Organizing the complete works of C. P. E. Bach

Over the past 200 years, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach has been known primarily as one of many 'pre-Classical' composers, filling the artificial divide between his father, Johann Sebastian Bach, and Handel in the first half of the 18th century, and Haydn and Mozart in the second, who in turn led ultimately to Beethoven's synthesis (or apotheosis) around 1800. The first edition of Sir George Grove's Dictionary of music and musicians (London, 1879) summed up the Victorian view of the importance of C. P. E. Bach:

As a composer, director, teacher, and critic, his influence was very great, and he was beloved and respected both by his brother professionals and by the whole town. His goodness, pleasant manners, literary culture, and great activity in music, all combined to place him at the head of his father's sons and scholars. But when we remember that for a Bach his musical gifts were by no means extraordinary—far below those of Friedemann, for example—it is plain that he stands so high because he is recognised historically in the transition period between J. S. Bach and Haydn. In such periods a man is eminent and influential more from his general cultivation than from proficiency in any special branch. At the particular time at which E. Bach lived there were no great men. The gigantic days of Handel and Bach were exchanged for a time of peruke and powder, when the highest ideal was neatness, smoothness, and elegance. Depth, force, originality, were gone, and 'taste' was the most important word in all things ... To form a right judgment of him as a composer he must be regarded apart from his father and solely from the point of view of his own time; and when so judged it is impossible to deny that he surpassed most of his contemporaries, and is of paramount importance as a connecting link between the periods of Handel and Bach on the one hand and Haydn and Mozart on the other.2

The article, signed by 'A. M.' (Herr A. Maczewski, Concert-director at Kaiserslautern), mentions some of the recent editions of his music, including Baumgart's of the Kenner und Liebhaber collections, but it is clear that the author was not acquainted with most of the chamber music, concertos, symphonies and vocal music by C. P. E. Bach, and probably not much music by his contemporaries either.

Although Beethoven himself was a great admirer of C. P. E. Bach's music and of his keyboard treatise Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen (The true art of playing keyboard instruments) (Berlin, 1753/1762), by the time Beethoven was writing his 'Eroica' Symphony in the first years of the 19th century, the 'Berlin' or 'Hamburg' Bach's music was already disappearing from the repertory. Perhaps Johann Nikolaus Forkel's biography of J. S. Bach, which appeared in 1802, also helped to hasten the demise of his son's reputation: Forkel's Bach is placed on such a high pedestal that no other 18th-century composers could compete, but a hundred years later Albert Schweitzer still thought that C. P. E. Bach was the only potential rival to J. S. Bach.3

The Solfeggio in C minor (Wq.117/2) is still one of the few pieces by C. P. E. Bach that is well known, at least by piano students. For many years, this stormy exercise was reprinted in numerous keyboard anthologies and is now available in arrangements in a variety of styles, from jazz to the Swingle Singers.4

This situation should be remedied now by the first complete critical edition of his music, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works (hereafter CPEB: CW), currently in preparation by The Packard Humanities Institute, in cooperation with the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Harvard University. This article deals with a few specific challenges in organizing the Edition and some discoveries we have made in the past 15 years of operation.5

confers at Harvard University in 1998 and 1999, the three general editors—Darrell M. Berg (series I); Peter Wollny (series II, III, VII); and Ulrich Leisinger (series IV, V, VI)—and Christoph Wolff made a formal proposal, and the project was approved by The Packard Humanities Institute in the spring of 1999. The original plan originally projected more than 70 volumes and hoped to finish by 2014, the 300th anniversary of the composer. In the summer of 1999, however, Christoph Wolff and associates from the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute recovered the lost Sing-Akademie archive in Kiev (see illus.1 for an example). This resulted in an additional 30 volumes being added to the Edition, mainly vocal music from Hamburg, including all 21 Passions, as well as many other works thought to have been lost.6

Once the Sing-Akademie archive was returned to Berlin at the end of 2001, we were able to change the title of the edition to ‘Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works’. Now we are projecting 115–20 volumes in total, and are on course to finish in about five more years. (See Appendix for the current organization of CPEB:CW.)

