

# BCS TANGENTS

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## Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's Keyboard Music

David Schulenberg

David Schulenberg is author of *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach* and editor of works by C. P. E. Bach. His book *The Music of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* will appear later this year from University of Rochester Press. He plays clavichord, harpsichord, and fortepiano and is professor and chair of the music department at Wagner College (Staten Island, N.Y.).

As pianists celebrate the two hundredth birthdays of Chopin, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, clavichordists will not want to overlook the fact that Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, oldest surviving son of Johann Sebastian, was born three hundred



Wilhelm Friedemann Bach  
*Zeichnung von P. Gulle in der Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach by P. Gulle

years ago on November 22, 1710. Although overshadowed during and after his life by his father and two of his younger brothers, Friedemann, as he was called, was an important composer in his own right, regarded by

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## The Clavichords of C.P.E. Bach & Haydn

Peter Bavington

Peter Bavington is a clavichord builder, as well as the editor of *The British Clavichord Society Newsletter*. The following article is a revised version of a talk he gave at a meeting of the British Clavichord Society in November 1998.

Dr. Charles Burney paid a visit to C.P.E. Bach and his family on the 12th of October 1772. Burney's description of Bach's clavichord playing on this occasion is well-known, but it will do no harm to quote from it here:

M. Bach was so obliging as to sit down to his Silbermann clavichord and favourite instrument, upon which he played three or four of his choicest and most difficult compositions... In the pathetic and slow movements, whenever he had a long note to express, he absolutely contrived to produce, from his instrument, a cry of sorrow and complaint, such as can only be effected on the clavichord, and perhaps by himself.

After dinner... I prevailed upon him to sit down again to a clavichord, and he played, with little intermission, till near eleven o'clock at night. During this time, he grew so animated and possessed, that he not only played, but looked like one inspired. His eyes were fixed, his under lip fell, and drops of effervescence distilled from his countenance. He said, if he were to be set to work frequently, in this manner, he should grow young again.<sup>1</sup>

In another passage, Burney refers to the maker of this favorite clavichord:

His great knowledge of mechanics, his originality and adequate means whereby he is enabled to maintain a permanent stock of good old timber, mean that all his instruments are extraordinarily beautifully and carefully made. The Hamburg Bach possesses one of the master's clavichords, which displays, besides its other perfections, three virtues to be met with, perhaps, in no other clavichord in the world. First, it does not rattle, notwithstanding that it is almost thirty years old and that its owner has played myriads of notes upon it; second, it requires scarcely any tuning; and thirdly, its construction is such, that its tone sustains considerably longer than that of other clavichords, and all possible gradations of forte and piano may be performed upon it, and portamento and *Bebung* distinctly executed without extraneous noise.<sup>2</sup>

Although this passage has the ring of

authentic Burney, it apparently occurs only in the contemporaneous German edition, and may have been added by the translator, Christoph Daniel Ebeling who, as a Hamburg resident and friend of Bach, would have known the instrument well.

Burney is not the only writer to admire the Silbermann clavichord and Bach's performance on it. This is from Johann Friedrich Reichardt:

Herr Bach plays not only a quite slow, singing adagio with the most touching expression... he also sustains in such a slow movement a note of the duration of six semiquavers with all the varying degrees of loudness and softness, and this in the bass as well as in the treble. This, however, is only possible on his very beautiful Silbermann clavichord for which he has especially written some particular sonatas in which long notes must be sustained. The same is true of the extraordinary loudness which Herr Bach occasionally produces; it is the utmost fortissimo; another clavichord would fall to pieces; and it is again the same with the finest pianissimo which another clavichord could not produce at all. It is a pity that we have so few such outstanding instruments and that the organ and instrument makers of today are not equal to the art of that skilful man. The newly invented instruments with six and twelve stops are only cobblers' patches and children's toys when compared to a Silbermann clavichord.<sup>3</sup>

This Silbermann clavichord must have been something of a phenomenon in its day. Apparently it had, to a high degree, certain tonal qualities which were sought-after in a clavichord: sustaining power allied to a wide dynamic range. By implication, many other instruments fell short of this ideal.

