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TWO KEYBOARD SONATAS OF JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH
AND CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH:
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas

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Sherwood, Anne, Two Keyboard Sonatas of Johann Christian Bach and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: A Historical Perspective. Doctor of Musical Arts (Piano Performance), August, 1979, 23 pp., 10 examples, bibliography, 41 titles.

After examining biographical and stylistic influences on the work of J. C. Bach and C. P. E. Bach, this study analyzes and compares the two sonatas under discussion. Each sonata is placed in historical perspective by relating its outstanding formal and stylistic features with conservative Baroque or more progressive Classical tendencies.

In addition to the recorded performance of the Sonata in E-Major, Op. 5, by Johann Christian Bach, and the Sonata in G-Major from Für Kenner und Liebhaber, Vol. 1, by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, this dissertation includes three tape recordings of selected piano works of D. Scarlatti, F. Haydn, W. A. Mozart, L. V. Beethoven, F. Schubert, F. Mendelssohn, F. Liszt, S. Rachmaninoff, and C. Debussy.

Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the North Texas State University Library.

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North Texas State University
School of Music

presents

Anne Sherwood,

pianist

will

Graduate Recital

Monday, February 6, 1978

5:00 p.m.

Recital Hall

Sonata in D, K. 311

Allegro con spirito
Andante con espressione
Rondo - Allegro

Mozart

Etudes, Book II

Clouez à travers les feuilles
Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut
Poissons d'or

Debussy

Intermission

Un bord d'une source
Sonata 4th of Petrucci
Appassionata No. 2
Sur un cor da

Liszt

Moment musical, Op. 16, No. 3
Prelude in A minor, Op. 32, No. 8

Rachmaninoff

Presented with the assistance of
the members of the School of Music
and the Music Department

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in a

Graduate Recital

Monday, October 9, 1978

8:15 p.m.

Recital Hall

Sonata in G, Op. 78

Schubert

Moito moderato e cantabile
Andante
Menuetto — Allegro moderato
Allegretto

Intermission

Variations Serieuses, Op. 54

Mendelssohn

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Monday, June 4, 1979

8:15 p.m.

Concert Hall

Variations in F, Op. 34

Beethoven

Sonata in C minor, Hob. XVI/20

Haydn

Moderato

Andante con moto

Allegro

Intermission

Four Sonatas

Scarlatti

K. 525

K. 87

K. 125

K. 447

Sonata in A minor, K. 310

Mozart

Allegro maestoso

Andante cantabile con espressione

Presto

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anne sherwood,

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in a

Graduate Lecture Recital

Monday, June 11

5:00 p.m.

Concert Hall

**Two Keyboard Sonatas of Johann Christian Bach
and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach:
A Historical Perspective**

Sonata in G Major Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
(from *Für Kemer und Liebhaber*, Vol. VI)
Allegretto moderato
Andante
Allegro di molto

Sonata in E Major, Op. V, No. 5 Johann Christian Bach
Allegro assai
Adagio
Prestissimo

*Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts*

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TWO KEYBOARD SONATAS OF JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH
AND CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH:
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When one considers the solo keyboard sonata of the eighteenth century, two names immediately come to mind: Franz Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. These two men represent, of course, the pinnacle of achievement in this genre at that particular time. However, both Haydn and Mozart were preceded and influenced by composers whose pioneering efforts made possible the accomplishments of these later geniuses. Two of the most important contributors to the development of the Classical style were Johann Christian Bach and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, both sons of Johann Sebastian Bach. The younger Bachs exerted great influence in their day, pointing the way to future developments. This discussion will focus on two solo keyboard sonatas--the Sonata in E-Major, Op. 5, by Johann Christian Bach, and the Sonata in G-Major from the set Für Kenner und Liebhaber, Vol. 1, by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach--and will identify the connection these works have to past Baroque practices and to certain Classical ideas employed by Mozart and Haydn.

