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C. P. E. Bach, Haydn and the Evolving Keyboard Idioms of the Later Eighteenth Century

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Abstract

The long careers of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Joseph Haydn coincided with fundamental transformations in how keyboard instruments were built and played and how composers wrote for them. Haydn's keyboard music probably saw the more profound changes in compositional style, yet C. P. E. Bach and others preceded him in discovering ways to incorporate new keyboard idioms into pieces written for new types of instruments. Bach gradually shifted from writing generic keyboard music to composing in idioms most appropriate to two-manual harpsichords, unfretted clavichords or fortepianos. Haydn likewise began writing in a generic idiom; many works that have been posited as having been meant for the clavichord cannot in fact be assigned clearly to that or any other specific instrument. Although Haydn did eventually turn to writing specifically for the fortepiano, he too made a gradual, and relatively late, transition from a generic approach to one that centred on the grand fortepianos of the late eighteenth century. Bach's influence on Haydn is inseparable from the matter of the keyboard instruments. Although the precise nature and extent of Bach's influence cannot be determined, compositional elements derived by Haydn from Bach's music range from superficial thematic and notational parallelisms to fundamental conceptions of what keyboard music could be or could express.

Keywords: Joseph Haydn; Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach; fortepiano; harpsichord; sonatas

The choice of the 'best' or 'preferred' keyboard instrument in eighteenth-century European music has been a favourite subject of discussion for scholars as well as performers. The problem is inextricably connected to the rapid evolution during that time of keyboard instruments and technique, or rather of what might better be described as keyboard 'idiom'. These matters have been considered with particular enthusiasm by students of the music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Joseph Haydn, often in connection to the question of how Bach might have influenced his younger contemporary.¹

No consensus has ever been reached on these issues, perhaps because the questions asked have not been exactly the right ones. The present investigation reframes the matter by first considering the concept of 'keyboard idiom', then examining the keyboard idiom of individual compositions and ending with a reconsideration of the musical relationship between the two composers. The chief finding is that, although both musicians probably did their actual music-writing at the clavichord, neither intended their keyboard music for specific types of instruments until much later in

¹ The present essay complements my study 'C. P. E. Bach's Keyboard Music and the Question of Idiom', in *Bach Perspectives*, volume 11, ed. Mary Oleskiewicz (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 2017), 83–112. Three books that have previously considered the same issues are A. Peter Brown, *Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music: Sources and Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Bernard Harrison, *Haydn's Keyboard Music: Studies in Performance Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997); and Richard Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998). Additional writings are cited below. Throughout this article 'Bach' refers to C. P. E. Bach; other members of the Bach family are referred to by their full names.

their careers than is usually thought. Rather, they conceived most of their keyboard works for a generic ‘clavier’, even if individual movements seem to favour one type of instrument (such as the clavichord) or another. Even relatively late keyboard works, both solo and accompanied, are playable – and were played – on various types of harpsichord. Each composer began to write for a more specific type of keyboard instrument, that is, some variety of the fortepiano, only when dynamic effects and a new type of musical rhetoric became essential elements of compositional thought.

Instrument and Idiom

Eighteenth-century Europe knew many types of keyboard instruments: not only organs, harpsichords, clavichords and pianos, but also rarer and more exotic varieties.² None of these had a standard form; when today we use an expression like ‘clavichord’ or ‘fortepiano’, we refer only to an abstraction defined by a certain general type of keyboard mechanism. The possibility of controlling dynamics through the player’s touch was an obvious distinguishing feature of the newer types of keyboard instrument. But just as critical as touch sensitivity is the overall range of dynamics. Equally important is sustaining power, from which derives the possibility of playing a legato melody in long notes. Sonority is also significant, whether determined by distinct stops or registrations, modified by the use of dampers and other devices, or varied simply through contrasts in sound between different tessituras on a single keyboard.

Dynamics are the easiest of these features to discuss, if only because they can be discretely notated in a score. There are, however, at least three distinct types of dynamic marking in eighteenth-century keyboard music. The so-called terraced dynamics of alternating *forte* and *piano* already occur in pieces for a two-manual harpsichord, such as J. S. Bach’s Italian Concerto. Gradual change in dynamic level, that is, *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, could be indicated by the words themselves, by hairpin symbols or by the placement of individual signs for *piano* and *forte* in a way that implies a gradual change from one to the other. Representing a third type of dynamic marking are those isolated signs for *forte* or *sforzando* that start to appear around 1760 to indicate a momentary accent within a relatively quiet passage.

How a player responds to each type of dynamic sign, if at all, depends on the instrument, and it does not necessarily involve touch alone. Nor does the presence of dynamic markings in a keyboard score necessarily indicate a specific intended instrumental medium. Three levels of dynamics, such as *forte*, *piano* and *pianissimo*, already occur in Bach’s Second ‘Prussian’ Sonata, Wq48/2, of 1740.³ What this implies about choice of instrument, in a publication that was issued ‘per Cembalo’, is not entirely clear. It hardly indicates abandonment of the harpsichord, for on a two-manual instrument one can divide the hands between louder and softer keyboards to express an intermediate dynamic level.⁴ Eighteenth-century harpsichords could incorporate Venetian swells, pliable leather plectra and machine stops, each permitting a certain degree and type of dynamic inflection.

² No recent scholarly books cover eighteenth-century keyboard instruments generally, but the catalogues of two important museum collections can serve the same purpose: John Koster, *Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1994) and John Henry van der Meer, Martin Elste, Günther Wagner and others, *Kielklaviere: Cembali, Spinette, Virginal* (Berlin: Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1991).

³ The six sonatas dedicated to Prussian king Frederick II (‘the Great’) were published in Berlin in 1742. Dates of composition for C. P. E. Bach’s works are from the *Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach* (Hamburg: Gottlieb Friedrich Schniebes, 1790). A searchable transcription is online at www.cpebach.org/pdfs/resources/NV-1790.pdf.

⁴ This was recommended by Bach (albeit in a discussion of continuo realization) in his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, two volumes (Berlin: author, 1753–1762; modern critical edition by Tobias Pleburch in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, volumes 7/1–3 (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 2011)), volume 2, chapter 29, paragraph 7.

More fundamentally, composers did not necessarily expect every dynamic sign to be realized literally. Well into the nineteenth century, composers continued to write unrealizable dynamic indications, as in several famous instances of hairpins marked on single chords.⁵ During Haydn's later years, composers were calling for the damper pedal in passages that include rests and staccatos, which therefore no longer signify an actual cessation of sound; rather, the hand springs away from the keyboard as the notes continue to ring.⁶ In short, there was a tradition that the notation of music for keyboard instruments did not represent what one actually heard. Dynamic indications, in particular, must have been regarded much like ornament signs, the realization of which might be desirable but not essential to the composition. This was implicit in the publication of keyboard music that was described as being for either piano or harpsichord, a player of the latter not being expected to realize every dynamic indication. One might imagine that composers preferred to hear every dynamic sign realized in sound. Yet it cannot be necessarily assumed that as Bach, Haydn and their contemporaries wrote increasingly numerous and detailed dynamic indications into their music, they took use of the piano for granted. In any case, dynamics are only one element of keyboard idiom.

Keyboard idiom in works by C. P. E. Bach

'Keyboard idiom' means how the composer writes for the keyboard, that is, the uniquely clavieristic gestures and textures of the music. To speak of musical textures and gestures is to speak metaphorically; behind those metaphors stand rather fuzzy concepts that are difficult to define rigorously. Still, we might posit that what makes a particular composition 'idiomatic' to a given type of instrument is writing that exploits its unique features. Identifying such features is, to some degree, subjective, but four examples may illustrate the evolving keyboard idiom in works by Emanuel Bach. One of these is idiomatically generic; the others are increasingly specific to particular types of keyboard instrument. All four are from published works that Haydn could have known (Example 1a–d).

Example 1a is from a fugue composed in 1755 and published several years later with analytical commentary by Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg. A recent edition places this composition in a volume of organ music, but it lacks a pedal part, and Marpurg's readers are likely to have studied it at home at a stringed keyboard instrument. It is in the same quasi-vocal or pseudo-renaissance style as J. S. Bach's *Art of Fugue*, which had appeared in print with Marpurg's preface a decade earlier. Example 1b is from the 'Württemberg' Sonatas, published in 1744.⁷ It juxtaposes grand arpeggiated chords with quieter music; this is typical of writing for a two-manual harpsichord. Example 1c, from the *Reprises-Sonaten* of 1759, shows a proliferation of dynamic markings but also the thin, treble-dominated texture that is especially favourable for the clavichord.⁸

Example 1d is from a rondo explicitly for the fortepiano. The designation of instrument is included in the title of the original publication: *Clavier-Sonaten nebst einigen Rondos fürs Forte-Piano für Kenner und Liebhaber* (Leipzig: author, 1780). Although the syntax might be ambiguous, the volume was the second in a series of six, and in later volumes the layout and typography of the printed title-page leave little doubt that the words 'fürs Forte-Piano' refer specifically to the volume's three rondos (Figure 1). Printed title-pages might reflect only the publisher's notion of what might make for a marketable product. In this case, however, the close relationship between composer and publisher (as documented by correspondence) makes it unlikely that Bach would

⁵ Several examples occur in 'Fremder Mann', No. 29 from Robert Schumann's *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68.

⁶ See the final movement of Beethoven's 'Waldstein' sonata, Op. 59 (Vienna: Bureau des arts et d'industrie[, 1805]).

⁷ These works take their name from their dedication to the young Duke Carl Eugen of Württemberg, who studied with Bach while at Berlin as a guest of Frederick II.

⁸ The *Reprises-Sonaten* are known as such owing to the presence of written-out embellishments for repeated passages. In this concluding sonata of the set, which comprises a single movement in rondo form, the variations occur in the restatements of the main rondo theme.

(a) subject (in soprano)

(b) Moderato

(c) 9

(d) 21

27 56

Example 1. C. P. E. Bach: (a) Fugue in E flat major, Wq119/6, bars 119–123, from *Clavierstücke mit einem practischen Unterricht für Anfänger und Geübtere, Zweyte Sammlung* (Berlin: Haude und Spener, 1762); (b) ‘Württemberg’ Sonata No. 6 in B minor, Wq49/6/i, bars 1–5, from *Sei sonate per cembalo* (Berlin: Giovanni Ulrico Haffner, 1744); (c) Sonata in C minor Wq50/6, bars 9–20, from *VI. Sonates pour le clavecin avec des reprises variées* (Berlin: George Louis Winter, 1760); (d) Rondo in A minor, Wq56/5, bars 21–28, 56–57, from *Clavier-Sonaten nebst einigen Rondos fürs Forte-Piano für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Wq56 (Leipzig: author, 1780)

have objected to the wording or layout of the title-page, which underwent no substantive changes in the remaining three issues in the series.

