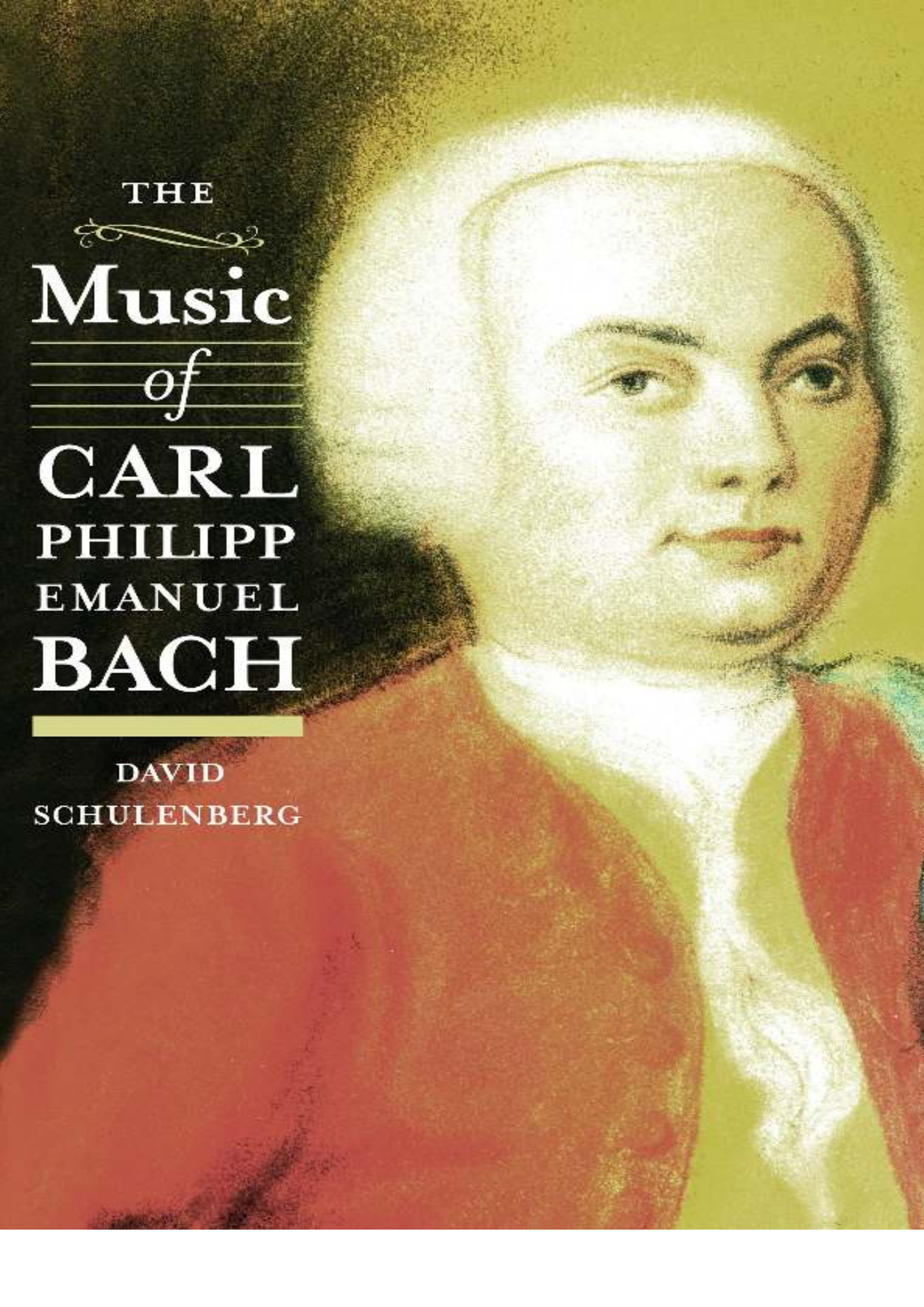


THE  
*of*  
MUSIC  
*of*  
CARL  
PHILIPP  
EMANUEL  
BACH

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DAVID  
SCHULENBERG



# The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

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Of Bach's four sons who became composers, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-88) was the most prolific, the most original, and the most influential both during and after his lifetime. This is the first comprehensive study of his music, examining not only the famous keyboard sonatas and concertos but also the songs, the chamber music, and the sacred works, many of which resurfaced only recently and have not previously been evaluated. A compositional biography, the book surveys C. P. E. Bach's extensive output of nearly a thousand works while tracing his musical development—from his student days at Leipzig and Frankfurt (Oder), through his near three decades as court musician to Prussian King Frederick "the Great," to his final twenty years as cantor and music director at Hamburg.

David Schulenberg, author of important books on the music of J. S. Bach and his first son, W. F. Bach, here considers the legacy of the second son from a compelling new perspective. Focusing on C. P. E. Bach's compositional choices within his social and historical context, Schulenberg shows how C. P. E. Bach deliberately avoided his father's style while borrowing from the manner of his Berlin colleagues, who were themselves inspired by Italian opera. Schulenberg also shows how C. P. E. Bach, now best known for his virtuoso keyboard works, responded to changing cultural and aesthetic trends by refashioning himself as a writer of vocal music and popular chamber compositions. Audio versions of the book's musical examples, as well as further examples and supplementary tables and texts, are available on a companion website.

David Schulenberg is professor of music at Wagner College and teaches historical performance at the Juilliard School. He is the author of *The Music of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* (University of Rochester Press, 2010).

"The book is a marvelous celebration of the 300th anniversary of [C.P.E. Bach's] birth, honestly showing the figure of... one of the most important composers of the eighteenth century." DOCENOTAS [Mario Guada] Full review at <http://bit.ly/1GVdAJX>.

"This is an important book that not only reflects the present state of knowledge regarding C.P.E. Bach's music but also has great potential to stimulate further research. Full of insight, it will be essential reading for scholars and students with a serious interest in C.P.E. Bach and mid- to late-eighteenth-century music generally."—Steven Zohn, author of *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann's Instrumental Works*.



