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The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 10.7. Other late sonatas

Several other late sonatas deserve notice. The 1783 sonata W. 65/48 for *Bogenclavier*, an experimental bowed keyboard instrument with gut strings, is a beautiful and substantial composition in three full-size movements. Less quirky or irregular than other late works, it has been plausibly connected with the exhibition in Hamburg earlier that year of an instrument of this type by Johann Carl Greiner, who was also maker of a combination piano-*Bogenclavier*. Bach had performed on a different *Bogenclavier* thirty years earlier, in a 1753 concert given by the queen of Prussia.¹ That instrument, which has been described as resembling a large hurdy-gurdy equipped with a keyboard, was an invention of Johann Hohlfeld; after his death, Bach had published a setting of Karsch's song "Der du wie Duft" as a memorial to him (W. 202C/11).² Neither the words nor the music of the song shows any trace of the instrument for which Bach wrote the sonata, but Hohlfeld was also known for other, probably more useful, inventions, such as a pedal device for changing the registration of a harpsichord while playing.³ The sonata, which was the last important one that Bach did *not* publish, incorporates several passages that were probably designed to take advantage of the special capabilities of a sustaining stringed keyboard instrument (no examples survive). In the opening Andantino, a chromatic scale with an implied crescendo would have demonstrated not only the instrument's variable dynamics but its capacity for legato performance of such a line, something unattainable on a fretted clavichord. A version of the passage occurs in each of the three sections of the opening movement. In the slow movement, a chromatic progression in four voices echoes one from the C-Major Sonata W. 65/47 of eight years earlier (online example 10.27).

¹ The concert by the royal *Cappelle*, given by the queen at the Berlin Stadtschloss on Oct. 28, 1753, is listed as no. 347 in Henzel, "Das Konzertleben," 249. Manuel Bärwald, ". . . ein Clavier von besonderer Erfindung': Der Bogenflügel von Johann Hohlfeld und seine Bedeutung für das Schaffen Carl Philipp Emanuel Bachs," *Bach-Jahrbuch* 94 (2008): 271–300, argues that on this occasion Bach played the concerto W. 31.

² Hohlfeld's dates are usually given as 1711–71, as in the present author's article in *The Harpsichord and Clavichord: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Igor Kipnis (New York: Routledge, 2007), 244. Bach's song, however, appeared in the *Unterhaltungen*, which ceased publication in 1770. Bach mentioned the *Bogenclavier* approvingly in the *Versuch*, ii.intro.2.

³ Described by Bach in the *Versuch*, ii.29.5.

Example 10.27. Sonata in G for *Bogenclavier*, W. 65/48, (a) movement 1, mm. 23–26, and (b) movement 2, mm. 14–16; (c) Sonata in C, W. 65/47, movement 3, mm. 10–13

The image displays three musical excerpts from Johann Sebastian Bach's keyboard sonatas. Excerpt (a) shows measures 23-26 of the first movement of the Sonata in G major, BWV 65/48. It features a treble and bass clef with a common time signature. Dynamics range from *pp* to *f*. Excerpt (b) shows measures 14-16 of the second movement of the same sonata. It includes a trill in measure 14 and dynamics from *mf* to *ff*. Excerpt (c) shows measures 10-13 of the third movement of the Sonata in C major, BWV 65/47. It is in 2/4 time and includes a crescendo marking. The score is presented in a grand staff format with treble and bass clefs.

Bach's last few keyboard sonatas are of limited intrinsic interest, but they provide hints about how he assembled the *Kenner und Liebhaber* collections. Breitkopf published Bach's C-Minor Sonata W. 60 on its own in 1785, between the fifth and sixth sets for *Kenner und Liebhaber* (hence its numbering in the Wotquenne catalog). Bach and Breitkopf had initially planned to add the sonata to a revised reprint of the Reprise Sonatas (W. 50), but this never came out.⁴ The first movement of the work was taken from a sonata composed in 1766; this was the last of the seven Potsdam sonatas of that year still remaining in manuscript, but two decades later Bach probably judged the last two movements too large for his present purposes. In their place he composed a new Presto, joining it to the opening Allegretto with a short transitional Largo. The opening movement is a full sonata form; the new Presto is a rondo in gigue rhythm (6/8). Unique in Bach's output, the

⁴ The expanded edition of the Reprise Sonatas was meant to head off an unauthorized reprint by Rellstab of Berlin (earlier pirated editions had also appeared in London). In the end, however, Breitkopf simply reissued W. 50 in its original form (see CPEBCW 1/5.2:xiv–xv).

latter movement avoids the complexities of the modulating rondos for *Kenner und Liebhaber*, although it does incorporate an extended *arpeggiando* passage in the second of its two *couplets* or contrasting sections. Bach wrote rather disingenuously to Breitkopf that the resulting sonata was “new, easy, short, and almost without an Adagio.”⁵ Apart from incorporating music almost two decades old, however, it was also significantly longer than most of the shorter sonatas published for *Kenner und Liebhaber*. Nor is it particularly easy; the first movement, which alludes to the symphonic style of other large sonatas of the 1760s, contains some tricky passages, including one that requires an unidiomatic stretch of a tenth in the right hand (m. 43).

In order not to waste the two rejected movements, Bach composed a little rondo, which he inserted in front of them to form another C-minor sonata, W. 65/49. This remained unpublished, as did the last sonata listed in NV, W. 65/50. The latter, too, must have been assembled from disparate material, for its three movements are in different keys, without any connecting passages. To these “last” sonatas should be added W. 65/19 in F, which in its surviving state must also be a very late work. NV lists it as a composition of 1746, but its last movement is a polonaise, a type of piece that Bach is not known certainly to have composed before 1754 (“La Borchward,” W. 117/17, is the earliest). Varied reprises in the polonaise ascend to f[♯], a note not used by Bach until the 1760s (it occurs also in the first movement). The autograph score of W. 65/19 is in the handwriting of Bach's last years, and it bears an index number indicating that Bach's heirs initially believed it to be his very last work for solo keyboard, dating from 1787 or 1788.⁶ Although it is not impossible that W. 65/19 incorporates earlier thematic material, the style of the individual movements and the unique, if small-scale, cycle that they constitute are consistent with Bach's having assembled the work at the very end of his career.

All three of these sonatas resemble some of the smaller ones published for *Kenner und Liebhaber*, incorporating diverse movements that could have originated as separate little keyboard pieces. For instance, the slow movements of W. 65/50 and 65/19, each a little through-composed binary form, resemble two Andantes from a set of “Six Easy Keyboard Pieces” that Bach composed in 1775.⁷ All but one of those pieces were incorporated into other works; presumably they were part of a storehouse of items on which Bach drew when necessary.

⁵ Quoted in CPEBCW 1/5.2:xiv from Bach's letter of Sept. 23, 1785, in Suchalla, *Briefe*, 1112 (no. 278 in Clark, *Letters*, 236).

⁶ Further discussion in CPEBE 1/18:127.

⁷ NV 175 (W. 116/23–28), preserved in the partially autograph P 748 together with the related little pieces H. 255–58.