

# INTRODUCTION

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Most keyboard concertos by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach are identified by the title “Concerto per il Cembalo concertato,” or a similar description, followed by a list of the supporting orchestral instruments. These concerted works played an important role in Bach’s career as a performer and, in retrospect, provide insight into his growth as a composer. The works in the present edition derive from that tradition of concerted keyboard music but were meant to be performed by a solo keyboard player. They were composed with an eye toward public appeal, and comments from Bach’s contemporaries show that he performed these works (at least the *Sei concerti per il cembalo concertato*) in both public and private venues. In these versions for solo keyboard, the tutti sections, normally played by the orchestra, appear in the keyboard score in a manner that provides a continuing musical fabric in the solo performer’s execution of both tutti and solo sections (see plate 4). Johann Sebastian Bach and Wilhelm Friedemann Bach had also produced examples of this genre several decades earlier, and Emanuel Bach himself had composed one earlier work of this type.<sup>1</sup> Considering these precedents, the works in this volume represent the continuation of a tradition that would have been familiar to Bach’s contemporaries. The wide distribution of the print of the *Sei concerti* was enhanced through further dispersion in many manuscript copies, to the extent that they were among the best known of Bach’s keyboard concertos in the late eighteenth century. (The orchestral versions of Wq 43/1–6 are published in CPEB: CW, III/8.)

Reports of concert life in Hamburg during Bach’s tenure as music director frequently refer to his performance of concertos, although it is not possible to ascertain whether these were unaccompanied or performed with orchestra.<sup>2</sup> In one of the most frequently quoted accounts of eighteenth-century musical life, Charles Burney provided a

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1. J.S. Bach: *Concerto nach italiänischem Gusto* (the “Italian” Concerto), BWV 971, and sixteen other works for solo keyboard adapted from concertos by Vivaldi and others, BWV 972–987; W.F. Bach: Concerto in G, Fk 40; C.P.E. Bach, Concerto in C Major, Wq 112/1. The latter is published in CPEB: CW, I/8.1.

2. Josef Sittard, *Geschichte des Musik- und Concertwesens in Hamburg* (Altona and Leipzig: U. C. Reher, 1890), 106, and Wiermann, 436–39, 446.

colorful description of Bach’s private performance of the *Sei concerti*, following his visit with Bach on 12 October 1772:

I prevailed upon him to sit down again to a clavichord, and he played, with little intermission, till near eleven o’clock at night. During this time, he grew so animated and possessed, that he not only played, but looked like one inspired. His eyes were fixed, his under lip fell, and drops of effervescence distilled from his countenance. . . . He played to me, among many other things, his last six concertos lately published by subscription, in which he has studied to be easy, frequently I think at the expence [*sic*] of his usual originality; however, the great musician appears in every movement, and these productions will probably be the better received, for resembling the music of this world more than his former pieces, which seem made for another region, or at least another century, when what is now thought difficult and far-fetched, will, perhaps, be familiar and natural.<sup>3</sup>

Burney’s observation that Bach played his last six concertos “lately published by subscription” could refer only to Wq 43/1–6, which appeared in October of that year.<sup>4</sup>

## Concerto in F Major, H 242

The first known reference to this solo keyboard work appears in Bach’s own “Autographischer Catalogus von den Claviersonaten des C.Ph.E. Bach bis zum Jahre 1772 komponirt” (CV 1772), where it is listed as item 158, a concerto composed at Potsdam in 1767.<sup>5</sup> In the later “Nachlaß-Verzeichnis” (NV 1790), it is listed both as a work for solo keyboard and as a concerto for keyboard and strings.<sup>6</sup> Bach’s autograph copy of the unaccompanied

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3. Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces*, 2 vols., 2d ed. (London: T. Becket, 1775), 2:270–72. See also Burney’s *Tagebuch einer musikalischen Reise durch Frankreich und Italien . . .*, facsimile ed. E. Klem (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1980), 458–59.

