

INTRODUCTION

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach wrote little music for solo oboe: besides the Concerto in B-flat Major, Wq 164, and the Concerto in E-flat Major, Wq 165, there is a single early sonata for oboe and continuo, Wq 135, composed probably by 1735.¹ The oboe concertos are both assigned the date 1765 in NV 1790 (pp. 33–34), and were likely written for some specific player who was in Berlin around then, possibly for a short time only.

One candidate is Johann Christian Fischer (1733–1800), described by his acquaintance Charles Burney as “the most pleasing and perfect performer on the hautbois.”² His accomplishments were not confined to his playing; in his later years in London, “Fischer, indeed, composed for himself, and in a style so new and fanciful, that in point of invention as well as tone, taste, expression, and neatness of execution, his piece was always regarded as one of the highest treats of the night, and heard with proportionate rapture.”³ Fischer had been employed at the Saxon court in Dresden as *Jagdppfeifer* from 1755 and as *Kapell-Oboist* from at least 1764 until 1773.⁴ In the period after the end

of the Seven Years’ War in 1763, however, that court had drastically reduced its expenses in order to pay war reparations and some musicians on the roster actually spent much of their time traveling.⁵ Fischer journeyed to Berlin where reportedly he “had the honour, during a month, to accompany his majesty, Frederic, the king of Prussia, alone, four hours every day. This circumstance was occasioned by an offence given by C. Ph. Em. Bach,” who had been banished from the court for a while after complaining about the execrable condition of the road from Potsdam to Sans Souci.⁶ This employment was not entirely to Fischer’s liking: “Fischer, however, who was some time in [Frederick’s] service before he first came to England, did not seem to like his musical productions, thinking them, even then, somewhat dry and old-fashioned.”⁷ Fischer journeyed on: “from Berlin he went to Mannheim ... and thence to Paris.”⁸ In late 1765 or early 1766 he was at The Hague, where the Mozarts encountered him.⁹ In 1766 he visited Italy,¹⁰ and in 1768 he played in Paris,¹¹ settling in England later in that year. Fischer was clearly in Berlin on one or more occasions in the mid-1760s, though the statement found in

1. A concerto for oboe and violin attributed to “Bach” in Cat. Breitkopf, Supplement 1 (1766), col. 248, is attributed to “G.S. Bach” in the non-thematic catalogue of 1764 and, in a version for solo violin and flute, to “Förster” (probably Christoph) in Cat. Breitkopf, part 2 (1762), col. 62. Wq 135 is published in CPEB:CW, II/1.

2. *The Cyclopaedia; or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Science, and Literature*, ed. Abraham Rees (London, 1819), s.v. “Fischer, Johann Christian,” by Charles Burney. See also the material from manuscript sources presented in Christopher Hogwood, “Our old great favourite: Burney, Bach, and the Bachists,” *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. Annette Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 232.

3. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London, 1776–89; ed. Frank Mercer, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), 2:1018.

4. Ortrun Landmann, “Die Entwicklung der Dresdener Hofkapelle zum ‘Klassischen’ Orchester,” *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 17 (1993): 187, cites documents listing Fischer as *Jagdppfeifer* in 1755 and *Kapell-Oboist* in 1765–73. His promotion evidently came before 1765, however. He was not on the list of members of the Dresden *Kapelle* as of 1756 printed in Friedrich Wilhelm Marburg, *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik* (Berlin, 1756), 2:475–77. Ernst Ludwig Gerber placed him in the *Kapelle* c. 1760; see *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1790–92), 1:417. He was listed as a member in January 1764 by Moritz Fürstenau, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Königlich sächsischen musikalischen Kapelle* (Dresden, 1849), 156.

5. See Landmann, “Entwicklung der Dresdener Hofkapelle,” 184–85; Fürstenau, *Beiträge*, 155–69; Burney, *General History*, 2:943–44.

6. *Cyclopaedia*, s.v. “Fischer.”

