

# D.839, Ave Maria

Composed by Franz Schubert

Arranged for piano, one hand alone

by Varun Athilat

## Prefatory Remarks

This is an arrangement of Schubert's beloved and gorgeous Ave Maria, meant to be performed on the piano with one hand alone. Minor adjustments have been made between the left- and right-hand versions for comfortability purposes. Below are some notes regarding the technicalities, musicality, and mindset behind many components of this arrangement that might be useful to the performer.

### The Purposes of Small Notes

Generally speaking, small notes are used in my scores to indicate notes that are:

- to be played quieter than the melodic line (as no appropriate notation for this exists yet)
- indicative of a supplementary or accompanying “background” line meant to aid in enhancing the atmosphere of the piece
- or are optional to play, often for a variety of reasons.

In this score, all notes typed in a smaller font are simply optional to play. For the sake of making clear the intentions of small notes used in these areas, I will address each section in which they are present.

Lento assai

p

con pedale

simile

1

2

Since the “solo” portions of the arrangement do not use octave chords (where as Schubert’s composition does; these have been omitted for better playability), I have opted for the bass chord just preceding the solo section to be optional, so as to better transition into the single-note bass line in these portions. The optional chord at the very beginning of the piece is meant to mirror this in tandem with the crescendo and decrescendo in the introduction. If the full octaves are utilized, it is advisable that careful voicing be used to make these chords just as quiet as if the performer were to use one note instead.

For here and all similar sections, the octave chord may be utilized for anyone who feels as if the lower note would ring nicely. If the performer would rather play the single note however, for consistency's sake, that is perfectly respectable as well. One might also find that when playing this for right-hand-alone, playing just the single note before leaping back up to the treble line will feel more natural than playing the octave here – however this can only be avoided for so long until the *quasi choir* section, where these octave chords must be played.

Similar to the first remark on small notes, the small notes present in these chords are just meant to aid in filling the atmosphere as the piece transitions to the *quasi choir* section.

The small note highlighted here (and also present in measure 7) is a special case. The E-flat should be played if one chooses to syncopate the rhythms. The E-flat should be omitted, however, if the performer opts to simplify the rhythms instead (see “**With Regards to Polyrhythms**”), so as to not create undesirable dissonance.

Musical score page 18. The upper staff shows a melodic line with a small note highlighted by a red circle. The lower staff shows harmonic support. The key signature is one flat.

The small note highlighted here is optional to play in the simplified version of the solo rhythms, because the stretch that would otherwise be required is far too large for most people to reach (see “**With Regards to Polyrhythms**”).

Musical score page 11. The upper staff shows a melodic line with a small note highlighted by a red circle. The dynamic marking *fp* is present. The lower staff shows harmonic support. Fingerings 1-2-1 and 1-3-2 are indicated above the notes. The key signature is one flat.

This small note is specific to the right-hand-alone arrangement of the piece. If the performer cares to keep the sextuplet nature of the upper register, then they should play this note using the fingering above the mordent for the melodic line. However, if one would rather use a more ergonomic fingering for the melodic line, then this note may be omitted.

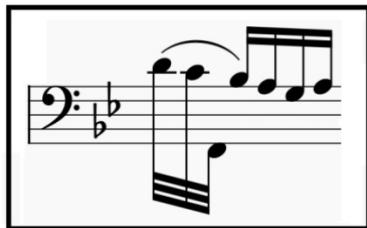
Musical score page 32. The upper staff shows a melodic line with a small note highlighted by a red circle. The lower staff shows harmonic support. The key signature changes to no sharps or flats.

This small note is specific to the right-hand-alone arrangement of the piece. People who do not have a large enough handspan might not be able to play this note while still retaining the octave in the melody. As such, this note is optional to play.

## Arpeggiations

In any one-handed piano work, trying to make a cohesive piece containing a melodic line (which caters to the upper part of the piano in most pieces) with accompanying parts and/or a bass line (which caters to the lower part of the piano in most pieces) can be quite tricky. Even in solo works of other instruments, this is an issue that is tackled in a variety of remarkable ways. Although masterminds like Godowsky, Alkan, Scriabin, Paganini, and many more have tried their hardest to navigate this limitation, they have all succumbed to the use of arpeggiations in one way or another. This is in no way a negative critique of these musicians' artistry; rather it is an acknowledgement of how the arpeggio is an all too efficient tool to tackle this issue in solo works. However, it is important to overcome this issue musically as well.

