

The Sons of Bach

Symphonies Concertos

Chamber Music

LINER NOTES

C.P.E. BACH: HAMBURG SYMPHONIES (CD1)

Of all Johann Sebastian Bach's sons, Carl Philipp Emanuel is the one who enjoys the greatest renown. Godson of the great Telemann, he studied law first at the University of Leipzig then at Frankfurt an der Oder, while at the same time assisting his father. His career took a new direction in 1738 when the Prussian crown prince Frederick offered him a post as harpsichordist to the royal chamber. While his royal employer, remembered by posterity as the 'flautist king', may not have shown him a financial generosity entirely in keeping with his musical talent, he did, on the other hand, provide an opportunity for Bach to spend nearly thirty years in a stimulating musical environment, in the company of such colleagues as Johann Joachim Quantz, Georg and Franz Benda, and Johann Gottlieb and Carl Heinrich Graun. These were the leading figures of the Berlin School, which at the time, enjoyed an artistic reputation on a par with the schools of Vienna and Mannheim (and all three were connected with 'Enlightenment' courts).

His father came to visit him twice in Berlin, notably in 1747, when the encounter between the elderly Bach and Frederick the Great led to the creation of *The Musical Offering*. When the arts suffered in the wake of the Seven Years' War of 1756–1763, Carl Philipp left Berlin and the Prussian court to apply for the post of music director and Kantor in Hamburg, which fell vacant on the death of Telemann in 1767. Bach obtained the post, and held it until his death in 1788, taking responsibility for all musical activities in the city and its five churches. With every important occasion in the social life of the city (births, deaths, visits by important personages and clerics taking up their duties) giving rise to a new commission, the workload was demanding.

Author of a famous treatise summing up all his experience as a harpsichordist and composer (*Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*), Bach tackled almost every musical genre, with the exception of opera, during his long career. But it was, of course, for the harpsichord that he composed most, producing sonatas, solo pieces, fantasias, minuets and polonaises, as well as around 50 concertos and sonatinas. In contrast, he paid less attention to the symphony, and composed a total of 18 works – a small number compared with the average for the period (107 for Haydn, around 40 for Mozart and around 50, including *symphonies concertantes*, for his half-brother Johann Christian). Of these 18 symphonies, eight saw the light of day during the composer's period in Berlin: they are not without interest, but with the exception of the Symphony in E minor, Wq177/78 (H652–653), they do not always have the same degree of inspiration as the keyboard pieces.

The ten works that date from the composer's time in Hamburg are on a quite different level. They divide into two groups: six symphonies for strings, Wq182 (H657–662), and the four symphonies *mit zwölf obligaten Stimmen* – with wind instruments – Wq183 (H663–666) recorded here. The six symphonies for strings, Wq182 of 1773 were written in response to a commission from the ambassador and patron of the arts Baron van Swieten, and they already reveal a profoundly original voice. The four symphonies, Wq183, composed in 1775–76, go even further.

To take the orchestration first, the basic strings and continuo are supplemented by two flutes, two oboes, two horns and bassoon, and these wind instruments are used almost constantly throughout the different movements. Indeed, flutes, oboes and bassoon take on a solo role at many points in all twelve movements: the first movement of the Symphony in E flat major, Wq183/2 can be read as a kind of *symphonie concertante* for two flutes, two oboes and orchestra, given the way the four wind instruments come to the fore either in pairs or grouped together. Bach regularly explores unusual instrumental combinations, as in the slow movement of the Symphony in D major, Wq183/1, in effect a quintet for two flutes, viola, cello and double bass, where the violins are restricted to highly discreet *pizzicatos*, or the equivalent movement in the Symphony in F major, Wq183/3, where, in a strikingly modern touch, the focus is on the violas and basses.

In structural terms, while the four symphonies follow the three-movement pattern derived from the Baroque *sinfonia*, when in southern Germany and Austria the four-movement model, with a minuet coming between the slow movement and finale was already established, the passage from one movement to the next is handled with great originality in each. For example, all the opening movements end, unusually, by linking directly – almost melting – into the subsequent movement by way of subtle harmonic transitions.

It is in terms of harmony, lastly, that all the hallmarks of Carl Philipp Emanuel come to the fore, intensified by the sonority and possibilities of a large orchestra. Only the Hamburg Bach would have dared to open a symphony (Wq183/1) – and the set as a whole – with one note (D) stressed almost obsessively by the first violins, creating a quite astonishing effect of rhythmic acceleration. The opening motif and the vast crescendo in the first movement of the Symphony, Wq183/3 are also very striking, as are the finale of the Symphony, Wq183/2 with its chaconne effect, and the beginning of the Symphony Wq183/4, where the tempo is driven almost to breaking point and there is much use of hemiola effects. Taken as a whole, the four symphonies also give an impression of urgency, and of the feverish agitation typical of the composer and of *Sturm und Drang* in the 1770s in general. Not only are eight of the twelve movements fast, but Bach also gives almost all of them (very) quick tempo indications: *Allegro assai*, *Allegro di molto*, *Presto*, etc. Even when he asks for a more supple, less breathless tempo (such as the final *Allegretto* of the Symphony Wq183/2), he manages to subject the listener to a continuous outpouring of very short notes.

Bach's own words provide a fitting conclusion: 'Last year I wrote four grand symphonies for orchestra with twelve obligato parts. It is the greatest thing I have done in this genre. Modesty prevents me from making further comment.' The words of someone who attended one of the first rehearsals under the composer's direction are also apposite: 'Forty of our Hamburg musicians and several amateurs performed these incomparable symphonies, unique in their genre, with such precision and enthusiasm that Herr Bach thought it right to praise their talents publicly, the listeners present demonstrating their satisfaction in the most lively manner possible'.

The Harpsichord Concerto in C minor, Wq43/4 is one of a series of six published in Hamburg in 1772 under the title *Sei concerti per il cembalo concertato*. The orchestra here consists of strings alone, reinforced in the fast movements by two horns, and in the slow movements by two flutes. These works were principally intended for amateur players, and their publication by subscription was preceded by articles stressing the fact that they were less demanding than C.P.E. Bach's previous concertos, and would have cadenzas provided by the composer himself. Here we find the same stylistic and emotional world as in the four symphonies, with C.P.E. Bach's characteristic mixture of passion – *Sturm und Drang* – and sensitivity – *Empfindsamkeit*. As well as the use of the highly introspective key of C minor, there are several aspects that distinguish this particular work from the other concertos in the series: it is in four movements (instead of the expected three) that follow one another without a break, and the last is a varied reprise of the first. Once again, the Hamburg Bach is opening a window on to the future.

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C.P.E. BACH: BERLIN SYMPHONIES (CD2)

In all likelihood, the nine symphonies which Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach wrote in Berlin were performed by various private musical associations in the Prussian capital. The "Musikübende Gesellschaft", founded in 1749, was for ever intent on "enlarging the common stock of... the latest and most exquisite overtures, symphonies and trios" with a view to performing them in public. In those days, audiences tended to judge a new symphony by the degree of novelty the discerned in it. The widespread acclaim which Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach won all over Europe was due in large measure to his originality and wealth of invention. At the same time, his works contain a number of conventional features as well as stereotyped and tentative formulas. But in the words of LaRue, "once a Bach symphony has got under way in the usual fashion, some intriguing detail may 'crop up' any moment: a forbidden dissonance, a mighty thunderclap, a headlong rush downwards, an abrupt change of tempo or a surprising modulation?"