The Edition is organized in eight series, and each series is divided into volumes of related repertoires. Some of the volumes are further subdivided between ‘music from prints’ and ‘music from manuscripts’ (for example, vols.1/5 and 1/6, also 111/7 and 111/9). Our basic plan is to publish the music C. P. E. Bach himself published first within each series or volume. Therefore, series I begins with the ‘Prussian’ and ‘Württemberg’ Sonatas (Wq.48 and 49 in 1/1); then the Sonatas with Varied Reprises (Wq.50, 51, 52 in 1/2); the Probestücke, Damen and Leichte Sonatas (Wq.63, 53, 54 in 1/3); and in volume 4, the Kenner und Liebhaber collections (Wq.55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, vol.1/4). Otherwise, we could have published all the solo keyboard works, chamber music and so on by genre in chronological order, but this would have meant that historical sets would have been scattered among various volumes or fascicles. And while we publish the works within each series or volume in chronological order according to their original date of composition, some of the works survive only in later revisions. Many series conclude with a volume containing an assortment of ‘odd’ works that do not fall into the general categories. For instance, Bach wrote a group of three quartets for keyboard, flute and viola (Wq.93–5), but since these only amount to 40 or so pages of music, they are included with other chamber music for other combinations of instruments in 11/5.

In series II we had a choice as to how to publish the trios. There are almost four dozen works in the ‘Trii’ section in Bach’s estate catalogue,7 listed in chronological order. After much deliberation, the Editorial Board decided to organize the volumes by scoring, so that the works are grouped as follows: ‘trio sonatas’ in 11/2, for works with two (mostly treble) instruments plus bass; ‘keyboard trios’ in 11/3, for works for keyboard plus one solo instrument; and ‘accompaniment sonatas’ in 11/4, for keyboard plus violin and violoncello. This gives performers better access to related repertory, though it

1 Instruction sheet near the end of the Dank-Hymne der Freundschaft, h824e, in lieu of writing out verses 2–9 of the final movement. Transcribed in CPEB:CW, v/5.1, p.143 (courtesy Sing-Akademie zu Berlin)
means that the *Zwey Trio* of Wq.161 (illus.2) are split between two fascicles (II/2.1 and II/2.2). It was impossible to find perfect solutions for works like the sonata for keyboard and viola da gamba, Wq.88, which is published in II/3.1 with works for keyboard and violin.

The flute, oboe and cello concertos are published separately in III/4–6, even though all of them either derive from or are related to keyboard versions in III/9. The symphonies, concertos and sonatinas are all numbered in Bach's estate catalogue, but there is no tradition of using these numbers, as there is in referring to Beethoven's nine symphonies and five piano concertos, which also have opus numbers. In addition to a set of four symphonies Wq.183 and six concertos Wq.43, C. P. E. Bach published only one symphony (Wq.177), three concertos (Wq.11, 14, 25) and three sonatinas (Wq.106, 107, 108) separately during his lifetime. He later added horns, flutes, and oboes to the Symphony in E minor, which Wotquenne labelled Wq.178, and this version is published in III/1. The three sonatinas were revised with varied reprises for the keyboard part as Wq.101, 104, 105, respectively; these versions are published with the original print versions in III/11. It is a question whether Bach favoured any of these printed works over others in each genre; more likely, he would have been happy to publish other symphonies and concertos, if there had been a larger market for them.

Some of the vocal music, especially works like *Klopstocks Morgengesang am Schöpfungsfeste* (Wq.239), is more difficult to classify. Eugene Helm lists the *Morgengesang* with the 'major choral works' (H779), but its scoring is limited to strings and flutes, and it is only about twelve minutes long. We ultimately decided to publish it in vi/4, along with the arias and chamber cantatas, but it could have been published with the miscellaneous sacred works in v/6. The double-choir *Heilig* (Wq.217) is used as a movement in several different works, but since it was always kept separate in Bach's library with a written cue for its insertion (illus.3), the Edition is publishing the chorus just once (in v/6.1) and indicating where it belongs in other works.9

