

# FOURTH GRADE MUSICIANSHIP

## AURAL SECTION – 30 MINUTES

### PITCH

1. Recognise and name between major and harmonic minor scales played twice ascending and descending (2 tests)
2. Given the keynote of a major scale with no more than 4 sharps or flats, write a key signature and any note of the scale within the limits of an octave. Played 3 times melodically (3 tests)
3. Distinguish between major and minor triads in root position played three times in close position (2 tests)
4. Recognise between similar, contrary and oblique motion between two parts in a progression of not more than 4 intervals placed twice (2 tests)
5. Distinguish between Perfect and Imperfect cadences in major keys. The key will be established and a short melodic phrase with the last two cadence notes fully harmonised will be played. The test will be played twice (2 tests)



### TIME AND RHYTHM

1. To recognise the time of a phrase as a simple duple, simple triple or compound duple  
The test will be played three times and the beat value will be given (1 test)
2. To write from dictation the rhythm of a 3-bar melodic phrase of minims, crotchets and quavers in simple time
  - A semibreve or dotted minim may be included
  - The time signature and the speed of the pulse will be given
  - The phrase will be played 6 times and you may begin writing at any time
  - One minute will be given to complete writing after which the phrase will be played once more (1 test)

## EXPRESSION AND MOOD

In a melody of approximately 8 bars that will be played 3 times (melody supplied and opening degree of tone will be given)

- Mark the principal cadences with a bracket
- Indicate variations of touch and tone
- Describe in two or three words the character of the melody (1 test)

## FORM AND HISTORY

Recognise binary and ternary forms in melodies **either** played twice OR from a printed copy mark the main divisions (1 test)

## WRITTEN SECTION: 1 HOUR

### FORM AND HISTORY

1. Discuss briefly the form, time and character of the dances from the standard keyboard suite of Bach: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Minuet and Gigue (2 questions)
2. To give short answers to a series of general questions or to write a short paragraph on the life and work of Bach, Handel and Purcell. Essay style is not expected (4 questions)

### MELODY

1. Write a balanced melody of 8 bars in simple time in a major key of not more than 4 sharps or flats. Phrasing should be included.
2. Rhythm of the first four bars will be given
3. Modulation is not expected but melody must show feeling for phrasing and tonality

### HARMONY

In a given melody or unfigured bass in a major key of not more than 4 sharps or flats, harmonise perfect, imperfect and interrupted cadences in piano style (2 cadences).

## RUDIMENTS

The recognition and writing of all major and harmonic minor scales and their key signatures.

Double sharps and double flats, tones and semitones (2 questions)

Diagram showing musical notation for major and minor scales with double sharps. The notation is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system includes: C major, G major, D major, A major, E major, B major, F# major, and C# major. The second system includes: A minor, E minor, B minor, F# minor, C# minor, G# minor, D# minor, and B# minor. Each scale is represented by a single note on the staff.

Diagram showing musical notation for major and minor scales with double flats. The notation is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system includes: C major, F major, Bb major, Eb major, Ab major, Db major, Gb major, and Cb major. The second system includes: A minor, D minor, G minor, C minor, F minor, Bb minor, Eb minor, and Ab minor. Each scale is represented by a single note on the staff.



Easy n Fun Piano

## COMPARISON CHART OF DANCE SUITES

ALLEMANDE	COURANTE	SARABANDE	GIGUE
German origin	<b>2</b> types French and Italian	Spanish origin	English, Scottish or Irish
4/4 sometimes 2/2	3/2 3/4 or 3/8 time	3/2 or 3/4 time	Usually 6/8 or 12/8 sometimes 3/8
Moderate speed	Fast speed	Slow tempo	Light and rapid
Mostly semiquavers	Running passages	Harmonic texture and ornaments	Continuous division of its beats into 3's
Serious style	French - cross accents Italian - free flowing	Dignified character	Differing styles
Feature – anacrusis semiquaver	Feature of both - Anacrusis French: dotted notes, Italian: running quavers	Feature - strong emphasis on 2nd beat of bar	Feature - often fugal treatment of principle idea
1 <sup>st</sup> dance of suite	2 <sup>nd</sup> dance of suite	3 <sup>rd</sup> dance of suite	Final dance of suite
Binary form	Binary form	Binary form	Binary form

### Additional Movements

#### MINUET

French origin

3/4 time

Moderate tempo

Flowing easily

Uncomplicated style

Feature - commences on 1st beat of bar

Placed between the Sarabande and Gigue

Binary form

#### GAVOTTE

French origin

2/2 sometimes 4/4

Steady

Optional movement

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

The following composer notes have been taken directly from <https://www.britannica.com/>.

Editing has been limited to formatting only. Please check the links provided for updates.

**Born** March 21, 1685 [Eisenach, Germany](#)

**Died** July 28, 1750 (aged 65) [Leipzig, Germany](#)

[Sinfonia](#)

["Brandenburg Concertos"](#)

["Christmas Oratorio"](#)

["Fugue in E-flat Major"](#)

["God Is My King"](#)

["Hunt Cantata"](#)

### Notable Works

["Jesu meine Freude"](#)

["Mass in B Minor"](#)

["Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor"](#)

["St. John Passion"](#)

["St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244"](#)

["Three-Part Inventions" Piano](#)

**Movement / Style** [Baroque music](#)

son [Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach](#)

son [Wilhelm Friedemann Bach](#)

### Notable Family Members

son [Johann Christian Bach](#)

son [Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach](#)

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### Did You Know?

- The same doctor performed eye surgery on Bach and George Friedrich Handel, who both became blind after the procedure.
- Bach's parents both died when he was ten years old.
- Bach was attacked by one of his students with a club.

J.S. Bach was the youngest child of Johann Ambrosius Bach and Elisabeth Lämmerhirt. Ambrosius was a [string](#) player, employed by the town council and the ducal court of [Eisenach](#). Johann Sebastian started school in 1692 or 1693 and did well in spite of frequent absences. Of his musical education at this time, nothing definite is known; however, he may have picked up the rudiments of string playing from his father, and no doubt he attended the Georgenkirche, where Johann Christoph Bach was organist until 1703.

By 1695 both his parents were dead, and he was looked after by his eldest brother, also named Johann Christoph (1671–1721), organist at Ohrdruf. This Christoph had been a pupil of the influential [keyboard](#) composer [Johann Pachelbel](#), and he apparently gave Johann Sebastian his first formal keyboard lessons. The young Bach again did well at school, and in 1700 his voice secured him a place in a select choir of poor boys at the school at Michaelskirche, [Lüneburg](#).

His voice must have broken soon after this, but he remained at Lüneburg for a time, making himself generally useful. No doubt he studied in the school library, which had a large and up-to-date collection of church music; he probably heard [Georg Böhm](#), organist of the Johanniskirche; and he visited [Hamburg](#) to hear the renowned organist and composer Johann Adam Reinken at the Katharinenkirche, contriving also to hear the French orchestra maintained by the duke of [Celle](#).

