To Prelude (v.): The Art of Preluding and Applications for the Modern Classical Guitarist

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TO PRELUDE (v.): THE ART OF PRELUDING AND APPLICATIONS FOR THE MODERN CLASSICAL GUITARIST

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ABSTRACT

In Western classical music, there are many types of compositions; some examples include sonatas, symphonies, fugues, and motets, each with a particular form. The prelude stands out as one of the few classical music forms in which the title can also be used as a verb. This is not frequently seen with other compositional types; there is never a case of “sonata-ing,” and an orchestra cannot suddenly burst into “symphony-ing.” However, there is a practice known as preluding. Historically, preluding was a common improvisational practice although many musicians today are unfamiliar with the tradition. Generally unexplored, preluding has played an influential role in the evolution of Western classical compositions and music education.

In these pages, the history of preluding will be revealed, starting from the Middle Ages and continuing through the twenty-first century. In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, preluding was especially important to plucked-stringed instruments such as the lute, an ancestor of the guitar. Lutenists would prelude in order to tune their strings and adjust their frets before a performance. Many of today’s guitarists are unaware of this practice but creating and performing preludes in concert can help their performances acquire aspects of immediacy and spontaneity. This study will look at the history of preluding with the goal of helping modern guitarists practice this art and be able to implement these ideas into performance situations.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To prelude as a mode of preparation [is] to exercise or improvise, to arpeggiate or to fugue to find one’s bearings and to help others with whom one [is] communicating to find theirs.¹

1.1 THE ART OF PREPARATION & PRELUDING

When it comes to introductions, first impressions are lasting impressions. In literature there is often a preface; in an opera there will likely be an overture; and in theater, a prologue is sometimes addressed to the audience at the beginning of a play. These are the types of introductions that artists use, and these introductions are significant for making lasting impressions on audiences. History shows that the prelude and preluding act as introductions to instrumental works and musical performances.

A professor of philosophy at Columbia University, Lydia Goehr, discussed the importance of preluding in a public address given in 2015 titled, “Does It Matter Where We Begin? Or, On the Art of Preparation and Preluding.” In this address, she questions whether or not the practice of preparatory preluding makes listeners more receptive to a piece of music. She explains that preluding was a favored tradition for musicians of the Middle Ages through the Romantic period. However, it is a practice that has almost entirely vanished in today’s Western classical music. Goehr states that a transformation

in preluding began around 1800 when the “...practice of preparatory preluding became the art of a Romantic prelude already prepared.”

This transformation in preluding is largely attributed to the changing aesthetic views of improvisation in classical music.

Today’s classical musicians rarely improvise and are often uncomfortable with improvisation. Once commonplace in classical music, this practice has fallen into disuse as increasingly literal performances became the standard. Before this change occurred, there were many instances where musicians were expected to improvise and play music that was not written down. For example, in the Classical period, it was expected that performers would improvise during the cadenza of a concerto. Similarly, there were other frequent times in performances in which it was customary to improvise. One of the most common practices of improvisation in the classical tradition was opening a piece with an improvised shorter piece in the same key, also known as preluding. This study will aim to discuss the performance practice of preluding and of creating spontaneously composed introductions. It will take a detailed look at preludes throughout Western music history, their origins, how preluding changed in different musical periods, and how modern classical guitarists (and other instrumentalists) can apply the art of preluding in their practice routines and performances.

1.2 THE PRELUDE: WHAT, HOW, & WHEN

Written as prélude in French; Vorspiel, in German; preludio in Italian and Spanish; and praeludium or praeambulum in Latin, the prelude is a term with a variety of applications. Initially, it was intended to be an instrumental piece that was improvised (apparent in the etymology of the word as the roots ludus, deriving from the Latin word

2 Goehr, 3.
ludere meaning “to play,” and Spiel, from Vorspiel in German, meaning “play before” as opposed to “sung”). It was also meant to precede another piece of music where the tonic, mode, or key was the same (the Latin prefix “pre” and the German prefix “vor,” meaning “before, prior to, in advance of, or in front of”). However, we will see that preludes after the Classical period are more often independent pieces that do not precede anything at all. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a prelude as, “An introductory piece of music, most commonly an orchestral opening to an act of an opera, the first movement of a suite, or a piece preceding a fugue.” Defined by the same dictionary as a verb, “to prelude” means, “To serve as a prelude or introduction to.”

These definitions are very broad and are not necessarily true of all preludes. According to *Oxford Grove Music Online*, throughout Western music history it is generally agreed that preludes can be placed into three main categories:

1. Unattached preludes - those seen before the Baroque period where the primary function is to precede any piece or set of pieces in the same key.

2. Attached preludes - preludes that are explicitly composed to precede a fugue or dance suite. These preludes are most common in the Baroque period.

3. Independent preludes - these preludes are primarily found in the Romantic period and are independent, stand-alone pieces (which could be performed as a set) that began a trend of preludes typically seen today.

Although these categories are commonly accepted as the defining classifications of preludes, they do not make clear that many attached preludes were often also improvised.

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5 Lledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” *Grove Music Online*. 
In the broadest sense of the word, improvisation is the act of making decisions in the present moment. This definition could mean many things and many people, even musicians, have difficulty in finding a clear understanding of what improvisation is. The confusion of defining improvisation in classical music derives from the fact that today classical musicians do not practice it. Professor John Tyson, from the New England Conservatory of Music, claims that, “In the entire study of music history, there is perhaps no subject more acclaimed but less practiced than improvisation.”

In the practice of interpreting a pre-composed piece, it is often assumed that there is no improvisation involved. In reality, any musical performance needs to include aspects of improvisation for expression. This is true even in the interpretation of fully composed pieces; “In a more intricate work, in which the pitches and durations have been specified along with the form, the player still must improvise timbre, dynamics, and rhythmic subtleties, and mold all these elements in relation to each other to make a convincing, moving interpretation.” Composers of early common practice period music would invite the use of improvisation by composing a general outline of simple melodic parts and a bass line (also known as the basso continuo). It was then up to the instrumentalist to improvise the inner voices.

Similarly, it was customary to improvise a short free fantasy at the beginning of larger works. The lutenist and early music scholar, Thomas Binkely (1931–1995), describes four ways in which an instrumental prelude could be used in the performance of

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European medieval music. In an article titled, “Zur Aufführungspraxis der einstimmigen Musik des Mittelalters,” he writes:

(1) a short prelude whose function is to “announce” that a piece is about to be performed; (2) a prelude that employs elements of that melody or “significant qualities of the accompaniment”; (3) [a] “character” prelude, which “attempts to establish a mood for the song or portray the dramatic development of the text”; and (4) a “conceptual” prelude, which “attempts to reveal bit by bit the elements of the song or its melody.”

This practice, as described by Binkley, extended to later periods. To fully understand the multiple forms of the prelude and uses of preluding, this study will present a detailed look through each musical era and discuss the developments made in the art of preluding.

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CHAPTER 2
ORIGINS OF PRELUDING

2.1 ORIGINS OF THE PRELUDE

The medieval period has the least amount of information on preludes, for at the time, neither the prelude nor preluding was well documented or defined. To help further understand the role of the prelude in this early period, as Angela Mariani describes, “One could easily replace the word ‘poetry’ with ‘music’…”9 in this passage from the thirteenth-century Poetry Nova by Geoffrey of Vinsauf.

Let the poem’s beginning, like a courteous attendant, introduce the subject with grace… In all of its parts let the whole method of presentation bring credit upon the poem, lest it falter in any section, least its brightness suffer eclipse.10

The prelude was one of the earliest known forms of pure instrumental composition.11 While keyboard instruments were still in their early stages of development, instrumental music was primarily used for banquets, ceremonies, various rites, theatrical performances, and to accompany singing with pitched instruments such as aulos, kithara, lyra, hydraulis, and percussive instruments such as castanets, cymbals, and the tambourine.12 Beyond that, music was primarily sung, most commonly in the Catholic liturgy as Gregorian chant or other forms of plainsong. One of the earliest preludial

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9 Mariani, 94.
10 Mariani, 94.
12 Gleason and Becker, 3.
genres, the *Introit*, was positioned and used at the beginning to the Proper of the Mass (*Proprium Missae*).\(^{13}\) In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, troubadours would often accompany themselves on the *vièle* or other instruments. The accompaniment would be played in unison with the voice (still monophonic) however, preludes, interludes, and postludes may have been used.\(^ {14}\)

The tradition of preluding began as early as the Middle Ages, but there are no records of precisely when or how it started. It is speculated that the custom of preluding began on these early instruments. However, we do know that with the coming of the fifteenth century the prelude was the “…first type of idiomatic keyboard music conceived without reference to pre-existent forms and in terms of the keyboard medium.”\(^ {15}\) The first notated keyboard preludes were organ pieces that were played as an introduction to parts of a Mass. The earliest surviving examples are five *praebambula*, which are notated in the Ileborgh Tablature of 1448. Compiled by Adam Ileborgh, who was a brother and rector in Stendal, Germany, this manuscript contains some of the earliest surviving examples of tablature for the organ.\(^ {16}\) The five preludes of the manuscript are as follows:

- *Praeambulum in C et potest variari in d f g a*
- *Praeambulum bonum super C manualiter et variatur ad omnes*
- *Praeambulum bonum pedale seu manuale in d*
- *Praeambulum super d a f et g*
- *Aliud praebambulum super d manualiter et variatur super a g f et c*

\(^{13}\) Gleason and Becker, 20.
\(^{14}\) Gleason and Becker, 34.
Modern transcriptions of this tablature, as seen in Figure 2.1, reveal how early preludes were composed.

![Image of tablature]

Figure 2.1: Adam Ileborgh, Prelude in C, complete

In the Ileborgh Tablature, each of the praeambula consists of a florid, improvisatory right-hand part which would decorate a more discreet left-hand or pedal. Ileborgh states that these preludes are transposable and can be used in various keys. “This, along with the designation praeludia, indicates the purpose of these pieces: they are intended to introduce a polyphonic ensemble work to be performed during the service, a motet, or part of a Mass.” The Ileborgh Tablature provides insight that with the evolution of preluding more preludes started to be written down.

The two predominant textures for preludes were described in one of the most influential organ books of the time, the Buxheimer Orgelbuch (c. 1470), as containing simple sustained chords (schlicht) and florid passages (colorirt). It also included a unique element in its collection; 16 free praeambula, “The only works, apart from the

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18 Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” *Grove Music Online*.
20 Kirby, 37–38.
pedagogical *Fundamenta*, that are free keyboard works without a vocal origin.”21 The first of these preludes begin with a few patterns of figuration followed by a plain chordal texture and were “…presumably a frame for further embellishment.”22 Later preludes in the manuscript are generally more extensive and are some of the first examples that stand on their own, or unattached preludes.23

This was the general criterion of preludes until the improvisational character of written preludes began to take a slightly more organized form. In the *praebambula* by Ileborgh and those in the *Buxheimer* organ book, there are signs of enlargement, but there are no distinguishable traits that show definite compositional changes.24 The line between preludes from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is difficult to draw as the distinctions are more fluid rather than concise. However, musicologist Willi Apel suggests that the sixteenth century brought new defining characteristics to the prelude which can be described as Renaissance-like including “…clarifying the idea, solidifying the structure, and regularizing the technique.”25

2.2 PRIMORDIAL PRELUDIAL GENRES

Many instrumental terms from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have blurred definitions, such as the *fantasia, fugue, ricercar, intonatio, preamble, praeambulum, intrada, capriccio*, and the *toccata*. What was the difference between a prelude and a *toccata*, or a *ricercar* and *fantasia*? Even in the Baroque era, distinctions between terms were sometimes vague. Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) confirms this when explaining

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21 Kirby, 150–51.
22 Kirby, 151.
23 Kirby, 151.
25 Apel, 213.
improvisation in Der vollkommene Capellmeister (1739), by stating: “Intonazioni, Arpeggi, senza e con battuta, Arioso, Adagio, Passaggi, Fughe, Fantasie, Ciacone, Capricci, etc., are the most important, which can all be included with their purpose under the general name [toccatas]…” Today, these terms are defined more clearly, but when these terms were first surfacing, they often were used synonymously with each other. However, before the seventeenth century many of the terms described by Matheson did not even exist, and with a limited musical language with respect to today, similar rules were applied to the various genres.

The etymologies of the words provide insight into why composers gave pieces certain titles. The word toccata comes from the Italian word “toccare” which means “to touch,” in the way a keyboardist or string player will touch the strings and was often used in keyboard music (organ, harpsichord, clavichord, or spinet) in the sixteenth century. Toccatas originated similarly to the way preludes did, as improvisations. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) describes the toccata in his book, Syntagma Musicum, III (1619), as: “A preamble or prelude played by an organist when he first sits down at the organ or harpsichord, before he begins the motet or fugue.” He also alludes to the fact that a toccata should be improvised by stating that “…each [player] has his own manner of executing it…” Praetorius’s definition links the toccata to the prelude.

