



feelings of status inconsistency' (114). In the paragraphs that follow, it is not clear whether the emphasis in that sentence should be on 'German' or 'musicians'. Certainly there is much evidence of concern about the high prestige of Italians in German musical life in the writings of Beer, Printz and Kuhnau; Kuhnau's 'musical charlatan' has a fake Italian name (Caraffa) and the basis of his musical confidence game is his claim to having studied music in Italy. The presence of an embryonic discourse about music and Germanness is just one of the many fascinating aspects of this literary output.

Despite his attention to a number of writers and despite the book title's reference to the 'age of Bach', the figure who dominates this book – through the virtuosic inventiveness, verve and strangeness of his work – is Johann Beer (1655–1700), a musician-writer who is currently the subject of a modest renaissance among literary scholars and musicologists in Germany. Everyone else looks pallid, dull, pedantic or unoriginal by comparison. Beer was not, of course, a figure of the eighteenth century, and later developments do seem to leave him behind. Rose suggests that the first decades of the eighteenth century saw an inexorable move away from his action-packed, magical-realist, absurdist style of writing about the world to one that was more tuned to Enlightenment projects of self-knowledge, secular knowledge, and taxonomic, classificatory and controlling knowledge. Nevertheless, one's sympathies remain secretly – rather like so many of Beer's clandestine readers – with the baroque, shambolic energy of the man. In a book without a weak chapter, the most intriguing was chapter 5, 'From Harmony to Discord', which provides a rich account of Beer's mastery of the extraordinarily inventive early modern discourse of emblems, proverbs and the play of resemblances in the world. The portrait of Beer that emerges from Rose's book is reason enough to read the book and praise it. But all scholars of Europe and its musical traditions, especially of course of the German ones, will find riches aplenty in this erudite, elegant and fascinating book.

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DAVID SCHULENBERG
THE MUSIC OF WILHELM FRIEDEMANN BACH
Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010
pp. xii + 341, ISBN 978 1 58046 359 1

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach has long been one of those figures in music history whose supposed weaknesses seem as alluring as his compositional strengths. Anecdotally, he is frequently viewed as the gifted but spoiled son of an impossibly talented father (an assessment not helped by the testimony of C. F. Zelter, who knew him in his Berlin years), someone who inevitably fell short, fell apart and lost the moral fibre inculcated by a remarkable but always upright family. Another side to the same story is the notion that Friedemann was simply born in the wrong historical slot, that it was impossible to be a truly great composer if one came to maturity in the mid-eighteenth century since the musical language and range of acceptable possibilities were simply too limited to support high art. The best that someone of Friedemann's calibre could be expected to do would be to lay some of the seeds for a greatness that was yet to come, as if a judicious farmer were restoring a field exhausted by the richness of the previous crops.

If there is a grain of truth in the notion that some things are best done at one time rather than another, this would seem to be a particularly good time for the re-evaluation of the life and works of Friedemann Bach. It is nearly a century since Martin Falck's dissertation on the composer was published, and no further full-length scholarly study appeared before Peter Wollny's Harvard dissertation of 1993. Not only has Wollny's own work proceeded apace since then (including the inauguration of a new critical edition of W. F. Bach),



but there has also been Christoph Wolff's rediscovery of the Berlin Sing-Akademie's collection in Kiev in 2000, which contains some very significant sources for Friedemann's music. Now we have this monograph by David Schulenberg, a writer particularly suited both to assimilating and evaluating the recent source findings on the composer and to providing a critical analysis of his output. It was Schulenberg who devised an analytical method that revealed much that had been missed in judgments of C. P. E. Bach's instrumental music; he has also written a perceptive and authoritative study of J. S. Bach's complete keyboard music and is a regular contributor to debates about performance practice and style in eighteenth-century music. He musters a trenchant, critical style of writing and relishes debunking the sorts of myth and psychologizing to which Friedemann is so frequently subjected.

Perhaps, though, mythology is not to be abandoned quite so easily. While Schulenberg naturally wishes to remove evolutionary conceptions of music history that tend to harm Friedemann (such as portraying him as stylistically immature, for example, or not living up to the standards that music history would eventually achieve), he is happy to use them when they serve his ends: Friedemann was broadening the dimensions of early sonata form (74), and comparisons are sometimes made with later composers such as Beethoven and Schubert (and many, of course, with Friedemann's father and nearest brother). But one can hardly blame a music historian for observing certain similarities with composers who have canonic status; otherwise, there is no place to start a truly critical study. Schulenberg – always scrupulously objective about biographical issues – notes the remarkable number of times Friedemann seems to have passed off other music (including his father's) as his own and exercised deception in some form or other, but refrains from making any overall psychological point. In other words, he exercises a strong degree of neopositivist caution when dealing with historical data, which sits somewhat at odds with his rich critical treatment of the music.