The Symphony in C major Wq174/H649, dating from 1755, appears somewhat inchoate throughout, and yet the listener is carried away by its fiery sweep. Sudden contrasts of intensity and startling arpeggio figures make it clear that C.P.E. Bach's music does not call for a bland, pleasing style of music-making but for an interpretation which explores the whole gamut of expression from ardent passion to deep inwardness. The Andante, laid out along the lines of an *arioso*, opens with plain melodic figures in thirds and sixths and then takes on an almost rapturous quality before ending on a more tranquil note. As contemporary music critics saw it, "all fast movements must be brisk, novel and flowing". The final Allegro, characterized by forward momentum on a subdued scale, provides some further surprises, including the use of the main subject in the tonic minor.

The Symphony in F major Wq175/H650, likewise composed in 1755, has also survived as a version for keyboard in the collection *Raccolta delle migliori Sinfonie* (1761) which was widely used at the time. Bach takes advantage of the contrast between the motives making up the principal subject to derive the momentum which he needs for melodic development. Employing something like a building block method, he often sets episodes of heterogeneous thematic design against each other. In this way he adheres to the aesthetic principle that emotions need to change all the time in order to keep the listener in a permanent state of suspense. The slow movement in F minor is suffused with an elegiac mood. The song-like main subject, presented in gentle strains, is matched in expression by a tender subsidiary figure (in A flat major). The only symphonic movement which Bach designated "Tempo di Minuetto" is, of course, dance-like in

character and features minuet-like sections alternating with trio episodes.

The operatic composer Johann Adolf Hasse described the Symphony in E minor Wq178/H653 as the best he had ever heard. Its structure attests to Bach's mastery of thematic exposition. The two mutually complementary sub-phrases (2+2 bars + continuation) are kept in a subtly contrived and carefully balanced state of rhythmic tension. Intoned vigorously in unison, the principal theme immediately mobilizes all energies for a first large-scale climax. The Andante moderato is dominated by the melodic line. Bach employs the art of embellishment to achieve the greatest possible effect. A rocking song-like episode decorated with trills gives rise to demisemiquaver motives. A final movement of modest proportions emphasizes the dance element, but contains more lyrical pages as well.

The opening Prestissimo of the Symphony in E flat major Wq179/H654 is very striking indeed, with signal-like arpeggio figures rushing upwards towards a top note and then rapidly descending over two octaves. These proceedings are repeated on the dominant in the tonic minor. After a brief respite, figurative passage work takes over again. Lack of originality is offset by freshness of invention. The Larghetto shows Bach the master of expression at his best. Modelling each individual note, he creates a finely graduated and subtly accentuated melodic line that flows gently up and down. The main theme of the Presto evokes associations with a hunting horn. Without leaving this thematic domain, Bach comes up with all manner of melodic permutations while keeping the rhythmic design unchanged.

The Symphony in F major Wq181/H656, dating from 1762, is the last of Bach's Berlin symphonies. A restless triplet motive endows the opening Allegro with an agitated and even tempestuous character. By introducing an element of peaceful repose for contrast, the composer underlines the novel feature of this music - its capacity to depict the struggle of human emotions within a symphonic movement. The Andante is in a sombre mood. Over a sustained pedal point in the bass, we hear a poignant song in the upper part which does not generate much momentum but persistently reverts to the tonic. In the middle section, the composer takes us to the ethereal heights of A flat major. The Allegro assai provides evidence of the finesse which the composer brings even to the more light-hearted final movements. When the main subject loses vigour after a series of stormy escapades, shattering chords set the scene for concise motives, scales and other sequences in ever-changing constellations - musical material that was used times without number in early classical symphonies, but which in the hands of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach assumed the capacity to fascinate audiences past and present.

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C.P.E. BACH: FLUTE CONCERTOS (CD3)

'It would be the highest injustice to deny, that Berlin has long had, and still has, a great number of *individuals* among the musical professors, whose abilities are great and striking... Of all the musicians which have been in the service of Prussia, for more than thirty years, Carl P.E. Bach, and Francis Benda, have, perhaps, been the only two, who dared to have a style of their own; the rest are imitators; even Quantz and Graun, who have been so much imitated, formed themselves upon the works of Vinci and Vivaldi...'

This is how the English travelling musical historian Charles Burney judged the court of Frederick the Great; a judgement, however, not shared by this enlightened despot, as Burney relates further on: 'Upon the whole, my expectations from Berlin were not quite answered, as I did not find that the style of composition, or

manner of execution, to which his Prussian majesty has attached himself, fulfilled my ideas of perfection. Here, as elsewhere, I speak according to my own feelings; however, it would be presumption in me to oppose my single judgement to that of so enlightened a prince; if luckily, mine were not the opinion of the greatest part of Europe; for, should it be allowed, that his Prussian majesty has fixed upon the Augustan age of music, it does not appear that he has placed his favour upon the best composers of that age. Vinci, Pergolese, Leo, Feo, Handel and many others, who flourished in the best times of Graun and Quantz, I think superior to them in taste and genius...'

Frederick the Great's favourite composer was undoubtedly Johann Joachim Quantz, the court's flute master who through the years became a close personal friend of the monarch. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Sebastian's second son from his marriage to Maria Barbara and employed as court harpsichordist, was held in much lower esteem by Frederick. This is clear from the court musicians' payroll. In 1744 and 1745 Bach earned 300 Thaler, Benda received 800 Thaler and Quantz and Graun were each paid no less than 2000 Thaler. Quantz's works were frequently performed but Bach's compositions were hardly ever placed on the music stands. The truth is that Bach did very little to win the monarch's favour. Having enjoyed a university education, he did not wish to be considered equal to ordinary footmen. He was frequently seen in intellectual circles, and his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen* (1753) was rapidly becoming the standard book on music theory and ethics. As an accompanist, Bach was the only court musician not to make concessions to the restrictions of Frederick the Great's flute-playing. He refused to adapt to lapses in tempo or feeble intonation.

After the Seven Years' War ended in 1763, cultural life in Berlin slowly went back to normal, but not for the court musicians. Frederick's interest in music had lessened considerably. The chamber concerts at Sans Souci, nightly events before the war, were only held sporadically. However, bourgeois musical life blossomed, as Friedrich Nicolai, publisher of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, writes: During the winter season, public concerts are organised by subscription by a number of musical amateurs [...] There are many private concerts, by usually well-manned orchestras: Apart from the Royal Band and the various bands of the Princess of the Royal House, there are still a number of independent musicians and many connoisseurs of music in Berlin.'

Among those good musicians were oboists Joachim Wilhelm Döbbert and Johann Christian Jacobi. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach might well have composed his two oboe concertos WQ 164 and 165 (included here in an arrangement for flute) for either of these musicians. Both concertos were created in 1765 in a period in which the composer felt an ever-increasing urge to leave Frederick the Great's employment, which is apparent from his correspondence with his godfather, Georg Philipp Telemann. The first movement of the Concerto in B flat shows characteristics of the so-called 'galant' style, but the abrupt mood changes in the first movement of the Concerto in E flat herald *Sturm und Drang*, a musical style not particularly favoured by Frederick the Great. After Telemann died in 1767, Bach went to great lengths to succeed him as cantor in Hamburg, but Frederick was not prepared to let his harpsichordist go just like that. Only after repeated petitions and feigned attacks of illness did the monarch agree to release him from employment. His sister, Anna Amalia, then appointed Bach 'Kapellmeister von Haus aus' and on 19 April, 1768, he began his work as cantor in Hamburg. The Flute Concerto in D minor, of which a harpsichord version is extant, as with the oboe concertos, might have been created for Frederick the Great around 1747. However, a manuscript of this Flute Concerto, albeit not in Bach's writing, exists in the library of Princess Anna Amalia, which means the work may have been written for her. The first movement of this concerto shows the

influence of Johann Sebastian Bach, especially in the orchestral introduction, whereas the third movement has real *Sturm und Drang* characteristics. Moreover, more than his contemporaries Bach has the flute performing a dialogue with the orchestra, making this concerto a prime example of the stylistic link he formed between the Baroque and the Classical solo concerto.

