

The life of j s bach music essay



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This research paper will describe the life of J. S. Bach, including his biography, career and personality. Johann Sebastian Bach is considered one of the greatest composers in the music history and a very talented person. That is why it would be interesting to find out more about his life in detail.

Johann Sebastian Bach (March 31, 1685 – July 28, 1750) – is a German composer and organist. Bach is also considered a representative of the Baroque period. During his life, Johann Sebastian Bach has written more than 1000 works, where were shown all the important genres of that time. The composer has also summarized the achievements of musical art of the Baroque period. As a fact, Bach was the master of polyphony. His work has had a profound influence on subsequent music composers, including those in the XX century.

Johann Sebastian Bach was the youngest, the eighth child of Johann Ambrosius Bach musician and Elizabeth Lemmerhirt. Rod Bach is known for his musicality from the beginning of the XVI century: many of the ancestors of Johann Sebastian were professional musicians. During this period, church, local government and the aristocracy supported the musicians, especially in Thuringia and Saxony. Father of Bach lived and worked in Eisenach. At this time the city had about 6000 inhabitants. The work of Johann Ambrosius included the organization of secular concerts and performance of church music.

When Johann Sebastian was 9 years old, his mother died a year later – the father shortly married again. The boy was taken to his elder brother, Johann Christoph, who served as organist at the nearby Ohrdruf. Johann Sebastian

enrolled in high school, and brother taught him to play the organ and piano. Johann Sebastian was very fond of music and never missed an opportunity to do it or learn something new. Johann Christoph in the closet kept a notebook with notes of famous composers at the time, but, despite requests from Johann Sebastian, he did not give him to look at it. Once the young Bach was able to extract from the always locked cabinet brother's notebook, and in six months on moonlit nights, he copied its contents himself. When the work has already been completed, brother found a copy and took notes. Perhaps the strain of view during the rewriting of the music at night was the cause of later development of cataracts, which played a fatal role for the composer. Trained at the Ohrdruf led him to become acquainted with the work of contemporary composers from South Germany - Pachelbel, Froberger and others. It is also possible that he became acquainted with the works of composers in northern Germany and France.

In 15 years, Bach moved to Lüneburg, where in 1700-1703 he studied at the singing school of St. Michael. During his studies, he traveled to Hamburg - the largest city in Germany and Celle (where the premium was a French music), and Lübeck, where he got the chance to become acquainted with the works of famous musicians of his time. These are the same age and the first works of Bach for organ and harpsichord. In addition to singing in the chorus a cappella, Bach probably played the organ and on the harpsichord. Here he received his first knowledge of theology, Latin, history, geography and physics, but also, possibly, he began to teach French and Italian. At school, Bach was able to communicate with the sons of famous northern German aristocrats and the well-known organists, especially with George Bémont in

Lüneburg and Reynken in Hamburg. With their help, Johann Sebastian, possibly gained access for the largest of all the instruments on which he ever played. During this period, Bach expanded his knowledge of the composers of the era, above all, the Dietrich Buxtehude, whom he greatly respected.

Bach wrote over 1000 pieces of music. Today, each assigned number of famous works BWV (short for Bach Werke Verzeichnis - catalog of Bach). Bach wrote music for different instruments, both spiritually and worldly. Some of the works of Bach are the treatments of works by other composers, and some - reworked versions of his works. Organ music in Germany at the time of Bach has had a long tradition established by predecessors of Bach, Buxtehude and other composers, each in its own way influenced by it. With many of them Bach was personally acquainted.

Over a lifetime, Bach was best known as a first-class organist, teacher and writer of organ music. He has worked in both traditional for that time of "free" genres, such as the prelude, fantasia, toccata, passacaglia, and in more severe forms - chorale prelude and fugue. In his works for organ Bach skillfully combined the features of different musical styles, with whom he became acquainted during his life. The composer's music was influenced by both northern German composers (Georg Böhm, with whom Bach met in Lüneburg, and Dieterich Buxtehude in Lübeck), and southern music composers: Bach transcribed his works of many French and Italian composers to realize their musical language, he later even transcribed some of Vivaldi violin concertos for organ. During the most fruitful period for Organ Music (1708-1714), Johann Sebastian, not only wrote many pairs of preludes and fugues, and Toccata and Fugues, but also wrote an unfinished organ

little book – a collection of 46 Short Chorale Preludes, which demonstrate various techniques and approaches to composing choral works on the topic. After his departure from Weimar Bach became less writing for organ, however, after the Weimar were written many well-known product (6 trio sonatas, a collection of “Clavier-Übung” Leipzig chorales and 18). Throughout his life Bach not only wrote music for organ, but also engaged in consulting in the construction of instruments, checking and setting of new organs.