7. Burney, *General History*, 2:961.

8. *Cyclopaedia*, s.v. “Fischer.”

9. Fischer is mentioned in Leopold Mozart’s *Reisenotizen* of 11 September 1765–10 May 1766; see *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, and Joseph Heinz Eibl (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962–75), 1:215. Wolfgang Mozart writes in a letter to his father of 4 April 1787 that he remembers that Fischer’s playing “had pleased me immensely, as it had all the world” (daß er mir ausserordentlich gefiel, so wie der ganze Welt) when they heard him at The Hague, but that now he plays “like a bad beginner ... his tone is entirely nasal and his held notes like the tremulant on the organ” (wie ein Elender scolar ... sein Ton ist ganz aus der Nase—und seine temata ein tremulant auf der Orgel). *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, 4:40–41; trans. Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1985), 907.

10. Johann Adam Hiller, ed., *Wöchentliche Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend* 1, no. 4 (22 July 1766): 27.

11. Constant Pierre, *Histoire du Concert Spirituel 1725–1790* (Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, 1975), 293 (no. 812: concert of 2 February 1768).

some modern publications that he visited the city in the specific years 1764 and 1767 seems to be an overly hopeful interpretation of the contemporary accounts.¹² If the exact timing and extent of his contact with Bach are not precisely known, however, Fischer was certainly the kind of musician for whom Bach might have composed these concertos.

Other candidates include members of the Besozzi family. Like Fischer, Antonio Besozzi (1714–81) and his son Carlo (1738–91) were employed at Dresden but also traveled and performed elsewhere.¹³ Carlo “toured extensively throughout Germany, France, and Italy and won still greater fame than his father through his then almost unprecedented perfection on the oboe.”¹⁴ Neither of the Besozzis is known to have had contact with Bach or to have been in Berlin in the mid-1760s, however.

Several oboists resident in Berlin should be mentioned as well:

Carl Ludwig Matthes was “chamber musician to his Royal Highness Margrave Heinrich” (Cammer-Musicus bey Sr. Königl. Hoheit dem Marggrafen Heinrich) in 1770; Bach published two oboe sonatas by him in the *Musikalisches Vielerley* in that year.¹⁵ In a review of the *Musikalisches Vielerley* published in Johann Adam Hiller’s *Musikalische Nachrichten und Anmerkungen auf das Jahr 1770*, the reviewer comments that “aside from his talent for composition, Herr Matthes here shows himself to be a man who is very capable on his instrument, and knows how to play it in the most pleasing and best style.”¹⁶ He does not seem to have been in the employ of the court in

the mid-1760s, but was possibly a member of a musical family active in Berlin.¹⁷

Johann Christian Jacobi (1719–84), “a worthy oboist” (ein braver Hoboist), was employed in the *Kapelle* of Prince and Margrave Heinrich of Prussia in 1766.¹⁸ Marpurg described him as having “achieved a skill on this instrument that won him the approval of connoisseurs.”¹⁹ Jacobi had been a member of the *Kapelle* of Prince and Margrave Carl from 1746,²⁰ and from 1768 he was director of the *Armee-oboistenschule* in Potsdam.²¹ He was also associated with the musical academies held every Friday at the home of the court chamber musician Johann Gottlieb Janitsch (1708–c. 1763), which began in 1740.²² Jacobi’s name appears on at least two works by Janitsch, including an autograph trio for oboe, violin, and bass, on which the date 21 February 1762 is also written.²³ Many of Janitsch’s other chamber works include parts for oboe.

Another member of Prince Heinrich’s *Kapelle* in 1766 was Johann Joachim Rodemann, “a good oboist” (ein guter Hoboist).²⁴

Joachim Wilhelm Döbbert, a member of the court *Kapelle* from at least 1754,²⁵ was praised as “a very good oboist” (ein sehr guter Hoboist) in the *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* of 1766.²⁶ His colleagues in the orchestra in that year were Johann Caspar Grundke and Johann August Grunert.

