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***The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach***  
**Supplement 1.2:**

**Some Practical Matters: Work Lists, Sources, Editions, Performance**

Bach's output was not unusually large by the standards of his contemporaries. But it was composed during a career longer than that of almost any other major eighteenth-century composer, and it includes many works that were revised or arranged from others. For these reasons Bach's music raises special problems for those seeking to identify particular works, find editions of them, or reach performance decisions about them.

### **Work lists and catalogs**

Listing the works of a musician as prolific as Bach is a necessary but complicated task, as the composer himself understood. The nature of his output is such that no list or edition of his works will ever be able to sort out, in a straightforward way, its division into specific categories or genres. Bach's habit of returning to completed compositions, either to revise them or to recast them in other media, has meant that many, perhaps most, works exist in multiple versions. Existing lists of his works have dealt with this issue in different ways.

Bach's own lists of works, prepared for the mundane purpose of organizing his personal music collection and making works from it available to potential buyers, were the basis of subsequent catalogs, including those of the eighteenth-century collector Westphal and the nineteenth-century biographer Bitter. By the early 1770s, shortly after his move to Hamburg, Bach had prepared a manuscript thematic catalog of his keyboard compositions (CV). The surviving copy was probably one of several used by Bach himself and by booksellers and collectors to keep track of works that he sold in both manuscript and printed copies.<sup>1</sup>

After Bach's death, his wife and daughter issued the so-called *Nachlassverzeichnis* (NV), which served as a catalog of items available for sale from his estate.<sup>2</sup> Among these were, naturally, his own compositions, of which it included a nearly complete list, but there were other items as well, such as his portrait collection. The information about Bach's works in NV was surely based on

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<sup>1</sup> On this *Clavierwerke-Verzeichnis*, in SA 4261, see Wolff, "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bachs Verzeichnis seiner Clavierwerke." Bach apparently issued a printed list of his works shortly after his arrival in Hamburg, but no copy survives (see no. II/5 in Wiermann, *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, 147).

<sup>2</sup> Wade, *Catalog of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's Estate*, is an annotated facsimile of NV. At this writing, a scan of the copy of NV in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, is available online at [imslp.org](http://www.cpebach.org/pdfs/resources/NV-1790.pdf); for a searchable transcription, see <http://www.cpebach.org/pdfs/resources/NV-1790.pdf>.

earlier lists drawn up during the composer's lifetime, including CV.<sup>3</sup> Like the earlier catalog, NV gives the dates and places of composition for Bach's works, also indicating which ones had been published and providing dates for the "renovation" of certain early works (see chap. 5). NV not only established an official or authorized corpus of Bach's works but organized it into particular genres or categories. As a predecessor of the thematic catalogs prepared by later scholars, it continues to influence present-day thinking about Bach's oeuvre.

An early example of a scholarly catalog is the manuscript list of most of Bach's works drawn up around 1800 by Johann Jacob Heinrich Westphal, an organist in the north-German town of Schwerin who collected manuscript copies of nearly all of Bach's works.<sup>4</sup> Better known today is the thematic catalog published in 1905 by Alfred Wotquenne; this is the source of the "W" numbers still used to designate most of Bach's works. Wotquenne based his list on the holdings of the library of the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, which had acquired Westphal's collection. Although Wotquenne numbered the works in a single series, he followed Westphal (and indirectly NV) in grouping works by genre; thus W. 1–47 comprise keyboard concertos, W. 48–65 are keyboard sonatas, and so forth. Unfortunately, Wotquenne failed to list many works that were preserved in other collections, in particular the unpublished vocal compositions whose manuscript sources were in the possession of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin. He also failed to include all of NV's information about dates and places of composition.

Wotquenne's catalog was thus incomplete. Its "W" numbers nevertheless remain the most common means of identifying Bach's works, despite the publication in 1989 of the more complete catalog of E. Eugene Helm. Helm listed manuscript and printed sources of Bach's works, and he identified doubtful and spurious works as well as genuine ones. Yet Helm lacked access to items in the archive of the Sing-Akademie, which went missing during World War II and turned up only in the late 1990s.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, and because of numerous inaccuracies in Helm's catalog, most scholars now use "H" numbers only when referring to works missed by Wotquenne.<sup>6</sup> At this

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<sup>3</sup> Surviving manuscript copies of keyboard music kept in Bach's household often bear two catalog numbers, one corresponding to the numbering in CV, the other (usually in parentheses) corresponding with NV. See, e.g., the title page for the Sonata W. 65/2 reproduced from P 775 in Berg, 3:101, with autograph CV number and NV number probably in the hand of Bach's daughter.