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# The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

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David Schulenberg

 UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER PRESS

# To my mother

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# Preface

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Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was one of the most original and most significant composers of eighteenth-century Europe. For much of his long career, the name “Bach” when used alone stood for him, not his father Johann Sebastian Bach. In the twentieth century, music historians acknowledged his influence on Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and in recent times his music has been the subject of renewed interest. Within the past two decades, spectacular rediscoveries have made available a substantial portion of his output that was long presumed lost, leading to many new recordings and making possible a new complete edition of his works.

Still, as the second son of a famous composer, Emanuel Bach stands in the shadow of his father. The “Bach Revival” of the nineteenth century involved solely Sebastian, and, as the latter’s music came to be ranked at the highest level of European art, Emanuel’s sank into obscurity. Yet a small fraction of Emanuel Bach’s output, including keyboard pieces, songs (lieder), and a few concertos, never disappeared from the sight of scholars and adventurous musicians. His *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Essay on the true manner of playing keyboard instruments) remained almost constantly in print, albeit sometimes in abbreviated versions. As his style came to be viewed as an evolutionary link between that of his father and the Viennese Classical style, he gained a respectable place in music history even when his actual music was rarely heard.

Today the evolutionary view of music history is out of fashion, and it is the proto-Romantic aspects of Emanuel’s style that seize the attention of players and scholars, who sometimes describe it as *empfindsamer*. The German term originally meant something like “sentimental,” but it is now applied to northern-European music of the later eighteenth century that achieved an expressive intensity unusual for its time, especially through harmonic and rhythmic surprises including unexpected juxtapositions of remote keys or of different tempos or meters. Such devices were part of an improvisatory “fantasy” style associated with Emanuel Bach, then as now attracting further attention to his music. The *empfindsamer* and “fantastic” are known best from the composer’s works for keyboard instruments, on which he was a famous virtuoso. Yet Bach, as I shall call him, was also a major composer of chamber and orchestral music—and of vocal works, secular as well as sacred, as has become ever clearer in recent years.

With a career spanning over half a century and a list of works numbering close to a thousand, Bach and his music are a substantial subject, covered by a substantial literature. Yet, except in encyclopedia entries, no one has provided a recent account of his career or works as a whole, nor have the discoveries of recent years been integrated in an evaluation of his lifework. This book does so, commemorating the three-hundredth anniversary of the composer’s birth.

This is a compositional biography of Bach: a study of his complete oeuvre, focusing on his choices to compose in one genre or another, to follow particular models, to transform a style rooted in that of his father’s generation into one bearing much in common with Classical and later music. Throughout his life, Bach was an active member of lively intellectual communities first in Leipzig and Frankfurt (Oder), later in Berlin and Hamburg, and his relationships with writers and thinkers left impressions on his music. So too did his professional activities, first as a member of the court of King Frederick “the Great” at Berlin, later as a church musician and cantor at Hamburg. His performing activities, as keyboard soloist, royal accompanist, and



ensemble director, also shaped his compositions, determining their character and scoring. In addition, Bach was one of the first musicians to participate actively in the publication of his works, and the rapidly evolving music business of eighteenth-century Europe was another shaping force on his compositions.

This book is not, however, a life and works. The details of Bach's biography are not a concern except insofar as they affected his composing. Of greater interest are possible distinctions between his training and that of his older brother Wilhelm Friedemann (also a composer); the effects on his music of being a relatively minor figure in the royal Prussian musical establishment; the changes in his output as he took on a heavy schedule of church and concert performances in a great trading port. The size of Bach's output makes it impossible to discuss or even mention every work. But an effort has been made to say something useful about even a major composition and all those that are frequently performed, as well as minor works that must be examined if we are to understand Bach's compositional choices. His writings—the *Versuch* as well as his letters—are also considered, but only where they provide clues to understanding his music.

The diversity of Bach's output, together with his habit of revising works repeatedly—sometimes more than fifty years after their original composition—makes it impossible to adopt a strictly chronological approach. Bach's output falls into distinct segments corresponding to the three major stations of his life—Leipzig, Berlin, and Hamburg—and the twelve chapters of the book accordingly fall into three groups. Following an overview of Bach's background and context in [chapter 1](#), chapters [2–4](#) consider his training, chapters [5–7](#) his development of distinctive types of keyboard and chamber music at Berlin, and chapters [8–12](#) his refashioning himself as a composer of vocal music, chiefly at Hamburg.

An important theme of the book is Bach's musical relationship to his contemporaries and colleagues in northern Europe. Here his father and brothers figure prominently, not just for the inherent human interest in the subject, but because how Emanuel was trained and why his music so diverged from that of his father and siblings are significant historical questions. Significant too is the issue of how his music reflected that of Telemann, Handel, Graun, and other German contemporaries, in ways that may surprise some readers. Equally surprising may be Bach's apparent insulation from musical developments elsewhere in Europe, including Austria and Italy.

Related to the theme of influence is the stylistic dichotomy, recognized by Bach and his contemporaries, that corresponds roughly to our distinction between Baroque and Classical styles. Bach understood this as a division between contrapuntal and *galant* music. Although he usually adopted the latter style, he occasionally employed elements of the former, but rarely by imitating his father's brand of counterpoint. The book therefore considers the relative significance of the two styles in Bach's music, as well as the meaning of terms such as *galant* and *empfindsamer* that have been applied to it. Important too is the evaluation of sonata form, long associated with Bach's music, as an element in his compositions.

Although Bach's music is central to the book, I have not ignored issues relating to its historical and cultural context. Opera and the cultural politics associated with it provide subtext for the treatment of Bach's instrumental music at Berlin. Developments in literature and philosophical aesthetics had an impact on Bach's transition to vocal composition, especially in songs, whose texts provide informative and occasionally troubling insights into thought and social relations in the circles in which Bach's music was cultivated. His concerts and church

music at Berlin and Hamburg reflect aspects of bourgeois society and spirituality in late eighteenth-century European cities, as do the patterns of Bach's activity as a self-publishing composer of music for the commercial market.

In this book pitches are named using the Helmholtz system, which is descended from the keyboard tablature that was still occasionally used by members of the Bach family. Middle C is  $c'$ ; the notes below and above it are  $b$  and  $d'$ , respectively. The pitches an octave lower are  $B$ – $b$ , an octave higher  $b'$ – $c''$ – $d''$ . Notes below  $C$  (two octaves below  $c'$ ) are designated by double letters (AA, BB).