He seems to have returned to Thuringia in the late summer of 1702. By this time he was already a reasonably proficient organist. His experience at Lüneburg, if not at Ohrdruf, had turned him away from the secular string-playing tradition of his immediate ancestors; thenceforth he was chiefly, though not exclusively, a composer and performer of keyboard and sacred music. The next few months are wrapped in mystery, but by March 4, 1703, he was a member of the orchestra employed by Johann Ernst, duke of Weimar (and brother of Wilhelm Ernst, whose service Bach entered in 1708). This post was a mere stopgap; he probably already had his eye on the [organ](#) then being built at the Neue Kirche (New Church) in [Arnstadt](#), for, when it was finished, he helped to test it, and in August 1703 he was appointed organist—all this at age 18. Arnstadt documents imply that he had been court organist at Weimar; this is incredible, though it is likely enough that he had occasionally played there.

## THE ARNSTADT PERIOD

At Arnstadt, on the northern edge of the [Thuringian Forest](#), where he remained until 1707, Bach devoted himself to keyboard music, the organ in particular. While at Lüneburg he had apparently had no opportunity of becoming directly acquainted with the spectacular, flamboyant playing and compositions of [Dietrich Buxtehude](#), the most significant exponent of the north German school of

organ music. In October 1705 he repaired this gap in his knowledge by obtaining a month's leave and walking to [Lübeck](#) (more than 200 miles [300 km]). His visit must have been profitable, for he did not return until about the middle of January 1706. In February his employers complained about his absence and about other things as well: he had harmonized the [hymn](#) tunes so freely that the congregation could not sing to his accompaniment, and, above all, he had produced no [cantatas](#). Perhaps the real reasons for his neglect were that he was temporarily obsessed with the organ and was on bad terms with the local singers and instrumentalists, who were not under his control and did not come up to his standards. In the summer of 1705 he had made some offensive remark about a [bassoon](#) player, which led to an unseemly scuffle in the street. His replies to these complaints were neither satisfactory nor even accommodating; and the fact that he was not dismissed out of hand suggests that his employers were as well aware of his exceptional ability as he was himself and were reluctant to lose him.

During these early years, Bach inherited the musical culture of the Thuringian area, a thorough familiarity with the traditional forms and hymns ([chorales](#)) of the orthodox Lutheran service, and, in keyboard music, perhaps (through his brother, Johann Christoph) a bias toward the formalistic styles of the south. But he also learned eagerly from the northern rhapsodists, [Buxtehude](#) above all. By 1708 he had probably learned all that his German predecessors could teach him and arrived at a first synthesis of northern and southern German styles. He had also studied, on his own and during his presumed excursions to Celle, some French organ and instrumental music.

Among the few works that can be ascribed to these early years with anything more than a show of plausibility are the *Capriccio sopra la lontananza del suo fratello dilettissimo* (1704; *Capriccio on the Departure of His Most Beloved Brother*, BWV 992), the chorale prelude on *Wie schön leuchtet* (c. 1705; *How Brightly Shines*, BWV 739), and the fragmentary early version of the organ *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor* (before 1707, BWV 535a). (The "BWV" numbers provided are the standard catalog numbers of Bach's works as established in the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*, prepared by the German musicologist Wolfgang Schmieder.)

## THE MÜHLHAUSEN PERIOD

In June 1707 Bach obtained a post at the Blasiuskirche in [Mühlhausen](#) in Thuringia. He moved there soon after and married his cousin Maria Barbara Bach at Dornheim on October 17. At Mühlhausen things seem, for a time, to have gone more smoothly. He produced several church cantatas at this time; all of these works are cast in a conservative mold, based on biblical and chorale texts and displaying no influence of the "modern" Italian operatic forms that were to appear in Bach's later

cantatas. The famous organ *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* (BWV 565), written in the rhapsodic northern style, and the *Prelude and Fugue in D Major* (BWV 532) may also have been composed during the Mühlhausen period, as well as the organ *Passacaglia in C Minor* (BWV 582), an early example of Bach's instinct for large-scale organization. Cantata No. 71, *Gott ist mein König (God Is My King)*, of February 4, 1708, was printed at the expense of the city council and was the first of Bach's compositions to be published. While at Mühlhausen, Bach copied music to enlarge the choir library, tried to encourage music in the surrounding villages, and was in sufficient favour to be able to interest his employers in a scheme for rebuilding the organ (February 1708). His real reason for resigning on June 25, 1708, is not known. He himself said that his plans for a "well-regulated [concerted] church music" had been hindered by conditions in Mühlhausen and that his salary was inadequate. It is generally supposed that he had become involved in a theological controversy between his own pastor Frohne and Archdeacon Eilmar of the Marienkirche. Certainly, he was friendly with Eilmar, who provided him with [librettos](#) and became godfather to Bach's first child; and it is likely enough that he was not in sympathy with Frohne, who, as a [Pietist](#), would have frowned on elaborate church music. It is just as possible, however, that it was the dismal state of musical life in Mühlhausen that prompted Bach to seek employment elsewhere. At all events, his resignation was accepted, and shortly afterward he moved to [Weimar](#), some miles west of [Jena](#) on the Ilm River. He continued nevertheless to be on good terms with Mühlhausen personalities, for he supervised the rebuilding of the organ, is supposed to have inaugurated it on October 31, 1709, and composed a cantata for February 4, 1709, which was printed but has disappeared.

## THE WEIMAR PERIOD

Bach was, from the outset, court organist at Weimar and a member of the [orchestra](#). Encouraged by Wilhelm Ernst, he concentrated on the organ during the first few years of his tenure. From Weimar, Bach occasionally visited Weissenfels; in February 1713 he took part in a court celebration there that included a performance of his first secular cantata, *Was mir behagt*, also called the *Hunt Cantata* (BWV 208).

Late in 1713 Bach had the opportunity of succeeding Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow at the Liebfrauenkirche, [Halle](#); but the duke raised his salary, and he stayed on at Weimar. On March 2, 1714, he became concertmaster, with the duty of composing a cantata every month. He became friendly with a relative, Johann Gottfried Walther, a music lexicographer and composer who was organist of the town church, and, like Walther, Bach took part in the musical activities at the Gelbes Schloss ("Yellow Castle"), then occupied by Duke Wilhelm's two nephews, Ernst August and Johann Ernst, both



of whom he taught. The latter was a talented composer who wrote [concerti](#) in the Italian manner, some of which Bach arranged for [keyboard instruments](#); the boy died in 1715, in his 19th year.

Unfortunately, Bach's development cannot be traced in detail during the vital years 1708–14, when his style underwent a profound change. There are too few datable works. From the series of cantatas written in 1714–16, however, it is obvious that he had been decisively influenced by the new styles and forms of the contemporary Italian [opera](#) and by the innovations of such Italian concerto composers as [Antonio Vivaldi](#). The results of this encounter can be seen in such cantatas as No. 182, 199, and 61 in 1714, 31 and 161 in 1715, and 70 and 147 in 1716. His favourite forms appropriated from the Italians were those based on refrain ([ritornello](#)) or da capo schemes in which wholesale repetition—literal or with modifications—of entire sections of a piece permitted him to create coherent musical forms with much larger dimensions than had hitherto been possible. These newly acquired techniques henceforth governed a host of Bach's arias and concerto movements, as well as many of his larger fugues (especially the mature ones for organ), and profoundly affected his treatment of chorales.