<sup>4</sup> Westphal's catalog is now in B Br Fétis 5218; this and other items collected by Westphal are described in "Die Sammlung Westphal," in Leisinger and Wollny, *Die Bach-Quellen der Bibliotheken in Brüssel*, 25–74. Another early list occasionally useful to scholars is that in Bitter, *Carl Philipp Emanuel und Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, 2:325–44.

<sup>5</sup> On the recovery of the Sing-Akademie archive, see Grimsted, "Bach is Back in Berlin," also Wolff, "Recovered in Kiev."

<sup>6</sup> Some writings, including the first edition of the *New Grove Dictionary* (published in 1980), used "H" numbers from an early version of Helm's list that differ from those in the published catalog.

writing, a new multi-volume catalog of the composer's works has begun to appear, incorporating reliable information about chronology, sources, and other matters not found in older listings. Even when complete, however, it is unlikely to supersede the existing “W” and “H” lists for identifying individual works.<sup>7</sup>

## Sources

Any list of works is ultimately an index to actual hand-written, printed, and (now) digitized musical scores and parts. Bach saw a substantial fraction of his output into print, some of it self-published, the remainder issued in authorized editions by publishers whom he knew personally. In most cases, NV indicates which works appeared in authorized editions; where these exist, they usually give the most reliable texts for Bach's compositions. Even published works could undergo revision, however, although it has been debated whether Bach's subsequent variations and arrangements of certain printed works constituted replacements or merely alternative versions.<sup>8</sup>

The majority of Bach's output remained in manuscript during his lifetime, and at this writing much of it remains unpublished. Yet Bach's concern for disseminating his music in accurate texts is evident in what seems to have been an unusually systematic approach to the production and sale of handwritten copies. Doubtless this reflected a highly profitable household business; even more than his father, Bach was a music seller as well as a composer and player. The system eventually involved Bach's wife and daughter as well as the composer himself, who employed trusted scribes to transcribe manuscripts for sale from so-called house copies. The latter included autograph manuscripts, but Bach had copyists prepare fresh scores and parts as old ones became worn through use or illegible through revision. Individual copies of printed editions could serve the same purpose after a print run was exhausted. Bach had no sentimental attachment to his student works and early drafts, however, and he evidently destroyed most of these. In a famous letter he mentions burning “a ream and more” of old works, implicitly comparing himself favorably to Handel, whose “youthful works” were still preserved; Bach regarded this as an embarrassment (he calls it “comical”).<sup>9</sup>

Exactly which of the many surviving manuscripts are Bach's house copies, and when Bach adopted the system, must be determined by scholars as part of the process of editing each individual work. Bach's practices must have evolved, a regular system emerging perhaps around 1750. By then, demand for his music had probably reached a point where ad hoc practices no

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<sup>7</sup> Volume 2 on the vocal works, edited by Wolfram Enßlin and Uwe Wolf, has appeared first: *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke, Teil 2: Vokalwerke* (Stuttgart, Carus, 2014). This is volume 3.2 of the larger series known as the *Bach-Repertorium*.

<sup>8</sup> See Kramer, *Unfinished Music*, 59, reflecting an argument of Darrell Berg (“C. P. E. Bach's 'Variations' and 'Embellishments,’” 171).

<sup>9</sup> Letter of Jan. 21, 1786, to Eschenburg, who had recently translated Burney's *Sketch of the Life of Handel* (no. 287 in Clark, *Letters*, 244).

longer sufficed and many faulty or unrevised texts were in circulation. Early works not listed in NV, and early versions of later ones, usually survive only in poor texts preserved in peripheral sources of doubtful provenance.

