

C. P. E. BACH AT HIS WORD: A RECONSIDERATION OF THE EARLY BERLIN YEARS

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C. P. E. Bach (1714–1788) seems to have been well aware that in publishing an autobiography he was issuing a self-portrait for the gaze of posterity. Although Charles Burney was the first to print a biographical account attributed to Bach, there were problems enough with it that the Hamburg publisher J. J. C. Bode soon asked Bach to contribute his own revised version of the story for the German translation of Burney's *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces*. Bode published his volume along with Bach's new text as *Tagebuch einer musikalischen Reise*.¹ The information Bach chose to convey reads at times as though it were arranged artfully, though not necessarily untruthfully. Standing in control of the narrative, he privileges certain details by presenting them clearly against a background that he leaves provocatively shrouded. This lack of definition in Bach's account has proved enticing to scholars, who have worked to shed light on those aspects he left murky, especially with regard to the early years of the composer's career: even with an autobiography, we know surprisingly little about where he was and what he was doing as a young man. Bach, of course, was a major figure of the eighteenth century and was the son of another. His life's story has therefore been, and continues to be, minutely dissected by scholars who have tried to read between the lines of his account in order to get at the specifics of what Bach did not, or perhaps would not, say.

The paragraph of Bach's autobiography that will be under scrutiny in the pages to follow concerns how and when he came to be in the employ of King Frederick II ('The Great') of Prussia. To our knowledge, this is the first full-time job that Bach had had, and it is also the platform upon which he built his professional reputation. Emanuel Bach was the first among four of his father's students to become a member of the Royal Prussian Kapelle. More has been written about him than any other musician on Frederick's payroll, but the exact circumstances of his hiring remain unclear. Two main points will concern us: the chronology of his appointment, and the identity of a young nobleman whom Bach was once invited to accompany on a Grand Tour. Chronology has been a matter of ongoing discussion; the nobleman's identity, unfortunately, has not.

The text of Bach's autobiographical account with regard to his early Berlin years reads as follows:

Als ich 1738 meine akademischen Jahre endigte und nach Berlin gang, bekam ich eine sehr vortheilhafte Gelegenheit einen jungen Herrn in fremde Länder zu führen: ein unvermutheter gnädiger Ruf zum damaligen Kronprinzen von Preussen, jetzigen König, nach Ruppin, machte, daß meine vorhabende Reise rückgängig wurde. Gewisse Umstände machten jedoch, daß ich erst 1740 bey Antritt der Regierung Sr. preussischen Majestät förmlich in Dessen Dienste trat, und die Gnade

1 Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces* (London, 1773). Autobiography issued in translation by C. D. Ebeling and J. J. C. Bode as *Tagebuch einer musikalischen Reise* (Hamburg: Bode, 1773). For a discussion of these sources as well as of Bach and the topic of biography see Mary Oleskiewicz, 'Like Father, Like Son? Emanuel Bach and the Writing of Biography', in *Music and Its Questions: Essays in Honor of Peter Williams*, ed. Thomas Donahue (Richmond, VA: Organ Historical Society, 2007).



hatte, das erste Flötensolo, was Sie als König spielten, in Charlottenburg mit dem Flügel ganz allein zu begleiten. Von dieser Zeit an, bis 1767 im November, bin ich beständig in preussischen Diensten gewesen ...²

When in 1738 I ended my academic years and went to Berlin, I received a very favourable opportunity to accompany a young nobleman on his Grand Tour. An unexpected and gracious call to Ruppín [Frederick's garrison residence] from the then-Crown Prince of Prussia, now King, meant, however, that my intended trip was cancelled. Certain circumstances meant that I only entered His Prussian Majesty's service officially following his accession to the throne in 1740. I then had the honour of accompanying him in the first flute solo that he ever played as king all by myself on the keyboard at Charlottenburg. From this time on, until November 1767, I was continually in Prussian service ...

In this short paragraph Bach provides five concrete pieces of information: (1) after he left the University of Frankfurt an der Oder in 1738, he went to Berlin, where he was invited to accompany a young nobleman on a Grand Tour; (2) he decided not to go on this trip because Crown Prince Frederick invited him to Ruppín; (3) something prevented him from entering royal service officially until after Frederick succeeded to the throne (1740); (4) once Bach was a member of the Prussian Royal Kapelle, he had the honour of accompanying Frederick at the Charlottenburg palace in the first flute solo he ever played as king; and finally, (5) he worked for Frederick until November of 1767. Most of the details that Bach offers are verifiable. The ones of which we are unsure are where scholars have sought in various ways to fill in the blanks: as was noted above, Bach does not provide the identity of the young nobleman, and we do not know exactly how long Frederick waited to hire Bach after inviting him to Ruppín.