Composed in 1778, the rondo shown in [Example 1d](#) substantially expands the composer’s vocabulary of keyboard gestures. These now include *crescendi* and *diminuendi*, which may (as in bars 25–26) accompany chromatic scale fragments in octaves. In addition, there is arpeggiated passagework (bars 56–63), which looks generic but sounds especially striking if played on a piano

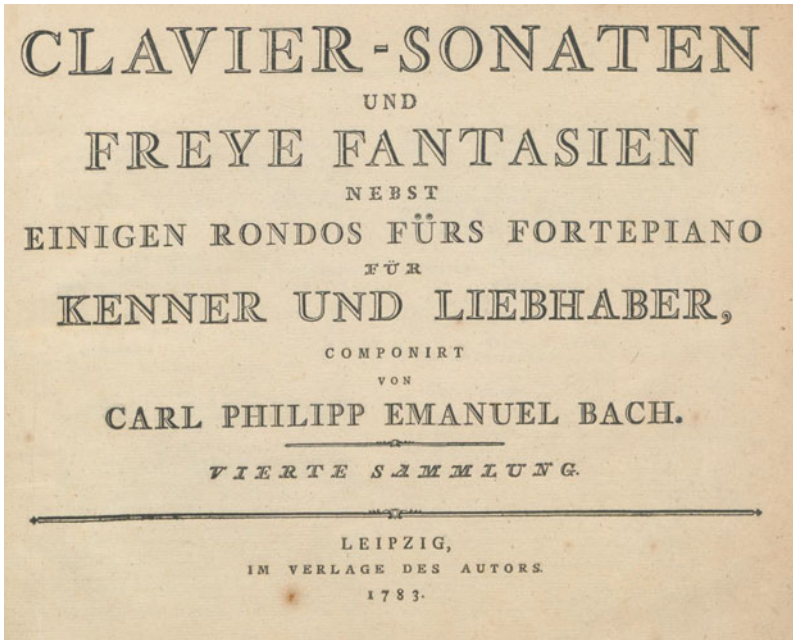


Figure 1. Bach, *Clavier-Sonaten und Freye Fantasien nebst einigen Rondos fürs Fortepiano für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Wq58 (Leipzig: author, 1783), title-page

without dampers.⁹ There are good reasons for doubting whether individual gestures can be specifically indicative of one keyboard instrument or another.¹⁰ Yet the *crescendo* marking beneath chromatic octaves for the right hand shown in [Example 1d](#), within a composition characterized by numerous close-spaced dynamic indications, supports the implication of the title-page that this example was written with some sort of piano in mind – unlike the three earlier passages illustrated.

Keyboard idiom in music by Haydn

Haydn's keyboard works, likewise written over a span of half a century, reveal a comparable range of idioms. Like those of C. P. E. Bach, Haydn's compositions for keyboard have long been studied for clues regarding either their intended or their most effective sounding medium. Reading the recent literature on the subject, one can gain the impression that each piece must have been written for some particular instrument, if only we could determine which.¹¹ The two most searching investigators of the topic for Haydn, A. Peter Brown and Bernard Harrison, acknowledged the problematic nature of the enterprise. They nevertheless sifted through various types of evidence – the availability of instruments in Vienna, letters and portraits that mention or depict keyboards, dynamic markings and titles in published music – to trace the composer's transition to writing for 'fortepiano'. Indeed,

⁹ I demonstrated this point in a lecture-recital, 'A New Voice for the *Clavier*: C. P. E. Bach and the Changing Idiom of Keyboard Music', presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Milwaukee, 8 November 2014.

¹⁰ Harrison, *Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 13, devotes a long footnote (note 48) to refuting assertions of this type.

¹¹ Regarding the works of C. P. E. Bach see John Henry van der Meer, *Die klangfarbliche Identität der Klavierwerke Carl Philipp Emanuel Bachs* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1978) and Joel Speerstra, 'Towards an Identification of the Clavichord Repertoire Among C. P. E. Bach's Solo Keyboard Music: Some Preliminary Conclusions', in *De clavicordio II*, ed. Bernard Brauchli, Susan Brauchli and Alberto Galazzo (Magnano: International Centre for Clavichord Studies, 1995), 43–81.



Example 2. Bach, 'Württemberg' Sonata No. 6 in B minor, Wq49/6/iii, bars 1–7

Brown provided a table that provisionally indicates the 'preferred instrument' and 'other possible instrument' for every solo and accompanied sonata.¹²

Yet neither a printed title-page specifying an instrument, nor a remark in a letter favouring a keyboard of a particular type or by a particular maker, can prove that a composer thought in terms of matching an individual piece with a specific instrument – or even with a general type. Haydn, like his younger contemporaries, seems to have taken the piano for granted by the end of his career. How and exactly when he began to do that remain obscure. Moreover, 'piano' or 'forte-piano' remains a vague formulation, given the tremendous variety of instrument types available throughout Haydn's lifetime, even within a single major city.

From generic 'clavier' to piano

Harrison argued that Haydn's compositional evolution was less a matter of shifting from one specific keyboard type to another, than a transition from a 'generalized keyboard idiom' to 'writing for a specific keyboard instrument'.¹³ This is surely right, but does 'a specific keyboard instrument' refer to pianos generally (as opposed to harpsichords or clavichords), a particular type of piano (say, a Viennese square) or one particular instrument owned by the composer or a dedicatee (such as Therese Jansen, for whom Haydn wrote four of his late piano trios)? Haydn, like his contemporaries, could only gradually have come to understand that particular keyboard instruments possess particular qualities that can be exploited compositionally. Today this may seem self-evident, yet most of Haydn's early keyboard works, like those of Bach, are not distinctly idiomatic even to a general category of instrument. That same sixth 'Württemberg' Sonata whose opening movement seems so clearly destined for a two-manual harpsichord concludes with an extended two-part invention. This movement (see an excerpt in Example 2), which lacks dynamic indications, is as generic, with respect to keyboard idiom, as a fugue in *stile antico*. Both Bach and Haydn continued to write movements until at least the 1760s that are confined to this same plain two-part texture. The figuration lies well under the hands, but it calls for few if any dynamics, and it does not obviously reflect any thought as to whether it would be best played on organ, harpsichord or clavichord – or, for that matter, by flute or violin together with bassoon or cello.

In Vienna, Matthias Georg Monn, Georg Christoph Wagenseil and Joseph Anton Steffan employed a similarly generic idiom, at least in their earlier keyboard works, continuing the practice of Italian predecessors such as Domenico Alberti and Domenico Scarlatti. Scarlatti, at least, had access to pianos, yet there is nothing in his keyboard music that demands a touch-sensitive instrument.¹⁴ The key word is *demand*. One can use a clavichord, fortepiano or for that matter a modern

¹² Brown, *Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 166–170. By 'accompanied sonata' is meant a work for leading keyboard with one or more secondary or optional instruments – typically violin and cello, as in the pieces by Haydn and Mozart now known as 'piano trios'. Haydn, unlike Mozart, left no unambiguously attributed works for keyboard with a single accompanying instrument (violin or flute).

¹³ Harrison, *Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 4.

¹⁴ On the instruments available to Scarlatti in Portugal and Spain see John Koster, 'Towards an Optimal Instrument: Domenico Scarlatti and the New Wave of Iberian Harpsichord Making', *Early Music* 35/4 (2007), 573–603, and Michael Latham, 'Pianos and Harpsichords for Their Majesties', *Early Music* 36/3 (2008), 359–396, especially 372–379.

piano to add dynamics and colour to earlier keyboard music. But dynamics and colours are embellishments, and not necessarily welcome ones, in music composed without consideration of them. László Somfai argued more than twenty years ago for the use of Viennese-style harpsichords in Haydn's keyboard music composed before 1780.¹⁵ Such instruments typically have a single manual, often with a distinctive variety of short or 'broken' bass octave.¹⁶ Yet one continues to hear these compositions played on fortepianos – often on varieties that became prevalent only after 1790, like the Walther instrument owned by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart but modified by (probably) another maker at an uncertain date.¹⁷ Such an instrument may be perfectly suited to the edited versions of Haydn's music that began to come out during the same period. But even if these editions reflect the composer's own way of playing on pianos of the late eighteenth century, they do not necessarily correspond with earlier practice. For this reason they may be misleading with respect to how the composer came to write as he did for the keyboard.

Few harpsichordists today regularly perform solo keyboard compositions by Haydn, J. C. Bach or Mozart. Doing so requires some departure from the type of playing that has become customary for older music. Yet the French style of two-manual harpsichord that is now so often used for baroque repertory is in fact a classical type, most modern examples being copies of a handful of instruments made or modified in Paris in the 1760s and 1770s.¹⁸ These instruments were designed for playing music by the contemporaries of Haydn, J. C. Bach and Mozart, even if all three composers were tending towards the piano during the period. Doubtless both harpsichords and pianos were used for playing their music, but whether either type of instrument is required for specific compositions is an entirely different matter.

Richard Maunder found details in Haydn's six sonatas published in 1774, with a dedication to his patron Nikolaus Esterházy (HXVI:21–26), that, taken literally, point to the need for a two-manual harpsichord. Yet he also provided evidence that such instruments were rare in Vienna at the time. Even in a sonata published two years later, there is, in fact, nothing particularly suggestive of a two-manual instrument in a passage that Maunder described as 'perversely awkward on a single-manual instrument' (Example 3).¹⁹ Rather, the interlocking of the two hands required here is one of those clever but not really virtuoso keyboard techniques that Haydn seems to have cultivated. It is one of the elements in his distinctive approach to the keyboard that also included large leaps (sometimes requiring hand-crossing) but nothing unusually difficult, awkward ('perversely' or otherwise) or obviously calculated for a particular instrument. Only from 1790 do we have a document in which Haydn says he is no longer accustomed to 'writing for the harpsichord'.²⁰ Like other composers of the time, he apparently had always been in the habit of composing at the

¹⁵ Joseph Haydn und das Clavier: Eine subjektive Einführung', in *Internationales Musikwissenschaftliches Symposium 'Haydn & das Clavier' im Rahmen der Internationalen Haydnstage Eisenstadt 13.–15. September 2000*, ed. Georg Feder and Walter Reicher (Tutzing: Schneider, 2002), 14–15.

¹⁶ The most convenient and usefully illustrated discussion of Viennese harpsichords remains Richard Maunder, 'Viennese Keyboard Instruments, 1750–1790', in *Cordes et claviers au temps de Mozart: Actes des Rencontres Internationales Harmoniques, Lausanne 2006*, ed. Thomas Steiner (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 113–131. This includes a diagram (page 115) showing how a short bass octave was typically 'broken' through the use of split keys at the bottom end of the keyboard, extending downward to F¹ but without low C[♯] and other chromatic notes.

