

Revisiting “C. P. E. Bachs Empfindungen”

The work of a music editor presents a rich palette of colorful challenges, ranging from the thrill of serendipitous discoveries to the roller coaster ride of hunches leading to somewhere or nowhere. It requires patience for the tedious work of detailed descriptions and the occasional mistakes due to missed information or research not yet completed.

The Fantasia in F-sharp Minor for Keyboard and Violin, Wq 80 (1787) is based on the Fantasia in F-sharp Minor, Wq 67, for solo keyboard (see CPEB: CW, I/8.1). As the editor of CPEB: CW, II/3.1 (Keyboard Trios I), I speculated (on p. xvi of the introduction) about the source of the final *Allegro* section in Wq 80:

To the original Fantasia [Wq 67], Bach added a closing *Allegro* section in A major, which possibly makes a melodic reference to the last movement of Wq 58/2, from part IV of his “Kenner und Liebhaber” collection (1783; see CPEB: CW, I/4.2).

While the opening of the *Allegro* in Wq 80, in A major and $\frac{6}{8}$, has a similar melodic profile to the *Allegretto* of Wq 58/2, in E major and $\frac{3}{8}$, there is a more immediate model. After volume II/3.1 was published in 2011, I found the hard-to-spot incipit in Helm, listed as an alternate third movement to Wq 65/45 (H 212) but without mention of its reuse later in Wq 80. Another early reference exists in a presentation given by Pamela Fox at Frankfurt/Oder (see Fox 1994, 317–19), with reference to Darrell Berg’s discovery of the insertion of an alternate third movement in Bach’s hand for the sonata Wq 65/45. Fox notes Bach had used the original movement of Wq 65/45 in Wq 80.

In her work on Mus. ms. Bach P 771, Berg clearly establishes that the original third movement of Wq 65/45 (Berlin, 1766) is, indeed, the source of the last *Allegro* in $\frac{6}{8}$ found in Wq 80. Bach then composed a new third movement for Wq 65/45. Addressing the circumstances surrounding the movements exchanged in P 771 between Wq 65/45 and Wq 80, Berg writes:

Two other revisions, not recorded in NV 1790, should also be mentioned. In fascicle VIII, containing the Sonata in B-flat Major, Wq 65/45, (a bifolio mostly in Michel’s hand), Bach replaced the original third movement, *Allegro* $\frac{6}{8}$, inserting a bifolio with a new movement, *Allegretto* $\frac{3}{8}$ (in a hand that can be dated to the late 1780s), between the first and second pages of the earlier third movement. On the cover of this sonata Bach wrote “Hat noch niemand” (no one has it yet), probably signifying that the sonata had not yet begun to circulate, and thus there would be no confusion about the new movement. He transferred the earlier third movement, transposed to A major and varied somewhat, to the end of the keyboard and violin version of the Fantasia in F-sharp Minor, “C.P.E. Bachs Empfindungen,” Wq 80.¹

1. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. *Keyboard Sonatas in Mus. ms. Bach P 771*, series I supplement, facsimile edition with introduction by Darrell M. Berg (Los Altos, California: The Packard Humanities Institute, 2013), xi; see p. 41 for the title page. Berg notes (p. xiii): “Fascicle VIII, containing Wq 65/45, consisted originally of two nested bifolios. Another bifolio was later inserted between the sixth and seventh pages of this fascicle (these pages contain the beginning and end of the original third movement) with the information on its first page, in the hand of a librarian or former owner, that Bach had written a new third movement, intended to replace the original one.”

It is only since the publication of the facsimile of P 771 in 2013, so thoroughly researched by Berg, that a more complete story has appeared in print about the use of the original third movement of Wq 65/45 in Wq 80. (Both third movements written for the sonata are published in CPEB: CW, I/6.5, pp. 56 and 107.)

Bach cast the original third movement of Wq 65/45 in B-flat major, the key of the earlier (1766) sonata (see example 1). When he reworked that movement for Wq 80 (likely late 1780s), he changed the key to A major, the relative major of F-sharp minor found in the Fantasia portion of Wq 80, composed earlier in 1787 (see example 2). The 1766 version of the third movement presents the material in a nearly rounded binary form, with each half repeated by the use of repeat marks.