In this boxed-off portion of the score, there are two accessible ways to perform this: The F and B-flat can either be arpeggiated up or down. One might arpeggiate up as it is custom to do this in most piano repertoire and thus will not be as jarring to listen to. However, if it can be done musically well, then one might consider arpeggiating down, as the grace notes can better lead into the melody without having to put it on a “pause” to snatch off the low F in this part.



Above are two differing approximations of how one might perform the boxed-off notes. It is worth noting that the notation on the right side might render the treble line more difficult to perform, as once the low F is played, the hand must come back up rather quickly to continue the sextuplet in the treble staff. If one were to play the arpeggiation like this, they might find it more convenient to do away with the polyrhythms and utilize the simpler version of the melody instead (see “**With Regards to Polyrhythms**”), so the syncopated rhythms aren’t as daunting or complicated to perform.

## Fingering, Pedaling, and Sustaining the Melody

A musical score for piano, page 10, measures 10-14. The score consists of two staves: treble and bass. The treble clef staff shows a melody line with eighth-note patterns. The bass clef staff shows a bass line with quarter notes and rests. A red rectangular box highlights a specific section of the bass line, starting with a quarter note followed by a rest, then a series of eighth notes. This section is positioned under a sustained note in the treble staff, which is indicated by a horizontal brace and a vertical stem extending downwards.

While I tried my best to keep the melody within reach of the accompaniment, there are times where this must be sacrificed for the sake of musicality, in my opinion. Nevertheless, the pedal must be used to sustain the melody in places where the melody cannot be held by the fingers (and really the pedal should be used anyways in order to sustain the bass line and aid in the ambience of the piece).

## Voicing

It is of utmost importance to bring out the main melody as best and as musically possible. It is natural to become confused with where the melody ought to "be" in the hand, as this arrangement often bounces between the higher and lower part of the hand to "sing" the melody. For the sake of directly addressing it, the first portion of this arrangement (measures 3-14) is meant to emulate a stereotypical man's singing voice. The second portion of this arrangement (measures 16-27) is meant to emulate a stereotypical woman's singing voice. The third portion (measures 29-40) is meant to emulate either a duet or a choir with a powerful piano or orchestral background. Understandably, there must be some mental effort on behalf of the performer's and listeners' imaginations in hearing these elements be brought out on the piano.

## With Regards to Polyrhythms

In the *quasi choir* portion of my arrangement, the 4-against-6 (melody-against-accompaniment respectively) polyrhythm is abandoned and the melody is restructured to cater to the sextuplets instead. The idea behind this simpler way to perform these rhythms and the idea behind this arrangement in general was inspired by Liszt's own masterful and intricate arrangement of the Ave Maria.

*dolciss. delicatamente*  
8.....  
8.....  
8.....  
8.....  
*il canto sempre marcato ed espressivo*  
A - - - ve Ma - ri - - -  
8.....  
8.....  
8.....  
*gli accompagnamenti sempre p e staccato*  
*Ped come prima*  
8.....  
8.....  
8.....  
*a!* un - - - be - - -

Below, I have listed every way to rewrite the polyrhythms into simpler rhythms for each applicable section. The original rhythm will be on top separated from the rewritten rhythm via a red line.

3



p  
*espressivo il canto solo*

arpeggiando ad lib.

5

This musical score page shows measures 3 and 5 of a piece for piano. The key signature is one flat. The piano part consists of two staves: treble and bass. In measure 3, the right hand plays eighth-note chords in the treble staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass staff. The dynamic is marked 'p' (piano) and the instruction '*espressivo il canto solo*'. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'. Measure 5 continues the pattern of eighth-note chords in the treble staff, with the bass staff providing harmonic support. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'.

3



p  
*espressivo il canto solo*

arpeggiando ad lib.

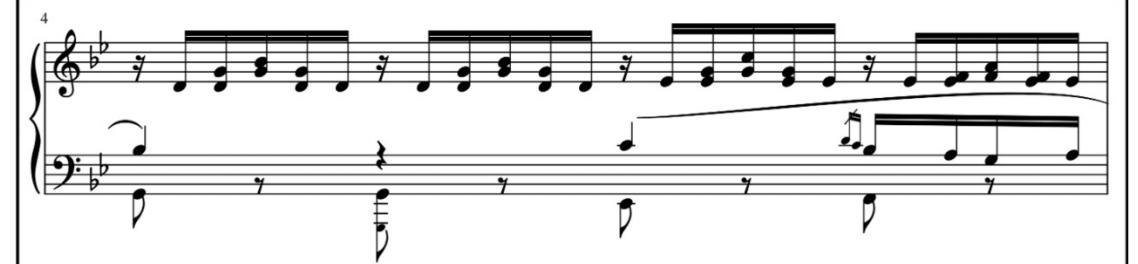
This is a repeated section of the musical score from page 3. It shows measures 3 and 5 again. The key signature is one flat. The piano part consists of two staves: treble and bass. In measure 3, the right hand plays eighth-note chords in the treble staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass staff. The dynamic is marked 'p' (piano) and the instruction '*espressivo il canto solo*'. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'. Measure 5 continues the pattern of eighth-note chords in the treble staff, with the bass staff providing harmonic support. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'.

