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Reviews

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works (Los Altos, CA: Packard Humanities Institute, 2005–).

If any collected works edition of a composer deserves the description "monumental," it is surely *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, a joint undertaking of Harvard University, the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, and the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, sponsored by the Packard Humanities Institute. Begun in 1998, the edition includes not only Bach's music, but also facsimiles; free downloads of parts and ancillary material not always included in complete editions, such as a fascinating catalogue of Bach's portrait collection, reconstructed by Annette Richards; and an excellent new edition of Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen,* edited and with commentary by Tobias Plebuch. To be sure, the C. P. E. Bach edition stands on the shoulders of other eighteenth-century monumental editions, including the *Joseph Haydn Werke* and the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe.* But it surpasses these in its rigorous view of the sources, its thoughtful editorial philosophy and policies, the quality of the editing and the volumes' forewords, and its broad view of Bach as a composer working within the context of particular locales at particular times or for particular—and sometimes diverse—audiences. It has the advantage, too, of having been undertaken only after many of the philological basics for dealing with eighteenth-century music have been more or less settled through the work of scholars like Wolfgang Plath, Alan Tyson, and Georg Feder, and after some vigorous debates concerning performance practice as well as the importance of the cultural context to a composer's life and works. Finally, unlike the Mozart edition in particular, it has benefited from the recent recovery of sources previously thought to have been lost, especially, in 1999, the archives of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, which includes some unique copies of Bach's passions and cantatas thought to have been lost since 1945.

The edition is divided into eight series: I: Keyboard Music; II: Chamber Music; III: Orchestral Music; IV: Oratorios and Passions; V: Choral Music; VI: Songs and Vocal Chamber Music; and VII: Theoretical Writings. Series VIII, the supplement, includes Bach's cadenzas, embellishments, and compositional studies; what the

edition has dubbed the Polyhymnia Portfolio (Bach's own collection of songs); librettos to his vocal works; and Bach's collection of 378 portraits and thirty-seven silhouettes. It includes all the authentic works and arrangements by him that are known to survive and selected uncertain works. Each volume has the edition's "General Preface," the relevant series preface, an introduction, facsimiles, the edition itself, and, at the end, a list of abbreviations and a critical report that identifies and evaluates all the sources (including those not used in the preparation of the editions), a note on editorial policy, and the critical report proper.

The introductions are uniformly excellent and models for a critical edition, describing what is known of the history of the works and their sources and providing the reader with both broader and more specific contexts. They do not, however, follow a pre-established format; editors are given the freedom to deal with the introductory material as they see fit. And while all of them deal one way or another with the history of the works, some—such as Peter Wollny's introduction to *Keyboard Concertos from Manuscript Sources I*, series III, volume 9, part 1 (hereafter III/9.1)—describe the musical cultures of Berlin and Hamburg, while others—including Barthold Kuijken's introduction to *Flute Concertos I* (III/4.1)—deal extensively with matters of performance practice. As John Butt pointed out in his review of the vocal music, contextual and contemporaneous documents, especially those relating to the performance of some works, and the occasional installation music in particular, provide further evidence for performance practice that goes beyond Bach's own *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*.[1]

The critical reports that accompany each volume are exhaustive. They not only list all the sources for a work but also give clear evaluations of the relationship among them, identifying in particular the sources upon which the editions are based. There is the potential for some slight misunderstanding here. The general preface to each volume, as W. Dean Sutcliffe noted in his review of the instrumental music, states that "Ordinarily, the edition considers the latest known

[1] John Butt, review of *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, Series IV, V, and VI, *BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* 51 (2020): 331–37.

authorized version of a work to be the principal one."[2] This could be misconstrued as endorsing a *Fassung letzter Hand,* especially in those instances where editors characterize Bach's revisions to his works as having been undertaken, as Sutcliffe notes, with an eye to posterity. But I do not think the edition itself promotes this view, since many of the forewords and critical reports include not only extensive accounts of the revisions, situating them as alternate, equally legitimate versions (or, as I might put it, performances), but also editions of them in volumes devoted to their relevant genres, for example the concertos Wq 43 and their version as keyboard solo works in I/10.1—but more on that below.

