

MA

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

LONDON BAROQUE
Andrew Manze, violin
Richard Gwilt, violin
Charles Medlam, cello
Richard Egarr, harpsichord

Wednesday, October 27, 1993
7:45 pm
Gartner Auditorium

Johann Sebastian Bach and His Sons

Trio Sonata in C major **Johann Sebastian Bach**
(after the Sonata in C major, S. 529, for solo organ) **1685-1750**
Vivace
Lento
Allegro

Polonaise No. 7 in E major for keyboard **Wilhelm Friedemann Bach**
Polonaise No. 4 in D minor **1710-1784**
Polonaise No. 9 in F major

Trio Sonata in C minor, "Sanguineus **Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach**
and Melancholicus" **1714-1788**
Allegretto; Presto
Adagio
Allegro

Intermission

Sonata in G major for cello **Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach**
and basso continuo **1732-1795**
Allegretto
Rondeaux

Duett V in A major for two violins senza basso **Johann Christian Bach**
Andante assai **1735-1782**
Spirituoso

Concerto in E-flat major, K. 107 **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
(Arranged from J. C. Bach's Op. 5, No. 3, for keyboard solo) **1756-1791**
Allegro
Allegretto

Harpsichord by William Dowd,
1983, after Pascal Taskin

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM
by Judith Eckelmeyer and Carla Chrisfield

Johann Sebastian Bach acquired legendary fame in his own lifetime primarily as a result of his virtuoso keyboard playing, but it is really as a composer that he has earned his unique place in the annals of music history. His art encompassed a vast range of styles and techniques, and he combined the accomplishments of his own generation with those of earlier ones to forge a style which has been (and will no doubt continue to be) regarded and understood in an almost endless variety of ways throughout the ages. But Sebastian's legacy went even beyond his compositions to the generation of his children, for he was the progenitor of an illustrious family of influential musicians.

The twenty children resulting from Johann Sebastian Bach's two marriages were divided (almost evenly) into eleven sons and nine daughters. Of them, nine were fortunate enough to survive into adulthood. Of these nine, five sons developed into musicians of considerable talent: Wilhelm Friedemann (1710-1784), Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714-1788), and Johann Gottfried-Bernhard (1715-1739) from Bach's first marriage to Maria Barbara; and Johann Christoph Friedrich (1732-1795) and Johann Christian (1735-1782) from his second marriage to Anna Magdalena. With the exception of Johann Gottfried-Bernhard, a highly skilled organist who died at the age of twenty-four, each son came to hold extremely visible and respected musical positions throughout Germany. In particular, Carl Philipp Emanuel and Johann Christian were regarded as two of the most important composers of the eighteenth century in their own lifetime, their fame virtually eclipsing that of their father.

Sebastian viewed the accomplishments of his sons with great fatherly pride. In 1728, in a letter to a friend, he tells of his delight at their ability to participate in family concerts, describing them as "born musicians." **Wilhelm Friedemann**, the first son, was particularly favored by his father, who spared no pains in order to ensure that his child receive the most comprehensive early musical education possible. In addition to broadening the boy's experience by taking him on extended trips and to hear concerts, Sebastian instructed him personally in keyboard, using his own *Klavierbüchlein* (written expressly for this purpose) as a method book. Wilhelm Friedemann later entered the university as a law student at the urging of his father, who wished for his sons the academic education he himself had lacked.

In 1733, Wilhelm Friedemann accepted a post as organist in Dresden, then a vital and visible center of Italian homophonic music, and remained there for thirteen years. In 1746, he accepted an appointment as organist in Halle, regarded as an important center for music in the German Protestant tradition. This new position provided him with a far better salary, but unfortunately he was unable to adjust himself to the contemporary requirements for a successful career. As a result, his music was greatly criticized and misunderstood. Sadly, this period was followed by a number of years of poverty and wandering.

Wilhelm Friedemann's musical style reflects the elements of freedom, playfulness, sudden changes of mood, and, at times, an intensely personal emotional quality that foreshadows Romanticism. He was an exceptional keyboard player, possessing a delicate, warm touch in his clavier playing and one of great strength on the organ. It is interesting to note that he preferred improvising over actually notating his compositions.

