

Johann Sebastian

BACH

THE WELL-TEMPERED CLAVIER

VOLUME I

Edited by
Carl Czerny

FOR PIANO

K 09842



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, the greatest member of a large family of distinguished musicians, was born at Eisenach, March 21, 1685. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach (1645-1695) was a violinist and an organist, and he married for his first wife, Elizabeth Lammerhirt of Erfurt, who died when Sebastian, her eighth and last child, was about nine years old. After the death of his father, Sebastian was brought up and taught by his brother, Johann Christoph, organist at Ohrdruff; the boy had received violin lessons from his father, and, in all probability, clavichord lessons from his uncle, Johann Christoph. Stories are still told of the jealousy of Sebastian's brother and the secret studies of the boy, who sang in the choir, and in 1700 received free education in Luneburg, from which place he made excursions on foot to Hamburg, to hear the organists Reinken and Lubeck. About this time Bach became acquainted with the works of the French clavecinists; and the influence of Couperin, the Great, is seen in many of his compositions for clavichord. We know little comparatively of the education of Bach; but it is more than probable that he was essentially an autodidact.

Bach's first position was in 1703 as violinist in the orchestra of Prince Johann Ernst at Weimar. A few months afterward he was appointed organist of the New church at Arnstadt, in which town he staid four years. He visited Lubeck, and associated with Buxtehude, who influenced mightily his compositions for organ. In 1707 Bach moved to Mullhausen, where he played the organ and taught for a year. Here he was married to his cousin, Maria Barbara, by whom he had seven children, of whom four grew up. 1708 saw the couple in Weimar, where Bach was court organist and chamber-musician to the reigning duke, William Ernst, who was fond of church music. Nine years were spent busily and agreeably in Weimar. In 1717 Bach entered the service of Leopold, prince of Anhalt-Kothen, and lived at Kothen where he had neither an organ to play nor a chorus to lead; he devoted himself to orchestral and chamber music. His wife died in 1720; the next year he married Anna Magdalens Wulken, the daughter of a court trumpeter; she sang, copied music, and bore her husband thirteen children, six of whom grew up; she died in 1760, after living for eight years on public charity. Bach went to Leipzig in 1723 to fill the positions of Cantor at the Thomas School and musical director of the city. Here he labored for twenty-seven years. His eyes troubled him seriously during the latter years of his life, and at the end he was totally blind. He died July 28, 1750.

These are the baldest outlines of a life distinguished by enormous labor. We have no time to look at the contests with foreign virtuosos, the interest in new instruments, the parochial quarrels with petty officials, the intercourse with rulers. The man's life was one of counterpoint and

household joy and care. His nature was sanguine; his temper was stormy. He was aware of his own worth; yet he was free from the common jealousy and vanity of musicians. A severe teacher, he was beloved by his pupils. He was robust, broad-shouldered, with highly developed forehead, deep eyes, good and large mouth: a face of keenness, frankness, and strength. The man was economical, honorable, yes, noble.

As a musician he summed up the past, exhausted his own age, and looked beyond even the end of this century. But we have not to do with the Maker of the Matthew Passion, the Mass and the church cantatas; nor may we now regard the master of organ prelude and fugue; we are concerned with the composer of "The Well-tempered Clavichord," sometimes called "the 48 preludes and fugues."

This work is in two parts, and each part contains 24 preludes and 24 fugues. The first part was finished in 1722 at Kothen, and to this part alone he gave the name "The Well-tempered Clavichord." The second part was finished in Leipzig, probably in 1744. It is believed that early compositions were used in the compilation of the first part, and it is certain that many preludes had already appeared as independent compositions

Bach is said to be the introducer of our present system, the "equal temperament," but it was known probably before, as Mersenne gave the correct number of the ratios in 1636. In the first system of temperament, the "unequal" or "mean-tone," the more common scales were fairly accurate, the others were ignored. Our present system is a compromise, and the only interval tuned with accuracy is the octave. "The sharp of a tone and the flat of the tone that follows are regarded as indetical." Bach here showed the possibilities of the new system.

A new system of fingering was introduced inevitably by this work. Before Bach, the little finger and the thumb were almost never used, for although Couperin strange, at times invented his own system of fingering for conquering difficulties, and it rested chiefly on the use of the thumb.

From the purely musical standpoint, these preludes and fugues are a monument for all time. As William Cart well says, this chaste Muse shuns the "screaming" light of the concert hall, nor will she speak to the jaded ears of a crowd indifferent, or greedy for startling effects. "Each of these pieces has its own cachet; and you remember it, as the face of a loved one." Are some severe? Others are full of modern romanticism. If Bach now pours out his soul in prayer, or gives way to gloomy thought, at other times he laughs with peasant gayety and dances and sings with the people. And often the most surprising contrapuntal feat escapes notice by the apparent simplicity of the performance.