In order to establish influences on the styles of the two Bachs, it is appropriate to recount the main events of

their lives.¹ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was born in 1714 to Johann Sebastian and Maria Barbara Bach. Emanuel recalled in later life that he received keyboard and compositional training exclusively from his father. He attended the University of Leipzig as a law student and then moved to Frankfurt-on-the-Oder to continue his studies. In 1738 he accepted an invitation to the Berlin court of Prince Frederick, who became King of Prussia in 1740. For twenty-eight years, Bach remained in Berlin, where his duties included composing music for the court concerts and serving as accompanist to the King, who was an accomplished flutist. It was also here that he wrote his famous treatise Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments (Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen; Part I-1753, Part II-1762). In 1768 he established residence in Hamburg, where he succeeded his godfather, George Philipp Telemann, as musical director of the city's five main churches. Here he remained until his death in 1788.

The life of C. P. E. Bach, who like his father was no world traveler, contrasts markedly with that of J. C. Bach. The youngest of Johann Sebastian's children, Johann Christian was born in Leipzig in 1735. Like his brothers, he studied music with his father as a child. Johann Christian was only fifteen years of age when his father died, and for

¹Karl Geiringer, The Bach Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 15.

this reason he was sent to live with Carl Philipp in Berlin. From him he received excellent training, but by the age of twenty he found the lure of opera in Italy too great to resist. He travelled to Milan, became an organist at the Milan cathedral, and studied compositional technique with Padre Martini in Bologna. Having accepted a position in London as official composer to the King's Theatre in 1762, Bach also served as Master of Music to Queen Charlotte, remaining in the city until his death in 1782.

The keyboard sonatas of J. C. and C. P. E. Bach clearly exhibit certain stylistic influences. Carl Philipp is usually associated with the Empfindsamer Stil which developed in Europe in the mid-eighteenth century and was especially prevalent in northern Germany. Music written in this "sensitive style" is characterized by fine shadings and expressive nuance. Often within a single movement, contrasting emotions find expression in rapidly alternating succession, a phenomenon which can be described as a "fluctuating style."² This procedure is very common with C. P. E. Bach, whose phrases in fast movements tend to be short or truncated to allow for greater variety of sentiment. Frequent dynamic and key changes, constantly varied rhythmic patterns, and abrupt pauses also help to create a discontinuous feeling. Another important element of

²Philip Barford, "C. P. E. Bach: A Master of the Clavichord," Musical Opinion, LXXVI (July, 1953), 601.

Empfindsamer Stil is a type of ornamentation which is not merely decoration but an essential part of the melodic line. In sum, the music often suggests an improvisatory character. Daring modulations and an element of harmonic surprise play an important role. In adagio movements, the harmonic vocabulary may even approach that usually associated with the nineteenth century. Great emotional intensity may be achieved through the use of melodic and harmonic chromaticism and through highly expressive harmony which may progress through rather distant keys. All these devices contribute to the spontaneity and element of surprise characteristic of the Empfindsamer Stil, and help to distinguish it from the generally more continuous and homogeneous Baroque manner.

Johann Christian Bach is also an eighteenth-century musical progressive. As Carl Philipp served to inspire Joseph Haydn, so Johann Christian influenced the young Wolfgang Mozart, who became well acquainted with the older man's work. The stylistic movement with which J. C. Bach was involved is known as the galant, which may be translated as "courtly" or "polite."³ Unlike the Empfindsamer Stil, galant music plumbs no great emotional depths. It is ingratiating music designed to entertain an audience without the necessity of excessive emotional involvement. By far

³"Galant," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., 10 vols., ed. Eric Blom (London: Macmillan, 1954-61), III, 547.

the greatest emphasis in this style is on the melody. In keyboard pieces, a lyrical singing-allegro type melody is often placed over a stereotyped accompaniment, such as an Alberti bass. One usually finds little harmonic depth or variety, and a harmonic rhythm which is relatively slow. In general, the phrases tend to be more carefully balanced and more expansive than those found in music of the Empfindsamer Stil, and the rhythms are usually more homogeneous. The result is a musical line which is less disjunct. The refined style of the galant was to become an important force in the shaping of the so-called High Classical style of Mozart.