I am grateful for help and ideas furnished at various times by Joshua Rifkin, Steven Zohn, Daniel Melamed, and the late Bruce Haynes. Moira Hill provided valuable comments and corrections for chapters 11 and 12. Over the years the staffs of several libraries, including the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin–Preußischer Kulturbesitz, the Bibliotheek of the Koninklijk Conservatorium, Brussels, and Sarah Adams, music librarian and keeper of the Isham Memorial Library at Harvard University, have made essential items available to me. This would have been a narrower book were it not for the Packard Humanities Institute's ongoing project to issue the composer's music in a new scholarly edition (*Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*). I am grateful to the editorial leadership and to individual members of the editorial staff, including Christoph Wolff, Christopher Hogwood, Peter Wollny, Darrell Berg, Ulrich Leisinger, Paul Corneilson, and Mark Knoll, for assistance of various sorts. During the writing of this book my mother Shirley Seigle as well as John W. Schulenberg, Pat Schulenberg, William Seigle, David Kopp, and Andrew Bergman provided many kindnesses. I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge aid of various kinds afforded me during an earlier period of my work by those who were involved in a previous effort to publish Bach's collected works (the *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach Edition*). Finally, I must thank flutist and musicologist Mary Oleskiewicz not only for insights and information on many matters, but for making possible for me the incomparable experience of accompanying, on the fortepiano, her recorded performances of the flute sonata of King Frederick II in the Music Room of Sanssouci Palace, where Emanuel Bach and his father once played.

# Abbreviations

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<i>BD</i>	<i>Bach-Dokumente</i> (see bibliography)
<i>BWV</i>	Catalog number of work by J. S. Bach in Schmieder, <i>Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs</i>
<i>CV</i>	“Autographischer Catalogus von den Claviersonaten des C. Ph. E. Bach bis zum Jahre 1772 komponirt” (SA 4261); facsimile in Christoph Wolff, “Carl Philipp Emanuel Bachs Verzeichnis”
<i>F.</i>	Catalog number of work by W. F. Bach in Falck, <i>Wilhelm Fridemann Bach</i>
<i>Grove</i>	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> (individual articles are cited below from the electronic edition at <a href="http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com">www.oxfordmusiconline.com</a> )
<i>GWV</i>	Catalog number of work by C. H. or J. G. Graun in Henzel, <i>Graun-Werkverzeichnis (GraunWV)</i>
<i>H.</i>	Catalog number of work by C. P. E. Bach, listed in Helm, <i>Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach</i>
<i>MGG</i>	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik</i> (individual articles are cited below with full bibliographic details)
<i>NBR</i>	David and Mendel, <i>New Bach Reader</i>
<i>NV</i>	C. P. E. Bach, <i>Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses</i> (the catalog of Bach’s estate)
<i>QV</i>	Augsbach, <i>Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Johann Joachim Quantz</i>
<i>Suchalla</i>	Suchalla, <i>Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Briefe und Dokumente</i>
<i>W.</i>	Catalog number of work by C. P. E. Bach in Wotquenne, <i>Catalogue thématique des œuvres de Charles Philippe Emmanuel Bach</i>
<i>Wiermann</i>	Wiermann, <i>Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Dokumente zu Leben und Wirken</i>
<i>WTC</i>	J. S. Bach, <i>Well-Tempered Clavier</i> ( <i>WTC1</i> is book 1, <i>WTC2</i> book 2)



## Library and Manuscript Sigla

<i>AmB</i>	“Amalienbibliothek,” part of the shelf mark for manuscript scores from the collection of Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia, now in D B (see below)
<i>B Bc</i>	Brussels, Conservatoire Royal, Bibliothèque / Koninklijk Conservatorium, Bibliotheek

D B	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv)
DK Kmk	Copenhagen, Det Kongelige danske Musikkonservatoriums Bibliotek
F Pn	Paris, Bibliothèque National
GB Lbl	London, British Library
Hs	Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Carl von Ossietzky, Musiksammlung
P	Abbreviation for “Mus. ms. Bach P,” part of the shelf mark for manuscript scores containing works of the Bach family in D B (or, where indicated, in PL Kj)
PL Kj	Kraków, Uniwersytet Jagiellonski, Biblioteka Jagiellonska
SA	Abbreviation for “Sing-Akademie,” part of the shelf mark for manuscripts (and copies of some printed editions) owned by the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, on deposit in D B
St	Abbreviation for “Mus. ms. Bach St,” part of the shelf mark for manuscript parts for works of the Bach family in D B (see above)
US CAh	Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard College Library
US Wc	Washington, Library of Congress
<b>Editions</b>	
BG	Johann Sebastian Bach, <i>Werke</i> (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1851–1900)
Berg	<i>The Collected Works for Solo Keyboard by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)</i> , facsimile edition with introductions by Darrell Berg, 6 vols. (New York: Garland, 1985)
CPEBCW	<i>Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works</i> (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 2005–)
CPEBE	<i>Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach Edition</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989–95)
NBA	Johann Sebastian Bach, <i>Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke</i> (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954–)
WFBCW	<i>Wilhelm Friedemann Bach: Gesamtausgabe / Collected Works</i> (Stuttgart: Carus, 2009–)

# Note about Online Supporting Material

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An online supplement to this book is available at <http://faculty.wagner.edu/david.schulenberg/the-music-of-carl-philipp-emanuel-bach/>, with individual online files archived at <http://hdl.handle.net/1802/28633>. The online material, although not essential to the narrative of the book, extends the discussion and provides additional illustrations of many points. Supplementary texts, such as tables, discussions of specialized topics, detailed analysis of many individual works, and a guide to catalogs and editions of Bach's works, are indicated in the book by the symbol  followed by an identifying number. Also online are many additional musical examples, as well as audio files that allow readers to hear every example, including those included within the present volume. Examples that are available only online are indicated by the symbol .

