

NAXOS

C.P.E.
BACH

Sonatas and Rondos

Christopher Hinterhuber, Piano



Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

Keyboard Sonatas

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was born in Weimar, the second son by his first wife of Johann Sebastian Bach, then newly appointed Konzertmeister to the Grand Duke Wilhelm Ernst. He attended the Latin School in Cöthen, where his father became Court Kapellmeister in 1717, and in 1723 moved with the family to Leipzig, where he became a pupil at the Thomasschule, on the staff of which his father had become Cantor. In 1731 he matriculated as a law student at the University of Leipzig, embarking on a course of study that had been denied his father. He continued these studies at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder, and in 1738, rejecting the chance of accompanying a young gentleman on a tour abroad, entered the service of the Crown Prince of Prussia at Ruppín as harpsichordist. He moved with the court to Berlin in 1740, on the accession to the throne of the Prince, better known subsequently as Frederick the Great.

In Berlin and at Potsdam, Bach, confirmed as Court Harpsichordist, had the unenviable task of accompanying evening concerts at which the King, an able enough amateur flautist, was a frequent performer. His colleagues, generally of a more conservative bent, included the distinguished flautist and theorist Quantz, the Benda and Graun brothers and other musicians of similar reputation, while men of letters at the court included Lessing. In 1755 he applied for his father's old position at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, but was unsuccessful, his father's former pupil Doles being appointed to take the place of Johann Sebastian's immediate successor, Gottlob Harrer. It was not until 1768 that Carl Philipp Emanuel was able to escape from a position that he had found increasingly uncongenial, succeeding his godfather Telemann as Cantor at the Johanneum in Hamburg, a city that offered much wider opportunities than Leipzig had ever done. He spent the last twenty years of his life there. In Berlin he had won a wider reputation with his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Essay on the True Art of Clavier

Playing) and was regarded as the leading keyboard-player of his day. In Hamburg he continued to enjoy his established position as a man of wide general education, able to mix on equal terms with the leading writers of his generation and no mere working musician. He died in 1788, his death mourned by a generation that thought of him as more important than his father, the latter disrespectfully dubbed 'the old periwig' by his sons.

As a composer Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was prolific, writing a considerable quantity of music for the harpsichord and for the instrument he much favoured, the clavichord. His music exemplifies the theories expounded in his *Versuch*, with a tendency to use dramatic and rhetorical devices, a fine command of melody and a relatively sparing use of contrapuntal elements that had by now come to seem merely academic. In musical terms he is associated with Lessing's theories of sentiment, *Empfindsamkeit*, the complement of Enlightenment rationalism.

Bach published some eighteen collections of keyboard music in his lifetime and, while he failed to please general popular taste in Vienna and South Germany, he nevertheless won the admiration of the greatest composers, of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The influence on Haydn, in particular, is attested by that composer's early biographers and is, in any case, apparent from his own keyboard sonatas.

The *Sonata in D minor, Wq.51/4*, was written in Berlin in 1758 and published in 1761 as what was to be a set of six, a supplement to the *Sechs Sonaten für Clavier mit veränderten Reprisen* (Six Sonatas for Clavier with Varied Repeats), first published in 1760. The energetic first movement, with its rapid passage-work, is followed by a slow movement with distinctly rhetorical elements interrupting the general tranquillity of the singing principal theme. The sonata ends with a vigorous final *Presto*.

Bach's *Sonata in F sharp minor, Wq.52/4*, was written in 1744 and published in 1763 in a set of six

sonatas as a second supplement to the *Sechs Sonaten fürs Clavier*. The first movement offers a contrast between the dash of the opening and a secondary singing melody. The second movement, marked *Poco andante*, offers an aria, discreetly accompanied, a reminder of Bach's own instructions in the *Versuch* on the art of presenting a sustained melody on the keyboard. The sonata ends with a return to the original minor mode in a texture that develops further the dialogue suggested in the previous movement.

