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The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 6.5. The Concerto in G, W. 16

Bach's revisions for W. 16 include a written-out cadenza of the type that he incorporated into the W. 43 concertos; the cadenza's citation of motivic material from the main body of the movement would be unique for a work of the 1740s, if it originated during that period.¹ But although short, as Quantz recommended, in other respects this cadenza resembles the long one that Bach wrote for W. 45, his last solo concerto, and it most likely dates from the same late period.²

Jane Stevens and Darrell Berg have suggested that W. 16 might “have been first composed during Bach's earliest years in Berlin,” arguing that its outer movements are in “the elegant, galant manner that was so fashionable at the time.”³ An early origin might explain its relatively simple style, yet there is no evidence for an earlier date than the one given in NV. The initial ritornello, although opening with a gesture entirely in the manner of Graun or Hasse, incorporates some harmonic surprises and dissonances uncharacteristic of them; one sequence echoes a passage in Sebastian's St. Matthew Passion (online example 6.28). More to the point is that some solo passages in W. 16 are so plain that they seem to call for an instrument with greater sustaining power than either a harpsichord or an early fortepiano. This raises the possibility of a lost version for flute, as for W. 13, but any earlier flute version must have undergone a more substantial reworking than occurred in the latter work, or in W. 22.⁴ The slow movement of Bach's next

¹ The final version of W. 16 as edited in CPEBCW 3/9.5 must date from the 1760s or later, as the solo part ascends to f”.

² The cadenza for W. 45, a work of 1778, is preserved only in Bach's separate collection of cadenzas (W. 120). It is unfortunate that the new edition of W. 16 gives only the keyboard part of the early version, depriving the reader of, among other things, the original string parts in movement 2, measures 29–30, which originally comprised three measures. (Although this music by Emanuel Bach is omitted, the accompanying commentary includes long lists of trivial variants *not* written by the composer.) A footnote (p. xiv, n. 14) points the reader to a discussion of “structural changes,” but these are nowhere detailed. In fact, in the late version, measures 191–97 of the first movement replace four measures of the early version, and another seven-measure passage (mm. 218–24) replaces what were originally measures 215–17. The cadenza in the first movement (mm. 230–46) was also added in the late version, which, however, omits measure 31 of the early version (with changes to the second violin part in the second half of measure 30 as well).

³ Notes to *C. P. E. Bach: The Complete Keyboard Concertos*, vol. 10, p. 5. One peripheral copy of the work, US BEu 732, originally gave the date 1738 (later replaced by 1745), but this is dismissed for good reasons by Wade (see below).

⁴ For instance, the initial solo entrance in the first movement involves parallel thirds which would have had to be supplied by one of the violins in a flute version. The quasi-bariolage of measures 70ff. in the same movement would not have been particularly idiomatic to either the flute or the violin.

concerto, W. 17 in D minor, also originally had very plain writing for the soloist. But here the scoring, with second violin and viola accompanying the initial solo entry, is unusual in a keyboard concerto and would not be inconsistent with the movement's having been conceived for flute.⁵

[Example 6.28a. J. S. Bach, aria “Blute nur” from the Saint Matthew Passion, mm. 13–16 \(flutes omitted\)](#)

[Example 6.28b. Concerto in G, W. 16, movement 1, mm. 12—20](#)

⁵ The initial solo entry in the second movement of W. 17 has a melody recalling the *Offertoire sur les grands jeux* in Couperin's *Messe pour les paroisses*. An organ might easily sustain the tune; is it possible that Bach composed the concerto for that instrument? His earliest known organ concerto, W. 34, dates from 1759.