Among other works almost certainly composed at Weimar are most of the *Orgelbüchlein* (*Little Organ Book*), all but the last of the so-called 18 "Great" chorale preludes, the earliest organ trios, and most of the organ [preludes](#) and [fugues](#). The "Great" *Prelude and Fugue in G Major* for organ (BWV 541) was finally revised about 1715, and the *Tocatta and Fugue in F Major* (BWV 540) may have been played at Weissenfels.

On December 1, 1716, Johann Samuel Drese, musical director at Weimar, died. He was then succeeded by his son, who was rather a nonentity. Bach presumably resented being thus passed over, and in due course he accepted an appointment as musical director to Prince Leopold of Köthen, which was confirmed in August 1717. Duke Wilhelm, however, refused to accept his resignation—partly, perhaps, because of Bach's friendship with the duke's nephews, with whom the duke was on the worst of terms. About September a contest between Bach and the famous French organist Louis Marchand was arranged at [Dresden](#). The exact circumstances are not known, but Marchand avoided the contest by leaving Dresden a few hours before it should have taken place. By implication, Bach won. Perhaps this emboldened him to renew his request for permission to leave Weimar; at all events he did so but in such terms that the duke imprisoned him for a month (November 6–December 2). A few days after his release, Bach moved to [Köthen](#), some 30 miles north of Halle.

## THE KÖTHEN PERIOD

There, as musical director, he was concerned chiefly with chamber and orchestral music. Even though some of the works may have been composed earlier and revised later, it was at Köthen that the [sonatas](#) for [violin](#) and [clavier](#) and for [viola](#) da gamba and clavier and the works for unaccompanied violin and [cello](#) were put into something like their present form. The *Brandenburg Concertos* were finished by March 24, 1721; in the sixth concerto—so it has been suggested—Bach bore in mind the technical limitations of the prince, who played the gamba. Bach played the viola by choice; he liked to be “in the middle of the harmony.” He also wrote a few [cantatas](#) for the prince’s birthday and other such occasions; most of these seem to have survived only in later versions, adapted to more generally useful words. And he found time to compile pedagogical keyboard works: the *Clavierbüchlein* for [W.F. Bach](#) (began January 22, 1720), some of the *French Suites*, the *Inventions* (1720), and the first book (1722) of *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* (*The Well-Tempered Clavier*, eventually consisting of two books, each of 24 preludes and fugues in all keys and known as “the Forty-Eight”). This remarkable collection systematically explores both the potentials of a newly established [tuning](#) procedure—which, for the first time in the history of keyboard music, made all the keys equally usable—and the possibilities for musical organization afforded by the system of “functional tonality,” a kind of musical syntax consolidated in the music of the Italian concerto composers of the preceding generation and a system that was to prevail for the next 200 years. At the same time, *The Well-Tempered Clavier* is a compendium of the most popular forms and styles of the era: [dance](#) types, [arias](#), [motets](#), concerti, etc., presented within the unified aspect of a single compositional technique—the rigorously logical and venerable [fugue](#).

Maria Barbara Bach died unexpectedly and was buried on July 7, 1720. About November, Bach visited [Hamburg](#); his wife’s death may have unsettled him and led him to inquire after a vacant post at the Jacobikirche. Nothing came of this, but he played at the Katharinenkirche in the presence of Reinken. After hearing Bach improvise variations on a chorale tune, the old man said, “I thought this art was dead; but I see it still lives in you.”

On December 3, 1721, Bach married Anna Magdalena Wilcken, daughter of a trumpeter at Weissenfels. Apart from his first wife’s death, these first four years at Köthen were probably the happiest of Bach’s life. He was on the best terms with the prince, who was genuinely musical; and in 1730 Bach said that he had expected to end his days there. But the prince married on December 11, 1721, and conditions deteriorated. The princess—described by Bach as “an *amusa*” (that is to say, opposed to the muses)—required so much of her husband’s attention that Bach began to feel

neglected. He also had to think of the education of his elder sons, born in 1710 and 1714, and he probably began to think of moving to [Leipzig](#) as soon as the cantorate fell vacant with the death of Johann Kuhnau on June 5, 1722. Bach applied in December, but the post—already turned down by Bach’s friend, [Georg Philipp Telemann](#)—was offered to another prominent composer of the day, [Christoph Graupner](#), the musical director at Darmstadt. As the latter was not sure that he would be able to accept, Bach gave a trial performance (Cantata No. 22, *Jesu nahm zu sich die Zwölfe* [*Jesus Called unto Him the Twelve*]) on February 7, 1723; and, when Graupner withdrew (April 9), Bach was so deeply committed to Leipzig that, although the princess had died on April 4, he applied for permission to leave Köthen. This he obtained on April 13, and on May 13 he was sworn in at Leipzig.

He was appointed honorary musical director at Köthen, and both he and Anna were employed there from time to time until the prince died, on November 19, 1728.

## YEARS AT LEIPZIG

As director of church music for the city of Leipzig, Bach had to supply performers for four churches. At the Peterskirche the choir merely led the [hymns](#). At the Neue Kirche, Nikolaikirche, and Thomaskirche, part singing was required; but Bach himself conducted, and his own church music was performed, only at the last two. His first official performance was on May 30, 1723, the first Sunday after Trinity Sunday, with Cantata No. 75, *Die Elenden sollen essen*. New works produced during this year include many cantatas and the *Magnificat* in its first version. The first half of 1724 saw the production of the *St. John Passion*, which was subsequently revised. The total number of [cantatas](#) produced during this ecclesiastical year was about 62, of which about 39 were new works.

On June 11, 1724, the first Sunday after Trinity, Bach began a fresh annual cycle of cantatas, and within the year he wrote 52 of the so-called chorale cantatas, formerly supposed to have been composed over the nine-year period 1735–44. The “Sanctus” of the *Mass in B Minor* was produced at [Christmas](#).

During his first two or three years at Leipzig, Bach produced a large number of new cantatas, sometimes, as research has revealed, at the rate of one a week. This phenomenal pace raises the question of Bach’s approach to composition. Bach and his contemporaries, subject to the hectic pace of production, had to invent or discover their ideas quickly and could not rely on the unpredictable arrival of “inspiration.” Nor did the musical conventions and techniques or the generally rationalistic outlook of the time necessitate this reliance, as long as the composer was willing to accept them. The Baroque composer who submitted to the regimen inevitably had to be a traditionalist who willingly embraced the conventions.

