Preface to "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach 1714–1788: exhibitions and essays celebrating the 300th anniversary of the composer’s birth"

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Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)

Bach on the other hand has raised himself through his original genius to the stature of a great and peerless man, and is the model for an entire school, indeed the best school of its kind that any nation has ever had.

Johann Friedrich Reichardt, 1774

C.P.E. Bach, the second son of Johann Sebastian Bach, became one of the most prolific and influential composers of the eighteenth century. His oeuvre encompassed virtually every musical genre of the time, except opera, and he wrote one of the most important and enduring music treatises on keyboard instruments. During his lifetime, he enjoyed a high reputation, and his music was widely distributed in print and in manuscript.

Drawing on a wealth of materials at Harvard, with a selection of important items generously lent by other institutions and individuals, Houghton Library and the Loeb Music Library are mounting complementary exhibitions to celebrate the 300th birthday of C.P.E. Bach. The Loeb Library exhibition focuses on the editorial challenges and current editorial practices behind the ongoing publication of Bach’s complete works. The Packard Humanities Institute (PHI)—in cooperation with the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, the Sächsische Akademie zu Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, and Harvard University—is producing a critical edition of the works, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works (hereafter CPEB:CW), projected to run to 115 volumes, with over half that number now in print.

The Houghton exhibition explores Bach’s intellectual and musical background by documenting the Bach family heritage, his service in the court of Frederick the Great, his interactions with authors, his important keyboard treatise, his reputation in his lifetime, his standing with his contemporaries, his later career in Hamburg, and his musical legacy.

Additional biographical information on C.P.E. Bach and critical assessments of his works are available in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, edited by Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (2001), 29 volumes, and also available online by subscription as part of Grove Music Online, edited by Deane Root at www.oxfordmusiconline.com. The complete contents and prefaces to the individual volumes in CPEB:CW (at www.cpebach.org) also provide much valuable biographical and scholarly detail.
Three thematic catalogs of C.P.E. Bach’s works have been published:  
*Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. Hamburg, 1790* (hereafter NV 1790); see Houghton exhibition case 8 (p. 41 below).


An anthology of C.P.E. Bach’s “greatest hits” based on CPEB:CW is available from The Packard Humanities Institute. Selected works are available as study scores in the series CPEB:CW Offprints and can be ordered at Amazon.com.

There are two important accounts of music resources at Harvard:  

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to David Schulenberg and Christoph Wolff for contributing essays to this issue. My fellow editors at the editorial office for CPEB:CW—Laura Buch, Jason B. Grant, and Mark W. Knoll—each curated one of the cases for the exhibition at Loeb Music Library. I also want to acknowledge our editorial assistants, Lisa DeSiro and Ruth B. Libbey, who assisted in proofreading and translating. It has been a pleasure to work with such a group of smart, convivial colleagues. None of this would be possible without the support of David W. Packard, president and founder of The Packard Humanities Institute.

Dennis Marnon, Administrative Officer of Houghton Library and Coordinating Editor of HLB, has guided me through the process from beginning to end. He advised me in selecting the items for display, oversaw the preparation of the exhibition and catalog, and gave generously of his expertise and time for the past eighteen months or so. I had no idea how many others would be involved with conservation work and behind-the-scenes activity, but I want to single out Sarah Adams, Louis French Music Librarian, who was also involved in this project from the outset. The holdings of the Harvard Libraries are extraordinarily rich, and it has been a delight to explore the collections.

I am also appreciative for the other libraries (and librarians) who have agreed to lend important, unique items to the exhibition, including Tuft University (Michael J. Rogan), the Boston Public Library (Charlotte A. Kolczynski), Yale University Music Library (Suzanne Eggleston Lovejoy and Ruthann McTyre), the Krauth Memorial Library at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (Ron Townsend), the Bach-Archiv Leipzig (Kerstin Weise), the Library of Congress, Music Division (Daniel Boomhower and Susan Vita), and Elias N. Kulukundis. Martina Rebmann at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv has been extraordinarily generous in giving CPEB:CW access to their C.P.E. Bach sources.

This undertaking, like so many others, has taken much more time than I thought it would, and I want to thank my family for giving me “time off” to do this work. Finally, I want to thank all the editors who have contributed to CPEB:CW over the years. This has been an amazing undertaking, and I have grown to admire the “original genius” Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.

Paul Corneilson
Managing Editor, CPEB:CW
and guest curator of the Harvard exhibitions
 Contributors

Laura Buch (PhD, Musicology, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester) has worked as an editor for CPEB:CW since 2006. Her research also includes music and aesthetics of 17th-century Italy, and Baroque performance practice. She is presently editing C.P.E. Bach's quartets and other chamber works in CPEB:CW, II/5.

Paul Corneilson (PhD, Musicology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) was appointed managing editor of CPEB:CW in 1999; he has been an associate of the Harvard Department of Music since 2000. In addition to editing works in CPEB:CW IV/7.1, IV/7.2, V/5.2, and V/6.1, he has prepared critical editions of an opera, Ifigenia in Tauride, by Gian Francesco de Majo, and two operas, Zanaida and Lucio Silla, by J.C. Bach. His anthology of C.P.E. Bach’s “greatest hits” will be published in 2014.

Jason B. Grant (PhD, Musicology, University of Pittsburgh) has been an editor for CPEB:CW since 2006. He wrote a dissertation on the late Passions of Georg Philipp Telemann, and he has published articles on Telemann and C.P.E. Bach in the Bach-Jahrbuch and Magdeburger Telemann-Studien, and reviews of books and CDs in Eighteenth-Century Music, Bach Notes (the newsletter of the American Bach Society), and the Newsletter of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music. He has edited a volume of C.P.E. Bach’s Einführungsmusiken for CPEB:CW, V/3.2, and is also editing volumes of that composer’s Christmas cantatas (V/2.6) and keyboard concertos (III/9.11).

Mark W. Knoll (PhD, Musicology, University of Michigan) has been an editor for CPEB:CW since 2004. His dissertation explored statistical techniques for resolving authenticity questions in the music of the Bach sons. He is also managing editor at Steglein Publishing, Inc., a publishing house specializing in eighteenth-century music that he founded in 2000.

David Schulenberg is Professor and Chair in the Department of Music at Wagner College and a member of the faculty in Historical Performance at The Juilliard School, both in New York City. His book The Music of C.P.E. Bach is forthcoming from the University of Rochester Press in 2014.

Christoph Wolff, Adams University Research Professor at Harvard University, served as Acting Director of the Harvard University Library (1991–1992) and as Director of the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, Germany (2001–2013).