If there is a potential for misunderstanding here, it is perhaps the conjunction of "work" and "principal" even if, in this case, all it means is the "primary" source or sources upon which an edition is based. So this could perhaps have been put a bit more clearly and explicit recognition given to the fact that in many instances a particular source represents only a moment in the compositional and performance history of any "work" (which I put in scare quotes to distinguish my own fluid notion of "work" from the idea of a single, fixed, and correct text). This does not preclude the possibility that in some instances Bach may have wanted to establish a single text with posterity in mind. But it does perhaps represent a view that captures more of the sometimes elusive relationship among source, text, and performance that is important for understanding eighteenth-century music and music history.

There is a hidden virtue to the forewords that struck me only as I read through most of them. And that is that they sometimes inadvertently raise issues in a reader's mind that might not otherwise have occurred to them. One particular instance of this concerns Bach's arrangements of his own works, how they fit with his oeuvre generally, and what their status is as independent or codependent works. This is an issue for Bach that for the most part does not arise with Haydn or Mozart, who only relatively rarely arranged their works for a different scoring (I do not mean here the reuse of earlier material that may or may not have been completed, such as Mozart's self-

[2] W. Dean Sutcliffe, review of *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, Series I, II, and III, *BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* 51 (2020): 314.

pilfering of the unfinished Mass in C Minor for the cantata *Davide Penitente* K 469 but, rather, cases like his arrangement of the Serenade in C Minor K 388 for the String Quintet in C Minor K 406, or the reuse of the Fugue in C Minor for Two Keyboards K 426 for strings with an added adagio [K 546]). In Bach's case, the number of self-arrangements is significant and the questions they pose about the relationship of one version to another, or even Bach's relationship to his public, are more central to our understanding of his musical biography.

What immediately raised this question for me was the edition of the *Sei concerti per il cembalo concertato* Wq 43, edited in III/8. The editor, Douglas Lee, rightly argues that there is "little question" that as concertos in the modern sense, they were intended for harpsichord. As Lee cites in his introduction, an early announcement of the concertos from October 1770 describes them as "Flügelconcerten" and states that "These works are said to distinguish themselves from his previous works in that they will be expressly directed toward the *Natur des Flügels*," while an announcement from November 1772 describes them as "Flügel-Concerte" (xi, xiii). I'm not entirely convinced by the argument that "Flügel" must mean harpsichord because the piano had not yet attained sufficient stature, or because the keyboard left hand is figured and so, as at times a continuo instrument, must be the same as the common continuo instrument of the time. *Zeitgeisty* arguments such as these implicitly posit a pan-European performance practice that seems to me to be a difficult proposition to support. It seems to me too—and I recognize this as my own, similarly unsupported *Zeitgeisty* speculation—that the notion of a pan-European performance practice flies in the face of a basic biographical trope we buy into: the individuality of composers like Bach, Haydn, and Mozart. Why assume that when it comes to style, great composers are unique, but that in performing their "unique" works, they were necessarily quotidian? Perhaps it is worth entertaining the notion that one of the things that made great composers "great," and especially composers who performed their own works, was that they also, at least in some respects, *performed* (or had their works performed) uniquely.

But to return to Wq 43. Lee, in his foreword, cites Burney, who visited Bach in October 1772 and heard him perform the concertos:

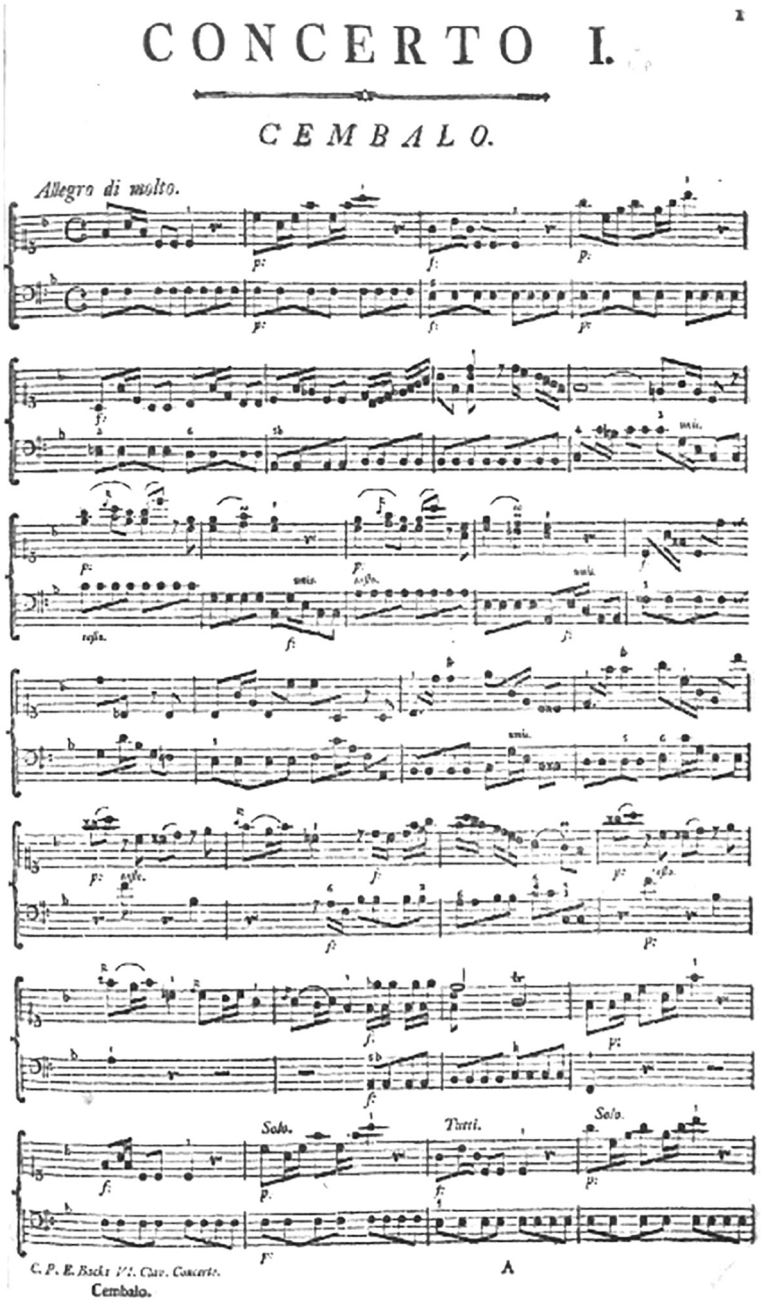
> After dinner, which was elegantly served, and cheerfully eaten, I prevailed upon him to sit down again to a clavichord, and he played, with little intermission, till near eleven o'clock at night . . . . He played to me, among many other things, his last six concertos, lately published by subscription, 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 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.[3]

Understandably, for a performance at home, Bach performed the works on his clavichord. But this was not, in fact, a *substitution* for performance on a harpsichord with orchestra, or at least not entirely, but an equally "authentic" performance of the works. The announcement of the concertos on 25 November 1772 (see above) states, "Amateurs can play these concertos as solos, as the main melody of the other instruments is always written out." It would seem, then, that as far as Bach was concerned, the concertos could "authentically" be performed either with an orchestra or as solos. And, as the announcement notes, the keyboard part for the concertos—the only demonstrably authentic source for Wq 43—includes the main melodic parts in the keyboard right hand (fig. 1).

For justifiable practical reasons, the edition of Wq 43 in III/8 omits the main melodic parts in the keyboard right hand, opting for a presentation that approximates what we now might expect for a mid-eighteenth-century concerto, a text with rests in the right hand during the tuttis. (To its credit, the published parts for the concerto do include violin I cues in the keyboard part, and the solo version is published in I/10.1.) Still, I would have preferred to have the keyboard reproduced as it is in the source, to reflect what players at the time would have had before them on the music stand. There is nothing to be lost by reproducing the part as Bach both sanctioned and published it, and possibly—at least in the context of some performances—something to be gained: as David Schulenberg notes in his excellent introduction to *Keyboard Concertos from Manuscript*

[3] Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces*, 2nd ed. (London, 1775), 2:270, 272–73.

Figure 1. C. P. E. Bach, *Sei concerti per il cembalo concertato* Wq 43/1, first movement. First edition, keyboard part. University of Michigan, Music Library, M1000.B12 C743.



Sources II (III/9.2, xiii), soloists sometimes doubled not only the first violin, but even some of the inner string parts during the ritornellos.

This has been a long-winded way to register what is really a minor quibble, that the cross-connections among Bach's works are not always signaled as well as they might be in the edition (there is only a parenthetical reference to the keyboard solo version of Wq 43 buried under the rubric "Musical Style"). That said, I do see it as a virtue that the thoroughness of both the editorial philosophy and apparatus behind this monumental edition have the perhaps unexpected benefit of raising further questions to consider, instead of closing off avenues to thinking about the composer.