## SYMBOLISM

A repertoire of melody types existed, for example, that was generated by an explicit “doctrine of figures” that created musical equivalents for the figures of speech in the art of rhetoric. Closely related to these “figures” are such examples of pictorial symbolism in which the composer writes, say, a rising scale to match words that speak of rising from the dead or a descending chromatic scale (depicting a howl of pain) to sorrowful words. Pictorial symbolism of this kind occurs only in connection with words—in vocal music and in chorale preludes, where the words of the chorale are in the listener’s mind. There is no point in looking for resurrection motifs in *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Pictorialism, even when not codified into a doctrine, seems to be a fundamental musical instinct and essentially an expressive device. It can, however, become more abstract, as in the case of number symbolism, a phenomenon observed too often in the works of Bach to be dismissed out of hand.

[Number symbolism](#) is sometimes pictorial; in the *St. Matthew Passion* it is reasonable that the question “Lord, is it I?” should be asked 11 times, once by each of the faithful disciples. But the deliberate search for such symbolism in Bach’s music can be taken too far. Almost any number may be called “symbolic” (3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 41 are only a few examples); any multiple of such a number is itself symbolic; and the number of sharps in a key signature, notes in a melody, measures in a piece, and so on may all be considered significant. As a result, it is easy to find symbolic numbers anywhere, but ridiculous to suppose that such discoveries invariably have a meaning.

Besides the melody types, the Baroque composer also had at his disposal similar stereotypes regarding the further elaboration of these themes into complete compositions, so that the arias and choruses of a cantata almost seem to have been spun out “automatically.” One is reminded of Bach’s delightfully innocent remark “I have had to work hard; anyone who works just as hard will get just as far,” with its implication that everything in the “craft” of music is teachable and learnable. The fact that no other composer of the period, with the arguable exception of [Handel](#), even remotely approached Bach’s achievement indicates clearly enough that the application of the “mechanical” procedures was not literally “automatic” but was controlled throughout by something else—artistic discrimination, or taste. One of the most respected attributes in the culture of the 18th century, “taste” is an utterly individual compound of raw talent, imagination, psychological disposition, judgment, skill, and experience. It is unteachable and unlearnable.

As a result of his intense activity in cantata production during his first three years in Leipzig, Bach had created a supply of church music to meet his future needs for the regular Sunday and feast day services. After 1726, therefore, he turned his attention to other projects. He did, however, produce

the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1729, a work that inaugurated a renewed interest in the mid-1730s for vocal works on a larger scale than the cantata: the now-lost *St. Mark Passion* (1731), the *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248 (1734), and the *Ascension Oratorio* (Cantata No. 11, *Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen*; 1735).

## NONMUSICAL DUTIES

In addition to his responsibilities as director of church music, Bach also had various nonmusical duties in his capacity as the cantor of the school at Thomaskirche. Since he resented these latter obligations, Bach frequently absented himself without leave, playing or examining organs, taking his son Friedemann to hear the “pretty tunes,” as he called them, at the Dresden opera, and fulfilling the duties of the honorary court posts that he contrived to hold all his life. To some extent, no doubt, he accepted engagements because he needed money—he complained in 1730 that his income was less than he had been led to expect (he remarked that there were not enough funerals)—but, obviously, his routine work must have suffered. Friction between Bach and his employers thus developed almost at once. On the one hand, Bach’s initial understanding of the fees and prerogatives accruing to his position—particularly regarding his responsibility for musical activities in the University of Leipzig’s Paulinerkirche—differed from that of the town council and the university organist, Johann Gottlieb Görner. On the other hand, Bach remained, in the eyes of his employers, their third (and unenthusiastic) choice for the post, behind Telemann and Graupner. Furthermore, the authorities insisted on admitting unmusical boys to the school, thus making it difficult for Bach to keep his churches supplied with competent singers; they also refused to spend enough money to keep a decent orchestra together.

The resulting ill feeling had become serious by 1730. It was temporarily dispelled by the tact of the new rector, Johann Matthias Gesner, who admired Bach and had known him at Weimar; but Gesner stayed only until 1734 and was succeeded by Johann August Ernesti, a young man with up-to-date ideas on [education](#), one of which was that [music](#) was not one of the [humanities](#) but a time-wasting sideline. Trouble flared up again in July 1736; it then took the form of a dispute over Bach’s right to appoint prefects and became a public scandal. Fortunately for Bach, he became court composer to the elector of [Saxony](#) in November 1736. As such, after some delay, he was able to induce his friends at court to hold an official inquiry, and his dispute with Ernesti was settled in 1738. The exact terms of the settlement are not known, but thereafter Bach did as he liked.

## INSTRUMENTAL WORKS

In 1726, after he had completed the bulk of his cantata production, Bach began to publish the clavier *Partitas* singly, with a collected edition in 1731, perhaps with the intention of attracting recognition beyond Leipzig and thus securing a more amenable appointment elsewhere. The second part of the *Clavierübung*, containing the *Concerto in the Italian Style* and the *French Overture (Partita) in B Minor*, appeared in 1735. The third part, consisting of the *Organ Mass* with the *Prelude and Fugue ["St. Anne"] in E-flat Major* (BWV 552), appeared in 1739. From c. 1729 to 1736 Bach was honorary musical director to Weissenfels; and, from 1729 to 1737 and again from 1739 for a year or two, he directed the Leipzig Collegium Musicum. For these concerts, he adapted some of his earlier concerti as [harpsichord](#) concerti, thus becoming one of the first composers—if not the very first—of concerti for keyboard instrument and orchestra, just as he was one of the first to use the harpsichordist's right hand as a true melodic part in [chamber music](#). These are just two of several respects in which the basically conservative and traditional Bach was a significant innovator as well.

About 1733 Bach began to produce cantatas in honour of the elector of Saxony and his family, evidently with a view to the court appointment he secured in 1736; many of these secular movements were adapted to sacred words and reused in the *Christmas Oratorio*. The "Kyrie" and "Gloria" of the *Mass in B Minor*, written in 1733, were also dedicated to the elector, but the rest of the *Mass* was not put together until Bach's last years. On his visits to Dresden, Bach had won the regard of the Russian envoy, Hermann Karl, Reichsgraf (count) von Keyserlingk, who commissioned the so-called *Goldberg Variations*; these were published as part four of the *Clavierübung* in 1741, and Book Two of "the Forty-Eight" seems to have been compiled about the same time. In addition, he wrote a few cantatas, revised some of his Weimar organ works, and published the so-called *Schübler Chorale Preludes* in or after 1746.

## LAST YEARS

In May 1747 he visited his son Emanuel at Potsdam and played before [Frederick II](#) (the Great) of Prussia; in July his improvisations, on a theme proposed by the king, took shape as *The Musical Offering*. In June 1747 he joined a Society of the Musical Sciences that had been founded by his former pupil Lorenz Christoph Mizler; he presented the canonic variations on the chorale *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her* (*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*) to the society, in manuscript, and afterward published them.