## Emanuel Bach in Context

No musician was ever more fortunate than Emanuel Bach. His father was the world's greatest composer, keyboard player, and teacher of musicians. His older brother was the most brilliant improviser and keyboard virtuoso of his generation, and his youngest brother was the most influential composer of the next. Although his mother died a few months after his sixth birthday, his stepmother was a gifted musician with whom he evidently shared the manuscript book of keyboard music given her by his father. Born in Weimar, one of the most cultivated small towns in Germany, he grew up in Leipzig, site of the region's leading university and major trade center. A fortunate choice to leave Saxony for university studies in Prussia led him to its capital city Berlin, where he soon received a royal appointment at Europe's most dynamic court. He spent three decades there, then concluded his career as municipal music director and cantor in Hamburg, one of northern Europe's greatest and freest cultural and commercial centers.

Bach did not fail to meet the expectations that might be held for the recipient of such good fortune. In a career lasting over half a century, he composed more than a thousand works of almost every type. His comprehensive treatise on keyboard playing went through several editions, helping to make him the most influential musician in northern Europe. Although he would be eclipsed in fame and reputation by four later generations of Viennese composers—Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert—his music was never entirely forgotten. Interest in it was renewed before the end of the nineteenth century—only a single long lifetime removed from that of people who had known him or heard him play.

What might look like a happy accident of birth quickly reveals potential problems. No one born into such a family could hope to rise to the level of the father. Four or five gifted sons might strive mercilessly against one another, nourishing lifelong grudges and suffering stresses that could hardly be buried beneath conscious memory. Emanuel was probably fortunate not to be the first surviving son. His older brother Wilhelm Friedemann (1710–84), although a significant composer, was arguably an underachiever, as was certainly the next younger brother Johann Gottfried Bernhard (1715–39), who racked up debts and died young without leaving a single known composition.<sup>1</sup> Another brother, Johann Christoph Friedrich (1732–95), was a prolific if minor composer, spending most of his life at the provincial court of Bückeburg in northwest Germany. Emanuel achieved far greater material and professional success than all of these, and his music and theoretical writings have been almost universally respected and admired.<sup>2</sup> By the end of his life he held a position comparable to his father's at Leipzig, after serving in a type of royal position to which Sebastian had only aspired.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly Emanuel possessed personal qualities of tact and sociability that contributed to his success first as a court musician, then as a municipal cantor and independent entrepreneur. Only his youngest brother and pupil, Johann Christian (1735–82), might be judged his equal in worldly success, perhaps even his superior in influence and historical significance: he became a royal musician in London and a role model for the child Mozart. Yet Christian died young

perhaps already having written as much interesting music as he was capable of producing, whereas Emanuel continued to compose provocative and original music to the end of his long life.

Still, in the grand scheme of European music history, Emanuel Bach has never been ranked within the supreme tier of composers, whether according to influence or musical accomplishment. Praised in his own day for its originality, his music failed to enter the modern concert repertory as the latter was established during the nineteenth century. Was this a mere accident of history, of Emanuel's having been active in the wrong part of Europe or writing for the wrong crowd? Did his music drop out of view because it merely seemed difficult or became unfashionable? Or does it truly fall short of the level reached by the music of his father and his younger Viennese Classical contemporaries, or even of composers of the next rank, such as Gluck and Boccherini?

Comparisons of this type can be invidious, and direct answers to those questions will not be offered here. Like Friedemann, Emanuel is worth studying regardless of the exact value we attach to his works, for these are unique and varied, products of a brilliant family that is of historical interest in its own right. How the Bach family was able to nurture six generations of musicians, including three prolific and outwardly very successful composers, is a question worth pursuing—not least because the music of those three (Sebastian, Emanuel, and Christian) is so distinct.

The basic facts of Emanuel's biography, like his father's, seem straightforward and have been duly laid out elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> He was born in 1714 at Weimar, the seat of a minor Saxon duchy where his father was Concertmeister; Telemann, who had connections with Weimar and was older and better known at the time than Sebastian Bach, was his godfather. At the age of four Emanuel went with the family to Cöthen after Sebastian was appointed Capellmeister to the reigning prince there. His mother, Maria Barbara Bach, died in 1720, but within a year and half Sebastian had married Anna Magdalena Wilcke, and in spring 1723 the family moved again, to Leipzig. Leipzig was the second city of Saxony, one of the more substantial components of the Holy Roman Empire; the ruling duke, whose residence was at Dresden, was also king of Poland. Leipzig was a leading commercial center as well as the seat of a university, which Emanuel attended after first studying at the Saint Thomas School; his father served at the latter as cantor (an educational post). Up to this point, Emanuel had followed in his older brother's footsteps, but in 1734 he left Saxony, traveling to Frankfurt (Oder), a dominion of Prussia, in order to continue his studies at the Viadrina University. There he probably hoped to find patronage from members of the Prussian nobility and intelligentsia, who favored an institution close to the capital city Berlin. Emanuel drew attention by directing performances of various vocal and instrumental works, including several honoring the ruling Hohenzollern family. These presumably had their intended effect, for in 1738 he moved to Berlin. Although he was not formally named to the court of the young King Frederick II until after the latter's coronation in 1740, Emanuel was probably already playing and perhaps composing for him for several years previously.<sup>5</sup>

In Berlin Emanuel worked at the center of a court and city famed throughout Europe for the brilliance of their music and intellectual climate. He remained in royal service until 1763, alternating with several other musicians as keyboard player in the king's famous private concerts. A rotating schedule placed Emanuel on call for several weeks at a time; he was apparently free at other periods. He brought out six keyboard sonatas, dedicated to the king, in

1742—the first of many publications—and in 1744 he married Johanna Maria Danneman whom he described as the daughter of a wineseller.<sup>6</sup> Her commercial background might have been a factor in his establishing what was, in effect, a household music publishing business, selling manuscript as well as printed copies of Bach's compositions. But in this Emanuel was also following his father's model, although the small size of the family (and a wife and children who were not musicians) meant that he relied throughout his life on hired copyists. During the 1740s the couple had three children, including an artist son, named for his paternal grandfather, who showed promise but died young in Rome.<sup>7</sup> An older son, Johann Adam, was a lawyer who outlived his father by only a year; a daughter, Anna Carolina Philippina, would carry on the family business into the early nineteenth century.

