

# COMPOSER SPOTLIGHT



**C. P. E. BACH**

1714–1788

Early Classical

“So proud of you, son!”



## A Famous Son of a Famous Father

Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach was one of the most talented sons of the legendary Johann Sebastian Bach. While his father was a master of Baroque music, C. P. E. Bach helped bridge the gap between the Baroque and Classical periods, creating a style all his own. He became one of the most famous and influential composers of his time.

## The King’s Musician

C. P. E. Bach worked for many years as a court musician for Frederick the Great, the King of Prussia. Frederick was a big fan of music, and C. P. E. often performed for him at the royal court, writing music for the king’s flute playing. Bach’s role at court gave him a platform to develop his unique style.



Frederick the Great

## The “Sensitive Style”

C. P. E. Bach was known for writing in a style called *Empfindsamer Stil*, or the “Sensitive Style.” His music was full of emotion and sudden changes, with dramatic shifts in dynamics, tempo, and mood. This made his compositions unpredictable and expressive, and it influenced many composers after him, including Haydn and Beethoven.



## An Innovator of the Keyboard

C. P. E. Bach wrote many important works for keyboard, particularly the clavichord and fortepiano, which were early versions of the piano. His keyboard music was full of experimentation, and he helped shape how future composers approached the instrument. His *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* is still an important resource for musicians today.

## Significant Works:

- Solfeggietto in C Minor, H. 220
- Symphony in E Minor, Wq. 178
- Keyboard Concerto in D Minor, H. 425