



Hasse, Johann Gottlieb Graun (brother of the more famous Carl Heinrich) and CPE Bach. The problem is that the two works attributed to Bach's second son are unlikely to be by him. Neither is authenticated; and while the B flat Sinfonia and the first movement of the E flat may, just, pass for CPE in uncharacteristically compliant mode, the E flat's *Larghetto* and suave minuet finale could easily be the work of his much younger half-brother, Johann Christian, so admired by Mozart. Still, whoever wrote it, the E flat Sinfonia is well worth hearing in a performance as alert and spirited as this. The *Larghetto*, with its sensuous (not a word readily associated with CPE) lines and soft bassoon colouring, even put me in mind of *Così fan tutte*.

Of the other, indisputably authentic, recorded premieres, the tiny Hasse Sinfonia – composed for the *festa teatrale Alcide al bivio* – makes up in colour and swagger what it lacks in memorable

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ideas, while the equally brief Graun Sinfonia contains a pleasantly doleful *Andante* in the rare key of B flat minor. Bach's troubled eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, appears courtesy of a typically intriguing work whose edgy outer movements (as with genuine CPE, you never quite know what's coming next) enclose a pastoral *Andante* for strings and a pair of cooing flutes.

Using period instruments, *Moderntimes\_1800* (irritating name) play the fast movements with panache and terrific rhythmic energy, and understand the vein of delicate *galanterie* in the *Andantes*. The familiar symphonies on the second disc are enjoyable, too. For *Sturm und Drang* turbulence, the performance of Haydn's No 39 stands up pretty well alongside the competition, even if Pinnock (Archiv) lives more dangerously in the explosive finale. In Mozart's No 29 *Moderntimes\_1800* tend to emphasise fire over lyrical grace. Other "period" performances, including, again, Pinnock (Archiv) and Koopman (Apex), shape the *cantabile* melodies of the first two movements and the Minuet's Trio with more affection and allure. I could have done without the tinkling harpsichord continuo, especially in the symphony's magical opening. But there's no denying the crispness and athleticism the playing, culminating in a finale whose mingled pace and precision (thrilling swordplay for antiphonal violins) would be hard to beat.

**Richard Wigmore**

## 'Sinfonias from the Enlightenment'

**CPE Bach** Sinfonias – in B flat major;  
in E flat **WF Bach** Sinfonia, F64

**Graun** Sinfonia E flat major

**Hasse** Sinfonia in D major

**Haydn** Symphony No 39

**Mozart** Symphony No 29, K201

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