

# Bach's concept of timbre and The Well-Tempered Clavier

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## **Abstract**

Did Bach think of timbre when composing, revising and performing his keyboard works? What can be the evidence for and against? Supposing that the answer to the first question is 'yes', then how and in what way did the concept of timbre appear (or not appear) at each of the above-mentioned three stages of musical production in such areas as range, texture or the choice of specific keyboard instrument?

This paper seeks the information from the surviving manuscripts of WTC that can be considered potential evidence for Bach's awareness of timbral issues. It also explores how the concept of timbre is embedded intrinsically in the work that can be 'discovered' afresh by performers or arrangers as witnessed during the several centuries-long reception history of the work.