Now there are a number of questions about this celebrated instrument which call for an answer:

– Which member of the Silbermann family was the maker?

– What was the instrument like? Was it, for example, fretted or unfretted? What was

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some as the most brilliant of the Bach children. Yet little more than one hundred of his compositions survive, and in a long career he never achieved a major position, ending his life unemployed and, it was rumored, a drunk who sold his father's manuscripts as his own. In the nineteenth century he was the subject of a fanciful romantic novel that became the basis in the twentieth century for plays, films, and even two operas, yet much of his music remains unpublished and little known.

The loss of essential sources means that much about Friedemann Bach will always remain enigmatic. His music, like his father's, is difficult to perform and to interpret, and unlike his younger brothers Carl Philipp Emanuel and Johann Christian he was apparently unwilling to compromise his style as a concession to public taste. Although his compositions resemble those of his contemporaries in broad outlines, they possess a distinctive profile, and like any composer he had favorite gestures and turns of phrase that make his music recognizable. Among these is a penchant for repeated, expressive chromaticism (especially in the bass) that gives many pieces a poignant, yearning quality.

Recognized as the foremost German keyboard player of his generation, Friedemann is naturally best known for his solo keyboard music. Yet only about a dozen sonatas and as many fantasias survive, as well as sets of twelve polonaises and eight fugues and a few miscellaneous pieces. Not a single organ work with pedals can be confidently attributed to him—despite the publication of several editions containing such works—nor did he write a single piece in the variation form so favored by other mid-century composers, including Emanuel Bach. Indeed, whereas Emanuel's style was based on the improvisatory variation or embellishment of an underlying harmonic progression, Friedemann's music is constructed more like Sebastian's, as the contrapuntal working-out of simple motives. Whether this reflects a difference in how the two were trained is impossible to say, but the distinction is striking and emerges most clearly in their fantasias: whereas Emanuel is famous for unbarred, "free" fantasias that wander through remote keys and contain many sudden changes of pace, Friedemann's fantasias tend to resemble medleys comprising extracts from previously composed so-

natas and other works—or of passages that *seem* as if they were drawn from other pieces. This may well reflect very different habits of performance: whereas Emanuel seems to have enjoyed playing the clavichord in an almost conversational manner, in intimate domestic settings, Friedemann may have been more the virtuoso showman, most at home in concerts where he could display his prodigious technique.

This is not to say that Friedemann's music consists of empty theatrics; on the contrary, like Sebastian in his inventions and Goldberg Variations, or Chopin in his études, Friedemann could use a trick like hand crossing as a means toward inventing new and fascinating keyboard textures. A few of his early pieces, such as a pair of minuets later incorporated into his G-minor Suite, consist almost entirely of hand crossing, in constantly varied patterns that put the performer through a sort of choreography that is challenging to play but fascinating to watch. His sonatas do not depart from the standard three-movement design, but some, such as a late example in G and the sonata in E-flat published in 1746—one of just two works printed in his lifetime—contain individual movements that make inventive departures from conventional binary form. For clavichordists, the most rewarding pieces, if also among the most difficult, are the twelve polonaises, a unique series that converts what had been a popular, undemanding dance type into ingenious excursions through remote keys in a proto-Romantic expressive world.

There is no doubt that these pieces were played on the clavichord, despite the presence of lively passagework and strong dynamic contrasts that might make some prefer performance on varieties of harpsichord and fortepiano. Two of Friedemann's longest fantasias, both in C minor, were explicitly for the clavichord, according to a manuscript copy owned by the Baltic aristocrat who commissioned them. But because Friedemann composed primarily for his own performances, published little, and had few amateur pupils, he rarely marked his works with the detailed symbols for ornaments and other performance elements found in music by some contemporaries. Several works contain gaps that he apparently filled in improvisatorily each time he played them, and unlike Emanuel he left virtually no examples of the types

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of cadenzas required in many sonatas, concertos, and fantasias.

