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Emanuel Bach: A Composer ahead of His Time

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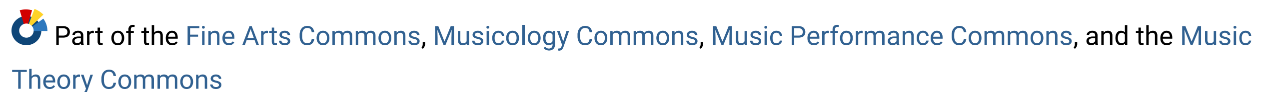
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Abstract

Up until recently, many musicologists perceived music history through the lens of what is known as the "linear view." This is the idea that one "musical period" seamlessly gave way to another, with brief transitionary periods to bridge the gaps. As a result, composers were expected to fall neatly into categories depending on their chronological placement. For this reason, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the eldest son of J. S. Bach, was (and still is) regarded as merely the bridge between the late Baroque style and that of the Viennese Classicists. In the past half-century, however, scholars have begun to study Emanuel Bach in his own right, giving an honest look at his works without imposing any preconceived notions on them. These scholars became captivated with the "pre-Romantic" aspects of his style, especially in the genre he advocated known as *empfindsamer stil*, or "sensitive style." These new insights into Emanuel Bach and other composers who are "ahead of their time" have had a profound influence on musicologists, leading some, such as James Webster, to question the over-simplistic "linear view" of music history. This paper explores the idea of Emanuel Bach and his *empfindsamer stil* as pre-Romantic. The results of this study will show that "pre-Romantic" is indeed an appropriate way to describe Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer stil* for three reasons: first, it was driven by the same philosophical ideals as Romanticism; second, it is closely associated with another pre-Romantic movement in literature and song known as *Sturm und Drang*; and finally, several specific elements in Emanuel Bach's music prefigure the pre-Romantic "innovations" of Beethoven.

Keywords

C. P. E. Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Empfindsamkeit, Empfindsamer Stil, Sturm und Drang, Pre-Romanticism, Beethoven, sentiment, piano sonatas

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Emanuel Bach: A Composer ahead of His Time

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Until recently, many musicologists perceived music history through the lens of what is known as the linear view. This is the idea that one musical period seamlessly gave way to another, with brief transitional periods to bridge the gaps. As a result, composers were expected to fall neatly into categories depending on their chronological placement. For this reason, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (henceforth referred to as Emanuel Bach), the eldest son of J. S. Bach, was (and still is) regarded as merely the bridge between the late Baroque style and Viennese Classical style. In the past half-century, however, scholars have begun to study Emanuel Bach in his own right, giving an honest look at his works without imposing any preconceived notions on them. These scholars became captivated with the pre-Romantic aspects of his style, especially in the genre he advocated known as *empfindsamer Stil*, or sensitive style.[1] These new insights into Emanuel Bach and other composers who are "ahead of their time" have had a profound influence on musicologists, leading some, such as James Webster, to question the over-simplistic, linear view of music history. This paper explores the idea of Emanuel Bach and his *empfindsamer Stil* as pre-Romantic. This study will show that pre-Romantic is indeed an appropriate way to describe Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* for three reasons: first, it was driven by the same philosophical ideals as Romanticism; second, it is closely associated with another pre-Romantic movement in literature and song known as *Sturm und Drang*; and finally, several specific elements in Emanuel Bach's music prefigure the pre-Romantic "innovations" of Beethoven.

[1] David Schulenberg, *The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 2.

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Empfindsamkeit in Philosophy

Georgia Cowart critically examines the usage of the word *Empfindsamkeit* (sentiment) by French, English, and German philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cowart asserts that philosophies in music do not come about by something "mysteriously 'in the air,'" but are rather deeply connected to the intellectual currents of that period.[2] She believes the word *Empfindsamkeit* is often "too narrowly associated with style" by today's scholars, suggesting instead that the term was used more broadly back then to describe an "attitude and an aesthetic system," rather than simply referring to a small group of German composers.[3] Through Cowart's research, the reader will see that *Empfindsamkeit* is not just a pre-Romantic musical style, but also a pre-Romantic philosophy.

