COLOR ME MOZART!

Biographies, Recordings & Coloring Pages for 25 Great Composers

By Anna Wentlent, Charles Grace & Mitch Wyatt

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
1685 – 1750
BAROQUE ERA

BIOGRAPHY

- Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany and died in Leipzig, Germany.
- He was born into a very musical family, and it is believed that his father taught him to play the violin at a young age.
- Bach's parents died when he was only ten years old, at which point he moved in with his older brother, who was an organist in a nearby town. While living with his brother, he continued his musical education and studied voice, violin, harpsichord, and organ.
- He spent most of his adult life as an organist and teacher at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, Germany. He played the organ for services, composed music for feast days and other special events, and taught music at the St. Thomas School.
- Bach was a devoted family man. He had seven children with his first wife, who died suddenly in 1720, and thirteen children with his second wife.
- During his lifetime, he was better known as an organist than as a composer. It wasn't until years after his death that his compositions began to receive significant attention.
- Today, Bach is regarded as the most important composer of the Baroque era, as well as one of the most influential Western composers of all time. Many other composers were impacted by him, including Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin.

FUN FACTS

- As a young man, Bach was an organist in the court of Duke Wilhelm Ernst. When he gave notice that he was resigning to take another job, the Duke imprisoned him in the castle for several weeks rather than let him leave. During that time, Bach wrote forty-six pieces of music.
- He loved coffee and wrote an entire cantata about the subject. It included the following line: "If I couldn't, three times a day, be allowed to drink my little cup of coffee, in my anguish I would turn into a shriveled-up roast goat."
- Five of Bach's sons were named Johann and two of his daughters were named Johanna.
- Several of his sons went on to be well-known composers and musicians in their own right. In total, 76 members of the Bach family tree were musicians.
- At the time of his death, Bach's estate included five harpsichords, two lute-harpsichords, one spinet, three violins, three violas, two cellos, one viola da gamba, and one lute.

FAMOUS WORKS

- Toccato and Fugue in D minor (organ)
- *The Well-Tempered Clavier*
- Brandenburg Concertos
- Mass in B minor

RECORDING

Track 1: "Little" Fugue in G minor

Johann Sebastian Bach