The second son of Sebastian's first marriage, **Carl Philipp Emanuel**, was born at Weimar in 1714. He, too, displayed an unusual gift for keyboard playing at an early age. In 1723, when his father accepted a position at Leipzig, Emanuel began his university career there studying law (following in

the footsteps of not only his older brother but those of other such notable musicians as Telemann, Schütz, and Handel). Later, Emanuel settled in Frankfurt-am-Oder, where he pursued his law studies while simultaneously writing music and directing local concerts.

In 1738 an event occurred which proved most significant in launching Emanuel's musical career. It was related by historian Charles Burney in one of his letters: "Emanuel Bach went to Berlin, not without expectation that the Prince Royal of Prussia, who was forming a band, would invite him to Ruppin (his residence); he was not disappointed, the fame of his performance soon reached the Prince's ears, his royal highness sent for him to his court, and commanded his attendance." Two years later, Emanuel was appointed to a musical position in the court of Frederick the Great at Potsdam, where he remained for twenty-eight years.

During the early years of his employment, Emanuel was relatively content with the conditions under which he worked. The courts of Frederick the Great were musical centers of considerable distinction and, prior to the Seven Year's War, were important gathering places for the most renowned musicians of the day. In his position as court harpsichordist, Emanuel was kept busy performing (occasionally as accompanist for his illustrious master's flute playing); he was also required to produce a specified number of flute concertos for Frederick, even though the King tended to prefer the less intellectually demanding compositions of his court composer Johann Joachim Quantz.

As time passed, it became increasingly evident that his duties provided Emanuel with little outlet for displaying his considerable creative gifts, which have come to be regarded as second to none among the sons of Sebastian. His salary was poor by the standards of the time; had he been in a position to leave the court, he may well have done so. However, in 1767, his fortune changed, and a golden opportunity presented itself to him when Georg Philipp Telemann, the renowned composer and Emanuel's god-father, died suddenly; his passing created a vacancy in the prestigious position of music director in Hamburg. Emanuel applied for the job and was appointed as Telemann's successor. He spent the remaining twenty years of his life there and, during this happy, fruitful time, came to be regarded as the central figure in the musical life of that city. He divided his time among the five principal churches, supervising all of the musical activities connected with each, and also produced many of his finest compositions (among them symphonies, concertos, oratorios, solo songs, and chamber music).

Johann Christoph Friedrich's musical education, like that of his oldest half-brother, had been supervised and nurtured by his father, and like Wilhelm Friedemann, Friedrich also took up law studies at the university. After his formal education, he entered the employ of Count Wilhelm von Schaumburg at Bucheburg as a member of his orchestra. He remained in that post for forty-five years, graduating from the rank of musician to the position of *Konzertmeister*.

Friedrich's writing style combined both the *Empfindsamkeit* (sensitivity: appoggiatura sighs, frequent dynamic changes) of his older brothers with the more Italianate style characteristic of the works of his younger brother Johann Christian. Friedrich's chamber music is similar in character and style to his works for the clavier.

Johann Christian's importance as a composer is amply displayed through his works written in the symphonic, chamber music, keyboard, and operatic genres. He was the youngest son of Sebastian Bach's second marriage and, like his brothers before him, received his early musical training from his father. Unlike his brothers, however, Christian never had the opportunity to attend the university, due to his father's death in 1750 when he was

fifteen years old. At this time, his two older half-brothers took him in their charge. Wilhelm Friedemann brought him to Emanuel in Berlin, where he remained for four years, continuing his musical studies with his brother.

In 1754, at the age of twenty, Christian went to Milan to study with the celebrated theorist and composer Padre Giambattista Martini (1706-1784), who would eventually be Mozart's teacher. He was later appointed organist at the Milan Cathedral; during this time he also wrote a good deal of religious music. Living in this milieu, Christian was soon drawn towards the increasingly popular medium of opera and managed to have several of his works in this genre performed in Turin and Naples. He went to London in 1762, at the age of twenty-seven, and remained there for the rest of his life. His popularity there was such that he garnered for himself the nickname "the London Bach;" his writing style, however, remained Italian. In fact, he was so rooted in the traditions of Italy that he even renounced his German Protestantism in favor of Catholicism. As a composer, however, he did not altogether abandon his German musical heritage, but it was in great part eclipsed by his love for the Italian style.