The reuse of arias and choruses poses some special challenges, depending on the degree the music was reworked. Two examples will illustrate the problems. The aria Wq.212 with the text 'Sing ihm voll Rührung, o Zion' was originally written in 1771 for the *Einführungsmusik Klefeker, h821b*, with a different text, 'Sei fromm, mein Sohn, und sanft!' (see CPEB:CW, v/3.1). Bach made minor revisions to the melody to accommodate the text 'Sing ihm voll Rührung, o Zion' as a movement for a Michaelmas cantata, *Siehe! Ich begehre deiner Befehler* (Wq.247), in 1775 (CPEB:CW, v/2.4, illus.4).10 So the aria is published in the two respective cantatas, but it is not included separately in the volume of arias and chamber cantatas (CPEB:CW, v/4). The chorus 'Wer ist so würdig als du' (Wq.222), is a different
case. The work survives in an autograph score (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P340; dated Hamburg, 1774 in NV 1790, p.62) with a section for tenor solo followed by a da capo repeat of the chorus. But when Bach used this chorus as a movement in his Easter cantata, *Nun danket alle Gott* (Wq.241, performed in 1780 and 1783), he omitted the tenor solo section. So in addition to the version published in the cantata Wq.241 (in v/2.1), the original version of the chorus Wq.222 is published in the volume of miscellaneous sacred works (in v/6.1).

The most significant additional—and virtually unknown—music comes from the archive of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin. In the initial plan for the Edition, we could have published only the following cantatas and Passions, which were known from other extant sources outside the Sing-Akademie:

1. The last St Matthew Passion (1789), which survives in a complete Ms. score in Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde; only the librettos and individual movements of other Passions were available."
2. Several Easter, Michaelmas and Christmas cantatas, Wq.241–9. Ms. scores of which are found in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn Archiv (D-B), and Brussels, Conservatoire Royal de
Copyist’s score of an aria ‘Sing ihm, voll Rührung, o Zion’ from the Michaelis cantata, Siehe! Ich begehre deiner Befehle, Wq.247, with C. P. E. Bach’s insertion of the original text ‘Sei fromm, mein Sohn, und sanft!’ from the Einführungsmusik Klefeker, H821b. See commentary to CPEB: CW, v/3.1 and v/2.4 (courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Mus. ms. Bach p349)
Musique, Bibliothèque / Koninklijk Conservatorium, Bibliotheek (see below).

3. Five of the 15 installation cantatas, H821c, H81f, H81g, H81l, H81m; Ms. scores in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (see Einführungsmusiken in CPEB:CW, v/3.1–3.5).

4. Three of the four Bürgercapitainsmusiken, H822a, H82b, H82d (H822c is lost); Ms. scores in Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, and Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Musikabteilung (see CPEB: CW, v/4).

5. A few miscellaneous cantatas identified by Rachel W. Wade and others.12

With the material in the Sing-Akademie archives, which includes some autograph scores and much of Bach’s original performing parts, we have virtually all the works listed as ‘lost’ in the section ‘Choral Works for Special Occasions’ in Helm’s catalogue.13

The on-going work of editors and the Bach-Repertorium has led to additional discoveries. Peter Wollny identified the autograph score of an otherwise unknown cantata Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Stande, written by the young C. P. E. Bach before he left Leipzig for the university at Frankfurt an der Oder.14 Annette Richards was able to reconstruct about three-quarters of C. P. E. Bach’s portrait collection (see CPEB: CW, v/11/4).15 And recently a short ‘Amen’ (Wq.210) for four-part choir has been found in Hamburg (CPEB: CW, v/6.1). More importantly for understanding Bach’s workshop during his tenure as music director in Hamburg, many of the Vorlagen (previous versions) of arias, duets and choruses in his church music have now been identified. Out of necessity, Bach became an editor and arranger of church music to prepare the required cantatas and Passions for the many Hamburg services he conducted while music director. Carl Friedrich Zelter, the long-time director of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin and Felix Mendelssohn’s teacher, recognized the problem in a long note of 1825 regarding C. P. E. Bach’s first St Matthew Passion, H782:

One can deduce that he was not entirely in his element in vocal music by the fact that the music chosen by him for the Hamburg churches was often patched together, with new texts adapted for different occasions, or, indeed, even woven together with other composers’ works. The latter case is particularly evident in this manuscript [of the 1769 Passion], in which all of the chorales and turba choruses are borrowed from Sebastian Bach’s St. Matthew Passion.