The term *Empfindsamkeit*, as originally used by seventeenth-century French and English scholars, was devoid of emotional connotations and referred rather to sensory perceptions. The word was used frequently by the English philosophers John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, who taught that ideas in the mind were formed as a result of information obtained through the senses. This was contrary to the view that ideas existed innately in the mind, as was taught previously by Descartes and his followers. This shift in the philosophical view of the senses as a medium for developing ideas resulted in a subsequent shift in the philosophical view of the arts. Whereas previously the arts were considered irrelevant when it came to philosophy, now they were accepted as valid ways of communicating solid ideas.[4]

Beginning in the late seventeenth century, French critics began to link *Empfindsamkeit* with good taste (*bon gout*). Prior to this, good taste was believed to be based on a set of objective universal standards. In Emanuel Bach's time, good taste was now thought of as being derived from subjective personal experiences.[5] This distinction influenced French art during this period, especially in the debate concerning line and color.

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[2] Georgia Cowart, "Critical Language and Musical Thought in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *College Music Symposium* 27 (1987): 14, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40373840.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 19-20.
[5] Ibid., 20.

Traditionally, line was promoted as more important than color; after all, line alone had the ability to communicate real intellectual meaning, while color could only communicate vague sentiments. Painter Roger de Piles challenged this assumption by giving equal weight to color in his paintings, thus drawing more attention to the surface than to the story, to the aesthetic qualities rather than intellectual ideas.[6]

French philosophers such as Abbé Dubos in 1719 began to tie *Empfindsamkeit* to "the perception of beauty through the external senses."[7] The beauty referred to was a kind of beauty that transcended intellectual beauty and spoke directly to the heart. Thus, *Empfindsamkeit* began to take on more emotional connotations, most often referring to gentler emotions like love and tenderness. In the late eighteenth century, critics further refined their definition of sentiment to distinguish it from the old Baroque ideas of passions and the Doctrine of Affections. Passions were explicit, objective emotional states, while sentiments were the heart's subtle, subjective responses to sensory stimuli. In music, passions would be dictated by the text and made clear in the music, while sentiments would be up to the listener's interpretation. Johann Matheson in 1721 and Alexander Baumgarten in 1750 further helped connect *Empfindsamkeit* to music. They argued that music cannot be judged by reason but should be perceived solely through the sentiments, since reason cannot judge aesthetic beauty.[8]

To summarize thus far: *Empfindsamkeit* is not just a musical style, but a philosophical movement. It prefers subjectivity over objectivity, and subtle beauty over traditional forms. It values individual emotional expression as well as individual subjective interpretation, and cares more about aesthetics than about intellectual meaning.

Hopefully by now, the reader will begin to see parallels between the *Empfindsamkeit* movement of the eighteenth century and the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century. Both movements were driven by the same underlying philosophical ideas: the rebellion against traditional rules as the arbiters of aesthetic value, the usurpation of objectivity by subjectivity, and the increased value of individual emotion and expression. The philosophers who taught these ideas, and subsequently

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[6] Cowart, "Critical Language and Musical Thought," 24-25.
[7] Ibid., 21.
[8] Ibid., 21-22.

the artists who followed them, challenged traditional rules, upholding in their place the values of individualism, imagination, emotion, and originality.[9]

Empfindsamkeit in Music

Emanuel Bach absorbed the philosophical ideas of *Empfindsamkeit* into his music to create a style known as *empfindsamer Stil*. One notable use of *empfindsamer Stil* was in the portrayal of human emotions in his character pieces, which were short keyboard works that attempted to portray in music the characteristics of actual people. He uses fragmented gestures and an introverted mood to represent human emotions and to elicit appropriate empathetic responses in the listeners.[10] By nature, these pieces are subjective, requiring the listener to interpret the music and imagine what the "person" in the music must be like.[11] Already, one can see the philosophical values of *Empfindsamkeit* emerging in Emanuel Bach's music: an emphasis on individuality, human emotion, and subjectivity. One example of such a character piece is *La Buchholtz*. In this piece, the juxtaposed contrasting moods every two bars, the unpredictable form, and unexpected dynamic contrasts all suggest a character who is capricious, unstable, and even explosive.[12]