The contribution of C. P. E. Bach to keyboard literature is quite substantial. Approximately 157 sonatas were written by him, of which about two-thirds were published during his lifetime.⁴ The most important sonatas were published in groups of six. One such set which demonstrates the composer's mature style is Book I from the six volumes Für Kenner und Liebhaber, published in 1779. The Sonata in G-Major from that set was probably written in 1765.⁵ In contrast to his brother, Johann Christian Bach published only two sets of solo keyboard sonatas, Op. 5 and Op. 17,

⁴Walter Schenkman, "Three Collections of Keyboard Works by C. P. E. Bach--Part I," Bach, VII/4 (October, 1977), 27.

⁵Philip Barford, The Keyboard Music of C. P. E. Bach (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1965), 18.

each containing six sonatas. Op. 5, from which the Sonata in E-Major is taken, appeared in 1768. Since these sonatas may have been composed a few years earlier, the two works under discussion could date from about the same time.

C. P. E. Bach's Sonata in G-Major consists of three movements in the sequence fast-slow-fast, a typically Classical arrangement which is the rule with this composer. J. C. Bach in his sonatas frequently composes just two fast movements. This procedure is akin to the two-movement groupings of Italian pre-Classicalists: Domenico Scarlatti, Rutini, Galuppi, and Paradies. In other cases J. C. Bach employs a three-movement scheme, usually fast-slow-fast. The Sonata in E-Major, Op. 5, follows the latter design.

More revealing than the overall form, however, is the construction of the first movement. Both works approach textbook sonata form, but in each the absence of certain important elements confirms that these works are indeed not of the High Classical mold. In the C. P. E. Bach sonata, a missing element is the differentiation of theme groups. The exposition is not, in fact, built on themes at all, but is motivically organized, somewhat in the Baroque manner. Thematic chains of small motifs make up the musical fabric, with little sense of Classical symmetrical phrasing. In this context, all material tends to sound motivically interrelated. A movement to the dominant does occur near the midpoint of the exposition, but since it is not accompanied

by any distinctive change in thematic material the effect of arriving at a new tonal level is weakened. Also notable is the lack of transitional material between the two key areas. The development section merely states sections of the exposition in various keys, incorporating only slight changes. This may be due to the fact that C. P. E. Bach often begins to develop motives as soon as they are stated, thereby making further elaboration in the development section superfluous. The full recapitulation proceeds normally, with the material of the second key area appearing, as expected, in the tonic key. Thus, while the key scheme of this sonata conforms to Classical practice, the thematic treatment is more akin to Baroque procedures.

The opening movement of the J. C. Bach Sonata in E-Major is in striking contrast to the first movement of the C. P. E. Bach sonata. This work clearly exhibits what is said to constitute Johann Christian's most important contribution to the Classical style: the coordination of musical elements. This simply means that the various key and formal areas of the sonata correspond to the standard sonata plan, and are accompanied by distinctive thematic ideas suitable to their function. For example, the first and second key areas are clearly distinguishable by the contrasting nature of their themes. In the following example a fanfare-like opening idea with hands alternating at the octave is suggestive of orchestral music.

Example 1. J. C. Bach, Sonata in E-Major, I. mm. 1-2



The music then proceeds through a transitional passage consisting of non-thematic material (i.e., sequences and cadential formula), arriving in the dominant with a lyrical and rhythmically relaxed second theme.

Example 2. J. C. Bach, Sonata in E-Major, I, mm. 20-21



A closing section of cadential patterns follows which firmly anchors the end of the exposition in B-Major, the dominant. Thus far, the form of the sonata is practically indistinguishable from that used later by Mozart. This is especially apparent in the great stability of key areas, provided by arpeggiated and scalar figures emphasizing the tonic and dominant chords of the key. The C. P. E. Bach sonata, on

the other hand, is characterized by nearly continuous modulation; in fact, a cadence in the tonic is not achieved until almost halfway through the exposition.

