‘pianistic’ way. The left hand plays three open chords in the beginning. Following that, the outer voices have been kept as in Bach’s score both for the soprano voice and the pedal bass line. The melodic line in the right hand has been doubled in octaves. Finally it is interesting to notice that Feinberg has
transferred the voices from the organ and placed them in different layers (Ex. 2.3.1).

In mm.2–5 the pedal has been doubled in octaves in Feinberg’s score. In mm. 4 and 5 Feinberg omits every other eighth–note from the lowest voice of the left hand from Bach’s score and focuses on the complete chord that can be reached by the right hand. In the second half of the beat he completes the harmony. He stays very faithful to the transcription by providing rests in this particular voice for the notes are missing:

Ex.3.1

In mm. 6–8 again the melodic part has been kept in the highest voices and the left hand now carries both the pedal and the left hand parts from the organ score. Pedal notes have been doubled in octaves but only on beats 1 and 3, and then, on beats 2 and 4 the left hand receives the sixteenth notes from the organ left hand line. In m.6 Feinberg spells the chords differently for better voicing purposes. For example, on beats 3 and 4, the F not is added and on beat 3 the B has been transferred to the right hand. Moreover, on the same
beats 3 and 4, instead of the D and B notes of the left hand, found in the organ score, Feinberg changed that to D and G in order to emphasize the pedal point:

*Ex.3.2 – m.6–8 (Bach – Feinberg)*

In mm.9–13 Feinberg doubles the melody in octaves and also reinforces the harmony and the sustained pedal point by re–striking the E7 chord adding at the same time a *sf* marking, resulting into the breaking the pulse of this long unit into smaller parts (Ex.3.3). In m.13 in particular we see that Feinberg has kept the right hand as in the original while he has realized the chords and harmony of the left hand in open chords requiring big leaps from the hand. This writing will provide a natural small retardation in order for the performer to reach these chords—a very appropriate device to serve for the performance practice of the baroque, which requires a small ritardando in cadential points⁴⁴:

⁴⁴ Nikolaus Harnoncourt, 112
Continuing in mm.14–16 Feinberg again faithfully has kept the outer melody as written, while he provides a broken chord pattern for the accompaniment. The melodic line has been enhanced with notes from the chords suggested by the harmony. In m.16 the indication *poco rit.* has been added to emphasize the ending of this first section before introducing the contrasting lyrical theme. In m.18 an extra melodic line has being added by Feinberg above the top melody of the right hand to be played with the left hand. These notes are smaller than the rest indicating that this is not part of the original melodic line:
In mm. 21–22 Feinberg has added a crescendo effect not only by writing the indication crescendo but also by emphasizing the V–I movement of the harmony by adding more notes to the chords for the left hand and also transferring to a lower register each time:

In mm.35–36 the same phrase is repeated twice and the second time Feinberg thickens the texture by adding extra notes to create a chordal texture split between the hands. On beats 3 and 4 of mm.37–39 the texture has been split between broken chords with octaves and single notes, while the pedal has been doubled in octaves. In the section of mm.42–46 Feinberg has added the indication crescendo for this dramatic passage heading gradually from a C major harmony to its diminished quality. During the Baroque era that wasn’t necessary since the harmonic progression itself would imply that the performer
needed to play with a more dramatic sound in order to support this climax. The pedal has been enriched here with full chords and octaves all the way to the lower register of the piano. Feinberg emphasized the highest moving voice doubling it with octaves in the right hand, while at the same time adding full chords to emphasize the harmony on beats 1 and 3 of each measure. The sixth relation between the moving voices is supported by the left hand and it has been omitted in m. 42 where the descending pattern begins. The cadence on m. 46 contains all the notes added by Bach and it does not reflect the original score by Vivaldi. Here, on beat 3, Feinberg writes the chord B major and then E major, again staying faithful to the outer voices in open space position. In the last note of beat 3 the note G has been added, and the A–B interval on beat 4 of the right hand comes from the combination of the notes B from the pedal and A from the left hand in Bach’s score:

Ex. 3.6 – mm.42–46 (Vivaldi – Bach – Feinberg)

Vivaldi:
Bach:

Feinberg:
In m. 47 Feinberg has reinforced the harmony on the first beat of this measure by adding a full E minor chord on the right hand. In the following section of mm.48–51 Feinberg has inverted the pattern of the left hand from Bach’s score so the lowest voice is now the one moving (Ex.3.7). Moreover he has introduced an A pedal tone probably to enrich the sonority. We also notice that articulation markings have been added to the melody of the right hand (staccato and slurs). Accents have also been added to emphasize the moving line of the left hand as well as a crescendo marking and a subito piano indication in measure 50. In measure 51 the first note D of the left hand in Bach’s score is an octave higher than the second D.

