

Frederick II of Prussia, *Sonata in C minor for Flute and Harpsichord* (1747)

Abstract

Frederick II of Prussia's complex personality has interested generations of scholars. He was a ruler, general and a philosopher, a power-hungry, ruthless politician and an enlightened aesthete. Music was both a passion and a means of representation for Frederick, who built the famous opera house Staatsoper Unter den Linden and maintained a court orchestra that included C.P.E. Bach (one of J.S. Bach's sons). Frederick had been interested in music from a young age and learned to play the flute despite his father's attempts to forbid what he saw as an "effeminate" occupation. In 1741, one year after he ascended the Prussian throne, Frederick II appointed the flute virtuoso and instrument builder Johann Joachim Quantz as his teacher and court composer. Quantz, who had taught the king to play the flute before he came to the throne, also instructed him in composition. Frederick composed some 120 solo sonatas as well as several concertos, symphonies, and arias. Some of these works were performed for the king's guests at Frederick's palace in Potsdam, Sanssouci.

This sonata for flute and harpsichord dates from 1747. J.S. Bach had visited his son in Potsdam that year and it is thought that this composition was influenced by Frederick's encounter with the elder Bach.

Source

Source: Frederick II of Prussia, *Sonata in C minor for Flute and Harpsichord* (1747). Performed by Jean-Pierre Rampal: flute; Robert Veyron-Lacroix: harpsichord (1954). Available from the Internet Archive, Unlocked Recordings [urn:discogs:release:16710228], https://archive.org/details/lp_vol-iv-record-4-the-flute-at-the-courts-o_jean-pierre-rampal-robert-veyron-lacroix

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