Schulenberg adopts a structure that matches his subject well. He begins with the enigmatic aspects of Friedemann's persona, moving to his musical relationship with his father and eldest brother. Given the limited number of works and genres (his surviving output numbers little more than one hundred works), the rest of the book falls into a predictable sequence: solo keyboard works, followed by instrumental works – from sonatas to concertos – then vocal works. He concludes with a useful appendix on performance issues, which includes some helpful comments on fingering and scoring together with some stimulating opinions about current performing conventions. He suggests that most performances are too fast for the intricacy of Friedemann's idiosyncratic style, that most of the vocal music was envisioned for single voices (yes, *that* debate again) and that the concertos generally presuppose single upper strings (thus making the intricate lines both more manageable and more soloistic). Particularly welcome is the quantity of musical examples, many from pieces that are not readily available. Moreover, all these can be heard in synthesized form on the author's website (<www.wagner.edu/faculty/dschulenberg/wfb.htm> (27 February 2012)).

From the outset Schulenberg provides an excellent overview of the state of knowledge. Most striking, perhaps, is the analysis of Reimar F. Lacher's recent claim that the famous Weitsch portrait is almost certainly of a distant cousin and pupil of Friedemann's rather than of the man himself (11). This immediately dispels the sense of a rather genial, roguish character that many might hold of the composer. Several pieces have been reattributed to Friedemann since Falck established the canon in his 1913 *Wilhelm Friedemann Bach: Sein Leben und seine Werke, mit thematischem Verzeichnis seiner Kompositionen und zwei Bildern*, including three keyboard sonatas (one in F clearly modelled on his father's Italian Concerto (76)), the flute concerto (confirmed by the Sing-Akademie archive, but sadly of 'limited interest' (188)) and the scores and parts for much of the church music. Perhaps most interesting of all is the discovery of the counterpoint exercises that Friedemann seems to have undertaken with his father in the late 1730s. These are not so much evidence of a teacher–pupil relationship (after all, Friedemann would already have left home) as of a challenge or exchange between equals. Schulenberg suggests an analogy with the 'double fugues' that Mattheson and Handel improvised together in 1703. But, on the whole, it is impossible to miss the sense that the father is the leader of this exchange, even if he thought of his son as a worthy partner.

The discovery of these exercises tells us something that we did not know before about Sebastian's attitude to contrapuntal puzzles and his competitive relationship with others, but it also shows that Friedemann had



an abiding interest in musical complexity. This is an interesting ‘counterpoint’ to Schulenberg’s observation that Friedemann sometimes did not notate everything in detail – that he showed ‘a tendency to rely on shorthand, memory, or improvisation where other members of the family were more inclined to write things out’ (31). The latter observation is also evident in works that were never finished or were intended to be completed by the player (for example, the Fantasia in D minor, Fk18 (59)). Schulenberg considers that there might be some formal uncertainty here, or an inability to follow through the implications of a promising opening. What all this might suggest, then, is that Friedemann’s approach to composition involves some sort of clash between a mastery of formal, contrapuntal technique and a more improvisational, fantastical approach; an intensity, perhaps, at the level of details and the local progress of the music, coupled with a more casual approach to form. Schulenberg summarizes Friedemann’s compositional character very succinctly: he was someone who combined counterpoint (his Leipzig side) with the fashionable galant style (his Dresden side), together with instrumental virtuosity. While this combination might also apply to his father, there is undoubtedly something more extreme in Friedemann’s counterpoising of the modern Italianate idioms with strong elements of complexity.

If Schulenberg is particularly successful in isolating the contradictory impulses that characterize Friedemann’s work, one might then ask whether these produce successful art. At the end of the book, Schulenberg does suggest that the most distinctive, characteristic result is the ‘elegant pathos’ of the best music. But, quite often, Schulenberg’s positive evaluations are tempered by more negative points. For instance, Friedemann’s excellent set of twelve Polonaises, undoubtedly a high spot in his compositional career, are successful because of the tight confines of the dance movement, thus ‘preventing him from improvising his way out of difficulties . . . by arbitrarily spinning extra measures’ (102). A particularly revealing example of the faint-praise syndrome is Schulenberg’s comment that ‘several real, recurring weaknesses in Friedemann’s fugues are worth mentioning, since one must look beyond them to find the positive features of these same pieces’ (114). At other points Schulenberg mentions the composer’s tendency to insert ‘obstinate’ passages, ‘fussy little’ imitative passages, and a vocal style that is ‘not inexpressive’, if ungrateful to sing. As he suggests several times, much depends on the spirit and quality of performance, something that might have been lacking in many recent interpretations. Most amusing from this point of view is Schulenberg’s comment about a commercial recording of a sinfonia which lacks its solo keyboard part (readily reconstructable from another version), ‘yielding an unintended example of “music minus one”’ (185). Here, we might infer, many musicians find Friedemann’s music so bizarre that they do not even notice when it is incomplete.

