

C. P. E. BACH, CONCERTO W. 24: INTRODUCTION

The concerto W. 24, the second of C. P. E. Bach's two concertos in E minor and his twenty-fifth keyboard concerto overall, was composed at Potsdam in 1748, according to the catalog of the composer's estate.¹ Like other concertos that Bach composed in the 1740s, W. 24 was revised on several occasions. Formal revisions were limited to the shortening of the last two movements by one and two measures, respectively, perhaps at a fairly late date, but refinement of bass and inner voices, addition of melodic embellishment, and supplementation of performance markings (signs for dynamics, ornaments, and articulation, and figured bass symbols) took place at different stages over what was probably an extensive length of time. Unfortunately, the loss of all autograph material for W. 24 makes it impossible to establish any but a relative chronology of the extant versions.²

At least five versions can be distinguished, including a spurious abbreviated version known only from a London printed edition of about 1775. The remaining versions, all apparently Bach's, are preserved only in manuscript; none has appeared in print. The present edition gives both the earliest and latest known versions. The principal source for the late version is a set of manuscript parts (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach St 363); the four string parts of this set are in the hand of the copyist known as Anonymous 303, whose hand has been identified in other manuscripts that include autograph entries.³ The early version is given on the basis of another set of manuscript parts (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Thulemeier 13).

Four cadenzas by Bach survive for the second movement. Because no source incorporates any of these as an integral part of the text of the concerto, they are given at the appropriate point in the list of variant readings for the late version of the concerto.

Performance

This work raises few special questions of performance practice. As in other concertos of the period, the solo part is assigned to *cembalo*, but the Italian term does not indicate a specific type of keyboard instrument. At the time of the work's composition, the harpsichord must still have been the most frequent choice. But by 1748 Bach must have been familiar with the fortepiano, at least one example of which was available to the Prussian royal court, where Bach had been accompanying King Frederick II in flute sonatas and other works on a regular basis since 1740. Although W. 24 may never have been heard at Potsdam, it was composed there just a year after

¹ *Verzeichniß des musicalischen Nachlasses des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach* (Hamburg, 1790); facsimile edited by Rachel Wade (New York: Garland, 1981). The present work is item 428 in E. Eugene Helm, *Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

² Although the *Nachlassverzeichnis* assigns dates to revised versions (*Erneuerungen*) of some early works, it does not do so in this case. There is no evidence that the concerto existed in any form prior to 1748 (a possibility raised by Helm, p. 90).

³ For example, Bach added revisions to a copy by Anonymous 303 of the sonata W. 65/18 in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach P 775 (discussion in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach Edition*, edited by David Schulenberg, vol. I/18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

the famous visit by J. S. Bach, whose improvisation on one of the King's fortepianos had led to the composition of the *Musicalisches Opfer*. Quantz included an obbligato fortepiano part in a flute concerto probably composed about this time.⁴ On the other hand, nothing is known about the circumstances for which W. 24 was composed or its revised versions prepared, and therefore it is possible that Bach used different solo instruments at various times. Others who acquired copies of the work must have employed whatever keyboard instrument was available.

Only one source (designated here as **C2**) includes more than a single copy of any of the string parts. As in other concertos of the 1740s, this doubled part is the lowest string part (basso). Although designated for *violone*, the part was not necessarily intended for a sixteen-foot (double bass) instrument. That other parts were sometimes doubled in performance cannot be ruled out, but there is no evidence for this.

W. 24 was composed just five years before Bach published the first volume of his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin, 1753). The latter describes numerous ornaments, for which the early version of W. 24 still uses chiefly the abbreviation “t” or “tr”. In Bach's surviving autographs of the 1740s, most ornaments are indicated by a plain cross or plus sign, and this was probably true of the lost autograph of W. 24 as well. Copies of the late version substitute more explicit ornament signs at many of these points, but whether these signs were chosen by Bach as opposed to copyists and whether they represent a change in practice or merely a more precise notation are unclear. The critical apparatus offers further discussion of several related issues of text and performance.

⁴ On the use of the fortepiano during the 1740s at the court of Prussia, see Mary Oleskiewicz, “The Trio in Bach's *Musical Offering*: A Salute to Frederick's Tastes and Quantz's Flutes?,” in *Bach Perspectives, Volume 4: The Music of J.S. Bach: Analysis and Interpretation*, edited by David Schulenberg (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 79–110.