A unifying factor of many early instrumental pieces is the consistent use of improvisation. Earlier in his book, Praetorius also defines the fantasia and capriccio: “A

28 Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 40.
capriccio or improvised fantasia is when one undertakes to execute a fugue of one’s choosing but dwells on it only for a short time soon changing to another fugue as it strikes him.” An aspect of improvisation is implied when Praetorius describes the ricercar, which derives from the Italian meaning, “To investigate, look for, seek out, to explore diligently and find out.” It was used as an introductory improvisation in which the musician would be “searching for” the mode of the piece to follow. For instrumentalists such as lutenists, organists, violists, and voices of Musica nova (after 1540), a ricercar was an improvisational free prelude in toccata style that was unrelated to the motet. Later in the sixteenth century, the term praeludium and its cognates were less popular in countries such as Germany, Italy and Spain and titles such as toccata, intrada, fantasia, and ricercare became more popular terms. However, compositions applying these titles still had preludial architectures.

In Italy the fantasia and the ricercar were favored. The virtuoso Italian lutenist Francesco Canova da Milano (1497–1543) composed many ricercars and fantasias and used these two titles interchangeably, but he never titled any pieces “preludes.” The earliest printed books dedicated to the lute, published in two volumes by Petrucci in 1507 and entitled Intabulatura de Lauto, include a collection of mainly ricercars, transcriptions, and one dance composed or arranged by the lutenist Francesco Spinacino (fl. 1507). The functions of the ricercars are evident in this publication as two of them bear the same names as the transcriptions they intend to proceed. Spinacino’s ricercars were intended to serve as preludes to other pieces. Compositionally they resemble

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29 Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 38.
30 Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 39.
31 Gleason and Becker, Music in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, 142.
32 Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” Grove Music Online.
preludes because they are freely composed in form and change direction and style abruptly in an improvisatory manner. Similarly to Spinacino, the lutenist Vincenzo Capirola (1474–after 1548) also linked his thirteen ricercars to other pieces found in eight of his intabulations and dances. “For example, the Padoana francese and the following intabulation Voi che pasati qui are both marked ‘nel ton del R 3º’ (‘in the mode of the third ricercar’).34

Another preludial form was the intonazione, or intonations, for keyboard, and was also from Italy.35 Organists primarily used preludes in church services to give the tone of the piece which was to be sung. The term first appeared in a famous collection of intonazione by Andrea Gabrieli (1532/33–1586) and Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612). Together they published a book titled Intonationi d’organa di Andrea Gabrieli, et di Giovanni duo nepote in 1593.36 These intonations presented pure block chord beginnings followed by long connected passages that are played by either the left or right hand. Figure 2.2 shows the opening measures of the Intonazione del secondo tono.

Figure 2.2: Andrea Gabrieli, Intonazione del secondo tono, mm. 1-7

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35 Apel, The History of Keyboard Music to 1700, 43.
All of these early terms were used as synonymous for these preludial instrumental genres and became more defined as time went on.

2.3 LUTE INFLUENCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRELUDE

The lute had a significant role in the development of many of the terms mentioned above, including preludes, and especially on the keyboardists. Keyboardists in Italy possibly titled pieces as *ricercars* because the lutenists used the title for similar pieces played on the lute. Author F. E. Kirby compares the *ricercar* to the prelude in his book, *A Short History of Keyboard Music*:

> The usual form-giving devices of repetition, variation, and imitation are absent; the chief characteristic is an alternation between sections of different character—scale figurations, on the one hand, and chordal passages, on the other. For this reason, they seem related to the prelude type.\(^ {37}\)

Keyboard prelude-type pieces were generally short in length (typically 25 measures or fewer), and in free-style with mixing chords and passagework, while the lute prelude-type pieces were said to be similar but more extended.\(^ {38}\) The *toccata* was a seldom used title by the lutenists before the sixteenth century. The word “prelude” was not even present in lute publications until 1529. This is why before the second half of the century there are relatively few preludes, and more intabulations and songs arranged for the lute. Still, it was common for lutenists to play short improvisations before pieces.

A predecessor to the prelude and the *toccata* comes from 1508 when the Italian lutenist Joan Ambrosio Dalza titled five pieces *tastar de corde* (“testing the strings” or “touching the strings”). These short pieces consist mainly of chords and scale passages,


\(^{38}\) Gleason and Becker, *Music in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 113.
not unlike the preludes in the organ Ileborgh Tablature. Below is an example of one of these *tastar de chorde* (Fig. 2.3).

![Figure 2.3: Joan Ambrosio Dalza, *Tastar de corde*](image)

Dalza specifies that they should be played "con li soi ricercar dietro,” meaning that a *ricercar* should be played afterward, and implying that the *tastar de corde* was used as a prelude to the *ricercar*. This validates that they have a preludial function, although they are often associated with the *toccata* because of their title. Dalza includes blocked chords throughout the piece, confirming the practice of “testing the strings.” He also places fermatas over many chords, indicating rhythmic freedom.

Music for the lute went through important changes because of the innovations that occurred in lute technique prior to the sixteenth century. Possibly inspired by the blind German lutenist Joannes Orbo, who was active at the Gonzaga court in the 1460s-1470s, lutenists began to “...abandon the plectrum in favor of using bare fingers to sound the instrument.”\(^{39}\) Abandoning the plectrum drastically changed the music being composed for the lute because it laid the ground for a soloist idiom which was opposite of much of

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\(^{39}\) Apel, *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700*, 218.
the music being printed at the time. In 1484 the lute was described as a being played as a polyphonic instrument by the Flemish theoretician, Johannes Tinctoris (1435–1511):

The lyre, which we call the lute, we use at feasts, dances, and public and private entertainments, and in this many Germans are exceedingly accomplished and renowned. Thus some teams will take the treble part of any piece you care to give them and improvise marvelously upon it with such taste that the performance cannot be rivalled… Furthermore, others will do what is much more difficult; namely to play a composition alone, and most skillfully, in not only two parts, but even in three or four.40

In the sixteenth century the lute was growing in popularity, which was observed in 1536 by the Venetian publisher Francesco Marcolini da Forli:

All wind and string instruments are sweet, because they retain the quality from the harmony that issues from the spheres while the heavens move. But the suavity of sound which is born of the lute when touched by the divine hands of Francesco Milanese, of Alberto da Mantua, and of Marco dall’Aquila, robs the senses of those who hear it by making itself heard in the soul.41

As solo polyphonic music became more common among solo instruments, the printing of short introductory pieces also became more common. These short introductions on stringed instruments gave string players a chance to tune their instruments, check the quality of their tone, and loosen the performer’s hands.42 In fact, the Spanish composer Alonso Mudarra (1510–1580) has three fantasias para desenvolver las manos (translating to “fantasies to untangle the hands”) intended to warm up the hands. As for checking the tuning or tone of an instrument, the lutenist Adrian LeRoy (c.1520–1598) composed his Petite fantasy dessus l’accord du Leut which initially sounds like a performer tuning the strings of their instrument. The piece creates this

42 Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” Grove Music Online.
effect by having the performer play the open strings of a lute, as one would do when tuning, and after it develops into a short contrapuntal work.

One of the most significant developments of the prelude is observed in a lute publication by the French publisher, Pierre Attaingnant. The collection titled, *Preludes, chansons, and dances for lute* (1529), contains the first pieces to use the title “prelude.” It consists of 39 songs intabulated for the lute; of these 39 pieces, five are preludes. These preludes exemplify both two and three-part writing. They have chordal openings that are followed by exuberant passages. They resemble the Italian *ricercar* as the “…third and fifth preludes use sequence as their chief organizing element, in the improvisatory tradition of Spinacino and Capirola.” However, the other three resemble polyphonic vocal music as they have very independent parts, “Supported by one or two subordinate voices.” Figure 2.4 exhibits such an example.

![Figure 2.4: Pierre Attaingnant, Prelude, excerpt](image)

Like the preludes from Attaingnant, Spinacino, and Capirola, the preludes from this time were all unattached. They were pieces in collections within which a performer could select a piece to pair with another, often in relationships to the mode.

Through the sixteenth century the popularity for the lute continued to grow with the new, polyphonic finger-style. Writers of the time would remark on its expressive

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44 Smith, 197.
45 Smith, 197.
capabilities which helped preserve this popularity. One such example was made by Titelouze to Mersenne who recalls a mediocre player from his childhood: “I remember having seen in my youth [presumably the 1580s or 1590s] everybody admiring and being delighted by a man playing a lute, and badly enough at that…”\footnote{David Ledbetter, \textit{Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th-Century France}, Music--Scholarship and Performance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 8.}

With the lute growing in popularity, the organ being the dominant keyboard instrument, and the harpsichord emerging out of England, the amount of music being printed was increasing.

2.4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRELUDES IN THE 16TH CENTURY

In the sixteenth century, the genre of the prelude took a more defined role; patterns of imitation and fugal passages are seen more consistently in written out compositions. The grounds, or tenor parts of the preludes, became more florid. Preludes from German keyboardists Hans Kotter (c. 1485–1541) and Leonard Kleber (c. 1490–1556) were important as they added new textures with sequential patterns, which formed a more advanced architecture than the preludes in the \textit{Buxheimer Orgelbuch}.\footnote{Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” \textit{Grove Music Online}.}

A consistent feature found in the Kleber preludes is an alternation of scalar and chordal movement.\footnote{Kirby, \textit{A Short History of Keyboard Music}, 41.} The lute tablature of Hans Judenkünig (1523) and Hans Neusidler (1536) showed similar developments in textures.\footnote{Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” \textit{Grove Music Online}.}

Notated preludes such as these were likely byproducts of improvisations that performers wanted to remember. However, they were also often written down for pedagogical purposes for students.

The majority of the techniques that evolved from this period came from Poland, and German organists profoundly influenced them. Most of the music comes from volumes that were used during church services. Preludes from this repertoire were played
during Mass, Vespers, or similar occasions. The prelude genre was taking form in Polish keyboard tablature, such as with the *Lubin* tablature (which contains 21 preludes), and the Holy Ghost tablature (which has three preludes). The styles of preludes in these tablatures are similar to Kleber’s. They start with basic four-part chordal textures, but later expand in a quasi-polyphonic manner with occasional ornamental figures from one voice to another. However, there are also examples that begin with festive chordal sections, and end with an extended final chord that is stressed with a flourishing toccata-style run. An example is found in the *Preambulum super FF* from in the Lublin tablature (Fig. 2.5).

![Preambulum super FF](image)

**Figure 2.5: Johannes of Lublin, *Preambulum super FF***

In the second half of the sixteenth century, preludes showed signs of expansion as they were considered longer; however, they still did not often exceed even 30 measures. Apel describes this as being a “...conclusion to the first chapter in the history of the prelude,” which lasted for one hundred years from the Ileborgh tablature (1448) until the Holy Ghost tablature (1548). The conclusion was found in England where preludes

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51 Apel, 217–18.
52 Apel, 218.
demonstrated a distinct evolution. One towards a “…greater vivacity, playfulness, and—unfortunately—shallowness.”\textsuperscript{53} There were more virtuosic scales over more than three octaves, more arpeggios, and in preludes, such as by John Bull (1562/63–1628), there were clear I-IV-V-I progressions to introduce the tonal center. This is evident in the beginning of his prelude in a pure F major key (Fig. 2.6).\textsuperscript{54}

![Figure 2.6: John Bull, Praeludium, mm. 1-8](image)

It is interesting that the sequentially repeated runs are only suggested after the first two bars which clearly shows the continued use of improvisation. This period also saw relatively fewer examples of preludes from Germany as there was a general decline of keyboard music in the country. At this point, the so-called “colorist” school of composition (called so for their famous use of embellishment) was the preferred way of transcribing polyphonic ensemble music, which consisted of primarily motets and chansons.\textsuperscript{55} As the evolution of preluding in the sixteenth century became more refined, preludes were further developed by performers and composers in the Baroque period.

\textsuperscript{53} Apel, 221.
\textsuperscript{54} Apel, 221.
\textsuperscript{55} Kirby, \textit{A Short History of Keyboard Music}, 246.
CHAPTER 3
PRELUDING IN THE BAROQUE PERIOD

3.1 LUTE INFLUENCES & PRÉLUDES NON MESURÉ

In the Baroque period, “The social status of instruments appears to have played an
important part in defining the quality, or at least the type, of their secular repertoire…”
Keyboard instruments were admired but only affordable to some. The lute, on the other
hand, was a smaller and more affordable instrument. It was often used in the “…principal
court entertainment, the ballet,” which secured employment for lutenists. It was also in
vogue to own a lute amongst royal homes, which was initiated by Louis XIII and
Cardinal Richelieu, whom both took lessons. This led to an expanded literature and
developments of improvisation that helped solidify the form of the prelude in the
seventeenth century.

English lutenists, Thomas Mace (1612/13–c. 1706) gave an expansive description

The Prelude is commonly a Piece of Confused-wild-shapeless-kind of Intricate-
Play, (as most use It) in which no perfect Form, Shape, or Uniformity can be
perceived; but a Random-Business, Pottering, and Grooping, up and down, from
one Stop, or Key, to another; And generally, so performed, to make Tryal,
whether the Instrument be well in Tune, or not; by which doing, after they have
Compleated Their Tuning, They will (if They be Masters) fall into some kind of
Voluntary, or Fansical Play, more Intelligible; which (if He be a Master, Able) is

56 Ledbetter, Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th-Century France, 7.
57 Ledbetter, 8.
58 Ledbetter, 8.
a way, whereby He may more Fully, and Plainly shew His Excellency, and Ability, than by any other kind of undertaking; and has an unlimited, and unbounded Liberty; In which, he may make use of the Forms, and Shapes of all the rest.  