The largest single group of manuscript sources for Bach's works is still probably that in the library of the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, which includes not only the Westphal collection but numerous additional items gathered mainly during the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Virtually all this material comprises not autographs but manuscript copies, many of them obtained by Westphal himself from Bach's family, the remainder from various sources. Westphal sought to have an accurate copy of the final version of every work, but he did not always succeed. Hence, even for works preserved in late and seemingly authoritative manuscripts from his collection, editors must also consult sources from other repositories.

The most important of these are in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (D B) and the Sing-Akademie archive (SA); the latter is legally distinct but since 2001 has been effectively incorporated within the Staatsbibliothek. The holdings in these two collections include most of Bach's surviving autograph material, as well as scores and individual parts made for his own performances (chiefly by his copyists). Both collections also contain many further sources that are less directly related to the composer, including sale copies made by publishers such as Breitkopf, who handled manuscripts as well as printed editions.<sup>11</sup> An essential guide to the Bach-family holdings of the Berlin library (D B), originally edited by Paul Kast and published in 1958, was reissued in 2003. The new edition adds the manuscripts of the SA and also serves as an index to a published reproduction of the entire Berlin Bach manuscript collection, available on microfiche in major research libraries.

Most manuscripts elsewhere are later and more remote in origin from the composer, but there are nevertheless important items in other collections. For instance, the Bibliothèque National in Paris holds autograph scores for a number of chamber works, and the Library of Congress in Washington has numerous copies of keyboard sonatas and concertos prepared by several professional copyists close to Bach.<sup>12</sup> At this writing, however, there is no up-to-date published listing of these sources; one must rely on the Helm catalog, supplemented by the critical reports in editions of individual works.

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<sup>10</sup> Details on the Bach sources in this collection are in Leisinger and Wollny, *Die Bach-Quellen der Bibliotheken in Brüssel*. Some of the Brussels sources are kept not in the library of the conservatory (B Bc) but in the royal library (B Br).

<sup>11</sup> Breitkopf published thematic catalogs of music available for sale in manuscript copies, originally issued in installments; Brook, *Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue*, is a facsimile edition. The identification of extant manuscripts sold by Breitkopf and other publishers has been a major occupation of scholars and editors; see, e.g., Kobayashi, "On the Identification of Breitkopf's Manuscripts."

<sup>12</sup> Details in, e.g., CPEBCW 3/9.2:186–87.

A number of manuscript as well as printed sources of Bach's works have been published in facsimile editions. Most important of these are six volumes containing his collected keyboard works, edited by Darrell Berg.<sup>13</sup> Individual sources for other works, especially some of the solo and trio sonatas, have also been published, and a growing number of libraries are making electronic facsimiles of selected holdings available online at websites such as [imslp.org](http://imslp.org) and [hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/loebmusic/collections/digital.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/loebmusic/collections/digital.cfm). These reproductions, however, are of varying quality, and not all the manuscript sources available in print or online are reliable or particularly close to the composer.

## Editions

Bach's own publications and reworkings of his music marked the first step in the editing of his compositions. But whereas a modern scholarly edition allows the reader to reconstruct the compositional history and transmission of a work, Bach's revisions suppressed it, and he and his heirs normally issued works only in what they regarded as their final, perfected forms. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century editions usually attempted to follow the same policy, but many actually gave early or faulty versions due to the inaccessibility of reliable sources or the failure to evaluate available sources properly. This remained true even of some of the scores in what was intended to be a scholarly critical edition of Bach's complete works, launched in the 1980s but abandoned after issuing just four volumes.<sup>14</sup> A new project to publish the composer's works, *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works* (CPEBCW) issued its first volume in 2005. At this writing it has already issued somewhat more than half its projected volumes, which will number over one hundred.

Editions, like translations, are necessary falsifications. Like similar projects founded in the late twentieth century, the CPEBCW follows current scholarly preferences for limited editorial intervention and aspires to present early versions of works on an equal footing with later ones. Yet the application of uniform editorial policies to a diverse oeuvre inevitably suppresses aspects of the original notation that can provide subtle clues about performance practice, interpretation, and other matters.<sup>15</sup> Unavoidable, too, is the need to be selective in the presentation of early and alternate versions, given the great number of these. Editions such as the CPEBCW therefore favor late versions even of early works, and they sometimes suppress matter valuable for the

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<sup>13</sup> *The Collected Works for Solo Keyboard by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)* (abbreviated here as “Berg”).