Emanuel Bach is also known for employing *empfindsamer Stil* in his fantasias. A fantasia, which comes from the German word for improvisation (*fantasieren*), is an ideal vehicle for *Empfindsamkeit* because of its free-flowing nature: "The later fantasy, in contrast, a favourite of the age of sentiment especially for the keyboard, was a piece conceived in imitation of the spontaneous playing of a master of his instrument, flexible in form and open to the maximum degree of emotional variation and contrast."[13]

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[9] Lilian R. Furst, "Romanticism in Historical Perspective," *Comparative Literature Studies* 5, no. 2 (1968): 119, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40467744.
[10] Joshua Walden, "What's in a Name? C. P. E. Bach and the Genres of the Character Piece and Musical Portrait," from *Genre in Eighteenth Century Music*, ed. by Anthony R. DelDonna (Ann Arbor, MI: Steglein Publishing Inc., 2008), 119.
[11] Ibid., 113.
[12] Ibid., 120-123.
[13] Margaret Mahony Stoljar, *Poetry and Song in Late Eighteenth Century Germany: A Study in the Musical* Sturm und Drang (London, UK: Croom Helm, 1985), 51.

Emanuel Bach not only incorporated *Empfindsamkeit* into his composition style but also into his performance practice. In his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments,* he famously admonishes his students to "play from the soul, not like a trained bird."[14] Observe the following advice he gives to performers in his *Essay*. Pay special attention to the way he uses the words "insensibility" and "sensitive":

> A musician cannot move others unless he too is moved. He must of necessity feel all of the affects that he hopes to arouse in his audience, for the revealing of his own humor will stimulate a like humor in the listener. In languishing, sad passages, the performer must languish and grow sad. Thus will the expression of the piece be more clearly perceived by the audience. . . . Similarly, in lively, joyous passages, the executant must again put himself into the appropriate mood. And so, constantly varying the passions, he will barely quiet one before he rouses another. . . . Those who maintain that all of this can be accomplished without gesture will retract their words when, owing to their own *insensibility*, they find themselves obliged to sit like a statue before their instrument. . . . Those opposed to this stand are often incapable of doing justice, despite their technique, to their own otherwise worthy compositions. . . . But let someone else play these, a person of *delicate, sensitive insight* who knows the meaning of good performance, and the composer will learn to his astonishment that there is more in his music than he had ever known or believed (emphasis mine).[15]

In summary, one can see that *Empfindsamkeit*, when adapted to music composition, refers to a passionate, expressive style with frequent juxtaposed and contrasting moods and unpredictable form. In performance practice, it refers to the performer's ability to interpret the subtle emotions embedded into a piece of music; the performer must not only himself be emotionally moved but must also perform the piece in such a way as to move his audience.

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[14] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. by William J. Mitchell (London, UK: Eulenburg, 1974), 150.
[15] Ibid., 152-153.

Empfindsamkeit* and *Sturm und Drang

Empfindsamkeit was closely related to another pre-Romantic movement around the same time period known as *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress). This movement was most prevalent in poetry and song and reached its peak in the 1770s. One could argue that *Empfindsamkeit* and *Sturm und Drang* are not two entirely separate movements, but rather are two manifestations of the same ideals.[16] In fact, some artists—including Emanuel Bach—were a part of both movements.[17] Margaret Stoljar attempts to demonstrate this very point in her book *Poetry and Song in Late Eighteenth Century Germany*: "Both *Sturm und Drang* and *Empfindsamkeit* are shown not as distinct phenomena but as complementary to the Enlightenment, themselves contributing to its differentiated character as special and relatively limited moments arising out of the complex currents of eighteenth-century thought and social change."[18]