4. See the introduction to CPEB: CW, III/8.

5. See Wolff, 235.

6. NV 1790, p. 21, no. 168, and p. 34, no. 43. Cat. Breitkopf, p. 518, attributes the same incipit to “Lange,” a reference not supported by archival studies. See Shelley Davis, “The Keyboard Concertos of Johann Georg Lang (1722–1798),” Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1972.

concerto provides the principal source for this edition (see plates 1 and 2). Three orchestral settings of the same material exist in manuscript; these differ in varying degrees from Bach's autograph of the unaccompanied version, a condition that contributes substantially to the question of whether the solo or orchestral version came first.

As no autograph for an orchestral version is known, this question of chronological precedence between solo and orchestral versions leads to some speculation. At several points in the *Larghetto* (movement ii) of the autograph, Bach has revised his original notation in a manner to achieve pairs of internal cadences which balance in contour and thematic material (mm. 9 and 11, 36 and 38, 89 and 91, 101 and 103). These revisions appear in the orchestral part books with no change other than some inconsistency in ornaments, suggesting the parts were prepared after the solo version, if not based upon it. In the autograph score of the *Allegro assai* (movement i), measure 123 falls at the end of the last system on the page, before the return of the head motive (as in an orchestral tutti). That measure has been omitted and copied as marginalia at the bottom of the same page, clearly intended as a correction in the process of copying, suggesting Bach was working from an antecedent musical text, either an orchestral score or a version for solo keyboard.<sup>7</sup> The orchestral versions in B-Bc, 5887 MSM (copied by Johann Heinrich Michel) and D-B, Mus. ms. Bach St 212 (copied by Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach) include this measure in its proper context, implying their reliance on the autograph solo version or on another, unknown exemplar; the copy in D-B, SA 2616, yet another orchestral version, introduces six inserted measures of different passage-work at this point before returning to the established text. As a further consideration, a catalogue of Bach's works prepared by Westphal (B-Br, Fétis 5218 (II 4140), fol. 34v) contains an annotation implying that the solo version was preceded by a setting for keyboard accompanied by strings, but Westphal identifies no source for such a work.

Considered collectively, these observations suggest the autograph of the Concerto in F Major, H 242, was drafted from an earlier working copy for keyboard, with revisions made during the course of copying or shortly thereafter. It is probable the orchestral scores in B-Bc, 5887 MSM and D-B, Mus. ms. Bach St 212 were prepared at a later date, based on Bach's autograph of the solo version, with embellishments, enhanced passage-work, and other alter-

ations to the musical text added as copying progressed.<sup>8</sup> The provenance of D-B, SA 2616 remains unclear at this writing. Sketches survive for a concerto for keyboard and strings that Bach abandoned and arranged for solo keyboard as Wq 112/1 (see appendix to CPEB: CW, I/8.1), but that work differs substantially from H 242. It is also possible that Bach may have intended H 242 for a second collection of *Clavierstücke verschiedener Art*.<sup>9</sup>

### *Sei concerti per il cembalo concertato, Wq 43/1–6*

This set of six concertos, some of the most widely dispersed of all Bach's works in this genre, was conceived for broad public appeal, printed at the composer's own expense, and distributed by him through subscription to a wide range of music lovers. Early references to the concertos stressed that they were less complicated than Bach's other compositions, although to cite them as "easy" (*leicht*), a common description in early announcements, is an assessment open to question. In retrospect, it seems probable that such references were designed to enhance their public appeal and commercial success, conditions of much concern to Bach. A major selling point was the inclusion of the tutti sections in the solo keyboard part, making it possible for the concertos to be performed by a single keyboard player, as the first published reference to these concertos noted in October 1770.<sup>10</sup> Similar advertisements later appeared in abundance in other journals, many of them describing the musical style in detail while extolling the broader merits of the concertos to interested music lovers.<sup>11</sup>

8. See Darrell M. Berg, "Sources of C.P.E. Bach's Solo Keyboard Works in the Sing-Akademie Archives," *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. Annette Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 76.