Fortunately for keyboard players, most of Friedemann's music for their instruments was issued in reliable editions during the twentieth century (the situation is otherwise for his concertos, symphonies, and especially his sacred vocal music). His works were catalogued in the early twentieth century by Martin Falck, whose "F" numbers remain the standard way of citing individual pieces. Old but generally reliable editions of the sonatas and fantasias are available online at [imslp.org](http://imslp.org). A new edition of the complete works is underway by Peter Wollny; unfortunately its first two volumes are graced by a portrait that, although widely reproduced as an image of Friedemann Bach, actually depicts his pupil and fourth cousin Johann Christian Bach. The latter, known as the Halle Clavier-Bach, is not to be confused with Friedemann's younger half-brother of the same name. Included with this bulletin is a score of one of Friedemann's few mature works that remain unpublished: a characteristically expressive but tricky little March in E-flat. Ω

## Ulrika Davidsson Plays Haydn

Peter Sykes

Peter Sykes is the president of the Boston Clavichord Society and a performer on many types of keyboards.

In its first concert of the 2009-2010 season, the Boston Clavichord Society presented Ursula Davidsson on Sunday, September 20, in recital in the Hastings Room at First Church in Cambridge. Ms. Davidsson is a native of Göteborg, Sweden, who now lives in Rochester, NY. Her studies have been varied and extensive. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in piano performance and pedagogy from the University of Gothenburg. She continued her piano studies at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam and has studied fortepiano with Malcolm Bilson and clavichord with Harald Vogel. After relocating to



Ulrika Davidsson

the US in 2001, Ms. Davidsson graduated from the Eastman School of Music with a Master of Music degree in harpsichord performance and the D.M.A. degree in piano performance.

Playing the now 101-year old Chickering/Dolmetsch clavichord (no. 31) from the collection of Peter Sykes, Ms. Davidsson traversed early, middle and late sonatas of Franz Joseph Haydn in a varied, tasteful and elegant recital. Her clavichord playing had a real sense of space, in which the music shone through effortlessly; here the clavichord was not treated as a stubborn obstacle to be overcome, but as an ideal window through which to see both detail and overview in this fascinating music. In concise and lucid spoken program notes, she noted Haydn's "sincerity and complexity with endlessly flowing ingenuity" in

works written over a thirty-year span of his compositional career. The program ranged from sonatas that were perky and exuberant (Hob. XVI:23) to more intimate (and quasi-Romantic) examples of the *empfindsamer Stil*, reminiscent of the works of C.P.E. Bach (Hob XVI:44). Other sonatas contained outrageous contrasts and examples of Haydn's famous wit and humor (Hob XVI:29). Some of the sonatas had elegant and lively movements showing Haydn's more mature style, taking a simple idea and developing it to its limits in a set of double variations (Hob. XVI:48). Her sympathetic treatment of the instrument, never pushing it past its sonic limits, proved her a good judge of sound, and the clavichord sounded beautiful and varied throughout the evening. In all, Davidsson's relaxed technique, expressive phrasing and tasteful presentation gave the audience a real insight into how Haydn's music could be experienced in the context of an intimate conversation between an insightful performer and a discriminating group of listeners.. Ω

(Bavington, continued from p.1)

its compass?

– And why did Bach sell it in 1781, nine years after Burney's visit and seven years before his own death, to Dietrich Ewald von Grotthuss? – a transaction which inspired the beautiful "Farewell" rondo.

As far as we know, only two members of the Silbermann family made clavichords. Firstly, there is Gottfried Silbermann of Freiberg in Saxony, famous throughout Germany as an organ builder, as the inventor of the *cembal d'amour* and as a pioneer of the early pianoforte. The other possible candidate is his nephew Johann Heinrich Silbermann, who studied with his uncle before setting up as an instrument maker in Strasbourg. These two are frequently confused, I'm sorry to say, by makers and buyers of clavichords, but it's worth remembering that they were of quite different generations. Gottfried was almost an exact contemporary of Bach's father, J.S. Bach, whereas Johann Heinrich was 44 years younger than Gottfried, and younger, in fact, than C.P.E. Bach himself.

