

David Schulenberg
The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 9.3. More on the 1763 Trios for Keyboard and Violin

The last two movements of the B-Minor Sonata (W. 76) are relatively conventional—disappointingly so, as they follow the later-eighteenth-century norm of winding down after an intense first movement. Even the idea of concluding with an *Allegretto siciliano* probably reflects precedents by Quantz and Gottlieb Graun, both of whom occasionally ended a sonata or concerto with a *scherzando* movement in siciliano rhythm.¹ But the other trios in the series, although lacking anything like the first movement of W. 76, reveal imaginative thinking about musical form. The Sonata in B-flat (W. 77) opens almost like a variation of the earlier Trio W. 73 in C, but comparison shows how far Bach had come in the intervening eighteen years. The first movement of the newer work is longer—doubly so, since it is a sonata form with double bar. Beyond its sheer length, the later work is also composed on a broader scale, its quasi-fugal opening exposition alone occupying thirty measures. By that point W. 73 has already modulated to the dominant; W. 77, however, continues with a counterstatement of the lively main theme by the violin. The keyboard interrupts this (m. 37) with a new, halting idea—perhaps a “second theme” in eighteenth-century parlance, although functioning as a bridge or transition theme within a the movement's sonata form.

The second movement, in D minor, is also a real masterpiece, with a “subdominant recapitulation,” rare for Emanuel although common in fugal movements from Friedemann's sonatas: the final section (mm. 45ff.) begins by transposing the opening of the movement downward by a fifth. This allows the violin, answering the keyboard at the dominant, to restate the theme for the last time in the tonic D minor (m. 49). Underlying this is the old idea of trio sonata as fugue, the initial statement of the theme by one instrument being imitated by the other a fifth higher. Yet the theme here is a lyrical eight-measure period, and the “subject,” initially played by the right hand of the keyboard, already includes a few chords that are echoed as double stops when the violin answers (online example 9.4). Even the left hand gets a few brief solos—which would project well only on a fortepiano—in a coda that follows Berlin tradition by concluding with a cadenza, signified as usual by a fermata (online example 9.5).

¹ Only in one work by Quantz is this explicit (the Concerto QV 5:15), but others conclude with similar movements, such as the “*Alla forlana ma Presto*” in the flute sonata QV 1:42. The latter is one of six solo sonatas whose origin Oleskiewicz places “in Berlin in the 1740s” (“Quantz and the Flute at Dresden,” 460). The main theme of the latter starts much like Bach's, as does the concluding *Allegro scherzando* of a trio in A by Gottlieb Graun for two violins (alternatively gamba and violin) and bass, GWV Av:XV:41.

Example 9.4. Sonata in B-flat for keyboard and violin, W. 77, movement 2, mm. 1–4, 9–12

(a) **Largo**

vi.

kb.

9

(b)

This musical score is for Example 9.4, measures 1-4 and 9-12. It is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. Part (a) shows measures 1-4, where the violin (vi.) is mostly silent, and the keyboard (kb.) plays a simple accompaniment. Part (b) shows measures 9-12, where the violin enters with a melodic line and the keyboard provides a more active accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 9.5. Sonata in B-flat for keyboard and violin, W. 77, movement 2, mm. 66–75

66

vi.

kb.

70

This musical score is for Example 9.5, measures 66-75. It is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The violin (vi.) part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The keyboard (kb.) part provides a complex accompaniment with many sixteenth notes and slurs. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

It is surprising, if NV is accurate in designating the C-minor work as the last of the series to be composed, that Bach concluded the set with a rigorous yet relatively conventional piece in a “serious” key. Both outer movements are complete three-part sonata forms, with much verbatim repetition and recapitulation and virtually no contrasting thematic material; rather they repeat the main theme more frequently and more literally than do the initial movements of the three other works. Perhaps the sonata from his father's *Musical Offering*, in the same key, was on Emanuel's mind as he composed this work, for the last movement practically quotes a passage from Sebastian's composition of sixteen years earlier. This occurs at a point that should have marked the cadence at the end of the second (“development”) section, but which instead diverts the music dramatically toward the tonic via a deceptive resolution (online example 9.6).

[Example 9.6. \(a\) Sonata in C Minor for keyboard and violin, W. 78, movement 3, mm. 191–99;](#)
[\(b\) J. S. Bach, Trio Sonata in C Minor for flute, violin, and bass, from the *Musical Offering*,](#)
[movement 2, mm. 157–63](#)

The image displays two musical excerpts. Excerpt (a) is from the Sonata in C Minor for keyboard and violin, measures 191-199. It features a violin (vn.) and keyboard (kb.) part. The key signature is C minor (three flats). The time signature is 6/8. The music is marked with *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte). Excerpt (b) is from the Trio Sonata in C Minor for flute, violin, and bass, measures 157-163. It features a flute (fl.), violin (vn.), and bass part. The key signature is C minor. The time signature is 2/4. The music is marked with *f* (forte), *tr* (trill), *adagio*, and *allegro*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Up to this point, the movement has been a very lively gigue, although resembling less a Baroque one, as in Sebastian's suites, than a Mendelssohnian tarentella. An earlier flute sonata by Quantz, in the same key, ends with a very similar movement, albeit one lacking the counterpoint of the present work, which even involves the bass in a number of strettos derived from the theme (online example 9.7).² If, on the whole, the present sonata is modeled more than usual on works of Sebastian Bach, it nevertheless demonstrates what Emanuel could do by *not* imitating his father's style, even while emulating it. That he knew and probably thought much about his father's "clavier trios" is clear from a later remark.³ The four trios of 1763 represent a response to them, combining *galant* writing with as much of the contrapuntal or learned style as could be safely included in works for concert performances in postwar Berlin.

[Example 9.7. Sonata in C Minor for keyboard and violin, W. 78, movement 3, \(a\) mm. 1–8, \(b\) mm. 96–101](#)

The image displays two excerpts of a musical score. Excerpt (a) is labeled '(a) Presto' and 'simile per tutto'. It shows measures 1 through 8. The violin part (vn.) is in the upper staff, and the keyboard part (kb.) is in the lower staff. The key signature is C minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/8. The keyboard part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with rests, while the violin part has a more complex melodic line. Excerpt (b) is labeled '(b)' and starts at measure 96. It shows measures 96 through 101. The violin part continues with a melodic line, and the keyboard part has a more active role with eighth-note patterns. The key signature and time signature remain the same.

² Oleskiewicz dates the Sonata QV 1:14 to “around 1750” (liner note for *Johann Joachim Quantz: Seven Flute Sonatas*, 5).

³ In a letter of Oct. 7, 1774, to Forkel (no. 71 in Clark, *Letters*, 67). It is unclear whether by “clavier trios” Emanuel means Sebastian's obligato-keyboard sonatas with violin, as Clark supposes, or the organ sonatas; the latter is more likely in context (Bach is sending Forkel what seems to be a group of organ pieces). The point holds in any case. Forkel owned both sets of “clavier trios,” in manuscript copies now lost.