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C.P.E. BACH: ORGAN CONCERTOS (CD4)

"Crafted" or "natural" - this short formula typifies the situation of many composers and their music around the year 1750. The Former technique was regarded with scepticism, and the desire to compose "naturally" was not seldom accompanied by a rigorous condemnation of exponents of the "scholarly way of writing", as is shown by Scheibe's harsh criticism of Johann Sebastian Bach's music.

A campaign was clearly being conducted against the use of counterpoint, and organ music remained a favoured preserve of this compositional method. Meanwhile, advocates of the "scholarly way of writing" searched for ways to justify their convictions. But they did so - and this significant - by clothing the old technique in new terminology, as it were. This explains the great many references in treatises to the desirability of writing "stirring" and "natural" sounding fugues.

In the 18th century, particularly in its second half, very basic changes in musical life and far-reaching shifts in style occurred, having a lasting effect also on the area of organ music. Homophonic structures and an emphasis on melody prevailed, and the sonata, string quartet and symphony became the leading genres of the day. The fortepiano began its victorious advance, bringing to an end the earlier predominance of the harpsichord and the organ.

Organ music and organ performance were a distance removed from this mainstream of music history. In his "Musical Almanac for Germany of the Year 1784" the German music theoretician Johann Nikolaus Forkel found only a few performers worthy of mention in the list of "presently living" organists. Included, along with Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, were Hassler in Erfurt, Homilius in Dresden, Yogier in Mannheim and a few others. Forkel believed that this decline was the result of a musical thinking dominated by the piano and piano technique. "During the baroque era of polyphony the organ was of course the ideal instrument for tracing out the lines of music. The newly dawning age has different stylistic principles and different ideals of sound. With their rigid tone, wind instruments cannot adequately convey the flow of songlike melody, melodic and thematic contrasts, the multitude of musical subjects, thematic and dynamic transitions, dynamic changeableness and plurality of timbres, least of all the organ, the amalgamation of wind instruments .."(Frotscher).

The organ music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach is to be viewed against this music-, historical and stylistic background. Research has not yet indicated conclusively whether Bach's two organ concertos can be associated with the name of Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia and her twenty-two register organ by Johann Peter Migend. The dates of composition of the two works, 1755 and 1759, seem to argue in favour of this thesis, as does the fact that the concertos were written for an organ with two manuals. Speaking against such a connection, on the other hand, is the fact that not a single copy of these compositions was to be found in the Amalia Library's comprehensive music collection, even though this collection included a number of other concertos by Bach. A note written by a contemporary on a copy of the Sonata for Organ, Wq70.6, - it is known that the sonatas, six all told, were written for Anna Amalia - indicates that the sister of Frederick II was not able to "play the pedal or difficult passages".

The two organ concertos, however, are technically quite challenging.

Bach's approach to the organ is that of a composer for keyboards in general, as is indicated by his note that the concertos can be played alternately "per l'organo overo il cembale concettato" The treatment of melodies, thematic development even the overall structure and performance technique demonstrate a sensitivity to the special characteristics of keyboard instruments. The transparency of the two and three-voice structure is derived from the sound ideal of the harpsichord.

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J.C. BACH: SINFONIA CONCERTANTE (CD5)

'Monsieur Bach of London is here... He is an honourable man and fair to everyone. I love him, as you know, with all my heart. I have the highest respect for him.' Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, in a letter to his father (27 August 1778)

'You probably know already that the English Bach has died? What a loss for the world of music!' Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, in a letter to his father (10 April 1782)

Johann Christian Bach, youngest musical son of Johann Sebastian, was born in 1735. His music gives little clue as to the dynasty from which he came, for he found himself in an era remote from the high baroque of his father, and his temperament was far removed from that of his famous brothers, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel, whose wit and earnestness produced music of quirky, often disturbing, originality. Despite studying with Emanuel during his youth, Johann Christian developed a distinct style: cheerful, tuneful, undemanding and easy on the ear. When he was 19 he went to Italy to study with Padre Martini, became a church musician, and was later involved in the Italians' favourite musical pastime: opera. But when an attractive offer came from London, he left Italy to settle for good in England.

John Christian arrived in the autumn of 1762 and sometime later he joined with Carl Friedrich Abel to form the Bach-Abel concerts. Thus, with the Handel/Bach-Abel/Haydn succession, most of 18th century London music was dominated by Teutons. Sadly, John Bach's popularity waned and with it his fortune and health. He died on 1 January 1782, aged 46.

Ernest Warburton has compiled an index of Bach's Symphonies and *Symphonie Concertante*, which provides a useful numbering system and the information that Bach wrote 18 of the latter. Only four are in the French gallant two-movement layout, and most close with a minuet or some other mellow movement. All display the melodic style of the Mannheim-Paris *symphonie concertante*, whose popularity spread to England and all were written during the 1770s. Warburton's "SC" numbers show that the works were published during the 18th century: "MSC" a manuscript source published only recently. Generally, Bach's accompanying orchestra consists of two oboes (or flutes), two horns and strings.

Symphonie Concertante in G, SC I, for two violins, cello and orchestra was first played on or about 20 February 1772 in London and was published a year or so later by Chevardière in Paris. Only two copies of this print survive, both incomplete, so it is fortuitous that a manuscript source was discovered recently in Mantua, thus at last making this substantial work performable as Bach wrote it.

It seems that he remembered something of his Italian days when writing this joyous work, for Mediterranean vivacity and sunshine beam through its pages. In addition to the three unspecified soloists, pairs of violas, oboes and horns join the fun, while in the playful tick-tock *Andante* Bach punctuates proceedings with the

unusual sonority of oboes and violas in thirds, the pairs separated by an octave. After a cello cadenza the movement ends with a brisk tutti unison. The minuet is unexpectedly extended by odd phrase lengths and a long second half for the soloists. The Trio is hijacked from the "official" soloist by a delightful quartet of violas and oboes.

Symphonie Concertante in E flat, MSC E flat 4, for two clarinets, bassoon and orchestra, the manuscript parts of this work are preserved in the King's Music Library in the British Museum and, like SC I and MSC E flat I, were printed in 1963 in an edition by Joseph White. The main theme's broad strokes and the wide dynamic contrasts (*pp-ff*), make a spacious effect in the first movement while, in the *Larghetto*, Bach is at his most charmingly original. Muted violins and viola, together with the three wind soloists, construct a luxurious backcloth against which, with surprising effect, a solo oboe stands to steal the whole movement. Both Handel and John Bach learnt in Italy the art of the graceful minuet: Bach ends with a perfect example, a smooth, supple movement in whose Trio the main soloists are joined by two horns to produce a kind of outdoor serenade.

Symphonie Concertante in A, SC 3, for violin, cello and orchestra is probably Bach's most popular *Symphonie Concertante*, this was published in Paris by Sieber in about 1773. Like both MCS E flat 1 and E flat 4, its manuscript is to be found in the King's Music Library. Its two easy-going movements are more intimate than the other works recorded here. The purpose of the work is simply to entertain by allowing the soloists to display their skills unhampered by any grand symphonic design. In the *Rondeau* a moment of pathos comes with a minor-keyed episode, but the subdued mood is soon dismissed.