Bach also wrote a number of pieces for harpsichord, many of which could carry clavichord. Many of these creations are encyclopedic collections, demonstrating the various techniques and methods of composing polyphonic compositions. Most of the clavier works of Bach, published in his lifetime, were held in the collections under the name “Clavier-Übung” (“clavier exercises”).

“Well-Tempered Clavier” in two volumes, written in 1722 and 1744 respectively – is a compendium of each volume of which is contained on the 24 preludes and fugues, one for each frequently used key. This cycle was very important in connection with the transition to a system configuration tools that allow equally easy to play music in any key – especially for the modern evenly tempered scale.

Two voiced 15 and 15 three-part invention – small works, arranged in order to increase the number of characters in the key. Meant (and still used today) to learn to play keyboards. Three collections of suites: The English Suites, French Suites and Partitas for harpsichord. Each cycle is contained in 6

suites, built on a standard scheme (Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Jig, and an optional part between the last two). Goldberg Variations (about 1741) - is the melody with 30 variations. Cycle has a rather complicated and unusual structure. Variations are rather based on the tonal plan of themes than on most tunes. There is a variety of pieces such as " Overture in the French style", BWV 831, " Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue", BWV 903, or " Italian Concerto", BWV 971.

Bach wrote music for individual instruments, as well as for ensembles. His works for solo instruments are 6 Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, BWV 1001-1006, 6 Suites for Cello, BWV 1007-1012, and the Partita for solo flute, BWV 1013 - many consider one of the most profound works of the composer. In addition, Bach composed several pieces for solo lute. He wrote also trio sonatas, sonatas for solo flute and viola da gamba, accompanied only by bass-general, as well as a large number of canons, mostly without the tools for implementation. The most significant examples of such works are the cycles of " Art of Fugue and The Musical Offering".

The most famous works of Bach for Orchestra - are Brandenburg Concertos. They were named so because Bach, sending them Margrave Christian Ludwig of Brandenburg-Swedish in 1721, thought to get a job at his court, but this attempt was unsuccessful. Six concerts were written in the genre Concerto Grosso. Other extant works by Bach for orchestra include two violin concertos, Concerto for 2 Violins in D minor, BWV 1043, and also concertos for one - four harpsichords. Researchers believe that these concertos for harpsichord were merely adaptations of older works of Johann Sebastian, now lost. As a fact, Bach has also written four orchestral suites. Among the

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chamber works should highlight the second Partita for violin, in particular the last part - chaconne.

Vocal works. Cantatas. In the long period of his life, every Sunday Bach visited the Church of St. Thomas led the performance of the cantata, the theme was chosen according to the Lutheran church calendar. Although Bach performed a cantata and other composers, in Leipzig he composed at least three full annual cycles of cantatas, one for each Sunday, and every religious holiday. In addition, he composed a number of cantatas in Weimar and Mulhouse. Total Bach wrote more than 300 cantatas on spiritual issues, of which only about 195 have survived. The cantatas of Bach differ a lot in form and instrumentation. As a fact, some of them are written for one voice, some - for chorus, some call for the execution of a large orchestra, and some - only a few instruments. However, the most commonly used model is as follows: Cantata offers the solemn choral entry, then alternate recitatives and arias for soloists or duets, and completes the entire chorale. The final chorale is often anticipated by the chorale prelude in medium-sized parts, and is sometimes included in the introductory part as a cantus firmus. The best known of Bach's cantatas are religious "Christ lag in Todesbanden" (No. 4), "Ein feste Burg" (number 80), "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (Room 140) and "Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben" (Room 147). In addition, Bach composed a number of secular cantatas, usually confined to some events, such as a wedding. Among the most famous secular cantatas by Bach are Two wedding cantatas and humorous Coffee Cantata. St John Passion (1724) and St. Matthew Passion (c. 1727) - a work for chorus and orchestra to gospel theme the sufferings of Christ, intended to be executed

on the evening of Good Friday in the church of St. Thomas and St. Nicholas. Passion is one of the most large-scale vocal works of Bach. It is known that Bach wrote 4 or 5 of Passion, but these are two completely reached our days.

Oratorio and Magnificat. The most famous Christmas Oratorio (1734) – is a cycle of six cantatas for performance during the Christmas period, liturgical year. Easter Oratorio (1734-1736) and the Magnificat are more extensive and carefully designed cantatas and have a smaller scope than the Christmas Oratorio or the Passion. Magnificat exists in two versions: the original (E-flat Major, 1723) and later and the famous (in D Major, 1730).

