INTRODUCTION

The four symphonies of Wq 183 represent Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's final and most imposing contribution to the genre. Though Bach's earlier symphonies were chiefly composed for four-part string orchestra, with winds added later to some works, this set was conceived and written for a full orchestra including pairs of flutes and oboes, bassoon, two horns, five-part strings, and basso continuo. Not only are all seven winds obbligato, but instead of the single "Basso" part of the earlier symphonies, Bach has provided a separate part for violoncello and another for violone and basso continuo throughout. Further, these four works constitute the only set of symphonies that he published.[1]

Composition and First Performances

Information about the origin of the symphonies is sketchy. In a letter to Johann Nikolaus Forkel of 14 May 1776 Bach reports, "Now I am working on orchestral symphonies, on commission, as one must."[2] Bach, discreet as ever, does not reveal the identity of his patron and no further information on the point has come to light.[3] The autograph score of the symphonies lacks any original wrappers or title pages it may have had. The present title page, in the hand of the collector Georg Poelchau, indicates that he had received the manuscript as a gift from Maximilian Stadler in Vienna in 1818.[4] Its whereabouts between 1776 and that date are unknown.

Several writers have speculated that the commission might have come from the Prussian Crown Prince, the future Friedrich Wilhelm II (1744–97, r. 1786–97), possibly with some involvement by Gottfried van Swieten, Austrian ambassador to Prussia in 1770–77. Friedrich Wilhelm was a notable musical patron with whom Bach enjoyed a cordial relationship, and he was the dedicatee of the 1780 printed edition of the symphonies. Bach had sent him a gift of music in September 1775, and the surviving draft of the prince's response is couched in remarkably friendly tones, though there is no mention of symphonies in the exchange.[5] Van Swieten, who had commissioned the Wq 182 symphonies in 1773, was one of Bach's most important supporters. After his return to Vienna in 1777 the baron would play a major role in disseminating Bach's music there, and Bach would dedicate his third set of *Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber*

1. The only other symphony that Bach published was the Symphony in E Minor, Wq 177, printed in 1759 in its original version for string orchestra; see CPEB:CW, III/1.

These four works have received abundant attention in the scholarly literature. Suchalla 1968 provides a detailed style-analytical study of Bach's symphonies. The reception of the four symphonies in Vienna is explored in Christoph Wolff, "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach und Wien. Zum Kontext der Orchester-Sinfonien mit zwölf obligaten Stimmen," *Hamburg 1988*, 119–31. Complementing Suchalla's dissertation, Günther Wagner concentrates on reception and an examination of the symphonies in the context of the contemporary theoretical literature: see Wagner 1994 and his "Die Sinfonien C. P. E. Bachs in der Berwertung von Zeitgenossen und Nachgeborenen," in *Frankfurt/Oder 1994*, 481–95.

2. "Jetzt arbeite ich an Orchestersinfonien, auf Verlangen, wie man nur kann." *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:575–77; *CPEB-Letters*, 96–97. (Translations of Bach's correspondence are taken from *CPEB-Letters* with minor modifications; all other translations in the introduction are by Stephen C. Fisher.) The letter is known only from citations in sales catalogues; on its history and the identity of the recipient, see commentary in *CPEB-Briefe*. As Bach uses the phrase "auf Verlangen" on p. 207 of his *Autobiography* in connection with the six symphonies commissioned by Baron van Swieten, Wq 182, in this context also he is probably talking about a formal commission.

3. Though the complete text of the letter is not known, the catalogues in which it appears would probably have included the name of the person who commissioned the symphonies as a selling point if Bach had mentioned it.

4. "Ein Geschenck des Herren Abts Stadler in Wien 1818." D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 350; see the description in the critical report (source **A**).

5. See Bach's letter of 28 September 1775, with the draft of the prince's reply, in *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:519–21, and *CPEB-Letters*, 85. Clark suggests that the music Bach had sent was a copy of Wq 183 but does not note the contradiction between the date of the letter and the apparent date of composition of the symphonies. Suchalla more plausibly proposes that the music was a MS copy of the accompanied keyboard sonatas, Wq 90. Wagner 1994, 16–17, also identifies the music as Wq 183. He proceeds to construct an elaborate hypothesis in which the symphonies were already in existence by 28 September 1775; revised in the extant autograph in 1775–76; and revised yet again in 1777 so that Bach's reference in his letter of 30 November 1778 to having composed the works "a year ago," discussed below, would be literally true. This goes well beyond anything the 1775 letter says or implies. If the prince had commissioned a major work from Bach at that time, it would be surprising that this letter does not mention it specifically, whether the music was enclosed or still in progress. The close textual correspondence between the autograph and the Schwickert print of 1780 seems to rule out any major revision of the symphonies after mid 1776.