EXAMPLE 1. Allegro in B-flat Major, earlier version of Wq 65/45/iii, based on PL-Kj, Mus. ms. Bach P 771 (from CPEB: CW, I/6.5)

EXAMPLE 2. Final *Allegro* of the Fantasia in F-sharp Minor for Keyboard and Violin, Wq 80
(from CPEB:CW, II/3.1)

In contrast, Bach wrote out the repeats for each section in the transposed version of the third movement. Though not adhering to the notes exactly in the first presentation of the material of both sections, he spontaneously added flourishes in a fantasia-like fashion in response to repetitions of material, possibly due to his access to the third voice of the violin part. In these written-out repeats, Bach gave his creative improvisatory style free rein, thus adding a sparkling mood to the repeated sections. These revisions in the writing also tie the *Allegro* section more closely to the overall style of the Fantasia. The repeat of the final A section in Wq 80 (m. 184) functions like a coda, different from a textbook rounded binary form, drawing on the material from the beginning of the second half of the A section (mm. 154–59) and also from the last portion of the original A section (mm. 130–39). This rearrangement of passages creates a flourishing ending to Wq 80.

Bach created stability between the two versions of the original third movement, one simple and the other ornamented, by maintaining nearly identical key and chordal harmonic structures. Bach clearly crafted the earlier third movement into one that is thoughtfully appropriate to the style of the Fantasia, and that advances a more buoyant mood in contrast to the darker *Affekt* of the F-sharp minor work. The final *Allegro* of Wq 80—an extended expression of emotion—presents a resilient resolution, perhaps, of Bach’s feelings about death.

In the manuscript version of the original third movement, Bach added two measures at the end, with indications of their placement within the movement. They appear as mm. 15 and 46 in the early version of Wq 65/45/iii (CPEB:CW, I/6.5). Bach omitted both of these measures in the Wq 80 version.

That Bach, likely in 1787, made a conscientious replacement of a newly-composed third movement for Wq 65/45/iii and noted that no one else had a copy of its original third movement, strengthens the notion that he had strong intentions about the suitable fit of this partially revised movement to conclude Wq 80, “C.P.E. Bachs Empfindungen.”

Two subtle features in the later version of the *Allegro* strengthen the *Affekt* of that portion. First, the keys Bach chose for its two main sections, F-sharp minor and A major, provide a bright resonant sound in a violin, due to the sympathetic vibrations of the open strings with many notes in those keys. His father followed this practice, as did a great many of the composers of solo violin literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In addition, the lilting *siciliano* rhythm that predominates in the original third movement engenders a feeling of peacefulness. The subtle change Bach made in this rhythmic figure—from two occurrences per measure to one occurrence per measure followed by three staccato eighth notes in both instruments—may convey a certain firmness, possibly indicating the strength of having risen beyond the anguish and grief so powerfully expressed in the *Fantasia* portion of the work. Bach made this rhythmic change eleven times in the course of this movement—not an insignificant number.

Wq 80 is a piece far ahead of its time. I have always felt the piece deeply as I heard it in my head combined with a bit of reading it on the piano (sometimes vocalizing the violin part to fill in the three trio parts). The fact that Bach gave it the title “C.P.E. Bachs Empfindungen”—along with the musical and possibly textual reference to Christoph Christian Sturm’s “Andenken an den Tod” (CPEB: CW, VI/2, p. 125; the opening line reads: “Who knows how close death is to me?”), which occurs three times in the *Fantasia* (mm. 31, 49, and 100–103, the last measure before the *Allegro*)—may point to Bach’s affinity for the mid-1770’s *Sturm und Drang* movement. The sincere beauty of the *Largo* sections moved me profoundly throughout my work on this edition. No matter what frustrations or sorrows Bach had experienced in his long life, some finding expression in this piece, the final *Allegro* provides a joyous, uplifting feeling, and a sense of profound satisfaction.

Wq 80 is one of Bach’s most venerated compositions, yet it is seldom performed. This might be because this unusual composition exceeded the instrumental forms and resources available to composers in the late eighteenth century. Wq 80 reveals that Bach was a composer far ahead of his time. What might he have expressed with the variety and nuances of sounds, melodic styles, and harmonies available to a nineteenth-century composer!

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