Like *Empfindsamkeit*, the *Sturm und Drang* movement can be seen as a rebellion against rationalism, with heavier emphases on individualism and emotion. The movement was inspired largely by the writings of French philosopher Rousseau.[19] Goethe and Schiller were the pioneers of the *Sturm und Drang* style in literature; their dramas contained themes of individualism, freedom, reliance on emotion for guidance, and rebellion against the artificiality of culture. Goethe inspired a group of artists that included Friedrich Maximillian Klinger, whose drama *Sturm und Drang* gave the movement its name.[20] Stoljar shows how an overlap occurred between literature and music in *Sturm und Drang* when poets and composers who wrote in the style collaborated to write songs. Such is the case with Emanuel Bach, who began setting the poems of Friedrich Klopstock to music in the *Sturm und Drang* style in the 1770s. Stoljar notes that Klopstock and Emanuel Bach were ideal counterparts because

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[16] Stoljar, *Poetry and Song*, xii.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid, xii.
[19] Paul F. Marks, "The Rhetorical Element in Musical *Sturm und Drang*: Christian Gottfried Krause's 'Von Der Musikalischen Poesie,'" *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 2, no. 1 (1971): 54, doi:10.2307/836470.
[20] Barry S. Brook, "*Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic Period in Music," *Studies in Romanticism* 9, no. 4, (1970): 271-72, doi:10.2307/25599772.

of their similarities in style: "The opening-up of established forms in poetry and music by Klopstock's free rhythms or by the fantasy in Bach's keyboard writing, the quasi-spontaneous form modelled on actual impromptu playing and preserving its free-ranging character, reflects the desire of poet and musician alike to find immediate expression for the emotional content of his art."[21]

The impassioned *Sturm und Drang* style had several distinguishable musical characteristics. One characteristic was an increased use of the minor mode. In eighteenth-century instrumental music, one rarely finds minor keys being used as principal tonalities. Only ten of Haydn's 107 symphonies are in minor keys, six of which were written during the peak of his *Sturm und D rang* phase from 1768 to 1773. Thus, the sparse use of minor keys stood out much more in this period, signifying even greater emotional intensity. Another characteristic of *Sturm und Drang* in music was a fascination with contrapuntal devices such as canons and fugatos. The use of these contrapuntal devices in *Sturm und Drang* pieces was not authentic counterpoint, but rather an attempt to rebel against the popular homophonic *style galant* of the period. Other characteristics of *Sturm und Drang* include driving, syncopated rhythms, melodic motives built on wide leaps, increased harmonic tension, sharp dissonances, extended modulations, and a broader dynamic range.[22]

Scholars note that *Sturm und Drang*, like *Empfindsamkeit*, foreshadows Romanticism in its philosophical values. According to Lilian Furst, "*Sturm und Drang* foreshadowed very many of the basic concepts of Romanticism: the belief in the autonomy of the divinely inspired genius, the release of the imagination from the bondage of 'good taste,' the primacy of spontaneous and intuitive feeling, the complete freedom of artistic expression, and finally, the notion of organic growth and development, from which arose both an interest in the past, particularly the Middle Ages, and a new pantheistic vision of nature as part of a unified cosmos."[23]

Other scholars have noticed similarities not just in the philosophies behind *Sturm und Drang* and Romanticism, but also in their musical sound. Barry Brook conducted a series of informal experiments among music majors and music faculty in preparation for his research on the

[21] Stoljar, *Poetry and Song*, 64.
[22] Brook, "*Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic Period," 278.
[23] Furst, "Romanticism in Historical Perspective," 121.

relationship between *Sturm und Drang* and Romanticism. The results showed that most of the time, over half of the listeners could not distinguish between the two but mistook *Sturm und Drang* for Romanticism. Based on this, Brook suggests that perhaps our understanding of Classicism and Romanticism is too narrow:

> Why is our understanding of the style, or rather of the styles, of the so-called Classical Era in music (1750-1825) not broad enough—nor precise enough—to readily identify and include the works of the *Sturm und Drang* (c. 1770)? Why do we seem to be so easily misled by relatively obvious 'romantic' style characteristics such as use of minor keys, dynamic extremes, and sombre moods, while ignoring more fundamental style elements such as phrase structure, tonal motion, and harmonic rhythm?[24]

Since *empfindsamer Stil* is closely related to (and overlaps) *Sturm und Drang*, and since *Sturm und Drang* is pre-Romantic both in philosophical ideals and in musical sound, one can reason that this would further support the notion that *empfindsamer Stil* is a pre-Romantic style. To summarize thus far, there is ample evidence for the idea that Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* is indeed a pre-Romantic movement. Its philosophical ideals are similar to those of the Romantic era, and it is closely associated with the *Sturm und Drang* movement in literature and song that is also pre-Romantic both in its philosophical principles and in its musical characteristics.

Emanuel Bach and Beethoven

If *Empfindsamkeit* is truly a pre-Romantic movement, therefore, one might expect several qualities of Emanuel Bach's music to anticipate that of Beethoven, who is considered by many to be the forerunner of Romanticism in music. One might even speculate that Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* may have had a direct influence on Beethoven, considering the reverence Beethoven held for Emanuel Bach: "Of Emanuel Bach's pianoforte works I have only a few things, yet a few by that true artist serve not only for high enjoyment but also for study," he once said. He later requested in a letter to a friend, "I should like to have

[24] Brook, "*Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic Period," 270.

all the works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, all that you actually publish."[25] The following section will demonstrate a few similarities between the piano sonatas of Beethoven and Emanuel Bach. The analysis shows that several pre-Romantic characteristics in Beethoven's sonatas, although commonly taught to be innovations of Beethoven, were found earlier in the sonatas of Emanuel Bach.

One distinguishing characteristic of Beethoven's piano sonatas was his blending of sonata and fantasia styles into a single work, especially in his *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27, No. 2 (Ex. 1). In a lecture on Beethoven's *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Jonathan Biss of The Curtis Institute of Music says that up until Beethoven, merging structured sonata and free-flowing fantasia into a single, coherent unit was unheard of:

> Now the notion of fantasy and sonata united is not entirely new. But in the past, the idea was to present them as distinct works in a sequence, their opposed natures being the very point of the exercise. Mozart for example wrote a Fantasy and Sonata in C minor. . . . So, to have a work that is simultaneously fantasy and a sonata surely seemed like a contradiction in terms. The title [*Sonata quasi una fantasia*] makes really a bold statement which Beethoven has clearly been leading up to with Opus 26—that something other than sonata form and the standard succession of movements can be the glue that holds a sonata together.[26]

It is safe to say that this is pre-Romantic, since his merging of sonata and fantasy would inspire nineteenth-century Romantic composers, including Schumann, to do the same. Biss continues:

> The Schumann Fantasy, one of the really greatest piano works of the Romantic generation, was originally titled Grand Sonata. . . and what was Schumann's motivation

[25] Donald W. MacArdle, "Beethoven and the Bach Family," *Music & Letters* 38, no. 4 (1957): 356-357, http://www.jstor.org/stable/730116.
[26] Jonathan Biss, *Exploring Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, online course (Curtis Institute of Music), https://www.coursera.org/learn/beethoven-piano-sonatas.

> in writing the fantasy? It was to raise money to build the statue of, who else? Beethoven.[27]

It may be surprising to learn that this very method of meshing sonata and fantasy into a single unit was also implemented by Emanuel Bach. His Keyboard Sonata in G Minor, Wq. 65/17 alternates between unmeasured fantasia style (marked *cadenza*) and conventional sonata style (in 2/4 time), all integrated into a through-composed sonata form (Ex. 2).[28] By incorporating fantasy styles into their sonatas, both Emanuel Bach and Beethoven demonstrate their pre-Romantic ideals by valuing expression over form, and by stretching the sonata beyond what were thought to be its limitations.