to van Swieten in 1781.[6] On the other hand, the musical life of Berlin was in a period of steep decline in the 1770s and it is not clear why anyone in the Prussian capital would have commissioned music that might have been difficult for the available forces to perform in a satisfactory manner.[7] As is indicated below, the prince's name does not enter the extant correspondence concerning the symphonies before they are in press in 1780. If the symphonies had originally been composed for the prince, it is curious that the autograph soon came into private hands while the prince's copy of the print was carefully preserved in the Prussian royal library until World War II.[8] One would also need to explain why Bach felt free to sell the works to a publisher a few years after their completion.[9]

By the time Bach wrote to Forkel on 14 May 1776 he was already nearing the end of the compositional task. In the autograph manuscript of the four works the notation "Ende. d. 11 Nov. 1775" appears at the end of Symphony II (p. 94), while after Symphony IV appears, "Fine. d. 12 Juni 1776" (p. 184). Possibly work on the set fell into two stages, with the first pair of symphonies completed in the fall of 1775 and the second pair in the following spring.[10] In NV 1790 (p. 45) they are listed as his last four symphonies, numbered 15 through 18; there they are all dated 1776.

Bach presented the new symphonies to the public two months after their completion. The event marked one of the high points in Bach's involvement in the musical life of Hamburg. As the *Hamburgische unpartheyische Correspondent* reports:

> Hamburg, 19 August [1776].
> The day before yesterday in the Konzertsaal auf dem Kamp Kapellmeister Bach rehearsed four grand symphonies that he had recently composed. The orchestra was perhaps the largest Hamburg has seen in some time. It consisted of some forty of our professional musicians with a few amateurs, who performed these incomparable, unique symphonies with such precision and spirit that Herr Bach publicly commended their skill and the audience gave the liveliest expressions of their approval.[11]

Bach's friend the poet Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock was in the audience, reporting in a letter dated 17 August to G. F. E. Schönborn, "How often we wish you were here, dear Schönborn, for instance yesterday, when we heard four new symphonies by Bach performed by forty instruments."[12] The accounts of the event thus leave it open as to whether it took place on 16 or on 17 August and also suggest that it may have been in the nature of a semi-public reading rather than a concert.[13] As will be seen below, the occasion was still vividly remembered four years later, both for the size and quality of the orchestra and for the symphonies themselves, which were each played twice.

Publication

More than two years later, on 30 November 1778, Bach wrote to the Leipzig publisher J. G. I. Breitkopf concerning the symphonies:

> Permit a small word to be said between us. Herr Schwickert wants to publish something of mine. A year ago I composed 4 large symphonies for orchestra with 12 obbligato parts. It is the greatest thing of this type that I have done. My modesty

6. On van Swieten's musical activities, see *NG*[II], s.v. "Swieten, Gottfried van," by Edward Olleson. Gudrun Busch, "Der österreichischer Botschafter Gottfried van Swieten, das Berliner Musikleben 1771–1777 und die Musik C. P. E. Bachs," *Frankfurt/Oder 1994*, 108–162, esp. 144–45, suggests that van Swieten may have been involved in arranging to have Bach compose the symphonies for the prince.

7. Busch admits this difficulty; see the letter of van Swieten's quoted in Busch, 108–9, also E. Eugene Helm, *Music at the Court of Frederick the Great* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 122–39, and the introduction to CPEB:CW, III/2.

8. On the history of the dedication copy of the print, see below. One could hypothesize that van Swieten acquired the autograph from the prince, but there is no direct evidence that the baron ever owned the manuscript. For further speculation on van Swieten's connection to the symphonies, see below.

9. Suchalla, *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:576, suggests that the individual who commissioned Wq 183 might have died before their publication. Alternatively one might suggest that the commission involved exclusive rights to the music for a period of time, so that Bach would have been free to publish the works and to dedicate the printed edition as he chose once that period had expired. Bach's attitude toward the symphonies for van Swieten, Wq 182, was quite different from the one he took toward Wq 183: he actively tried to prevent their distribution to the general public, presumably in accordance with his agreement with van Swieten. See Leisinger/Wollny 1997, 37, and the introduction to CPEB:CW, III/2.

10. It is tempting to connect the symphonies, with their unprecedented (for Bach) role for the winds, with one of Bach's few substantial works for wind ensemble, the six "Kleine Sonaten" for pairs of horns, flutes, and clarinets and one bassoon, Wq 184, dated "H[amburg] 1775" in NV 1790. These pieces will appear in CPEB:CW, II/5.

11. *HUC* (20 Aug. 1776), 4; quoted in Wiermann, 448–49. The German text appears as no. 1 in the appendix.

12. "Wie oft wünschen wir Sie bey uns, l. Sch., z. E., gestern, da wir 4 neue Simphonien von Bachen mit 40 Instrumenten aufführen horten." *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:594. If the date on the letter is taken to be the date on which Klopstock began it and the quoted passage was actually penned on the 18th, the performance would have taken place on the 17th and the apparent discrepancy with the date of the newspaper account disappears.

13. Wiermann, 449, points out that no advertisements of the event (which one might have expected in connection with a public concert) are known.