Lute repertoire was influential during the Baroque period and there were many publications of lute preludes throughout the seventeenth century. Some of the first examples are in Johann Baptiste Besard’s (c. 1567–c. 1625) collection, Thesavrs Harmonicvs, published in 1603. Like Besard’s, other collections of works by various composers were being published, such as the Cosens lute book (c. 1610). It was collected and comprised by the French lutenist Charles Bocquet (1594–1606) and contains fourteen different preludes by Italians. In this case, the Cosens contains works by Laurencini, Lorenzo Tracetti, and Francesco da Milano.  

Collections of lute preludes, such as the ones mentioned above, helped shape the prelude genre. The most influential contributions were from a new type of prelude known as the prélude non mesuré, or the unmeasured preludes, which were later developed by harpsichordists who adopted elements of the French lute preludes. In lute works many of these preludes demonstrated no rhythmic indications, but most were given “…at least some rhythm stems above the tablature, generally to indicate a note or chord to be dwelt on or to indicate broad tempo proportions.” They were also often short compositions sometimes only being “…brief introductory flourishes that recall the improvised origins of the genre.” There were larger examples, such as those composed by Pierre Gaultier

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62 Ledbetter, Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th-Century France, 40.
63 Ledbetter, 40.
(1599–1681) and René Mesangeau (fl. 1567–1638), that demonstrated a “decidedly compositional approach.”

The preludes by Pierre Gaultier (1638) represent a fully matured style of the unmeasured preludes. They portraited techniques where successive notes from a scale were played on different courses creating a pedal, baigné effect known as bariolage or campanella. This effect is apparent in the short prelude found in Figure 3.1.

![Figure 3.1: Anonymous, Prelude, CNRS, ff. 45v-46, complete](image)

Others who composed unmeasured preludial pieces were François Dufaut (1604–1672), Bouvier, and François de Chancy (1600–1656). “The prelude may open with a chord, noted either broken (Dufaut) or not (Bouvier), or with a single part (Chancy).” However, it was indicated that these preludes should always return to a broken-chord movement at the end. It was also common to have several notes slurred together which created the effect of a diminuendo. The concept of unmeasured preludes with no rhythmic notation “…was first derived from the lute repertoire but was brought to popularity in the keyboard works.”

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64 Ledbetter, 40.
65 Ledbetter, 41–42.
66 Ledbetter, 40.
67 Ledbetter, 42.
3.2 FRENCH KEYBOARDISTS & THE UNMEASURED PRELUDES

Under the rule of King Louis XIV (1638–1715), revered harpsichordists, such as Louis Couperin (c. 1626/29–1661), Jean-Henri D'Anglebert (1629–1691; the king’s harpsichordist), Nicolas Lebègue (c. 1631–1702), and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) developed and popularized the prélude non mesuré. For keyboardists, they present problematic interpretations as they are notated with “…semibreves devoid of any rhythmic indication, [making] the only guide to the manner of performance being the positioning of the semibreves (in itself often confusing), and a complex system of elaborate and elegant slurring.”69 Influenced by the Italian toccata, these preludes were meant to be of an improvisatory style. They contained no time signatures or bar lines and they used slurs to indicate phrasing.70

![Figure 3.2: Louis Couperin, Prelude, Bauyn MS, Vol. 2, excerpt](image)

There were two main groups which the unmeasured preludes fell into: "toccatas and tombeaux, relating to the Italian toccatas of Frescobaldi and Froberger and to the elegiac tombeaux composed, mostly by the French, in honor of dead teachers, patrons or

70 Rutt, “A Blend of Traditions,” 32.
friends.” Louis Couperin’s preludes emulate the toccata style which is organized into three sections; the two outer sections are freer while the central section is strictly fugal. The tombauro style, which is often connected to an allemande in a suite, uses a slower tempo, is rhythmically free, and the opening motif incorporates a melodic scale a fourth higher. He composed more unmeasured preludes than any other keyboardist.

The French keyboardist Jean-Henri D’Anglebert composed these types of preludes with more influence taken from lutenists than those by Couperin. Preludes by D’Anglebert “…especially show an inspiration from these lute preludes in their opening chords, chordal basses, few motivic repetitions, and contrast in textures.” The openings of his preludes often start with slow arpeggiated chords and lack decorated broken-chord patterns as well as traits (“the French version of the Italian term tirata, a rapid scale passage”) which are frequently found in keyboard preludes. Instead, he uses bass notes placed at the ends of a brilliant ascending trait, which is commonly found in lute music, and demonstrated in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Jean-Henri D’Anglebert, Prelude, excerpt

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71 Moroney, “Prélude Non Mesuré.”
72 Moroney.
73 Rutt, “A Blend of Traditions,” 32.
74 Ledbetter, Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th-Century France, xii.
75 Ledbetter, 100.
His compositions included bass figures that imitated lute pieces. “While earlier keyboard preludes by Louis Couperin place a changing bass note after the last note of an accent, D’Anglebert’s lute-inspired preludes interject the bass subtly between rising phrases.”

As the unmeasured preludes became less understood due to problems of increased misunderstandings of composers’ intentions, the fear of inaccuracies caused some publishers to omit these preludes from reprinted volumes. François Couperin (1668–1733) printed eight preludes in measured notation in his *L’art de toucher le clavecin* (published in 1716 and revised in 1717). He warns that preludes are:

A style dictated by custom… A prelude is a free composition in which the imagination gives rein to any idea which presents itself. But it is rather rare to find geniuses capable of producing them on the spur of the moment, and so those who resort to these non-improvised preludes should play them in a free and easy style, not adhering too closely to the exact rhythm.

The measured preludes in *L’art de toucher le clavecin*, were played in an improvisatory style, but they were some of the first examples that recognized preludes as independent pieces. While making the distinction that preludes were meant to have an improvisatory feel, he describes why he composed measured ones: “One of the reasons why I have written these Preludes in measured time was to make them easier, whether in teaching them or in learning them.”

### 3.3 THE BAROQUE SUITE & ATTACHED PRELUDES

In the seventeenth century, the prelude began to be associated with dance forms as an attached piece. Association between all the dance movements soon developed into composers and publishers grouping various dance movements together, creating the

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76 Rutt, “A Blend of Traditions,” 32.
78 Moroney, 145.
Baroque Suite or *sonata*. French influences in the prelude led to this association, which was initially established by lutenists. The prelude, as an improvisatory introduction to the dance suite “…acted as an introduction to another work by exploring the key, and it gave the performer an opportunity to warm up and to tune the strings.” This is apparent in the lute repertoire of the early seventeenth century as lute compilation books would have all the dance movements grouped by the types of piece they were. The first book to show the standard lute organization of unmeasured preludes, *allemandes, courantes*, and *sarabandes* was Pierre Ballard’s *Tablature de luth de differens auteurs* (1631), where all of the pieces are organized by the composers and then are grouped by the type of dance movement they are. Collections were grouped this way because lutenists had many strings and when dances were grouped by type, lutenists could select pieces based on their key and not have to retune. This led lutenists to commonly compile a series of preludes in all 12 modes, and to composers making collections in all 24 major and minor keys. Two examples for lute are the 30 preludes for 12-course lute by John Wilson (1595–1635) written in the 1640s, and in the prelude collection of the French lutenist Bouquet around 1680. “The organization of suites by diatonic keys, instead of modes, was an innovation of the lutenists Denis Gaultier.” Lutenists preferred this organization because they could keep the same tuning through the entirety of the suite. Arranging dances this way is also found in the Saizenay manuscript (c. 1699).

Organizational tendencies by lutenists influenced the French keyboard suites of composers, such as Jacques Chambonnières (ca. 1601/2–1672) and, “In general, the

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81 Rutt, 31.
82 Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” *Grove Music Online.*
French keyboard suites showed a strong connection to the lute’s idioms." As the harpsichord also has plucked strings, these idioms functioned well, and harpsichordists were influenced by lutenists’ treatment of the dance suite. “For the lute, dances were to be played in exact regard for the beat, which exaggerates the interest of the complex, irregular rhythmic effects, such as arpeggiation, syncopation, and hemiola." This affected the views of the unmeasured preludes used in French keyboard suites. D’Anglebert was one of the most prominent figures to attach preludes at the start of his suites. His three preludes from the four suites presented in his Pièces de clavecin (1689) portray the unique style of mixing whole notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, as opposed to the unmeasured preludes consisting of only whole notes (Fig. 3.5).

Figure 3.4: Jean-Henri D’Anglebert, Prelude, excerpt

These influences and treatments of preludes confirm that “…the French style sought after by the late German Baroque musicians encouraged them to apply certain [similar] structural conventions.”

Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687–1759) was a German lutenist and was one of the most prolific lute composers in history, famous for his many dance suites. His suites

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84 Rutt, 31.
85 Rutt, 32.
(titled “sonatas”) sometimes open with an allemande or a prelude-like introduction under a different title, such as entrée or fantasia. At the time, if a suite or sonata did not include a prelude “…it was assumed that the performer would improvise one before playing the sonata.”\textsuperscript{87} Weiss was well aware of the practice and would sometimes include extra pages of music as example-preludes for a performer to use. His preludes varied in length and included aspects of improvisation. They were sometimes unmeasured and used fermatas over chords to indicate rhythmic freedom. Another element that Weiss included was writing a series of blocked chords that were intended to be arpeggiated; this can be seen in Figure 3.4.

![Figure 3.5: Silvius Leopold Weiss, Prelude, Sonata no. 1 in F Major, London MS](image)

3.4 PRELUDE-FUGUE PAIRING & THE WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER

Instrumentalists, such as organist Jacob Praetorius (1586–1651), had another significant impact on the evolution of the prelude. His three Praeambula, which are mostly short in length (only eight to sixteen measures long), were some of the first examples to have attached fugal sections.\textsuperscript{88} The prelude-fugue pairing became more popular in the seventeenth century and the first part of the eighteenth century. By 1650, in Northern Germany there was a pattern to have a free introduction, fugue, and a free

\textsuperscript{87} Cardin, 5.
\textsuperscript{88} Apel, \textit{The History of Keyboard Music to 1700}, 356.
conclusion in works, such as the short *Praeludia Pedaliter* by Heinrich Scheidemann (ca. 1595–1663).\(^{89}\) Often these free improvisational introductions were the *soggetti* (subjects) of the fugues to follow.\(^{90}\)

There was a slightly different tradition in Southern Germany as free contrapuntal forms were made up of prelude-fugue pairings. German composer J.K.F. Fischer (1656–1746) was likely one of the first to associate this pairing regularly in his *Ariadne Music* (1702) and his *Blumen-Strauss* (before 1736) which “…display the unambiguous joining of prelude and fugue.”\(^{91}\) With development “…the prelude and fugue (in Germany, at least) was directly contemporaneous (and indeed associated) with the first experiments in organizing the keys of the tonal system.”\(^{92}\) In both of the collections by Fischer, it is clear that the thematic material is prominently independent of the fugues with which they are paired. This is quite significant as it “…implies that south-German composers considered the juxtaposition of prelude and fugue more important than the thematic unification of the two forms.”\(^{93}\)

The most important composer of the prelude-fugue pairing was German composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). He was a prolific composer in the development of the prelude genre. Apparent in his works, he was inspired by the prelude-fugue association aesthetic. Bach was aware of both the North and South-German practices, and this was a departure point for his development of the prelude-fugue pair. Shortly after being in Arnstadt, he composed the *Prelude & Fugue in A*, BWV 536a and the *Prelude &

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90 Stauffer, 127.
91 Stauffer, 128.
Fugue in e, BWV 533. Both of these works demonstrate a more fully developed prelude being “…treated with as much deliberation as the fugue.”94 He also had been writing “…free preludes intermittently over a span of more than three decades, from the Arnstadt period (the Prelude & Fugue in G, BWV 535a in the Möller Handschrift) to the later Leipzig years (the Prelude & Fugue in E-flat, BWV 552, in Clavierübung III).”95 In these years of developing preludes, he looked for new ways to experiment with them.96

As Bach’s part-writing evolved, he began cleaning-up inner voices of some early preludes for later use.97 He does this in his famous compilation of preludes and fugues, the two-book volume set, his Well-Tempered Clavier (WTC). The first part (Book I) of the WTC was completed in 1722 while the second part (Book II) was not completed until 1744.98 His decision to create such a work was primarily for didactic purposes; this meant it was to be used as a model of keyboard study for students, but it was also intended to provide a pleasant diversion for performers already familiar with prelude-fugue pairings.99 The WTC is one of the most influential works for keyboardists.

Bach set a new standard as the prelude was from then on often associated with the fugue by later composers. However, attached preludes were also incorporated with other genres. Notably, the French influence in Italy in the 1680s led to the association of the prelude with a suite that had sonata features in the sonata da camera. This association is apparent in Arcangelo Corelli’s (1653–1713) chamber sonatas of 1685 and 1694, which open with a Preludio.100 Towards the end of the Baroque period, Corelli’s violin sonatas

94 Stauffer, 129.
95 Stauffer, 31.
96 Stauffer, 28.
97 Stauffer, 29.
98 Kirby, A Short History of Keyboard Music, 113.
99 Kirby, 127.
100 Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” Grove Music Online.
(1700) set a standard of using preludes as opening movements to sonatas. This influenced German composers, such as Bach in his six English Suites. Each one opens with a prelude utilizing figurations similar to Italian string writing. The preludes after 1713 would “…generally exploit the fertile possibilities of the Vivaldian ritornello [which was] principle for unifying an extended movement in a single span.”