Symphonie Concertante in E flat, MSC E flat 1, for two Violins, two violas, cello and orchestra is titled "Concerto" in the London source and "Concertino... osia Notturmo" in the undated holograph manuscript in the Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, this work illustrates the vague terminology of the genre. The score's title page calls for *Trombe de Caccia* in the orchestra, but other references indicate that horns are intended. Both movements show once again that the "official" soloists do not enjoy total prominence: horns and oboes also have important solos and duets, the horns particularly so in the "Menuetto terzo" (i.e. second Trio) of the second movement.

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J.C. BACH: SIX SONATAS, OP. 5 (CD6)

J.C. Bach was something of a keyboard virtuoso (just like his father and older brothers), and despite first receiving acclaim as an opera composer shortly after his arrival in London, he soon gained recognition as a performer, later becoming music master to none other than Queen Charlotte and her children. This royal endorsement was a great boost to his career as he was able to proclaim on the title pages of his works that he was 'Music Master to her Majesty and the Royal Family'. He was the first to champion the fortepiano in concert, and his set of Six Sonatas Op.5 (1766) was the first to mention both the fortepiano and harpsichord as options on the title page. The first collection of sonatas written exclusively for the fortepiano was in fact composed in 1732 by Lodovico Giustini in Florence, the city where the instrument was invented by Bartolomeo Cristofori around 1700.

The piano did not gain favour for quite some time, however, and it was J.C. Bach who helped bring it into prominence. When he published his Op.17 in 1779, another set of Six Sonatas for harpsichord or fortepiano, the instrument was well on its way to dominance.

The instruments of J.C. Bach's time:

Johann Christian Bach's career happened to parallel the arrival of a new instrument, the square piano, an instrument that resembled the clavichord visually and functioned a bit like today's upright piano in that it was a space-saving, cheaper alternative to a grand. Johannes Zumpe, another German expatriate living in London, started to manufacture them in the 1760s, and after Bach's arrival his sales increased rapidly.

The English musician and renowned historian Charles Burney explained the situation as follows:

After the arrival of John Chr. Bach in this country, and the establishment of his concerts [i.e. concert series]... all the harpsichord makers tried their mechanical powers at piano-fortes; but the first attempts were always on the large size, till Zumpe, a German, who had long worked under Shudi, constructed small piano-fortes of the shape and size of the virginals, of which the tone was very sweet, and the touch, with a little use, equal to any degree of rapidity. These, from their low price and the convenience of their form, as well as power of expression, suddenly grew into such favour, that there was scarcely a house in the kingdom where a keyed-instrument had ever had admission, but was supplied with one of Zumpe's piano-fortes, for which there was nearly as great a call in France as in England. In short he could not make them fast enough to gratify the craving of the public.

Less is known about the emergence of grand pianos in London, but research by noted instrument builder and historian Richard Maunder suggests that builders were making prototypes in the 1760s. The earliest English grand in existence today was built by the Dutchman Americus Backers in 1772. The Scotsman John Broadwood, who eventually went on to become one of the most important piano builders of his time, worked on the invention of the English grand action with Backers and Robert Stodart in the 1760s. During the years that Broadwood worked for Burkart Shudi (see quote above), he seems to have concentrated on building harpsichords, but once he took over the firm in 1773 his focus shifted. (However, Broadwood's firm built harpsichords until 1793, which shows just how long both instruments co-existed.) Though Bach is often rightly associated with square pianos, it is hard to imagine that he performed exclusively on them when there were grands being manufactured in London by first-rate builders. That the square was favoured in domestic musicmaking is clear, but it was also the case that many talented amateurs, such as Queen Charlotte herself, would have had both at her disposal.

The influence of J.C. Bach:

The Mozart family's first grand tour brought them to London in 1765. Wolfgang Amadeus was aged nine at the time, and his talented sister Maria Anna was 15. They performed together for Queen Charlotte, and also made numerous other appearances throughout the city. J.C. Bach was very kind to the family, and he advised Mozart's father to send his son to his beloved teacher Padre Martini. Mozart eventually went to Bologna to see the Italian in 1770, but actually it is J.C. Bach's stamp that we often hear in his music. Soon after meeting Bach, he arranged three of his Op.5 sonatas into piano concertos, and mentions studying his works in letters to his father years later. Mozart even occasionally quoted Bach: the theme of the slow movement of his Piano Concerto in A major (No.12 K414) resembles Bach's overture to *La calamità dei cuori*, which many have taken to be an homage to the recently deceased Bach.

Another composer who surely benefited from studying Bach's keyboard works was Muzio Clementi, who was brought to London from Rome as a boy in 1766. One texture that Clementi especially favoured was 'double thirds', and these are found in many passages in Bach's keyboard music. There is also a fiery

virtuosity in some of these works that clearly inspired both young composers.

Six Sonatas Op.5 (London, 1766)

The six sonatas of Op.5 were J.C. Bach's first publication of solo keyboard works in London. It seems clear that Bach wanted to showcase his multi-faceted compositional skills in this opus; the works not only grow in scope as the set progresses, but also display the widest possible range of compositional styles and characters, from the singing *galant* style to a grand baroque fugue in the last sonata.

Sonata No.1 in B flat. Just two movements long, this charming work is not complicated structurally. The first movement follows the basic formula of what we now call 'sonata form', and the second movement is a pleasing Minuet also in this form. This sonata would have been sight-readable for most talented amateurs of the period.

(The next three sonatas, Nos. 2–4, are the ones that Mozart arranged into concertos for himself to play. This was a time-honoured way to study a work – J.S. Bach similarly made arrangements of works by Vivaldi for performance and study.)

Sonata No.2 in D major. Where the first sonata is intimate, this one is utterly public. (The key of D major was associated with military music and triumphant music in general – Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus from *Messiah* is in this key.) The first movement is very symphonic in nature, and it is easy to see how Mozart was able to fashion this work into a concerto. The second movement shows Bach's lyrical prowess and is reminiscent of an aria. The last movement, a Minuet with a contrasting middle section in D minor, is interesting in part for its very careful articulation markings. Here we find dots, wedges and slurs, all of which point to the piano as the most effective instrument for the piece's execution.

Sonata No.3 in G major. The first movement features very sudden dynamic contrasts, and is both virtuosic and lyrical. The second movement is a 'theme and variations' movement, a form that was popular throughout the second half of the 18th century.

Sonata No.4 in E flat major. This sonata opens with an irrepressible energy that bubbles just beneath the surface. It features a longer development section than the previous sonatas, and also feels more 'serious' since it makes use of the relative key of C minor. The second movement is a lovely and intimate Rondeaux that epitomises the feeling of romance closely associated with E flat major in the 18th century.

Sonata No.5 in E major. This is the first sonata in the set to feature three movements in the typical 'fast-slow-fast' arrangement. Where the third movement of the Sonata in D major ends with a minuet, this sonata closes with a fiery movement marked 'Prestissimo', which basically means 'as fast as possible'.

The first movement is all noise and technical fireworks. One way composers achieved dynamics at the harpsichord was by simple addition and subtraction: the more notes there are, the louder it is, and vice versa. The first and last movements feature typical 'noise-making' devices in the left hand that were used by many harpsichord composers to create more volume and a fuller texture: they are both bravura movements that require the utmost in virtuosity. The gorgeous second movement looks unassuming at first, until one realises that it features double thirds and sixths in the left hand, accompanied by a sustained trill in the right – a feat which must be accomplished three times in the movement.

Sonata No.6 in C minor. This work is unlike any other in the set in almost every way. It is the only one in a minor key, and it is the first to open with a grand slow movement, marked 'Grave'. It

looks to the past stylistically, and this is made even more clear when the movement ends on a dominant cadence that leads directly into an extended fugue. However, the writing in this fugue is very 'modern' in that the right hand features many double thirds – no one would mistake this for a fugue by Johann Christian's father.