Ex. 3.7 – Measure 49 (Bach – Feinberg)

In mm.51–53 both voices have been doubled in octaves probably to reflect Bach’s indication organo pleno. Feinberg has provided a chord in the beginning of each measure in mm.54–60 to serve as the pedal of the organ, which also introduces the harmony of each measure.
A repeated note of each chord has been added for each sixteenth figuration of the right hand accompaniment probably to emphasize the harmony since the left hand plays the melody instead of the repeated notes from the pedal. Feinberg has realized this part as two different voices having a conversation: a higher and a lower one. He has alternated the voices on each measure by having the second voice “singing” the line two octaves lower than the original:

*Ex. 3.8 – Measures 56–57 (Bach – Feinberg)*

In m 61, the C# to A melodic line on the first beat has been enriched with the full A major triad with accents, creating a small counter melody with the second beat C# to A octaves of the left hand, again supported with accents.

The “recapitulation” of the theme has been emphasized in mm.67–68 with the ascending A melodic minor scale doubled in octaves and the pedal line with additional octaves that require large leaps and fast strokes from the performer:

*Ex. 3.9 (Feinberg)*
In mm. 71–77 the treatment of the transcription here is the same as in mm.54 through 60 but instead of the dominant that the left hand has been playing in the beginning of each measure to provide the harmony, here Feinberg provides a plain octave with the same notes as the ones from the pedal line in Bach’s score.

In mm. 85–89 we have the same treatment as in mm. 48–51 but on the last beat of m.88 and first beat of m.89 the note D and a full A minor chord have been added. In the last beat of m.91 Feinberg has doubled the leading tone G# in octaves to emphasize the last cadence. A full A minor chord with an emphasized bass in octaves concludes this first movement:

*Ex.3.10 (Feinberg)*

Movement II – Adagio:

In mm.1–12 Feinberg has doubled the voices of each hand for the most part by adding extra notes that move in a relation of a sixth or a third to the original single melodic lines.

In mm. 5 and 8 he has reinforced the harmony by adding a full D minor triad in the right
hand. In terms of expressive markings we see that the original *piano* has been kept in the beginning of the movement. In m.5 we find the indication *espressivo* replacing *cantabile* in both Vivaldi’s and Bach’s score. A pianissimo *pp* marking can be found in measure 9, and finally phrasing slurs have been added to indicate shaping of the melodic line.

*Ex.3.11 – mm. 1–10 (Bach–Feinberg)*

![Ex.3.11 – mm. 1–10 (Bach–Feinberg)](image_url)
In the next section of mm. 13–14 the notes D-C-B have been added in the right hand creating a new counter melody. Feinberg doubles the bass line of the left hand in m.14 by adding the lower sixth notes of this melody:

Ex.3.12 (Feinberg)

In m.16 the bass line has been transposed an octave lower and a new counter melody has
been placed in the original register creating large leaps of a tenth (F–A) or (G–B♯).

Feinberg has mainly transposed the bass line an octave lower and added two extra counter melodies in the middle parts in mm.17–24. Again here the composer stays consistent by keeping the outer voices as written in the original but embellishing the text with extra inner voices. In measure 21 the grace note has been realized as a sixteenth–note and the original G# dotted quarter note has been realized as a sixteenth note tied with a quarter note. In m.22 Feinberg writes a four–voice texture in the right hand instead of the two–voice original and adds the indication legatissimo to inform the performer of the original sound effect:

Ex.3.13 –mm.21–22 (Feinberg)

In m.26 a pp dynamic marking has been added along with a crescendo and diminuendo markings to emphasize the shaping of the melody. In the next measure a poco a poco crescendo indication has been added in m.27 running all the way to the f marking found in m.31. In the same measure Feinberg suggests a climactic moment by transposing the melodic line an octave higher and embellishing all voices by completing the chords from the harmony and adding notes in the bass line in a third and sixth relation. All supported by a f dynamic marking (Ex.3.14).