Masses. The most significant mass Bach – is Mass in B minor (completed in 1749), a complete cycle of the ordinary. In this Mass, as in many other works by the composer, came reworked early compositions. Mass never performed entirely in the life of Bach – the first time this has happened only in the XIX century. Furthermore, this music is not performed on purpose because of the duration of sound (about 2 hours). In addition to the Mass in B minor, come down to us 4 short two-part Mass by Bach, as well as individual parts, such as the Sanctus and Kyrie. Others vocal works by Bach include several motets, about 180 chorales, songs and arias.

Today, performers of Bach's music are divided into two camps: those who prefer authentic performance (or "historically oriented performance"), that is, using the tools and methods of the era of Bach and performing Bach on modern instruments. In times of Bach did not have such large choirs and orchestras, such as in times of Brahms, and even the most ambitious of his

works such as the Mass in B minor and the Passion, do not involve performance of large groups. In addition, some chamber works by Bach did not specify instrumentation, and therefore are known today are very different versions of the execution of the same products. Of the stringed keyboard instruments Bach preferred the clavichord. He met with Zilberman and discussed with him a device of its new tool, contributing to the creation of the modern piano. Bach's music for one instrument often is left up to others, for example, Busoni transcribed organ Toccata and Fugue in D minor and other works for piano.

In popularizing the music of Bach in the XX century have contributed to many "lightweight" and "modernized" versions of his works. Among them – is widely known today melodies, performed by Swingle Singers, and recorded Wendy Carlos in 1968 "Switched-On Bach", where was used the recently invented a synthesizer.

In the last years of his life, and after death of Bach his fame as a composer began to diminish: his style was considered old-fashioned compared to the burgeoning classicism. He was better known and remembered as a performer, teacher and father of Bach, Jr., primarily Carl Philipp Emanuel, whose music was known. However, many of the major composers such as Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin, are known and loved works of Johann Sebastian. For example, when visiting the school of St. Thomas, Mozart heard one of motets (BWV 225) and exclaimed: "There is much to learn!" – And then, asked the notes, and was long and happily studying them. Beethoven greatly appreciated Bach's music. As a child he played the preludes and fugues from The Well-Tempered Clavier " and later called Bach

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“ true father of harmony”. Chopin before concerts locked in a room and played music by Bach. The works of Johann Sebastian’s had an effect on many composers. Some themes from the works of Bach, for example, the theme of the Toccata and Fugue in D minor, were reused in the music of the XX century.

Biography, written in 1802 by Johann Nikolaus Forkelem, spurred public interest in his music. More and more people are discovering his music. For example, Goethe, rather late in life acquainted with his works (in 1814 and 1815 in Bad Berka were performed some of his clavier and choral works), in a letter in 1827 compared the feeling of the music of Bach with the “ eternal harmony in dialogue with itself “. But the current revival of Bach’s music began with the performance of the Passion of St. Matthew in 1829 in Berlin, organized by Felix Mendelssohn. Hegel, who attended the concert, later called Bach a “ great, a true Protestant, strong and, so to speak, erudite genius which we have just recently re-learned to appreciate in full measure”. In subsequent years, he continued to work on Mendelssohn’s promotion of Bach’s music and growing popularity of the composer. In 1850, the Bach Society was founded, whose goal is to collect, study and dissemination of works of Bach. In the next half-century that society has undergone extensive work on compiling and publishing the body of the composer.

The major forms in which the composer worked are:

Tocatta and Fugue in D minor; Joke – Suite for Flute and Strings; Musical Offering*; St. Matthew Passion; Invention; Goldberg variations*; Brandenburg Concertos; Magnificat*

Chorale Preludes.

In XX century, continued awareness of the musical and pedagogical value of his works. Interest in music of Bach has created a new movement among performers: a widespread idea of an authentic performance. These artists, for example, use a harpsichord instead of a modern piano, and choirs smaller than it was made in the XIX and early XX century, wanting to exactly recreate the music of Bach's era.

Some composers have expressed their respects to Bach, including the themes of their works motive BACH. For example, Liszt wrote a prelude and fugue on BACH, Schumann wrote six fugues on the same topic. The same subject has used Bach, for example, in the XIV counterpoint of the " Art of Fugue." Many composers took the example of his work or have used the theme of them. Examples are variations on a theme by Diabelli Beethoven, whose prototype is " Goldberg Variations", 24 Preludes and Fugues by Shostakovich, inspired by the Well-Tempered Clavier, and the Sonata for Cello in D Major by Brahms, which are inserted in the final musical quote from Art Fugue. Bach's music is among the best creations of mankind is recorded on golden disc " Voyager".

All in all, the research has shown me the path of life of Johann Sebastian Bach, his success, talent and possibilities. He has made many efforts to show

his talent to the world, to make people appreciate what he was doing and to leave the indispensable heritage to the humanity.