As for the editions themselves, these must be the most error-free editions of any eighteenth-century composer. I struggled, mostly in vain, to find something I could pick on, and what I could find was insubstantial, a dynamic here or there, once in a blue moon the slurring, and very rarely a questionable pitch. Inevitably there are editorial decisions that could be second-guessed; for example, how many notes are covered by a slur? Especially with printed editions, this is often far from clear. And the exact placement of dynamics may sometimes be uncertain, especially given the modern typographical convention to use only *f* and *p*, for example. Again, this appears in Bach's case to be more of a problem with printed editions of his works, since a look through the hundreds of facsimiles of Bach's autographs available in the edition shows that he appears to have been scrupulous in his dynamic placement and to have avoided the more ambiguous notations such as *pia:* and *for*: that can be so problematic for other later eighteenth-century composers.

In rare instances, I wondered about unexplained editorial decisions. A case in point is measures 5–7 of the Concerto in E-flat Major Wq 41 (III/9.14). Here, the viola has a distinct pattern of repeated eighth notes, with notes 1 and 2 identical in pitch, note 3 a different pitch, notes 4 and 5 identical (but not the same as notes 1 and 2), and note 6 the same as note 3; this is the pattern in three successive bars. The primary source for the edition, a score copy by an anonymous copyist with autograph entries by Bach, has dots for notes 1 and 2 and 4 and 5 but not notes 3 and 6. A secondary source, a set of parts by Johann Heinrich Michel copied in Hamburg during the early 1790s, has the same reading. Yet the edition adds dots on notes 3 and 6, which seems to me contrary to the

instruction in the editorial guidelines not automatically to standardize (admittedly, that instruction is given in connection with slurs, but I would suppose, as a general principle, that it applies as well to other articulations). Arguably, the different articulations in measures 5–7 are significant: they not only make sense on musical grounds, but they also promote a subtler expressivity, a hallmark of Bach's and other great later eighteenth-century composers' styles. My own inclination would be not to editorialize. To the credit of the edition, the readings are described in the critical report. But while a reason is given why the dots may not be in the sources, no reason is given to justify why they are editorialized there. Looking at the score alone, not the critical report (and not everyone reads critical reports), a reader has no inkling that some of the articulation in this passage is an editorial intervention.

The physical attributes of the edition are outstanding, including elegant hardbound volumes, high-quality paper, and easy-to-read typefaces for both the forewords and the editions themselves. Its luxuriousness is matched by its contents, the extensive forewords, the thorough description and evaluation of sources, the comprehensive critical reports, and the scrupulous editing. Similarly, the virtual attributes of the edition—the website cpebach.org—far exceed in depth, quality, usefulness, and ease of navigation any other website devoted to the works of a later eighteenth-century composer. The site includes a list of the contents of the volumes and series; a link to a page where users can request free downloadable parts of all of the published editions, parts that can be used not only to study the works but also, with appropriate credit given, to perform or record them; a search function (limited to searches by Wotquenne numbers, Helm numbers, or keywords in title); and "additional resources." This last is especially valuable. It includes links, internal or external, to pdfs of Bach's autobiography in both German and English; a facsimile and transcription of Bach's *Nachlaß Verzeichnis* of 1790; and Alfred Wotquenne's pioneering C. P. E. Bach thematic catalogue. A number of primary sources are made available by external links to the digital holdings of Harvard University, including the *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, the *Sonatas with Varied Reprises*, the "Württemberg" sonatas and *Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber,* numerous songs, and *Die Israeliten in der Wüste* Wq 238, among many others, in particular keyboard works. Additionally, the resources page also includes a useful chronology; a link to

downloadable copies of all the edition's newsletters; a link to the superb Bach Digital (https://www.bach-digital.de/content/index.xed); and a link to the invaluable online site of RISM. Somewhat hidden, but to my mind an important resource for working with the edition, are the editorial guidelines. A link to these is found only under "About the edition" (cpebach.org/description.html).

I do not think one could ask more of an edition than what *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works* provides. All told, it is a model of its kind, a credit to its sponsors and editors, and, finally, a worthy tribute to a composer who was among the most influential of the eighteenth century and whose complete works should have been made available long before now.

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