There is also much about this sonata that resembles the music of French composers such as François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau. The second (and final movement) is a stately Gavotte which is basically a through-composed rondo with couplets. It is highly reminiscent of French harpsichord music, and even includes a little coda at the end that reminds one of a *petite reprise*. This sonata provides an end to a set that is dignified and of regal bearing, befitting a composer who was music master to the English royal family.

© Sylvia Berry

W.F. BACH: ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (CD7)

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach died impoverished in Berlin in 1784, the city where he had spent the last ten years of his life. For a time he had enjoyed the favour of Princess Anna Amalie, a devotee of organ music who played the instrument herself. And he had made a lasting impression on the young Carl Friedrich Zelter.

In 1774 the *Berlinische Nachrichten* enthused over a concert of his that it embodied "Just the right ingredients to set the pulse racing, fresh ideas, striking changes of key, dissonant movements..." There could hardly be any more apposite description for his music today. He was not only one of the first composers to seek his livelihood as a freelance, which put him beyond the pale in those days, but his bold ideas were far ahead of the times and failed to earn the understanding of his contemporaries. It is a rare concert even today that includes material from his pen. One of the reasons is that a major portion of his output was never actually published. The interest is undoubtedly there but many of the works he wrote have been destroyed or disappeared.

Martin Falck included nine symphonies in his thematic catalogue of W.F. Bach's oeuvre compiled in 1913 of which one, however, does not originate from the composer himself. Up until World War II, five of the unpublished symphonies were kept at the State Library in Berlin. Their present whereabouts are unknown. We can only hope that they will resurface someday, as have other manuscripts given up for lost in the past.

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach is believed to have used one of the extant symphonies (that in D minor, Falck 65) later as a prelude for a cantata dedicated to Frederick the Great. On the other hand, it is likely that the cantata *Dies ist der Tag* (Falck 85) predates the three-movement Symphony in D major (Falck 64). This prompted us to investigate which cantatas still survive in manuscript form. We discovered they are to be found among the stock of the State Library in Berlin and the score of the Symphony in F major in Vienna. We only had to copy out the manuscripts and would have three symphonies, it seemed.

But the task proved to be an exceedingly complex one. The autograph score of *Ertönet ihr seligen Völker* (Falck 88), a cantata for Pentecost, has been disfigured in places to the point of indecipherability, probably by the damp. The solo oboe parts are completely missing. The autograph score was kept in the library of the Berlin Singakademie up to World War II but has also disappeared in the meantime. Fortunately enough, the music department of the Austrian National Library in Vienna has a copy of the score, which also includes the oboe parts. Since Wilhelm Friedemann Bach employs the same musical structures in his unfinished Harpsichord Concerto in E flat major (Falck 42), it has

been possible to reconstruct this remarkable movement almost exactly in the original form. There can be no denying its indebtedness to the "Dissonant" Symphony (Falck 67) in structural terms. Here too, harmonic shifts in the most compact of spaces and a counterpoint that places successive entries no more than a crotchet apart as well as continual overlapping combine to produce a sound that knew no equal either at its own time or even today, over two centuries on. The watermark in the paper suggests that the symphony was written in Halle between 1755 and 1758.

A more or less legible score in the custody of the State Library in Berlin is all that could be found of the Symphony in G major, part of the Christmas cantata *O Wunder* (Falck 92). On a musical level, this work is far more restrained in its dissonances than the previous one. It is reminiscent of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's early Berlin symphonies, though the harmony is much more finely structured. It is no longer possible to attach a precise date to this work either, though in likelihood it too was penned in Halle (between 1746 and 1764).

The Symphony in D major (Falck 91), which serves as the prelude to *Wo geht die Lebensreise hin* – a cantata for Ascension Day – might almost be labelled a single-movement concerto for two trumpets, two oboes and strings with basso continuo. Judging by the watermark, it seems to date from between 1755 and 1758.

That Wilhelm Friedemann Bach had to be extremely frugal in his use of paper is clear from the autograph score at the Berlin State Library where he crams no less than 48 bars of the tiniest writing onto one page. But time has taken its toll here too. One of the major problems was a bar inserted as an embellishment for which there is no indication of the transposition or scoring (cf. example, p. 8/9). It has been possible to insert the missing parts with some degree of confidence on the strength of stylistic research.

The symphonies in D major (Falck 64), F major (Falck 67) and D minor (Falck 65) have been published more recently. Their musical idioms are wide apart, and the stylistic variations are astonishing even within the confines of a single work. We are in the domain of bold mental leaps and transient sentiments.

This is the reason why the Suite in G minor (BWV 1070) was eventually attributed to Wilhelm Friedemann Bach. It was originally thought to originate from his father's pen and is sometimes labelled Johann Sebastian's 5th suite even on present-day recordings, though a closer look at its style strongly suggests otherwise. The copy of the score which has come down to us merely indicates that we have a work "di Bach" before us. Listeners to the present CD, which brings together all Friedemann Bach's extant orchestral works for the first time, will hear for themselves that Friedemann Bach is the most likely source. The capriccio is comparable in structure with the fugue from the suite with that in the Symphony in F major. None of Bach's other sons – whose style was more consistent – ever ventured to tackle such structure, and it seems beyond the bounds of credibility that they would have done so in this case. One needs look no farther than the overture to see that it deviates from the typical first movement of French provenance. What we have here is an example of the "composite style" which post-dates Johann Sebastian Bach and was discussed at length by Johann Joachim Quantz, a contemporary of Friedemann. Our view was that the overture's slow beginning entails certain harmonic demands, challenging us to introduce "*voluntary embellishments*" as Quantz instructed. Another consideration was that there is no proof of the piece having been scored for full orchestra, so that it seemed perfectly legitimate to apply interpretative techniques more typical of soloists to the context of a small orchestra. We were positively inspired to proceed with this approach by the extra ornamentations which concert master Johann Georg Pisendel

added to parts in orchestral works during his tenure at the royal court in Dresden. They are still kept by the regional library of Saxony and are a noble example to follow. Quantz, who worked together with Pisendel in Dresden, recalls in his notes (XVII.VII., §15/§16) on orchestral performance that the practice was quite common at his time. He goes on to demand, however, that the tutti should refrain from introducing ornamentations, which are supplementary to or differ from those of the concert master. There should be a "leader" to specify how the tutti are to render the "trimmings" (XVII.I, § 9). In the dance movements we have endeavoured to adhere to the principle of doing justice to the composer's original idea in the first instance whilst using the recapitulations to accommodate another of Quantz's demands (XI., § 14), that of "diversity". We believe this approach has enabled us to bring out the heterogeneous elements of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's music.

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W.F. BACH: HARPSICHORD CONCERTOS (CD8)

Despite an upsurge in research over the last few decades, musicologists are still some way from a conclusive reappraisal of the instrumental music of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, eldest son of the famous Johann Sebastian, who was born in Weimar in 1710 and died in Berlin in 1784.

As we know, Wilhelm Friedemann started lessons with his father in keyboard playing and composition when he was still very young. The different phases of this education can be traced in the *Clavierbüchlein* that Johann Sebastian prepared for him (parts of it written out by the child himself), which followed a method that Bach senior would later use with equal success with his other children. The book contains roughly five years' worth of exercises on different aspects of playing, and gradually moves into the area of vocal and instrumental composition. From the very beginning, Wilhelm Friedemann showed considerable talent, even if, according to many scholars, he found it harder than his brothers to establish his own artistic voice. This was probably due to the fact that, as the eldest child, he spent a long time working closely with his father, and served as copyist, proof-reader, performer, continuo player and, in some cases, composer. Much of his knowledge in these areas was seemingly collected in his treatise, *Abhandlung vom harmonischen Dreiklang*, which has unfortunately been lost.