Of Bach's last illness little is known except that it lasted several months and prevented him from finishing *The Art of the Fugue*. His constitution was undermined by two unsuccessful eye operations performed by John Taylor, the itinerant English quack who numbered Handel among his other failures; and Bach died on July 28, 1750, at Leipzig. His employers proceeded with relief to appoint a successor; Burgomaster Stieglitz remarked, "The school needs a cantor, not a musical director—though certainly he ought to understand music." Anna Magdalena was left badly off. For some reason, her stepsons did nothing to help her, and her own sons were too young to do so. She died on February 27, 1760, and was given a pauper's funeral.

Unfinished as it was, *The Art of the Fugue* was published in 1751. It attracted little attention and was reissued in 1752 with a laudatory preface by [Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg](#), a well-known Berlin musician who later became director of the royal lottery. In spite of Marpurg and of some appreciative remarks by Johann Mattheson, the influential Hamburg critic and composer, only about 30 copies had been sold by 1756, when Emanuel Bach offered the plates for sale. As far as is known, they were sold for scrap.

Emanuel Bach and the organist-composer Johann Friedrich Agricola (a pupil of Sebastian's) wrote an obituary; Mizler added a few closing words and published the result in the journal of his society (1754). There is an English translation of it in *The Bach Reader*. Though incomplete and inaccurate, the obituary is of very great importance as a firsthand source of information.

Bach appears to have been a good husband and father. Indeed, he was the father of 20 children, only 10 of whom survived to maturity. There is amusing evidence of a certain thriftiness—a necessary virtue, for he was never more than moderately well off and he delighted in hospitality. Living as he did at a time when music was beginning to be regarded as no occupation for a gentleman, he occasionally had to stand up for his rights both as a man and as a musician; he was then obstinate in the extreme. But no sympathetic employer had any trouble with Bach, and with his professional brethren he was modest and friendly. He was also a good teacher and from his Mühlhausen days onward was never without pupils.

## Reputation and Influence

For about 50 years after Bach's death, his music was neglected. This was only natural; in the days of [Haydn](#) and [Mozart](#), no one could be expected to take much interest in a composer who had been considered old-fashioned even in his lifetime—especially since his music was not readily available, and half of it (the church cantatas) was fast becoming useless as a result of changes in religious thought.

At the same time, musicians of the late 18th century were neither so ignorant of Bach's music nor so insensitive to its influence as some modern authors have suggested. Emanuel Bach's debt to his father was considerable, and Bach exercised a profound and acknowledged influence directly on Haydn, Mozart, and [Beethoven](#).

## REVIVAL OF MUSIC

After 1800 the revival of Bach's music gained momentum. The German writer [Johann Nikolaus Forkel](#) published a study of Bach's life and art in 1802 and acted as adviser to the publishers Hoffmeister and Kühnel, whose collected edition, begun in 1801, was cut short by the activities of [Napoleon](#). By 1829 a representative selection of keyboard music was nonetheless available, although very few of the vocal works were published. But in that year the German musician [Eduard Devrient](#) and the German composer [Felix Mendelssohn](#) took the next step with the centenary performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*. It and the *St. John Passion* were both published in 1830; the *Mass in B Minor* followed (1832–45). The Leipzig publisher Peters began a collected edition of "piano" and instrumental works in 1837; the organ works followed in 1844–52.

Encouraged by [Robert Schumann](#), the Bach-Gesellschaft (BG) was founded in the centenary year 1850, with the purpose of publishing the complete works. By 1900 all the known works had been printed, and the BG was succeeded by the Neue Bach-Gesellschaft (NBG), which exists still, organizing festivals and publishing popular editions. Its chief publication is its research journal, the *Bach-Jahrbuch* (from 1904). By 1950 the deficiencies of the BG edition had become painfully obvious, and the Bach-Institut was founded, with headquarters at Göttingen and Leipzig, to produce a new standard edition (the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, or NBA), a publication that eventually exceeded 100 volumes.

In retrospect, the Bach revival, reaching back to 1800, can be recognized as the first conspicuous example of the deliberate exhumation of old music, accompanied by biographical and critical studies. The revival also served as an inspiration and a model for subsequent work of a similar kind.

Among the biographical and critical works on Bach, the most important was the monumental study *Johann Sebastian Bach*, 2 vol. (1873–80), by the German musicologist [Philipp Spitta](#), covering not only Bach's life and works but also a good deal of the historical background. Although wrong in many details, the book is still indispensable to the Bach student.



## Editions of Bach's Works

The word *Urtext* ("original text") may lead the uninitiated to suppose that they are being offered an exact reproduction of what Bach wrote. It must be understood that the autographs of many important works no longer exist. Therefore, Bach's intentions often have to be pieced together from anything up to 20 sources, all different. Even first editions and facsimiles of autograph manuscripts are not infallible guides to Bach's intentions. In fact, they are often dangerously misleading, and practical musicians should take expert advice before consulting them. Editions published between 1752 and about 1840 are little more than curiosities, chiefly interesting for the light they throw on the progress of the revival.

No comprehensive edition is trustworthy throughout: neither Peters nor the BG nor even the NBA. Nevertheless, it is advisable to begin by finding out whether the music desired has been published in the NBA.

(For additional music by Bach, see *Concerto No. 2 in D Minor for Solo Keyboard*, BWV 593; the Leipzig chorale "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" ("Now Come, Saviour of All"), BWV 659; *Concerto No. 1 in D Major for Solo Keyboard*, BWV 972; *Sonata No. 1 in G Minor for Solo Violin*, BWV 1001; *Partita No. 1 in B Minor for Solo Violin*, BWV 1002; *Sonata No. 2 in A Minor for Solo Violin*, BWV 1003; *Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Solo Violin*, BWV 1004; *Sonata No. 3 in C Major for Solo Violin*, BWV 1005; *Partita No. 3 in E Major for Solo Violin*, BWV 1006; *Suite No. 1 in G Major for Unaccompanied Cello*, BWV 1007; *Suite No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Cello*, BWV 1008; *Suite No. 3 in C Major for Unaccompanied Cello*, BWV 1009; *Suite No. 4 in E-flat Major for Unaccompanied Cello*, BWV 1010; *Suite No. 5 in C Minor for Unaccompanied Cello*, BWV 1011; *Suite No. 6 in D Major for Unaccompanied Cello*, BWV 1012; *Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor*, BWV 1043 (first movement); *Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor*, BWV 1043 (second movement); *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G Major*, BWV 1049; *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D Major*, BWV 1050; and *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat Major*, BWV 1051.