The Seven Years' War, which began in 1756, severely disrupted life in Berlin. When in 1757 the city was threatened by Russian and Swedish troops, the family took refuge in Zerbst, about ninety miles away, for several months.<sup>8</sup> This, however, appears to have been the most serious inconvenience to occur to Bach over the course of his life, apart from the regular commuting between Berlin and Potsdam that his position required, and about which he complained.<sup>9</sup> After 1750 his duties as royal chamber musician did not prevent Emanuel from undertaking increasingly ambitious publishing projects or from participating (probably) in increasing numbers of public concerts—even during the war, when the court itself almost ceased to function. After obtaining his dismissal, he moved in spring 1768 to Hamburg, where he served for the remainder of his life (until 1788) as director of music in the city's churches. He was also cantor of the Johanneum, an educational institution that still exists. While fulfilling these official duties he continued to compose for, direct, and play in public concerts. These included performances of oratorios as well as a concert series that featured historical repertory, including selections by his father and Handel.<sup>10</sup> He also continued his publishing career, issuing not only more music but further editions of his *Essay on the True Manner of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (henceforth, his *Versuch*), whose two volumes had appeared at Berlin and were revised in Hamburg.<sup>11</sup>

Emanuel's career mirrored in its broad outlines that of his father. Both went from court musician to city while retaining a court title, in Emanuel's case that of honorary Capellmeister to King Frederick's sister Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia. Also like Sebastian, Emanuel produced distinct types of music at different stages of his career, reflecting his changing positions and personal circumstances. In his youth he composed vocal as well as instrumental compositions, but, apart from one recently discovered work, only instrumental music survives from before the 1740s. During his first decade and a half at Berlin, he composed chiefly sonatas and concertos for keyboard instruments, as well as smaller numbers of solo and trio sonatas for instrumental ensemble. Later at Berlin he diversified his output, composing additional types of instrumental music: many smaller keyboard pieces, as well as sinfonias and a new type of concert piece for keyboard and orchestra, which he called a sonatina. During the same period he also wrote increasing numbers of vocal works, chiefly songs or lieder. With his move to Hamburg, Bach practically reinvented himself as a vocal composer, composing and arranging liturgical church music as well as oratorios and similar works for concert use. He also continued to write sonatas and all sorts of instrumental pieces, many of them for publication or public concerts.

The complete corpus of Bach's music is difficult to delineate, for many works were adaptations, revisions, or arrangements of existing compositions. At Hamburg, moreover, his job



as a church musician led him to edit, arrange, and adapt music by other composers for performance during services. Indeed, the line between original composition and adaptation blurred in many church works of the Hamburg years that are, to a greater or lesser degree, pastiches, comprising music from several sources, sometimes also incorporating parodies or movements in which new text was attached to older compositions. Emanuel's reworking of music by others, including Sebastian Bach and Telemann, was an extension of the revisions and arrangements that he carried out on his own music. The changes could be as small as the addition of a few slurs and dynamic markings, or as large as the rescoring of a little keyboard piece as a movement in a sinfonia or ensemble sonatina. (For an outline of Bach's works, see 1.1.)

Bach's music has probably been cataloged more times than that of any other composer. Two numbered lists of works are in current use, and several others are frequently cited by scholars. The present study usually employs "W" numbers from the thematic catalog published in 1905 by Alfred Wotquenne; works not in Wotquenne are cited by "H" numbers from the 1989 catalog by E. Eugene Helm. Both are out of date, but a more complete and accurate multivolume catalog has begun to appear. Reference is also made to the so-called *Nachlassverzeichnis* (NV), the posthumously published catalog of Bach's estate that included a list of his works, specifying the date and place of composition for many of them. Dates and places of composition in what follows are from NV unless otherwise specified. Many works remain available only in unpublished manuscripts or in early prints, but a collected edition (*CPEBCW*) is under way, and virtually all of the music not yet published is accessible to scholars in one form or another. (See 1.2 for guidance on various practical matters: work lists, including the new thematic catalog, as well as sources, editions, and performance.)

Bach worked in all the major genres of his time except for opera, making original contributions to each. Even the many arrangements, parodies, and the like, although not involving entirely new music, were an important sphere of creative activity. A few genres, however, are unique either to Bach—his own inventions—or to where he happened to work. What are here termed "modulating rondos" appear chiefly in a few late sets of published keyboard pieces (see [chap. 10](#)); the ensemble sonatinas ([chap. 9](#)) represent a sort of divertimento for keyboard and orchestra that Bach cultivated for a few years late in his Berlin period, probably for concerts. Among his Hamburg vocal works, the church pieces for the inaugurations of pastors are a special type of what today is usually termed a cantata. Commissioned when new preachers were appointed to the main Hamburg churches, they are comparable to the works that Sebastian wrote for the installations of professors and civic officials at Leipzig.

Bach's music covers fifty-seven years of dated compositions; of his major contemporaries, only Telemann had a longer active career. Bach wrote keyboard pieces throughout his life, and these form the most numerous category of his works, especially when one counts the various types of ensemble composition with written-out (obligato) keyboard parts. Other types of music tend to be concentrated within particular periods. Most of the works for one or two instruments with basso continuo, that is, solo and trio sonatas, are, as one would expect, relatively early, whereas the accompanied-keyboard compositions, a Classical type, are relatively late. Only during his last two decades did Bach write a significant number of major vocal works. Yet the large number of these and other vocal compositions belies the common view of Bach as primarily a writer of instrumental music. Songs (*lieder*) make up the second most numerous category of his

compositions, and the Hamburg church music, including most of his larger sacred works, can no longer be dismissed as unimportant; that was possible only until the rediscovery in 1999 of a large archive containing the missing sources for most of these works. Whether the compositions are as significant musically as the better-known instrumental ones will be considered in the following chapters. They were certainly important from a biographical point of view, and they must be examined thoroughly in any evaluation of Bach's development as a composer.