Now, that he had little desire to indulge in the custom of setting biblical texts or turba choruses can be assumed, but I possess many church pieces by him which contain choruses or arias by Homilius, Georg Benda and others, only in order to perform a particular piece for a particular Sunday without much effort!16

Since the Edition is publishing repertories that contain music mostly borrowed from other composers, especially Georg Benda, Gottfried August Homilius, Anton Schweitzer and the Graun brothers, we might call it ‘The Complete Works of C. P. E. Bach Plus’.

The Edition is still in the process of sorting out the repertory of Quartalstücke (cantatas performed for the four principal feast-days or seasons—Easter, Pentecost, Michaelmas and Christmas) and other miscellaneous sacred cantatas that C. P. E. Bach adapted and arranged for other Sundays of the church year. Indeed, it is often difficult to determine how much music he contributed to these pieces, especially when we do not have the manuscript copy of what was in Bach’s library. A few of these works are listed in NV 1790, including the Easter cantatas Gott hat den Herrn auferwecket (Wq.244), Jauchzet, frohlocket (Wq.242), Nun danket alle Gott (Wq.241) and Anbetung dem Erbarmer (Wq.243); the Michaelmas cantatas Den Engeln gleich (Wq.248), Ich will den Namen des Herrn preisen (Wq.245), Siehe! Ich begehre deiner Befehle! (Wq.247) and Der Frevel mag die Wahrheit schmähn (Wq.246); and the Christmas cantata Auf, schicke dich (Wq.249). But several other Quartalstücke have been identified and will be published in CPEB: CW, v/2, including the Easter cantatas Sing, Volk der Christen and Ist Christus nicht auferstanden (H808) and Er ist nicht mehr (by Benda); the Pentecost cantatas Herr, lehr uns tun (H817), Lasset uns ablegen die Werk der Finsternis (by W. F. Bach) and Ihr waret weiland Finsternis (by Homilius); the Michaelmas cantatas Es erhub sich ein Streit (BWV19), Wie wird und werden und Wenn Christus seine Kirche schützt (both by J. C. F. Bach); and the Christmas cantatas Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe (H811), Gott steigt herab (by Benda) and Kommt, Christen, feiert dieses Fest (by C. H. Graun). Several other cantatas will be published in CPEB: CW, v/6, including Der Gerechte (H818), Herr, deine Augen sehen nach dem Glauben (BWV102), In deinem Schmuck
the transition from Baroque to Classical; his works have become historical testimony to the mannerisms of concert programs as exotic appetizers. Emanuel’s career made possible, his music is strange to contemporary ears. But gusts of fashion blow unpredictably, and though we have worked on C. P. E. Bach’s music these past few years have grown to appreciate the complexity of the composer, his attention to detail but also his economy in adapting, reusing and revising his own music as well as that of others. Even when he borrowed other music, he often spent considerable effort refining and improving the music in subtle ways.

In 1981, reviewing some recent recordings of the composer, Edward Rothstein predicted a revival in interest in C. P. E. Bach’s music:

But gusts of fashion blow unpredictably, and though we are thoroughly at home in the classical style which C. P. E. made possible, his music is strange to contemporary ears. The works are scarcely recorded; they appear on concert programs as exotic appetizers. Emanuel’s career has become historical testimony to the mannerism of the transition from Baroque to Classical; his works are eccentric exclamations whose quirkiness may confuse rather than convince.9

Susan Wollenberg, writing a few years later, in the 200th anniversary year of his death in 1988, observed that ‘C. P. E. Bach was in his own day, and has been since, a not uncontroversial figure’. After reviewing some of the recent scholarly literature, she concluded:

It is a tribute to the intellectually challenging and provocative nature of Bach’s work that when it is removed from the grip of those traditional assessments mentioned, there remains not less, but more, in the work that invites attention, interest and admiration.90

Ultimately, our challenge is to find a place for C. P. E. Bach in music history, and revive his reputation as one of the most important composers of the 18th century. We do not have to try to knock J. S. Bach or Handel off their pedestals, or view C. P. E. Bach only as a precursor to Haydn and Beethoven. What has been lacking of course is a Gesamtausgabe. Our undertaking will give scholars and performers comprehensive access to a body of work spanning the life of a composer who was active from the 1730s to the 1780s. No longer will scholars have to rely solely on tracking down 18th-century material or having to take ‘honorable shortcuts’93 to understand the music of one of the major composers of the 18th century. C. P. E. Bach’s solo keyboard music and concertos, along with his chamber music, symphonies and songs, are already well represented on recordings and in concert halls. A few important works like the Magnificat are also known, but now it is possible for conductors to choose between the early Leipzig/Berlin version and the later revision for Hamburg (see CPEB: CW, v/1.1–1.2). When more of his vocal music is known—especially the oratorios, the double-choir Heilig and the Morgengesang—C. P. E. Bach should gain the foothold in the canon that he deserves.
Appendix. Organization of CPEB:CW
(December 2013)

I. Keyboard Music (18 vols.)
1. ‘Prussian’ and ‘Württemberg’ Sonatas
2. Sonatas with Varied Reprises
3. Probestücke. Leichte and Damen Sonatas
4. 1–2 Kenner und Liebhaber Collections
5. 1–2 Miscellaneous Sonatas from Prints
6. 1–5 Sonatas from Manuscript Sources
7. Variations
8. 1–2 Miscellaneous Keyboard Sources
9. Organ Works
10. 1–2 Arrangements of Orchestral Works

II. Chamber Music (7 vols.)
1. Solo Sonatas
2. 1–2 Trio Sonatas
3. 1–2 Keyboard Trios
4. Accompanied Sonatas
5. Quartets and Miscellaneous Chamber Music

III. Orchestral Music (29 vols.)
1. Berlin Symphonies
2. Six Symphonies for Baron van Swieten
3. Orchester-Sinfonien mit zwölf obligaten Stimmen
4. 1–2 Flute Concertos
5. Oboe Concertos
6. Violoncello Concertos
7. Keyboard Concertos from Prints
8. Sei concerti per il cembalo concertato
9. 1–15 Keyboard Concertos from Manuscript Sources
10. Concertos for Two Keyboards
11. Keyboard Sonatinas from Prints
12. 1–2 Keyboard Sonatinas from Manuscript Sources
13. Sonatinas for Two Keyboards

IV. Oratorios and Passions (24 vols.)
1. Die Israeliten in der Wüste
2. Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu
3. Passions-Cantate
4. 1–6 Passions according to St Matthew
5. 1–5 Passions according to St Mark
6. 1–5 Passions according to St Luke
7. 1–5 Passions according to St John

V. Choral Music (20 vols.)
1. 1–2 Magnificat
2. 1–6 Quartalstücke
3. 1–5 Einführungsmusiken
4. Bürgercapitainsmusiken
5. 1–2 Works for Special Occasions
6. 1–4 Miscellaneous Sacred Works

VI. Songs and Vocal Chamber Music (4 vols.)
1. Gellert Songs
2. Cramer and Sturm Songs
3. Miscellaneous Songs
4. Arias and Chamber Cantatas

VII. Theoretical Works (3 vols.)
1. Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen I
2. Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen II
3. Commentary to the Versuch

VIII. Supplement (10 vols.)
1. Miscellanea Musica
2. The Polyhymnia Portfolio
3. 1–3 Librettos
4. 1–2 Portrait Collection
5. Historical Catalogues
6. Sources and Scribes
7. Indices

Total estimated number of volumes: 115. Detailed contents of individual volumes, plus the introductions of published volumes and librettos for vocal works, can be found at www.cpebach.org. Many performing parts are available free at www.cpebach.org/parts-index.html.