With regard to chronology, some accounts place Bach in royal employment as early as 1738, although there is wider discussion as to whether he began officially in 1740 or 1741. For example, Ulrich Leisinger's view is that Bach was paid informally from Frederick's privy-purse until he was made a regular member of the Kapelle in 1741.³ Günther Wagner, on the other hand, states plainly that Bach was first hired in or around 1741: 'Der "Etat von denen Besoldungen derer Königlichen Capell-Bedienten" führt Bach unter jenen Musikern an, [die] "so anno 1741 zugekommen" sind' (The 'Statement of Payments to the Royal Kapelle Members' places Bach among those musicians who had 'arrived around 1741').⁴

Wagner is relying here on the exact wording within the extant pay records (*Kapell-Etats* or *Capelletats*) from Frederick's reign for the date of Bach's employment.⁵ Leisinger, who is certainly aware of these documents, privileges instead the direct reference made to the starting year of Frederick's reign, probably because it is given in Bach's account ('I only entered his Prussian Majesty's service officially following his accession to the throne in 1740'). He then offers the theory of the privy-purse to explain away the conflicting source evidence, which, as we know, delays Bach's actual hiring by one year (1741). Leisinger's theory is

2 Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Autobiography. Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses*, with annotations by William S. Newman (Buren: Frits Knuf, 1991), 199–200. My translation.

3 '[Bach] says in his autobiography that his appointment became official only after the prince succeeded to the throne (as Frederick II) on 31 May 1740, but he then had the honour of accompanying the "first flute solo" played by the new king "alone at the harpsichord". The first mention of Bach in the court budget is as one of "those who joined the Kapelle in 1741", so he must initially have been paid from the prince's privy purse.' Ulrich Leisinger, 'Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001) volume 2, 388. Oleskiewicz has also made a close examination of many of Emanuel Bach's statements about Berlin, including the chronology of his appointment; 'Like Father, Like Son?', 260ff.

4 Günther Wagner, 'Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, second edition, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel and Stuttgart: Bärenreiter and Metzler, 1994–2008), Personenteil 1, column 1313.

5 The original record can be found in D-Bga, I. HA Rep. 36 Geheimer Rat Hof- und Güterverwaltung, Nr. 2435, 10.



attractive and is certainly plausible in some ways because it is true that there are examples of musicians – including Bach – being paid additional sums from Frederick’s private funds, but we have hard evidence for this only later on.⁶ Leisinger, though, reads Bach’s claim to have accompanied Frederick on the ‘first flute solo that he ever played as King’ as definitive proof that Bach must indeed have been in place by 1740. I suggest instead that there is another way to read this very text that both takes Bach at his word and stands in agreement with the source evidence, which clearly sees him hired one year later.

Bach’s account implies that he had begun working for Frederick, or had at least gone to play for him in an unofficial capacity, from 1738.⁷ He reports that his status did not change owing to ‘certain circumstances’ until after Frederick became king in May 1740. However, as we have seen, Bach’s name does not appear in the official pay records until 1741. What about the time – exactly one year – that is missing in between? The detail embedded in Bach’s boast of having accompanied Frederick’s first solo might actually provide a clue, not to the early date of his engagement, as Leisinger would have it, but instead to a possible explanation as to why Frederick might not have acquired Bach immediately and might instead have waited one full year before doing so: the appointment might have been delayed by the year-long mourning period following the death of the old king, during which time music-making and other forms of revelry would have been officially suspended. Bach might well have accompanied the first flute solo Frederick ever officially played as king, but that might well have taken place one whole year after the old king died.

The national period of mourning for Frederick’s father, Friedrich Wilhelm I, began on 7 June 1740.⁸ Its official end was declared by the Queen Mother on 1 June 1741 (a year and a day after her husband’s death).⁹ We cannot establish for certain whether the attendant public suspension of music-making during the state mourning period extended to the new king’s own chambers, but there is little evidence to suggest definitively that it did not – especially when Frederick was residing in an official capacity in Berlin and not at his more remote residences of Ruppin and Rheinsberg.¹⁰ Whether or not Frederick regularly indulged his crown-princely habit of evening music-making during this time, he continued to pay the salaries of the chamber musicians he had carefully assembled over a span of eight years.¹¹ He intended for these players

6 For a discussion of payments to Bach from Frederick’s privy purse (in the *Schatoull-Rechnung*) see Oleskiewicz, ‘Like Father, Like Son?’, 263–264.