9. See Peter Wollny, introduction to CPEB: CW, I/8.1, xiv–xv.

10. "Die Concertstimme sowohl als die Begleitungen sollen leichter seyn, die Ritornelle in der Clavierstimme (doch mit Beybehaltung des bezieferten [*sic*] Basses) ausgesetzt, und die Cadenzen ausgeschrieben werden." (The solo part as well as the accompaniment should be easier, the ritornellos are set out in the solo part (but with the retention of the figured bass), and the cadenzas are written out). *Unterhaltungen*, vol. 10, no. 4 (Oct. 1770), "Vermischte Nachrichten, die schönen Künste betreffend," 347; quoted in Wiermann, 174, and CPEB-Westphal, 101. Unless specified otherwise, all English translations from the original German text are my own.

11. Recognizing Bach's efforts to publish and distribute his own works, and the detailed knowledge of the music revealed in many of the published announcements, it seems highly probable that at least some of the notices in the Hamburg press originated with Emanuel Bach himself. For a more comprehensive discussion of Bach's relationship with the Hamburg press, see Hans-Günter Ottenberg, "C. Ph. E. Bach im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Musikpresse," *Hamburg 1988*, 159–73.

7. On this point, see Wade, 76–77, 112–113.

Bach began composing the concertos in late 1770, and all six concertos are assigned to 1771 in NV 1790. He originally planned to publish the set in time for Easter 1772.<sup>12</sup> However, on 9 April, Bach wrote to J. G. I. Breitkopf that the illness of the printer George Ludewig Winter would delay matters further.<sup>13</sup> Winter must have died in late April or early May 1772, because in June his widow had assumed direction of the firm. Bach enlisted Breitkopf to help him resolve various disputes between the composer and Madam Winter, and in early September Bach let it be known that “My easy harpsichord concertos will come from the press at the end of this month and can be in the hands of subscribers around the middle of the coming month of October.”<sup>14</sup> Finally, on 15 October he wrote to Breitkopf that the concertos should arrive in “10 or 12 days,” and in a postscript he mentioned having received the bill from Winter, confirming thereby that the printing of *Sei concerti* had been carried out by the Winter firm and that Bach himself was underwriting costs.<sup>15</sup> Their publication was advertised in the Hamburg press on 25 November 1772:

Finally we can announce to the connoisseurs and enthusiasts of music the completed publication of the six excellent harpsichord concertos by our esteemed Mr. Bach which they have looked forward to for so long with impatient expectation. All six meet the expectation which we have formed from the masterpieces of a keyboard player such as this who knows all the fine points of his instrument. Noble melody [is] accompanied by well chosen harmony and set for the instrument in the best manner, brilliant passages in which the performer can demonstrate his skill and show his instrument to best advantage, and yet which Herr Bach has taken pains to make easy enough for amateurs . . .

Amateurs can play these concertos as solos, as the main melody of the other instruments is always written out. Some passages are provided with fingering . . . The cadenzas are also fully written out . . .<sup>16</sup>

12. This is corroborated in an announcement in *HUC* (9 Aug. 1771), “Von gelehrten Sachen,” 3, reprinted in *CPEB-Westphal*, 107, and in a letter to Breitkopf dated 2 January 1772; see *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:251, and *CPEB-Letters*, 25. See the introduction to *CPEB:CW*, III/8 for additional documentation regarding the publication and reception of the *Sei concerti*.

13. *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:257, and *CPEB-Letters*, 27.

14. “Meine leichten Flügel-Concerte kommen zu Ende dieses Monats aus der Presse, und können gegen die Mitte des künftigen Octobers denen resp. Herren Pränumeranten eingehändigt werden.” *HUC* (12 Sept. 1772), 4; quoted in Wiermann, 181.

15. *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:286; *CPEB-Letters*, 30.

16. “Endlich können wir den Kennern und Liebhabern der Tonkunst die vollendete Ausgabe der sechs vortrefflichen Flügel-Concerte unsers

## On Musical Style

The salient musical traits of the *Sei concerti* are described succinctly in the introduction to *CPEB:CW*, III/8. The version of that music presented here—an arrangement for unaccompanied keyboard—differs from the larger ensemble works primarily in matters of sonority and texture. The contrasts between the orchestral *tutti*s and the intervening passage-work of the soloist can only be suggested by a sensitive performer in these versions for unaccompanied keyboard. Yet the salient musical traits of the orchestral concertos endure in the solo version: the concerto as a unified musical statement, with no interruption of sound between movements; the architectonic unity achieved in some of the concertos through shared thematic materials; and the contrast between the musical energy of fast and slow movements as a balance to those broader unifying traits.