> does not allow me to say more about them. I am offering them to him in the enclosed reply for 100 Reichsthaler and 24 copies for myself. If I published them myself, I could earn more from them, but I do not want to announce a subscription every moment. What do you think about this? He intends to send the money right away before he receives the music, if my condition should be agreeable to him. Although I do not believe you have any desire for this publication, I nonetheless wanted to tell you about it first.[14]

E. B. Schwickert was another Leipzig publisher; Bach had enclosed his letter to Schwickert in this one to Breitkopf so that Breitkopf could see it before forwarding it to Schwickert. Though Bach did not wish to undertake the effort of soliciting subscriptions on a large scale, the twenty-four copies of the symphonies would permit him to sell them to a few customers.[15]

Bach's terms were satisfactory. In February 1779 Schwickert was soliciting subscriptions for the forthcoming edition of the symphonies:

> The undersigned book dealer humbly offers to all connoisseurs of music subscriptions to four orchestral symphonies with concertante parts by C. P. E. Bach, a man whose services to music are sufficiently widely known. Music lovers who do not live near a book dealer are requested to supply the most convenient dealer with their character references, residence, and name. As soon as the requisite number of subscribers is collected (which must reach us before the coming Easter trade fair), the (not as yet set) price for each copy and the date at which copies will be delivered will be publicly announced.[16]

Without a firm price or date of delivery, this advertisement was not well calculated to generate business quickly.[17] Schwickert seems to have had little experience of his own in publishing musical editions of this sort and equally little interest in taking advantage of Bach's experience.

Nearly a year later the music was still in press, and Schwickert was exasperating the composer. In a letter of 25 January 1780 to Breitkopf (who was serving as the printer), Bach complained:

> Herr Schwickert did not follow the good suggestions I gave him, partly out of forgetfulness, partly out of irritation. I wanted and was able to provide subscribers for him, but without giving me orders and without letting me know, I received most of the sheets for review all at once and indeed NB printed on miserable paper. When I sold him the symphonies, I asked for permission from him to be able to dedicate these pieces to a great man. He granted me my request, and now he is writing to me that all copies will be printed on the same paper (such miserable paper indeed). Do help me out of this trouble, I beg of you. The symphonies are dedicated to the Prussian Crown Prince. The late Winter always used to have one or several copies of all his printed works printed up on fine paper for himself and also sometimes for me. In this way I have for my pleasure especially clean copies of nearly all my printed things. And now, just think, for the Crown Prince and for myself I am supposed to have nothing better. Help me out of this if you can. I will keep quiet. I will pay, but NB no new typesetting. However, if nothing can be changed now, what do you think; would it perhaps contrast too much if only the title-sheet were printed on fine paper? It would be best if you, for your use, or one of your people, who are always rightfully entitled to a few copies, would have a copy on fine paper for his pleasure and be able to sell it to me for my money and my thanks. These symphonies will do harm to our music printing business, just because of the paper. I fear a pirated edition. Misguided tightfistedness!
> [in the left margin:] I am asking you kindly to deliver as soon as possible the dedication copy and my own, however bad or good their paper may be, so that Herr Schwickert does not forget me once again and the Crown Prince and I are the last.[18]

Breitkopf's draft reply, dated 13 February, indicates that all the paper Schwickert had provided was inferior (the word he uses is "unwert") and that the best he could do was to have two of the best copies sent off at once, with six more to follow a few days later.[19]

The discussion of the paper sheds light both on the relationship between Bach and Schwickert and on publishing practices in the era. Not only did Bach take pride in the appearance of his printed works and in his set of personal copies, but he also thought it good business to produce editions on good paper. (G. L. Winter, who had died in 1772, had been Bach's preferred printer for over a decade.) Bach feared that Schwickert's attempt to cut corners by using cheap paper might not only harm sales in itself but encourage someone to bring out a pirated edition. Further,

14. *CPEB-Briefe* 1: 711–12; *CPEB-Letters*, 129–30. The letter arrived on 5 December. The German text appears as no. 2 in the appendix.

15. On Bach's activity as a promoter of his own music, see Stephen L. Clark, "C.P. E. Bach as a Publisher of his Own Works," *Frankfurt/Oder 1994*, 199–211.

16. *HUC* (20 Feb. 1779), 4; quoted in *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:818, and Wiermann, 229. The German text appears as no. 3 in the appendix.

17. As Suchalla points out, *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:817–18.

18. *CPEB-Briefe*, 1: 816–17; *CPEB-Letters*, 155–56. The letter arrived on 29 January. The German text appears as no. 4 in the appendix.