Now, if the clavichord had been in Bach's possession for almost thirty years as Burney states – and this is confirmed by a note made by Grotthuss when he received the clavi-

chord from Bach – it could not have been made any later than the mid-1740's. At that time Johann Heinrich would have been a young man of only 18 or so: rather early in life for him to have become established as an independent instrument maker. Moreover Reichardt, in the passage I quoted a moment ago, clearly implies that the maker of Bach's clavichord was of an earlier generation, not a contemporary like Johann Heinrich. It seems almost certain, therefore, that the maker of Bach's instrument was Gottfried Silbermann.

It is, of course, surprising that Burney speaks of him in the present tense, since at the time of his German tour Gottfried had been dead for 19 years, and Ebeling, if not Burney himself, would surely have been aware of this. News travelled slowly in the eighteenth century, however, and perhaps even then there was a tendency to confuse the identities of these two Silbermanns.

Having established that Gottfried was the likely maker, how wonderful it would be if we could refer to clavichords made by him, to establish the compass and other technical features of Bach's instrument. Sadly, none survive, at any rate no genuine ones. There are at least six surviving

clavichords attributed to Johann Heinrich Silbermann: these cannot tell us directly about the nature of Bach's instrument, but they may represent a later stage in the tradition which produced it.

In the absence of actual instruments, what other clues do we have as to the nature of Bach's clavichord? It is often assumed that it must have been a big five-octave unfretted one, but this is not necessarily so. Such instruments were indeed made in the 1740's, but fretted clavichords with a smaller compass would have been far more common. C.P.E. Bach himself says in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, the famous *Versuch*, that "in addition to a lasting, caressing tone" [note the emphasis, once again, on sustaining power] a clavichord should have "the proper number of keys, extending at the very least from the great octave C to the three-lined e."<sup>4</sup>

Admittedly, this was published in 1753, nearly twenty years before the date of Burney's visit: but in fact much of Bach's solo keyboard music will fit into this C-e<sup>3</sup> range. The "Farewell" rondo – which was presumably meant to be played on the clavichord which inspired it – appears to be an exception, since it requires one semitone

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## Els Biesemans, Clavichordist, at Gore Place

David Patterson

David Patterson is a Professor of Music at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The Boston Clavichord Society presented Els Biesemans, a young Belgian keyboard artist, in recital on Friday, November 20, in the lovely and intimate Great Hall at Waltham's Gore Place. Biesemans chose to perform on a 1972 Robert Goble & Son clavichord from Peter Sykes' extensive collection of early keyboard instruments. She said she liked "its warmth...it sounded less like a harpsichord."

Touches of historical connectivity in Ms. Biesemans' programming of Bach, J.S. and C.P.E. along with Mozart, Clementi and Beethoven fostered focus as much as did the clavichord, obliging the listener to be very still. Opening her recital with five Bach chorale preludes was a bit puzzling, their sacred aura especially



Els Biesemans

not leading into the newer artifices of these later composers.

Having said that, enter Clementi. Suddenly, midway through the program, his caprice capers—and hers—caused a veritable traffic jam of focal points. Capricious might be an understatement. The 1972 model from Goble & Son only for moments showed its "warmth" before going "crazy," Biesemans' own description. Thrillingly, Biesemans created the illusion of there being pedals, the kinds which are capable of making the finest of accelerations and the most abrupt of stops.

And there was everything in between that really made it quite a ride!

One of these, a truly astonishing point of focus that we were lucky to hear more than once, was an over-and-again rapid-fire single key repetition suggesting the older instrument was really a newer model. Els

Biesemans deserves a first-place prize for a seriously crazy and capricious performance of *Caprice in A Major* op. 35 no. 1 (1793).

For Ludwig van Beethoven's six variations for piano on *Nel cor piu non mi sento* from Giovanni Paisiello's opera *La Molinara*, WoO 70 (1795), Biesemans settled into stylistic norms. "I really like to play Beethoven," she exclaimed afterwards. Beautiful lyricism and simplicity made touching the opening theme. Through the second variation, a stretch of mid-range warmth and fullness could be savored. In the minored variation, her exploratory-like phrasing piqued curiosity. The finale based on a hard-driving left hand seemed overwrought to me. Perhaps she felt the concluding work on her 50-minute recital needed a smashing close.