Continuing in mm.32–33: The climactic moment is followed by an immediate transition
to a pianissimo sound where Feinberg has transferred the original text by adding only an A in the right hand. This melodic segment is transposed an octave lower to emphasize the sound effect:

Ex.3.14 – mm.31–33 (Feinberg)

The same two contrasting–character effects have been applied in mm.33–37 too, following a similar treatment of the original organ score. A transition to the final text starts in mm.37–41 where Feinberg thins out the texture again, bringing it closer to the organ score by removing gradually all the extra voices added earlier. This section is marked with a pianissimo dynamic. The final statement in mm.41–45 has been transferred to the piano score with the exact notes in their original octave. The original piano indication has been replaced by a pp marking. A ritenuto marking can be found on m.44 to emphasize the closure of this movement.

Movement III – Allegro:

In the beginning of this movement, the voices have been doubled an octave lower and the forte dynamic marking has been added. In mm.3–4 voices have been transposed an octave higher and the highest voice has been doubled an octave lower, resulting chords in
octaves moving in parallel motion. The right hand is doubled by the left hand but here the lower voice (of the left hand) is doubled an octave higher. Finally the $ff$ indication has been added in Feinberg’s score (Ex.3.15).

In mm. 5–8 In this section Feinberg repeats the same process used in mm. 3 and 4 for the left hand and in the right hand he has changed the texture to a sixteenth–note broken chord pattern, moving up and down where the notes of the right hand meet the notes of the melodic line of the left hand on every other eight beat. In the eighth beats in between, the notes represent the repeated notes of the higher register from the organ score. This, very clever, transformation serves both the transferring of the pitches from the original organ score and at the same time provides a challenging, pianistic texture for the performer:

*Ex.3.15 (Bach – Feinberg)*
In mm.9–12 the notes have been doubled in octaves reaching all the way to the lower A of the keyboard range. Following that, in mm.13–25 the melodic notes have been supported with staccato dots under a slur, indication a portato touch required by the performer. In mm. 16 and 22 the mordent has been realized and written out using a triplet figuration.

In mm. 25–32 Feinberg has used a combination of the devices used in the primary ritornello alternating octaves, chords in parallel motion, and broken chord pattern for the right hand:
In mm. 37–50, the sixteenth-note arpeggiated accompaniment has been transferred as found in the original. For the higher voice, carrying the melody in the organ score, Feinberg has transferred that to the left hand, which breaks the pattern into a broken octave, placed in the same register as the right hand, resulting in a hand crossing movement. The indication *marcato* can be found in measure 37 and the indication *sopra* and *sotto* have been added. A crescendo poco a poco is added in m.42 to follow the climactic movement of the harmony. Following this section in mm. 51–58, Feinberg has doubled the melody of the right hand an octave lower by also adding additional inner
voices to emphasize the harmony on beats 1, 3 and 4. A full chord played by both hands on the first beat of each measure serves to set the harmony of each measure, marked with a *sf* while accents have been also added to each eighth note of beats 3 and 4:

*Ex. 3.17 – mm. 51–58 (Bach – Feinberg)*

Feinberg has expanded the chords in mm. 59–63 in the beginning of each measure to provide more sound and emphasize the harmonic motion of each measure within the chain. The pedal line from the organ has been placed on the left hand, doubled in octaves and from measure 59 through 63 the right hand has been doubled an octave higher. It is also interesting to note that in Bach’s score each chord is supposed to be played in a
different manual or division, marked Rückpositiv or Oberwerk in order to achieve a different timbre and sound, while in Feinberg’s transcription all chords have the same character. It is also very interesting here to notice the evolution of the music from the original score by Vivaldi through Feinberg’s transcription. As we had seen before during the Vivaldi – Bach comparison, this section here was a simple modulatory passage:

Ex.3.18 (Vivaldi – Bach – Feinber)
In comparison with Bach’s score, the music has been changed significantly in mm.64–65 by adding extra notes to the left and right hands, but always keeping the outer voices true to the original resulting in a very complex passage where the melody is spelled out under a chordal framework:

*Ex. 3.19 mm.64–65 (Bach – Feinberg)*

Continuing in mm. 66–74 the melodic line has been doubled in octaves and split between the two hands, while large jumps are required to reach the pedal octaves and the chords of the outer voices.
In mm. 75–81 we find a very popular device of the Italian baroque concerto where the harmony moves through a fast broken chord motion, a technique very effective and common for the violin section of the time. Bach has split that between two keyboards played by both hands while Feinberg brings all voices together on each hand, resulting in a very unusual movement for the pianist. In order for this figuration to be kept clean, the articulation marked is *staccato*. In measure 79, a *crescendo* is added in order for the end of the section to be reached through a climax and lead to the next ritornello section.