[Walter Emery Robert L. Marshall](#)

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## GEORGE FRIEDRICH HANDEL

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### Facts

**Also Known As** [Georg Friedrich Haendel](#) • [Georg Friedrich Händel](#)

**Born** February 23, 1685 [Halle, Germany](#)

**Died** April 14, 1759 (aged 74) [London, England](#)

[“Acis and Galatea”](#)

[“Agrippina”](#)

[“Almira”](#)

[“Chandos Anthems”](#)

[“Dettingen Te Deum”](#)

[“Giulio Cesare”](#)

[“Haman and Mordecai”](#)

**Notable Works** [“Israel in Egypt”](#)

[“Jephtha”](#)

[“Messiah”](#)

[“Music for the Royal Fireworks”](#)

[“Rinaldo”](#)

[“The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba”](#)

[“Water Music”](#)

[“Zadok the Priest”](#)

**Movement / Style** [Baroque music](#)



Handel was the son of a barber-surgeon. He showed a marked gift for music and became a pupil in [Halle](#) of the composer Friedrich W. Zachow, learning the principles of [keyboard](#) performance and [composition](#) from him. His father died when Handel was 11, but his education had been provided for, and in 1702 he enrolled as a law student at the University of Halle. He also became organist of the Reformed ([Calvinist](#)) Cathedral in Halle, but he served for only one year before going north to [Hamburg](#), where greater opportunities awaited him. In Hamburg, Handel joined the [violin](#) section of the opera [orchestra](#). He also took over some of the duties of [harpsichordist](#), and early in 1705 he presided over the premiere in Hamburg of his first opera, *Almira*.

Handel spent the years 1706–10 traveling in Italy, where he met many of the greatest Italian musicians of the day, including [Arcangelo Corelli](#) and [Alessandro Scarlatti](#) and his son [Domenico](#). He composed many

works in Italy, including two operas, numerous Italian solo [cantatas](#) (vocal compositions), *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (1707) and another oratorio, the [serenata](#) *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo* (1708), and some Latin (i.e., [Roman Catholic](#)) church music. His opera *Agrippina* enjoyed a sensational success at its premiere in [Venice](#) in 1710.

Handel's years in Italy greatly influenced the development of his musical style. His fame had spread throughout Italy, and his mastery of the Italian opera style now made him an international figure. In 1710 he was appointed Kapellmeister to the elector of [Hanover](#), the future King [George I](#) of England, and later that year Handel journeyed to England. In 1711 his opera *Rinaldo* was performed in [London](#) and was greeted so enthusiastically that Handel sensed the possibility of continuing popularity and prosperity in England. In 1712 he went back to London for the production of his operas *Il pastor fido* and *Teseo* (1713). In 1713 he won his way into royal favour by his *Ode for the Queen's Birthday* and the *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Jubilate* in celebration of the [Peace of Utrecht](#), and he was granted an annual allowance of £200 by Queen [Anne](#).

Recognized by prominent members of both the English aristocracy and the intelligentsia, Handel was in no hurry to return to Hanover. Soon he had no need to do so, for on the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the elector George Louis became King [George I](#) of England. In 1718 Handel became director of music to the duke of [Chandos](#), for whom he composed the 11 *Chandos Anthems* and the English [masque](#) *Acis and Galatea*, among other works. Another masque, *Haman and Mordecai*, was to be the effective starting point for the English oratorio.

Except for a few visits to the European continent, Handel spent the rest of his life in England. In February 1727 he became a British subject, which enabled him to be appointed a composer of the Chapel Royal. In this capacity he wrote much music, including the *Coronation Anthems for George II* in 1727 and the *Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline* 10 years later.

From 1720 until 1728 the operas at the King's Theatre in London were staged by the Royal Academy of Music, and Handel composed the music for most of them. Among those of the 1720s were *Floridante* (1721), *Ottone* (1723), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Rodelinda* (1725), and *Scipione* (1726). From 1728, after the sensation caused by [John Gay's](#) *Beggar's Opera* (which satirized serious opera), the future of opera in the Italian style became increasingly uncertain in England. It went into decline for a variety of reasons, one of them being the impatience of the English with a form of entertainment in an unintelligible language sung by artists of whose morals they disapproved. But despite the vagaries of public taste, Handel went on composing operas until 1741, by which time he had written more than 40 such works. As the popularity of opera declined in England, oratorio became increasingly popular. The revivals in 1732 of Handel's masques *Acis and Galatea* and *Haman and Mordecai* (renamed *Esther*) led to the establishment of

the English oratorio—a large musical composition for solo voices, chorus, and [orchestra](#), without acting or scenery, and usually dramatizing a story from the [Bible](#) in English-language lyrics. Handel first capitalized on this genre in 1733 with *Deborah* and *Athalia*.

Handel also continued to comanage an Italian opera company in London despite many difficulties. Throughout his London career he had suffered competition not only from rival composers but also from rival opera houses in a London that could barely support even one Italian opera in addition to its English theatres. Finally, in 1737, his company went bankrupt and he himself suffered what appears to have been a mild [stroke](#). After a course of treatment at [Aachen](#) (Germany), he was restored to health and went on to compose the *Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline* (1737) and two of his most celebrated oratorios, *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt*, both of which were performed in 1739. He also wrote the *Twelve Grand Concertos*, Op. 6, and helped establish the Fund for the Support of Decayed Musicians (now the Royal Society of Musicians).

Handel was by this time at the height of his powers, and the year 1741 saw the composition of his greatest oratorio, *Messiah*, and its inspired successor, *Samson*. *Messiah* was given its first performance in [Dublin](#) on April 13, 1742, and created a deep impression. Handel's works of the next three years included the oratorios *Joseph and His Brethren* (first performed 1744) and *Belshazzar* (1745), the secular oratorios *Semele* (1744) and *Hercules* (1745), and the *Dettingen Te Deum* (1743), celebrating the English victory over the French at the Battle of Dettingen. Handel had by this time made oratorio and large-scale [choral works](#) the most popular [musical forms](#) in England. He had created for himself a new public among the rising middle classes, who would have turned away in moral indignation from the Italian opera but who were quite ready to be edified by a moral tale from the Bible, set to suitably dignified and, by now, rather old-fashioned music. Even during his lifetime Handel's music was recognized as a reflection of the English national character, and his capacity for realizing the common mood was nowhere better shown than in the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (1749), with which he celebrated the peace of the [Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle](#). Handel now began to experience trouble with his sight. He managed with great difficulty to finish the last of his oratorios, *Jephtha*, which was performed at [Covent Garden](#) Theatre, London, in 1752. He kept his interest in musical activities alive until the end. After his death on April 14, 1759, he was buried in Poets' Corner in [Westminster Abbey](#).

## MUSIC

The first basis of Handel's style was the north German music of his childhood, but it was soon completely overlaid by the Italian style that he acquired in early adulthood during his travels in Italy. The influences of Arcangelo Corelli and Alessandro Scarlatti can be detected in his work to the end of his long life, and the French style of [Jean-Baptiste Lully](#) and, later, that of the English composer [Henry Purcell](#) are also evident.

There is a robustness in Handel's later music that gives it a very English quality. Above all, his music is eminently vocal. Handel's directness of manner makes him one of the great masters of choral music. His choruses have a power and effectiveness that have never been surpassed, and his writing for them is remarkable for the manner in which he interweaves massive but simple harmonic passages with contrapuntal sections of great ingenuity, the whole most effectively illustrating the text. His writing for the solo voice is outstanding in its suitability for the medium and its unerring melodic line. Handel had a striking ability to depict human character musically in a single scene or aria, a gift used with great dramatic power in his operas and oratorios.