Touches of beauty as in the wandering chromaticism near the end of the Mozart *Sonata in B-Flat Major* KV570 (1789) and surges of power as in the ending of the Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach *Rondo E-Dur - Poco Andante*, Wq. 57, further revealed Els Biesemans as a sensitive and energized performer. Ω

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(Bavington, continued from p.3)

lower, namely BB natural: however, since neither C natural or C# are required, either of these notes could be tuned down in order to play the rondo. And Grotthuss's cheerful companion piece, *Joy on receiving the Silbermann clavichord*, does seem to have been intended for a clavichord with a compass of C-e<sup>3</sup>, limits which it touches several times but does not exceed.

What about fretting? In his prescriptions in the *Versuch*, Bach does not mention it. It is a remarkable fact that, despite its adventurous modulations and extreme chromaticism, there is nothing in the *Rondo* or Grotthuss's response which cannot be realized on a clavichord which is diatonically fretted on the usual German system. I have not been able to examine all of C.P.E. Bach's keyboard works, but my impression is that the same applies to most of them.

It is therefore at least possible that Bach's famous Silbermann clavichord was a diatonically-fretted instrument of modest size, with a compass of four octaves and a major third. In this case, though, how to explain those pieces which are undoubtedly clavi-

chord music, but which go below bottom C? An example is the well-known Free Fantasy in F# minor, the *Empfindungen* fantasy.

Well, the Silbermann was not Bach's only clavichord. From the inventory prepared by his widow, it appears that he owned two clavichords at the time of his death: one by Christian Ernst Friederici and one by Heinrich Wilhelm Jungcurth. The likelihood is that these were five-octave unfretted instruments, like the fine example by Christian Gottfried Friederici (Christian Ernst's brother) in the Leipzig museum, and that he possessed at least one of them in 1781 when he disposed of the Silbermann.

Bach expressed his admiration of Friederici clavichords in a letter to Johann Nikolaus Forkel dated November 1773 – roughly a year after Burney's visit. He said:

*I greatly prefer Friederici clavichords to those of Fritz and Hass because of their construction and the absence of octave strings in the bass, a thing I cannot bear.*<sup>5</sup>

Barthold Fritz and the Hass family were North-German makers (Fritz in Brunswick, Hass in Hamburg), whereas the Friederici workshop was at Gera in Thuringia. The

clavichords of the Saxon makers and those made in Hamburg are of two distinct schools. The Saxon instruments, for example, have plain wood cases with soundboard roses, whereas the Hamburg ones are painted and gilded and without roses. More significantly, octave strings, which we know Bach disliked, are used on the Hamburg clavichords but never in the Saxon ones. The most celebrated exponent – perhaps the creator – of the Saxon style, the man who trained the Friedericis, was Gottfried Silbermann himself; and, although the Friederici workshop was not, strictly speaking, within the Kingdom of Saxony, the style of Friederici clavichords is solidly in the Saxon tradition.

Now C.P.E. Bach, remember, was brought up in Saxony – in Leipzig – and it seems to me that he remained faithful to the Saxon type of clavichord all his life, disdaining the Hamburg product despite his long residence in that city. His ownership of a clavichord by Jungcurth seems, at first sight, to contradict this, since Jungcurth was registered as a harpsichord maker in Hamburg: however, he was a Thuringian by birth and (prob-

(Bavington, continued from p.4)

ably) by training, so I suggest that he may well have brought the Saxon/Thuringian style with him to Hamburg, where it would be natural for him to seek the friendship and patronage of his illustrious musical compatriot. (Incidentally, a clavichord by this maker dated 1760 survived until 1885 when it was shown at the International Inventions exhibition in London, but it has – most frustratingly – never been heard of since.)

The only thing that is slightly surprising about this conclusion that Bach’s instrument was of Saxon type is the emphasis which observers of that time place on its sustaining powers. John Barnes once suggested that the Saxon instruments were characterised by their quick response, whereas it was the Hamburg ones which had a really long-sustained tone. Modern Hass copies certainly don’t seem lacking in sustaining power, or in any of the other qualities needed to perform Bach’s music effectively.