7 According to the earlier years of the *Tageskalender*, Crown Prince Frederick was with his garrison at Ruppin frequently in 1738. There were extended periods of residence, especially in April and May. Another time when extra musicians might have been required was for the birthday celebration of the queen in mid-March. After June of 1738, though, there would have been far less call for musical entertainment at Ruppin or Rheinsberg because the king became very ill and his imminent death was expected. He recovered, but the family was gathered at Potsdam for the duration of his acute illness. Frederick was then occupied with travel and the formal review of his troops for most of the rest of the summer and was at Rheinsberg for most of the autumn. If Bach was called to Ruppin, it seems most likely that it would have taken place in the spring (between March and May). See Hans Droysen, ‘Tageskalender des Kronprinzen Friedrich von Preußen vom 26. Februar 1732 bis 31. Mai 1740’, *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* 25 (1913), 103–106.

8 See ‘Feierlichkeiten in Halle bei der Regierungsveränderung im Jahre 1740’ in the *Hallisches patriotisches Wochenblatt*, Drittes Quartal, 31. Stück, Sunday, 1 August 1840, 977.

9 Hans Droysen, ‘Tageskalender Friedrichs des Großen vom 1. Juni bis 31. März 1763’, *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* 29 (1916), 100.

10 For a more detailed discussion of this topic and of Frederick’s musical hiring at this time see Ellen Exner, ‘The Forging of a Golden Age: King Frederick the Great and Music for Berlin, 1732 to 1756’ (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2010), 182–186.

11 It is not known exactly what Frederick’s ensemble might have been doing during the period of mourning. We do know, though, that Frederick’s Kapellmeister, Carl Heinrich Graun, was sent to Italy to recruit singers. Clearly, he at least was not needed at the time. Furthermore, Frederick went to war against Maria Theresa of Austria in December of 1740, so he would not have called much upon his musicians except when he was actually in residence, which would have been seldom.



to become the core of the Royal Prussian Kapelle so he kept them on, even though their duties were slight for the first year of his reign.

Whatever the situation might have been, Frederick did not immediately transform his chamber orchestra into an elaborate Kapelle, even though it would have been directly in his power to do so. The pay records nevertheless reflect that Frederick did hire a few musicians in his very first days as king, but it was only to complete the wind section that had been lacking in his chamber ensemble anyway. He made no further additions to the group for a year – until late spring of 1741 – which is, not coincidentally, the time that the Berlin opera began looking forward to its debut performances (December 1741) and the period of mourning was lifted. Until then, Frederick had little material reason to increase his musical payroll.

Even though Frederick added some personnel right away in 1740, for whatever reason Bach was still not among them. The most reasonable explanation for the three-year gap between the reported summons to Ruppin and Bach's appearance on the royal payroll is that he was not hired until he was needed. At the time, Frederick already had two capable keyboardists in his employ: Gottlieb Hayne and Christoph Schaffrath. With an ensemble of about twenty players, Frederick would have had no place for a third cembalist. The 'circumstances' to which Bach referred in discussing the delay in his employment after 1738 might well have been merely practical and thus too uninteresting to commit to paper.

Bach's eventual hiring date seems to have fallen squarely within the standard quarterly pay cycle of the Prussian fiscal year, which began with the liturgical season of Trinitatis (late May or early June). This is to say that the financial records for 1741 carry no indication that Bach was receiving compensation for any extra days or months of work prior to the new fiscal year. Details given for other musicians clearly reflect when they were paid in addition for special services, or how much less they had received if they were hired later in the payroll cycle. In any case, it should simply be recalled here that Bach did not say that he went immediately to work for Frederick – only that he did so after Frederick was crowned king. A date of 1741 does not give lie to his claim.