The Concerto in F Major, H 242, presents three autonomous movements in fast-slow-fast order which, unlike the Wq 43 concertos, are separated by clear and distinct cadences, with no gesture toward sonorous continuity. All three movements of H 242 expand along the outlines of ritornello design; the outer, fast movements follow this plan more clearly than the intervening slow movement. Each movement includes an opportunity for a cadenza, not written out as in the *Sei concerti*, but designated by the traditional half cadence, fermata, and concluding trill, meant to be expanded through the performer’s improvisation leading to a return of the head motive.

Within the context of the three movements of H 242, the *Larghetto* displays an unusual degree of musical individuality. Bach apparently took considerable pains with this movement; obvious erasures and alterations show that he worked carefully to establish balanced cadence patterns throughout the movement, all expanding on one motive.

berühmten Herrn Bach ankundigen, welchen sie schon lange mit einer ungeduldigen Erwartung entgegen gesehen. Sie entsprechen all sechs der Vorstellung, die wir uns von diesen Meisterstücken eines solchen Clavierspielers, der all Feinheiten seines Instruments kennt, gemacht haben. Edle Melodie, mit der ausgesuchtesten Harmonie begleitet, und dem Instrument aufs beste angemessen, glänzende Stellen, bey welchen der Spieler seine Geschicklichkeit, und die seinem Instrument eigenen Vorzüge zeigen kann, und dabey doch eine Leichtigkeit, die Herr Bach mit Fleiss für verschiedene Liebhaber hineingebracht . . . Die Liebhaber können diese Concerte als Soli spielen, da die Hauptmelodie der übrigen Instrumente immer ausgeschrieben ist. Bey einigen Stellen sind auch die Finger angezeigt . . . Die Cadenzen sind ebenfalls völlig ausgeschrieben . . .” *HUC* (25 Nov. 1772), “Von gelehrten Sachen,” 3; quoted in Wiermann, 183–84, and *CPEB-Westphal*, 108–9.

The movement is more extended than the slow movements in the *Sei concerti*, offering an uncharacteristic variety of musical material. Much of this may seem quixotic on first encounter, even playful at times, and in those qualities it resembles some of Bach's character pieces for keyboard designed to portray persons known to him, or at least character pieces dedicated to acquaintances or prominent persons. Certainly this and comparable slow movements in the concertos illustrate Bach's comment in his *Versuch*: "One should play from the soul, not like a trained bird. A keyboard player of this calibre generally deserves more thanks than other performers."<sup>17</sup> Thus, it seems possible that the *Larghetto* of H 242 may have originated as an independent work, adapted to the concerto format by assigning some of the poignant thematic references in the solo part to the tutti of the orchestral accompaniment.<sup>18</sup>

### On Performance Practices

Titles of these seven concertos consistently designated the "cembalo" as the solo instrument, a generic term which, at the time, meant little more than keyboard. In his autobiography of 1773, Bach acknowledged that his "principal study, especially in recent years, has been directed toward playing and composing as songfully as possible for the clavier, in spite of its deficiency in sustaining power."<sup>19</sup> His reference to the lack of sustaining power suggests, to most modern readers, that he was thinking of the clavichord; if so, his stated interest in that instrument may have extended to the concertos of 1772. Moreover, Bach played on the clavichord when demonstrating the *Sei concerti* to Burney; thus it is possible the music lovers for whom these works ostensibly were written would have turned to the clavichord as well. But early published announcements of the *Sei concerti* in the press consistently referred to the Flügel or Flügel-Concerte, the usual German term for the harpsichord. Those notices most likely were alluding to orchestral performances, where acoustic considerations would make the harpsichord a preferred choice over the clavichord. To compound the question further, the frequent and often

abrupt changes of dynamics in the keyboard score might suggest the fortepiano. This instrument was well known by 1767, the date ascribed to H 242, the first work in this volume. But neither then nor by the time of the appearance of the *Sei concerti* had the instrument achieved the physical and musical stature it would come to enjoy in the decades to follow. Also, when Bach intended use of the fortepiano he distinguished it from the harpsichord (or cembalo) by name, as in the title of his double concerto of 1788: "Concerto doppio a cembalo concertato, fortepiano concertato, accompagnati da due corni," Wq 47.