4



This musical score page shows measures 4 and 5 of a piece for piano. The key signature is one flat. The piano part consists of two staves: treble and bass. In measure 4, the right hand plays eighth-note chords in the treble staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass staff. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'. Measure 5 continues the pattern of eighth-note chords in the treble staff, with the bass staff providing harmonic support. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'.

4



This is a repeated section of the musical score from page 4. It shows measures 4 and 5 again. The key signature is one flat. The piano part consists of two staves: treble and bass. In measure 4, the right hand plays eighth-note chords in the treble staff, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the bass staff. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'. Measure 5 continues the pattern of eighth-note chords in the treble staff, with the bass staff providing harmonic support. The bass staff has a note labeled 'arpeggiando ad lib.'.

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16

<img alt="Musical score page 16 showing two staves of piano music. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Both staves are in common time with a key signature of one flat. Measure 16 consists of six measures of music. The first measure starts with a dotted quarter

18

18

22

22

As noted in my arrangement, it is wholly acceptable for these simpler rhythms to be used in place of the polyrhythms present in the "solo" sections. However, in my opinion, it is not preferable to incorporate polyrhythms in place of the simpler rhythms in the *quasi choir* section. As this is an arrangement for one-hand-alone, I believe there is too much potential for involuntary cluttering and/or blending of the choir and orchestral elements if the original rhythms are used, hence why I aimed for a rhythmic reduction in this portion.

### On Musicality

Regardless of everything aforementioned, the musicality of this arrangement is entirely dependent on the musician. I do not enjoy obstructing how one harmlessly expresses themselves, especially in music. Everything I have provided in these remarks are merely guidelines for people to consider when practicing and playing, along with establishing some of my thought processes when making my arrangements. How someone chooses to perform my arrangements is completely and totally up to them.

Much love and happy practicing,  
Varun Athilat

# Ave Maria, D.839

for piano, left hand alone

Arranged by Varun Athilat

Composed by Franz Schubert

**Lento assai**

**1**

**p** *con pedale*

Small notes are optional to play

**2**

*simile*

**3**

**p** *espressivo il canto solo*

*arpeggiando ad lib.*

**4**

**5**

6

7

8

9

10

11

*fp*

1

2 4 1

2 4

12

3

1 5

13

14

15

Piano sheet music showing five staves of music. The music is in common time and key signature of two flats. Measure 16 starts with a dynamic *mp*. Measures 17-20 show a repeating pattern of eighth-note chords in the right hand and sustained bass notes in the left hand.

16

*mp*

17

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19

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21

1 3 1 2 2 1 4  
5 4 4 1 2

22

23

24

fp

25

26

27

28

Rewritings of the polyrhythms in this portion may be utilized in earlier portions as well

29 *quasi choir*

*f*

30

Musical score for piano, page 10, system 31. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves have a key signature of one flat. The music features a series of chords and bass notes. A slur is present over the first six measures of the treble staff, and a curved line connects the eighth measure of the treble staff to the beginning of the bass staff.

A musical score for piano, page 11, measures 32-5. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature changes from B-flat major (two flats) to A major (no sharps or flats). Measure 32 starts with a half note in B-flat major followed by a sixteenth-note pattern of eighth-note chords. Measures 33-34 show eighth-note chords with a bass line underneath. Measures 35-36 continue with eighth-note chords. Measure 37 begins with a bass note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measures 38-39 show eighth-note chords. Measure 40 concludes with a bass note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern.

A musical score for piano, page 33. The top staff uses a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It consists of a continuous stream of eighth-note chords. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It features sustained notes with vertical stems and occasional eighth-note chords. A large brace groups both staves. The score is set against a background of horizontal lines and diagonal strokes.