*Ex.3.20 – measure 81 (Bach – Feinberg)*

In mm. 82–85 we find the ritornello theme but it is very interesting to notice that the sixteenth-note accompaniment that Feinberg has been employing since the beginning of the movement is now encountered for the first time in Bach’s score. Continuing in mm.86–113 the famous cantilena section, where a cantabile long melody takes over from the original Vivaldi score, can be found. Bach had to transfer this melody to the higher register of the transcription while Feinberg transfers this melody to a warmer middle voice (alto maybe?) in the middle register of the piano, played by the left hand with the indication *cantabile e sostenuto*. The accompaniment has been transferred to the right hand in a higher register where extra notes have been added to accommodate the repeated notes from the pedal section from Bach’s score:
Let’s now jump to mm. 125–127. In measure 125 Feinberg has transferred the melodic lines from both hands, doubled in octaves and enhanced with extra notes to provide full chords in beats 1, 2 and 3 but he has also added accented notes in the second half of each beat. This results in a more dramatic closure of this section leading to the final solo section (in terms of a ritornello approach), which serves as the finale of the whole concerto.

In the following mm.128–129 the accompaniment from the left hand in Bach’s score has been transferred to both hands and extra notes have been added in the right hand to provide a more chordal realization of the melody. The indication non legato is also added. The descending melodic line has been transferred to the left hand two octaves lower while the right hand provides strikes of the note A crossing the left hand and reaching the lowest register of the keyboard in mm.130–131.

Ex.3.22 mm.130–131 (Feinberg)
In mm. 132–141 the transfer of this section to the keyboard by Feinberg is very clear. The pedal and the right hand from the organ have been transferred to the left hand in the piano score and doubled in octaves. The overall result though makes this finale section the most complicated in the entire concerto since the two parts are placed in their actual register, creating uncomfortable hand crossing and a challenging voicing while the hands are forced to play on top of each other. Perhaps an option for the performer would be to redistribute the notes between the hands. But this requires very good control of voicing within the multiple layers of each hand:

*Ex. 3.23 mm.132–141 (Bach – Feinberg)*
The final ritornello section in mm.142–148 has been transcribed as originally written in Bach’s score with the pedal point doubled in octaves in the left hand. In mm. 146–148, in order to emphasize this very last statement Feinberg has broken and split out the notes within a four-octave range, with the final A (tonic) reaching to the lowest note of the keyboard to provide extra resonance. We also need to address that the fermata in Feinberg’s transcription is on the quarter rest instead of the note A placement on Bach’s organ score:
The Feinberg Approach

The results of this detailed comparison reveal that Feinberg has changed the original text significantly in order to adopt it to the new modern instrument. His intentions though are always to reproduce the original baroque effects but under a modern conception, that of the romantic era. At the same time he aims for the best use of the modern piano while also highlighting its capabilities.

Paul Griffiths writes that the concerto during the baroque era was an instrumental piece, which featured contrasting ideas between two different forces. In the late 18th century and during most of the 19th century, the solo concerto became a prominent form of virtuoso display. “Concerto probably comes from the Latin concertare, which can
mean both ‘to contend, dispute, debate’ and also ‘to work together with someone. The primary Italian meaning of concertare is ‘to arrange, agree, get together’.45

Feinberg’s primary goal was of course to transfer this ‘argument’ between the two forces to the piano. This new medium thought did not have two keyboards, its volume in terms of dynamics was much smaller than the powerful organ, and finally it was lacking the pedal section. However, the possibilities in terms of shaping the phrases, making quick dynamic contrasts by just changing the way a performer approaches the keyboard (touch), being able to balance different voices under the same polyphonic texture, were qualities promising the birth of a new art in piano transcriptions.