Johann Christian Bach's treatment of the E-Major Sonata first movement follows the common pre-Classical convention of dovetailing the development and recapitulation. Themes are presented in the development section in the same order in which they appear in the exposition, with a certain amount of true development (particularly of the transitional passages). The only material recapitulated in the tonic key is that which is not used in the development, namely the long closing section. For this reason, the C. P. E. Bach example, with its full recapitulation of all expository material, points in this respect more clearly to Classical sonata treatment.

The slow second movement by C. P. E. Bach suggests not Classicism, but nineteenth-century Romanticism. It is an excellent example of Carl Philipp's Empfindsamer Stil. Here he uses his full arsenal of expressive harmonic devices: deceptive cadences, the augmented sixth chord, deflection to the Neapolitan area, irregular resolutions, and constant harmonic fluctuation. Formally, the movement is a large fantasia which is seamless and non-repetitive, a plan which is by no means common in the Classical literature. The rhapsodic, improvisatory style at times suggests Chopin, as in the following passage.

Example 3. C. P. E. Bach, Sonata in G-Major, II,
mm. 10-12.

The image displays a musical score for C. P. E. Bach's Sonata in G-Major, II, measures 10-12. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system shows measures 10 and 11. The second system shows measures 11 and 12. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and ornaments, while the left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. Dynamic markings 'p f p f p f p f' are present in measure 12.

The adagio of the J. C. Bach sonata, unlike the C. P. E. Bach slow movement, unfolds in typically Classical fashion. Here, the composer has transferred to the keyboard the Italian bel canto style which was to be such an important shaping force in the Classical style as practiced by Mozart. Even the form is vocal--the da capo aria (ABA')--complete with three opportunities for the insertion of short cadenzas (indicated in the score by fermatas). Characteristic galant features include harmonic stability, much ornamentation, regular use of on-the-beat appoggiaturas, and a sense of Mozartean refinement and restraint. The movement lacks, however, that spiritual depth found in many of Mozart's slow

movements. The emphasis in J. C. Bach is ever on grace and elegance rather than emotional profundity.

In his finales, J. C. Bach is noted for "Classical" forms such as rondo, minuet, or theme with variations. C. P. E. Bach, however, does not favor these forms for his keyboard sonata finales. The concluding movement of the Sonata in G-Major follows much the same plan as the first movement, but with greater motivic elaboration in the development section. The last movement of the J. C. Bach sonata, although not so labeled, is a true rondo, having four statements of the main theme and three episodes. Again, there are well-defined key areas and harmonic simplicity, both hallmarks of Classical style.

In formal design, it is apparent that both J. C. Bach and C. P. E. Bach approach Classical norms; however, a look at their key schemes reveals a different orientation. The outer movements of the J. C. Bach sonata are in E-Major, with the middle movement in A-Major, the subdominant. The placing of the slow movement in the subdominant or dominant was to become a common Classical practice. The sequence of keys of the three movements of the C. P. E. Bach sonata is G-Major-g-minor-G-Major. Maintaining the same tonal center in this fashion for all the movements suggests a relationship to the Baroque suite.

The sonatas of Johann Christian Bach and Emanuel Bach are further distinguished by differing approaches to phrase

structure. One essential step in the consolidation of Classical style is the establishment of parallel phrase construction, where the first and second halves of the phrase are of equal length. This principle is well presented in the themes of J. C. Bach, with the E-Major Sonata being no exception. A symmetrical theme structure of four-plus-four or two-plus-two is especially evident in the outer movements. No such claim can be made for the C. P. E. Bach sonata. Here the more spontaneous and improvisatory style calls for irregular phrase groupings. For example, the exposition of the first movement is built of phrases of seven, three and one-half, five, four, and five and one-half bars. Obviously, antecedent-consequent phrase structure is not the basis of this composition. Rather, the chains of motives referred to earlier are linked in such a way as to minimize the effect of cadence. This is accomplished by phrase elision, or by keeping one voice moving into the next phrase when a cadence point is reached. Because C. P. E. Bach uses motives in place of true themes in the fast movements, his melodic materials seem much less tuneful than those of Johann Christian Bach. In general, C. P. E. Bach avoids the melodiousness of Italian opera which so influenced other Classicists.