19. *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:815 (the reply to Bach's letter of 25 January is drafted on the back of his letter of 15 January and so appears in the commentary to it).

for Bach as for many composers of the era, dedications to wealthy patrons represented a significant source of income. Schwickert's mishandling of the paper situation was jeopardizing Bach's ability to reap the just rewards of his labor. Bach had retained the right to dedicate the edition to a patron—as was noted previously, this was Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, whose name appears here for the first time in connection with the symphonies. Bach seems to have considered it implicit in his agreement with Schwickert that the publisher supply a suitably elegant copy of the print for presentation to the prince as soon as one could be produced. Presumably this was the usual procedure and the one best calculated to induce generosity and a feeling of satisfaction on the part of the patron. As Bach says nothing more about the matter, his worries may have been groundless, even if the print was not up to Bach's usual standard. In addition, though the paper may have been drab, the number of copies of the edition that survive indicate that it was durable.[20]

Significant considerations for the present edition emerge from Bach's letter. Having delayed publication well beyond the original projection (based on his setting the deadline for subscriptions at the Easter trade fair of 1779), Schwickert seems to have taken Bach by surprise by finally going to press and announcing the edition without keeping the composer properly informed. On 26 January 1780, the day after the letter just discussed, the publication of the edition was announced at a firm subscription price, half a *louis d'or*, with a post-publication price of 3 Reichsthaler, or a premium of about 20 per cent:[21]

> At Schwickert's in Leipzig, and also in all recognized bookstores . . . humbly offered to connoisseurs of music, 1) four orchestral symphonies with concertante instruments by C.P.E. Bach … subscription price, until the Easter trade fair of 1780, half a *louis d'or* each, delivered at that time by the undersigned. After that, each for 3 Reichsthaler.[22]

Presumably Bach had been waiting to learn the publication date and price in order to inform potential subscribers, and now found himself without the time to do so. (Unfortunately, no list of subscribers to the symphonies has survived.) He had also received most of the proof sheets with very little time either to mark them or to get them back to Leipzig, a journey of some four days.[23] In fact, if Bach was unable to obtain a few copies of the print on good paper even by going behind Schwickert's back and offering money, it would appear that the printing process was already so far advanced that there was little opportunity for his corrections to be made. It is therefore not certain how much control Bach was able to exert over the textual details of the print.

From this point matters seem to have gone more smoothly. Bach reports the receipt of the two copies of the edition he had requested on 25 January in a letter to Breitkopf dated 24 February.[24] The next six copies had come by 21 March.[25] Bach reminded Schwickert of the remaining copies he was owed on 10 April,[26] and reports their arrival on 19 May.[27] The symphonies were available in Hamburg as of 6 June:

> Subscribers to the following works are asked to pick up their copies from the musical office . . . C.P.E. Bach 4 new grand symphonies.[28]

The "musical office" was the establishment of the Hamburg dealer J. C. Westphal, who advertised the works for sale to

20. A full description of the print appears in the critical report (source **C**). What appears to have been Bach's archival copy of the print was auctioned with the rest of his estate in 1805; see Elias Kulukundis, "Die Versteigerung von C.P.E. Bachs musikalischen Nachlaß im Jahre 1805," *Bach-Jahrbuch* (1995): 155, 160. Due to the number of other copies of the print still circulating in the period, this particular exemplar cannot be traced further.

Steglich identifies the dedication copy for Prince Friedrich Wilhelm as an exemplar in the former Prussian court library; it is listed in *Katalog der Musiksammlung auf der Königlichen Hausbibliothek im Schlosse zu Berlin*, verfasst und erläutert von Georg Thouret (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895), 10. The collection sustained severe losses in World War II and this exemplar is apparently no longer extant.

21. Suchalla, *CPEB-Briefe*, 1:492, states that in this period, the *louis d'or* was worth 5 Reichsthaler in the "light" Leipzig money but 4 Reichsthaler, 2 or 3 Groschen (there were 24 Groschen to the Reichsthaler) in the "heavy" Hamburg coinage. Presumably the Leipzig rate of exchange applies here; in Hamburg currency the premium would be nearly 50 per cent.

22. *HUC* (26 Jan. 1780), "Beylage," 1; quoted in Wiermann, 229. The German text appears as no. 5 in the appendix.

23. To judge from the dates of receipt entered on the letters from Bach to Breitkopf as given in *CPEB-Briefe*.

24. *CPEB-Briefe*, 1: 822–23; *CPEB-Letters*, 157. The letter arrived on 1 March (it was a leap year); Suchalla suspects that it was composed over several days.

25. Bach to Breitkopf, *CPEB-Briefe*, 1: 824–25; *CPEB-Letters*, 157–58. The letter arrived on 29 March.

26. *CPEB-Briefe*, 1: 829–31; *CPEB-Letters*, 159–60.