In the pinnacle of this development, Bach demonstrated the most systematic representation of the variety of the prelude as a genre in the WTC.

3.5 FRENCH PRELUDING TREATIES

The prelude genre made distinct changes in the Baroque, likewise, the art of preluding was also strongly addressed. Improvisation was a fundamental trait of music from the Baroque period and this influenced musicians to publish treatises on how to improvise. In terms of preluding, the most important tutors derive from France at the time of the High Baroque (particularly for wind instruments). “Other tutors of the common practice period, though they often included a large number of preludes, usually give no instructions for composing them.” One of the first books to discuss preluding was La veritable maniere d’apprendre a jouer en perfection du haut-bois, de la flue et du flageolet written by Jean-Pierre, Freillon-Poncein, and published in 1700 in Paris. The treatise taught students how to prelude and compose improvisations on the spot.

The most important publication on the subject is Jacques-Martin Hotteterre’s (1674–1763) L’art de Preluder (1719), which consists of eleven chapters that explain the

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101 Ledbetter and Ferguson.
102 Ledbetter and Ferguson.
principles of preluding at the time, including those of meter, tempo, and *inégal* (a term referring to unequal notes) playing. Hotteterre claims that there are two types of preludes:

Two different sorts of Prelude may be considered: one is the composed Prelude which is normally the first piece of what is called a Suite or a Sonata, and which is a genuinely formal piece; this sort includes Preludes put into Operas and Cantatas to precede and sometimes to herald what is to be sung. The other sort is the impromptu Prelude, and this is really the true Prelude { . . . } [This] Prelude should be produced on the spot without any preparation.

The composed type (*prelude composé* in French) opens a suite or a sonata, and an opera or a cantata, introducing musical material which would be heard later in the work. The improvised introduction (*prelude de caprice* in French), Hotteterre describes as being the true prelude, which has no rules and is only limited by the imagination of the performer. Listed below, Hotteterre gives basic rules of how preludes should be created.

1. A prelude should be maintained in the key of a music piece, especially its extremities.
2. It may start from a prime, third or fifth of the tonic chord.
3. It must end on the first scale degree (the tonic).
4. After starting from one of the degrees mentioned in point (2), we should start within the tones of the scale, paying special attention to the pitches which keep us in it, then we must finish with a final cadence; if a prelude is long, then before we end it, we go through a few suitable cadences.

The evolution of preluding and the prelude steadily transformed through D’Anglebert, Weiss, Bach, and Hotteterre as the Western Music canon shifted into the classical period.

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106 Gubiec, 56.
109 Gubiec, 56.
CHAPTER 4
PRELUDING IN THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

4.1 DOMINATING FACTORS & INFLUENCES ON PRELUDING

The coming of the Classical period changed the need for preluding, mainly because new musical styles arose. The new “galant style” gave music of the period characteristics of “…simplified technique, pleasing manner, and superficial expression.”\textsuperscript{110} Along with changes in musical style, places where concerts were given shifted “…as the salon manner became more fashionable….”\textsuperscript{111} The lute did not adapt to these idioms as well as keyboard, bowed string, and wind instruments did, and the piano took its place as the dominant instrument of the time. However, some lutenists, such as Adam Falckenhagen (1697–1754), attempted to embrace these changes by taking influence from their pianist contemporaries. He was a student of S. L. Weiss and, although some of his works are rooted in the Baroque tradition, others showed a progressive tendency toward the galant style.\textsuperscript{112} His \textit{Preludio nel quale sono contenuti i tuoni musicali} (Prelude, which contains all the musical keys) exhibits these styles and is unique in that it last over 20 minutes in performance. It demonstrates characteristics of

\textsuperscript{111} Sheldon, 241.
the new musical idioms by containing traits of one of the most radical and innovative composers of the time, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788).\textsuperscript{113}

Throughout the classical period, the sonata was the principal type of composition, especially among pianists. While there are few surviving examples of written-out sonata preludes there is evidence that eighteenth century composers were incorporating preludes as introductions to their sonatas. The surviving compositions make use of the attached prelude type (similar to the prelude-fugue pairs in the Baroque period) and were common in the growing body of piano repertoire at the time. The composers, Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760–1812) and G. M. Rutini (1723–1797), wrote relatively long preludes in improvisatory styles for their sonatas.\textsuperscript{114} Some examples are Dussek’s Three Sonatas with Scotch or German Airs and Three Preludes, Op. 31, and Rutini’s Op. 7 (1770).\textsuperscript{115}

Length is the primary difference between stand-alone, or independent preludes, and preludial introductions placed at the beginning of a piece. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's (1756–1791) Fantasy in C Minor, K. 475, for example, was published together with his Sonata in C Minor, K. 457, demonstrating that the “fantasy” could be performed as an introduction or independently. He may even have intended his Fantasy in D Minor, K. 397 to be an introductory piece. It was composed in the 1780s, and although it was not published until 1804, after his death, it was described by the publisher as a \textit{fantaisie d’introduction}.\textsuperscript{116} Contrastingly, some of the newer preludes of the time were too short to play as independent pieces, and were simply titled “prelude,” indicating their introductory role.

\textsuperscript{113} Radke and Crawford.
\textsuperscript{115} Hamilton, 106.
\textsuperscript{116} Hamilton, 106.
There were instances when composers would include written-in preludes within pieces before the piece would really “start.” We see this in the *Tempest Sonata*, Op. 31, no. 2, by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Within the piece, there is a dreamy arpeggiated chord which is followed by more punctuated thematic passages.

The repetition happens twice, and it is only the second time, when there is the full cadence in D minor, that the piece seems to begin. Musicologist, scholar, and writer on preluding Kenneth Hamilton points out that, “If we are as accustomed to pianists’ preluding as Beethoven’s audiences certainly were—it is perhaps not actually until the exposition repeat that we might realize that the extempore-style opening was ‘officially’ part of the work itself.”

For the pianists, which were some of the most popular soloists of the time, preludes were used to capture the audience’s attention; “Indeed actually attracting their

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117 Hamilton, 108.
attention in the first place to let them know that the performance was about to start…”
and this “…was absolutely essential, whether in a cosmopolitan salon or in the noisy
 crush of a public event.”\textsuperscript{118} Another reason pianists needed to prelude was to test an
instrument in performance situations. Craftsmanship of instrument building was still in its
early stages. While improvements were made in the pianos, they were still being built by
hand. This remains so until about the 1860s, and for this reason there were more
possibilities for something to go wrong. Common challenges for a pianist during a
performance were that keys would stick, hammers could break, and the strings could go
“…drastically out of tune with depressing regularity.”\textsuperscript{119} Besides testing the instrument,
preludes could be used as moments for the keyboardist to “warm up” the fingers. Emil
von Sauer gave a valuable account of a nervous performance for Anton Rubinstein in the
late 1870s, where he first improvised a prelude “…to make sure that my fingers, even in
his presence, would do their duty.”\textsuperscript{120} Before independent preludes were frequently being
published, great masters were improvising preludes but not necessarily writing them
down. It was seen as a proper gesture that one should prelude before concerts.

Throughout Europe, preludes were still often considered to be improvisational
pieces. Mozart, almost sixty years after Hotteterre’s description, gave a similar
description of the types of preludes in a letter written on July 20th, 1778. He stated that
there were two types of keyboard preludes at the time: “One that modulated from one key
to another, of which he himself wrote some examples (1777)… and a freely improvised
type whose function was to test the keyboard.”\textsuperscript{121} These free-improvisational preludes

\textsuperscript{118} Hamilton, 112.
\textsuperscript{119} Hamilton, 113.
\textsuperscript{120} Hamilton, 113.
\textsuperscript{121} Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” Grove Music Online.
were also often called ‘fantasia,’ which is reminiscent of the lute fantasia from the Renaissance.\textsuperscript{122}

The expectation of improvisation in the Classical period lasted through the eighteenth century to the beginning of the Romantic period, but the aesthetics towards preluding began to change during the late 1700s. Entries made in 1765 by Jean-Jacques Rousseau titled “Prélude” and “Préluder” in the *Encyclopédie*, confirm that one had to be knowledgeable in composition in order to excel at the practice:

But on the organ and the harpsichord, the art of preluding is something more significant: it consists of composing and playing on the spot pieces charged with the most learned aspects of composition, in fugue, imitation, and harmony. To succeed [in this art] it is not enough to be a good composer, it is not enough to master the keyboard and to possess agile and well-exercised fingers. One must also abound in that fire of genius and that liveliness of spirit that allows one at once to find subjects most suitable for harmony and melodies most pleasing to the ear.\textsuperscript{123}

While preluding was an expected gesture performance, it began to be viewed as something only a musical genius could do. Sill, amateurs wanted to learn the art which gave incentives for composers to include examples of how to create improvised introductions in pedagogical literature. Masters of the art felt that they should pass on their knowledge of improvisation to their pupils by teaching how one should prelude.

4.2 PRELUDING IN PEDAGOGICAL LITERATURE

Like the publications for wind instruments in France, there were books published on preluding by contemporary pianists, particularly in London and Paris. These publications included examples of preludes for amateurs and students. One of the first examples was by the Italian composer, Tommaso Giordani (1730–1806), who published

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\textsuperscript{122} Ledbetter and Ferguson.
Preludes for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte in all the Keys Flat and Sharp in 1773. In fact, he only includes 14 preludes in the most common keys. They are intended to be introductory pieces as they are only 8 to 15 measures long and all except one in common time.\textsuperscript{124}

The German-born composer and musical theorist, Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollmann (1756–1829) included a set of six preludes in his lesson book, An Introduction to the Art of Preluding and Extemporizing in Six Lessons for the Harpsichord or Harp, Op. 3 (1792). These six preludes are interesting because Kollmann pairs them with sonatas by different composers. He examines how preludes “…might incorporate one or more ideas from a given piece.”\textsuperscript{125} Each one is identified with the piece it is meant to precede, as in Figure 4.1.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.2.png}
\caption{Augustus Kollmann, Prelude to Burney’s Sonata IV, Op. 1., mm. 1-7\textsuperscript{126}}
\end{figure}

One of the most prolific prelude composers of the period was Muzio Clementi (1752–1832). A prominent figure in London at the time as a piano manufacturer, publisher, and teacher, Clementi played a significant role in the development of the prelude. His collection titled, Clementi’s Musical Characteristics: or A collection of Preludes and Cadences for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte Composed in the Style of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{124} Temperley, 327.
\textsuperscript{126} Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollmann, An Introduction to the Art of Preluding and Extemporizing in Six Lessons for the Harpsichord or Harp, Op. 3 (London: R. Wornum, 1792), 17.
\end{footnotesize}
Haydn, Kozeluch, Mozart, Sterkel, Vanhal and The Author, Op. 19 (1787), has twelve preludes that imitate the compositional styles of the composers within the collection’s title. His didactic work titled, Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte, Op. 42 (1801; revised in 1826) was also influential. This collection contains short pieces titled, “lessons” and range from a variety of difficulties. They are grouped by key, and each is preceded by a short prelude in the same key. Grouping pieces in this manner is similar to how lute books in earlier periods would use attached preludes. While Clementi was still associating these preludes with the intention to be used as an introduction to piece, they were primarily meant to be pedagogical resources for students. Figure 4.2 portrays one of the prelude lessons for an Allemande by Corelli.

![Figure 4.3: Muzio Clementi, Prelude in D Minor](image)

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127 Kirby, A Short History of Keyboard Music, 111.
129 Temperley, 330.
A composer who had a significant influence on the prelude, but did not write very many, was Beethoven. He composed three preludes, two of which are in Op. 39 and are exercises in modulation. They both begin in C major and travel through the circle of fifths, as seen in Figure 4.3.

