



## EDITIONS

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CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH (1714–1788), ED. ANNETTE RICHARDS  
*PORTRAIT COLLECTION, VOLUMES I (CATALOGUE) AND II (PLATES)*

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works, series 8, volumes 4.1 and 4.2

Los Altos: The Packard Humanities Institute, 2012

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If ever a music-related item or series of items called for a ‘biography of an object’ approach, it is surely C. P. E. Bach’s renowned collection of portraits. The collection of over four hundred portraits was amassed over decades and was widely admired in the composer’s own time. What is more fascinating than the objects themselves – consisting of original paintings, silhouettes and engravings – is the speculative process of reconstructing the motivation to acquire each item, the associated bargaining and journeys travelled, and (presumably) the affectionate and admiring beholding to which the various pieces in the collection were later subject. An ‘it-narrative’ or ‘novel of circulation’, then, itself a fashionable genre in the second half of the eighteenth century, would be an apposite mode of inquiry into, and description of, the lives and loves of this large family of inanimate objects.

The collection, once thought lost and dispersed after C. P. E. Bach’s death, has been reconstructed by Annette Richards in a herculean effort of scholarship, the results of which are published here in two volumes forming part four of series 8 (supplement) of *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*. Of immense value to Richards’s endeavour is the existence of a catalogue of the collection listed in Bach’s estate dating from 1788 that left invaluable details of the format, medium, size and sitter. The current volumes’ place in a complete-works series is noteworthy in itself and a very welcome source for music scholars with an interest in iconography. While parallels can be drawn to Gunther Braam’s *The Portraits of Hector Berlioz*, which formed volume 26 of the *New Edition of the Complete Works of Berlioz* (Neue Berlioz-Ausgabe; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2003), the current volumes are quite different in their material and purpose. The C. P. E. Bach ‘Portrait Collection’ is a reconstruction of portraits in the possession of a composer rather than portraits of a composer, and as such it stands as a record of an individual’s tastes, interests, and intellectual and social environment, and doubtless many other facets of his life as well.

The first volume is a catalogue and contains a twenty-two-page Introduction by Richards, followed by the catalogue of portraits and two appendices that cover the silhouette collection and portraits of Bach himself and his family. Three indexes complete the volume: the first is a classified index grouping portraits according to their status within the original 1788 catalogue and whether Bach is likely to have possessed them; this is followed by an index of subjects and an index of artists. The catalogue itself contains a black-and-white crop of each portrait, details from the 1788 catalogue description, information about the picture’s dimensions and medium, details of the sitter and artist, and other miscellaneous notes.

Volume two contains the plates in colour, and here the widely variable nature of the prints becomes especially apparent as they are assembled cheek by jowl in alphabetical order. Fine mezzotints, such as the portrait of Arabella Hunt by John Smith (after Kneller), sit near rather crude engraved caricatures, such as that of Niccolò Jommeli by Matthias Oesterreich (after Ghezzi). Poignantly, the last three portraits are of J. S. Bach the younger, himself an artist, who died ten years before his father.

The informative Introduction provides valuable information on the origins, expansion and eventual dispersal of C. P. E. Bach’s collection, and on Richards’s own subsequent efforts to track down most of the original items and reconstruct the whole collection. The composer’s letters from the 1770s and 1780s provide clear evidence of how he acquired the portraits and why some items were of particular interest. Correspondence between J. G. L. Breitkopf, Forkel and J. J. H. Westphal includes requests from Bach for



specific versions of printed portraits, and shows his keen awareness of practical matters such as transportation. The resulting collection was recognized in Bach's own time as highly significant; upon his death there were concerns expressed to keep the portraits together, but to no avail, as the items were sold off unsystematically by his daughter Anna Carolina Philippina (16).

The subjects of the portraits range from great historical figures such as Homer, Horace and Socrates, to downright obscure seventeenth-century theologians, to well-known contemporaries both musical and literary. Richards notes that the presence of a significant number of selected types of musicians – Kapellmeisters and organists, for example – could be due to the origins of the collection lying with J. S. Bach, although this is not certain. Whether the collection was started by father or son, Richards notes that the presence of sitters who belonged to J. S. Bach's cultural milieu suggests that it 'can be understood in part as a window into the intellectual and musical interests of the Bach family in the first half of the eighteenth century' (7). Whatever its origins, there is no doubt that C. P. E. Bach was a remarkable collector, and in a crucial passage Richards argues that the collection as a whole indicates Bach's awareness of historical and contemporary music, and that the images 'were meant to be cherished for conveying a sense of the accomplishments of the broadly conceived musical past and making immediate the richness of the musical present' (8). In a later footnote, Richards makes reference to a forthcoming study that will explore the relationship between the collection and its wider musical, social and intellectual contexts (24).