Schulenberg is perhaps marginally less deft in his treatment of the vocal music. He makes a point about Friedemann’s text expression being based on whole texts rather than ‘older word painting’ in the German rhetorical tradition (220), and thus being rather less successful than his father’s. It is absolutely true that this general move occurred during the course of the early eighteenth century, but there are also numerous examples of his father’s ignoring individual words or taking larger textual units as the source of invention. Awkward repetitions and underlay – even an indifference to text altogether – are also not necessarily absent in the older Bach’s (considerably larger) vocal corpus. Schulenberg views issues of Pietism as past history in disputes about German church music, something that would no longer affect a university town like Halle, in ‘enlightened’ Prussia. In actual fact, Halle had been, since the 1690s, the epicentre of Pietism, its university even a Pietist foundation. Indeed, the organizational, charitable and educational aspects of the movement do in fact play an important part in the foundations for the German Enlightenment, notwithstanding its excessive religiosity and antipathy towards complex music. So questions about the place of music in the orthodox stronghold of the Liebfraukirche in the centre of Halle could very usefully have extended the discussion of Friedemann’s intricate and often complex church music.

There are moments when Schulenberg positively enthuses about Friedemann, such as in discussing the G minor keyboard concerto (the attribution of which Falck questioned, on account of its not being ‘modern’ enough (190)). He also examines a fine birthday cantata for Frederick the Great, *O Himmel, schone* (252), which is undoubtedly one of his greatest works in terms of expressive range and duration. Sadly, when



Friedemann envisioned writing an opera at the end of his life the plan was never realized, and what might have been a very successful direction for a composer with a 'real feeling for musical drama' (264) was lost.

In all, then, this most perceptive and comprehensive study of J. S. Bach's eldest son fills an enormous gap in the literature, contributing further to our understanding of various styles and processes in the mid-eighteenth century. Despite the very best of intentions, though, the standard views of Friedemann's achievement are hardly dented by Schulenberg's honest appraisal, and the overall impression is of music that possesses a strange sense of melancholy.

JOHN BUTT



EDITIONS

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CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH (1714–1788), ED. PETER WOLLNY
KEYBOARD CONCERTOS FROM MANUSCRIPT SOURCES I
Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works, series 3, volume 9.1
Los Altos: The Packard Humanities Institute, 2010
pp. xxviii + 211, ISBN 978 1 933280 60 8

Here is a further volume of the ongoing C. P. E. Bach *Complete Edition*; it presents three keyboard concertos, one of them in two distinct versions. As we have come to expect of this enterprise, the scholarship is of the highest order, and the volume is handsomely, indeed sumptuously, produced. Its modest price – a mere \$25 according to the edition's website – is therefore a welcome surprise. The general introductory material describes the editorial processes that have been followed, discusses the three relevant concertos in some detail, briefly considers a few issues of performance practice and lists keyboard concertos once attributed to C. P. E. Bach but which are now considered doubtful or spurious. (I was amused to read that a Concerto in D major listed in some of the literature is actually a forgery by Henri Casadesus.)

We perhaps forget that Emanuel Bach left as many as fifty-two keyboard concertos, as listed in the 'Nachlaß-Verzeichnis' which was published in Hamburg in 1790. This comprehensive and significant index of Bach's oeuvre is based on the composer's own catalogue, which he had been compiling methodically for some years. Like his father, Emanuel constantly revised his compositions, and this is the case with all three works in this new edition. They are the Concerto in A minor Wq1, given in two versions; the Concerto in E flat major Wq2; and that in G major Wq3. All have come down to us in manuscript sources only, which are fully described in the edition. (Also included are details for each concerto of manuscript sources which have been consulted but not used.)

The 'early' version of Wq1 was written in Leipzig in 1733, and subsequently revised in 1744, by which time the composer was in Berlin as a chamber musician at the Prussian court. It was probably also performed in Emanuel's concert series in Frankfurt an der Oder, where he was based from September 1734. This was the 'Musikalische Akademie' he mentions in his autobiography – a student body which he directed. Almost all of Emanuel's pre-Berlin works have been lost, or conceivably were destroyed by him when he made revisions. However, it seems that Wq1 was a favourite concerto which enjoyed considerable popularity and which he allowed to circulate, unlike other works that he withheld (perhaps to retain them for his own exclusive use). This new edition provides the opportunity for close comparison of the two versions, allowing us to examine the revisions carefully. Wollny clearly outlines the essentials of these revisions in the Introduction, and informative details of all the various sources are included in the Critical Commentary.