[27] Biss, *Exploring Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*.
[28] Schulenberg, *The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, 82.

Ex. 1: Beethoven, Sonata No. 14 in C# Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"), mvt. 3, mm. 79-94.[29]

[29] Ludwig van Beethoven, *Piano Sonata No.14, Op.27 No.2* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1862).

Ex. 2: Emanuel Bach, Sonata in G Minor, Wq. 65/17, mvt. 1, opening.[30]

A second characteristic that is commonly taught to be invented by Beethoven is the way the movements of his sonatas flow seamlessly from one to the next. Biss continues in the same lecture, "But the real innovation in Op. 27 No. 1 is that there are no breaks between the movements. . . . This is really unheard of."[31] Interestingly, this very device was utilized over a half century earlier by Emanuel Bach, including in the sonata just mentioned.[32] As with the blending of fantasy and sonata, removing the breaks between movements demonstrates a tinkering with traditional forms, a common tendency of composers in both *empfindsamer Stil* and Romanticism.

A third element of Romanticism in Beethoven's sonatas is his interrupting of phrases, often with *subito pianos*. This can be seen in the opening of his beloved "Pathetique" Sonata (Ex. 3). In another lecture,

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[30] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Keyboard Sonata in G minor*, *H. 47*, *Wq. 65 No. 17*, ed. by Émile Bosquet (Paris: Maurice Senart, 1921).
[31] Biss, *Exploring Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*.
[32] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Keyboard Sonata in G minor*, *H. 47*, *Wq. 65 No. 17*, ed. by Émile Bosquet (Paris: Maurice Senart, 1921).

Biss states that this characteristic was also invented by Beethoven: "The power of the *subito piano* comes from the feeling of the natural trajectory of the phrase being interrupted, of having the rug pulled out from under you. Unsurprisingly, Beethoven absolutely loved doing this. I mean, *he really practically invented the idea*" (emphasis mine).[33] Again, the reader may be surprised to learn that interrupting phrases in this way was used before Beethoven by Emanuel Bach. He implements this especially in the opening of his Keyboard Sonata in B Minor, Wq. 49/6 (Ex. 4), using both broken-off phrases and *subito pianos*. Like Beethoven, Emanuel Bach does not merely use this device for dramatic effect, but proceeds to develop the broken-off phrases as any other motive would be developed in sonata-allegro form.[34] Compare the opening of Emanuel Bach's Sonata in B Minor (Ex. 4) with the opening of Beethoven's "Pathetique" (Ex. 3). Besides the extreme dynamic changes and interrupted phrases, notice the other uncanny similarities in the openings of these two sonatas: the blending of fantasia and sonata styles, the melodramatic pauses and fermatas, and the stark contrasts between dense, powerful chords and light, suspenseful dotted rhythms.

[33] Biss, *Exploring Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*.
[34] Schulenberg, *The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, 80.

Ex. 3: Beethoven, Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13, mvt. 1, mm. 1-10.[35]

[35] Ludwig van Beethoven, *Piano Sonata No. 8, Op. 13*, ed. by Louis Köhler and Adolf Ruthardt (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1862).

Ex. 4: Emanuel Bach, Keyboard Sonata in B Minor, Wq. 49/6, mvt. 1, mm. 1-25.[36]

So far, the reader has seen similar elements in Emanuel Bach's and Beethoven's sonatas that are considered pre-Romantic. Other comparisons can also be made between their music that are not necessarily pre-Romantic but support the possibility that Beethoven was influenced by Emanuel Bach. According to David Schulenberg, the high

[36] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Keyboard Sonata in B Minor, H. 36, Wq. 49 No. 6*, ed. by Rudolf Steglich (Nuremberg: Johann Ulrich Haffner, 1744).