Johann Sebastian's Trio Sonata in C major for two violins and harpsichord, S. 1037, is one of a set of six which had had a prior life as solo works for organ (S. 525-530) that were composed specifically as a teaching device for Wilhelm Friedemann. Sebastian later transcribed these works, adapting them to the chamber music idiom. The Sonata is scored for two violins and continuo in the authoritative edition of Bach's works, but, true to the custom and esthetic of Bach's day, it may very well have been performed by any number of suitable instruments in place of the violins. The Sonata is representative of the genre in its contrapuntal texture of three independent voices, its arrangement of movements, and the influence of the Italian style on the thematic character of the sonata.

Wilhelm Friedemann's Twelve Polonaises for keyboard, written in 1765, are considered among his finest works. They are short pieces, usually in either two- or three-part form and occasionally hinting at the structural elements of the sonata form which would become characteristic of the next generation. They are in a series of major and minor keys, and vary considerably in tempo and mood, reflecting *Empfindsamkeit* and *stile galant* (aristocratic style: homophony with triadic or scale melody, and simple harmonies).

Carl Philipp Emanuel's Trio Sonata in C minor, Wq. 161, No. 1, is unusual in that it bears the programmatic title "Conversation between a Sanguineus and a Melancholicus" (a cheerful person and a melancholy one). It is a work that has generated a great deal of discussion. The score contains a printed preface which reads:

"An attempt has been made in the first trio to express as far as possible by means of instruments alone something for which the resources of voices and a text are perhaps more suitable. It is meant to portray a conversation between a Sanguineus and a Melancholicus, who are in disagreement throughout the first and most of the second movement; each tries to draw the other over to his own side, until they settle their differences at the end of the second movement, at which point the Melancholicus gives up the battle and assumes the manner of the other."

This preface is followed by a detailed discussion of "all the main events" in the piece, so that the changing nuances of mood and the various angles of the situation can be easily grasped by the listener. The three movements contain certain expressive devices characterizing the attitudes of fullness,

questioning, complaining, pleading, high-spiritedness, and melancholy, in an attempt to create as representational a musical language as possible.

In this work, Emanuel attempted to raise one of the most controversial questions pertaining to the aesthetics of music in his day: what is the essence of music and how can it be defined? Ideas of this sort were much more clearly defined through the medium of vocal music, where the accompanying text was a means of elucidating the content of the work. With regard to this, Quantz wrote, "Vocal music has some advantages that instrumental music must forego. In the former, the words and the human voice are a great advantage to the composer, both with regard to invention and effect." In this particular Trio, however, Emanuel (who firmly believed in the expressive potential of purely instrumental music) demonstrates that the absence of a text does not necessarily rob the music of its specific message or meaning as the composer intended it.

Important examples of **Johann Christoph Friedrich's** earlier works are contained in a collection entitled *Musikalisches Vierlerly*, which includes the Sonata in G major for violoncello and basso continuo. This work is in two movements, an *Allegretto* in sonata form and a concluding *Rondeaux*, and combines passages of lyrical cantilena with those displaying a certain amount of technical brilliance.

Johann Christian's Duett in A major for two violins without basso continuo is one of the *Sechs Duette für Zwei Violinen* that were published without opus number in London in 1775. Like its companion pieces, it is a suite-like work, light in character, and primarily homophonic.

Christian published his first set of Six Sonatas, Op. 5, to be played on either the harpsichord or the fortepiano, in 1776, although it is certain that several of them were composed at an earlier date. The second, third, and fourth of these sonatas were transcribed into piano concertos by the eight-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Leopold Mozart had brought his young daughter and son on tour to London in April 1764, where they were to remain for fifteen months; during this time Christian was working to establish his own reputation there. Wolfgang was immediately attracted to Christian's style of writing, and a strong rapport developed between the boy of eight and the young man of twenty-eight. During this time Mozart likely became acquainted with these sonatas, and although the exact date of the transcriptions is not known, they are thought to have been written at about the time that Nannerl, Wolfgang, and Leopold left London for The Hague. Even though young Wolfgang primarily "borrowed" melodies from Christian to form the work, this practice was then viewed as indicative of the high esteem and respect with which Mozart regarded his contemporary.

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