NV 1790 lists these two concertos as for “Clavier . . . auch für die Hoboe gesetzt.” Several of Bach’s concertos exist in versions for different instruments, but the keyboard

12. E.g., *NG*^{II}, s.v. “Fischer, Johann Christian,” by T. Herman Keahey.

13. Hiller, ed., *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* 1, no. 4 (22 July 1766): 27. Both Antonio and Carlo Besozzi were listed as members of the Dresden *Kapelle* in 1766; according to the list, Carlo was “at that time in Vienna” (anjetzt zu Wien).

14. “Er machte große Reisen durch Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien und erwarb sich durch seine damals fast beispiellose Fertigkeit auf der Oboe einen noch größern Ruf als sein Vater.” Moritz Fürstenau, *Zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe zu Dresden* (Dresden, 1861–62), ii:234.

15. *Musikalisches Vielerley* (Hamburg, 1770), 73–78 (no. 19), 174–78 (no. 45).

16. “Außer der guten Anlage zur Composition zeigt sich Herr Matthes hier als ein Mann, der auf seinem Instrumente stark ist, und dasselbe auf die gefälligste und beste Art zu spielen weis.” Hiller, ed., *Musikalische Nachrichten und Anmerkungen auf das Jahr 1770*, no. 30 (23 July 1770): 234. The second sonata is reviewed briefly in *Musikalische Nachrichten*, no. 51 (10 Dec. 1770): 402. The sonatas are also mentioned in reviews of the *Musikalisches Vielerley* published in the Hamburg *Unterhaltungen*; see *CPEB-Westphal*, 81, 170, 172, and 313.

17. Other members of the family may have included Armelina Koch, “gebohrne Mattei,” a soprano in the royal *Kapelle* in Berlin in 1766 (*Wöchentliche Nachrichten* 1, no. 10 [2 Sept. 1766]: 74); Johann Andreas Matthies, *Stadtmusiker* in Berlin, 1764–85 and before that a regimental musician (Christoph Henzel, ed., *Quellentexte zur Berliner Musikgeschichte im 18. Jahrhundert* [Wilhelmshaven: Noetzel, 1999], 167–70, 231); and the violinist Johann Wilhelm Mathies, who was in the service of Prince Heinrich in 1784 (Hiller, *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler, neuerer Zeit* [Leipzig, 1784], 1:53).

18. *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* 1, no. 11 (9 Sept. 1766): 81: “Herr Johann Christian Jacobi, aus Preußen, ein braver Hoboist.”

19. “Zu derjenigen Stärke auf diesem Instrumente zu gelangen, die ihm den Beyfall der Kenner erworben hat.” Marpurg, *Historisch-kritische Beyträge*, 1:157–58; see also 1:387.

20. *Historisch-kritische Beyträge*, 1:157–58.

21. *Quellentexte zur Berliner Musikgeschichte*, 68 and 229.

22. *Historisch-kritische Beyträge*, 1:157–58.

23. *Music for Oboe, 1650–1800: A Bibliography*, ed. Bruce Haynes et al. (accessed 2 January 2006) <<http://musicforoboe.net>>.

24. *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* 1, no. 11 (9 Sept. 1766): 82.

25. *Historisch-kritische Beyträge*, 1:77.

26. *Wöchentliche Nachrichten* 1, no. 10 (2 Sept. 1766): 77.

version receives the main entry in NV 1790, perhaps because it was considered more saleable. The oboe versions of the concertos appear to have been written before the keyboard versions Wq 39 and 40 (see CPEB: CW, III/9.13). A sketch for the oboe version of Wq 164 (a facsimile and transcription are given in the appendix) shows the material for the orchestral tutti and the solo passagework for the oboe being worked out together. A sketch for the keyboard version Wq 40 is written directly following the conclusion of the oboe concerto Wq 165, confirming that the oboe version was completed before this passage of keyboard figuration was worked out.²⁷ That the versions for non-keyboard instruments were often the primary ones is confirmed by Bach in his autobiography, where he lists among his works “49 concertos for clavier and other instruments (the latter I have however also set for the clavier).”²⁸