Moreover, we must also consider that during this period that this transcription was written, the presence and influence of Franz Liszt through his students was very prominent. Breathing, arm weight, free treatment of the pulse according to the ‘natural’ demands of the hand, are just few elements of the new revolutionary approach to piano performance. Many composers–pianists of the era were composing music for the instrument in order to showcase its capabilities. The new idea of ‘pianism’ as an art had occupied most performers, composers and piano teachers. The birth of this new ‘piano school’ along with some of its elements will be examined in the following chapter.

Feinberg takes the idea of the concerto and adopts it to this new art. He brings the evolution to this concerto grosso, by taking it from the baroque idea of the contrasting conversation between the two forces, and placing it into a new virtuosic form. The transcription of the concerto becomes not only a task of reduction of the music to a new

medium, but a challenging adaptation to a powerful instrument that will also reflect the principles of the modern romantic solo concerto.

The Influence of Franz Liszt and Performance Practice of Transcriptions in the Romantic Era

Franz Liszt was one the first to introduce the art of piano transcription in the romantic era under a completely new approach where the piano served as a medium able to represent the sounds of an entire orchestra. His transcriptions of keyboard works by Johann Sebastian Bach and the symphonies by Ludwig van Beethoven served as devices to inspire contemporary and future composers up to the present day. As I mentioned before, Feinberg studied with Goldenweiser, who studied with Pavel Babst, who himself was a student of Franz Liszt. This chain clearly influenced Feinberg’s performance and compositional output. However there are numerous practical reasons that led Feinberg to study the transcription process of Franz Liszt.

Konstantin Zenkin, a student at the State Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Moscow in 2001, under the guidance of Victor Merzhanov, student of Samuil Feinberg, states the connection between Liszt and Feinberg and the influence of Liszt: “Before Liszt’s 1840’s recitals in Russia,” Konstantin mentions, “all Russian piano music was written for domestic purposes, not for the concert platform.” The modern piano with the double escapement action was unknown to the Russians, and Liszt was the first to introduce this monumental innovation of the romantic era. John Field, who studied with Clementi in London, moved to Saint Petersburg before the two conservatories were founded and developed a very influential school of pianism in Russia up to Liszt’s arrival. Field was
not using the modern instrument that Liszt had been exposed to with the improved pedal mechanism and the double action.

Principles of Liszt’s pianism may have penetrated the Russian piano teaching methods through private instruction, before the two Conservatories were even founded. Thus, the recitalist and talented teacher Anton Gerke (another pupil of Field) performed Liszt’s works, including Totentanz. Gerke was the piano instructor of Modest Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky. However, the establishment of the new concert pianism in Russia was connected with the brothers Rubinstein, Anton and Nikolay.46

Later in the same article, Zenkin explains how the two brothers Anton and Nikolay Rubinstein became directors of the two conservatories (Anton in Saint Petersburg and Nikolay in Moscow) and were responsible for spreading Liszt’s ideas and principles:

Above all, his art was based on the potential of the modern instrument, intended for large halls. Hence the absolutely different techniques and approaches, unknown in Field’s or Hummel’s schools—the use of the entire arm weight, the flexible wrist and mobile body. All those led to a new method of phrasing, which was distinguished by a “broader breathing.” The new features resulted in a free treatment of musical time, contrary to the strict meter of the earlier manner. […] Russian audiences had never heard Fryderyk Chopin who employed rubato, so it was Liszt who was the first to demonstrate there the new, Romantic manner, the new sense of music.47

Nikolay Rubinstein, soon before his decision to found the Conservatory of Moscow, asked for Liszt’s advice on which musicians should come and work there so the impact of this new school would be even greater. Rubinstein not only hired artists that would support and spread Liszt’s ideas but also designed the whole program of studies of the conservatory according to Liszt’s pedagogical practices. Through a nine–year piano program, students were not only learning how to play the new instrument, but they were

47 Konstantin Zenkin, 97
also trained on how to make piano arrangements of orchestral works. Thus, one of the most important aspects of Liszt’s piano art was represented in the teaching strategies of the conservatory. The part of the program intended for the senior students was designed by Sergei Taneyev (student of Nikolay Rubinstein), Pabst (Goldenweiser’s teacher and student of Liszt himself) and Otto Neitzel, (student of Liszt). In the eighth–year the students had to study thoroughly one of Bach’s organ works arranged by Liszt. During the same time we also have to consider that Bach’s revival was in full swing and many composers were transcribing older pieces for the new piano to present its glory and endless possibilities. Of course some people considered that a perversion rather than a gain. Although Feinberg arranged this Vivaldi – Bach concerto in 1918, seven years after his graduation from the conservatory, we know that he had been through the process of studying Liszt’s transcriptions for the piano and used some of his techniques.