The *Sonata in A major, Wq.55/4*, was written in 1765 and published in 1779 as one of a set of six sonatas, *Sechs Clavier-Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber* (Six Clavier Sonatas for Connoisseurs and Amateurs), the first of six similar collections, dedicated to a Madame Zernitz. The first classical movement leads to an F sharp minor *Adagio* in which one writer has perceived an affinity with the slow movement of Mozart's *Piano Concerto in A major, K.488*. The sonata ends with an *Allegro* that seems to suggest a vein explored by Haydn.

Bach's *Rondos* proved particularly popular with those who subscribed to his *Clavier-Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber*. The *Rondo in D minor, Wq.61/4*, appeared in 1787 in the final collection, *Clavier-Sonaten und freye Fantasien nebst einigen Rondos für Fortepiano* (Clavier Sonatas and Free Fantasies with Some Rondos for Fortepiano), the last contribution to what Charles Burney's correspondent Thomas Twining called his *Carlophilipmanuelbachomania*, an enthusiasm that must have been widely shared, as witnessed by the commercial success of these publications, although demand for this latest collection had been rather less, with only 288 subscribed for. Carl Friedrich Cramer, indeed, in the *Magazin der Musik* that he published in Hamburg between 1783 and 1786,

deplores the inclusion of rondos, which he regards as a trivial concession to superficial contemporary fashions. Nevertheless Cramer, since 1775 professor of Greek and oriental languages at the University of Kiel, was among the subscribers, as was Baron van Swieten in Vienna, who ordered twelve copies, and the publisher Artaria who ordered six. Subscribers in London included Dr Burney, the composer and harpsichordist Thomas Linley, Carl Friedrich Abel, former colleague of Johann Christian Bach, and Johann Samuel Schroeter, husband of the heiress Rebecca Schroeter, who, as a widow, enjoyed a relationship with Haydn during his London visits. In Berlin Mendelssohn's great-aunt Sara Levy continued her patronage of the Bach family, while 44 copies were demanded in St Petersburg. This final volume contains two sonatas, two fantasias and two rondos. In these last Bach's music is, as Burney had earlier written, 'every thing, by turns, that music can express'. The *Rondo in B flat major, Wq.58/5*, is taken from the 1783 fourth collection for *Kenner und Liebhaber*.

The *Sonata in C major, Wq.65/47*, was written in 1775 but not published in Bach's lifetime. The first of the two movements has the contrast and variety characteristic of the composer, with an aria-like *Adagio assai* that embodies the ideals of the *Empfindsamerstil*, with its juxtaposed changes of mood. Bach's *Sonata in E major, Wq.65/29*, also unpublished in his lifetime, is a relatively early work, written in 1755 and straightforward in form and appeal. The present recording ends with the *Cantabile* from the *Sonata in B minor, Wq.55/3*, published in 1779 in the first Hamburg collection of sonatas, a telling melody of apparent simplicity.

Keith Anderson

Christopher Hinterhuber



Christopher Hinterhuber was born in Austria and studied with Axel Papenberg, Rudolf Kehrner and Heinz Medjimorec at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna and Lazar Berman at the Accademia Pianistica in Imola. His numerous prizes and awards in international competitions include top prizes at the J.S.Bach Competition in Leipzig, the J.S.Bach Competition in Saarbrücken, the Pretoria Unisa International Piano Competition in South Africa, the Schumann Prize in the Geza Anda Competition in Zurich and the Beethoven Competition in Vienna. In 2002/2003 he performed as “Rising Star” in the international series at Carnegie Hall, New York, the Athens Concert Hall, Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Wigmore Hall, London, Konserthus Stockholm, the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Symphony Hall Birmingham, the Vienna Musikverein, Mozarteum Salzburg, and

the Philharmonie in Cologne. Christopher Hinterhuber has appeared as a soloist with distinguished conductors, including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yakov Kreizberg, Bruno Weil, Howard Griffiths and Dennis Russell-Davies and has given many recitals and chamber music performances in most European countries, New Zealand, the Americas and Japan.

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