Each concerto survives in an autograph manuscript, scored for oboe, two violins, viola, and basso; the edition treats the autograph as the principal source for each concerto. If performing parts for the oboe concertos were made c. 1765, they do not survive. Sets of parts for both Wq 164 and 165 were copied in Hamburg in 1792, after Bach’s death, by Johann Heinrich Michel, who worked as a copyist for Bach, and, after the composer’s death, for Bach’s widow and daughter.²⁹

Notation and Performance

The solo passagework in these concertos generally suits the oboe well, and the erasing and rewriting of several passages in Wq 164, especially in the first movement, show that Bach tried to fit the capabilities of the instrument and to utilize the possibilities for contrast. The most extensive alteration is of the solo line in measures 202–6 of the first movement. That passage seems to have initially been set in a lower tessitura, reaching up to b^b only once, and remaining mostly in the upper part of the treble staff. In the revised version, much of the passagework is above the staff, matching the tessitura of the first part of the solo section that begins at measure 143 (see plate 1). Bach also made alterations in the first movement of Wq 164 to create variety in color. Two short segments (mm. 72–73 and 75) of the oboe line were transferred to the violins (with m. 75 now an octave lower).

27. See the description of Wq 165, source A; facsimile and transcription in CPEB: CW, III/9.13. See also Wade, 106–7.

28. “49 Concerten fürs Clavier und andre Instrumente (welche letzten ich aber auch aufs Clavier gesetzt habe).” *Autobiography*, 207.

29. Schmid 1988, 480.

This alteration also allows the oboist short rests and time to breathe, necessary if the player is to continue with the following tutti.






Bach has carefully indicated the beginnings and endings of the tutti sections in the oboe staff in the autograph manuscripts of both Wq 164 and 165. In several cases he inserts a rest at the beginning of a tutti, following the end of the solo, or at the end of a tutti, before the solo begins. In Wq 164, movement i, measure 189, for example, a quarter rest is inserted following the final note of the solo and the oboist joins the tutti in the second half of the measure, with the continuation marked with a custos. In Wq 164, movement ii, measure 24, Bach notates the oboist’s final tutti note and inserts two quarter rests before the beginning of the solo, providing a short, contrasting solo for the strings; the oboist would have been unable, in any case, to play the notated turn on c’ (see plate 2). Opening and internal tutti sections in the autograph manuscripts are left blank in the oboe staff, without rests (with the exception of the opening tutti of Wq 164/i, for which only the accompanying parts are notated on the first page of the autograph, mm. 1–35). Custodes are often used to indicate that the violin I line should be copied into the oboe part. Final tutti sections are sometimes provided with rests, sometimes with blank measures, but without custodes; thus it seems that the oboist was not expected to play in these passages. In the outer movements of both concertos the final tutti includes a *dal segno*, but in each case the oboe staff has rests at the beginning of the tutti, suggesting that the oboist remains silent.




In Michel’s copy of the oboe part for Wq 164, the violin I line is written in the opening and most internal tutti sections and labeled “tutti” or “violino” (the latter at the opening of movement iii). Several passages descend below the range of the oboe (for example, movement i, m. 37 and movement iii, mm. 25–32; see plate 3), and these passages are not altered to accommodate the oboist. Bach’s notation and Michel’s interpretation of it suggest that the oboist might have been expected to play during these tutti. Although the tutti are treated the same way in the autograph of Wq 165, in Michel’s oboe part the soloist has rests, with a few measures at the beginning and end of a tutti sometimes written into the part and labeled “tutti” or “violino.” Thus Michel’s 1792 copies offer the soloist two interpretations of Bach’s tutti notation. Playing all the tutti is certainly not practical for a player of the modern Conservatoire oboe, and was perhaps not even a good idea for many oboists of the mid-eighteenth century, although it was then customary for other instrumentalists, such as

violinists or keyboard players, to do so—for them physical endurance of the embouchure was not a concern.

