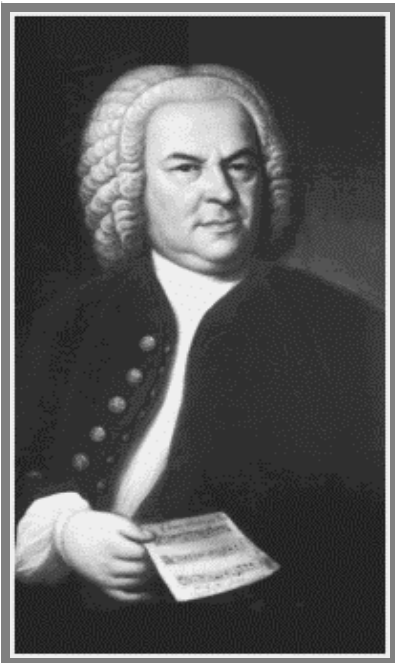


A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME TO THE WORLD OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

by Kerstin Wartberg
(Translated by Mike Hoover)

I would love to put you into a time machine and program it to take you back to Germany sometime between the years of 1685 and 1750. Although no one has yet been able to invent such a wonderful machine, I still want to invite you on a short trip back in time. You will visit Johann Sebastian Bach in his world. Simply imagine that you are taking part in everything described on the following pages. You might be Sebastian's sister, making music with your younger brother. Or maybe you are one of his pupils, living in Bach's house, receiving regular lessons from him, and helping him to copy the music for his new compositions. You might even assume the role of a young court musician, or a chamber maid in Köthen castle – let your imagination run wild!

Concentrate now, I think our time machine is ready. Do you also hear the powerful voice of Johann Sebastian Bach?



Johann Sebastian Bach
in the year 1748.

Dear students, a hearty welcome to 1748!

How nice that you could come for a visit. I am now 63 years old and have been a musician my entire life. My greatest pleasure was and is to compose. I have written pieces for all possible combinations of instruments: solo instruments like the violin, cello, harpsichord or organ; chamber ensembles; orchestra; and orchestra with chorus. Up until now, more than one thousand of my compositions have been performed.

I have been told that you have also played some of my pieces. If you continue to practice diligently, you will certainly become acquainted with many more.

On the following pages, you will not only learn things about my life and music, but you can also complete interesting tasks and solve entertaining riddles.

CHILDHOOD FILLED WITH HAPPINESS AND SORROW (1685-1700)

Who would have thought that when I was born in the white house in Eisenach in 1685 I would one day be one of the most famous composers? Admittedly, I did grow up in a family of musicians and already as a young child demonstrated unusual interest and delight in everything musical. My father gave me my first piano and violin lessons, and even before I was old enough for school, I was allowed to listen to rehearsals and concerts and even to sit with my uncle or my elder brother, both named Johann Christoph, on the organ bench.

My elder brothers and sisters, who had long since left home, along with aunts, uncles and their children, would visit at regular intervals. We would all sing and play music until late into the night. Even as a small boy I was allowed to participate, playing my small violin in the family orchestra or singing in the family chorus. These were the most beautiful moments of my childhood.

When I was nine years old, my life changed dramatically. First, my loving mother died, followed one year later by my father. After initial uncertainties about what to do with me, my elder brothers and sisters

decided that I should live with my fourteen-year elder brother, Johann Christoph. He was an organist in the Thuringian city of Ordruf and now had the additional responsibility of attending to my musical instruction, including lessons on the piano. He was a very strict teacher, for he wanted me to also have the opportunity of becoming a professional musician. With sadness, I often reflected on the lessons with my deceased father, who taught with loving insight even when my fingers flew imprecisely over the keys in wild enthusiasm. In contrast, sensing his great responsibility for my future, my elder brother would scold me when I chose to play self-composed melodies instead of the dry finger exercises he had assigned. "If you continue like this you will never become a serious musician! You will end up in the gutter! For punishment you will now play this finger exercise one hundred times in a row – and without mistakes!" This scenario recurred time and again.