In the course of the eighteenth century, collecting printed portraits became possible for more than just the socially privileged, as historians such as Stana Nenadic have shown (see 'The Enlightenment in Scotland and the Popular Passion for Portraits', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21/2 (1998), 175–192; also 'Portraits of Scottish Professional Men in London, c.1760–1830: Careers, Connections and Reputations', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34/1 (2011), 1–17); in this respect C. P. E. Bach was not atypical for his time. Moreover, from the mid-eighteenth century printed portrait production flourished to a remarkable degree, driven by avid middle-class collectors and by groups of men using images to help to establish professional identity. (The historian Ludmilla Jordanova's work on portraits of medical men is seminal in our emerging understanding here; see her *Defining Features: Scientific and Medical Portraits, 1660–2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000).) C. P. E. Bach's collection, while readily conceivable as part of a then-current tradition of print collecting especially, was nonetheless remarkable in its sheer size and scope.

Once obtained, portraits became a form of goods to trade, not in monetary terms, but rather more as a means of strengthening relationships, be they personal or business, and of exchanging information and knowledge through visual form. To purchase or request a portrait, and in turn sell or give one, results in a likeness of someone being distributed for further collecting and viewing, and as a topic for discussion.

Print collections can be thought of as both permanent and fluid. Prints were given to and (as C. P. E. Bach's own letters indicate) exchanged with friends, fellow professionals and essential business partners, but the value of the collection to the collector was obviously in its size and scope as a collection for display. This latter function is clearly suggested in Charles Burney's well-known account of visiting C. P. E. and being 'introduced' to the portraits. It was as objects of display, whether in frames, collected in folios or as loose items, that viewers would engage with these portraits.

The value to the scholar of such collections is multifaceted, but not always self-evident. The individual items obviously have an attraction as representations of sitters, especially in the case of original drawings and paintings. Considering the collection as a whole leads to much more intriguing questions. Unlike individual portraits, the collection itself provides evidence of longitudinal trends in an individual's tastes and interests – it is, after all, the result of sustained behaviour. What remains more obscure than the apparent predilections of the collector, however, is precisely what kinds of behaviours occurred around the collection; the gaze, the conversations, the walking amongst framed worthies to stop and contemplate his or her physiognomy, to name just some likely acts. While some suggestive evidence can be found in the contexts of display – framed or mounted in a folio – a web of evidence is needed in order to reconstruct the nuances of such consumption and interactions. It is in the reconstructed life of the object, both individual



portraits and collections as a whole, that the deepest insights into the role of images in music history will be gleaned.

Richards has done a major service to musicologists and musicology in general by providing such a valuable source within a complete-works series of a composer. This not only signals an increased awareness of the importance of visual materials within musicological study, but also lays down a challenge concerning how such material is to be approached and assimilated into the business of musicology at large. A typical contribution to a collected works series would normally be expected to be 'self-sufficient' in the sense that a music scholar and musician could well feel equipped to assimilate and interpret the content in relation to other source materials and research findings. With a volume of iconographic material, new skills are needed that lie outside presumed knowledge and self-evident content, and critical notes will not always be able to bridge this gap. Nevertheless, a history of music which does not fully account for the role of images is an incomplete history, and it is to be hoped that this fine contribution to music scholarship will provide yet more impetus for the comprehensive inclusion of visual materials in historical music research.

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SANTIAGO BILLONI (c1700–c1763), ED. DREW EDWARD DAVIES  
*COMPLETE WORKS*

Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era 170  
Middleton: A-R Editions, 2011  
pp. xxvi + 340, ISBN 978 0 89579 695 0

The study of colonial Latin American repertoires within Anglophone historical musicology involves the mapping of what is still largely *terra incognita*: the discovery of untapped archival treasures and their insertion within theoretical frameworks that are constantly evolving. The boundaries of this musicological field in the English-speaking world were defined in large part by pioneering luminaries such as Robert Murrell Stevenson and Robert Snow, but over recent decades there have emerged new generations of younger scholars, including Drew Edward Davies, Bernardo Illari, Craig H. Russell and Leonardo Waisman. Davies, in particular, has been actively involved in projects to digitize the vast collections of music manuscripts in Mexican archives (see the description of the Seminario de Música en la Nueva España y el México Independiente at <<http://musicat.unam.mx/nuevo/index.html>>). In his work on Italian influence in the art music of the Spanish Americas he has raised numerous methodological and theoretical questions that give scholars pause to consider the role of genre and aesthetics in colonial Novohispanic repertoires (see, for instance, his PhD dissertation 'The Italianized Frontier: Music at Durango Cathedral, Español Culture, and the Aesthetics of Devotion in Eighteenth-Century New Spain', University of Chicago, 2006).

The volume under review represents the first complete edition of surviving works by a composer from eighteenth-century New Spain (Mexico). This composer, Santiago Billoni (c1700–c1763), played a significant role in the dissemination of Italian musical styles across the Atlantic (along with his better-known Italian-born contemporary Ignacio Jerusalem (1707–1769), chapel master at Mexico City Cathedral from 1750). A composer previously unknown to musicology, Billoni represents a musician whose works open a window onto the complex picture of aesthetic transformation in the early eighteenth-century Spanish colonies in the New World (and further afield), widespread musical landscapes that were increasingly influenced by developments on the Italian peninsula and their resonance in the major metropolises of the Iberian peninsula and New Spain. Davies has played a pioneering role in studying Billoni's life and works, and his approach is appropriately interdisciplinary: he combines musical analysis with textual criticism,