The edition follows Bach's autograph manuscripts for the beginnings and endings of tuttis in the oboe line. The *colla parte* portions of the oboe line are set in small notes, with notes impossible or impractical on the oboe of Bach's time in brackets. The oboe solos have the range c' to d''' in these concertos, and a player such as Matthes or Fischer, likely using a transitional instrument of the sort then being made in Dresden by the Grenser and Grundmann families,³⁰ would probably have been able to play the e_b''' 's in the tuttis of the first movement of Wq 165. Short tutti sections for which Bach provides rests in the oboe staff are marked with rests in the edition.

At the beginning of the *Largo e mesto* in the autograph of Wq 164 Bach writes "con sordini" over the score (see plate 2). Given the melancholy affect of the movement, it is entirely possible that Bach intended the oboe to be muted as well as the strings, and the edition accordingly prints the directive in all the parts.³¹

The interpretation of  patterns in relation to triplets was a matter of considerable controversy in the mid-eighteenth century, and even later. Bach says that "short notes which follow dotted ones are always shorter in their execution than their notated length" (*Versuch* I: 3, § 23).³² But he also acknowledges other possibilities (*Versuch* II: 29, § 15), and provides an example in which  patterns are matched to triplets (*Versuch* I: 3, § 27 and Tab. VI, Fig. XII). The first movement of Wq 164 includes many passages in which a prevailing triplet figuration in the upper parts is set off against a  pattern in the lower (e.g., mm. 32–33 or 221–22; see plate 1) or where the triplet figuration is followed immediately by  patterns. Bach consistently marks the dotted 8th note with a stroke, suggesting a well-marked interpretation, with a space following the dotted 8th. He thus seems to clarify the distinction between triplets and  patterns through the use of strokes,

which serve both as articulation marks and as rhythmic indications. In only one place (m. 188) does a  pattern appear simultaneously with a triplet. If the stroke is understood as indicating a strongly dotted pattern, the 16th note will not match the triplet, but rather be played short and late. One such pattern (m. 67) is not marked with the stroke, and is thus ambiguous, as it falls between a triplet passage and a duple passage; it is interpreted as  and marked with a stroke. The dotted 8th notes marked with trills in the first movement of Wq 164 remain ambiguous; all appear in conjunction with triplet passagework and many are slurred to the following 16th note, which tends to soften the rhythm (e. g., m. 97). Strokes are used similarly in the first movement of Wq 165, although there the triplet and  patterns are not so directly contrasted.

Bach describes staccato dots and strokes as interchangeable (*Versuch* I: 3, § 17), and in the edition all staccato marks are rendered as strokes. However, it is possible that Bach, perhaps only in these concertos, was experimenting with his notation. The long vertical or slightly left-slanting strokes (type A) used consistently throughout the first movements of both concertos look different from the marks that predominate in the final movements (compare plates 1 and 3). The latter range from dots to short, thick strokes slanting markedly to the left (type B). A few marks in the first movement of Wq 164 are shorter than most of the others there, especially in the basso part where space is limited, but all are vertical or nearly vertical, in contrast to those of type B (see m. 7, basso; m. 27, violin I).