During the Classical period certain stock accompanimental patterns enjoyed a great vogue. Alberti-like bass lines, various types of broken-chord figures, and murky

(i.e., broken octave) bass accompaniments are all important components of the keyboard style of J. C. Bach, and are all abundantly present in his Sonata in E-Major. For example, an Alberti bass is present in most of the slow movement. Here and in the other movements, stereotyped accompaniments are helpful in that, by remaining unobtrusive, they do not hinder the listener's perception of the form. By their chordal nature they greatly aid in establishing various large tonal plateaus. In this respect there may be observed a Classically-oriented arrangement: a melodically-functioning upper part with harmonically-functioning lower part. It is significant that not a single Alberti bass or other stock accompaniment exists in the C. P. E. Bach Sonata in G-Major. Here, the left hand is used frequently in the presentation of thematic materials. An example is seen in the frequent use of figurative patterns typical of Baroque toccatas, in which an interplay of right and left hand results in basically a single-line texture.

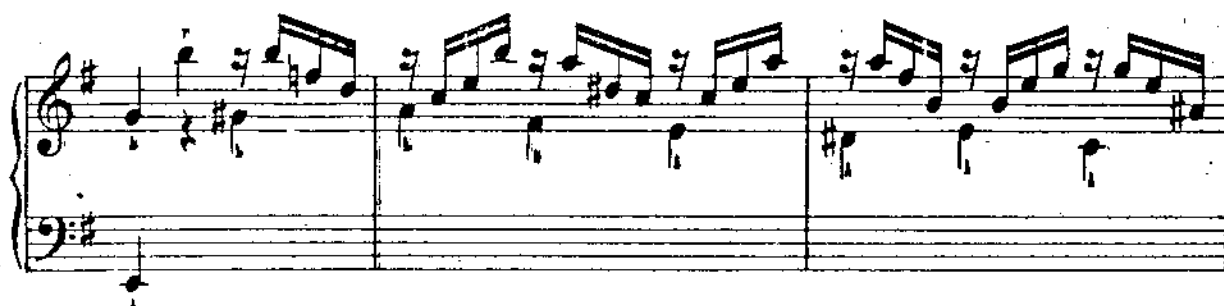
Example 4. C. P. E. Bach, Sonata in G-Major, III, mm. 114-117.





This passage also demonstrates the relatively fast harmonic rhythm of much Baroque music. As further illustration, a passage from the development section of the third movement features chord changes on every beat.

Example 5. C. P. E. Bach, Sonata in G-Major, III, mm. 66-70.



In contrast, the development section of the first movement of the J. C. Bach sonata contains the following passage where each chord lasts an entire measure.

Example 6. J. C. Bach, Sonata in E-Major, I, mm. 71-75

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is E major, indicated by two sharps (F# and C#). The first system covers measures 71-74, and the second system covers measures 75-78. The music is characterized by a sequence of chords in the right hand and a corresponding sequence of chords in the left hand, with each chord lasting an entire measure. The right hand part features a sequence of chords in the upper register, while the left hand part features a sequence of chords in the lower register. The notation includes stems, beams, and chord symbols.

Another difference involves the use of sequence. Baroque composers often employed sequences which rapidly modulated by means of the circle of fifths. When C. P. E. Bach followed this procedure, it may have been due to the influence of his father, as in the following example from the third movement exposition.

Example 7. C. P. E. Bach, Sonata in G-Major, III,
mm. 27-31.