dramatic tension of the retransitions in Emanuel Bach's *da capo* arias and keyboard concertos also anticipates that of Beethoven's retransitions. One can see this in the first movement of his Concerto in G Minor, Wq. 6. The retransition in this movement consists of passages alternating between the strings and the keyboard soloist, stating sharply contrasting material. Over the course of the passage (mm. 212-54), their entries grow shorter and more urgent, leading to a climactic keyboard solo that modulates back to the tonic.[37]

To summarize, there are at least three pre-Romantic characteristics that are commonly taught to be innovations of Beethoven that were actually anticipated by Emanuel Bach: first, the incorporation of fantasia into sonatas; second, the lack of breaks between movements; and third, the use of interrupted phrases and *subito pianos*. We have also seen one additional way in which Emanuel Bach foreshadows Beethoven: namely, the high intensity of the retransitions in their keyboard concertos. Hopefully the point has been made clearly: Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* anticipates Beethoven's style in several of its pre-Romantic qualities. Furthermore, taking into consideration the fact that Beethoven studied and revered Emanuel Bach's works, one could conjecture that Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* may have even directly inspired Beethoven's style.

Conclusion

Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* is indeed a pre-Romantic style, as it is drawn from the same philosophical principles as Romanticism, such as an emphasis on individuality, emotion, and a break from traditional rules. In addition, *empfindsamer Stil* is closely associated with another movement in poetry and song (*Sturm und Drang*) that is described by scholars as pre-Romantic. Finally, Emanuel Bach predates Beethoven, the "forerunner of Romanticism," in many of his pre-Romantic characteristics. The goal of this research is to give honor to whom honor is due. In many cases, some of the great artists in history did not invent anything new; they just did it much better than the original inventors, and the audience was much more ready to receive it. For example, Debussy is often credited with being the forerunner of Impressionism. However, even though the term did not become associated with music until Debussy, the ideas and characteristics of the musical style can be traced back to earlier composers such as Abel Decaux and Franz Liszt.

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[37] Schulenberg, *The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, 51-52.

In this same way, Emanuel Bach is just one of many such artists in history who were ahead of their time. Although Beethoven is usually thought to be the forerunner of Romanticism in music because of the way he inspired later Romantic composers, the ideas and characteristics of Romanticism can be traced back to Emanuel Bach and his *empfindsamer Stil*.

The research presented in this article—and similar research on other composers who were also ahead of their time—is important because it helps musicologists develop a more subtle understanding of music history. Musicologist James Webster discusses the benefits and problems with the traditional "periodization" of European music:

> A historical period is a construction. Periods don't just happen; still less are they given "objectively" in the historical record. . . On the contrary, a periodization is not so much true or false, as a *reading*, a way of making sense of complex data. . . . In recent German historiography, finally, much has been made of the 'contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous' and its converse. A simple example in our field is the common notion that an artwork is 'ahead of its time' (which admittedly makes less sense the longer one ponders it). As a generalized methodology *it encourages historians to consider events from different times and domains as belonging together* (emphasis mine).[38]

In other words, musicologists are beginning to realize that the traditional method of organizing music history into neat, tidy "periods" has its limitations. The method can be useful as a convenient framework for making sense of music history, but there are always exceptions to these periods. This is what Webster means when he refers to art that is ahead of its time and the idea that art from different times can belong together. Based on this, one could argue that Emanuel Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* belonged in the same musical period as Beethoven, even though he preceded Beethoven chronologically by over fifty years.

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[38] James Webster, "Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: 'First Viennese Modernism' and the Delayed Nineteenth Century," *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2-3 (2001): 110, doi:10.1525/ncm.2001.25.2-3.108.

Music never exists in a vacuum. As seen with *empfindsamer Stil* and *Empfindsamkeit*, music is almost always a product of its philosophical, historical, and artistic context. In summary, the field of musicology needs more scholars who are able to take composers' historical contexts into consideration while also studying these composers in their own right. This involves making connections to historical events, philosophies, and arts of the time period while still performing an in-depth, unbiased study of the composer's works. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, with his *empfindsamer Stil*, is just one example of a composer who is ahead of his time, and musicologists should do their best to study his music on its own terms.

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