27. Bach to Schwickert, *CPEB-Briefe*, 1: 840–42; *CPEB-Letters*, 162–64.

28. "Die *resp.* Pränumeranten folgender Werke werden gebeten, ihre Exemplare aus der musikalischen Niederlage abholen zu lassen. . . C.P.E. Bach 4 neue grosse Sinfonien." *HUC* (6 June 1780), "Beylage," 1; the same notice appeared in *Hamburgische neue Zeitung* (6 June 1780), "Beylage," 1; quoted in Wiermann, 248–49.

additional buyers.[29] Further newspaper notices followed, and the edition is listed for sale in the 1779/80 supplement to the Breitkopf catalogue.[30] The print was still available after Bach's death in 1788: his heirs continued to sell it, as did Westphal, and it appears in the 1799 catalogue of the Viennese music dealer Johann Traeg.[31] Bach would continue to do business with Schwickert, but would bring out no new works with him; the two letters just cited primarily concern the sale of the stock, plates, and rights to the *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*.[32]

Early Reception

Reviewers put the critical vocabulary of the German Enlightenment to full use in praising the four symphonies. A Hamburg critic refers back to the performances of the works in August 1776:

> 30 December 1780.
> These symphonies display precisely the novelty and originality that astonishes one so greatly in all Bach's works and make an indescribable effect when they are well performed by a suitable ensemble. Some time ago we heard them performed by an orchestra of some forty players, directed by the Herr Kapellmeister himself. Each symphony was played twice, and we will never forget the impression that this music made on us . . . The stronger the forces are on each part, particularly the bass, and the more the players have practiced, the better these symphonies will sound.[33]

Bach's rich textures caused difficulties for a Leipzig reviewer:

> It is a tedious labor to study elaborately scored works in parts in order to judge the whole. One must constantly strain one's imagination to add what one cannot see; and then one analyzes, instead of feeling, so that no certain judgment can result. If one were to attempt to evaluate these symphonies only from the upper voice, however, one would fail to recognize the original genius of this great master. There are four of them, all substantial and in many places exalted. The movements are mostly linked together, which pleases me quite well. Because of that the orchestra is required to leave the whole together, rather than unnaturally splitting it up into separate pieces, as often happens in our concerts. The first movement of all the symphonies is, it seems, the best worked-out and lively in tempo. Nevertheless, the final Presto of the fourth symphony is also well developed and particularly beautiful. It is in G major, $\frac{6}{8}$ time, and in the upper and middle voices moves almost entirely in eighth notes, of which the two that are sustained, that is, the first two in each half-measure, are slurred.[34]

The Berlin critic Christoph Friedrich Nicolai wrote:

> Anyone who would wish to see such a truly original composer as our *Bach* freely go his own way, untrammeled by custom or fashion, will find his heart's desire in these splendid, unique symphonies. In none of his other works has this great master gone so completely his own way as here; because of this, the symphonies present unusual difficulties in execution: when they are overcome, however, one is fully rewarded for the effort. Such works are gifts that only *Bach* can give us, and therefore all true friends of art would wish that *Bach* gave us only such works as these.[35]

Later History

As was indicated above, Georg Poelchau received the autograph of the symphonies from Maximilian Stadler in Vienna in 1818. This fact has provided a point of departure for speculation about the possible Viennese reception of the symphonies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Stadler (1748–1833) was active in Viennese musical circles from about 1796.[36] Rudolf Steglich has suggested that the autograph might earlier have been in

29. *Verzeichniss derer Musicalien, welche in der Niederlage auf den grossen Bleichen bey Johann Christoph Westphal und Comp. in Hamburg in Commißion zu haben sind* (Hamburg, 1782), 3; B-Br Fonds Fétis 5205.

30. Later advertisements in *HUC* appeared on the following dates: 1 September 1780; 24 November 1780; 8 August 1781, "Beylage"; 28 September 1781; 17 December 1783. (For details see Wiermann, 251, 261, 267, and 302.) The listing in the Breitkopf catalogue supplement for 1779/80 includes thematic incipits of all four works; see *The Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue. The Six Parts and Sixteen Supplements 1762–1787*, ed. Barry S. Brook (New York: Dover, 1966), col. 672, "IV. Orchest. Sinf. da C. P. E. Bach."

31. NV 1790, 129. The Westphal catalogue, headed "Folgende des sel. Hrn. Capelmeister C. P. E. Bach musicalische Werke, finden sich in der musikalischen Niederlage bey Joh. Christ. Westphal & Comp. in Hamburg, oder sind zu verschaffen," is reprinted in *CPEB-Westphal*, 213–17; the symphonies are the very first item, under the heading "Gedrukte und Gestochene." The reference in the Traeg catalogue appears on p. 4 as no. 11 under "Sinfonien;" see the facsimile in *Johann Traeg: Die Musikalienverzeichnisse von 1799 und 1804 (Handschriften und Sortiment)*, ed. Alexander Weinmann, (Vienna: Universal Edition), 1973. These three catalogues do not give incipits of the symphonies.

32. See CPEB:CW, VII/1.

33. *HUC* (30 Dec. 1780), "Beyträge," 4; quoted in Wiermann, 261–62. The German text appears as no. 6 in the appendix.

34. *Allgemeines Bücher Verzeichnis mit kurzen Anmerkungen*, 5 (Leipzig, 1780): 615, quoted from *CPEB-Westphal*, 120–21. The German text appears as no. 7 in the appendix.

35. *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 45 (1781): 102, quoted from *CPEB-Westphal*, 169. The German text appears as no. 8 in the appendix.