Through the untimely death of my parents I had lost my ideal world. I was often very sad, though I still appreciate my brother's sacrifice today. Had he not been so supportive of me and my musical training, my life would certainly have turned out differently.

Johann Christoph had a music book filled with wonderful music that I would have loved to play. But he thought this music was much too difficult for me, so he locked the book in a cabinet. I would only be allowed to play the pieces after I acquired what he thought to be a solid technique. But I had other ideas! For six months, I managed to sneak into the music room late at night, pull the desired music carefully through the laticework of the closed cabinet with my thin fingers, and copy it by hand in the moonlight – note for note and page for page. When my brother was playing the organ in church, I would take my copied music out of its hiding place and joyfully practice these pieces. Unfortunately, Johann Christoph came home earlier than expected one day and listened with amazement as I played. He became furious at my disobedience when he saw the copy of the forbidden music. Without one word, he took the manuscripts away, and I never saw them again.

In those days, I felt very lonely and unhappy: I had lost both my parents and my home, my elder brother was almost always extremely rough on me, my beloved music was out of reach, and six months of laborious work had been for nothing...

But something valuable did remain for the rest of my life: My love of music. This helped me again and again through difficult times, opening a beautiful, inner world for me where I could forget about everything.

1ST ASSIGNMENT

In my day, there were a remarkable number of composers alive whose compositions are still commonly heard and played in your time. You have already played pieces by five of these composers, whose names can be found in the table below.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Do you know which five composers these are? Write them here:

<i>Composers Alive in Bach's time</i>									
Year	1685	1692	1706	1732	1734	1739	1741	1743	1750
Age of J.S. Bach	Born on March 21 st	7 y.o.	21 y.o.	47 y.o.	49 y.o.	54 y.o.	56 y.o.	58 y.o.	Died on July 28 th at the age of 65
Composers in Bach's Lifetime	Händel born on Feb. 23 rd	Tartini born on April 8 th	Martini born on April 24 th	Haydn born on March 31 st	Gossec born on Jan. 17 th	Dittersdorf born on Nov. 2 nd	Grétry born on Feb. 8 th	Boccherini born on Feb. 19 th	Boccherini (7 y.o.)
	Rameau (2 y.o.)								Grétry (9 y.o.)
	Telemann (4 y.o.)								Gossec (16 y.o.)
	Vivaldi (7 y.o.)								Haydn (18 y.o.)
	Corelli (32 y.o.)								Martini (44 y.o.)
	Lully (53 y.o.)								Tartini (58 y.o.)
		Rameau (67 y.o.)							
		Telemann (69 y.o.)							

2ND ASSIGNMENT

What do a prince and princess in different costumes

have to do with a musical composition in different arrangements ?

A sentence somewhere on this page will provide the answer !



Here you see my previous lord, prince Leopold, with his wife. Prince Leopold was a great friend of music. This couple has changed clothes three times for you, showing three different party costumes. The nobles and their attendants usually wore long, curly wigs. These were meant to give a man a lion-like appearance. I also had to wear a wig for official occasions. The expensive woman's apparel was tailored from velvet and silk and was decorated with fine lace. Although it was certainly beautiful to look at, it was not very comfortable to wear! A tight corset trimmed the waistline. A heavy hooped skirt, a framework made of wood and wire, came next. Over this came a valuable petticoat, and the last layer would be the stately ceremonial dress. All of these garments together often weighed more than thirty pounds!

Original Compositions and Arrangements

You probably can't imagine that in earlier times, we composers often borrowed **musical works from other composers**, adding alterations which varied from slight to extreme.

As an example, I was very fond of many concertos by Antonio Vivaldi, adapting them in many different ways. Sometimes I just changed Vivaldi's instrumentation, but other times I provided new harmonies or different bass lines and melodies.