PHILIP HALE

PREFACE

The principal object in issuing this new edition of J.S. Bach's "Well-tempered Clavichord" has been to make it as correct and complete as possible, both by means of comparison with all preceding editions, and by collating with some earlier manuscripts. In marking the fingering, which renders this issue far more generally useful, two points have been steadily kept in view:

First, to keep the hands as quiet as may be, even in extremely complicated passages; Secondly, to enable the player to bring out each separate part independently, with perfect smoothness, and with due regard to the phrasing.

Patient study, either on the pianoforte or on the organ, will be rewarded by the rich and full effect produced by a smooth and flowing polyphonic rendering. It has been my endeavor to indicate tempo and interpretation:

First, according to the unmistakable character of each movement; Secondly, according to the well-remembered impression made on me by Beethoven's rendering of a great number of these fugues; Thirdly, according to convictions matured by more than thirty years' study of this work.

Wherever an extremely rapid tempo is indicated, this is, of course, meant only for the pianoforte. When playing passages so marked on the organ, the tempo must be moderated very decidedly.

Those who have no Maelzel's Metronome at hand are reminded, that the Allegro in these old compositions is to be taken, as a rule, much more tranquilly and slowly than in modern works.

VORWORT

Bei dieser neuen Ausgabe von J.S. Bach's wohltemperirtem Clavier hat man vor Allem gestrebt, durch Vergleichung aller fruheren Ausgaben so wie einiger altern Handschriften, die moglichste Correctheit und Vollstandigkeit zuerlangen. In der Angabe des Fingersatzes, wodurch dieses Werk eine weit grossere Gemeinnutzlichkeit erhalt, wurde siets der zweifache Gesichtspunkt beachtet:

Erstens, die Hande, auch in den verwickeltesten Fallen moglichst ruhig zu halten; Zweitens, jede einzelne Stimme von den Andern unabhingig, streng gebunden und folgerecht ausfuhren zu konnen.

Der Spieler wird die daran zu verwendende Muhe, sowohl auf dem Pianoforte wie auf der Orgel, durch die gehaltreiche Wirkung belohnt finden, die mit einem vollstimmigen und fliessenden Spiele hervorgebracht wird.

Das Zeitmass und den Vortrag habe ich:

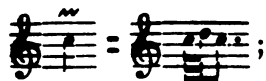
Erstens, nach dem unzweifelhaften Character eines jeden Satzes; Zweitens, nach der wohlbewahrten Erinnerung wie ich eine grosse Anzahl dieser Fugen einst von Beethoven vortragen horre; Drittens, endlich nach den Ideen aufzuzeichnen und zu bewahren gesucht, welche ich selbst durch ein mehr als dreissigjahriges Studium dieses Werks in mir festsetzte.

Wo ein bedeutend schnelles Zeitmass vorgeschrieben wurde, ist es naturlicher Weise nur fur das Pianoforte berechnet. Wollte man jedoch die so bezeichneten Satze auch auf der Orgel vortragen, dann musste allerdings das Tempo bedeutend langsamer genommen werden.

Fur diejenigen, denen kein Maelzel'scher Metronom zu Gebote steht, wird noch erinnert, dass das Allegro bei diesen altern Compositionen in der Regel viel ruhiger und langsamer zu nehmen ist, als bei modernen Tonstucken.

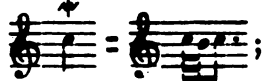
CARL CZERNY

Inverted mordent.



Praller.

Mordent.



Mordent.

Trill without after-beat.



Triller ohne Nachschlag.

Trill with after-beat.



Triller mit Nachschlag.

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First Part

Preludio I

Allegro. (♩ = 112.)

J. S. BACH.

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The right hand (RH) plays a steady eighth-note pattern, often with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 4, 1, 3, 5) indicated above the notes. The left hand (LH) provides a bass line with occasional chords, with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 5) indicated below the notes. Dynamics include *p*, *legato*, *cresc.*, *pp*, and *dimin.*. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the bass staff.

All figures in the fingering which are set above the notes are intended, whether in inner or outer parts, for the right hand; whereas, the figures below the notes are for the left hand. This explanation will suffice to show, in doubtful cases, by which hand any note in the inner parts is to be played.

Alle Fingersatz-Zahlen, welche über den Noten stehen, gelten (auch in den Mittelstimmen) stets der rechten Hand. Dagegen sind die unter den Noten stehenden Zahlen immer für die linke Hand bestimmt. Dieses reicht hin, um in zweifelhaften Fällen anzuzeigen, von welcher Hand jede Note in den Mittelstimmen gegriffen werden muss.

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