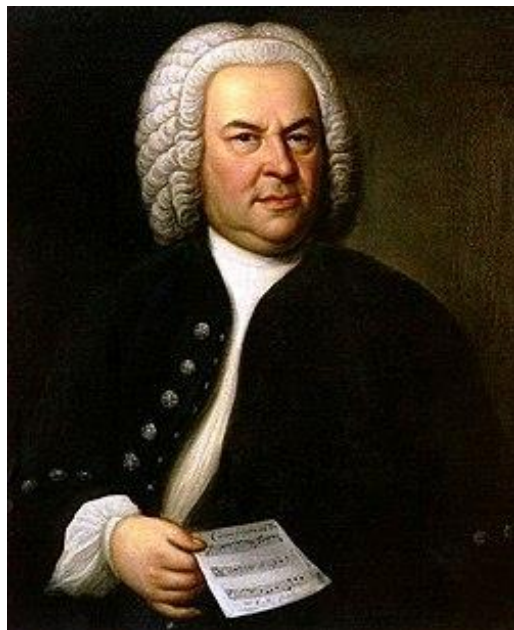





Composer Portfolios

BACH



Name	Johann Sebastian Bach
Nationality	German
Born-Died	1685-1750
Quote	<i>'There is nothing remarkable about it. All one has to do is hit the right keys at the right time and the instrument plays itself.'</i>
	 <i>'Without my morning coffee I'm just like a dried up piece of roast goat.'</i>

Interesting Stories

Bach in a Brawl

When Bach was a young teacher he got into trouble with the authorities over a public brawl with one of his students. While walking across the market place, Bach was confronted by one of his students and his gang of friends. The student demanded to know why Bach had called into question his abilities as a bassoonist. As tempers rose, he called Bach 'a dirty dog' and lashed his face with a stick. Bach drew his sword in a counter attack, which saw the intervention of another student, stopping anyone coming to real harm.

When Bach complained about the incident, the authorities decided that he was to blame after calling the student 'a nanny-goat bassoonist'. He was told to build better relations with his students in order to maintain peace. In reaction to this, Bach decided to take an unauthorized, 230 mile walk to Lubeck, to listen to the organ playing of Buxtehude.

The Irresponsible Organist

Bach was a brilliant organist, there is absolutely no doubt of that. However his reputation was somewhat blemished by his irresponsible behaviour. The town council criticised him for being a loner, for being arrogant, for neglecting his duties, for playing strange melodies on the organ during church services, for playing too long and in defiance, deliberately playing too short. To crown all of this, Bach was once asked to visit a neighbouring town to inspect a new organ. He showed up at the correct hour-four months late!

Bach's Bad Temper

Bach had a pool of wonderful qualities but he also had a famous, hasty temper. Once, the organist at St Thomas', who normally played very well, played a false chord. Bach tore his wig off his head and in a fit of rage threw it at the unfortunate man's head! Bach shouted, 'You ought to have become a cobbler rather than an organist!'

Facts:

- Johann Sebastian Bach was born March 31, 1685 in Eisenach, Thuringia, Germany.
- Bach descends from a family of musicians
- At the age of 10, Bach lost both his parents
- Bach walked 450 kilometres from Arnstadt to Lubeck and back
- Bach had two wives and 20 children
- Bach had a short-temper
- The Duke of Saxe-Weimar sent Bach to prison for 30 days
- Bach loved coffee
- Bach fell victim to a false eye-surgeon who left him blinded
- Bach was given a diamond ring from the Crown Prince Fredrick of Sweden who was amazed at his playing.
- Bach was deeply religious
- After suffering a stroke, Bach died age 65 in Leipzig, July 28, 1750.

Bach's Music

Now we know more about the man, why not listen to some of his music!

- Air from Orchestral Suite no.3 (Air of the G String)
- Prelude No.1 in C Major
- Sheep May Safely Graze
- Goldberg Variations
- Herr Jesu Christ
- Brandenburg Concertos
- St Matthew Passion
- Cantata No.21
- Toccata and Fugue in d minor
- Fantasia and Fugue in g minor
- The Well- Tempered Clavier- The 48
- Six Cello Suites