Musical score for piano, page 34. The score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Both staves have a key signature of one flat. The music begins with a melodic line in the upper staff, marked *poco ritardando*. The melody consists of eighth-note chords and single notes. The bass staff provides harmonic support with sustained notes and eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking *mf* appears in the upper staff's bass line around measure 34. The score concludes with a melodic line in the upper staff ending on a half note.

35

Treble staff: eighth-note chords. Bass staff: eighth-note chords.

36

Treble staff: eighth-note chords. Bass staff: eighth-note chords.

37

3

ff

$\begin{matrix} 1 & 2 \\ 2 & 3 \\ 3 & 5 \end{matrix}$

Treble staff: eighth-note chords. Bass staff: eighth-note chords.

38

mf

Treble staff: eighth-note chords. Bass staff: eighth-note chords.

39

*mf*

40

41

*dim.*

42

*(dim.)*

# Ave Maria, D.839

for piano, right hand alone

Arranged by Varun Athilat

Composed by Franz Schubert

The sheet music consists of six staves of music for the right hand of a piano. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature varies between common time and 6/8.

- Staff 1:** Shows chords in the treble clef. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Dynamics: **p**, *con pedale*. Articulation: 6 above each group of notes. A note with a fermata and a bass note below it are followed by a instruction: "Small notes are optional to play".
- Staff 2:** Continues with chords in the treble clef. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5.
- Staff 3:** Continues with chords in the treble clef. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5.
- Staff 4:** Dynamics: **p**. Articulation: 5-1, *espressivo il canto solo*. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Articulation: 1-1. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Articulation: 1.
- Staff 5:** Dynamics: **p**. Articulation: arpeggiando ad lib. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Articulation: 5-1. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Articulation: 1.
- Staff 6:** Continues with chords in the treble clef. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Articulation: 5-1. Fingerings: 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5, 2-3-5. Articulation: 1.

6

4 2 3 2 5 3 3 2 4

4 3 4 2

5 3

1

7

3 2 3 1 5 3 4 2 3

1

1 1

8

5 3 5 4 5 4 2

5 3 2 2

1

9

3 2 4 3 5 4 3 4 3

4 3 4 3 5 4 3 4 3

1 3 5 3 3 2

3-1 1

2-1 1 1 2

5 2 1

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28

Rewritings of the polyrhythms in this portion may be utilized in earlier portions as well

*quasi choir*

29

30

A musical score for piano featuring two staves. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat, and the bass staff has a key signature of one flat. The music consists of four measures. The first measure shows a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand and eighth-note bass notes in the left hand. The second measure is identical. The third measure begins with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand. The fourth measure ends with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand.

30

31

A musical score for piano featuring two staves. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat, and the bass staff has a key signature of one flat. The music consists of four measures. The first measure shows a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand and eighth-note bass notes in the left hand. The second measure is identical. The third measure begins with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand. The fourth measure ends with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand.

31

32

A musical score for piano featuring two staves. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat, and the bass staff has a key signature of one flat. The music consists of four measures. The first measure shows a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand. The second measure is identical. The third measure begins with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand. The fourth measure ends with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand.

32

33

A musical score for piano featuring two staves. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat, and the bass staff has a key signature of one flat. The music consists of four measures. The first measure shows a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand. The second measure is identical. The third measure begins with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand. The fourth measure ends with a single eighth note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth-note chords in the right hand.

33

*poco ritardando* -----

34

Treble staff: Measures 34-35 show eighth-note chords. Measure 35 includes a dynamic 'mf'. Bass staff: Measures 34-35 show sustained notes with vertical stems.

35

Treble staff: Measures 35-36 continue the eighth-note chord pattern. Bass staff: Measures 35-36 continue the sustained notes from the previous measures.

36

Treble staff: Measures 36-37 continue the eighth-note chord pattern. Bass staff: Measures 36-37 continue the sustained notes from the previous measures.

37

Treble staff: Measures 37-38 begin with eighth-note chords. The dynamic 'ff' is indicated in measure 37. Bass staff: Measures 37-38 continue the sustained notes with vertical stems.

A musical score for piano, featuring five staves of music. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). Measure 38: Treble staff has eighth-note chords; Bass staff has quarter notes. Measure 39: Treble staff has eighth-note chords; Bass staff has quarter notes. Measure 40: Treble staff has eighth-note chords; Bass staff has quarter notes. Measure 41: Treble staff has eighth-note chords; Bass staff has quarter notes. Measure 42: Treble staff has eighth-note chords; Bass staff has quarter notes. Measure 42 concludes with a dynamic instruction *(dim.)*, a repeat sign, and a bass clef change.