¹⁷ On this famous instrument see Michael Latham, 'Mozart and the Pianos of Gabriel Anton Walter', *Early Music* 25/3 (1997), 382–400, as well as Richard Maunder, 'Mozart's Walter Fortepiano' (letter), *Early Music* 29/4 (2001), 669, and his somewhat equivocal conclusion about it in 'Viennese Keyboard Instruments', 125.

¹⁸ For instance, the prototype for countless modern harpsichords is the double-manual harpsichord completed by Pascal Taskin in 1769, now in the Musical Instrument Collection of the University of Edinburgh (accession no. 4315); see, for example, Edward L. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 269–271.

¹⁹ Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, 100–102; the present Example 3 corresponds to Maunder's Example 7.4.

²⁰ Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, 106, citing Haydn's letter of 27 June 1790 to Maria Anna von Genzinger.



Example 3. Joseph Haydn, Sonata in E flat major HXVI:28/i, bars 105–110, from *Six sonates pour le clavecin ou le piano forte*, Op. 14 (Berlin and Amsterdam: Hummel, 1778)

clavichord, but he did not necessarily regard that instrument as a desirable or optimal medium for any particular composition.

Hence, although we know something about the types of instruments owned by both Bach and Haydn, such information provides little guidance for how we might interpret individual compositions.²¹ Other composers who worked at the clavichord include Johann Baptist Wanhal, Giuseppe Bonno (Kapellmeister at the Viennese court), Mozart and Steffan. Charles Burney reported that Wanhal played for him ‘six lessons which he had just made for that instrument’.²² That was in 1772, before any of Wanhal’s keyboard music had appeared in print – none of it designated as clavichord music. Nor are there any titles or other sources referring to use of the instrument in Steffan’s keyboard music; the assertion that his early published sonatas ‘were composed for the fortepiano’ apparently depends on doubtful assumptions about the ‘limited volume’ of the clavichord.²³ An argument that some of the same music ‘seems to work particularly well on the clavichord’ is little more than an expression of personal preference.²⁴

Bach, eighteen years older than Haydn, described the clavichord as the instrument on which ‘a keyboard player can be judged most conveniently’.²⁵ That he liked to play the clavichord is clear from accounts by visitors, including Burney and the poet Matthäus Claudius. Yet he rarely designated individual pieces for specific keyboard instruments, even though there are reasons for supposing that, by the 1750s, his solo keyboard music was written primarily for the clavichord. Nevertheless, the late rondos, as we have seen, were designated for the fortepiano, which he also used in public performances of concertos and other compositions after his move to Hamburg in 1768.²⁶

Something similar appears to have been true as well of Emanuel’s younger half-brother Johann Christian. This Bach studied with his older sibling in Berlin for five years before departing in 1755 for Italy and ultimately England. During his time in Italy, when he was employed as an organist at Milan, he must otherwise have played almost exclusively the harpsichord. Yet his English keyboard

²¹ For both composers, the most searching consideration of their instruments may still be Peter Bavington, ‘The Clavichords of Haydn and C. P. E. Bach’, talk for the British Clavichord Society, London, 21 November 1998 (online at www.peter-bavington.co.uk/bachaydn.htm). As Bavington notes, a 1794 clavichord by the Viennese maker Johann Bohak, now in the Royal College of Music Museum, London, is the only extant instrument likely to have belonged to either composer (Haydn), but nineteenth-century modifications have rendered it unreliable as a guide to its original character.

²² Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces: Or, the Journal of a Tour through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music*, two volumes (London: Becket, Robson and Robinson, 1773), volume 1, 352. For the other composers see Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, 109 and 111.

²³ Howard J. Picton, *The Life and Works of Joseph Anton Steffan (1726–1797): With Special Reference to His Keyboard Concertos*, two volumes (New York: Garland, 1989), volume 1, 62.

²⁴ Michael Tsalka, ‘The First Published Keyboard Sonatas of Joseph Anton Steffan’, in *De clavichordio XII: The Clavichord as a Pedagogical Instrument*, ed. Bernard Brauchli, Alberto Galazzo and Judith Wardman (Magnano: Musica Antica a Magnano, 2017), 21.

²⁵ Bach, *Versuch*, volume 1, Introduction, 11.

²⁶ As documented by concert announcements in the local press; see David Schulenberg, *The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 183, 206 and 373, note 40.

Example 4. Haydn, Sonata in C major HXVI:35/i , bars 130–136, from *Sei sonate per il clavicembalo, o forte piano*, Op. 30 (Vienna: Artaria, 1780)

Example 5. Haydn, Sonata in C sharp minor, HXVI:36/i , bars 20–23, from *Sei sonate per il clavicembalo, o forte piano*

Example 6. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sonata in C major $\kappa 309$ (284b)/i, bars 107–111, from *Trois sonates pour le clavecin ou le forte piano*, Op. 4 (Paris: Heina, c1781)

music includes compositions evidently written for piano, as implied not only by the presence of dynamic indications but by elements of texture discussed below in connection with Haydn. Richard Maunder argued that Johann Christian Bach had adopted the piano for public performances by the early 1770s.²⁷ Dynamic markings, including closely spaced ‘p’ and ‘f’ and a single ‘cresc’, appear as early as in the first three sonatas of his Op. 5 (London: Welcker, c1766), the title-page of which declared it to be ‘for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord’. These works could have been known in Vienna by early 1772, when they were advertised as sonatas for harpsichord or piano.²⁸

Haydn, nevertheless, stands apart from these north European composers and probably also from Mozart (who was more widely travelled at a younger age and more of a keyboard virtuoso). Mozart, inspired by Johann Christian Bach, was probably writing for the piano by the time of his six accompanied sonatas published in Paris in 1779.²⁹ The following year saw the publication of the rondo by Emanuel Bach shown in [Example 1d](#), explicitly for piano, and around the same time there appeared Haydn’s Op. 30 sonatas, HXVI:35–39 and 20. Several of these are sometimes seen as among Haydn’s

²⁷ Richard Maunder, ‘J. C. Bach and the Early Piano in London’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 116/2 (1991), 209.

²⁸ Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, 244.

²⁹ W. A. Mozart, *Six sonates pour clavecin ou forté piano avec accompagnement d’un violon*, Op. 1, $\kappa 301–306$ (Paris: Sieber, 1779); there is a ‘cresc’ marking found already at the end of the exposition of the first movement.

first sonatas to call distinctly for the piano.³⁰ Indeed, within the first sonata one finds four dynamic levels, from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. Also present in this sonata (H XVI:35) is the same chromatic crescendo in octaves present in Emanuel's rondo; Haydn marks this with a slur (Example 4). A variation of this idea occurs in the C sharp minor sonata (H XVI:36) from the same collection (Example 5). Mozart, incidentally, employed the same gesture – albeit shared between the two hands – in his first published sonata for solo keyboard (K309 (284b)), which appeared about a year later (Example 6).³¹

Even without the dynamic markings, this gesture is peculiarly pianistic. To produce the illusion of legato, the pianist relies not only on the sustaining power of the instrument but also on the possibility of precisely matching the dynamic level of each successive tone with that of the preceding one – or of producing an unbroken *crescendo* or *diminuendo*. It also helps not to hear the articulation of every note produced by the plucking mechanism of the harpsichord or the striking of the tangents on the strings of a clavichord. To be sure, the hammers of some early pianos can also create the impression of articulating every note, and the illusion of legato can be approximated on a lightly quilled harpsichord or a clavichord. But even the most resonant clavichord can produce only a feeble *crescendo* on this figure, and the same is quite beyond the capabilities of any ordinary harpsichord.

Another feature of many of these same pieces – even Haydn's Sonata in C minor – is the frequent use of the so-called Alberti bass (Example 7a). Today this is associated with early piano music. Yet Alberti himself, who died in 1746, used his signature device in many sonatas that he certainly expected to be played on Italian harpsichords with a single manual (Example 7b). Modern pianists usually play Alberti basses legato, even applying the damper pedal, and indeed legato performance is documented in eighteenth-century sources.³² Yet the Alberti bass often imitates textures from orchestral and ensemble music, in which the broken chords are likely to have been played lightly and detached, as in a string trio by J. C. Bach (Example 8). Execution in a similar manner at the

Example 7. (a) Haydn, Sonata in C minor, H XVI:20/i, bars 33–35, from *Sei sonate per il clavicembalo, o forte piano*; (b) Domenico Alberti, *Sonata per cembalo* in C major/i, bars 1–2 (Bologna, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica di Bologna, CC.159/3)

³⁰ See, for example, the 'preferred instrument' designations and accompanying remarks for H XVI:35, 36, 38 and 39 in Brown's Table V-3 (*Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 169).

³¹ The revised Köchel number 284b reflects the redating of K309 to around 1777, based on a manuscript copy by Leopold Mozart (source B in *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, Kritischer Bericht*, volume 11/25, ed. Wolfgang Plath and Wolfgang Rehm (Bärenreiter: Kassel, 1998), 50.

³² We see this in J. C. Bach's Op. 5, where some accompanimental figures of this type are marked with slurs or, in one instance, the verbal indication *legati* (in No. 4, second movement). On the other hand, each note in the similar accompaniment to No. 2 (second movement) is marked by a staccato wedge. Most of the *legato* markings in nineteenth- and twentieth-century editions of Mozart's keyboard music are absent from primary sources.

keyboard makes it easier for the player to project a sustained melody against the accompaniment. This is true even for slow movements, as in HXVI:33 (Example 9a), although the effect would be more visceral in the scampering finale of HXVI:34 (Example 9b); both illustrations are from Haydn's sonatas of c1780.³³ As pianistic as this notation may appear today, when newly composed, the music using it must have seemed perfectly suited to a one-manual harpsichord, as indeed it is when the player takes advantage of that instrument's capability for clear articulation.

Allegro assai

Example 8. Johann Christian Bach, Trio in D major for two violins and cello, WarbB36, first movement, bars 1–6, from *Six sonates pour deux violons et basso* (Amsterdam, 1772)

14 (a)

(b) **Molto Vivace**

innocentemente

Example 9. Haydn, (a) Sonata in D major HXVI:33/ii, bars 14–16, from *Trois sonates pour le clavecin ou piano-forte*, Op. 46 (Paris: LeDuc, c1785); (b) Sonata in E minor HXVI:34/iii, bars 1–4, from *Œuvres complètes*, volume 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1799)

³³ For an example of the type of ensemble playing that may have been imitated by many Alberti basses, hear the recording by The Vivaldi Project (*Discovering the Classical String Trio*, volume 1 (MSR Classics, MS1621, 2017)) of the work illustrated in Example 8.