Before I pass on to Haydn, what about the other question we posed earlier: why did Bach sell his beloved Silbermann in 1781? We do not know; but maybe it was because the compass which seemed adequate in the 1750’s, when the *Versuch* was published, was out of date by 1781. If Bach possessed other fine instruments of the type he admired (such as the Friederici) with a larger compass, he might have decided the time had come to let his Silbermann go – to a suitably good home, of course.

#### Haydn’s Clavichords

Now to Haydn. In the early 1750’s, when C. P. E. Bach was writing his *Versuch*, Haydn, in his early twenties, was a freelance musician in Vienna. Years later he recalled for his biographer Georg August Griesinger his unheated, leaky room and exiguous wardrobe, but declared:

*Sitting at my old worm-eaten clavichord, I did not envy any king his luck.*<sup>6</sup>

When he entered the service of the Eszterházy court in 1761, at least two clavichords were at his disposal;<sup>7</sup> it is highly unlikely that he had access to a fortepiano until later. It was therefore almost certainly at the clavichord that he developed his keyboard-writing style. This is how he described his daily routine

sometime in the 1770’s:

*I get up early... after some breakfast, I sit at the Clavier and begin to improvise. If I hit upon something soon, then things go further without much effort. But if nothing comes to me, then I see that I have through some lapse lost grace, and I pray again for mercy until I feel that I am forgiven.*<sup>8</sup>

Haydn certainly used a clavichord in his final great composing period, after leaving full-time employment with the Eszterházy

example, with the Leipzig Friederici<sup>10</sup> which has the same compass but is 5 foot 8 inches long). In part this is achieved by the use of the so-called “Viennese” short and broken bass octave (see Fig. 1). This arrangement of keys is found on harpsichords and pianos made in Vienna before about 1775: so far, this is the only known surviving clavichord which has it. It saves a good deal of space because the lowest octave occupies the width of only four naturals rather than seven. Haydn must have been familiar with the arrangement, since there are left-hand stretches in some keyboard works which cannot be played on any other keyboard: an example occurs in the manuscript of the *Acht Sauschneider* Capriccio (Hob. XVII: 1), composed in 1765 (though when this was eventually published by Artaria in 1788 or 89 it was re-arranged so as to be playable on a “normal” keyboard).<sup>11</sup>

One clavichord almost certainly owned by Haydn has survived: this is the instrument dated 1794 by Johann Bohak in the Royal College of Music Museum in London.<sup>12</sup> It is an unfretted instrument with a full five octaves from *FF* to *f*<sup>3</sup>: no short-octave complications this time, but at 4 foot 10 inches long it is still quite compact for a five-octave instrument.

Unfortunately it underwent a drastic modernization in the 1830’s, so that it is impossible to be absolutely certain about some features of its original design. In the circumstances, the museum decided not to attempt to restore it, so it remains unstrung and therefore unheard. To judge from modern reconstructions, it might have had a sweet, quite long-sustained but not very strong sound. I would suggest, though, that it is probably wrong to think of it as the one ideal medium for interpreting Haydn’s clavichord music, i.e., as *the* Haydn clavichord. He acquired it very late in his career, when his keyboard works were undoubtedly created with the English or Viennese fortepiano in mind. The early days of feverish experimentation at the *Clavier* were over. A clue to the way he used the clavichord at this time is given by his reported words on presenting the instrument – as a gift – to the young Demetrius Lichenthal in 1803:

(continued on p.6)