![Figure 4.4: Ludwig van Beethoven, Op. 39, no. 1, mm. 1-34](image)

From this modulating-exercises by Beethoven, it is evident that some early preludes were used to show evasive tonal ambiguity which demonstrated how a prelude could move from one key to another, as in Mozart’s *Modulierendes Präludium.* These preludes were used as transitions between pieces. Mozart confirms this; “The performer can stop when he likes…” in the middle of a prelude when the desired key has been found. They were composed specifically to help students and performers practice modulation. Compilations of these kinds of preludes include Beethoven’s *Zwei Präludien durch alle Dur-Tonarten für das Pianoforte oder die Orgel*, Op. 39, Clementi’s *Étude journalière*

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131 Hamilton, 124.
The eighteenth century was a period of transition for the guitar. Compositions for the Baroque guitar by composers such as Robert de Visée (1650–1725), Ludovico Roncalli (1626–1700), and Santiago de Murcia (1673–1739) remained popular, but the role of the instrument changed because of the developing styles in Classical period music. Many of these changes began when Philip V took the throne in Spain after arriving in Madrid in 1701. Under his rule, he embraced foreign influences and repressed art forms from his home, causing the Spanish guitar to be less important. The instrument became one that was used by low-class people and was associated with drinking, dancing, and singing in the streets or bars.\footnote{133}

There were also changes with the instrument itself which caused a decrease of solo repertoire in the second half of the eighteenth century. The shift into the periods \textit{galant} style caused the guitar to take the role of an accompanying instrument through arpeggiating chords while other instruments played the melody, most often voice. This change of role caused the repertoire to favor the fourth and fifth strings, making the guitar have prominent bass lines, which ultimately led to the addition of a sixth string. This was a significant change for the instrument. One publication that portrayed the guitar as an accompanying instrument comes from the Spanish guitarist Pablo Minguet y Yrol titled, \footnote{132 Hamilton, 124.}

Reglas, y advertencias generales para acompañar sober la party con la guitarra, clavicordo, organo, arpa, cithara (Madrid, c. 1752).\textsuperscript{134}

Another significant development was the abandonment of the tablature system to one that used staff notation. The Italian guitarists were the first to adopt staff notation for the guitar. The first two critical figures to make this transition were Giacomo Merchi (1730–1789) and Michel Corrette (1707–1795) in their method books. Corrette’s method, titled \textit{Les Dons d’Apollon, méthode pour apprendre facilement à jouer de la guitarre} (1762), demonstrated a clear transition in the guitar starting to use a staff notation.

These developments caused the guitar to have substantially less repertoire from this time period and therefore fewer preludes. As the prelude was a more polyphonic genre, it was not seen necessary to write them for an accompanying instrument. However, there were guitarists in the second half of the century who opposed the guitar being used as solely a strumming and accompanying instrument and reestablished the guitar as a polyphonic and solo instrument. One of the first and most notable guitarists was a monk named Miguel García (1760–1800, also known as Padre Basílio) who, although was an organist and composer, held his most important contribution to the history of the guitar.\textsuperscript{135} He influenced guitarists of the time to oppose the monophonic styles of playing guitar and instigated of a modern school of guitar.

A notable performer of this modern school was the Italian guitarist Ferdinando Carulli (1770–1841), who “…was the first to reveal to Paris audiences what the guitar was capable of in terms of expressivity, timbre, harmony and virtuosity, and he brought about a change in taste and performing practice.” He published many educational

\textsuperscript{134} Tyler and Sparks, 193.
\textsuperscript{135} Graham Wade, \textit{A Concise History of the Classic Guitar} (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications Inc., 2001), 68.
collections, including his *L’utile et l’agréable* (1817?). These preludes are mostly arpeggios studies and right-hand exercise, but they are longer than other guitar preludes of the time.

Other guitarists of this modern school were Federico Moretti (1795–1838), Fernando Ferandiere (c. 1740–c. 1816), Fernando Sor (1778–1839) and Mauro Giuliani (1781–1829). Both Sor and Giuliani caused a rise in the popularity of the instrument. While Sor has one of the most extensive body of works for the guitar of the time, he did not publish any preludes. Mauro Giuliani, however, did include *Preludi* in his 24 studies for the guitar, Op. 100 (no. 17-24). They clearly derive from the improvisational tradition as he indicates; “Use these [preludes] before starting a piece of music.” The flourishing scale passages, indication of rhythmic freedom with “a piacere” (*ad libitum*), and brief, non-imitative motifs all exemplify the influence of improvisation, which can be observed in Figure 4.4.

![Figure 4.5: Mauro Giuliani, Prelude, no. 17](image-url)

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Giuliani is often accredited with composing six other preludes that either he (or his publisher) arranged and published (Op. 83). However, these pieces were originally published as *Six Exercises*, Op. 27 by the guitarist Antoine de l'Hoyer.\footnote{Matanya Ophee, “The Guitarist’s Album,” *Soundbaord* XVII/1, no. Spring (1990): 80–83.} They are popular preludes that feature simple arpeggiation patterns, with the final ones emulating the style *brisé* (broken style) from the 17th century French lutenists (Fig 4.5).

![Figure 4.6: Antoine de l’Hoyer, Prelude, no. 6, Op. 83, mm. 1-7](image)

There is even more substantial interest in the capabilities of the guitar with the coming of the Romantic period, although the practice of preluding is realized more frequently by the expanding repertoire of the piano.
CHAPTER 5
PRELUDING IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

5.1 TRANSITIONING TO A SOLO PERFORMER

By the early nineteenth century, a change occurred between musicians, audiences, and amateur musicians that shifted the minds and attitudes of concertizing. Composers and performers began distinguishing and documenting differences between improvisations and pre-composed works. At the time, pianists often played their own compositions in their concerts to attract audiences. The rise in audience members attending public concert caused an “...increase in [the] number of aspiring pianists, in the opportunities for musical education and in music publishing and journalism.” Consequently, the rise in musical education created more critics and articles on musical performances. Valerie Goertzen writes that, “Between 1800 and 1850, [there] was the shift of emphasis from the pianist as composer to the pianist as interpreter that did most to alter attitudes of performers and audiences to the piano music presented in public concerts.”

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139 Goertzen, “By Way of Introduction,” 327.
141 Ritterman, 13.
142 Ritterman, 13.
The perception of performers becoming interpreters resulted in the publication of more pedagogical method books, which inspired students to play specific pieces.

“Compendious piano methods of 1838–39… which appeared in 1847, contained chapters on the performance of music by composers of the modern Romantic school, by Beethoven, and by composers such as Bach and Handel, as well as an extensive list of suggested repertoire for study.”143 Aspiring pianists were being taught that they had to learn specific pieces by specific composers. When a London concert season in 1850 held a concert “…advertised as a ‘performance of classical pianoforte music,’” with works by Beethoven and of composers from the ‘Modern Romantic’ school “…the role of the pianist as interpreter was now acknowledged.”144 Preluding before a concert was still considered fashionable, but views on it also began to change as more amateurs became inclined to attempt the art. “Although preluding lost its place in the performance of serious music, its traces continued to be evident in notated introductions, in studies, and in independent pieces that attempted to capture the spirit of improvisation.”145

A prominent pianist of the time Philip Antony Corri (1784–1832), stated that:

Every performance should be introduced by a prelude, not only to prepare the ear for the key in which the air or piece is to be played, but to prepare the fingers, and therefore should in general consist of some rapid movement intermixt with chords, arpeggios and other passages. A prelude is supposed to be played extempore, and to lay down rules would be as impossible as wrong, for the fancy should be unconfined; but for those who are not acquainted with the rules of counterpoint or composition I shall submit several specimens or styles of prelude, adapted to every capacity.146

143 Ritterman, 13.
144 Ritterman, 16.
Corri, who was living in London, published *L’anima di music: An Original Treatise on Piano Playing* (1810), which had instructions on preluding and over 200 “progressive preludes.” These were later published as a separate collection titled as the *Original System of Preluding* (1813).\(^{147}\) Corri’s preludes observe a progression that was explicitly written for “young scholars” of the pianoforte and are organized in a unique progression of six separate “styles.” The first set consists of short-simple chordal styles that have simple harmonic progressions of tonic-dominant-tonic, as in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1: Philip Antony Corri, Preludes, First Style](image1)

There are styles that introduce the subdominant chord in and are decorated with more arpeggiated figurations (styles 2 and 3), seen in Figure 5.2.

![Figure 5.2: Philip Antony Corri, Preludes, Third Style](image2)

\(^{147}\) Goertzen, “By Way of Introduction,” 331.
Styles 4 and 5 are more elaborate preludes and include Coda’s and Capo’s. The final sixth style, which he calls the Complete Preludes, combine all the aspects used in the previous styles and contain examples of what could be independent pieces. Corri sometimes even labels these capriccios. An example of the elaborate sixth style preludes is found in Figure 5.3.

![Prelude in G](image)

Figure 5.3: Philip Antony Corri, Prelude in G

Bar lines are present in Corri’s preludes to facilitate reading, but he adds, “All formality or precision of time must be avoided; [preludes] must appear to be the birth of the moment, the effusion of fancy, for which reason it may be observed that the measure or time is not always marked at Preludes.”

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148 Corri, P. A. Corri’s Original System of Preluding, 84.
The importance of preluding was highly regarded by some teachers. The German composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837) “…who was renowned for his ability to improvise even fugues and other elaborate pieces in strict styles,”\textsuperscript{149} stated:

Even if a person plays with inspiration, but always from a written score, he or she will be much less nourished, broadened, and educated than throughout the recent offering of all his or her powers in a free fantasy practiced in the full awareness of certain guidelines and directions, even if this improvisation is only moderately successful.\textsuperscript{150}

Hummel was an advocate for preluding and was considered to be one of Europe’s greatest composers and pianists of his time.\textsuperscript{151} He published a set of twenty-four \textit{préludes}, Op. 67 (1814) in all 24 keys which continued the tradition of composing sets of preludes in the style of the \textit{WTC}.\textsuperscript{152} Hummel’s book titled \textit{Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel} “…outlined two methods by which an amateur pianist or finished artist might design an extended prelude to introduce a great and fiery bravura piece.”\textsuperscript{153} One was favored by J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Handel, Scarlatti and Mozart, and the other was favored by Beethoven (which he mentioned was more common at this time). He was one of the first pianists to group preludes in keys, including the relative minor keys, following the circle of fifths.\textsuperscript{154} Hummel’s Op. 67 influenced other composers to write sets of attached preludes during the nineteenth century. Examples include Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) who composed Six Preludes and Fugues for piano, Op. 35 (1832–7) in addition to his three independent preludes, Op. 104; Liszt composed \textit{Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H} (1855); Brahms wrote two preludes

\textsuperscript{149} Goertzen, “By Way of Introduction,” 305.
\textsuperscript{150} Goertzen, 305.
\textsuperscript{152} Temperley, “Preluding at the Piano,” 332.
\textsuperscript{153} Goertzen, “By Way of Introduction,” 325.
\textsuperscript{154} Goertzen, 331.
and fugues for organ (1856–7); Franck’s Prélude, choral et fugue for piano (1884); and Reger’s Prelude and Fugue for violin, Op. 117.155

Another significant composer and teacher teaching the art of preluding was the pianist Carl Czerny (1791–1857). He was a student of Beethoven and composed a large collection of 120 “examples” of preludes in his book, The Art of Preluding as applied to the Piano Forte, Op. 42 (1801). This collection, like Corri’s preludes, displayed preludes “in every style.” The first page gives examples which can be used to introduce the key. They are simple one measure dominant-tonic preludes labeled as, “The shortest preludes.” Initially, they are followed by a set of cadence examples, in the keys of C major and minor, and afterward go through a series of “…rather long preludes which may be transposed into all other keys.”156 These longer preludes are quite elaborate and show improvisatory qualities. They are often unmeasured although the cadences always include bar lines.

A composer who wrote a collection of preludes which had a significant influence on the length of preludes at the time was French pianist Frédéric Kalkbrenner (1785–1849). His set, Twenty-Four Preludes for the Piano Forte, in All the Major and Minor Keys, being an Introduction to the Art of Preluding, was published in 1827.157 These preludes were organized in a similar order to the WTC, in a rising chromatic order. However, they exemplify a change in composition, as they are longer and often more complex than previous introductory miniatures.

155 Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” Grove Music Online.
156 Corri, P. A. Corri’s Original System of Preluding, 3.
157 Temperley, “Preluding at the Piano,” 334.
5.2 THE INDEPENDENT PRELUDE & THE CHARACTER PIECE

As performers became less interested in attached preludes that did not match the solo-performer idioms, a rise of the independent prelude emerged. These preludes were longer and more elaborate, like Kalkbrenner’s set. They were also considered to be some of the most elaborate solo piano pieces of the period. Preludes of this type, which were associated with the character piece, had no prefatory function and were independent pieces that could be composed with any types of moods, musical figures, or technical exercises.

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) was the most important composer to label his entire set of character pieces “preludes” in his influential cycle of 24 preludes, Op. 28. Along with this set, he also composed Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 45 and Prelude in A-Flat Major. His set of preludes were so influential to composers of the time that Robert Schumann said of them:

I must signalize them as most remarkable. I confess I expected something quite different, carried out in the grand style of His Studies. It is almost contrary here; these are sketches, the beginning of studies or if you will, ruins, eagle’s feathers, all strangely intermingled. To be sure, the book also contains some morbid, feverish repellent traits, but let everyone look in it for something that will enchant him.158

Franz Liszt was also impressed with them. He considered them modestly named and full of a youthful vigor which was not as apparent in his later works.159 These preludes exhibit a variety of different characters and weight. Some are soulful laments and one is a 16-bar waltz. They are really varied character pieces. In 1950, Robert Wagerméé would say, “They are preludes to nothing, and their improvisatory character is only affected, for

they are a stylization of an ideal of improvisation which had already effective ceased to be practiced."\textsuperscript{160} Chopin’s preludes were the models for Stephen Heller (Op. 81), Alkan (Op. 31), Cui (Op. 64), and Busoni (Op. 37).\textsuperscript{161}

Debussy is one of the most significant composers to contribute to the evolution of the independent prelude. He “…added a complexity of materials and a completeness of form, which without losing its essential characteristic of brevity, brought the prelude to its highest point of development.”\textsuperscript{162} Although known for his unattached preludes, he also composed a handful of attached preludes, such as for his suite \textit{Pour le Piano} and \textit{Suite Bergamasque}. Most notably, he composed a set of twenty-four unattached preludes. Similar to Bach’s \textit{WTC}, they were published in two books: \textit{Livre I} (compiled in 1910) and \textit{II} (compiled in 1914). Despite being considered a collection of independent preludes, they were composed with sequential contrasts and effectively as a continuous performance. These preludes also have a somewhat improvisatory form;\textsuperscript{163} composing them this way could imply motivation from preluding. Influenced by Impressionism, Debussy composed them like “little pictures.” The titles are given at the end of each prelude (instead of the beginning) and they describe the image that the music is meant to portray. For example, in his \textit{Livre I}, no 6, “Des pas sur la neige" (“Footsteps in the snow”), the composer stated that the “…simple appoggiatura ‘should have the sonorous value of a melancholy ice-bound landscape’”\textsuperscript{164} (Fig. 5.3).