This would explain why, compared with his brothers' work, Wilhelm Friedemann's music, especially at the beginning of his career, still bears strong traces of the influence of his father's teaching. Instead, it remains rooted in an artistic outlook which was in some ways outmoded, as certain musicologists have pointed out. It was his time at university, where he studied subjects other than music for several years, that proved decisive in his acquiring a more progressive musical idiom. His move to Dresden in 1731 also had a positive effect on his composing, although he retained strong ties to Johann Sebastian on both a personal and musical level, to the extent that some critics occasionally accused him of plagiarizing his father's work.

Despite the dissatisfaction of occupying a poorly-paid post, Wilhelm Friedemann composed and performed concertos, thereby adding to his income. It was the 'academies' promoted by the Electress of Saxony, Maria Antonia Walpurgis, who liked to gather the leading members of the Saxon aristocracy around her, that provided opportunities to compose a number of instrumental pieces, as the composer himself describes in the dedication of his E minor concerto, F43 (completed in 1767, but probably composed some years earlier). By the time he left Dresden in 1746, Bach had composed several instrumental works, including symphonies, trio sonatas and various other sonatas, as well as a number of concertos, such as those in A minor and D

major, F45 and F41. This was also the period when his first published composition, a harpsichord sonata, appeared – a sign that his work was starting to find some success and become known in important circles. Critics were quick to point to the severe character and sophisticated construction typical of Friedemann Bach's work, but added to these aspects are the quality of great pathos that dominates the middle movements of his concertos and the composer's interest – a modern one for the time – in the minor mode for the tonic key of his works. In this he seems to be anticipating some of the aesthetic ideals that would soon dominate European music. For this reason alone, Wilhelm Friedemann's harpsichord concertos deserve more attention from musicologists as well, as the pieces recorded here demonstrate. Indeed, Bach can be considered one of the main forerunners of 'Empfindsamkeit', the new approach to writing, performing and listening to music that was soon to lead to the so-called *style galant*, many of whose characteristics are present in the E minor F43 and F minor (F deest) concertos. These bring to the fore what the A minor concerto F45 had already expressed in embryo, admittedly in a more traditional idiom, but one that clearly foreshadows new aesthetic approaches in music. Since they date from a transitional period that is both important and hard to pin down – and one that remains little explored in western music history to this day – these are works of considerable significance.

Despite all the thought-provoking aspects to be found in Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's music, it struggled to enter and establish itself in the repertoire, partly, then as now, because of the rather ill-judged view of contemporary critics who saw him as a continuation from his father and not a clean break with him. The music of his brothers – Carl Philipp Emanuel and Johann Christian, for example – was becoming increasingly popular and this, with the rediscovery of the work of Johann Sebastian, had the effect of finally obscuring what little had survived up until then. Consequently, although the pieces recorded here are not unfamiliar, they can still be considered genuine rediscoveries, in that presenting some of the most interesting and progressive examples of Wilhelm Friedemann's instrumental work makes it possible to view his output as a whole from another angle.

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W.F. BACH: CANTATAS (CD9)

Of the three compositional geniuses Johann Sebastian Bach fathered (the others being Carl Philipp Emanuel and Johann Christian), the least known remains his first-born son Wilhelm Friedemann, a restlessly inventive and creative artist who eventually abandoned writing music entirely. Preceded by a daughter, W.F. Bach was born on 22 November 1710 in Weimar to the 25-year-old J.S. Bach and his wife Maria Barbara. He studied music and keyboard playing with his father (one result was the elder Bach's compilation of the *Clavier-Büchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*) and the violin with Johann Gottlieb Graun. His formal education took place in Weimar and, after his father accepted the post of Thomaskantor, at Leipzig's Thomasschule. Subsequently, he studied law at Leipzig University and also began what proved to be a lifelong passion for mathematics, but was appointed organist of Sophienkirche, Dresden at the age of 23. This was a part-time position, allowing him time for mathematical studies as well as writing operas and ballets for the local Court. His reputation as a brilliant organist soon spread, and it has been theorised that J.S. Bach actually wrote his monumental *Goldberg Variations* as a display piece for his eldest son to showcase his keyboard technique. In 1746, when Wilhelm Friedemann was 36, he moved to become organist of the Marktkirche in Halle, a post that also involved organising orchestral performances in the city's three principal churches. Handel had been baptised at the Marktkirche and played on its organ, and the position of organist had always been occupied by

outstanding virtuosi and composers, starting with Samuel Scheidt in the early seventeenth century.

Following J.S. Bach's death in 1750, it fell to Wilhelm Friedemann to clear up his father's state, and he inherited many of his manuscripts, some of which he subsequently sold in order to pay his debts. Shortly afterwards he married Dorothea Elisabeth Georgi, the daughter of a tax collector; the couple had three children, but only a daughter lived beyond infancy. W.F. Bach was unhappy in Halle, where he often found himself in conflict with the church authorities, in some measure because of his interest in Enlightenment philosophy. He sought unsuccessfully to move to other posts (though for a short interval it appears he thought he had secured the position of Hofkapellmeister of Hesse-Darmstadt). His affairs became increasingly disordered and in 1764 he resigned his post in Halle despite having no other position to go to. Instead, he survived precariously by teaching and performing, first in Halle and then in Braunschweig. In 1774 he moved to Berlin, where he briefly secured the patronage of the Princess Anna Amalia, sister of Frederick the Great, but apparently soon fell into disgrace. His last years were spent in poverty and ill health until he died in Berlin in 1784 from pulmonary disease. It is possible that his last pupil was Sarah Itzig Levy, the great-aunt of Felix Mendelssohn: W.F. Bach gave her the manuscript of his father's *St Matthew Passion*, which she in turn passed to her great-nephew.

Despite this chequered career, Wilhelm Friedemann was widely respected as a very learned and capable musician. He was renowned as an improviser and particularly recognised for his individualism and refusal to simply emulate the Baroque manners of his contemporaries or compose fashionable, easily accessible music. Many of his works have been lost, but surviving examples include a number of church cantatas and instrumental compositions. Among the latter are several powerful keyboard concertos and numerous fugues, polonaises and fantasies for clavier, as well as some fine sonatas for one or two flutes. He incorporated more elements of his father's polyphonic idiom than any of his younger brothers, but also absorbed a range of contemporary influences. While C.P.E. and J.S. Bach were leading exponents of the Galant and pre-Classical styles, Wilhelm Friedemann was a transitional figure, whose music looks Janus-like to both past and future.

This aspect of W.F. Bach's creativity can be felt acutely in his 20 or so church cantatas, all of which seem to date from his years in Halle. As part of his duties as director of music for the city's principal churches he also prepared and conducted a great deal of other composers' music; a striking feature of his church concerts was the large number of his father's cantatas, works that were virtually forgotten elsewhere, that he performed. While he tended to use the work of lesser contemporaries for regular Sundays, he reserved J.S. Bach's cantatas – and his own – for feast days. Moreover, there are recorded instances of his performing a cantata by his father and one of his own on the same day. It is clear, therefore, that he attached special significance to his father's cantatas, viewing them as a standard that he sought to equal, if not surpass, when writing in the genre himself.