According to the sources, then, Bach's official membership in King Frederick's orchestra began unequivocally in 1741 and not 1738 or even 1740, as his autobiography has been read to suggest. Instead, the sequence of events Bach reports is actually very straightforward: he left university in 1738, went to Berlin, was invited to go on a Grand Tour, but was then invited by Crown Prince Frederick to perform at Ruppin. He chose the (one-time?) royal invitation over the Grand Tour, and eventually the gamble paid off: once Frederick became king and began slowly to build up his orchestra beyond the chamber ensemble he had had as crown prince, he remembered Bach and hired him permanently at the first moment it was practical to do so – once the mourning period for the late king was over and there was space in the cembalo section. It is entirely possible as well that Frederick would not have had to remember Bach because he might have been engaged unofficially in other noblemen's ensembles, where Frederick could have heard him. Moreover, Bach was well acquainted with some of Frederick's favourite musicians who might have reminded their sovereign (if it were necessary) of Bach's talents once a space opened up in the Kapelle.

A hiring date of 1741 instead of 1738 would bring four other elements related to Bach's biography at this time into clearer focus. If Emanuel secured his first official professional appointment in May/June of 1741, it might explain why Johann Sebastian decided to visit his son in Berlin during August of that same year, and not before.¹² It might also explain why Bach-family correspondence suddenly contains mention of 'the dawning of the musical age' in the Prussian capital, as well as of the contemporaneous relocation of

12 For more on Johann Sebastian Bach's 1741 visit see Michael Maul, "Dein Ruhm wird wie ein Demantstein, ja wie ein fester Stahl beständig sein": Neues über die Beziehungen zwischen den Familien Bach und Stahl', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 87 (2001), 7–22. Maul also offers insight into C. P. E. Bach's relationship with the Stahl family, which was prominent and very well connected.



Johann Friedrich Agricola to Berlin explicitly on Emanuel Bach's recommendation.¹³ Furthermore, it could shed new light on the appearance of Bach's 'Prussian' sonatas (Wq48, published in Nuremberg around 1742/1743), which he dedicated to King Frederick.¹⁴ The title-page of the set would then have served as an announcement to the world that the young and already celebrated Prussian king had accepted Bach's compositional efforts. The sonatas were also a gift of thanks to a royal employer as well as a proclamation of Bach's new professional status as a member of the Royal Prussian Kapelle.

The other vexed question of the composer's early Berlin years is of course the identity of the anonymous young gentleman of the Grand Tour. Biographers of Johann Sebastian Bach have long since supplied a name for this gentleman, whom Emanuel Bach for whatever reason preferred to leave anonymous: they say he was the son of Count Keyserlingk. The family is among the luminaries in Johann Sebastian's biography and has been cited in this instance as evidence that old Bach was helping to secure a bright future for his second son by attaching him to one of the greatest patrons of his acquaintance.¹⁵ An early date for Emanuel's employment under Frederick as well as the continuing promotion of a connection to the Keyserlingk family with the story of the Grand Tour are cherished flourishes that unfortunately stand in opposition to demonstrable fact. Much has been made – and rightly so – about the many ties between the Bach family and the wealthy and powerful count, who was a high-profile diplomat and music-lover with direct connections to the royal courts in Dresden, Berlin and beyond.¹⁶ Johann Sebastian Bach's relationship with Count Keyserlingk is well established; the relationship between their sons is not. The facts of the case actually eliminate Keyserlingk's son from consideration to such an extent that it is puzzling how the theory could have persisted for so long.

The common identification of young Keyserlingk as C. P. E. Bach's likely charge can be traced back to Spitta, who wrote:

Einer allerdings nicht unbedingt glaubwürdigen Quelle entnehmen wir, daß Bach mit einer vornehmen und reichen Familie aus Livland bekannt gewesen sei, deren ältester Sohn in Leipzig studirt habe, und daß Emanuel Bach mit demselben eine Reise durch Frankreich, Italien und England habe unternehmen sollen; doch sei dieser Plan durch Emanuels Anstellung beim Kronprinzen Friedrich von Preußen vereitelt worden.¹⁷

We also learn – though not, it is true, from a perfectly trustworthy authority – that [C. P. E.] Bach was on intimate terms with a noble and wealthy family of Livland, with whose eldest son (who had studied in Leipzig) Emanuel Bach was to make a journey through France, Italy, and England; this plan, however, came to nothing, in consequence of Emanuel's appointment by the Crown Prince of Prussia.¹⁸

13 Johann Elias Bach reports that this is the reason Agricola went to Berlin in late 1741 – in other words, just months after Bach would have been hired. See 'Die Briefentwürfe des Johann Elias Bach', in *Leipziger Beiträge zur Bach-Forschung* 3, ed. Evelin Odrich and Peter Wollny (New York: Olms, 2000). Letter No. 83: An Johann Ernst Bach in Eisenach, 9. January 1742 (181): 'Mons. Agricola is vor etwa einem Viertheil Jahr nach Berlin auf Einrathen des dasigen Herrn Vettern [C. P. E. Bach] gegangen'.