36. See *NG*^{II}, s.v. "Stadler, Maximilian," by Robert N. Freeman.

the possession of van Swieten in Vienna and that it had passed from him to Stadler.[37] No evidence to support this hypothesis has come to light. Aside from their previously mentioned appearance in the 1799 Traeg catalog, there is no further documentation of these symphonies in Vienna and no exemplar of the Schwickert print in any of the older Viennese collections. This makes the lack of a subscription list to the print particularly regrettable, as the lists for other Bach publications from around 1780 show van Swieten, the music dealer Artaria, and other Viennese subscribers taking substantial numbers of copies.[38]

In the nineteenth century Bach's four orchestral symphonies occasionally appeared on concert programs as novelties.[39] The first of them seems to have been particularly well liked; it has been republished at least once in every half-century since its composition, starting with a score occasioned by a performance in Leipzig in the early 1830s.[40] Following another Leipzig performance of Symphony I some thirty years later, a new edition of the first three symphonies appeared based on the autograph, which by this time was in the Berlin library.[41] Of the twentieth-century editions of these symphonies, the 1942 critical edition by Steglich deserves particular mention.[42]

37. Steglich, p. v. This is seconded by Wolff, "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach und Wien," 123–24, who speculates that Stadler could have acquired the manuscript from the auction of van Swieten's library, which took place shortly after his death in 1803, or that it might even have passed from van Swieten to Mozart and that Stadler might have acquired it from Mozart's estate.

38. See Hartmut Krones, "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach im Wien des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Hamburg 1988*, 529–44.

39. For more on the nineteenth-century reception and performance history of the symphonies, see Steglich, pp. v–vii, and Wagner, "Die Sinfonien C. P. E. Bachs in der Bewertung von Zeitgenossen und Nachgeborenen," 491–95.

40. *Symphonie D dur für Orchester componirt von C. Ph. Emanuel Bach. Partitur, nach den, für die Aufführungen in den Leipziger Gewandhaus-Concerten mit Vortragszeichen versehenen Stimmen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, [1832]), pl. no. 5362.

41. *4 Orchester-Sinfonien componirt 1776 von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: nach der in der Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin befindlichen Original-Handschrift des Componisten*, ed. Franz Espagne (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, [1861?]). Symphony I, pl. no. 4270 (score), 4271 (parts); Symphony II, pl. no. 4285 (score), 4272 (parts); Symphony III, pl. no. 4295 (score), 4273 (parts); Symphony IV was never published. Symphony I was also published as *Sinfonie von Philipp Emanuel Bach, für Pianoforte zu 4 Händen*, arr. August Horn (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, [1861?]), pl. no. 4278.

42. Further details of the publication and performance history appear in Steglich's introduction, pp. v–vi.

Musical Style

These four symphonies follow the three-movement (fast-slow-fast) structure characteristic of the north German symphony in this period. Ernst Suchalla argues that Bach's symphonic structure emphasizes the first movement over the last two movements, with the emphasis on the first movement especially strong in these four late symphonies, as the contemporary critics had noted.[43] His detailed analyses of the first movements of these symphonies show that Bach uses a sophisticated ternary structure, approaching sonata form in many examples. The most significant point of the late symphonies is Bach's use of advanced thematic and motivic structures, allowing for thematic variation and development. Yet there are also hints of ritornello structures in each of these movements, which may help to explain Bach's use of strong contrasts of texture and dynamics. As can be seen below, the harmonic structure of each symphony depends on the elision of the first movement to the second, and of the second movement to the third:

Symphony I
- i. D major, ending with a modulation to E-flat major
- ii. E-flat major, ending on the dominant chord of D
- iii. D major

Symphony II
- i. E-flat major, ending with unstable harmony
- ii. modulatory, ending on the dominant chord of E-flat
- iii. E-flat major

Symphony III
- i. F major, ending on the dominant chord of D
- ii. D minor, ending on the dominant chord of F
- iii. F major

Symphony IV
- i. G major, ending on the dominant chord
- ii. G minor, ending on the dominant chord
- iii. G major

Suchalla has perhaps best characterized the style of these works: the use of contrasting elements of homophonic and polyphonic textures, along with thematic and motivic development, as a means towards emotion and expressivity.[44] C. P. E. Bach had formulated a new and personal musical language, one distinctly different from that of his father.

43. Suchalla 1968, 12–15.

44. Ernst Suchalla, "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Wegbereiter der Musik seiner Zeit: Eine stilkritische Untersuchung seiner Sinfonien," *Hamburg 1988*, 269–82.

Although these symphonies do not correspond to our view of Viennese symphonic style in the 1780s and after, there are significant points of comparison. Bach's employment of contrapuntal devices in the presentation and development of motivic material certainly represents one parallel.[45] Christoph Wolff argues that Bach's use of the winds to create a texture with more than four obbligato parts anticipates procedures found in Mozart's orchestral writing starting in 1784 and in Haydn's after 1790.[46] The striking key scheme of Symphony I, with the middle movement in the Neapolitan, presages the tonal relationships between movements in many late works by Haydn, though even that master seldom went so far afield harmonically.

