

Introduction

C. P. E. Bach wrote at least 15 works for obbligato keyboard and melody instrument, over half of them for violin. They are similar in genre to the three sonatas for gamba and harpsichord obbligato by his father J. S. Bach. Sonatas of this type were originally converted from Italianate trios for two melody instruments (often violins or flutes) and bass, and many of them exist in both forms. C. P. E. Bach explicitly authorized this practice in the preface to his two sonatas (Helm 578 and 579), published in 1751:

Two Trios; the first for two violins and bass, the second for one flute, one violin and bass, whereby however in both works one of the upper voices can be played on the keyboard, . . .¹

This obbligato sonata could easily be a converted trio, although no such variant has been found. In its compositional texture, it follows the traditional Corellian trio model rather more closely than the obbligato sonatas of J. S. Bach do: that is, the two upper voices share the same melodic material throughout, which allows for imitative entries and contrapuntal treatment, but discourages any idiomatic writing for the different instruments which may play the upper voices. This extensive use of pure, old-fashioned counterpoint makes it important that all voices can be clearly heard in performance. In overall form, however, Bach has chosen the more modern three-movement fast-slow-fast format, which was to become the norm for sonatas, over the popular Berlin slow-fast-fast format and the more archaic slow-fast-slow-fast *sonata da chiesa* model favoured by his father's generation.

This sonata dates from 1759. Although Bach's original score is for viola da gamba, the other contemporary sources for viola and violin are equally legitimate indications of the performance practice of the time, and the work is equally successful on all three instruments.²

Bach was the high priest of *Empfindsamkeit*, the characteristically North German sensitive, directly emotional and highly rhetorical style. This is most noticeable in the *Larghetto*, which would surely have brought contemporary audiences to tears. The theme is one of Bach's most poignant statements, with its expressive intervals (the diminished fourth between the first two notes of bars 1 and 2, and the unexpected sixths in bar 4), its dissonances (between B flat and B natural in bar 1) and its strong melodic line.

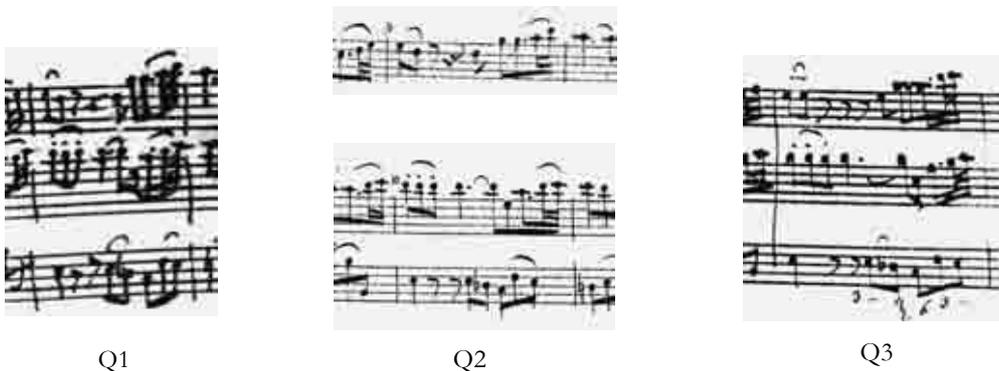
Another characteristic of the *empfindsamer Stil* is the frequent and effective use of expressive *appoggiaturas*. These are normally dissonant and can either be written as small "grace notes," as in bar 4, or as full-sized notes as in bar 3, where the first, fourth and seventh notes of the violin part are written-out *appoggiaturas*. Bach himself gives us instruction on performance of the first and more usual category of *appoggiatura*: irrespective of its written value, it should be played on the beat, and take half the value of the main note before which it stands. If the main note is dotted (as in bar 4), the *appoggiatura* takes two-thirds of its value. *Appoggiaturas* are also found in the *Allegro* movements. In the first movement they are a frequent and important part of Bach's "singing *allegro*" style, whereas in the last movement they are used with other ornaments in the occasional lyrical moment in an otherwise crisp and vigorous *Allegro assai*. Bach also instructs that all *appoggiaturas* are slurred to the following main note, whether this is indicated or not.

It is part of Bach's genius that he is often surprising and unpredictable. Previous editors have made "corrections" to Bach's original in places where we have chosen to reproduce the musical text exactly as it is found in Bach's autograph. This choice is supported by the fact that neither Bach's trusted copyist of Q2 (see below), Michel, nor the copyist of Q3 altered the text at these points. The most problematic of these places is the last dotted-crotchet beat of bar 10 in the gamba part of the *Larghetto* (see the

¹ Alfred Wotquenne, *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach* (Leipzig, 1905; rep., 1964) 58.

² This sonata is published separately by Edition Güntersberg for viola da gamba or viola and keyboard (G080).

following detail figures). Q1 and Q2 agree at this point, but whereas Michel's intention in Q2 is perfectly clear and precise, the autograph Q1 has been altered to the way it now stands. It is not possible to decipher the original text. Furthermore, Q3 appears to have originally been identical to Q2 at this point, but has been altered.



In fact there is no real problem of performance practice here, since the rhythm, no matter how it is notated, is simply a formulaic rendition of a very common ornamental device which Bach includes under the category of the *Schleifer*. Precise rendition of the differing rhythms in the two upper parts was probably not expected. As in all questions of performance practice, the players can decide how to reproduce a passage when given the text and information relating to it.

We have three sources of this sonata:

Q1 – D-B Mus. m. autogr. Bach P 357. Berlin State Library - Prussian Cultural Heritage, Music Department with Mendelssohn Archive: “Trio No. 24/Viola da Gamba/Cembalo.” Autograph score.

Q2 – B-Bc 5635. Library of the Royal Conservatoire, Brussels: “Sonata./per il/Cembalo./ Viola.” Parts.

Q3 – D-B SA 3627/1. Archive of the Berlin Sing-Akademie (deposited in the Berlin State Library - Prussian Cultural Heritage, Music Department: “Sonata/Violino/Cembalo.” Score.

Q1 and Q3 are almost identical. Almost all differences can be identified as writing errors or carelessness on the part of the copyist. Q3, the source for violin, has just one octave transposition from Q1 (I, bar 29, violin part: the last note is transposed up an octave to suit the range of the violin). The existence of Q3 justifies publication of this sonata for the violin; our edition, however, follows the autograph Q1. Q2 and Q3 were consulted only to resolve doubtful passages.

Repeated accidentals and original beaming have been retained from Q1; however, we have added occasional reminder accidentals. Bach adheres generally to the convention that accidentals apply only to the note before which they stand or immediate repetitions of that note, and not necessarily for the whole bar. We have adapted the text to the modern convention where necessary by adding occasional editorial accidentals in brackets. The slurs vary among the sources and are sometimes unclear in Q1. In the interests of playability we have added some slurs, using a dotted line. The soprano C-clef in the harpsichord right hand in Q1 has been replaced by the treble clef; the violin is notated in the treble clef as in Q3.

We thank Angela Koppenwallner for the realisation of the figured bass.

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