Though the bulk of his music was vocal, Handel was nevertheless one of the great instrumental composers of the late [Baroque](#) era. His long series of [overtures](#) (mostly in the French style), his orchestral concertos (Op. 3 and Op. 6), his large-scale concert music for [strings](#) and [winds](#) (such as the *Water Music* and the *Music for the Royal Fireworks*), and the massive double [concertos](#) and organ concertos all show him to have been a complete master of the orchestral means at his command.

Handel had a lifelong attachment to the theatre—even his oratorios were usually performed on the stage rather than in church. Until almost the end of his life he loved Italian opera, and only after it involved him in ever-increasing financial losses did he abandon it for English oratorio. Like other composers of his time, he accepted the conventions of Italian opera, with its employment of [male sopranos and contraltos](#) and the formalized sequences of stylized [recitatives](#) and [arias](#) upon which [opera seria](#) was constructed. Using these conventions, he produced many masterpieces. Among the Italian operas, such works as *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Sosarme* (1732), and *Alcina* (1735) still make impressive stage spectacles, with some scenes of great dramatic power bursting through the formal Baroque grandeur. Many of his Italian operas were revived in the 20th century.

But Handel's oratorios now seem even more dramatic than his operas, and they can generally be performed on the stage with remarkably little alteration. Most of them, from early attempts such as *Esther* to such consummately crafted later works as *Saul*, *Samson*, *Belshazzar*, and *Jephtha*, treat a particular dramatic theme taken from the [Old Testament](#) that illustrates the heroism and suffering of a particular individual. The story line is illustrated by solo recitatives and arias and underlined by the chorus. With *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah*, however, the emphasis is quite different, *Israel* because of its uninterrupted chain of massive choruses, which do not lend themselves to stage presentation, and *Messiah* because it is a meditation on the life of [Christ](#) the Saviour rather than a dramatic narration of his Passion. Handel also used the dramatic oratorio genre for a number of secular works, chief among which are *Semele* and *Hercules*, both based on stories from [Greek mythology](#). But the finest of his secular choral works is *Acis and Galatea*, which has a youthful magic he never quite recovered in subsequent pieces of this type.

Handel's most notable contribution to church music is his series of large-scale [anthems](#), foremost of which are the 11 *Chandos Anthems*; though written for a small group of singers and instrumentalists, they are conceived on a grand scale. Closely following these works are the four *Coronation Anthems for George II*; the most celebrated of these, *Zadok the Priest*, is a striking example of what [Ludwig van Beethoven](#) called Handel's ability to achieve "great effects with simple means."

Most of the orchestral music Handel wrote consists of overtures, often in the style of Lully, and totaling about 80 in number. Handel was equally adept at the [concerto](#) form, especially the [concerto grosso](#), in which he generally employed four or more movements. His most important works of this type are the *Six Concerti Grossi* (known as *The Oboe Concertos*), Op. 3, and the *Twelve Grand Concertos*, which represent the peak of the Baroque concerto grosso for stringed instruments. The *Water Music* and *Fireworks Music* suites, for wind and string band, stand in a special class in the history of late Baroque music by virtue of their combination of grandeur and melodic bravura. They are still among the most popular of his works.

Handel also published harpsichord music, of which two sets of suites, the *Suites de pièces pour le clavecin* of 1720 and the *Suites de pièces* of 1733, containing 17 sets in all, are his finest contribution to that instrument's repertoire. The ever-popular *Harmonious Blacksmith* variations are in No. 5 of the *Suites de pièces* of 1720. Handel's finest [chamber music](#) consists of [trio sonatas](#), notably those published as *Six Sonatas for Two Violins, Oboes, or German Flutes and Continuo*, Op. 2 (1733). He also wrote various sonatas for one or more solo instruments with [basso continuo](#) accompaniment for harpsichord. In addition, he was a notable organist and composed more than 20 [organ](#) concertos, most of which Handel used as intermission features during performances of his oratorios.

## INFLUENCE

In England, Handel was accorded the status of a classic composer even in his own lifetime, and he is perhaps unique among musicians in never having suffered any diminution of his reputation there since. As a young man on the European continent, he had to some extent supplied the demands of aristocratic patronage, but in England he adapted himself to a different climate of opinion and taste and came to serve and express the needs of a wider public. More than anyone else, he democratized music, and in this respect his popular oratorios, his songs, and his best-loved instrumental works have a social significance that complements their purely musical importance. Handel's music became an indispensable part of England's national culture. In Germany, meanwhile, interest in his music grew apace in the late 18th century and reestablished him as a German composer of the first rank.



[Charles Cudworth The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)

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## HENRY PURCELL

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**Born** c.1659 [London, England](#)

**Died** November 21, 1695 [London, England](#)

["Abdelazer"](#)

["Dido and Aeneas"](#)

["Dioclesian"](#)

["King Arthur"](#)

["My heart is inditing"](#)

["Sonatas of III Parts"](#)

["Te Deum and Jubilate"](#)

["The Fairy Queen"](#)

["Welcome Songs"](#)

["Welcome to all the pleasures"](#)

### Notable Works

**Movement / Style** [Baroque music](#)

Henry Purcell, (born c. 1659, [London](#), England—died November 21, 1695, London), English composer of the middle [Baroque](#) period, most remembered for his more than 100 songs; a tragic opera, *Dido and Aeneas*; and his [incidental music](#) to a version of [Shakespeare's](#) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* called *The Fairy Queen*. Purcell, the most important English composer of his time, composed [music](#) covering a wide field: the church, the stage, the court, and private entertainment. In all these branches of [composition](#) he showed an obvious admiration for the past combined with a willingness to learn from the present, particularly from his contemporaries in Italy. With alertness of mind went an individual inventiveness that marked him as the most original English composer of his time as well as one of the most original in Europe.

## LIFE

Not very much is known of Purcell's life. His father was a gentleman of the [Chapel Royal](#), in which musicians for the royal service were trained, and the son received his earliest education there as a chorister. When his voice broke in 1673, he was appointed assistant to John Hingston, keeper of the king's instruments, whom he succeeded in 1683. From 1674 to 1678 he tuned the organ at [Westminster Abbey](#) and was employed there in 1675–76 to copy organ parts of anthems. In 1677 he succeeded [Matthew Locke](#) as the composer for [Charles II](#)'s string orchestra and in 1679 was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey in [succession](#) to the composer [John Blow](#). A further appointment as one of the three organists of the Chapel Royal followed in 1682. He retained all his official posts through the reigns of [James II](#) and [William III](#) and [Mary](#). He married in 1680 or 1681 and had at least six children, three of whom died in [infancy](#). His son Edward was also a musician, as was Edward's son Edward Henry (died 1765). Purcell seems to have spent all his life in Westminster. A fatal illness prevented him from finishing the music for the operatic version of [John Dryden](#) and [Sir Robert Howard](#)'s verse tragedy [The Indian Queen](#) (1664), which was completed after his death by his brother Daniel (d. 1717). Daniel Purcell had also been brought up as a chorister in the Chapel Royal and was organist of Magdalen College, Oxford, from 1688 to 1695. Before his brother's death, he was little known as a composer, but from 1695 to 1707 he was in considerable demand for music for stage productions in London until the advent of Italian [opera](#) brought his activities to an end.