3 Forkel’s biography, Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke (Leipzig, 1802), was based in part on extensive correspondence with both Wilhelm Friedemann and C. P. E. Bach. Albert Schweitzer’s biography was published in French in 1905, in German in 1908 and in English
in 191. According to Schweitzer, 'In the eyes of the public and the critics of the end of the eighteenth century the great composer of the Bach family was Emanuel. No one stood so much in the way of his father's fame as he' (i, p.229).

4 For more information on these arrangements see my introduction to the anthology of The Essential C. P. E. Bach (Los Altos, CA, 2014), pp.xx–xxi.


7 Verzeichnis des musikalischen Nachlasses des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, bestehend (Hamburg, 1790), pp.66–42; hereafter abbreviated NV 1790.


10 For a brief discussion of this aria, see P. Cornelson, 'An aria’s journey: C. P. E. Bach’s Sing ihm voll Rührung, ozion’ (Wq.42:Wq.212), Harvard Library Bulletin, xxxiv/5 (2013), pp.70–80.


12 R. W. Wade, 'Newly found works of C. P. E. Bach', Early Music, xvi/4 (1988), pp.23–32; identified a cantata In deinem Schmuck, Wq.888, that was not listed in NV 1790; U. Leisinger, 'Carl Philipp Emanuel Bachs verschollene geglaubte Trauungskantate 182:44 im Kontext des Bearbeitungs- und Parodieverfahrens, Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (1999), pp.9–31; and R. L. Sanders, 'Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and liturgical music at the Hamburg principal churches from 1768 to 1788' (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001), pp.266–313, which includes a list of cantatas that were in Bach's music library.

13 See Helm, Thematic catalogue, pp.178–223, items 1782–824f. Most of the incipits and information on the 'lost' works are based on H. Miesner, Philipp Emanuel Bach in Hamburg. Beiträge zu seiner Biographie und zur Musikgeschichte seiner Zeit (Leipzig, 1939); Miesner was one of the few scholars to study the Sing-Akademie archive before World War II. For a catalogue of the newly recovered Bach sources, see W. Enßlin, Die Bach-Quellen der Sing-Akademie zu Berlin. Katalog 2 vols., Leipzig Beiträge zur Bach-Forschung 8 (Hildesheim, 2006).

14 P. Wollny, 'Zwei Bach-Funde in Mügeln, C. P. E. Bach, Picander und die Leipzig Kirchenmusik in den 1730er Jahren, Bach-Jahrbuch (2010), pp.111–51; his edition of the cantata is published in CPEB:CW, v/5,2 and the autograph score from the parish archives of St Johann in Mügeln (Saxon) is published in a facsimile supplement.

15 See also her comprehensive article 'Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, portraits, and the physiognomy of music history', Journal of the American Musicalological Society, lvi (2013), pp.337–96.


19 E. Rothstein, 'The rediscovery of C. P. E. Bach', The New York Times (4 January 1981). Under review were recordings by Bob van Asperen (the Prussian and Württemberg Sonatas), Herbert Tachezi (the complete organ works), Trevor Pinnock with The English Concert and Christopher Hogwood with the Academy of Ancient Music (discs including the Wq.182 symphonies), and Raymond Leppard with the English Chamber Orchestra (the Wq.183 symphonies).


Paul Corneilson

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Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works, an editorial and publishing project of The Packard Humanities Institute, began planning the critical edition in the late 1990s and published its first volumes in 2005. One of the principal problems of the Edition is how to organize more than a thousand works, ranging from short keyboard pieces and songs to major oratorios, cantatas and Passions. C. P. E. Bach, like most of his contemporaries, frequently borrowed music from himself or other composers and also revised his works for different media. The contents of volumes have changed as new discoveries are made, especially the recovery of the Sing-Akademie archive, which was inaccessible from 1943 until 1999.

Keywords: C. P. E. Bach; Complete Works; editing; Berlin; Hamburg; Sing-Akademie