As becomes clear merely from the list of genres in which he worked—from trio sonatas to lieder—Bach's career coincided with the transition between Baroque and Classical styles, even heralding the Romantic. Of course, this is a modern way of viewing music history. Bach himself was aware of historical changes in musical style, yet, writing in 1753, he placed an important transition not during his own career but his father's;<sup>12</sup> he refers to a shift in emphasis from “harmony,” that is, counterpoint, to “melody.”<sup>13</sup> This corresponds to what is now viewed as an evolution from a polyphonic “Baroque” style to a more homophonic *galant* or pre-Classical one, with Emanuel's music spanning the transition. In the past, this way of understanding musical history probably encouraged an understanding of Bach as an “Interesting Historical Figure”—a quote a phrase that has been applied to Domenico Scarlatti.<sup>14</sup> But by the bicentenary of Bach's death—1988, which saw a number of appreciative publications—the traditional view of Bach as a “transitional” figure was being questioned, if only because it automatically made him seem of an “inferior rank” by comparison to the better-known composers on either side of him, especially S. Bach and Haydn.<sup>15</sup>

Lurking behind such a view was an old-fashioned teleological concept of musical evolution in which one monolithic style (“Baroque”) gives way to another (“Classical”) as part of triumphant progress toward a perfected present-day music. Bach's instrumental compositions have been admired for their incipient Classical sonata-allegro forms, and some of the same compositions have been praised as proto-Romantic outpourings. His songs have made Bach a seminal figure in histories of the German lied—as one study put it, in the “rebirth of strophic song.”<sup>16</sup> Today few would conclude from such estimations that Bach's sonatas or songs are worth hearing *because* they prefigured those of Beethoven and subsequent composers. But one continues to see characterizations of his works in general terms, without reference to the wide breadth of his output. Writers on his keyboard music have tended to focus on a few examples, especially several pieces that Bach published near the end of his career; these have been repeatedly reprinted, as also a small selection of his songs. These may indeed be his most original, most valuable compositions. But to focus on these is to judge Bach's output based on only the portion he was able to publish, and on the even smaller portion that remained in circulation after his death. That these particular works remained known might be only because they happened to meet the expectations of his immediate successors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (see 1.3 lists works that were available in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions).

It is, of course, the fate of minor composers to be remembered chiefly for a few works that either deviate from the conventions of their time or fulfill them perfectly. Was Emanuel Bach such a composer? His older brother Friedemann was arguably a *Kleinmeister* of the first sort, leaving behind a few brilliantly idiosyncratic works. His youngest brother Christian, on the other hand, composed sonatas, symphonies, and operas that are perfectly suave, often touching, but

rarely very challenging for listener or performer. Unlike his brothers, Emanuel has become symbol for an age, or at least a moment, in the history of music—the one we know as the *Empfindsamkeit*. The term properly means something like “sentiment,” but it is now applied to certain strongly expressive examples of mid-eighteenth-century music. The idea that Bach’s music represents an *empfindsamer Stil* has been encouraged by his own oft-quoted admonition “to play from the soul, not like a trained bird.”<sup>17</sup> Burney confirmed the idea for the English-speaking world by finding that Bach, as a player, was capable of “every style; though he confined himself chiefly to the expressive.”

This was part of the famous account of Bach at the clavichord as one that “not only played but looked like one inspired”<sup>18</sup>—a classical reference to the idea of an oracle possessed by demonic force. Today Bach’s admonition has been reduced to a slogan, the underlying idea cliché if it was not already so when he wrote it. That expression should be paramount in musical performance, or that a performer must feel moved in order to move others, was hardly a new idea.<sup>19</sup> Even Bach, in calling one famous late composition *C. P. E. Bachs Empfindungen* (C. P. E. Bach’s Sentiments, W. 80), may have used the expression ironically, with a touch of skepticism. The piece, for keyboard with violin accompaniment, comprises a “dark” fantasia followed by a disarmingly light if not trivial sonata movement.<sup>20</sup> At about the same time, Bach wrote the *Versuch*, although “music has long been called a language of feelings,” the analogy between musical and verbal expression is understood only “darkly”—the word *dark* (*dunkel*) signifying things that are obscure or incomprehensible (on Bach’s “dark” sentiments, see § 1.4).<sup>21</sup>

Not all Bach’s compositions are unusually expressive; some, such as the little keyboard piece that was widely anthologized as the so-called Solfeggietto (W. 117/2), are even, in principle, finger exercises. Sebastian Bach (like his predecessor Kuhnau) had already published collections of keyboard music under the title *Clavierübung*, which literally means “keyboard practice” or “exercise.” New to Emanuel’s generation, however, was the systematic working out of fingering and other technical problems: a quasi-scientific approach to performance problems characteristic of thought during the Enlightenment. Bach devotes the lengthy first chapter of his *Versuch* to fingering, including a detailed account of how to play scales in every key. Yet unlike his father, who drew motives out of fingering patterns in works like the Inventions, Emanuel seems rarely to have found musical inspiration in technique as such.<sup>22</sup> In this he differed as well from his older Berlin colleague Quantz and from his brother Friedemann.<sup>23</sup> Rather, by the time he was completing volume 1 of the *Versuch*, Emanuel was reminding his readers of the centrality of expression with his famous advice in the final chapter.

Was Bach’s remark a sideways reproach to his older brother or his senior colleague? There is no evidence that he ever held Quantz in anything but respect, and in 1753 a break with Friedemann probably had not yet occurred, if indeed it ever did.<sup>24</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, however, there must have been amateurs as well as professionals who, dazzled by the fashion for “research” into instrumental technique, had to be reminded that the latter was not the end of music but only the beginning. Emanuel’s music is usually more restrained, from the technical point of view, than that of Sebastian and Friedemann. Many pieces, however, are equally restrained from the point of view of expression; few reach the extremes of discontinuity or surprise that characterize Bach’s most famous exercises in the *empfindsamer Stil*.

The precise meaning of this last expression has never been clear. Like *Empfindsamkeit*, it is a modern term, at least as now applied to eighteenth-century compositions. Typically, these are

works from northern Germany that achieve intense expression through a combination of shock, surprise, and general confounding of present-day stylistic expectations for music of the period. The “shock” might be something as simple as a modest chromatic modulation or a fermata on a dissonant chord—individually, nothing that would be out of place in an aria by Hasse or another contemporary of Bach. But when a composition comprises numerous such moments, the character of the whole is no longer *galant* as we understand the term today.<sup>25</sup> The opening Moderato of the Sixth Württemberg Sonata (W. 49/6), a relatively early example, must already have startled those unaccustomed to such things, threatening to fall into incoherence in any but the most sensitive performance (🔊 ex. 1.1). More certainly “*empfindsamer*” in the modern sense are the late rondos and free fantasias of the *Kenner und Liebhaber* series, whose broken-cello melodies, sudden enharmonic modulations, and other surprises have led commentators to investigate their “nonconstancy,” that is, their deliberate brushing with incoherence (🔊 ex. 1.2).<sup>26</sup> (For more on the *empfindsamer Stil*, see 🗄 1.5.)