## SONGS AND INDEPENDENT INSTRUMENTAL COMPOSITIONS

To later ages Purcell was best known as a songwriter because so many of his [songs](#) were printed in his lifetime and were reprinted again and again after his death. The first evidence of his mastery as a composer, however, is an instrumental work—a series of [fantasias](#) (or “fancies”) for viols in three, four, five, six, and seven parts. The nine four-part fantasias all bear dates in the summer of 1680, and the others can hardly be later. Purcell was here [reviving](#) a form of music that was already out of date and doing it with the skill of a veteran. Probably about the same time he started to work on a more fashionable type of instrumental music—a series of sonatas for two violins, [bass viol](#), and organ (or harpsichord). Twelve of these were published in 1683, with a dedication to Charles II, and a further nine, together with a chaconne for the same combination, were issued by his widow in 1697. The foreword to the 1683 set claimed that the composer had “faithfully endeavour'd a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters”; but side by side with the Italianate manner there was a good deal that derived from the English [chamber music](#) tradition. The instrumental movements are the most striking part of the earliest of Purcell's *Welcome Songs* for Charles II—a series of ceremonial [odes](#) that began to appear in 1680. Possibly he lacked experience in writing for voices, at any rate on the scale required for works of this kind; or else he had not yet achieved the art of cloaking [insipid](#) words in significant music. By 1683 he had acquired a surer touch, and from that



time until 1694, when he wrote the last of his birthday odes for Queen Mary, he produced a series of [compositions](#) for the court in which the vitality of the music makes it easy to ignore the poverty of the words. The same qualities are apparent in the last of his odes for St. Cecilia's Day, written in 1692.

## MUSIC FOR THEATRE

Purcell's genius as a composer for the stage was hampered by there being no public opera in London during his lifetime. Most of his [theatre music](#) consists simply of instrumental music and songs interpolated into spoken drama, though occasionally there were opportunities for more extended musical scenes. His contribution to the stage was in fact modest until 1689, when he wrote [Dido and Aeneas](#) (libretto by [Nahum Tate](#)) for performance at a girls' school in Chelsea; this work achieves a high degree of dramatic intensity within a narrow framework. From that time until his death, he was constantly employed in writing music for the public theatres. These productions included some that gave scope for more than merely incidental music—notably music for *Dioclesian* (1690), adapted by [Thomas Betterton](#) from the tragedy *The Prophetess*, by [John Fletcher](#) and Philip Massinger; for *King Arthur* (1691), by John Dryden, designed from the first as an entertainment with music; and for *The Fairy Queen* (1692), an anonymous [adaptation](#) of Shakespeare's [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#), in which the texts set to music are all interpolations. In these works Purcell showed not only a lively sense of comedy but also a gift of passionate [musical expression](#) that is often more exalted than the words. The tendency to identify himself still more closely with the Italian style is very noticeable in the later dramatic works, which often demand considerable agility from the soloists.

## MUSIC FOR CHURCH

Purcell's four-part fantasias, his first court [ode](#), and his first [music](#) for the theatre, *Theodosius*, a play by [Nathaniel Lee](#), all date from 1680. Some of his [church music](#) may be earlier than that, but it is not possible to assign definite dates. As far as is known, most of his [anthems](#), whether for the full choir (full anthems) or with sections for soloists ([verse anthems](#)), were written between 1680 and 1685, the year of [Charles II's](#) death. The decline of the Chapel Royal during the reigns of [James II](#) and of William and Mary may have been responsible for the comparatively few works he produced during that period, or, alternatively, he may have been so busy with stage music and odes that he had little time or [inclination](#) for church music. The style of his full anthems, like that of the fantasias, shows a great respect for older traditions. His verse anthems, on the other hand, were obviously influenced, in the first instance, by his master at the Chapel Royal, [Pelham Humfrey](#), who had acquired a knowledge of Continental styles when he was sent abroad to study in the mid-1660s. The most notable feature of these latter works is the use of

expressive vocal declamation that is pathetic without being mawkish. The same characteristics appear in the sacred songs he wrote for private performance. Since composers for the Chapel Royal in Charles II's reign had the string orchestra at their disposal, Purcell took the opportunity to include overtures and ritornellos that are both dignified and lively. The most elaborate of all his [compositions](#) for the church are the [anthem](#) "My heart is inditing," performed in [Westminster Abbey](#) at the coronation of James II in 1685, and the festal *Te Deum and Jubilate*, written for St. Cecilia's Day in 1694. Of these the anthem is the more impressive; the *Te Deum and Jubilate* suffers on the whole from a forced brilliance that seems to have faded with the passage of time.

## STYLE

Though the main period of Purcell's creative activity lasted for little more than the last 15 years of his life, he managed to crowd into it a large number of compositions, including more than 100 [secular songs](#) and about 40 duets, apart from those that he contributed to plays. Many of the songs are quite substantial pieces, incorporating [recitative](#) and arias on the lines of the Italian solo [cantata](#). A favourite device used widely by Purcell in his [secular](#) music, though rarely in his anthems, was the [ground bass](#) (a short melodic phrase repeated over and over again as a bass line, with varying music for the upper parts). This device can have an invigorating effect in lively pieces, while in laments, such as Dido's farewell, it can intensify the expression of grief. The chaconne in the second set of sonatas uses the same technique with impressive results. Works of this kind represent the composer at the height of his capacity. The numerous [catches](#) (rounds for three or more unaccompanied voices written as one melody with each singer taking up a part in turn), on the other hand, though accomplished enough are little more than an experienced musician's contribution to social merrymaking. Purcell seems to have abandoned instrumental [chamber music](#) after his early years. His keyboard music forms an even smaller part of his work: it consists of suites and shorter pieces for harpsichord and a handful of pieces for organ.

## POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS

Apart from a large number of songs that appeared in vocal collections, little of Purcell's music was published in his lifetime. The principal works were the *Sonatas of III Parts* (1683); "Welcome to all the pleasures," an ode for St. Cecilia's Day, written in 1683 (published in 1684); and *Dioclesian*, composed in 1690 (1691). After his death his widow published a collection of his harpsichord pieces (1696), instrumental music for the theatre (1697), and the *Te Deum and Jubilate* (1697); and the publisher Henry Playford issued a two-volume collection of songs titled *Orpheus Britannicus* (1698 and 1702), which went through three editions, last appearing at mid-18th century.

A few of Purcell's dramatic works, odes, and anthems were printed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but not until 1876, when the Purcell Society was founded, was a serious attempt made to issue all of Purcell's works. The first volume was published in 1878, the second in 1882. From 1889 to 1928 volumes appeared at intervals. Then the scheme was in [abeyance](#) until 1957, when a volume of miscellaneous odes and cantatas was published. It was finally completed in 32 volumes in 1965. Revision of earlier volumes proceeded simultaneously with the issue of later ones, beginning with a revised edition of *Dioclesian* in 1961.

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