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{160} Temperley, “Preluding at the Piano,” 334.
\footnotetext{161} Ledbetter and Ferguson, “Prelude,” \textit{Grove Music Online}.
\footnotetext{164} Thompson, \textit{Debussy: Man and Artist}, 265.
\end{footnotes}
5.3 PRELUDING GUITARISTS IN THE “GOLDEN AGE”

By the nineteenth century, guitarists entered what is now known as the “Golden Age” of the guitar repertoire. Guitar composers, like Dionisio Aguado (1784-1849) and Luigi Legnani (1790–1877), produced works and methods that gave the guitar new foundations for composition and study that would be the basis for a growth in repertoire in the twentieth century. The guitar preludes in the Romantic period were often short pieces used for study. Consequently, preludes were not always included in guitar pedagogical literature and there are few records that mention guitarists preluding in public concerts. Still, some important guitarists did incorporate the practice of preluding in their pedagogical literature which infers that it must have been an important topic for teachers.

One of the most influential guitarists to include the art of preluding in his teachings was Dionisio Aguado in his Nuevo Método para Guitarra (1834). The method includes a series of short preludes but are similar to the cadenza-like preludes of Corri.
They are rich in improvisatory thematic material and present a good model for how a guitarist can prelude. Aguado instructs that they can also be transposed to be used in different keys. This set of preludes is quite unique in the guitar repertoire and will be looked at in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Guitar pedagogical literature was often presented in a similar manner to piano pedagogical literature. That is, the “lesson” starts by introducing a key and its scale, which is followed by a prelude and a piece in the same key. Lessons then increase in difficulty with the progressively more difficult keys. One guitarist who arranged lessons this way was the prominent Italian composer, Matteo Carcassi (1792–1853) in his *Méthode complète pour La Guitare*, Op. 59 published in Paris in 1836 (Fig. 5.4).

Figure 5.5: Matteo Carcassi, Key of A Major, Op. 59\textsuperscript{165}

Another important figure of the time was the Polish guitarist, Felix Horeczky (1796–1870). He was a student of Mauro Giuliani and was one of the finest guitar performer-composer-teachers active in Edinburgh. Horeczky clearly believed that his students should practice preluding and modulation as he published a volume titled, *Preludes, Cadences, and Modulations in every Key for the Guitar*, Op. 21. Some of the preludes in this collection display a variety of musical devices including scales, sequences, motifs, modulation, and tonal uncertainty while others are arpeggio exercises with basic modulations. Although there are only seven prelude examples, the second half of the volume has cadence progressions which can be used as a reference to modulate the preludes into all possible keys. Feasibly, after studying preludes in this way, a student would be able to then improvise and compose preludes in all the keys. The figure below shows one of Horeczky’s more adventurous preludes and an example of two cadence progressions from his Op. 21.

![Figure 5.6: Felix Horeczky, Prelude, no. 7 and cadence progression, Op. 21](image)

The guitarists, Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909), was one of the most important guitar composers at the end of the Romantic period. He wrote preludes without giving
any indication of what they were to proceed or if they were a collective set. The lack of
documentation of Tárrega’s works make it difficult to know exactly how many preludes
he composed, but five were published in his lifetime. Though they are short pieces, they
are considered today to be excellent resources for modern classical guitar students.
Robert Spencer claims that, “As with the Sor studies, the student will be working at
excellent music.” The opening measures of Prelude, no. 4 (subtitled *Preludio Patético*)
exhibits how it could be a helpful study in playing staccato chords (Fig. 6.10).

![Figure 5.7: Francisco Tárrega, Preludio, no. 4, mm. 1-13](image)

While the guitar is a dynamic instrument, it does not feature the grandiose capabilities
that were popular of the Romantic period; “…the instrument was at the low ebb
throughout Europe, and overshadowed by the piano.”

5.4 IMPROVISATION & CRITIQUES

Within the mid and late nineteenth century, preluding became less favored but
still used amongst German and French-trained pianists. With the growing popularity of
music from a maturing audience and industry, pianists were given fewer opportunities,
and there seemed to be less interest in hearing spontaneous introduction. It was also

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166 Thomas F. Heck, “Tárrega (y Eixe), Francisco,” *Grove Music Online*, Accessed March 1,

becoming a risky practice with the growing number of critics. In the mid-nineteenth century, preluding began to be reviewed negatively, which can be observed in an excerpt written by a reviewer for the *Quarterly Musica Magazine and Review*:

> We have often enquired why a Piano Forte player should be indulged or should indulge himself with the liberty of running over the instrument before his regular performance commences… \(^{168}\)

Along with critics, the relationship between performers and the written scores by composers began to change. Improvisatory liberties in a composer's work became regarded as inappropriate and even offensive. “When Rossini heard Maria Malibran spinning improvised material around one of his pieces, he is said to have inquired, ‘What a lovely aria, my dear. Who was the composer?’” \(^{169}\) The role of the performer was shifting to that of an interpreter and composers were feeling that performers were disfiguring their compositions with inappropriate improvisations. \(^{170}\) Teachers were also less interested in hearing this type of practice. Even Czerny complained as early as 1829 “…of performers who played virtually the same prelude every time.” \(^{171}\) Some twenty years later Kalkbrenner, a rather vain but leading pianist, composer, and teacher in most all of Europe in the early nineteenth century, remarked in the introduction to this treatise on preluding and improvising:

> How many of our best pianists can make an even moderately satisfactory prelude? And as for students there is not more than one in a thousand who try to go beyond the perfect cadence in improvisation. \(^{172}\)

The suppression of improvisation was not the fault of the teachers per se, for there were many other factors which aided in the depleting fashion of preluding. However, it is

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\(^{168}\) Goertzen, 306.

\(^{169}\) Gould and Keaton, “The Essential Role of Improvisation in Musical Performance,” 144.

\(^{170}\) Gould and Keaton, 144.

\(^{171}\) Goertzen, “By Way of Introduction,” 333.

\(^{172}\) Goertzen, 333.
evident that teachers and the leading pianists of the time were critical. Lesser known pianists were attempting to match what virtuosic pianists were doing by either preluding or choosing not to prelude. It is evident that only a few were able to do it well. “In the 1820s-40s the pursuit of virtuosity grew to overshadow the exercise of creative ability through improvisation… Improvisation, though it might have a part in such concerts, was bound increasingly to fashion. Whereas some performers, among them Hummel, managed to reconcile their aesthetic ideals with the wishes of their public, others had more difficulty with this.”

Franz Liszt (1811–1886) celebrated the performance practice of preluding in the 1870s, and later Theodor Leschetizky (1830–1915) did in the 1900s. One of Liszt’s students, Hans von Bülow (1830–1894), wrote preludes that were considered extremely ingenious. He, like Czerny, used preludes to “…silence a noisy audience, to warm up before playing a piece or even to ‘test the piano.’” At this time, certain music was well-known, and it was evident if performers played with their forms and keys; Bülow often integrated transposed sections of Beethoven’s works to open other pieces. In his American tours of the 1870s newspaper reviews notices that he “…adapted ‘a kindred passage of a few measures of the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony’ as an introduction to the Moonlight Sonata and transposed the opening bars of Beethoven’s Sonata in F sharp major, Op. 78, to use as a prelude to the Sonata Op 110.”

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173 Goertzen, 334.
175 Hamilton, 26.
CHAPTER 6

PRELUDING IN THE 20TH CENTURY & TODAY

6.1 GUITAR PRELUDES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The twentieth century is the single most important period regarding the output of guitar repertoire. One of the most important guitarists at the beginning of the century was the Catalan composer, Miguel Llobet (1878–1938). His preludes affirm that composers were now writing preludes primarily as stand-alone, independent pieces. His five preludes vary in length (8–45 measures), and they contain musical expansiveness similar to those of Chopin’s Op. 28. Compositionally, they adhere to romantic styles, but Llobet does not indicate that they precede anything. This excerpt from Prelude-Original (c. 1912) exhibits how his guitar preludes were absorbing the romantic idioms with virtuosic figures, stark changes in dynamics, and rapid harmonic movement (Fig. 61.).

Figure 6.1: Miguel Llobet, Prelude-Original, mm. 7-12
Most composers in the twentieth century were composing preludes for the guitar as sets rather than introductions. At the time, the young guitarist Andrés Segovia (1893–1987) was becoming a well-known champion of the instrument and he was getting many composers to write for him. One of the first was Mexican composer, Manuel Ponce (1882–1948) who composed a set of preludes for Segovia around 1929. Segovia felt they were not idiomatic to the instrument in their original keys and, after transposing some of them, he selected 12 to be published. Similar to the preludes in the Classical era, Ponce initially intended them to be included in a guitar method book that was to be co-authored by Segovia.176

The Brazilian composer and guitarist Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959) also composed five virtuosic preludes titled, Cinq Préludes. They were composed in 1940 but were not published until 1954. Performers often play them as independent pieces, but they are also sometimes performed as a set. Various rumors state that Villa-Lobos composed a sixth prelude, which Segovia lost, but there is no written evidence to prove its existence.177 Although the preludes were published without, they were later given subtitles indicating the character of each prelude. This connects them to the character pieces and preludes by Debussy. All five are homages and each incorporate a wide diversity in styles depicting Brazilian life; “The Preludes comfortably settle the listener before the five windows, each open on different aspect of the Brazilian scene.”178

Ponce’s and Villa-Lobos’ preludes are good examples of how prominent independent preludes had become. However, attached preludes were also being

composed specifically to be paired with fugues drawing influence from Bach’s *WTC*. The Italian guitarist Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968), who was also a close friend of Segovia, published a set of 24 preludes and fugues in 1962 for two guitars titled, *Les Guitars bien tempérées* (The Well-Tempered Guitars), Op. 199.

### 6.2 PRELUDING IN THE 20TH CENTURY

While many preludes were composed in the twentieth century, the practice of preluding and playing improvisatory transitions was fading. In general, it was a practice that was determining to be unnecessary as audiences were becoming better mannered and, with the addition of electric lights that could dim, people knew when to be silent for a performance. Another reason for the decrease in preluding was that pianos had become more stable, as they were being made in factories rather than by hand, and they were less likely to have defects (such as having sticky keys and easily breaking hammers). Before these changes, tuning and testing instruments were two principal reasons a performer would start with an improvisatory prelude. One could also say that the tolerance of preluding had lost favor with audiences due to the invention of the phonograph in 1876. The world was becoming more accustomed to what they heard on their home recordings. It was therefore startling and unacceptable to diverge from what was the familiar and the "correct" way of interpreting what a composer had precisely written.

Even with the declining popularity of preluding, there were still pianists who enjoyed teaching and performing improvisations. Theodor Leschetizky was known for playing improvisatory introductions in the beginning of the 1900s and was a true advocate for the practice. “When Ethel Newcomb played to Leschetizky’s class at the turn of the century, she was reprimanded by the master for not having made ‘a little modulation from the first piece to the second.’ Leschetizky summoned another of his
pupils to provide the missing modulation…” 179 On the other hand, by the end of the nineteenth century, many considered it a practice which was being abused. Some music critics were even profoundly offended when a performer would insert improvisation into a performance. Such a case is found in an 1892 review made in London by Musical Times when Valdimir de Pachmann played a transitional prelude in a performance of Beethoven’s third concerto.

The Cadenza played at the close of the [first] movement was by Liszt, and was played with extraordinary fluency. But M. de Pachmann spoilt everything by what followed. The opening movement of the concerto is in C minor. The Largo is in E-major, and the sequence of keys apparently jarred on the nerves of the susceptible virtuoso, for he must preface the slow movement with a modulatory improvisation of his own, and act of artistic impertinence for which he deserved to be hissed. What was good enough for Beethoven should be good enough for M. de Pachmann… as a whole, the performance was artificial, affected and irreverent. 180

Pachmann could have easily retorted saying it was appropriate on historical grounds, even if it was not successfully executed. Just a few years before, in 1885, Anton Rubinstein performed, “Four crashing B-flat-minor chords in the deepest bass range of the piano” between more than one movement of Chopin’s Sonata no. 2 during a concert in Pressburg to increase dramatic effect. 181 However, he was not hissed for the performance and even Liszt (who was in the audience) “…told Rosenthal that the Chopin Sonata was the high point of the program for him.” 182

Still, with the growing of a critiquing musical culture, the practice was eclipsed by literal interpretations through the twentieth century. Although from time to time the practical reasons for preluding did arise. Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941) often

179 Hamilton, After the Golden Age, 129.
180 Hamilton, 134.
181 Hamilton, 135.
182 Hamilton, 135.
performed a short prelude before a concert to silence the frequently enthusiastic applauding audience. An account of this was given by an audience member at one of his recitals in 1914: “Two or three imperative chords commanded absolute silence, which was maintained unbroken throughout the three hours over these thousands of people by the wonderful spell of his magnetic presence.”