Certainly, the difference in appearance might be the result of a variety of factors. The generally majestic and lyrical character of the opening movements, in contrast to the lighter, more playful character of the finales, might have caused Bach to form his markings slightly differently. Alternatively, he might merely have been writing more quickly in later movements. Strokes of type A are used in the final movements of these concertos in one place only: a solo oboe passage in Wq 165, movement iii, measures 310–16, where the marks indicate the ends of short gestures that lead from beat 2 of one measure to beat 1 of the next. The slow movement of Wq 164 contains marks of both types. Type A marks appear in measures 20 and 108, on the final note of a phrase that resolves to a weak beat and is also marked *p*, creating a strong contrast with the beginning of the following phrase. Dots appear below slurs in measures 33 and 35, 60 and 62, 101 and 103, 110, and 118. Michel—so careful in copying Bach's pitches and dynamics—did not recognize a difference between marks of type A and type B; he sometimes interpreted Bach's dots as strokes in the

30. Bruce Haynes, *The Eloquent Oboe: A History of the Hautboy from 1640 to 1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 396–401, 429–30. See also Cecil Adkins, "The German Oboe in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 27 (2001): 5–47.

31. See Janet K. Page, "'To Soften the Sound of the Hoboy': The Muted Oboe in the 18th and Early 19th Century," *Early Music* 21 (1993): 65–80.

32. "Die kurtzen Noten nach vorgegangenen Punkten werden allezeit kürtzter abgefertiget als ihre Schreib-Art erfordert." English translations from the *Versuch* are after C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. William J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949).

third movements. In any case, performers would be wise to follow Bach's advice in the interpretation of all such markings: that one should consider the affect to be created, as well as the performance situation, in deciding how to attack and release the notes (*Versuch I*: 3, § 5–17).

Measures 65 and 106 of the second movement of Wq 164 contain the rhythm . Bach comments on the interpretation of such patterns: "Dots after short notes followed by groups of shorter ones are held fully" (*Die Punkte bey kurtzen Noten, worauf ungleich kürzere nachfolgen, werden ausgehalten; Versuch I*: 3, § 23). A new example added for the 1787 edition illustrates the pattern of measures 65 and 106. Therefore the 32nd notes have been interpreted as triplet 32nds.

Bach calls the lowest accompanying part "basso." It seems clear from the care with which he notated the figuration that the keyboard part is an essential component of the piece, and that the player should follow the figures as exactly as possible. Furthermore, the string ensemble should be small, so that Bach's carefully calculated effects are not overpowered by the other instruments. The figures duplicate the basic harmonic progressions of the other parts but frequently indicate notes, such as sevenths, not appearing in them.

In his figuration Bach mostly writes the literal accidental for the pitch to be played. However, the figure 5 \flat is used to indicate a diminished fifth, when either the upper note or the lower note of the interval is altered, and also when neither note is altered. The raising of a note with a sharp is usually indicated by a slash through the figure; a natural or a slash may be used if the upper note of the interval is altered from a flat to a natural (e.g., Wq 164/i, mm. 100 and 162–63; in this case the two notations appear to be interchangeable). Bach may indicate a seventh chord in first inversion with the figure 5 (see Wq 165/i, m. 7), though in these concertos he usually uses the explicit $\frac{6}{5}$ for that situation and the 5 to indicate a root-position triad (e.g., after a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord). In certain situations (e.g., Wq 165/iii, mm.

197, 204, and 253) Bach appears to use a line of prolongation over a note that follows a rest to indicate that the note should be *tasto solo*—it is the rest that is prolonged rather than the previous chord.

Bach frequently employs "Telemannische Bogen" to indicate that he wants only the pitches of the figures rather than the fuller chord implied. He uses this notation not only to regulate the harmony but also to create subtle dynamic and textural effects, perceptible only in the small ensemble that Bach probably envisioned for these works. In Wq 165, movement i, measure 136, for example, the "Telemannische Bogen" force the keyboard instrument to provide the third below the solo part, in imitation of the thirds provided by the violin I in measures 129–30 (see plate 4). The carefully placed "Telemannische Bogen" in the same movement, measure 211 contribute to the *decrescendo* of all the parts. In Wq 164, movement iii, measure 6 and parallel passages the "Telemannische Bogen" warn the keyboard player not to thicken the chords in anticipation of the *forte*; such an anticipation would diminish the effect of the dynamic contrast that is an essential element of the theme.

Acknowledgments

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