Example 10. Haydn, Capriccio in G major, HXVII:1, bars 233–237, from *Œuvres complètes*, volume 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1800)

Pieces for Specific Instruments?

In addition to the late rondos for piano, a handful of Bach's compositions can be assigned to particular types of instruments. One sonata composed in 1747 (Wq69) was for a special harpsichord for which the composer specified registrations. Several other pieces contain indications for *Bebung*, the vibrato-like ornament distinctive to the clavichord. Six or seven sonatas are designated as organ works, although they lack pedal parts. All of these compositions are equally playable on other instruments. Nevertheless, one can detect a trend in Bach's music for solo keyboard from the 1740s onward towards a type of writing that is distinctly favourable for the clavichord, even when explicit dynamic markings are absent. These works are typified by thin textures, or a melodic line accompanied by simple chords, with numerous appoggiaturas and other expressive ornaments in both treble melody and bass.³⁴

A few of Haydn's earlier keyboard pieces, especially ones not destined for immediate publication, might likewise have been composed with a specific type of instrument in mind. For instance, the Capriccio in G major (HXVII:1) is playable as written only on a keyboard with a Viennese broken octave, and it entirely lacks dynamic markings. It is not easy for a performer on the harpsichord to bring out the main theme when it appears in the middle register, accompanied by an Alberti 'bass' in the treble (Example 10). Yet Haydn is unlikely to have had the piano in mind at the early date indicated by the autograph (1765).³⁵ As the piece also avoids idioms particularly characteristic of the clavichord (such as in Example 1c, or in Example 11 below), a Viennese one-manual harpsichord is the most plausible 'intended' instrument – albeit only in the sense that this was the medium in which the composer might have expected it to be played most often. Even if the passage illustrated is not particularly idiomatic to the harpsichord, it hardly demands a touch-sensitive instrument.

Fifteen years later Haydn was probably still thinking along the same lines. Even the six sonatas Op. 30, dedicated to the Auenbrugger sisters and published by Artaria about 1780, seem less clearly destined for the piano than is sometimes supposed. The keyboard idiom has evolved, growing more intricate and variable than that found in the Capriccio, yet it remains problematical to see in these pieces – even the most famous one, discussed below – demands for a specific type of instrument. The previous year, 1779, had seen the publication in Vienna of a treatise on clavichord playing by Franz Rigler, which was supplemented by six 'clavichord pieces of various types'.³⁶ The latter phrase echoed the title of an earlier publication by Bach, the *Klavierstücke verschiedener Art*, Wq112 (Berlin: Georg Ludwig Winter, 1765). Rigler makes it clear that for him, as for Bach, the word

³⁴ For further discussion of these features and specific examples see Schulenberg, *The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, 125–127.

³⁵ The autograph (current location unknown) is described by Sonja Gerlach in *Joseph Haydn Werke*, series 19–20, *Klavierstücke und Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen* (Munich: Henle, 2006), 128.

³⁶ *Anleitung zum Klavier für musikalische Lehrstunden* (Vienna: Joseph Edlen von Kurzböck, 1779). The title-page described this as 'Erster Theil'; a separately paginated supplement concludes with '6 Klavierstücke verschiedener Art' (22–40). Rigler's publisher had previously issued Haydn's Esterházy sonatas (HXVI:21–26).

Example 11. Instances of *Bebung* from Bach: (a) *Probestück* No. 6, Wq63/6/iii (fingerings omitted), from the *Exempel nebst achtzehn Probe-Stücken in Sechs Sonaten* issued alongside volume 1 of the *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin: Christian Friedrich Henning, 1753); (b) Sonata in F major Wq55/2/ii, bars 69–74, from *Sechs Clavier-Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Wq55 (Leipzig: author, 1779)

‘Clavier’ referred primarily to the clavichord, which must have been found in many homes in Vienna. Nevertheless, Rigler says nothing specifically about dynamics, suggesting that, even when playing the clavichord, musicians considered dynamics secondary in importance to ornaments and other elements of performance.³⁷

Haydn’s Sonata in C minor – for clavichord?

Among Haydn’s earlier keyboard pieces, the one most often regarded as calling for a specific instrument – the clavichord – is the Sonata in C minor, HXVI:20. That the composer recognized its special character might be inferred from the fact that he published it only as the final item in the 1780 collection, a decade or so after its composition.³⁸ The view of this sonata as specifically, and perhaps uniquely, for clavichord reflects not only its minor key but other features. Within the 1780 collection, it is exceptional for its numerous dynamic markings as well as its varied textures, which tend, especially in the slow movement, toward sustained linear writing for both hands.³⁹

Yet, as in the other sonatas with which it was published, many passages employ the Alberti bass (see Example 7a). The sonata lacks any notation for *Bebung*, for which, however, even Bach called explicitly in only a handful of pieces, including two notable ones that Haydn is likely to have known (Examples 11a and 11b).⁴⁰ Haydn never uses this device, although the similar notation for the *Tragen der Töne* (a sort of portato) does occur in some later compositions, such as the piano trio HXV:22 (Example 12a and 12b). This trio, incidentally, also uses Bach’s *tenuto* indications,

³⁷ Rigler clearly describes *Bebung* and *Tragen [der Töne]*, which can be executed ‘nur auf dem Klaviere’ (page 36; compare Example 12b below). Yet though he includes dynamic markings in his musical examples, he provides no discussion of the same, merely listing a number of Italian terms for dynamics with their German equivalents (page 28).

³⁸ The date 1771 is that of the autograph fragment.

³⁹ Brown (*Joseph Haydn’s Keyboard Music*, 161), grouping the C minor sonata with several other ‘highly expressive’ and ‘intense’ works of the late 1760s and early 1770s, concluded that ‘it is almost certain that these sonatas were composed for the clavichord’. Harrison is only slightly less guarded – ‘the most logical conclusion is that the C minor Sonata was written expressly for the clavichord’ (*Haydn’s Keyboard Music*, 17) – although Maunder (*Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, 101) cautioned that nothing in it ‘would be impossible on the two-manual harpsichord’.

⁴⁰ Example 11a is from the so-called ‘Hamlet’ Fantasia, the last of the *Probestücke* published alongside the *Versuch* in 1753; Example 11b is from a work composed in 1758, reportedly on Bach’s famous Silbermann clavichord (see Schulenberg, *Music of C. P. E. Bach*, 131), although published only in 1779 in the first of the six famous collections *für Kenner und Liebhaber*.

The image displays two musical excerpts, (a) and (b), illustrating the concept of 'Tragen der Töne'. Excerpt (a) is from Bach's Probestück No. 6, Wq63/6/iii, showing a right-hand part with a complex chromatic scale and a left-hand part with a steady accompaniment. Excerpt (b) is from Haydn's Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 71, showing a right-hand part with a similar chromatic passage and a left-hand part with a steady accompaniment. Both excerpts are in 3/4 time and feature intricate chromatic lines.

Example 12. Instances of *Tragen der Töne* from (a) Bach, *Probestück* No. 6, Wq63/6/iii; (b) Haydn, Piano Trio in E flat major HXV:22/ii, bars 17–19 (strings omitted), from *Trois sonates pour le piano forte avec accompagnement de violon & violoncello*, Op. 71 (London: Preston and Son, 1795)

as well as the irrational division of the beat which Bach described as *tempo rubato*.⁴¹ For Haydn, however, the *Tragen der Töne* cannot have been a unique signifier for the clavichord.

The tonality of the C minor sonata, especially the slow movement in A flat major, makes it relatively difficult to play well on any clavichord. This is because the short accidental keys of most such instruments make it challenging to sustain tones and play legato in tonalities with many accidentals. Moreover, this sonata contains several passages whose performance is problematic on a so-called fretted clavichord. Such an instrument – the earliest, cheapest and historically most widespread type – has multiple pitches assigned to each string. For example, F and F# (or Gb) might be produced by tangents striking the same string at different points.⁴² ‘Fretting’ reduced the size and cost of the instrument but also made it impossible to play a descending slur between the notes in question, which also could not be struck together in a chord or alternated rapidly in a trill.

Use of a fretted instrument would affect the performance of passages such as the slurred chromatic melisma for the right hand in the middle of the first-movement exposition (Example 13). A keyboard player normally produces legato by means of an imperceptible overlap between two notes. This becomes impossible if the first note must be detached to allow the second to be struck on the same string. Failure to detach the first note on a fretted clavichord leads to a ‘blocked’ tone (or just a thump) instead of two notes joined by a slur. To be performed satisfactorily on a clavichord, this sonata would require a large unfretted instrument (that is, with one string per key) of the type that might have been common at this date only in northern Germany.⁴³

Maunder found substantial evidence for unfretted instruments in Vienna, but not before the 1780s.⁴⁴ To be sure, the relatively low value of even a large clavichord, as compared to a harpsichord or piano, would have made such instruments less likely to be advertised for sale or to leave traces in inventories and other documents. Rigler, whose treatise evidently was conceived as an elementary version of Bach’s *Versuch*, must have assumed the use of a large instrument – to judge from the five-octave range required by the keyboard pieces in the musical supplement. Supporting the

⁴¹ *Versuch*, volume 1, chapter 3, paragraphs 22 and 28 (also volume 1, Introduction, paragraph 9). Haydn’s work was published as the second of the *Trois sonates pour le piano forte avec accompagnement de violon & violoncello*, Op. 71 (London: Preston & Son, 1795).

⁴² Tangents are small metal projections attached to the ends of the keys; they not only strike the strings but stop them to produce specific pitches, as the player’s finger does on the fingerboard of a violin.

⁴³ C. P. E. Bach probably owned such an instrument, which is necessary not only for readily executing chromatic passages but also many trills, turns and other ornaments that involve semitones.

⁴⁴ Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, 53–54.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system, labeled '19', consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a slur over a group of notes. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a supporting line with eighth notes. A dynamic marking 'p' is placed below the second measure of the first system. The second system, labeled '21', also consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line from the first system. The lower staff contains a series of chords, with a dynamic marking 'f' placed below the second measure of the second system.

Example 13. Haydn, Sonata in C minor, HXVI:20/i, bars 19–22

same conclusion is Rigler's provision of twenty-four model cadenzas in all keys. On the other hand, only one of Rigler's *Clavierstücke* employs a key signature with more than three flats or sharps. The latter occurs in a single *minore* within a rondo movement, and this and other pieces in the volume avoid the descending chromatic half steps so crucial in Haydn's sonata.