These principles of the new piano technique suggested by Liszt had a major impact on a new performance approach of these transcriptions and pieces composed from this period and on. As we saw earlier during our comparison of the two versions by Bach and Feinberg, the original text has been altered significantly, not only in terms of texture thickening in order to represent the organ sound to the piano but also in terms of adding new melodic lines and accompaniment textures to serve a more romantic, dramatic and virtuosic approach highlighting the modern instrument. Original elements from the baroque performance practice of these concertos such as the almost metronomical stability of the pulse or the lively and faster tempi of the baroque Italian orchestra, are characteristics completely contradictory to the new principles of this romantic approach.

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48 Konstantin Zenkin, 105
49 Evlyn Howard–Jones, 307
of breathing and free treatment of the pulse. In a review in the *American Record Guide*, the author comments on a recording of organ transcriptions performed by Samuil Feinberg:

The more contrapuntal works display a wonderful clarity and independence of lines while pointing to the pieces’ overarching shapes. Feinberg’s tempos can be slow, as in Bach’s Toccata in D, because he is illuminating aspects of the texture that would get lost at a faster tempo. You are forced to listen differently, so you hear a different piece.50

A performer must definitely be aware of the original version for strings by Vivaldi and question himself about the elements that can be transferred to the modern piano. Such elements include timbre, voicing, balance between different layers and of course the choice of tempo since a specific metronomical marking is not provided by any of the three composers.

The Austrian pianist Alfred Brendel in his *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* discusses problems that arise from piano transcriptions from the orchestra to the piano and also from the organ to the piano and what principles the performer has to have in mind:

In endeavoring to produce orchestral colors on the piano, our concern must not only be with the timbre of each individual instrument, but also with the manner in which it is played—with certain peculiarities that arise from the construction of the instrument and that are reflected in the technique required by it. Another consideration is the number of players employed in a certain context. An orchestral tutti will have to be treated differently from a passage for strings alone; a forte for strings will need more volume than one for woodwind. […] In his ‘string playing’, the pianist ought to be familiar with the various kinds of bowing…51

Liszt himself was definitely aware and able to produce these sound differences by employing a different approach to the keyboard known as touché. The president of the

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Royal Hungarian Academy of Music, E. Mihalovich, a close friend of Liszt, informs us about Liszt's abilities to use a different sound according to the pieces he was performing:

…a ‘classical neutral’ tone was used when playing the older masters or when playing accompaniments; a ‘romantic’, i.e., very colorful yet thoroughly pianistic sonority appeared when he played Schumann, Chopin, or his own original piano works; but when he played his transcriptions, he used an orchestral tone, and the audience could readily perceive the pounding of the kettle drums, the flourishes of the trumpets, and the scintillating staccato of the woodwinds.  

Alfred Brendel continues this discussion offering more information about sound quality when playing piano transcriptions of organ works in particular:

With the organ, a strict distinction must be made between the tone color and strength of the manuals. Within each manual every part remains at the same level of volume. Declamation, therefore, is not produced by dynamic, but by articulation and the careful use of agogics (subtle inflections of rhythm). Arpeggios are excluded. Organ sound and church acoustics belong together, and the pianist has to reproduce that special resonance. This, along with pedal points and other long–sustained notes, creates fascinating pedaling problems, and here, above all else, lies the attraction of organ transcriptions. […] Organ transcriptions provide excellent training in color control, in preparation for ‘orchestral’ playing.  