The practice of attention-seeking introductions was even realized in some publications. The short preludial pieces that Percy Grainger (1882–1961) wrote for his version of the sea shanty, “One More Day, My John,” display such a task (Fig. 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Percy Grainger, “One More Day, My John,” mm. 1-2

This piece was somewhat of a novelty in 1916, and it has many written instructions. Above these instructions the composer states, “This piece may be key-shifted (transposed) into any key so as to serve as a ‘preliminary canter’ before any piece in any

\[\text{183} \quad \text{Hamilton, 135.}\]
\[\text{184} \quad \text{Hamilton, 136–37.}\]
key.” He also mentions the use of improvisation by stating, “All big stretches may be harped (played arpeggio) at will.” The piece is composed of thick-voiced chords and has many clear dynamic markings; however, the effect is meant to be one of spontaneity.185

With accounts of preluding and a piece such as this, it is clear that the practice was by no means entirely lost by the twentieth century. Even if the practice was fading, the early part of the century provides an aspect in preluding that no other periods could produce; the recorded audio of artists who would prelude. One of the most notable pianists to have recorded himself preluding was Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924). In his recording made in 1922 of Chopin’s Black Key etude in Gb Major, Op. 10, no. 5, he preceded the piece with Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28 no. 7. Discographies of Busoni recordings often list these two pieces as separate recordings; however, they are not. Though the Chopin prelude is hardly a miniature work, Busoni still used it as an introduction to the Black Key Etude. Due to the fact that they are also in different keys, Busoni had to recompose a little by modulating “…the dominant of F# minor (enharmonic Gb minor) the relative minor of the prelude’s A major, to facilitate the A-major–Gb-major change of key, before launching straight into the etude.”186

There were practical reasons, however, for not including preludes or improvised transitions on recordings (especially in the early twentieth century). For one, improvisations are highly influenced by the mood and moment and are not always appropriate for the repetitive nature recordings create. Secondly, because there was not an infinite amount of space on the etched groves of shellac discs (recording could only be about four and a half minutes). This is hardly enough time for a full piece let alone an

185 Hamilton, 136.
186 Hamilton, 102.
improvisatory introduction.\textsuperscript{187} Even though artists such as Paderewski, Rachmaninoff, Sauer, and Percy Grainger, did not include preludes in their albums, there were live recordings made of such occasions. Josef Hoffmann (1876–1957) has some surviving recordings from the late 1930s including, "…his Golden Jubilee concert in the Metropolitan Opera House in 1937, a recital from Casimir Hall at the Curtis Institute, Philadelphia, and part of this penultimate Carnegie Hall recital of 1945. In all of these recordings, Hoffmann sometimes preludes between pieces."\textsuperscript{188}

Hoffmann would sometimes play simple introductions that would only feature one note, a chord, and sometimes a flourish. An example of this can be heard in his prelude to Beethoven’s Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, no. 2, “Moonlight” (Fig. 6.3).

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig63.png}
\end{center}

Figure 6.3: Hoffmann’s prelude to Beethoven’s Sonata, Op. 27, no. 2

Similar introductions by Hoffmann can be heard in the fourth movement of Carl Maria von Weber’s Sonata in C Major, Op. 24 (Fig. 6.4);

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig64.png}
\end{center}

Figure 6.4: Hoffmann’s prelude to Carl Maria von Weber’s Sonata, Op. 24

\textsuperscript{187} Hamilton, 136.
\textsuperscript{188} Hamilton, 137.
and in Chopin’s Waltz in D-flat Major, Op. 64, no. 1, “Minuete” (Fig. 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Hoffmann’s prelude to Chopin’s, Waltz in D-flat Major, Op. 64, no. 1

Hoffmann also demonstrates how preluding could be a tool for exploring tonality with improvisation. His prelude to Chopin’s Polonaise in E-flat Minor, Op. 26, no. 2, reveals him exploring keys using the circle of fifths (Fig. 6.6).^{189}

Figure 6.6: Hoffmann’s prelude to Chopin’s Polonaise in E-flat Minor, Op. 26

Other pianists who have preludes in their recordings include Wilhelm Backhaus (1884–1969) and Dinu Lipatti (1917–1950). Their improvisatory introductions range from dynamically changing rolled dominant seventh chords to contrapuntally complex progressions and techniques.^{190} Backhaus inserts a prelude to Schumann’s “Des Abend” from *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, which is a fantastic demonstration of how one can set a mood to prepare an audience for a tender piece.{^{191}}

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^{190} Mann, 23.
^{191} Mann, 24.
While there are no surviving video performances of preluding from the middle of the twentieth century, there are some video examples from the pianist, Vladimir Horowitz. In a video made on May 31, 1987 in Vienna’s Musikverein, Horowitz gently played a few chords before opening the concert with Mozart’s Rondo in D Major, K. 485. In Dinu Lipatti’s last recital he modulated between J. S. Bach’s Partita no. 1 in B-flat Major, BWV 825, and Mozart’s Sonata in A Minor, K. 310. In the figure below depicts how Lipatti played a B-flat major chord followed by a dominant E major chord to modulate into the key of A minor (Fig. 6.7).192

![Figure 6.7: Dinu Lipatti’s prelude to Mozart’s Piano Sonata, K. 310](image)

Kenneth Hamilton states that before the twentieth century an improvised introduction was “…a sign of musical good manners and a chance for the player to frame appropriately the pieces in his program. It was also an opportunity to give the audience a gentle reminder that the player was a creative artist”193 Although today it is a dying art in classical music, there are a few who have carried on the tradition into the twenty-first century.

192 Mann, 24-25.
6.3 PRELUDING TODAY

Today, preludes are most often composed as independent pieces. Many composers in the twenty-first century wrote sets of preludes modeled after Bach’s *WTC*. One example is Michelle Gorrell who composed a set titled *Well-Tempered Licks & Grooves: 24 Preludes & Fugues in Jazz Styles* (2010). In the spirit of Chopin and Debussy, there are also preludes that are character pieces. Spanish composer Antón García Abril (b. 1933) composed three longer preludes titled *Tres Preludios Urbanos* (1995) that portray three European cities. They can be programmed individually, or as the set, but it is clear that Abril did not intend them to sound improvised or to proceed other pieces.

Preluding in public performances today is something that is rarely witnessed on the Western classical concert stage. The most common practice of preluding, which has remained consistent practice since medieval times, is utilized by church organists who play preludes during church services. In this instance, preluding is still used in a manner similar to the Renaissance *Intonazione*, to give the choir and congregation the starting pitches of hymns that are immediately sung afterwards. These preludes usually use similar material found in the succeeding hymns, but with altered and improvised parts that lead to the start of the hymn.

In the concert world, there are some occasions where performers prelude. The pianist Robert Levin (b. 1947) is known for his imaginative, spontaneous ornaments and cadenzas in his performances of Mozart and other classical composers.\(^\text{194}\) He is also known for reconstructing many eighteenth-century works and unfinished works by

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\(^{194}\) Hamilton, 138.
Mozart and J.S. Bach. Another pianist who recorded an entire album of improvised preludes is Piotr Orzechowski in his album titled, *24 Preludes & Improvisation*. Guitarist Roland Dyens (1955–2016) thought that improvisation was essential to performance and to composition. He stated in an interview: “I always start my recitals with improvisation as far as I remember. I start with something fresh and unknown for many reasons. I use this power, this gift by this way at the beginning just to feel a bit more relaxed; it was a kind of habit and it became a kind of superstition and it was not only to kill anxiety which is always the case today, to be honest. It was for many purposes: to test the acoustic, to test the people.”\(^{195}\) He was known to begin his concerts with an improvised piece (a prelude) as a way of “tuning in” to the performance.

In today’s Western classical music concerts preluding is generally a lost practice. Even with prominent pianist figures of the twentieth century performing spontaneous introductions, the current association of a composed prelude as an independent piece is inseparable to most musicians. Many students and performers would likely benefit from playing a few bars of something before giving a recital. However, today classical music listeners view improvisation as a practice used in other genres of music, such as jazz. However, Hamilton suggests that, “This is not a lost art—it is simply one that has been deliberately neglected,” and that, “Many players in the classical performance world quite simply lack the training in improvisation that Liszt, Chopin, and their contemporaries received as a matter of course.”\(^{196}\)

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CHAPTER 7
PRELUDING EXERCISES

7.1 GENERAL PRELUDING EXERCISES

By looking at the history of the prelude through all the periods of music, it is evident that there are many possibilities to draw inspiration from surrounding the art of preluding. However, although it is a genre with over a 500-year history, the majority of today’s classically trained musicians do not practice the art nor understand the concept of preluding as a practice. It is a forgotten art, and music schools do not present it as a pedagogical or performance tool, except for students of early music, who might improvise before commencing a piece. This is a sad notion, especially when considering all the pedagogical material that was discussed in this study. Might it be a worthy undertaking to include this lost art in performance practice today?

Some think so, such as pianist Johnathan Mann. In his article, Preluding with The Masters, Mann presents a simple exercise that one can use to practice conceptualizing how to prelude. His exercise involves “reimagined notation” to give passages a more “extemporaneous atmosphere” by visualizing pieces without bar lines. He specifically looks at Chopin’s G minor Ballade and states that by taking out the bar lines one will “…notice a less compartmentalized, more recitative-like appearance.”

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Perhaps this may look familiar to the French *preludes non meaurés*. This is an exercise that any instrumentalist (or vocalist) can practice with other pieces as well, simply by reimagining the notation to be without bar lines. By experimenting with rhythmic flexibility, one will be able to give pieces improvisatory gestures and take a first step in improvisation without having to make-up the notes.

A wonderful resource for learning how to prelude is found in a book titled, *The Art of Preluding 1700-1830: For Flutists, Oboists, Clarinetists and Other Performers* by Betty Bang Mather and David Lasocki. This guide collectively groups examples of preludes from the late Baroque, pre-Classical, Classical, and early Romantic periods to give a complete understanding of ways in which one can prelude. The music organized in these periods, which the authors call the “Common Practice Period,” is organized and based on tonality, uses a common harmonic vocabulary, and uses regular meter to make the exercises unanimous to all instruments.\(^{199}\) Because the work is targeted to

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\(^{198}\) Mann, 27.  
monophonic instruments all the exercises are monophonic examples. However, the rules and devices used could easily be applied to the practices of polyphonic instruments as well. The majority of the book includes examples of preludes composed by famous composers from these periods and describes their rules for creating improvised preludes.

For this study, I will discuss the instructions for generating preludes based on Mather’s and Lasocki’s own analysis. The authors refer to this section as the “General Instructions.” From the analysis of preludes from the years mentioned above, they create a list of basic melodic figures:

Identified as scales, turns, arpeggios, chordal leaps, broken arpeggios, chordal turns, turns, scales of seconds, scales of thirds, cadential trills (including predatory and closing notes) and final note. Repeated tones (RT), passing tones (PT), appoggiaturas (A) and lower neighbors (LN) are also indicated.

![Figure 7.2: Prelude Examples 1 and 2, The Art of Preluding 1700-1830](image)

It is then advised to memorize the figures and practice them a step higher or lower. Once one has developed a music vocabulary of melodic figures, “The next step is to combine

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200 Mather and Lasocki, 66.
201 Mather and Lasocki, 66.
them in the improvisatory style of a prelude.” To do this, simply join figures together to create compound patterns. It is instructed to take memorized figures and pair them with chordal turns ending with a final note. Once a compound pattern is made, such as in the figure below (Fig. 7.3), one should, “Practice this compound pattern starting on other suitable notes and in other suitable keys.”

![Figure 7.3: Compound Pattern, The Art of Preluding 1700-1830](image)

Finally, one should practice preludes after analyzing the harmony. It is important to keep in mind that, “Preludes… sometimes pass through chords such as the subdominant, secondary dominant or relative major or minor, [and] the implied harmony is more often restricted to the tonic (I or i) and the dominant (V, V7, vii, vii7, or viiº7) functions.” An example of analyzing a prelude this way is found in Figure 7.4.