The clavichord or clavichords that Haydn reportedly owned in his early years may well have been small, fretted instruments, unsuited for performing much of the music presumably composed on them.⁴⁵ The Sonata in C minor contains no actual simultaneities that would have been unplayable on such instruments. Many slurs and ornaments, however, involve adjacent chromatic notes, as in Example 13. No composer who knew this type of clavichord, as Haydn undoubtedly did, could have expected this sonata to be performed on it exactly as written. He might have delayed publishing it for precisely that reason.

Haydn nevertheless could have found inspiration for this composition, including the key of its slow movement, in the last of the six sonatas that Bach published as a musical supplement to his *Versuch*.⁴⁶ Indications for *Bebung* in the concluding movement of that sonata, the 'Hamlet' fantasia, suggest that it was intended primarily for the clavichord (see Examples 11a and 12a above). Yet that same sonata includes a slow movement in A flat major, as well as an opening Allegro in F minor in which one hand repeatedly crosses over the other (Example 14). This is the only composition by Bach to exploit that technique, which we tend to identify with the sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. Even so, the fact that Bach incorporated it into a composition primarily for the clavichord confirms Burney's later report that Bach was prepared to play 'in every style' on that instrument.⁴⁷ The last of the *Probestück* sonatas provided practice for any player to do the same, and Haydn might have intended his Sonata in C minor to serve a similar purpose.

To be sure, Bach played chiefly in what Burney called the 'expressive' style. We might identify the latter as involving slow to moderate tempos in a thin treble-dominated texture, incorporating the dynamic gradations that Quantz as well as Bach described as contrasting 'shadow and light' ('Schatten und Licht').⁴⁸ The first two movements of Haydn's C minor sonata surely fall within

⁴⁵ Howard Pollack, 'Some Thoughts on the "Clavier" in Haydn's Solo Clavier-sonaten', *Journal of Musicology* 9/1 (1991), 74–91, especially 78, reviews the evidence regarding Haydn's 'clavier'. Pollack regards at least fifteen sonatas, including the one in C minor, as 'best suited' for clavichord, but he does not consider the issue of fretting or the availability of unfretted instruments in Vienna or elsewhere.

⁴⁶ The sonatas, known as the *Probestücke* (Wq63/1–6), are unusual in that each movement is in a different key. See the edition by David Schulenberg in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, volume 1/3 (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 2005).

⁴⁷ Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 270.

⁴⁸ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voss, 1752), chapter 14, section 9; C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch*, volume 1, chapter 3, paragraph 29; see further discussion in Schulenberg, *Music of C. P. E. Bach*, 19.

Allegro di molto

Example 14. Bach, *Probestück* No. 6, Wq63/6/i, bars 1–6 (fingerings omitted)

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Example 15. Haydn, *Sonata in C minor*, HXVI:20/iii, bars 108–111

this category, which corresponds to ideas of what is today considered appropriate to the clavichord. But the same could not be said of the last movement, which reaches a climax in a long hand-crossing passage, an extract from which is shown in [Example 15](#). Even Beethoven might have taken an idea or two from Bach's piece in his *Pathétique* sonata of 1798. Yet that is surely not clavichord music, even if it remains playable on a five-octave instrument – and at least one early edition still described it as being for 'harpichord or piano' ([Example 16](#)).

These examples show how an idiom that originated in harpsichord music could be transferred to the clavichord and the piano. Although Haydn's C minor sonata benefits from resources beyond those of a typical Viennese harpsichord of the time, it is not distinctly for any specific type of instrument. The same is true of other compositions that have also been seen by commentators as potential clavichord music, among them the earlier of the two sonatas in A flat major (HXVI:46). Such music could be played on the clavichord, but one would need a five-octave unfretted instrument to do so effectively.

There are further reasons for doubting that these and other sonatas of the period were intended specifically for the clavichord. The relatively low string tension of many larger unfretted instruments – at least as typically encountered today – renders them less than 'preferable' for

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Example 16. Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sonata Pathétique*, Op. 13/i, bars 220–225. *Grande sonate pathétique pour le clavecin ou piano-forte* (Vienna: Eder, c1800)

Example 17. Haydn, (a) Sonata in D major HXVI:14/iii, bars 11–14, from *Œuvres complètes*, volume 12 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1806); (b) Sonata in C major HXVI:21/ii, bars 22–25, from *Sei sonate da clavi-cembalo* (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1774); (c) Sonata in C sharp minor, HXVI:36/i, bars 51–54

distinctly articulating quick Alberti basses and other lively accompaniment figures (Example 17a). Equally unidiomatic for such instruments are quick staccato octaves and parallel thirds (Example 17b), as well as the extended sequences that Haydn uses in some development passages (Example 17c).⁴⁹ Passages such as this last are described as ‘vamps’ in modern writings on Scarlatti, from whom Haydn might have derived the idea, although comparable writing occurs in all manner of eighteenth-century music; a more historical term might be *perfidia*.⁵⁰ On the clavi-chord, a player can colour such passages through dynamic shadings. Yet the overall dynamic range is limited and the sustaining power weak, by comparison with those of other types of keyboard instruments. Even on many early pianos, a narrow dynamic range and modest sustaining power make these instruments only incrementally more ‘expressive’ than a one-manual harpsichord, which remains as plausible a medium as any other type of stringed keyboard.

A Shift in Instrumental Medium or a Change in Compositional Thinking?

The problems that modern commentators have encountered in assigning eighteenth-century keyboard music to specific types of instruments suggest that they have been asking the wrong question. Rather than shifting from one instrument to another, composers of Emanuel Bach’s and even Haydn’s generation may initially have thought of keyboard music as independent of any specific performing medium. As late as 1802, when Johann Nikolaus Forkel published his biography of J. S. Bach, he found it necessary to explain the composer’s understanding of the difference between

⁴⁹ Example 17b has been corrected by comparison with Haydn’s autograph score (in the Bibliothèque nationale de France), which is headed ‘Sei sonate per cembalo’.

⁵⁰ For ‘vamps’ see W. Dean Sutcliffe, *The Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti and Eighteenth-Century Musical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 196–216. On *perfidia* see Klaus Hofmann, ‘Perfidia-Techniken und -Figuren bei Bach’, in *Die Quellen Johann Sebastian Bachs: Bachs Musik im Gottesdienst*, ed. Renate Steiger (Heidelberg: Manutius, 1998), 281–299.



Example 18. Bach, Sonata in E minor Wq52/6/i, bars 1–4, from *Zweyte Fortsetzung von Sechs Sonaten fürs Clavier* (Berlin: George Ludewig Winter, 1763)

‘clavier’ and ‘organ’, which was apparently not self-evident to his readers.⁵¹ Emanuel Bach surely did understand that distinction from an early age. Yet it might not have been obvious to him before the mid- or late 1740s that his solo ‘clavier’ music was becoming more suited for performance on the clavichord than on the harpsichord. Even as he wrote the first volume of his *Versuch*, published in 1753, he continued to advise readers to be prepared to play pieces equally well on both instruments.⁵²

By the same token, only gradually, and somewhat later than elsewhere in Europe, would it have become clear to Haydn in Vienna that a player at either the clavichord or the harpsichord could realize his keyboard music only imperfectly. Dynamic markings are perhaps the most obvious although not necessarily the most important of the musical elements whose presence in a composition would have led to a new way of thinking about choice of instrument. As is well known, the number and variety of dynamic markings in his keyboard music increased over the course of Haydn’s career. These included not only *crescendo* and *diminuendo* but local accents that can hardly be made audible on the harpsichord. Yet there is great inconsistency in the number and type of dynamic markings even within pieces published together (as in the 1780 set). Some works, such as the C minor sonata, might have been conceived from the outset as being more mutable in character, requiring greater dynamic flexibility. Yet even in this work, most of the original dynamic markings are of the ‘terrace’ and accentual types, calling only for local contrasts of ‘shadow and light’ and functioning like the ornaments in older music.

Composing with dynamics

Although dynamic contrasts may at first have been understood as a sort of ornamentation, not essential to the argument of a composition, dynamic effects are among the fundamental ideas of certain exceptional pieces. A sonata composed by Bach in 1758 (Wq52/6) opens softly, contrary to convention. It then grows even quieter before proceeding to an implied crescendo, as indicated by successive *piano*, *pianissimo* and *fortissimo* markings (Example 18). The dynamics of this opening phrase have ramifications later in the sonata, even in the second movement. Haydn may not have opened a keyboard piece in a similar manner prior to the F minor variations of 1793 (discussed below). Subsequent examples include the great Piano Trio in E flat major HXV:22, published in 1795, as well as the C major solo sonata of the same year (Example 19).⁵³ Yet with Haydn it is less dynamics than other features that suggest a composer whose ideas were beginning to require a more

⁵¹ Johann Nicolaus Forkel, *Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (Leipzig: Hoffmeister und Kühnel, 1802), 18. Forkel does not further explain the word ‘Clavier’, which evidently did not yet refer specifically to the piano, as it does in modern German.

⁵² Bach, *Versuch*, volume 1, Introduction, 15.

⁵³ Several earlier sonatas, including HXVI:34 in E minor, 40 in G major and 42 in D major, begin *piano* but no crescendo follows immediately. Nor are the initial dynamics in these pieces part of a compositional idea developed later in the movement, as they are in Wq52/6 and in HXVI:50 (see below). Later editions of HXVI:31 in E major and 35 in C major, among others, show an opening *piano* followed by *forte* after a few bars, but these markings are probably not original.

(a) **Allegro moderato**

(b) **Allegro**

The image shows three systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled (a), is for 'Allegro moderato' and shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of two flats. It includes dynamics like *p* and *sf*. The second system, labeled (b), is for 'Allegro' and shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, 3/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. It includes a dynamic of *p*. The third system shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, 3/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. It includes dynamics like *cresc.*, *fs*, and *f*.

Example 19. Haydn, (a) Piano Trio in E flat major $\text{H}\text{XV}:22/\text{i}$, bars 1–6 (strings omitted); (b) Sonata in C major $\text{H}\text{XVI}:50/\text{i}$, bars 1–7, from *A Grand Sonata for the Piano Forte*, Op. 79 (London: Caulfield, c1801)

(a)

(b) **Allegro assai**

The image shows three systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled (a), shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of two sharps. The second system shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of two sharps. The third system, labeled (b), is for 'Allegro assai' and shows a piano part with a treble and bass clef, 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of two sharps.