Bach’s innovation in these pieces was not the mere use of discontinuous or “nonconstant” music, which had been customary for more than a century in recitative, among other genres. What was striking was to incorporate such music into sonatas and other compositions that usually employed more homogeneous writing, and to do so repeatedly. Sebastian Bach, following Vivaldi, had used such writing in his Chromatic Fantasia (BWV 903/1).<sup>27</sup> Indeed an example of the fantasia—at least the free or improvisatory type—was expected to include music of this type. But with Emanuel such music was no longer confined to ostensibly improvisatory pieces. Nor was it merely a type of *bizzarria* used for special effect in the occasional instrumental recitative incorporated into a sonata or concerto, as with Vivaldi or, closer to home, Quantz and his pupil King Frederick II of Prussia.<sup>28</sup> With Bach the irregular rhythm and harmonic characteristic of recitative became a normal element of writing in more deliberately “composed” genres. This gave sonatas and other compositions a “speaking” quality, making them a metaphorical form of musical rhetoric,<sup>29</sup> but Bach and his contemporaries never put it that way explicitly.

Rhetoric is often mentioned in discussions of eighteenth-century music, to the point that it has become a cliché. Bach’s music has also been described as invoking the “music picturesque” or involving a high level of “drama” or “agitation.” Yet all these are merely metaphors when applied to instrumental music—or even to vocal works that are not in fact theatrical or concerned with actual storm or stress.<sup>30</sup> Annette Richards has attached a more potent term, the “sublime,” to some of Bach’s late works; as a critical category, the sublime enjoyed high stature in late-eighteenth-century European aesthetics. Richards finds the “free-ranging ideas, metrical liberties, and striking juxtapositions”—fantasy or *empfindsamer* elements—in Bach’s music akin to the “irregular meters, difficult syntax, and emotive language” of the poet Klopstock, an acquaintance of the composer.<sup>31</sup> Klopstock has been likened in turn to the ancient Greek poet Pindar, famed for his mythic themes and difficult language. Bach and his contemporaries evidently found something equally strong and difficult in his music, as when the critic and amateur composer Krause compared Bach to Milton.<sup>32</sup> Others described Emanuel’s music as “original,” which, however, could have implied criticism as well as admiration for its singularity or irregularity; the latter made his music distinctive but also hard to understand, even irrational.

For all their fulsomeness, contemporary characterizations of Bach's style tended to be ~~vague or general as to be almost meaningless except as indications of the high regard in which~~ was viewed. Even if Bach himself intended his setting of Klopstock's *Morgengesang* (W. 239) to be "a quintessential expression of the sublime," this relatively small-scale work presents, as Richard acknowledges, "quite another musical vision of sublimity than that expressed in the *Heilig*," massive liturgical composition for double choir and orchestra.<sup>33</sup> Contemporaries also praised both works for their "simplicity," a characteristic seemingly at odds with the difficulty of irregularity that Krause sensed in Bach's music. A reviewer found "prevailing simplicity" in the *Morgengesang*,<sup>34</sup> whereas Bach's acquaintance and fellow composer Georg (Jiří Antonín) Benda praised the *Heilig* for combining the "greatest simplicity" with the "deepest art."<sup>35</sup>

This last expression was itself a term of art, signifying fugue or counterpoint—something that was rarely praiseworthy in the musical aesthetics of the late eighteenth century. The *Heilig* ends with a fugue, but its most famous passage—the one that Benda probably had in mind when he referred to its simplicity—is its opening, in which the two choirs alternate in straightforward homophonic texture (see [chap. 12](#)). We might not apply the term "simple" to the enharmonic modulations of the passage. But Bach's use of elliptical chromatic harmony within a homophonic texture was evidently heard as a striking and novel effect, hardly capable of precise verbal description by listeners who lacked our technical vocabulary for analyzing it. Benda, however, probably would not have used the same adjectives to describe the equally striking music of some of Bach's earlier instrumental works, such as the Sixth Württemberg Sonata or certain keyboard concertos and symphonies. Although these sometimes approach the *Heilig* in their harmonic juxtapositions, their complex texture and irregular rhythm are hardly "simple"; it was probably the combination of uncomplicated texture with a high-blown literary or liturgical text that led Benda to describe these works as he did.

Rhetorical, sentimental, sublime, picturesque: that modern writers continue to apply these essentially metaphorical expressions to Bach's music suggests that there is something uncatchable about the latter that cannot be explained in purely musical terms. Evidently, to describe this music adequately one must identify in it some extramusical expressive aspiration; perhaps, to some, some of Bach's compositions are formally incoherent, not entirely comprehensible as music alone. Bach might have disagreed. That he was skeptical of this line of thought could be inferred from the rarity with which he used this type of aestheticizing language in his own writings. Nor did he encourage the programmizing interpretations of his music by the poet Gerstenberg (see [chap. 8](#)). He ignored Moses Mendelssohn's recommendation for "naivety"—which sounds like a younger contemporary, Blake—in his lieder; these are more complex in harmony, texture, and rhythm than those of other mid-century composers.<sup>36</sup> Bach's contributions to music theory, far from consisting of impressionistic criticism or philosophizing about aesthetics, include hard-headed analyses of difficult figured-bass progressions, as well as manuscript pages full of carefully worked out modulations between remote keys.<sup>37</sup>

Overlooked in most recent, generally laudatory, treatments of Bach's music are problems that have been discovered in it by some of the most thoughtful commentators on eighteenth-century music. Charles Rosen found Emanuel's compositions "often incoherent"; the "most striking passages... exist in and of themselves, with little relation to any conception of the whole work." In this view, only Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven succeeded in integrating the various musical forms and varieties of expression favored by Bach's contemporaries; the result was Classic

sonata form. Rosen's focus on the integration of local effects into coherent large-scale form is no longer fashionable, and rigorous musical analysis is now often seen as something of mere technical interest. But what we call the form of a composition is a plan or metaphor for our experience in hearing it. The form or design of a piece expresses something more profound than anything that might be expressed by a single chord progression or melodic figure. To put in words what a musical design expresses is more difficult, however, than saying that a dissonant chord expresses pain or that a graceful melisma is a representation of flight. If Emanuel's forms really are incoherent, as Rosen suggests, this could be because they were meant to express something different from the equipoise—the reconciliation of passion or even violence with something like peace or reason—that is expressed in many of the greatest examples of the Classical style. But it could also be that Emanuel's most ambitious works fail to achieve the complete control of every compositional parameter that Rosen found in the music not only of the three Viennese classicists but of Sebastian Bach.