![Figure 7.4: Harmonic Analysis Examples, The Art of Preluding 1700-1830](image)

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202 Mather and Lasocki, 68.
203 Mather and Lasocki, 68.
204 Mather and Lasocki, 69.
7.2 PRELUDING EXERCISES BY GUITARISTS

For the practicing guitarist, there are a few excellent prelude exercises found in guitar method books, some of which have been mentioned in previous chapters. One such method is a self-published guitar book by Mrs. Joseph Kirkman. Published in London, in 1842, this book is a fine pedagogical resource that contains a section on preluding. The section includes an exercise that specifically targets the practice of modulation and can be seen in Figure 7.5.
Another example of preluding exercises for guitarists (previously seen in Chapter 6) is found in Dionisio Aguado’s *Nouvelle Méthode de guitare*, Op. 6 (Paris, 1834). It would be beneficial to practice these preludes and to transpose them (as he suggests) to
other keys. Before the twenty-two preludes, which he subtitles, “Or indication of the key in which a piece is to be played,”205 Aguado states:

In these preludes the metre is not strictly observed. The value of the notes serves only to give an idea of the respective speed at which a piece is to be played. The time-increasing dots after some notes show that the notes in question should last for the whole value of the notes which they include and which are above or below them. The pupil should learn those preludes which his fingers are able to play.206

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206 Aguado y García, 110.
7.3 A MODERN PRELUDING GUITARIST

This author believes that the examples given above are valuable tools for modern guitarists to study. But then, one might ask why are they not used or taught by the majority of guitarists today? The answer is partially because of the fact that preluding today is uncommon and therefore most musicians are unaware of the practice. Another important factor is simply that most performers of classical music do not know how to improvise and only play what is written on the page. In order to create a spontaneous prelude, one needs to be familiar with improvisation. The prelude examples above (and others) can then be used rather as suggested models for creating original introductions.

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207 Aguado y García, 110–12.
according to a performer’s own imagination. To develop this skill, here are some ways to practice improvisation using pre-composed preludes as models.

A good place to start is with Aguado. He states that the rhythmic values in his preludes are just suggestions. This is an invitation to try playing them with different rhythms. Figures 7.7 and 7.8 demonstrate of his examples of how this could be done.

![Figure 7.7: Dionisio Aguado, Prelude no. 1, with varied rhythm](image)

![Figure 7.8: Dionisio Aguado, Prelude no. 5, with varied rhythm](image)

After experimenting with the rhythmic values, it also is important to practice transposing the preludes so that they are accessible to use on pieces in other keys. Figure 7.9 shows how Aguado’s prelude no. 2 (originally in C major) can be played in the key of D major, which is a common tonal center for the guitar.

![Figure 7.9: Dionisio Aguado, Prelude no. 2, transposed to D Major](image)

Finally, once one has collected and practiced a variety of pre-composed preludes, and is comfortable with them, one can attempt to combine parts of the figures together to
make original preludes. Figure 7.10 portrays a model of how various preludes by Aguado can be combined to make a completely different piece.

![Figure 7.10: Dionisio Aguado, Preludes nos. 14, 15, & 16, with combined parts](image)

It is important to practice exercises like these without directly writing notes on a page. Memorizing figures upon which to improvise is essential. If this practice can be done without the use of notated music, it will give the performer the flexibility to make spontaneous rhythmic or ornamental alterations of figures in the moment. However, to achieve this level of spontaneity requires experimenting slowly at first. The goal is to have a vocabulary that one can manage and manipulate at will in a high-pressure concert setting.

In order to create original preludes, it is also essential to have a strong knowledge of harmony. It would be inappropriate, for example, to end an improvised prelude on a minor ii chord, which is not a proper chord to cadence on. To be prepared in a concert setting it is best to have a preconceived notion of the harmonic progression, rather than trying to create it entirely at the moment. One must keep the progressions simple and always diatonic so that the prelude can be manageable. Example progressions could be, I-IV-ii-V7-I. In minor it could be, i-ii°-V-i. Note that the progression does not always have to end on the tonic. It could also end on a dominant chord, and the start of the main piece can function as the resolution. Figure 7.11 demonstrates some notated harmonic progressions (two in the key of C major and one in the key of E minor) that can be used to make a prelude.
One can apply what are known as “figuration preludes” to harmonic progressions. These preludes repeat a specific pattern over a harmonic progression. An example of this is found in Ferdinando Carulli’s first prelude in his Op. 114. It is easy for guitarists to alter arpeggiated figuration. Figure 7.12 demonstrates one example of how this could be done if the figuration was simply played backward.

These are all examples of devices one can use to improvise on preludes or invent new ones. Memorizing figures, being able to experiment with melody and rhythm, and

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knowing appropriate chord progressions are essential skills to master for improvising preludes. After being practiced in these skills, the next step is making spontaneous introductions on the concert stage.

Preluding before a piece in a concert, or even improvising in a classical tradition, can be an intimidating task. First, it is important to consider the reasons for attaching a prelude. In the book titled *Improvisation and Inventio In the Performing of Medieval Music*, author Angela Mariani gives a worthy discussion of crafting preludes in medieval music. These rules can also be applied to creating preludes in all the musical periods. Mariani suggests that, “Not all introductions have the same set of goals or intentions, and the performers must decide what they are trying to accomplish.” She describes that there are three possibilities for creating a prelude.

1. A prelude may be created for practical reasons: the establishment of a tempo or the introduction of a particular section of the melody or refrain.
2. A prelude may allow the musical content of the piece to unfold. It may be used to establish the sound of the mode or to highlight or manipulate particular phrases in the melody or patterns in the rhythm.
3. [A prelude may be used] to convey something about the mood of a piece… The cultural element is an important consideration for a performer… Only [the performer] can decide how [they] will evoke “sadness” or “yearning” or “anxiety to [the] audience and how much [they] are willing to push the boundaries of what [they] consider to be historical performance practice in order to accomplish that.209

When considering the art of preluding in public performance, Mariana’s possibilities are helpful in defining the intent that a performer must consider. A prelude given without the proper intention could result in an ineffective introduction and likely an unsuccessful performance. It is important to study and practice preluding and modulating exercises beforehand, otherwise an audience will sense that the performer is not playing

genuine music. Developing these skills on the guitar is not easy. However, the time devoted to developing them will vastly improve the performer’s musicianship and ability to connect with their audience so that the music feels genuine, authentic, and makes a lasting impression.

Once well practiced in these skills, there are a number of different situations in which a guitarist can incorporate a prelude in performance. For example, when accompanying a singer with a piece that has no introduction from which the singer can get the starting pitch, a prelude would be very appropriate. Pieces that start this way are commonly found in early lute songs that are transcribed for guitar, such as in John Dowland’s, “Flow My Tears.” Although useful in this instance, another application is in solo repertoire. Here, one can choose to improvise a prelude before a piece of music that does not already have one. It would also be appropriate to give a short prelude (perhaps as simple as a pronunciation of the tonic-dominant-tonic) in order to check an instruments tuning. This would be especially helpful if the performer comes from a cold green room directly to the concert stage where the temperature differences were significant enough to alter the tuning of their guitar. Finally, one can also use preludes to connect two pieces of music which would sound nice as a continuous piece.

After establishing when to insert a prelude, it is important to have an idea of what material will be used in an improvised prelude. Even good public speakers never deliver a speech without rehearsing what they will say beforehand. An improvisation should be treated the same, and a performer should have a general idea of what they will play. For the guitarist, it is very easy for improvisations to sound like “noodling.” The main difference between a good improvisation and noodling has to do with intent and knowledge of what will be played before actually executing it. Regardless of how
spontaneous or pre-rehearsed a prelude is, it should always come from the performer’s pre-conceived intentions and delivered in a way that has musical integrity. Educated and uneducated listeners alike will know the difference, for they will feel disconnected and the music will fail to capture and hold their attention.

Finally, having fun is a guideline for success. Creating a prelude may seem simple, but on the guitar if they are not sprinkled with forethought and intricacies, they can sound rigid and labored. Attempting to play beyond one’s ability can have negative effects but so can overly simplified preludes. For example, figuration preludes might appear easy on the guitar, but they could run the risk of being uninteresting if the harmonic progression is not thought out well. The reason that Aguado’s examples are fun to play is because they provide a modest challenge. The performer must help listeners stay intrigued in a prelude by making interesting compositions that are enjoyable to play.

The only way to become better at preluding is to actually attempt it in public. There are only a handful of prelude examples for guitarists, but there are other places to find inspiration. Composers sometimes write prelude-like introductions within pieces and these sections could possibly be used for other pieces. An example of this can be found in the opening section of *Au Malvina* by the guitarist Johann Kasper Mertz (1806–1856) and can be seen in Fig. 7.13.

![Figure 7.13: Johann Kasper Mertz, *Au Malvina*, mm. 1-7](image-url)
Consider practicing preludes similarly to etudes; most of Sor’s etudes could even contain comparable characteristic and functionality. Take ideas from composed guitar etudes and experiment with them similar to the methods described in this chapter. Perhaps even write simple studies and practice improvising with them so that they later may be used as preludes. The possibilities are only limited to the imagination of the performer.

Clearly, there is much to be gained for the modern guitarist who takes time to develop these skills. As the art of preluding is such an uncommon practice, there is opportunity to experiment and to re-invent this practice, applying it to creative and authentic performances and contributing new compositions for the guitar. Also, there are applications in ways that these exercises and history can enhance current methods of music education. Lastly, there is an invitation to include fun, freedom, and pleasure into everyday practice sessions and performance situations for the modern classical guitarist.
CHAPTER 8
POSTLUDING - CONCLUSION

Modern writers and performers have vastly diverse views on the practice of preluding in a contemporary setting. As this document has shown, many who have written on the subject, such as Hamilton, Mann, Dyens, and Goertzen, might argue that it is not a tradition lost to time, but rather a relevant exercise for the current musician. However, others, such as author and historical musicologist Nicholas Temperley, view it as an outdated routine, one that cannot be recovered, even if performers wanted to.\textsuperscript{210} On the other end of the spectrum, there are audience members and critiques who believe that to add improvised introductions or improvised transitional interludes completely defiles a sacred work of art. Mann mused on an instance when he was accused of this: “During a post-concert reception, an audience member scolded me for preluding before Schubert’s \textit{Impromptu in E-flat Major, Op. 90, no. 2}.”\textsuperscript{211} Although, Mann points out, that in piano literature there are built-in introductions, “They just happen to be written down.”\textsuperscript{212}

To demonstrate how blurry the lines between improvisation and composed music can be, even those who are known to regularly “improvise” express how it is not completely spontaneous. Temperley confirms this by stating, “We have learned from two

\textsuperscript{210} Temperley, “Preluding at the Piano,” 339.
\textsuperscript{211} Mann, “Preluding with The Masters,” 25.
\textsuperscript{212} Mann, 25.
conferences on improvisation, covering cultures from all over the world, that the practice itself is typically a product of long and careful preparation, and that its aura of spontaneous creation may be more an affect or a symbol than a literal reality.” The big question is, were improvisational geniuses (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven) born with an innate gift to improvise entire pieces without any preparation, or did they practice improvising for a long time before they were able actually to do it well? Also, if the aesthetic of today’s musical audience were one that did want to hear spontaneous musical creation on the stage, would performers of classical music even be able to accommodate? The likely answer to this question, “no” as most classically trained musicians today do not know how to create original compositions at the moment. From the countless treatises on improvisation it is clear that teachers from past times believed it a skill that can be learned. However, it requires a strong understanding of music harmony and scales in order even to create a remotely successful prelude. Many students today do not have a strong understanding of these concepts and this is especially true of guitarists.

Developing a thorough understanding of these concepts through the practice of preluding could ultimately lead to a better understanding of music and musicianship. There have been countless benefits documented for musicians who do practice improvisation. In her paper titled, “An Investigation of the Benefits of Improvisation,” Rebecca Kossen claims that studying improvisation can help musicians in a number of ways, including a better understanding of musical devices, an increase in a musician’s aural awareness, helping a performer find their own voice, and that improvisation can make for an authentic performance. Tyson also suggests that because there is so much

\[ \text{Temp}erley, \text{“Preluding at the Piano,” } 339. \]
\[ \text{Rebecca S. Kossen, “An investigation of the benefits of improvisation for classical musicians” (Honors Theses, Edith Cowan University, Australia, 2013), 12-29.} \]
more written and discussed on improvisation today that this may “…even herald a new
direction in concert performance.”

Could this not be a reason why classical music is often considered a “dying” art
form? Perhaps classical music does not have the exciting, unknowingness of what is
about to happen that is found in so many other genres of music where improvisation is
used. If classical music did have more aspects of improvisation (an improvised prelude,
or interlude) then the music might become more exciting and accessible to the modern
ear. It would prepare those who are ready to listen for what is to come.

This document has taken a detailed look at the evolution a specific type of
improvisation; preluding. Though the performance practices of preluding have changed,
it can still be practiced if modern performers make initiatives to do so. This initiative may
not seem important for all, but Lydia Goehr’s states, “One early writer spoke of
preparatory preluding as the time for attaching the soul to the ear, for were this
connection not made, the concerted music or prepared speech would be delivered to no
one who was properly prepared to listen.” Although she does not give the source, it is
still an important idea when discussing the relevance of introductions. Inspired by the
significant virtuos i guitarists and other treatises on preluding, this document has offered
guidelines and encouragement for the modern classical guitarist (and other performers) to
embrace rather than reject the notion and practice of preluding. From the long history in
the art of preluding it is appropriate to conclude that it does, indeed, “matter where we
begin” as Goehr suggests.

215 John Tyson, review of The Art of Preluding, 1700-1830: For Flutists, Oboists, Clarinettists
and Other Performers, by Betty Bang Mather and David Lasocki, Music Library Association 43, no. 1
(Step., 1986): 178.
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