Acknowledgments

It is a pleasure to express our gratitude to all the libraries that provided access to source material for this edition, and in particular the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv and the University of Michigan Music Library for permission to publish the facsimiles. For critically reading the manuscript and making numerous helpful suggestions, we would like to thank Peter Wollny, Paul Corneilson, and Dexter Edge.

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Stephen C. Fisher

APPENDIX

Original German Texts

1. *HUC* (20 August 1776), 4:
Vorgestern probirte Herr Kapellmeister Bach im Concert-Saal auf dem Kamp 4 neue von ihm verfertigte große Sinfonien. Das Orchester war dabey so zahlreich, als es vielleicht lange nicht in Hamburg gewesen. Es bestand aus einigen 40 Personen von unsern Hamburgischen Tonkünstlern, und einigen wenigen Liebhabern, welche dies unvergleichlichen, und in ihrer Art einzigen Sinfonien, mit solcher Richtigkeit und Begeisterung ausführten, daß Herr Bach ihrer Geschicklichkeit öffentlich Gerechtigkeit wiederfahren ließ, und die gegenwärtigen musikalischen Zuhörer ihr Vergnügen in den lebhaftesten Ausdrücken zu erkennen gaben.

2. Bach to Breitkopf, 30 November 1778:
Erlauben Sie ein Wörtgen unter uns zu sagen. Herr Schwickert will von meiner Arbeit etwas in seinen Verlag haben. Ich habe vorm Jahre 4 große Orchester Sinfonien von 12 obligaten Stim̄en gemacht. Es ist das größte in der Art, was ich gemacht habe. Weiter etwas davon zu sagen, leidet meine Bescheidenheit nicht. In beÿkom̄ender Antwort an ihn offerire ich ihm solche für 100 rl. und 24 Exemplare für mich. Verlegte ich sie selbst, so könnte ich mehr damit verdienen: allein will ich nicht alle Augenblicke Contribution ausschreiben. Was dünkt Ihnen hiebeÿ? Er will, weñ ihm meine Fordrung sollte anständig seÿn, gleich das Geld einschicken, ehe er die Noten kriegt. Ohngeacht ich nicht glaube, daß Sie zu diesem Verlage Lust haben, so habe ich es Ihnen doch zuerst sagen wollen.

3. *HUC* (20 February 1779), 4:
Unterzeichnete Buchhandlung bietet ohne alle Anpreisung einem jeden Kenner der Musik vier Orchester-Symphonien mit concertirenden Stimmen von C. P. E. Bach, einen [*sic*] Mann, dessen Verdienste um die Musik zur Genüge bekannt sind, zur Subscription an. Liebhaber der Musik, welche wegen Entlegenheit der Orte sich nicht unmittelbar an nachstehende Buchhandlung wenden können, werden um die Anzeige ihres Charakters, Aufenthalts und Namens bey denjenigen Buchhandlungen, die ihnen am gelegensten fallen, ersucht. Sobald die erforderliche Zahl Subscribenten, welche binnen hier und bevorstehende Jubilate-Messe anhero gesendet werden müssen, gesammelt ist, soll der noch vest [*sic*] zu setzende Preis für jedes Exemplar, so wie die Anzeige, wann sie fertig geliefert werden können, durch die öffentlichen Blätter gehörig bekannt gemacht werden. Schwickerts Buchhandlung in Leipzig.

4. Bach to Breitkopf, 25 January 1780:
Herr Schwickert hat meine ihm gethane gute Rathschläge theils aus Vergeßenheit theils aus Verdruß nicht befolgt. Ich habe ihm Subscribenten schaffen wollen u. können; aber ohne mir Ordre zu geben u. ohne daß mir etwas wißend gemacht worden ist, kriege ich auf einmahl die meisten Bogen zur Durchsicht und zwar NB auf elendes Papier gedruckt. Wie ich ihm die Sinfonien verkaufte, so erbat ich mir die Erlaubniß von ihm, diese Stücke einem großen Herren dediciren zu dürfen; er accordirte mir meine Fordrung, u. nun schreibt er mir, daß alles auf einerleÿ Papier (so elendes Papier) gedruckt seÿ. Helfen Sie mir doch, ich bitte recht sehr, aus dieser Noth. Die Sinfonien sind dem Preuß. Cronprinzen gewidmet. Der seel. Winter pflegte im̄er von allen seinen gedruckten

