

Johann Sebastian Bach

“It is the special province of music to move the heart.”

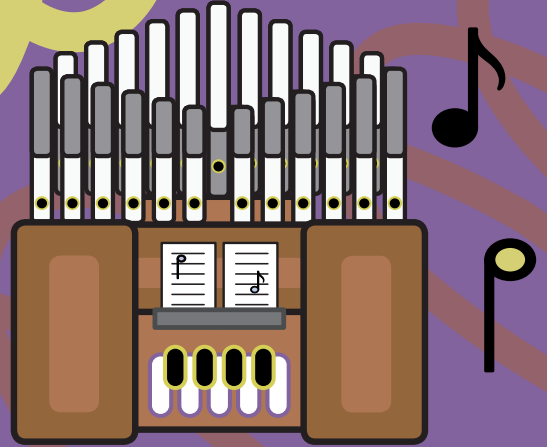
Johann Sebastian Bach was a classical musician and composer born in 1685 in Eisenach, Germany. Bach's lineage marked over 300 years of musicians with four of his children also following in his footsteps. His father, who was the director of the town musicians of Eisenach, passed away when Bach was just 10 years old, leaving his older brother, a professional organist, to raise and teach him music.

At 23 years old, Bach was appointed court musician to the Duke of Weimar. Bach was so famous for his organ playing abilities, that the Crown Prince Fredrick of Sweden gifted him a diamond ring as a token of admiration of his musical talents.

In 1717, Bach was offered the position of director of music, at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen, however, his then employer, the Duke of Weimar, was so determined not to let him go, that he had Bach imprisoned for a month for disobedience. Bach used this time in prison to write music.

In 1721, Bach wrote the *Brandenburg Concertos* as a gift for the Margrave of Brandenburg, whom he was hoping to work for, but he never received a response or recognition for this work. Two years later, Bach became the cantor of St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, where his role was choirmaster and director, a rank that was regarded as one of the most respected and influential in musical office at the time. He held this position for almost 30 years until his death in 1750.

It was not until 100 years after his death that Bach's musical compositions gained prominence, when composer Felix Mendelssohn began performing them. In his lifetime, Bach composed an incredible 1128 pieces of music including the well-known *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor*. He is regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Baroque music era (1600 - 1750).



DID YOU KNOW?

Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* was used for the opening scene of Walt Disney's movie, *Fantasia* (1940).

FUN FACT

In 1977, NASA launched two Voyager spacecrafts both of which carry, *The Golden Records*; two phonograph records that contain the sounds of life on Earth, including greetings in 55 languages and music by Bach that are intended to tell the story of our world to extraterrestrials!

MUSICAL TERM

Tocatta: an instrumental piece of music that features light-fingered and fast-moving sections, emphasising the technical skills of the performer.