Example 20. Haydn, Piano Trio in D major $\text{H}\text{XV}:7/\text{iii}$, from *Trois sonates pour le clavecin ou piano forte accompagnées d'un violon et violoncelle*, Op. 40 (Vienna: Artaria[, 1785]) (strings omitted): (a) bars 84–96; (b) bars 1–4

specific instrumental medium. A relatively early example involves an enharmonic modulation in the finale of the D major keyboard trio $\text{H}\text{XV}:7$, published by the end of 1785 (Example 20a).⁵⁴

The passage invites the keyboard player to give the repeated D sharps a changing colouration, reflecting the gradual realization that these notes are no longer E flats. ‘Colour’ in this case

⁵⁴ This passage was previously singled out by Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York, Norton, 1971), 96, as an example of a musical pun (‘the highest form of wit’), without reference to its instrumentation.

(a) **Allegro moderato**

(b) **ff**

(c) **Allegro**

Example 21. Haydn, Sonata in E flat major HXVI:38, from *Sei sonate per il clavicembalo, o forte piano*: (a) first movement, bars 1–4; (b) second movement, bars 9²–13¹; (c) third movement, bars 1–4

might be some combination of dynamic, articulation and timing effects, though Haydn specifies none of these. The harpsichord ('clavicin') is still the first instrument named in the title of the piece as published. Yet it is impossible on that instrument to make the repeated note sound any different from when the motive is first heard at the beginning of the movement (Example 20b). Elsewhere in the piece, the accompanying violin and cello can provide colour. In their silence here, however, even the most exquisite phrasing and timing by a harpsichordist cannot do justice to the enharmonic transformation of the motive, which is written into the notes of the keyboard alone at this crucial moment.

Throughout this work, as in most of Haydn's keyboard music from before the 1790s, dynamic markings remain sparse and rarely other than obvious, reinforcing what is already indicated by the texture. The Sonata in E flat major HXVI:38 opens in what seems a fairly generic keyboard idiom (Example 21a).⁵⁵ Yet the slow movement includes changing dynamics, in a passage whose busy, low left-hand part is not easily subordinated to the melody except on a clavichord or piano (Example 21b). The octaves that accompany the main theme of the final movement are less unsuited for the harpsichord, but this type of writing, which requires the hand to leap quickly, is hardly idiomatic for the clavichord (Example 21c). That leaves some sort of piano as the most satisfactory instrumental medium.

Given its relatively early date, HXVI:38 is unlikely to have been written specifically *for* piano. Rather, like the trio HXV:7, it presents musical ideas that are most fully realizable on a piano – especially the larger grand pianos of the late eighteenth century. For discussions of dynamic effects, articulation and sonorities we lack an analytical vocabulary that is as well developed as that used for themes and motives. Yet compositional ideas involving dynamics or 'colour' may be equally crucial in music of the later eighteenth century, as with the initial *piano* and subsequent *crescendo* in Bach's E minor sonata. Occurring at the outset of the composition, these markings indicated that dynamic variability would be one of the piece's basic ideas. This dynamic

⁵⁵ Brown, *Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 123 (Table IV-5), places composition of the work in the mid-1770s.

Example 22. Bach, Sonata in E minor Wq52/6/ii, bars 1–7

changeability continues in the slow second movement, where *forte* phrases alternate with *piano* echoes (Example 22).⁵⁶

This sonata was published well before the appearance of anything similar by Haydn.⁵⁷ But when Haydn does open the late C major sonata (H XVI:50) in a comparable way, the initial *piano* marking has a ramification in the famous *pianissimo* passages heard in the development and recapitulation sections. These are marked ‘open pedal’, indicating performance without dampers (Example 23). The marking is unique in Haydn’s keyboard music, but these are not the only passages in his late keyboard compositions that would have been inconceivable apart from one of the newer types of fortepiano. The theme of the F minor variations (H XVII:6) opens presumably *piano* and then *crescendo* (Example 24).⁵⁸ What rules out not just the harpsichord but also, probably, the clavichord, is the requirement to sustain the pensively moving lower voices – not only the suspensions in bars 4–6 and 8–11 but the uniquely Haydnesque chromaticism that accompanies the latter.

For Haydn, the critical changes in compositional thinking may not have taken place before the mid-1780s. This was the period during which Bach was publishing rondos explicitly for the piano, but by then he had been adapting to dynamic keyboard instruments for several decades. That Haydn apparently paid less attention to keyboard idiom might have reflected the late arrival of the piano in Vienna.⁵⁹ It could also be attributed to his not having been primarily a keyboard soloist. If he indeed spent much of his performance time leading the Eszterháza ensemble from the violin,⁶⁰ he would not have focused his substantial creative powers on the invention of new keyboard idioms, at least not to the degree that Mozart or the Bachs did. Perhaps, in addition, Haydn simply lacked interest in new instruments and instrumental idioms, an attitude that seems to have been characteristic of mid-century Vienna. This contrasted with Berlin, where new types of flute as well as keyboard instruments were adopted at the royal court during the 1740s, influencing fashionable music-lovers across the northern parts of the empire.⁶¹ The piano idiom that Haydn eventually

⁵⁶ The movement bears the title *L'Einschnitt* (The Caesura).

⁵⁷ The title-page of the *Zweyte Fortsetzung von Sechs Sonaten fürs Clavier* (Berlin: George Ludewig Winter, 1763), in which this is the sixth sonata, depicts a man seated at a small house organ, his left foot playing on the pedals, but the latter are not required by anything in the volume.

⁵⁸ The *piano* indication is explicit in the Breitkopf edition of 1800 (*Œuvres complètes*, volume 2), which also adds a slur and the word *ten[uto]* on the bass in bars 1–2.

⁵⁹ Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, chapter 7, especially pages 99–105, established that pianos were probably rare in Vienna before the 1780s.

⁶⁰ As argued by James Webster in ‘On the Absence of Keyboard Continuo in Haydn’s Symphonies’, *Early Music* 18/4 (1990), 607.

⁶¹ On the flutes and fortepianos purchased by King Frederick II (Emanuel Bach’s employer from 1741 or 1742 to 1767) see Mary Oleskiewicz, ‘The Trio in Bach’s *Musical Offering*: A Salute to Frederick’s Tastes and Quantz’s Flutes?’, in *Bach Perspectives*, volume 4, ed. David Schulenberg (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 79–110.

73 (a)

pp open Pedal

p

fz fz fz fz

120 (b)

pp open Pedal

Example 23. Haydn, Sonata in C major $\text{H}\text{XVI}:50/\text{i}$: (a) bars 73–76; (b) bars 120–124

Andante

[p]

cres.

f

[p]

7

p

Example 24. Haydn, Variations in F minor, $\text{H}\text{XVII}:6$, bars 1–12, from autograph manuscript, New York Public Library, JOE 72-13

achieved is utterly different from that of Emanuel Bach, just as the pianos that he knew were very distinct instruments. Both, however, came to recognize that one could compose specifically for the piano, not merely for generic keyboard – just as one might compose for string quartet, as opposed to a string ensemble of unspecified size with continuo.

Haydn and Bach

Haydn famously acknowledged a debt to Bach, especially his ‘first six sonatas’.⁶² This report has generated considerable discussion, but Haydn also at one point asked the publisher Artaria to send him Bach’s two last keyboard works, plausibly identified by Wolfgang Fuhrmann as the final instalments of the series *Für Kenner und Liebhaber*.⁶³ Published in 1785 and 1787 respectively,

⁶² According to Georg August Greisinger, *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1810), 13; this and other relevant documents are considered by Ulrich Leisinger, *Joseph Haydn und die Entwicklung des klassischen Klavierstils bis ca. 1785* (Laaber: Laaber, 1994), 247–258.

⁶³ Wolfgang Fuhrmann, ‘Originality as Market-Value: Remarks on the Fantasia in C Hob. XVII:4 and Haydn as Musical Entrepreneur’, *Studia musicologica* 51/3–4 (2010), 310, note 25.

Presto

*tenuto intanto, finche
non si sente più il sonno*

Example 25. Haydn, Fantasia in C major, HXVII:4, from *Fantasia per il clavicembalo o Forte-Piano*, Op. 58 (Vienna: Artaria, c1789): (a) bars 1–4; (b) bars 164–167; (c) bars 184–192

those two volumes (Wq59 and Wq61) included four of the composer's unique modulating rondos. The latter likely provided a model for Haydn's Fantasia in C major (HXVII:4), as seems clear not only from the varied restatements of the main theme in various keys but also the use of modulating passages based on arpeggiation – here interrupted several times by mysterious fermatas (Example 25; compare Example 1d).⁶⁴ Much of the passagework is eventually recapitulated, and Haydn's fantasia concludes with a written-out cadenza. These are all features that Haydn would have found in Bach's rondos, especially the great one in G major (Wq59/2) from the penultimate collection of *Kenner und Liebhaber*.⁶⁵ Another work by Bach, the C major fantasia from the final volume in the series (Wq61/6), also comes into question.⁶⁶ The latter resembles the composer's rondos more closely than it does his other fantasias, in this respect bearing comparison with Haydn's fantasia in the same key.

C. P. E. Bach's 'last' keyboard works

In the case of Haydn's Fantasia in C major, the claim for Emanuel Bach's influence is plausible because one can draw direct parallels between specific compositions, and Haydn had readily documentable access to the postulated models. The subscriber lists printed within Bach's two publications show that multiple copies were sent to both Artaria and 'Baron von Swieten' in Vienna, the latter being doubtless the musical patron and collector Gottfried van Swieten.⁶⁷ Bach's rondos would have attracted attention not only for their singular form but also for their designation as piano pieces. Haydn would not have missed that, despite seeing his own pieces still published with the commercially advantageous alternative assignment to the harpsichord. Yet although

⁶⁴ The Italian expression in bar 192 indicates that the chord under the fermata is to be 'held until the sound can no longer be heard' – raising the question of how much sustaining power Haydn expected of the instrument (on a modern grand piano a *forte* chord might last ridiculously long). Surely, however, the passage loses much of its intended effect on a clavichord or even a harpsichord.

⁶⁵ See further analysis in Schulenberg, *Music of C. P. E. Bach*, 239.

⁶⁶ As suggested by Georg Feder and James Webster in 'Haydn, (Franz) Joseph', *Grove Music Online* www.oxfordmusiconline.com (23 May 2023). The work-list attached to the article dates Haydn's fantasia tentatively to March 1789, less than two years after Wq61 would have become available in Vienna.

⁶⁷ For Bach's correspondence with Artaria over the publication of these volumes see the introduction by Christopher Hogwood to his edition, *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, volume 4/2 (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 2009), xv–xxi.