Peter Williams raises a related issue in his critique of “the greatest weakness of Friedemann (and Emanuel's) music: its feeble harmonic tension. True, there is often some quirky harmonic and derivative chromatics, but such is not real ‘tension.’”<sup>39</sup> “Real” tension would presumably be that found in their father's music, where remote modulations are usually integrated into large symmetrical designs, typically occurring either in the middle or as climaxes toward the end of a composition. Sebastian's compositions may be replete with strange chromatic progressions, but the latter are almost a sort of motivic material—not isolated surprises—and they usually can be reduced to movement around the circle of fifths; sudden enharmonic transitions are rare except in recitative. It is probably true that some of the remote tonal excursions in Emanuel's famous late fantasias and rondos have an arbitrary quality. On the other hand, a number of his songs approach Sebastian's chorale settings in their convincing handling of ingenious chromatic and enharmonic progressions. Certain late works, including movements from the Hamburg *sinfonias*, as well as arias in the Resurrection Cantata (see [chaps. 10](#) and [12](#)), surely generate genuine tension at the formal or structural level as they negotiate mediant relationships more characteristic of Schubert or late Beethoven than Sebastian Bach.

To some degree, negative impressions of Emanuel's music may simply reflect disappointment that it does not do what Sebastian's did, or what that of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven would do after 1770. Yet Rosen is right that some passages merely tread water, as when certain pieces lapse into routine diatonic sequences after an initially arresting opening theme. Despite this sort of occasional failure of imagination, which might be found in the works of any composer, is it possible that Emanuel's music achieves something fundamentally different from what happens in the great works of the late Baroque and the Viennese Classical style? Could the peculiar intensity of the *local* drama of some of these works—the dramatic dialogues between soloist and ripieno in the outer movements of certain concertos, or the astonishing modulatory strokes of the late rondos and fantasias—have been achieved within a more integrated or more “coherent” style?

It does not suffice to say merely that Emanuel's music shocks in order to express things that are sublime or picturesque, or that it is an acquired taste. During his lifetime, a style was emerging in Vienna that would find ways of producing astonishing expressive effects with musical designs that were, as Rosen has demonstrated, unprecedented in both length and the degree of integration of every detail within a rational design. The first movement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 3 (“Eroica”) was not composed until fifteen years after Bach's death, but

Emanuel was still alive when Mozart wrote *Don Giovanni*, and he was in a position to know much of Haydn's symphonies and quartets. We might excuse a son of J. S. Bach for not looking too carefully at such things, yet we might also expect him to have understood his father's rather different achievement in works such as the *Art of Fugue* and the opening chorus of the Saint Matthew Passion. It is hard, however, to know how well a son comprehends the totality of his father's work, even when professing admiration for it, as Emanuel did. Sebastian's biographer Forkel, who knew Friedemann and corresponded with Emanuel, wrote that each deliberately set out to create his own manner of writing. They did so, says Forkel, because they understood that they could not equal Sebastian "in his style."<sup>40</sup> Their response to Sebastian's music would have been a product of their training and upbringing, which is considered in the next chapter in relation to Emanuel's earliest surviving works.

# A Student in Leipzig

We know more about Emanuel Bach's training and early compositions than about any other son or pupil of Sebastian. According to NV, ten keyboard sonatas and sonatinas, a suite, and two concertos, as well as seven "trios," survive from his Leipzig years. In addition to a number of further compositions not listed in NV, we also have Emanuel's testimony about how his father taught performance and composition, not to mention school records and other documents from Emanuel's early years.

Yet these traces are of limited use for understanding how Bach learned his craft and found his distinctive musical voice. All the music acknowledged in NV as products of his Leipzig years was reworked during the following decade at Berlin, and it is unclear how much of it survives in its original form. His authorship of the pieces not listed in NV is uncertain, and the information that he provided late in life about his father's teaching methods could have been idealized or otherwise slanted—nor did he explicitly indicate that he was describing his own training. As for his personal or psychological development, we know little beyond the bare records of his attendance at the Saint Thomas school in Leipzig, following the family's arrival in spring 1720 and at the Leipzig university from fall 1731. His life prior to the move to Leipzig is a complete mystery, and we cannot even guess how he reacted to the death of his mother when he was six or to the introduction of a younger stepmother into the household less than two years later. Emanuel said essentially nothing about either woman in his autobiography, although he traced his genealogy as a musician back through both parents, including his maternal grandfather Johann Michael Bach, an organist and composer<sup>1</sup>—without noting that his stepmother was a brilliant singer from a musical family as well.

Any attempt today to reconstruct Emanuel's psychological development is bound to involve anachronistic projections onto the long-gone type of early-modern family in which he grew up. Whether the alleged antagonism between him and Friedemann went back to their childhood and whether it had any bearing on their musical development, is unknowable.<sup>2</sup> Equally inscrutable is the effect of growing up as the godson of Telemann, whose middle name he bore. Until his death in 1767, Telemann was the most influential composer in northern Germany, and Bach eventually succeeded him as director of music in Hamburg. But it is unclear whether the two had even met prior to Emanuel's visit there in 1751 (and even then no meeting is explicitly documented). Still, it could have been a source of pride and confidence for a growing child to think not only that his father was the world's greatest organist but that one of those responsible for his spiritual well-being was its most respected composer.<sup>3</sup>

Emanuel left Leipzig to continue university studies in Frankfurt on the Oder in September 1734, about six months after his twentieth birthday. The only previous event of any significance in his life, so far as we know, was his unsuccessful audition for the position of organist in Naumburg a year earlier. His examination at the city's principal church of Saint Wenzel would have served as a test of everything he had learned up to this date, including organ playing and improvisation, if not also composition. Yet although two other pupils of J. S. Bach also



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