Like his father's cantatas, Wilhelm Friedemann's are based on chorale texts, an astonishingly archaic procedure for the period that they were written. If J.S. Bach's music was considered 'old-fashioned' in his lifetime, W.F. Bach's compositional approach in this field might have been thought practically fossilised, although it clearly won favour with the conservative church authorities. Many of the arias and chorales might have come just as easily from the elder Bach's more Italianate cantatas. Nevertheless, the cantatas give evidence of W.F. Bach's highly individual attempts not only to emulate the musical achievements of his father, but to develop them further in works that strive continually towards grace and pathos, brilliance and

originality, artistic diversity and natural simplicity. For this, in addition to speaking the polyphonic language of J.S. Bach with extraordinary fluency, W.F. Bach seasoned it just as successfully with movements in the contemporary North German *empfindsamer Stil*, the 'sensitive style', intended to convey true and natural feelings and encompassing sudden changes of mood.

The elder Bach's influence is overwhelmingly evident in the initial chorus of *Lasset uns ablegen die Werke der Finsternis* ('Let us cast off the works of darkness'), an Advent cantata of genuine magnificence, composed in 1749. The musical content, and the use of four-part chorus with an ensemble of flutes, oboes and strings enlarged with trumpets and drums, has decided affinities with some of J.S. Bach's festive cantatas, such as *O ewiges Feuer* (BWV 34) which W.F. Bach is known to have performed in Halle, perhaps also in 1749. Both the solo arias of this cantata are of a very high quality, and the first of them, 'Vater, mit Erbarmen' ('Father, hearken with mercy'), a lyrical and poignant piece featuring soprano and obbligato flute, attests to the excellence of W.F. Bach's declamatory writing.

The other three cantatas are equally impressive in their different ways. *Es ist eine Stimme eines Predigers in der Wüste* ('It is the voice of a preacher, crying in the wilderness'), a cantata for the Feast of St John the Baptist, opens with a wonderfully athletic initial chorus, again finely embellished with trumpet writing, while the virtuoso soprano aria 'Der Trost gehöret nur vor Kinder' ('Solace belongs only to children'), a piece in the galant style, has a strikingly rhapsodic organ obbligato, which may reflect W.F. Bach's renowned improvisatory style.

Dies ist der Tag ('This is the day'), a cantata for Whitsuntide, is unique among the four works on these CDs for the fact that it begins, not with an elaborate choral movement – in fact the chorus's entire contribution to the cantata is confined to a short hymn verse at the very end of the piece – but with a sturdy three-movement Sinfonia in full galant style for flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns and strings. The galant style is also flourishing in the two extended and deftly-written arias, one featuring a pair of flutes, the other horns. Finally, the Easter Cantata *Erzittert und fallet* ('Tremble and fall'), which was probably composed, like *Dies ist der Tag*, in the late 1750s, again features trumpets and drums and begins with one of W.F. Bach's most complex and vocally taxing choruses. There are three strongly contrasted arias, beginning with a tenor aria delicately accompanied by a pair of flutes, and then a duet for soprano and baritone entitled 'Komm, mein Hirte' ('Come, my shepherd'), appropriately cast as an exquisite pastoral number with an obbligato oboe d'amore symbolising the shepherd's pipings. The third and last aria, 'Rauscht, ihr Fluten, donnernd Blitzen' ('Roar, ye floods and thunderous lightnings'), for soprano, gives us an idea of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's powers of dramatic illustration, and seems to anticipate the *Sturm und Drang* style of some of the young Haydn's early symphonies, which must have been written within a few years of this splendid work.

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J.C.F. SYMPHONIES (CD10)

Among those of Johann Sebastian Bach's sons who embarked on a musical career, Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach commanded the least attention in his own day and afterwards. Unlike his brothers, Wilhelm Friedemann and Johann Christian, he showed no penchant for a flamboyant lifestyle surrounded by scandal that might have fired the imagination of fashionable authors of second-rate fiction. Instead, he spent decades in relative obscurity at the court of Bückeburg, capital of the earldom of Schaumburg-Lippe. In terms of social status, he was little more than a servant throughout his life, playing and composing chamber music for the delectation of his sovereign and the court.

Even though Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach's instrumental music did not have a lasting effect on stylistic developments in the latter half of the 18th century, it reflects typical facets of that process, i.e. the combination and interaction of various trends and features and their individual treatment.

The early symphonies reveal the influence of the *galant* style, the slow movements being notable for their poignant tenderness. Back from a trip to England in 1778, he surprised the cognoscenti with pieces »composed in the latest fashion« which are clearly indebted to the musical idiom of his brother Johann Christian, the »English Bach«. Finally, a few months before his death, he managed to assimilate elements of the prevailing Viennese style in his B flat major symphony I/20. Bach's early symphonies, including the Symphony in C major I/16, are modelled on the Italian *sinfonia*, as the piece of orchestral music preceding an opera was then known, and laid out in three movements (quick-slow-quick). As was standard practice at the time, the strings are generally reinforced by horns in the outer movements to underline the mood of poignancy. In the Allegro of the Symphony in E flat major I/10, written around 1770/72, the method of motivic treatment appears to be even more sophisticated than in the earlier examples of this form. The composer displays a preference for abrupt dynamic contrasts, which determine the inner structure of the principal theme, assigning transitional piano-like motives to the ascending dotted triadic figures. The lyrical subsidiary subject in the development section is no longer treated as a mere episode, but takes on added significance compared with the main theme.

As H. Wohlfarth has noted, the Andante assai was conceived with string instruments in mind. The composer uses the specific possibilities of these instruments, notably the "long line" and vibrato playing. After the highly charged opening movement, the simple, flowing main theme establishes a more subdued mood, furnishing evidence of the composer's soulful personal idiom. Only the middle section, with its forte-piano effects, offers some dramatic accents. The syncopated rhythms of the opening dominate the entire Allegro assai even though they are modified several times in the course of the movement. They endow the

finale, laid out in sonata form, with such verve and momentum that the listener will readily succumb to its exhilarating effect. The expressive chromaticism of the middle section also helps to enliven the musical proceedings.

The stylistic novelties of the Symphony in B flat major I/20 are too striking to ignore the parallels with the classical Viennese school of symphonic writing: the slow introduction, the thematic and motivic treatment, the four-movement pattern including a minuet, the large-scale design of the movements, the complete abandonment of the basso continuo and the use of additional instruments, i.e. bassoon and clarinets.

As in Haydn's symphonies, the Largo fulfils a preparatory function. A sweeping cadenza, which gives the clarinets an opportunity to display their mellifluous tone, leads up to the dominant seventh, its pent-up energies being released in the first tutti chord of the Allegro. Strings and wind have an equal share in the exposition of the vigorous main subject, which is strictly divided into periods, lending it a highly colourful and luminous quality. The largely monothematic treatment of the Allegro once again reveals the influence of Haydn. The Andante con moto features a gentle ebb and flow of an unbroken melodic line. For this movement Bach employed a rondo-like design. Subtle motivic references establish a link between the theme and several transitional passages, allowing for variegated nuances of emotional expression. The accentuation of the second beat, which is moreover adorned with trills, lends the Minuetto a somewhat awkward and eccentric quality. The minuet theme is dominated by the strings while the more gracious trio gives prominence to the play of the woodwind (flutes, bassoon). In terms of expressive content, the Rondo is the movement that comes closest to the South German-Austrian tradition of this genre. The principal subject, which is as simple as it is original, resembles a catchy popular tune. The composer employs the rondo most effectively, with abridged thematic quotations often setting in motion delightful intermediate episodes. In this movement, H. Wohlfahrt has discovered similarities to Haydn's finales marked all'ongarese (in the Hungarian manner).