Musical notation for Example 7, measures 27-31. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some slurs. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

Musical notation for Example 7, measures 27-31, showing a different perspective or continuation. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some slurs. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

Classical sequences often differ from the preceding example. J. C. Bach, in the opening movement of the Sonata in E-Major, presents a two-bar segment in the tonic key and transposes it to the dominant level. This type of sequence is useful in affirming the tonal center of E, thus serving as a stabilizing element.

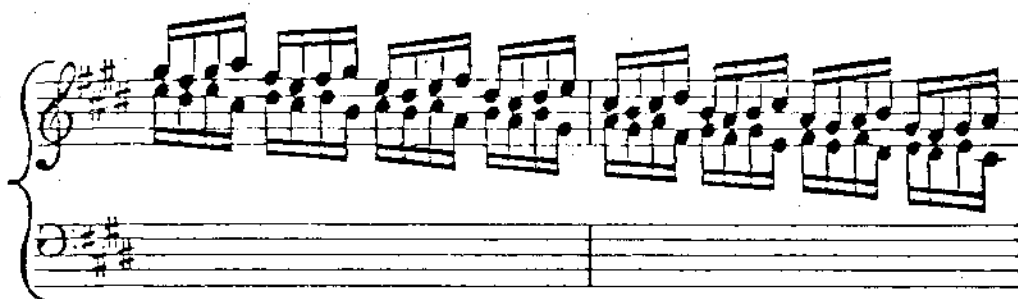
Example 8. J. C. Bach, Sonata in E-Major, I, mm. 9-12

Musical notation for Example 8, measures 9-12. The score is in E major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with quarter and eighth notes, including some slurs. The bass staff contains a supporting bass line with quarter and eighth notes.



Another instance of J. C. Bach's sequence patterns is in non-modulating bridge passages. The following example sequences a sixteenth-note figure seven times.

Example 9. J. C. Bach, Sonata in E-Major, I, mm. 15-16



Many specific qualities which relate C. P. E. Bach's sonata with the Baroque past have already been noted. A less tangible aspect which is nevertheless equally reflective is a certain formality detected in the first movement. This quality, in part created by the prominent dotted and double-dotted rhythms, is reminiscent of the old French overture.

Example 10. C. P. E. Bach, Sonata in G-Major, I,
mm. 23-25.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano sonata. The first system consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The second system also consists of two staves, with dynamic markings *p*, *f*, and *p* indicating changes in volume. It includes first and second endings, marked with '1.' and '2.' and repeat signs.

One should not conclude that C. P. E. Bach was completely immersed in the musical past. Careful and profuse dynamic indications which make this music unsuitable for performance on the harpsichord must be added to the list of progressive tendencies already mentioned. Also, the motivic development (chiefly in the third movement) strongly anticipates Haydn and others.

The C. P. E. Bach Sonata in G-Major presents a strange mixture of Baroque, Classical, and Romantic characteristics. It is one of many mid-eighteenth-century works which exhibit the stylistic confusion affecting composers of this time as they experimented and struggled to forge a new musical language. Unfortunately, it is the fate of C. P. E. Bach

to be counted among those transitional figures who simply smoothed the road for the two greatest exponents of the High Classical style, Mozart and Haydn. In relation to works of succeeding Classicists, however, the Sonata in G-Major seems to be not so much transitional as unique. It is true that certain aspects of this sonata, as for instance the use of short motives in place of longer themes, were absorbed and utilized by Haydn, but few compositions seem to be as distinctive in other respects.

The Sonata in E-Major of Johann Christian Bach, as has been seen, approaches the fully integrated Classical style of Mozart. Mozart became acquainted with this sonata, along with the other sonatas of Op. 5, when he visited London in 1764, so it is no accident that the E-Major Sonata sounds Mozartean in many ways. Of course, it is actually Mozart who sounds like J. C. Bach, the younger composer obviously having picked up many mannerisms from Bach. While often labeled as a transitional composer, Johann Christian Bach in this sonata is seen as a true exponent of the burgeoning Classical style which had its culmination in the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

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