<sup>14</sup> The *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach Edition* (CPEBE), headed by Helm and Rachel W. Wade. See, e.g., the review of volume 2/23 by Ulrich Leisinger in *Early Keyboard Journal* 11 (1993): 146–52.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Wollenberg (“Reviving C. P. E. Bach,” 695) on the consequences of simplifying the original notation of dynamics in Bach's keyboard music. Together with the arbitrary regularization of the beaming of small note values and the grouping of notes belonging to different voices onto single stems, the edition's practice substantially alters the appearance of Bach's keyboard parts.

performance practice and reception history of the music, such as cadenzas and alternative ornament signs, on the grounds that these are not assuredly by Bach himself.<sup>16</sup>

It is inevitable that any edition will contain errors and oversights, and the CPEBCW has begun publishing corrections on its website.<sup>17</sup> Some types of errors, however, are more matters of interpretation than fact, and some systematic problems may be evident only to specialists. For instance, like many such projects, the CPEBCW in principle bases the text for each work on a “principal” source, with several additional sources (where available) “used for comparison”; any further sources are dismissed as “not used for the edition.” This approach was a late-twentieth-century reaction against an earlier “collation” approach, in which the editor selected readings, sometimes arbitrarily, from any number of sources. But the so-called “best text” method can eliminate information about early or alternate versions that is preserved only in peripheral sources, which can also prove important for the historical context and reception of a work, including its performance practice. In some cases, moreover, what is in principle an edition based on a “best text” is in fact a collation—justifiably so when no one source is particularly accurate or close to the composer.

It is in the nature of Bach's music and its sources that no edition will ever be either complete or finished. Editions are ephemeral interpretations, limited by what their editors know or can know. They are only launching pads, whether for performances or scholarship, but already the CPEBCW has done more to clarify the nature of Bach's texts and their history than two centuries of previous efforts.

## Performance

Performance practices changed significantly over the course of Bach's life, and even his own *Versuch* can be considered authoritative only for portions of his output. The existing literature on eighteenth-century practice is vast, and even studies and guides relevant specifically to Bach's music are too numerous to summarize here. General treatments of historical performance practice rarely provide useful details about the specific genres or styles in which Bach wrote, except perhaps during his earliest period at Leipzig. A serious student of the subject will, however, turn to Bach's own *Versuch* (1753–62), followed by that of Quantz (1752) and their Berlin colleague Agricola's annotated translation (1757) of the 1723 singing treatise by Tosi (all listed in the

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, in CPEBCW 3/9.2 (edited by the present author), containing the concertos W. 4–6, only the early version of W. 5 and an intermediate version of the slow movement of W. 4 are printed. The author's editions of early versions of the remaining movements, as well as several cadenzas and other material, are online at <http://faculty.wagner.edu/david-schulenberg/concertos-by-c-p-e-bach/>.

<sup>17</sup> Thus far, however, only a few lists of errata have appeared, e.g., for the two volumes of pieces for *Kenner und Liebhaber*. These are hidden deep within the structure of the website (one must scroll down to the bottom of the tables of contents at [www.cpebach.org/toc/toc-I-4-1.html](http://www.cpebach.org/toc/toc-I-4-1.html) and [www.cpebach.org/toc/toc-I-4-2.html](http://www.cpebach.org/toc/toc-I-4-2.html)) and are far from complete; cf. Wollenberg, “C. P. E. Bach for Connoisseurs and Amateurs,” 438–39.

bibliography). Much information can be found in the prefatory material of individual volumes in the CPEBCW, and the author has published a few further contributions that some readers may find helpful, if only by providing suggestions for further reading.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See especially the sections designated “Performance Considerations” or the like in CPEBCW 1/4.1, 1.9, 2.1, 3/9.2, 3/9.4, and 4.1. The program booklets in Miklós Spányi's CD recordings of the solo keyboard works and concertos contain valuable commentaries on instruments and performance, and the author's article “Toward the Most Elegant Taste” presents matter on continuo realization.