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SUNG TEXTS

(CD9)

Lasset uns ablegen die Werke der Finsternis

Chor

1 Lasset uns ablegen die Werke der Finsternis
und anlegen die Waffen des Lichts.
(Röm. 13,12)

Recitativo (Alto)

2 Es ist nun hohe Zeit,
vom Sündenschlafe aufzustehen,
das Licht und Heil sind schon bereit,
in unseren Herzen aufzusehen.
Wie liebeich nahet sich doch Gott zu allen Sündern,
die nicht nur freventlich die Zukunft selber hindern.
Er störet unsre Sündenruh und ruft:

Choral

3 „Steh auf vom Sündenschlaf,
der du lebst stets in Sünden,
erkenne die Gefahr,
so kannst du Gnade finden.
Laß dich nicht nehmen ein
die schnöde Sicherheit,
die nictes mit sich bringt als eitel Herzeleid“.

Recitativo (Tenor)

4 Drum, Vater, wolltest du zu mir auch deine Hand ausstrecken
und mich zu meinem Heil erwecken,

Aria (Soprano)

5 Höre, Vater, mit Erbarmen meinen matten Seufzern zu.
Hab ich mich von dir entrissen,
so laß meiner Seele wissen,
dass in dir sei wahre Ruh.

Recitativo accompagnato (Bass)

6 Ich weiß. die Nacht ist schon dahin
und durch das Licht die Finsternis vertrieben,
drum muß ich auch des Lichtes Werke üben,
dazu musst du, o Jesu, selbst mir dienen,
ich wappne mich mit deinem Sinn,
mit dir will ich den Vater auch versöhnen.

Aria (Alto)

7 Ich ziehe Jesum an im Glauben,
damit will ich vor Gott bestehn.
Er lasse mich im Tun und Wandeln
nach seinem heiligen Willen handeln,
so kann ich nicht verloren gehn.

Choral

8 Den Geist, der heilig ist, laß willig dich regieren,
er wird auf ebner Bahn dich alle Zeit wohl führen,
und, dass du Gottes Kind, dem Herzen prägen ein,
auch dich versichern des, daß du sollt Gottes sein.

Da capo

9 Lasset uns ablegen die Werke der Finsternis...

Es ist eine Stimme eines Predigers in der Wüste

Chor

10 Es ist eine Stimme eines Predigers in der Wüste,
bereitet dem Herrn den Weg,
macht auf dem Gefilde
eine ebene Bahn unserm Gott.
Alle Tale sollen erhöht werden,
und alle Berge und Hügel
sollen erniedriget werden.
(Jesaja 40, 3-4)

Recitativo (Tenor)

11 Gott hat uns Gnad und Heil in Christo angetragen
und läset uns zu unserm Troste sagen,
nunmehr sei die Zeit der Ritterschaft vollendet,
dieweil er seinen Sohn aus Liebe und Barmherzigkeit
von seinem Himmelsthron zu uns herab gesendet.
Nun soll der Trost bei deinem Sündenschmerz
in deine Seele dringen,
du musst auch Gott ein Herz,
durch Buße zubereitet, bringen.

Aria (Soprano)

12 Der Trost gehöret nur vor Kinder,
die in der wahren Buße stehn.
Wer ohne solche sich lässt finden,
dem wird sein falscher Trost verschwinden,
und er wird selbst verloren gehn.

Recitativo accompagnato (Alto)

13 Dein Heiland lässt die Bahn
durch seinen Engel zubereiten
und dieser zeigt aller Welt
ihn als das Heil mit seinem Finger an;
er will, man solle sich bei Zeiten,
zu Gott bekehren lassen,
und diesen Wunderheld mit wahren Glauben fassen.
Er spricht: da seht ihr Gottes Lamm,
das alle Missetat der Welt getragen,
davor ward er verwundet und geschlagen.
Er wollte an des Kreuzes Stamm,
sein Leben selbst nicht teuer achten,
drum ließ er sich zum Opfer für die Sünde schlachten.
O Mensch, bekehre dich, es willst du in der Wüsten
noch länger irre gehen?
Entreiß dein Herz der Welt und ihren Lüsten,
so wirst du dir die Bahn bereitet sehen.

Aria (Bass)

14 Holdseligster Engel, du Bote des Friedens,
erwecke die Herzen, bereite die Bahn,
dass Buße und Glauben die Menschen bewegen
das Heil ihrer Seelen in Jesu zu legen,
so haben sie, was sie beruhigen kann.

Choral

15 Wir Menschen sind zu dem, o Gott,
was geistlich ist, untüchtig.
Dein Wesen, Wille und Gebot,
ist viel zu hoch und wichtig.
Wir wissen und verstehen's nicht,
wo uns dein göttlich Wort und Licht
den Weg zu dir nicht weiset.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let us Cast off the Works of Darkness

Chorus

1 Let us cast off the works of darkness
and put on the arms of light.
(Rom. 13, 12)

Recitative (Alto)

2 It is now high time,
to rise from the sleep of sin,
light and salvation are now ready
to unfold in our hearts.
How tenderly God draws near all sinners,
who do not themselves wickedly obstruct the future.
He disturbs our sinful rest and calls:

Chorale

3 "Arise from the sleep of sin,
you who live in constant sin,
realise your peril,
then you can find grace.
Let bare assurance
not possess you,
that brings nothing with it but empty affliction."

Recitative (Tenor)

4 Then, Father, do thou stretch out thy hand to me
and rouse me to my salvation.

Aria (Soprano)

5 Father, hearken with mercy to my feeble sighs.
If I have torn myself from thee,
let my soul know
that true peace resides in thee.

Accompanied recitative (Bass)

6 I know the night is already pass
and darkness is expelled by light.
Therefore must I also practice the works of light
and thou thyself, o Jesus, must serve me;
I arm myself with thy Spirit,
with thee I will also placate the Father.

Aria (Alto)

7 I appeal to Jesus in the belief,
that I will stand steadfast before God.
Let him deal with me in action and changes
according to his holy will,
then I cannot be lost.

Chorale

8 Let the Holy Spirit guide you,
he will always lead you on an even path
and impress on your heart that you are a child of God
and assure you that you shall be God's.

Da capo

9 Let us cast off the works of darkness...

The Voice of him that Crieth in the Wilderness

Chorus

10 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness:
"Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be exalted
and every mountain and hill
shall be made low."
(Isaiah 40, 3-4)

Recitative (Tenor)

11 God has offered us grace and salvation in Christ
and for our comfort lets us say
that now the time of chivalry is completed,
since from love and compassion he sent his Son
down to us, from his heavenly throne.
Now solace for the pain of your sin
shall enter into your soul,
you must also bring to God
a heart prepared by repentance.

Aria (Soprano)

12 Solace belongs only to children
who truly feel penitence.
He who finds himself without this
will be abandoned by his false comfort,
and he himself will be lost.

Accompanied recitative (Alto)

13 Your Saviour lets the path
be prepared by his angel,
who with his finger points him out
to the whole world as its salvation,
he wills that in good time
people shall be converted to God
and clasp this wondrous hero with true faith.
He speaks: "Behold there the Lamb of God
who has borne all the misdeeds of the world,
for which he was wounded and beaten;
he did not wish, on the tree of the Cross,
to hold his own life dear, and so
let himself be killed as sacrifice for sin.
O man, be converted,
will you stay still longer in the wilderness?
Wrest your heart from the world and its pleasures,
Then you will see the path prepared for you."

Aria (Bass)

14 Most gracious angel, messenger of peace,
awaken hearts, prepare the path,
so that repentance and faith move men,
to place the salvation of their souls in Jesus,
then they will have what can soothe them.

Chorale

15 We men are unfit, O God,
for what is sacred.
Thy being, will and precept
are much too high and weighty.
We do not know and understand
where the divine word and light
do not show us the way to thee.