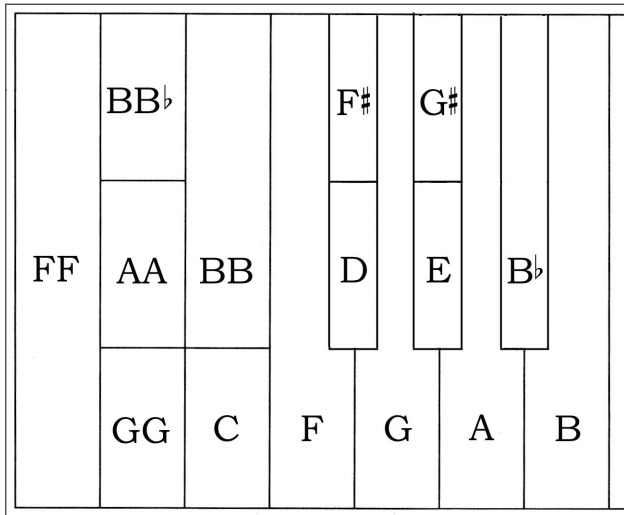


Fig. 1: “Viennese” short-and-broken bass octave

in 1790: a clavichord which was almost certainly used by him in this late period has survived, and I shall describe it in a moment. We know nothing about the early worm-eaten instrument, but it is most likely to have been a humble four-octave fretted one: commonplace, cheap and going out of fashion, the only kind of instrument which an impoverished musician could afford. It is harder to be certain about the kind of clavichord Haydn would have used during his middle period at Eszterházy. If we assume that it was a local product (rather than one imported from Saxony, Berlin or Hamburg) then we may get some clues from an anonymous clavichord which was sold at Sotheby’s London auction rooms in 1993, one of the rare examples of a surviving Viennese clavichord of the mid-eighteenth century.

Some time after it was sold, it was examined and measured by Karin Richter, who has given a detailed description in a paper delivered at a symposium in Herne, Germany, in 2001 and published in 2003.<sup>9</sup> It is fretted diatonically, and for its compass, *FF* to *f*<sup>3</sup>, it is remarkably small: only just over 4 feet in length (which compares, for

(Bavington, continued from p.5)

Here I make you a present of this instrument for your boy... in case when he is older he should care to learn upon it. I have composed the greater part of my Creation upon it.<sup>13</sup>

No doubt Haydn continued to improvise on the clavichord as he had done all his life, but I suggest the main use he had for it at this late date was as an aid to composing large works for voices and orchestra. We must accept, I think, that by the 1790's the clavichord was no longer at the cutting edge of musical advance, as it had been at the time of C. P. E. Bach.

In an article published in *De Clavicordio VII*,<sup>14</sup> Alfons Huber identifies four clavichords probably or certainly made in eighteenth-century Vienna in addition to the Bohak and the anonymous one with the Viennese short octave.<sup>15</sup> Although this is a small sample, it is possible to see some common features which point to possible characteristics of a "Viennese school" of clavichord making. Significantly, all but one of the six clavichords were clearly intended for iron strings; by contrast, nearly all the clavichords made in Northern Germany or in Saxony seem to have been designed for brass treble strings.

Now, iron strings require a greater sounding length; but it is noticeable that the actual cases of these Viennese clavichords are rather short. Huber suggests that they typically have a length-to-width ratio of 3:1. Northern clavichords, particularly those of the Saxon school, are typically longer than this in proportion to their width: for example, the Friederici clavichord mentioned above has a length-to-width ratio of around 3½:1.

What this means is that, since there is no room in the case for long bass strings, the bass strings must be shorter than the treble strings in relation to their pitch: to use the technical term, they must be "foreshortened." Although original stringing data are not available, we can infer that there were typically three sections:

1. iron strings in the treble;
2. a transition to brass strings somewhere in mid-compass;
3. a second transition to overwound strings in the bass.

This would have the musical effect of creating different tonal characteristics in different parts of the instrument's compass: we would be able to hear a difference in timbre between the treble, the tenor and

the bass, and the effect could be compared to that of different voices singing together. Considering the particular sweetness and clarity of the iron-strung treble, a well set-up Viennese clavichord should thus have a characteristic sound, different from that of the North German types with which we are more familiar.

How interesting it would be, therefore, to hear Haydn's keyboard music on a mid-eighteenth-century Viennese clavichord, like the one sold at Sotheby's in 1993. So far as I am aware, no-one has yet tried to copy this kind of instrument. I very much hope one of the instrument makers of today will soon rise to this challenge. Ω

<sup>1</sup> Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces*, London, 1773, pp. 269-270 (facsimile edition, London, Travis & Emery, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Burney, trans. and ed. Christophe Daniel Ebeling, *Carl Burney's der Musik Doctors Tagebuch*, Bode 1773 (German edition of Burney's *The Present State of Music in Germany*, see note 1). Quoted in Hanns Neupert, *The Clavichord*, trans. Ann P. P. Feldberg, Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1965, p. 64 n. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Briefe eines anmerkenden Reisenden, die Musik betreffend*, part II, Frankfurt and Breslau, 1776, Letter I, pp. 10-22. Quoted in B. Brauchli, *The Clavichord*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 218 (translation), p. 339 n. 158 (original German).

