

The Works of Johann Sebastian Bach

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Seed
Learning





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Text Audio

Who was Johann Sebastian Bach?

Bach came from a very musical family. It is no surprise that he loved music. His father was a court musician in Eisenach, which is part of Germany today. Other members of the Bach family worked there as musicians long before Johann Sebastian Bach was born in 1685.



↑ The town of Eisenach



↑ A drawing of Johann Sebastian Bach




Classical instruments



Bach played organs such as this one from a young age.

Bach lost both his parents when he was just ten years old. He moved in with his older brother, Johann Christoph Bach, who taught him to play the organ. Playing the organ was a skill that helped Bach find jobs as he got older.

Like his younger brother,  Johann Christoph Bach was a composer and organist.

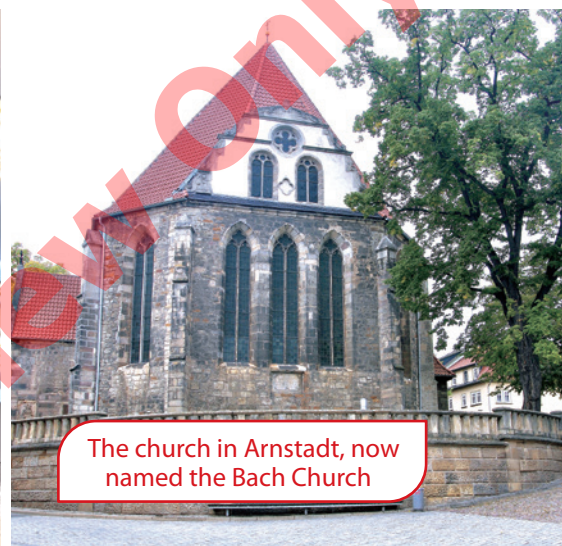




The town of Arnstadt today



Bach played this organ in Arnstadt from 1702 to 1707.



The church in Arnstadt, now named the Bach Church

Bach became the organist to the Duke of Arnstadt. At the Duke's court, there was a church with an organ. Bach wrote many of his great organ works at this time. He became very famous as an organist and was invited to play in other big churches and to give advice on how to build organs.

In 1714, the Duke made Bach his Concert Master, a job that paid more money. Bach had to write music for churches. But in 1717, he was given a job in the town of Köthen, where he would make even more money. The Duke was angry and did not want him to go, but Bach left anyway.

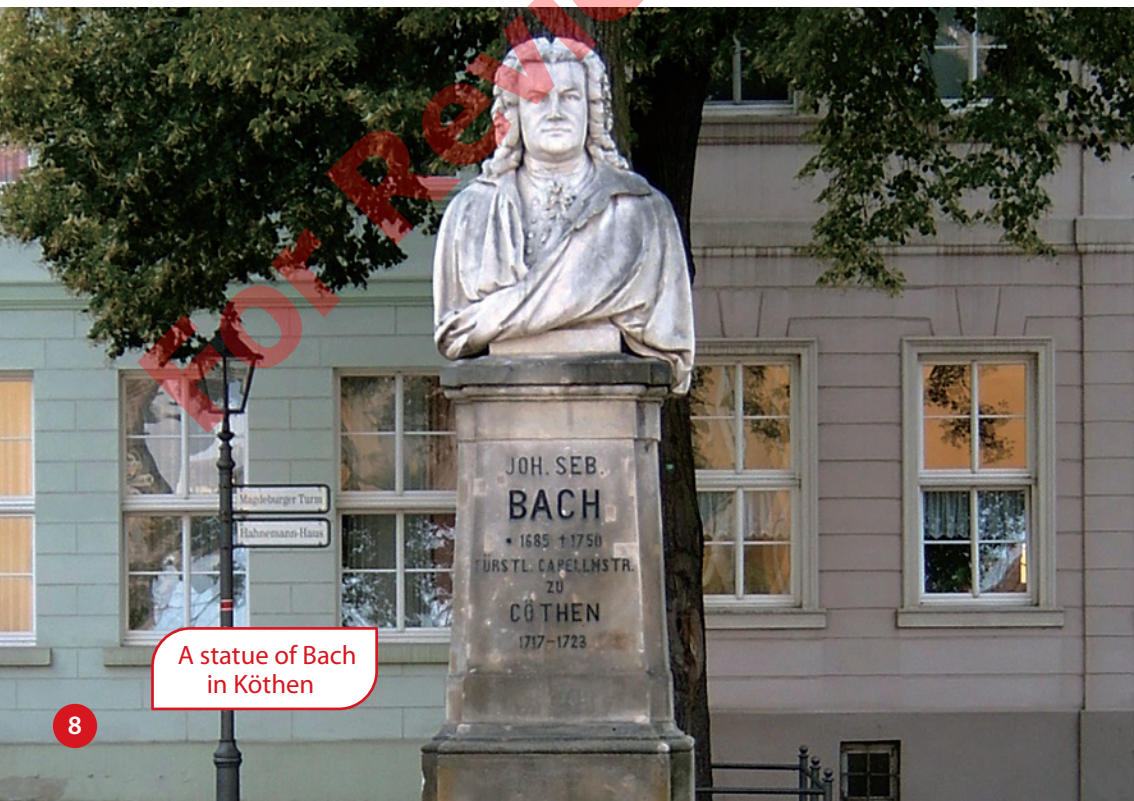
Köthen is near the towns of Halle and Leipzig in Germany.