14 The undated title-page reads: 'Sei Sonate / per Cembalo / che all' Augusta Maestà / di / FEDERICO II. / Rè di Prussia / D. D. D. / l'Autore / Carlo Filippo Emanuele Bach / Musico di Camera di S.M. / Alle spese di Balth: Schmid / in Norimberga'. The catalogue of Bach's estate reports that the individual sonatas were composed in 1740, 1740, 1741, 1741, 1741 and 1742 respectively. It also says that the collection appeared in 1743, although 1742 is the more commonly cited date.

15 Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 401.

16 See, for example, Heinrich Miesner, 'Graf v. Keyserlingk und Minister v. Happe, zwei Gönner der Familie Bach', in *Bach-Jahrbuch* 31 (1934), 100–115.

17 Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, revised edition (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1979), volume 2, 715–716.

18 Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, trans. Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller Maitland (London: Novello, 1899), volume 3, 236.



Spitta's footnote to this passage explains his conclusion: he identifies his source as Rochlitz,¹⁹ who he says obtained the information from Doles, 'Em. Bach's friend'. He then asks, 'Could not this noble family have been that of Baron von Keyserling?'.²⁰

What Spitta posed only as a question in a footnote has since been assimilated into Bach scholarship as though it were a statement of fact.²¹ While investigating Spitta's question in 1934, Heinrich Miesner found a way, in spite of facts to the contrary that his own article reveals, to graft the Keyserlingk identification affirmatively onto C. P. E. Bach's autobiographical statement. Miesner's conclusion is that Rochlitz's original report is valid if we reread the composer's opening sentence ('When in 1738 I ended my academic years and went to Berlin, I had a very advantageous opportunity to accompany a young nobleman on a trip abroad') to be referring to the actual year Bach entered Prussian service – 1741 – rather than 1738. In other words, we are to understand Bach's first sentence to read, 'When in 1738 I ended my academic years and [then] went to Berlin [in 1741], I had a very advantageous opportunity . . .'. It must have been 1741, according to Miesner, because that is the year Bach in which first appears in the pay records and Keyserlingk's only son, Heinrich Christian (born 1727), entered the University of Leipzig.

Miesner's reassessment, while intriguing, is not unproblematic. It presumes that Bach for some reason implied two different dates, three years apart, in his first sentence. The second problem is that even if we want to believe that Emanuel Bach was telling us his trip was to have taken place in 1741, the timing still does not work because Keyserlingk's son, Heinrich Christian, was only fourteen years old in 1741 – as Miesner himself points out.²² A Grand Tour was usually made when a young man was finished with his schooling and entering adulthood – some time between his very late teens and early twenties. Entering university at fourteen was possible, but making a Grand Tour at that age – and before one's formal education was complete – would have been most unusual. If the date of 1738 is taken instead for Bach's Berlin employment, this particular gentleman would have been only eleven, which can only further remove him from consideration. As if to contradict his own theory, Miesner discovered that Heinrich Christian Keyserlingk did in fact take his Grand Tour, but not until 1747 – in other words, when he was at the appropriate age (twenty) and finished with university.²³ Surely if the boy had been meant to travel in 1741 (despite his uncommonly young age), his father could have found any number of eager substitutes to take Bach's supposed place. The only reasonable conclusion is that Keyserlingk's son is an impossible suggestion. We have to erase

19 The reference to Rochlitz is from *Für Freunde der Tonkunst*, volume 4 (Leipzig: Carl Cnobloch, 1832), 283. The original passage reads: 'Zwar vollendete er seinen akademischen Kursus, und da der Vater in Leipzig Gelegenheit gefunden hatte, mit einer vornehmen und reichen Familie aus Liefland, deren ältester Sohn in Leipzig studierte und nun bald eine Reise durch Frankreich, Italien und England machen sollte, bekannt zu werden und seinen Emanuel zum Führer des jungen Reisenden zu empfehlen – eine Empfehlung, die von den Aeltern dankbar angenommen worden war: so hätte unser Frankfurter schwerlich ausweichen dürfen, wäre ihm nicht eben da der Ruf vom preußischen Kronprinzen, dem nachherigen König Friedrich II., gekommen, so daß er nun selbständig, auch der Unterstützung des Vaters nicht mehr bedürftig, seinen Entschluß erklären und jene sehr vortheilhafte Anerbietung ausschlagen konnte' (my italics).