(a) **Allegro assai**

(b) **Moderato**

Example 26. (a) Bach, 'L'Aly Rupalich', Wq117/27, bars 1-7, from *Musikalisches Mancherley* (Berlin: George Ludewig Winter, 1762); (b) Haydn, Capriccio in G major, HXVII:1, bars 1-5

Haydn's fantasia is surely a piano piece, his piano idiom is distinct from Bach's – on the whole somewhat heavier by this date (c1790) and incorporating the type of motoric accompaniment figures avoided by Bach (see, for instance, [Examples 25b](#) and [c](#)). Nevertheless, the texture of Haydn's fantasia is somewhat lighter than in the composer's last sonatas and piano trios. This might reflect his composing the work while still having in mind the types of instruments favoured at Vienna, rather than the English pianos with which he became acquainted a few years later.⁶⁸ Regardless of the specific type of instrument, however, this is a distinctly pianistic composition as opposed to one conceived generically or for the harpsichord.

Haydn's G major Capriccio (HXVII:1) appears to present a comparable case, for, like the C major fantasia, it would seem to have been a response to Emanuel Bach's modulating rondos of the 1780s – if only it were not dated 1765 in Haydn's autograph score. Yet the rondo-like form of the Capriccio, as well as its combination of the serious with the burlesque, allies it with an earlier composition of Emanuel Bach. Bearing the unexplained title *L'Aly Rupalich*, this famously perplexing character piece, composed in 1755, came out in an anthology during 1762 or 1763 ([Example 26](#)).⁶⁹ On the surface, the piece has little to do with Haydn's capriccio. Yet seeing something as unbuttoned as Bach's piece, by a respected composer, would not have discouraged the still youthful Haydn from writing something equally outré.

C. P. E. Bach's 'first' six sonatas

As influential as any of Emanuel Bach's later keyboard works might have been on Haydn, scholars have been more exercised over the question of what Haydn meant by Emanuel Bach's 'first' six sonatas – not least because these might have exerted a formative influence on the younger musician. Both composers dedicated their first publications of keyboard music to their employers; Haydn might have noted that Bach's 'Prussian' Sonatas were dedicated to Frederick 'the Great', just as his own collection of 1774 was presented to Nikolaus Esterházy. Yet the identification of the Bach set as the one meant by Haydn is by no means certain. Seeking a more concrete basis for an identification, Ulrich Leisinger has considered which of Bach's keyboard sonatas actually

⁶⁸ Bart van Oort, 'Haydn and the English Classical Piano Style', *Early Music* 28/1 (2000), 73–89, outlines regional preferences for instruments, arguing for Haydn's espousal of a keyboard idiom more typical of England in the late keyboard works composed and published there.

⁶⁹ Theories about the piece's origin and title are considered in Schulenberg, *Music of C. P. E. Bach*, 135.

The image displays three musical excerpts. The first two are grouped under the heading '(a) Allegro' and the third under '(b) Allegro'. Each excerpt consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The first two excerpts are in C minor (three flats) and common time. The third excerpt is in G major (one sharp) and common time. The first two excerpts show a similar rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the third excerpt features a more complex rhythmic structure with sixteenth-note runs and a trill.

Example 27. (a) Bach, ‘Prussian’ Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Wq48/4/i, bars 1–6, from *Sei sonate per cembalo* (Nuremberg: Balthasar Schmid, 1742); (b) Haydn, Sonata in G major HXVI:6/i, bars 1–4, from *Œuvres complètes*, volume 12 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1806)

circulated in Vienna during Haydn’s time.⁷⁰ Others have sought internal evidence, chiefly in the form of thematic parallels, which are easy enough to find. Yet the presence of common motivic ideas may be less significant compositionally than elements of the music that lie beneath the surface.

For instance, the opening of Bach’s Sonata in C minor of 1741 (Wq48/4) has been found to share ‘some common features’ (‘einige gemeinsame Züge’) with that of Haydn’s early Sonata in G major HXVI:6.⁷¹ Yet these features seem to be limited to vaguely similar rhythm and phrasing (Example 27a and 27b). A more meaningful parallelism might be drawn to the opening of Haydn’s C minor sonata, which shares with Bach’s sonata not only its key but the insistence on appoggiaturas decorating the notes G and B♭.⁷² Whether the fermatas on dominant chords that interrupt both movements also constitute significant parallelisms is debatable. In any case, correspondences of these types could demonstrate only that Haydn was thinking compositionally along lines similar to Bach’s, not that he was actually imitating the earlier piece.

Leisinger, however, showed that another relatively early sonata movement by Haydn – the Moderato of HXVI:18 – proceeds for some twenty-four bars, nearly to the end of the exposition, in a way that parallels a rather different work of Bach’s (Example 28). The publication containing the latter (Wq50/5) was actually his fourth printed set of keyboard sonatas, the *Reprises-Sonaten*, in which repeated passages are furnished with written-out variations.⁷³ Melodic and rhythmic parallels between the two sonata movements are indeed striking, yet are there any deeper relationships?

⁷⁰ Leisinger, *Joseph Haydn und die Entwicklung des klassischen Klavierstils*, 258–269.

⁷¹ This phrase and the example are from Federico Celestini, ‘Die frühen Klaviersonaten von Joseph Haydn: Eine vergleichende Studie’, *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 52 (2004), 198.

⁷² This is not the place to pursue the question whether the two C minor sonatas share what is known in Schenkerian literature as ‘motivic parallelism’. Heinrich Schenker himself seems never to have published any commentary on either piece; for the type of comparative ‘motivic’ analysis that might be carried out see the discussion headed “‘Parallelismen’”; “‘Synthese’” in Nicholas Marston, *Heinrich Schenker and Beethoven’s ‘Hammerklavier’ Sonata* (London: Routledge, 2016), 56–60.

⁷³ This set was followed by two *Fortsetzungen* (continuations), although only a few movements in the latter volumes include varied reprises.

(a) **Tempo di Menuetto**

(b) **Moderato**

Example 28. (a) Bach, Sonata in B flat major Wq50/5/iii, bars 1–11, from *VI. Sonates pour le clavecin avec des reprises variées*; (b) Haydn, Sonata in B flat major HXVI:18/ii, bars 1–10, from *Œuvres complètes*, volume 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1799), based on Ulrich Leisinger, *Joseph Haydn und die Entwicklung des klassischen Klavierstils bis ca. 1785*, Example 7.3 (Laaber: Laaber, 1994), 287

Haydn's movement incorporates no substantial variations, although neither does Bach's, despite its inclusion in one of the *Reprises-Sonaten*. On the other hand, the Bach example is one of very few quick sonata movements by the composer that avoids some version of binary or sonata-allegro form. It is instead a sort of rondo, albeit one with sonata-like elements. Precisely for that reason, Bach's composition might have attracted the attention of a thoughtful musician interested in musical form or design. If Haydn did come across it in the years around 1760, surely he would have recognized its unusual qualities and studied it carefully.

Influence and echoes

Speculation of this sort can only suggest how one creative musician might have wound up, perhaps unconsciously, closely echoing the work of another. It cannot settle the issue of which sonatas by Emanuel Bach were actually known to Haydn, let alone influenced him. At best, one can conclude, as Elaine Sisman put it, that a rondo with variations also from the *Reprises-Sonaten* – the concluding Sonata in C minor Wq50/6 (in a single movement) – is a 'more than merely plausible' model for Haydn's examples of the similar form known as 'alternating variations'.⁷⁴ Among the latter is the final movement of Haydn's G minor sonata, HXVI:44, one of the composer's 'expressive' sonatas of the mid-1760s. As such, the sonata might, incidentally, seem particularly suitable to the

⁷⁴ Elaine R. Sisman, 'Tradition and Transformation in the Alternating Variations of Haydn and Beethoven', *Acta musicologica* 62/2–3 (1990), 159.



Example 29. Haydn, Sonata in G minor, HXVI:44/i, bars 9–12, from *Three Sonatas for the Pianoforte or Harpsichord*, Op. 53 (London: Longman & Broderip, c1788)

Example 30. (a) Haydn, Sonata in G minor, HXVI:44/i, bars 13–14; (b) Bach, Sonata in D minor Wq50/4/i, bars 88–91, from *VI. Sonates pour le clavecin avec des reprises variées*

clavichord, but at least one passage would be awkward on any but a large unfretted instrument (Example 29).

Be that as it may, the continuation of this particular sonata has been seen as deliberately *emanuel-bachisch*, inviting comparison with a work such as Wq50/4, which at one point employs equally bizarre figuration (compare Examples 30a and 30b). Passages such as this might even have been what led a contemporary English observer to claim that Haydn's first two printed sets of sonatas were not influenced by, but rather were meant 'to ridicule Bach of Hamburg' by way of parody.⁷⁵ That idea has been refuted,⁷⁶ but whether parodistic or merely playful, Haydn here displays a sense of humour shared with the older composer. Still, even if Bach's wit provided a 'more than merely plausible' model for Haydn's, that is too vague to serve as an argument for direct influence.

If Haydn did pick up the idea of alternating variations from Emanuel Bach, he uses it in a very different way. Bach's C minor sonata, following a tradition that went back at least to Corelli's *Follia* variations (Op. 5 No. 12), served as a concluding tour de force for the volume in which it was published. Yet for Bach those variations remained a demonstration of what was in principle a performance practice, a type of improvisatory embellishment.⁷⁷ Haydn, on the other hand, uses the

⁷⁵ The quotation is from an anonymous 'Account of Joseph Haydn, a Celebrated Composer of Music', in the *European Magazine and London Review* 6 (1784), *253.

⁷⁶ See, among others, Brown, *Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 344 and 350–351, citing Bach's letter of 14 September 1785, to the editor of the *Hamburg Correspondent*, No. 511 in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Briefe und Dokumente: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Ernst Suchalla, two volumes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), volume 2, 1098–1099.

⁷⁷ As Bach wrote in the *Versuch*, volume 1, chapter 3, paragraph 31, 'man heute zu Tage die Allegros mit 2 Reprisen das andere mahl zu verändern pflegt' (nowadays one takes care in an Allegro with two repeated sections to vary [each one] the

principle of embellishment structurally, incorporating alternating variations into a distinctly classical design: he returns to the opening theme in its original form, unvaried, to serve as a 'reprise' (Sisman's term) just before the coda of the F minor variations – a structural function absent from most of Bach's variation works.

The question of which of Bach's pieces actually influenced Haydn not only seems unanswerable but is probably the wrong one to ask. To pose such a question is really to ask how one creative mind responds to the work of another. Yet an inventive composer might be profoundly moved – set on a new path – by ideas that would not seem particularly significant to anyone else. Harrison noted a new 'orthography' in Haydn's keyboard music of the later 1760s, following his encounter with Emanuel Bach's publications of a few years earlier.⁷⁸ Seeing Bach's highly rationalistic systems not only of ornament signs but of figured-bass symbols, Haydn might have become aware of a certain negligence in his own notational practice, resolving thenceforth to indicate his intentions more precisely. Reading Bach on the need for varied reprises, then studying written-out examples in the *Reprisen-Sonaten*, Haydn might have considered how to incorporate such decoration into the deeper structure of a composition. Examining pieces that depart from conventional musical forms, even if only for descriptive or humorous purposes, Haydn might have been inspired to rethink formal design at a fundamental level.