<sup>4</sup> Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen*, part I, Berlin, 1753 translated into English by William J. Mitchell as *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, New York, W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1949, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> C.P.E. Bach, letter to Johann Nikolaus Forkel dated 10 November 1773, quoted in Brauchli, *The Clavichord* (see note 3), p. 325 n. 55 (original German).

<sup>6</sup> G. A. Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn*, Leipzig, 1810; English translation in V. Gotwals (ed.), *Joseph Haydn, Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius*, Madison WI, 1963; quoted in Bernard Brauchli, *The Clavichord*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 227.

<sup>7</sup> The Eszterházy archives include a document dated 1764 which refers specifically to the repair of the "fürstlichen Klavikordi" (plural). See Bernard Harrison, *Haydn's Keyboard Music: Studies in Performance Practice*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 6. Haydn's duties as Vice-Kapellmeister included responsibility for all the musical instruments, so he would undoubtedly have had access to these clavichords.

<sup>8</sup> J. F. Reichardt, "J. A. P. Schulz dargestellt," *Allgemeine Musicalische Zeitung* No. 11, December 1800 (reporting on a conversation between Haydn and Schulz in about 1770); quoted in A. Peter Brown, *Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music: Sources and Style*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Karin Richter, "Ein ungewöhnliches Wiener Clavichord von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in C. Aherns and G. Klinke (eds.), *Fundament aller Clavirten Instrumenten – das Clavichord*, Munich, Musikverlag Katzbichler, 2003, pp. 100-114. See also the description and photograph in Richard Maunder, *Keyboard Instruments in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 50 and Plate 8.

<sup>10</sup> No. 30 in the Leipzig Musikinstrumentenmuseum: see Hubert Henkel, *Clavichorde*, Leipzig, VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1981, pp. 65-7.

<sup>11</sup> Other works by Haydn which require the "Viennese" short octave are the Variations Hob. XVII: 2 and the Sonata in E minor Hob. XVI: 47.

<sup>12</sup> No. RCM 177. See the description and commentary in Elizabeth Wells (ed.), *Royal College of Music Catalogue of Instruments, Part II: Keyboard Instruments*, London, Royal College of Music, 2000, pp. 67-71; also John Barnes, "Haydn's Clavichord" in B. Brauchli, S. Brauchli and A. Galazzo (eds.), *De Clavicordio III*, Magnano, International Centre for Clavichord Studies, 1998, pp. 227-40; Bernard Brauchli, *The Clavichord* (see note 3), pp. 226-7; and Peter Bavington, "Clavichords in Britain, No. 14: Haydn's Clavichord," *British Clavichord Society Newsletter* No. 45 (October 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in the RCM catalogue, in the book by Bernard Brauchli, and in the articles by Barnes and Bavington: see note 12.

<sup>14</sup> Alfons Huber, "Characteristics of some Viennese Clavichords made in the second half of the Eighteenth Century" in B. Brauchli, A. Galazzo, J. Wardman (eds.), *De Clavicordio VII*, Magnano, International Centre for Clavichord Studies, 2006, pp. 119-28.

<sup>15</sup> The four additional clavichords of certain or probable Viennese origin are: (1) by Ferdinand Hofmann, Vienna, made sometime between 1785 and 1795, now in Vienna, Haydn Wohnhaus Museum; (2) Anon., perhaps Ignaz Assmayer, made between 1790 and 1800, now in Vienna, Kunsthistorischesmuseum, on loan from Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, No. GdM 4; (3) by Engelbert Klinger (or Klingler), Vienna, before 1799, now in Prague, Museum of Czech Music, No. 1593 E; (4) Anon., probably made in Vienna between 1775 and 1800, now in Salzburg, Mozart's Birthplace Museum.