Apparently Feinberg was aware of all these questions and problems and that is the reason that so many articulation, dynamic and phrasing markings have been added to his arrangement. This results in less research needed by the performer since he can provide an authentic performance of this transcription by following all the marking provided by Feinberg. Of course though this does not resolve the problem of the transition from the original concerto composed by Vivaldi to the modern piano arrangement by Samuil Feinberg. What we need to understand here is that there is finally no such term as ‘the original’ since the piece has been through so many alterations, and the purpose each arrangement serves is different. Moreover, if we would like to be extremely precise we

53 Alfred Brendel, 97
need to consider the following point of view by Alfred Brendel who comments on a
different aspect of alterations of the original work through the work of editors:

Every edition of older music, with the exception of those by editors like Bischoff and Kullak, was virtually a transcription. Bülow ‘corrected’ Beethoven. Adolf Ruthardt, with no qualifications as composer, virtuoso or musical thinker, turned every masterpiece he touched into an Augean stable. Nor were contemporary pieces safe from ‘embellishments’, even those that could scarcely be said to have suffered from any lack of pianistic strength: Liszt’s Second Legend of St Francis was inflated by his disrespectful pupil Stavenhagen in such a manner that the original looks by comparison like a simplified version for beginners.\(^54\)

\(^{54}\) Alfred Brendel, 93
I would like to conclude this paper by providing an example of such pianistic ‘strengthening’ and apparently an example in my opinion of a less successful arrangement of the same A minor concerto made by the Bohemian pianist and music teacher August Stradal (1860–1930). Stradal was a student of Anton Bruckner and his piano credentials include studies with Franz Liszt. Transcriptions and arrangements were of a great importance to Stradal’s artistic work and his compositional output includes versions of works by Bach, Beethoven, Buxtehude, Mozart and Liszt for the solo piano. In one of the his arrangements of a Vivaldi–Bach organ concerto published in 1897 he provides a descriptive summary of his point of view on those concertos: “The concerto was the drama of a storm within a soul undermined by grief, tortured by a passionate desire.”

Without reading further, we become suspicious of his over-romantic perception of the baroque concerto. Furthermore the bombastic arrangement itself provides clear proof of a composition meant to fulfill the idea of a virtuoso performer with transcendental abilities. This is perhaps why Pincherle remarks:

(Stradal’s arrangement) accounts for, if it does not justify, the excess of cadenzas, the disheveled passage work, and the thundering bass line to which this arrangement owes its many years of vogue. […] The hyperromanticism of this transcription is manifest even in the frontispiece, where we see a tree uprooted by the storm, with a gloomy cathedral in the background menaced by lightning and encircled by a flight of ravens.

I will not provide an extensive analysis and comparison of this arrangement with the

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55 Mark Pincherle, 234
56 Mark Pincherle, 234
previous ones because my goal is to give you a brief example of this over–romantic practice of transcribing older music in a contemporary and highly bombastic and virtuoso manner. This manner is again unfortunately influenced by the great pianistic and compositional abilities of Franz Liszt. Liszt’s ideas and experimentations exploring the limits of the piano—as an instrument able to imitate the large sounds of the orchestra through a multi–layer, well–crafted writing—were many times misunderstood. Especially during the late years of the romantic era, Liszt’s pianistic craftsmanship was misunderstood as a goal to show off or to seek the creation of a super human performer with unrealistic skills. However this subject can be part of a longer discussion, which I will not be examining in this paper.

The edition I will be using to provide the examples is the J.Schuberth No.7103 (Leipzig), 2tes Concert für die Orgel (A–moll) von Johann Sebastian Bach. Arrangirt für Pianoforte von August Stradal. This is the only edition I was able to locate (probably the only one existing).

**Movement I – Allegro moderato e maestoso**

The original Allegro indication has been replaced by the indication Allegro moderato e maestoso, which immediately changes the character of the movement.

In the very beginning Stradal has multiplied the voices by adding extra chords to provide a large sound. This thick texture results in a less flexible movement of the melodic line since the pedal line has been realized for the most part with full chords. The original forte dynamic marking has been replaced by a triple forte fff followed by the indication sempre ff e maestoso in the second measure:
Jumping to mm. 90–93 the indication *ff e molto ritenuto* has been added, transferring the cadential ritenuto two measures earlier and also making the end of the movement significantly slower and emphatic. Arpeggiated 6–note chords have been added to the left hand to provide the harmony and large octave leaps on every eighth–beat on measure 92:

*Ex.4.2 (Bach – Stradal)*
Movement II – Adagio

In mm.1–4 the simple unison of both the original, the Bach, and the Feinberg versions has been transferred in this arrangement to full chords marked with a $p$ (piano) dynamic marking:

*Ex.4.3 (Bach – Stradal)*

Movement III – Allegro (nicht zu schnell). *Gewaltig* (Enormous)

In mm. 1–11 Stradal stays closer to the Bach transcription by keeping the repeated note ‘A’ of the right hand. A great crescendo effect is added by starting the movement with a *pianissimo* marking all the way to the indication triple forte $fff e molto ritenuto$ in measure 11:
In mm.75–81 Stradal again follows Bach’s example of keeping the texture split between the two hands, but he thickens it by adding full four-voice chords rather than the thirds indicated by Bach. A triple forte dynamic marking has been added with a crescendo symbol on m.75. The indication *vibrando* has been added:

*Ex. 4.5 (Bach – Stradal)*
Coda: An extended bombastic coda has been added by Stradal after the last ritornello statement with the indication *strepitoso* (with a large sound) *sempre ff* built up in chords played repeatedly, split between the hands and making use of an extended range of the keyboard to provide extra resonance. The piece ends in a triple *forte fff* dynamic marking with a *loco* indication above the last fermata:

*Ex. 4.6 (Stradal)*
CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper we examined the transcriptions of the concerto in A minor by Antonio Vivaldi through the musical craftsmanship of three important composers: Bach, Samuil Feinberg and August Stradal. All four composers, including Vivaldi, were also established performers and specialists on an instrument or a category of instruments. Vivaldi was a violin virtuoso, Bach, a master of the keyboard—including the harpsichord and the organ. Feinberg and Stradal were great pianists of the twentieth century with musical training reaching back to the father of the modern piano, Franz Liszt. Each one of them took into consideration the sound and characteristics of the musical instrument or the ensemble he was working with. Bach and Feinberg adopted the music accordingly creating musical masterpieces, which do not violate the primary purposes of the original work. These transcriptions not only fit very well to the new instrument but also try to follow the performance practice of each period and transfer the effects of the string ensemble to the keyboard. In both cases, composers added extra notes and musical passages in order to embellish the music and fully utilize the new instrument. Feinberg went a step forward, enriching the text with specific articulation markings and dynamic effects in order to present and emphasize the abilities of the piano, an instrument relatively new during the end of the nineteenth century.

Concerning articulation markings, we also need to take into consideration the great evolution of music notation since Vivaldi and Bach’s times through the late romantic period and the beginning of the twentieth century. As we discussed earlier in this document, numerous elements in the music that would suggest performance practice during the Baroque era—without further markings needed—such as a crescendo or a
diminuendo, had been forgotten during the romantic era. The principles of creating a very accurate reproduction of what the composer wanted was an idea born during the classical era, and that is why musical scores have been heavily marked with extended information regarding articulation, dynamics, phrasing etc. as we move closer to the twentieth century. Following this tradition, Feinberg had to ‘complete’ the score with all the appropriate markings that a ‘modern’ musician needed to follow in order to be as close as possible to the original practices. At the same time, his goal was also to be consistent with all the new performance and pedagogical ideas Liszt had suggested about the treatment of musical time and breathing.

In conclusion, if we consider all the differences presented earlier about the performance practice of each period, in conjunction with the point of view by Alfred Brendel we will understand that the concept of an ‘authentic’ performance, when we talk about transcriptions, would not have been possible. In my opinion, the notion of authenticity cannot exist nowadays since everything has gone through such a dramatic reformation—starting from the instruments’ development and going all the way to modern concert halls construction—resulting the failure to approach such an ‘original’ sound. Bach himself did not see music as ‘appropriate’ for specific instruments but instruments as ‘tools’ able to create great music.\(^{57}\) This is a very important statement coming from a composer who had all the appropriate ‘tools’ needed for an authentic performance but rather choose to create his own version of such great music and make it accessible to a significantly larger audience.

A modern performer should definitely be aware of the original work and study choices of the transcriber in reaching the final musical product and what purposes those

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choices serve. In the case of Samuil Feinberg, we discovered that he was well aware of the original performance practice and even the terminology and technical elements of the organ itself since his transcription tries to reproduce all the effects originally suggested by Johann Sebastian Bach. It is now up to the contemporary pianist to choose how faithful he will be to the suggestions made by Samuil Feinberg in order to recreate music written during the Baroque era but able to thrill the contemporary audience.