I had just as much fun giving my **own works** a new costume. In the year 1775, my student Johann Friedrich Agricola wrote: "Bach often played the pieces for violin or violoncello solo on the clavichord adding chordal accompaniments to the melody."

Apropos, I am happy to have learned that this practice was later continued by the composers Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Robert Schumann. Both wrote piano accompaniments for my solo violin works, for which they are unfortunately criticized today by musicologists and some violin teachers.

3RD ASSIGNMENT
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH'S FAMILY CREST



Find my initials in the family crest which I designed!

**These initials
are hidden in the family crest:**

J S B

**This is a rough sketch of how the
artistically drawn letters look:**



In the crest, the lines are not always continuous.
This makes finding them more difficult.

Assignment A: Color Bach's initials in the family crest!

Assignment B: Mirror play

Now hold a small mirror to the left or right of the my crest, angled so that you can see the crest's reflection in the mirror. The reflection looks exactly like the crest on the page before you! Try this with other pictures or symbols in this book. Do their reflections look the same as the original?

Assignment C: Make a drawing!

Now for a real challenge! Can you make a drawing where the reflection looks the same as the original?

A HOUSE FILLED WITH MUSIC (1723-1750)

In 1723 I took on the respected position of Thomas Cantor in Leipzig. Being responsible for the music in four Leipzig churches kept me very busy. In addition, I taught music and Latin in the famous Thomas School. Returning home, tired after completing my day's work, my wife, Anna Magdalena, my children and my students were waiting impatiently for me. Many of my students lived with us for long periods of time, expecting regular lessons from me. Sounds of various musical instruments emanated from every room in the house, even the pantry. Anna Magdalena and I listened every day - quasi in passing – whether the children were practicing carefully and correctly.

The entire household, family as well as guest students, would often sit together in the large music room at the old oak table, neatly copying the parts for my new compositions from the scores on large pages, all under the watchful eye of Anna Magdalena.

I have neglected to mention that Anna Magdalena was my second wife. Perhaps you can imagine how difficult it was for me when Maria Barbara died. Although three of our seven children had died as infants, I was suddenly left alone with four children. Through music I became acquainted with Anna Magdalena, at that time just twenty years old. She was a talented singer whom I regularly engaged for my concerts. She not only lovingly raised the children from my first marriage, but she also provided us with thirteen more children, ten of whom survived.

I love each of my surviving children dearly. Although all have mastered at least one instrument, four of my sons have even followed in my footsteps to become composers:

- ◆ Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784)
- ◆ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)
- ◆ Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach (1732-1795)
- ◆ Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)

My loving wife, Anna Magdalena, played piano very well when she was younger. Regretfully, her many duties as wife and mother have left hardly any time for practice. For this reason, I put together two small music books with many easy, but beautiful pieces. There are still many empty pages, but whenever I find a suitable piece - it might even be from another composer - I copy it into one of the books. She is very fond of them, proudly shows each new piece to our children, and guards the collection like a precious treasure. By the way, Minuets 2 and 3 from your book 1B can also be found in one of the piano collections of Anna Magdalena.

MY PARTING ASSIGNMENT

In my day, music paper was very expensive. I wrote everything in ink and could not erase any mistakes I might make. To complicate matters even more, I had to be extremely careful to avoid ink blots and smears.

On the following page you see the beginning of the *Preludio from the Partita in E Major for Violin Solo* which I wrote myself roughly three hundred years ago.

In order to see how difficult it is to write music neatly and without mistakes, you should pick any two lines of the Partita and copy this music into the empty staves.

Dear children, if you continue to practice diligently, you might also play this Preludio someday. Please don't give up, even when daily practice sometimes seems a burden. Remember, there is a wealth of beautiful music waiting for you!

Your *Johann Sebastian Bach*

Partia 3^{ta} à Violino solo senza Basso.

Preludio -