20 'Die vornehme Familie wird doch nicht die des Freiherrn von Keyserling gewesen sein?' Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, volume 2, 716, note 38.

21 See, for example, Leisinger: 'In about 1738 he was offered the opportunity to go on an educational tour abroad as companion to Heinrich Christian von Keyserlingk, a son of Reichsgraf Hermann Carl von Keyserlingk, a patron of J. S. and W. F. Bach' ('Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel', *The New Grove*, volume 2, 388). Wagner also offers Keyserlingk and, parenthetically, the Prussian Minister von Happe ('Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel', *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Personenteil 1, column 1313). See also Christoph Wolff: 'Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was given the opportunity, after completing his university studies at Frankfurt an der Oder, to escort a "young gentleman" on a Grand Tour through Austria, Italy, France, and England. This gentleman was none other than the son of Count Keyserlingk in Dresden, one of Bach's most important patrons, and the scheme had clearly been worked out by the two fathers.' *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*, 401.

22 Miesner, 'Graf v. Keyserlingk', 110.

23 Miesner, 'Graf v. Keyserlingk', 110.



this ‘fact’ from what little we know about both Emanuel Bach’s early Berlin years as well as Johann Sebastian’s role in fostering his second son’s career. We also need to renew the search for other likely Grand Tour candidates.

We might start by asking what Bach was doing in Berlin immediately after leaving university. At present, we have no trace of him apart from what he tells us in the autobiography.²⁴ He might well have gone from leading the university’s collegium musicum to working in a Prussian nobleman’s household – just as Johann Gottlieb Janitsch did for Minister von Happe²⁵ and Christoph Nichelmann did for Count Barfuss. There is presently no evidence for Bach’s employment in such a capacity, but it might well be that for a time he did what his peers did. Perhaps not coincidentally, Janitsch and Nichelmann also went on to become members of Frederick’s ensemble. It is also possible that Bach worked for one of Frederick’s relatives, for example one of the Margraves of Brandenburg. I suggest this because in total two margraves plus a member of a margrave’s household staff stood as godparents to Bach’s sons.²⁶

If we want to believe Rochlitz and accept that Bach was intimately connected with a noble family from Livland, we might consider looking for the young gentleman among the extended family of Margrave Carl, whose mother Maria Dorothea was a Princess of Courland – which, admittedly, is not the same as Livland, but is geographically and dynastically very close.²⁷ Margrave Carl was one of the godfathers to Philipp Emanuel’s son, Johann Sebastian (the younger). The margrave maintained his own musical establishment, inherited a portion of the estate of his uncle Christian Ludwig (the margrave to whom J. S. Bach dedicated the ‘Brandenburg Concertos’) and had a sister (Anne Sophie Charlotte) who was married to the ruler of Duke of Saxe-Eisenach (Wilhelm Heinrich) – a place that was home to many Bach family members.²⁸ Margrave Carl himself would have been far too old for a Grand Tour in the 1730s, but it might be that one of his lesser-known relatives was not. If Frederick had called C. P. E. Bach to come and play for him from such a household, the prudent thing for all involved would have been to comply.

24 A recent theory by Rashid-S. Pegah suggests a much earlier start to the relationship between Emanuel Bach and King Frederick. See his ‘Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach und Kronprinz Friedrich in Preußen: Die erste Begegnung?’, *Bach-Jahrbuch* 94 (2008), 328–332. In this article Pegah suggests that a ‘fils de Back’ mentioned in a letter of 8 June 1735 from Crown Prince Frederick to his sister Wilhelmine was certainly C. P. E. Bach. His conclusion is that Frederick must have already been aware of Bach in 1735. The letter, however, does not identify specifically which ‘fils de Back’ Frederick heard, and it also expresses doubt on Frederick’s part as to the musician’s level of polish (‘his taste is not yet formed’). Pegah’s conclusion, that Frederick must have already known of the Bach family in the 1730s, is alluring, but in the context of the rest of the correspondence, it seems possible that Franz Benda, another one of Frederick’s musicians, could be the source of Frederick’s knowledge: Benda stopped in Leipzig on his way from Frederick’s residence at Ruppין to Wilhelmine’s palace at Bayreuth. See Johann Adam Hiller, *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler neuerer Zeit* (Leipzig, 1784), 44.