45. Discussed at length in Wagner 1994, 308–37.

46. Wolff, "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach und Wien," 127.

Arbeiten ein oder ein Paar Exemplare auf feines Papier für sich u. auch zuweilen für mich abdrucken zu laßen. Auf diese Art habe ich meist von allen Sachen, die von mir gedruckt sind, besonders saubere Exemplare zu meinem Vergnügen: u. nun, denken Sie einmahl, soll ich für den Cronprinzen u. für mich nichts beßres haben, als das allgemeine. Helfen Sie mir hierin, weñ Sie können. Ich will schweigen; ich will bezahlen, aber NB keinen neuen Satz. Weñ nun aber nichts geändert werden kan, was meÿnen Sie, würde es wohl zu sehr abstechen, weñ blos der Titelbogen auf fein Papier gedruckt würde? Am besten wäre es, weñ Sie für Ihren Gebrauch, oder einer von Ihren Leuten, denen allezeit mit Recht einige Exemplare zukom̃en, zu seinem Vergnügen ein Exemplar auf fein Papier hätte u. es mir für Geld und gute Worte ablaßen könnte u. wollte. Diese Sinfonien werden unserem Notendruck, blos des Papiers wegen, Tort thun. Ich befürchte einen Nachdruck. Schlecht angebrachte kaufmäñische Menage! . . . Das Dedications Exemplar u. das meinige, sie mögen Papier haben, so schlecht oder gut es seÿ, erbitte mir von Ihrer gütigen Besorgung so bald als möglich, damit H. Schwickert nicht noch einmahl mich vergißt, u. der Cronprinz u. ich die letzten sind.

5. *HUC* (26 January 1780), "Beylage," 1:
Bey Schwickert in Leipzig, wie auch in allen bekannten Buchhandlungen ist zu haben: . . . auch biete Kennern der Musik, ohne alle Anpreisung, 1) Vier Orchester Symphonien mit concertirenden Stimmen von C.P.E. Bach . . . bis OsterMesse 1780, um folgenden Pränumerationspreis, nämlich: für jedes einen halben Louisd'or an, wogegen besagte Handlung zu der Zeit gleich liefern thun. Nach verflossener Zeit kommt jedes 3 Rthlr.

6. *HUC* (30 December 1780), "Beiträge," 4:
Eben das Neue und Originale, was man in allen Bachischen Compositionen so sehr bewundert, trifft man auch in diesen Sinfonien an, die einen unbeschreiblichen Effect machen, wenn sie gehörig besetzt und gut ausgeführt werden. Wir haben sie vor einiger Zeit von einem Orchester, das aus einigen 40 Personen bestand, und vom Herrn Capellmeister selbst angeführt ward, gehört. Jede Sinfonie ward zweymal gespielt, und nie vergessen wir den Eindruck, den diese Musik auf uns machte. . . . Je stärker jede Parthie, besonders der Baß, besetzt ist, und je mehr die Spieler die ihrige studirt haben, desto trefflicher werden sich die Sinfonien ausnehmen.

7. *Allgemeines Bücher Verzeichnis mit kurzen Anmerkungen*, 5 (Leipzig, 1780): 615:
Es ist eine mühselige Arbeit vielstimmige Stücke aus einzelnen Partien zu studiren, um das Ganze daraus zu beurtheilen. Man muß durchgehends die Einbildungskraft in der äußersten Spannung erhalten, wenn man das einigermassen ergänzen will, was man nicht übersehen kann; und dann analysirt man, anstatt zu empfinden, woraus kein sicheres Urtheil entstehen kann. Unterdessen wenn man diese Symphonien auch blos nach der Oberstimme beurtheilen wollte, so würde man das Originalgenie des großen Meisters nicht verkennen. Es sind ihrer vier; alle von wichtigem Inhalt, und in vielen Stellen erhaben. Die Sätze sind meist an einander gebunden, welches mir sehr wohl gefällt. Denn dadurch wird das Orchester genöthiget, das Ganze fein beysammen zu lassen, und es nicht wider die Natur zu zerstücken, wie es in unsern Concerten sehr oft geschieht. Der erste Satz ist in allen, wie es scheinet, am besten ausgearbeitet und von lebhafter Bewegung. Doch ist das letzte Presto in der vierten auch gut ausgeführet und von besonderer Schönheit. Es ist in g# 6/8 Takt, und bestehet in den Ober= und Mittelstimmen fast aus lauter Achteln, davon die langen, nämlich die 2 ersten in jeder Hälfte des Taktes mehrentheils geschleift sind.

8. Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 45 (1781): 102:
Wer Sinn dafür hat, einen so wahrhaftig großen Originalkomponisten wie unser *Bach*, seinen ganz eignen freyen, durch kein Kostume, keine Mode gefesselten Gang gehen zu sehen, der findet volle Seelenweide an diesen herrlichen, in ihrer Art ganz einzigen Sinfonien. Selbst in keinem seiner eigenen Werke geht dieser große Meister so ganz eignen Gang als hier; weshalb sie dann auch von ungemeiner Schwierigkeit in der Ausführung sind: wo sie aber bezwungen werden, da hat man vollauf für seine Mühe. Solche Werke sind Geschenke, die uns *Bach* nur allein geben kann, und deshalb wünschen auch alle edle Kunstfreunde, daß *Bach* nur solche Werke ihnen gäbe.