What could keyboard music be?

Even more basically, Bach could have given Haydn a broadened view of what was possible when composing for keyboard instruments. The Italianate tradition of keyboard music that Haydn encountered in Vienna in his youth focused on two sharply different but equally generic types of writing: strict, quasi-vocal polyphony in a tradition that went back to Frescobaldi and Froberger, and homophonic pieces in a simple popular style. Examples of the former include the canzonas and ricercars attributed to Georg von Reutter (or his son of the same name, who was Haydn's teacher), and, of the latter, the variously titled divertimentos and similar compositions for solo and accompanied keyboard by Wagenseil and the Monn brothers. One of the most admired composers of the time was Hasse, who wrote, besides some striking operas and oratorios, many popular but facile keyboard sonatas and concertos. If Haydn knew those pieces, they would have demonstrated to him that an admired composer of sacred and dramatic music could coast when writing for instruments alone.

Curiously, Hasse may have been the one older contemporary known personally to both Haydn and Emanuel Bach, serving each as a professional model, if not exactly a mentor. Hasse praised works by both younger composers, referring to one of these as the best symphony he had ever seen. That was (perhaps surprisingly) Emanuel Bach's E minor work of 1756 (Wq178), which demonstrated that a symphony could be more than a noisy opening for a night at the theatre.⁷⁹ Bach's E minor symphony survives both as an orchestral work and in a keyboard version. Although the composer's responsibility for the latter is not entirely assured, it illustrates a symphonic type of writing for the keyboard also found in Bach's sonatas of the 1750s and

second time), and echoed in the *Préface* to the *Reprisen-Sonaten*: 'Dès qu'on se répète aujourd'hui, & qu'on reproduit une chose, il est indispensable d'y faire des changemens' (these days whenever someone learns a piece and repeats something, it is necessary to create variations). One of the *Probestücke* published in conjunction with volume 1 of the *Versuch* (Wq63/5, third movement) already illustrated the practice.

⁷⁸ Harrison, *Haydn's Keyboard Music*, 170–183.

⁷⁹ The symphony was published in 1759 in a version for strings alone (listed as Wq177). In that same year Hasse visited Berlin, where he presumably met C. P. E. Bach and perhaps heard the symphony or saw its printed version; his remark about the symphony was reported by Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 349. For Hasse's praise of Haydn's *Stabat mater* see H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, volume 2, *Haydn at Eszterháza, 1766–1790* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 144, citing Haydn's letter of 20 March 1768.

The image displays three musical excerpts, labeled (a), (b), and (c), arranged in three rows. Each row consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom.
 (a) Haydn, Sonata in E flat major, bars 38-39. The top staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note chord. The bottom staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note chord.
 (b) Bach, Sonata in B flat major, bars 9-11. The top staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a half note chord. The bottom staff has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a half note chord.
 (c) Mozart, Sonata in D major, bars 9-13. The top staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note chord. The bottom staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a half note chord.

Example 31. (a) Haydn, Sonata in E flat major κ XVI:52/i, bars 38–39, from autograph manuscript, Washington, Library of Congress, ML96 .H364 Case SSF (1794); (b) Bach, Sonata in B flat major Wq59/5/i, bars 9³–11², from *Clavier-Sonaten und Freye Fantasien nebst einigen Rondos fürs Fortepiano für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Wq59 (Leipzig: author, 1785); (c) Mozart, Sonata in D major κ 284 (205b)/i, bars 9–13, from autograph manuscript, Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. autogr. W. A. Mozart 279–284, 330, 455

later.⁸⁰ The E minor sonata shown in [Examples 18](#) and [22](#) is another instance of this type; a later one is the Sonata in B flat major from the penultimate collection for *Kenner und Liebhaber* (Wq59/3). Many of Mozart's solo sonatas show elements of this style, which can, however, sound both pretentious and derivative, not entirely suited to keyboard instruments. Echoes of it might be heard in Haydn's late Sonata in E flat major κ XVI:52. Yet that work makes only sparing references to actual orchestral style, and the sonata remains more idiomatic to the keyboard than the more literal evocations of actual symphonies by both Bach, in one of his last printed keyboard sonatas, Wq59/5, and Mozart, in his 'Dürnitz' sonata κ 284/205b ([Example 31](#)).⁸¹

Haydn thus avoided a keyboard idiom found in innumerable works of the time, including those of his best contemporaries. Even Bach's 'symphonic' sonatas, however, demonstrated that keyboard music could be more than either a pleasant *divertissement* or an exercise in strict counterpoint. Keyboard pieces could be intellectually stimulating in ways that did not involve counterpoint, and they could be challenging not only technically but emotionally. Among the challenges posed by Emanuel Bach's keyboard compositions was the performative one of projecting emotions or affects to listeners while playing wordless music on a stringed keyboard instrument. Contemporary accounts, especially the famous one by Burney, depict Bach's playing at his Silbermann clavichord as a reflection of the composer's personal emotional state. Burney described Bach as inspired, using a word which at the time probably implied something more visceral than it does today. 'Inspiration' invoked the classical image of an ancient Greek sibyl, literally inspiring or

⁸⁰ On the keyboard version of the symphony (Wq122/3), preserved in a single manuscript copy, see the introduction by Jonathan Kregor to his edition in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, volume 1/10.2, xiii.

⁸¹ Mozart would have picked up this particular keyboard idiom from J. C. Bach's Sonata in G major Op. 5 No. 2, which he arranged as the concerto κ 107 (21b).

breathing in divine vapours from a mysterious sacred source.⁸² Late in life, when Haydn described his working method, he wrote as if his compositions likewise began as a manifestation of his own psychological state, as he sat at his clavichord and improvised.⁸³

Emanuel Bach did not record similar thoughts. Yet the presence of the clavichord in these accounts of both composers reflects its association in pre-romantic German-speaking Europe with private, sensitive musical performance. Another trope in writing of the time is the paradox that great music might be written on a tiny instrument limited in both compass and dynamic range. Haydn's account probably alluded to this, as Emanuel Bach certainly did when he informed Forkel that two sonatas resembling fantasias had been composed on a travelling clavichord with a short octave.⁸⁴ In neither case was the composer indicating that his music was written specifically for the clavichord in question, which in Bach's case could not even have provided all the necessary notes. Yet each associates keyboard music with an instrument known for its utility for subjective expression, not for either learned counterpoint or light entertainment.



That the piano eventually took the place of the clavichord as the most 'expressive' keyboard instrument was due not only to its broader dynamic range but to its greater sustaining power and its utility in all keys. In its larger forms it was also better equipped for the types of public performances by virtuosos that were coming into vogue as the nineteenth century approached. That these aspects of the piano came to be viewed as desirable was reflected in changes in instruments and in musical style that took place during the second half of the eighteenth century – and these changes came with a price. The sustaining power of later pianos, together with keyboard actions and techniques that favoured legato over articulate performance, tended to smooth over details such as the short slurs and frequent ornaments that complicate or problematize motion from one note to the next in late baroque and early classical music. Ornaments and minute articulations are more readily controlled on the actions of earlier types of stringed keyboard instruments. Although composers and writers in northern Europe, including Bach and Daniel Gottlob Türk, continued to focus on details of ornament and articulation to the end of the century, by the 1780s such things had become less important for other musicians, Haydn among them.⁸⁵ His shift to writing distinctly for the piano was an element in his achievement of what used to be called the 'mature classical style'.⁸⁶ We might tentatively associate it with the end of Haydn's deep involvement with private court opera and his renewed engagement with the public after 1780 through printed instrumental works.⁸⁷

Haydn scholars now see these developments as involving what they describe as the rhetoric of his music.⁸⁸ Indeed, the metaphorical rhetoric of Haydn's later compositions, including those for keyboard, involves speaking in longer paragraphs that are more evenly flowing, less subdivided or

⁸² Bach 'not only played, but looked like one inspired'. Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 271.

⁸³ See the quotations from Griesinger and Dies cited at the opening of Elaine Sisman, 'Haydn's Solo Keyboard Music', in *Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music*, ed. Robert L. Marshall (New York: Schirmer, 1994), 270–307.

⁸⁴ Letter of 10 February 1785, probably referring to the sonatas Wq65/16 and Wq65/17; see the edition by David Schulenberg in *The Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach Edition*, volume 1/18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 110.

⁸⁵ The *Klavierschule* of Daniel Gottlob Türk, first issued in 1789 and published in a revised edition as late as 1802, remained heavily influenced by C. P. E. Bach in its focus on ornaments, although the later edition acknowledges the keyboard music of Haydn, Mozart and even Beethoven.

⁸⁶ These are the words of Rosen, for whom the music of C. P. E. Bach and the younger Haydn represented an 'intermediate and confused period between the High Baroque and the development of a mature classical style'. *The Classical Style*, 49.

⁸⁷ On this 'periodization' of Haydn's development see, for example, James Webster, *Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-Composition and Cyclic Integration in His Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 361 and Table 9.1 (362).

⁸⁸ 'Rhetoric' has been a theme in writings by Webster and Sisman, notably their chapters 'The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn's Keyboard Music' and 'Rhetorical Truth in Haydn's Chamber Music: Genre, Tertiary Rhetoric, and the Opus 76

articulated into smaller units, than in earlier works. The piano, by virtue of its capabilities for extended *crescendi* and *diminuendi*, as well as for long legato lines, is better able to project or convey this rhetoric than the clavichord or the harpsichord. The new approach to instrumental musical rhetoric helps explain why one might feel that by the late 1780s Haydn was doing what neither he nor Bach had done in earlier keyboard music: shifting toward a distinctively pianistic idiom, albeit only gradually and somewhat imprecisely at first. The piano idiom in Bach's late rondos remains only subtly different from his writing for generalized 'clavier' in other compositions. Haydn's piano writing is ultimately more distinct, not only from his own earlier keyboard writing, but also from that of his younger contemporaries, including J. C. Bach and Mozart: less focused on new types of virtuoso figuration and accompaniment patterns, and more on characteristic types of keyboard texture and motivic development (as seen, for instance, in [Examples 17](#), [20](#) and [25](#)). The best player of either harpsichord or clavichord must feel inadequate when facing the late keyboard works of both composers, especially Haydn's final sonata in E flat and the London piano trios. Nevertheless, in almost everything leading up to them, the piano adds only a layer of refinement to music that remains expressible, in large part, on older types of instrument.

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Quartets', in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric*, ed. Tom Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 172–212 and 281–326 respectively.