25 We know that C. P. E. Bach also enjoyed a relationship with Minister von Happe because he dedicated a trio sonata to him (Wq157). The source of this information is a note on C. P. E. Bach’s own title-page in the hand of the collector Böhmer [Behmer]: ‘NB. ist des Hl. CBach / eigene Hand, u. vor / den seel. Hl. Etats Minister / v. Happe von ihm verfertigt, / aus dessen musicalischen / Nachlaß ich es erhalten. Behmer’. The source is in a private collection in North America. See *Chamber Music: Trio Sonatas II*, ed. Christoph Wolff, in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, series 2, volume 2 (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 2011), xviii. See also Miesner, ‘Graf v. Keyserlingk’, 100–115. In addition, there is a recent theory that C. P. E. Bach’s *Trauungs-Cantate* (H824a) might have been intended for a member of the Happe family; see note 29.

26 Heinrich Miesner, ‘Aus der Umwelt Philipp Emanuel Bachs’, *Bach-Jahrbuch* 34 (1937), 132–143.

27 The Keyserlingk family is also nobility from Courland, and not Livland. This detail might actually remove both families from contention – unless we assume that Rochlitz got it completely wrong, in which case we have no information whatsoever regarding the identity of Bach’s potential companion.

28 Margrave Carl’s Kapelle roster is given in Marburg, *Historisch-Kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik* (Berlin: G. A. Lange, 1754–1762), volume 1 (1754), section (*Stück*) 2, 156ff. His status as beneficiary of his uncle’s will is established by Heinrich Besseler, ‘Markgraf Christian Ludwig von Brandenburg’, *Bach-Jahrbuch* 43 (1956), 26.



Another possible candidate might be found within the family of Baron Dietrich Ewald von Grotthuß, whom Bach taught, and to whom he later dedicated his rondo 'Abschied von meinem Silbermannischen Claviere' (Wq66). There is also a recent theory that Bach's *Trauungs-Cantate* (H824a) might have been written for Grotthuß's wedding in 1773, although the source evidence is decidedly equivocal.²⁹ Thus far, there is no documentation of a relationship between the Grotthuß family and Bach before 1779, and the theory can be little more than a starting suggestion. That being said, there is more demonstrable a connection between Emanuel Bach and Grotthuß than there ever was between Bach and the son of Keyserlingk. Furthermore, the Grotthuß family – unlike the Keyserlingks, or Margrave Carl's mother – actually was nobility from Livland. Dietrich Ewald himself could not have been a candidate for the Grand Tour in the 1730s or '40s because he was not yet born, but at present we know nothing about his father or cousins or any older siblings. His son, though, was born in Leipzig, which might indicate that there was a family connection to the city.

It might very well be that Bach's young gentleman was from none of these families. The decision not to identify him might indicate that the name was perhaps not as important to the story Bach was telling as the prestige of the offer itself. We should, however, carefully consider the evidence against the standing Keyserlingk identification and renew the search in order to learn something more about the early professional life of one of the eighteenth century's most influential musicians. We do not know what Bach might have been doing in Berlin (or elsewhere?) for the years between his studies in Frankfurt and his official employment under Frederick. We also do not know the full extent of his early connections to Prussian high society. It is becoming clear, though, that the acquaintances he made at the elite Prussian university of Frankfurt an der Oder served him well in later life. The gap in our knowledge about Emanuel Bach's early years not only concerns his biography, but is also symptomatic of a general lack of information about the early modern history of Berlin. When we take away a prevailing theory about Bach's activities between 1738 and 1741, we are left with questions that, at present, we cannot answer with any certainty. There is more work to be done.

29 *Arias and Chamber Cantatas*, ed. Bertil van Boer, in *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*, series 6, volume 4 (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 2010). The rubric on a (possibly autograph) source that was in the library of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) reads: 'Cantate auf die Vermählung des Hrn. Von G. und des Fräul. G componieret von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach'. It also provides a date, '1765?', with question mark included. This, of course, is several years before Grotthuß's wedding took place. Bach's own works catalogue (*Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses*) also reflects uncertainty about the date, so the chronology indicated in the sources is doubly unhelpful. Other early sources that have recently come to light seem similarly to suggest a date prior to Grotthuß's wedding for the work's composition. See Bertil van Boer's Introduction to the edition, especially xiii–xiv.