

Preface

According to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's catalogue of keyboard works (*Clavierwerkeverzeichnis*, CV 1772) and the catalogue of his effects (*Nachlassverzeichnis*, NV 1790), he composed his *Solfeggio* in C minor Wq 117/2¹ (H220²) in 1766 in Potsdam. It was published by Michael Christian Bock in Hamburg in 1770 in the collection *Musikalisches Vielerley*³ which Bach himself edited.

In his extensive output, C. P. E. Bach wrote more than 300 compositions for solo keyboard (*clavier*)⁴ covering every possible genre and sub-genre – from sonatas to rondos, fantasias and fugues, to character pieces and dances, as well as numerous other short individual movements. These include six pieces which he called *Solfeggio*.⁵ This description for a keyboard composition is unusual, as it is generally used to refer to a study for voice without text. Heinrich Christoph Koch defined *solfeccio* as follows in his *Musikalisches Lexikon*:

'Solfeggio describes a piece of music for practising singing which has no text. One uses such pieces of music partly in order to help beginners sing intervals with accuracy and to teach pure intonation, and partly also for established singers to practise their vocal skills in performing all kinds of coloratura.'⁶

But it was not only keyboard pieces by Bach that carried the title *Solfeggio*, as shown by the entry in Daniel Gottlob Türk's *Clavierschule oder Anweisung zum Clavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende*:

'The word *solfeccio* is actually used in singing, and describes a piece of music for practising intervals using the familiar syllables: ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, (si,) instead

of which, Graun chose the following and far more appropriate seven: da, me, ni, po, tu, la, be. In keyboard playing, *solfeccio* is likewise understood to mean a piece of music which is solely intended for practising playing, and for acquiring skill. *Solfeggiere[n]* [to vocalize] therefore means to practise singing or playing difficult passages & the like.'⁷

The etude-like character is especially evident in the *Solfeggio* in C minor. Other *solfeccio* are more fantasia-like (such as Wq 117/3) or emphasize contrapuntal characteristics (such as the canonic *Solfeggio* Wq 112/18).

Of Bach's six *solfeccio* the one in C minor is the best known and the most frequently published to date. Even during Bach's lifetime it enjoyed wide circulation. As well as the printed edition, 20 manuscript copies survive (mainly hand-written copies of printed editions).⁸ As is frequently the case with Bach, when a printed edition authorized by him exists, the autograph score is missing. These had become less important for him because of the printed editions, and he may usually have discarded them himself.

Between 1760 and 1770, three periodicals were published weekly or quarterly in Berlin and Hamburg, the similarity of their titles alone showing their relation to each other: *Musikalisches Allerley* (published in Berlin in 1760–1763 by Friedrich Wilhelm Birnstiel), *Musikalisches Mancherley* (published in Berlin in 1762/63 by George Ludwig Winter) and *Musikalisches Vielerley* (edited by C. P. E. Bach and published in Hamburg in 1770 by Michael Christian Bock).⁹

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(Translation: Elizabeth Robinson)

¹ Alfred Wotquenne, *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)*, Leipzig 1905, reprint Wiesbaden 1964.

² Eugene Helm, *Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, New Haven 1989.

³ CV 1772, No. 160: 'Pet. Piec. NB [incipit of the Fantasia in G minor, Wq 117/13] P[otsdam]. 66 besteht aus 3 Fantasien u. 3 Solfeggi' (comprises 3 Fantasias & 3 Solfeggi) and NV 1790, p. 21: 'Clavier-Soli No. 160: P[otsdam]. 1766, bestehet aus 3 Fantasien und 2 [in fact: 3] Solfeggien, welche im Musikalischen Vielerley gedruckt sind' (comprises 3 Fantasias and 2 [in fact: 3] solfeccio, which are published in the *Musikalisches Vielerley*).

⁴ Here, the word 'keyboard' ('Clavier') is the general term for keyboard instruments, and includes instruments such as harpsichord, clavichord and fortepiano. Bach, who was particularly fond of the clavichord, often did not specify the instrument he had in mind for a particular keyboard composition. The new catalogue of C. P. E. Bach's instrumental works (*Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Teil 1: Instrumentalwerke*, edited by Wolfram Enßlin [= Bach-Repertorium. Werkverzeichnisse zur Musikerfamilie Bach, ed. Bach-Archiv Leipzig, Vol. III.1], in preparation) contains nearly 350 keyboard compositions, including some of uncertain authorship, particularly from Bach's youth.

⁵ *Solfeggio* in G major, Wq 112/4, *Solfeggio* in C major, Wq 112/10, and *Solfeggio* in G major, Wq 112/18, were all composed in 1759 in Berlin and published by G. L. Winter in 1765 in the collection *Clavierstücke verschiedener Art* in Berlin. Together with the *Solfeggio* in C minor, the *Solfeggi* in E flat major and A major, Wq 117/3–4, were composed in 1766 in Potsdam and published in *Musikalisches Vielerley*. The description *Solfeggiotto* for Wq 117/2 found in numerous editions was not given by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. It probably emerged for the first time at the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century, for example in an edition by Oscar Wagner published by Augener (London).

⁶ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, Frankfurt (Main) 1802, col. 1399, reprint Kassel 2001.

⁷ Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Clavierschule oder Anweisung zum Clavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende*, Leipzig/Halle 1789, p. 398, reprint Kassel 1997.

⁸ The copies are now preserved in libraries in Berlin, Bonn, Brussels, Cambridge (GB), Hamburg, New Haven (USA), Prague, Schwerin and Vienna.

⁹ For information on this, see Ulrich Leisinger, *Musikalisches Allerley, Mancherley, Vielerley – Drei gedruckte Sammlungen mit Hausmusik aus der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Hausmusik im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Christian Philippsen in collaboration with Ute Omonsky, Augsburg 2016, pp. 233–244.

Solfeggio

c-Moll / C minor / ut mineur

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788)

Wq 117/2 / H220

Prestissimo

4

7

10

13

p

f

*) Siehe Kritische Bemerkungen (S. 4) / See Critical Notes (p. 4) / Voir Notes critiques (p. 4)