These conditions do not exclude any of the stringed keyboard instruments mentioned above (clavichord, harpsichord, fortepiano) when considering an unaccompanied solo performance. In a private home or small hall, any of the three would serve. In a larger room or concert hall, acoustical considerations would make the harpsichord or fortepiano a more effective choice than clavichord. Whatever the chosen instrument, it would need to encompass the C to f''' range of the keyboard score in these works.<sup>20</sup>

The shifts from tutti to solo sections in an orchestral concerto often are marked by a sharp change in dynamics, range, and texture. When those passages are transferred to solo (unaccompanied) concertos, marked changes in dynamics and pitch level remain as hallmarks of the alternation between tutti and solo writing. For example, in H 242, movement i, mm. 40, 54, and 152, the abrupt change in dynamics is quite clear. Even more pronounced is the leap of more than two octaves in the right hand, a disjuncture of musical line reflecting, in this instance, the implied switch from tutti to solo writing. Such shifts in H 242 reflect the tradition of contrasting media in an orchestral score; in the Wq 43 concertos, those shifts reflect the practical musical fact of that change in texture, sometimes represented by an abrupt change of pitch level which endures as a dislocation in the continuation of a musical line in the top staff of the solo keyboard score.

H 242 contains no written-out cadenzas, although all three movements include a fermata showing those places where cadenzas are required. Bach did include cadenzas in the *Sei concerti* print, and these are included here for the benefit of amateurs and connoisseurs alike.

Ornamentation signs in the solo concertos also occasionally reflect their origin in orchestral works. In the solo

17. "Aus der Seele muss man spielen, und nicht wie ein abgerichteter Vogel. Ein Clavierist von dieser Art verdient mehr Dank als ein andrer [sic] Musikus." *Versuch* I:3, §7.

18. See Wade, 113.

19. "Mein Hauptstudium ist besonders in den letzten Jahren dahin gerichtet gewesen, auf dem Clavier, ohngeachtet des Mangels an Aushaltung, so viel möglich sangbar zu spielen und dafür zu setzen." *Autobiography*, 51.

20. For a more extended discussion of Bach's choice of keyboard instrument in the last decades of his life, see Dieter Krickeberg, "Clavichord und Fortepiano bei Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach—Ästhetische Aspekte," *Hamburg* 1988, 407–15.

keyboard scores, Bach usually designates trills within a musical period as trilled turns ( $\overset{\infty}{\text{w}}$ ), short trills ( $\text{w}$ ), or long trills ( $\text{ww}$ ). Wq 43/5 offers an exception to this practice where one finds simple trills (*tr*). These trills fall within designated *tuttis*, sections derived from the orchestral score where trills in the violins are consistently indicated by *tr*. A similar condition appears in the slow movement of H 242, mm. 48 and 101; both passages represent strong cadence points which probably originated as orchestral interjections in the musical dialogue between *tutti* and *solo*. This variance might be explained as an oversight in copying, but it also lies within Bach's own views regarding the trill, for in the *Versuch* he observes that different types of trills have their own distinctive signs, but that in general they could also be designated by a *tr* or by a simple cross.<sup>21</sup>

Published descriptions of the concertos mention fingerings with a frequency leading one to expect an abundance of such annotations when, in fact, they are very sparse. Some fingerings may seem strange to players not

steeped in Bach's keyboard tradition, but practical tests at the keyboard will show that they often resolve problems of awkward passage-work in unusual ways that prove to be surprisingly effective, thereby offering some insight into Bach's own practices as a keyboard performer.

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21. *Versuch* I:2.3, §4.