The church in Köthen where Bach worked

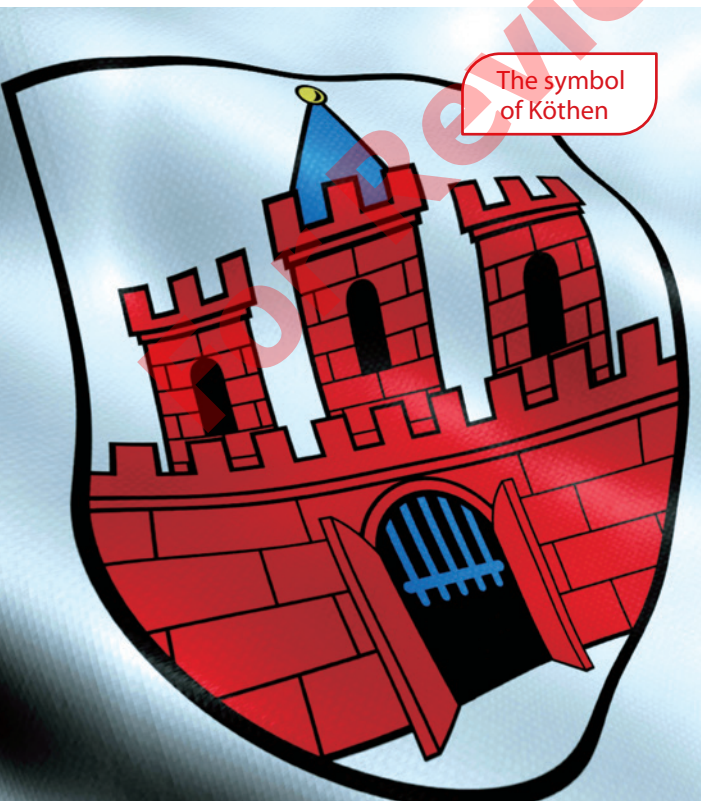
In Köthen, Bach worked for Prince Leopold. The Prince was very musical and a wonderful man to work for. Bach was the Head of Music and was treated well.

Prince Leopold of
Anhalt-Köthen, a
lover of music



A statue of Bach
in Köthen

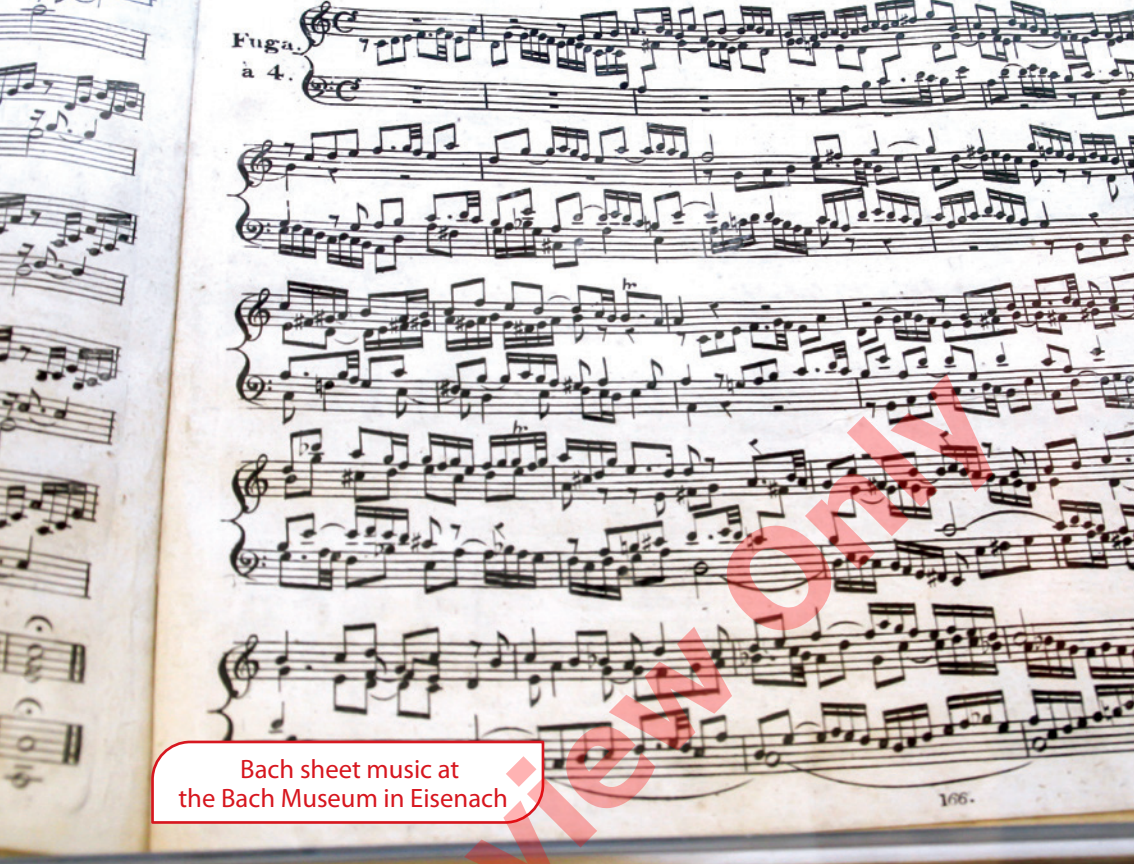
The organ in Köthen was not very good and not used much, so Bach did not write any organ music during this time. The Duke had an orchestra, and Bach was the head of it. Almost all of Bach's orchestra works were written in Köthen.



The symbol
of Köthen



Bach directing church
singers in 1732



After Bach died in 1750, no one really listened to his music for fifty years. Luckily for music lovers around the world, in the 1800s, people became interested in Bach again. Many of his works were printed after he had been dead for more than a hundred years!

A stamp from Paraguay celebrating Bach ➔

