

Prelude

75 years

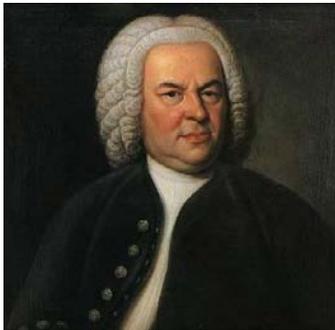


Alive through great music!

BACH AND BEYOND • JANUARY 18-20, 2019

MASTERWORKS #4:

Can you identify the Baroque composer whose name is synonymous with "classical" music and who, for generations, has influenced music, including the works of many modern musical artists?



Johann Sebastian Bach

Nearly 300 years after his death, Johann Sebastian Bach is still the "gold standard" in classical music.ⁱ A man known for his prolific output of music, Bach was also known for his prolific procreative capacity: with his two wives, Bach fathered 20 children. His youngest was born when Bach was 23 and the oldest when he was 57.ⁱⁱ Bach's intricate harmonies and complex style of composition created music both versatile and timeless. Not only did Bach influence other Baroque composers of his time, but, to this day, the "Bach-effect" can be heard in varied musical styles from rock to hip-hop and everything in between. For proof, just listen to this version of hip-hop Bach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seS8hdALabo>

Born in 1685, Bach lived in an era of church-dominated music. The last-born child of a city musician of Eisenbach, Bach was orphaned at age 10 and, at age 17, found employment as a church musician.ⁱⁱⁱ It is no surprise that much of Bach's compositions centered around the church and was considered "sacred" music". Long after his death in 1750, Bach's music inspired future generations of musicians.^{iv}

If plagiarism is the highest form of flattery, Bach is truly revered, for he is among the most copied composers of all time. His compositions are so frequently referenced in multiple genres of music that sometimes, even a modern artist

might not immediately recognize Bach's profound influence. In composing "A Whiter Shade of Pale," lead singer Gary Brooker (of the U.K. rock band Procol Harum) admitted to using a few bars of



Procol Harum

Bach's famous *Air on a G String* in the beginning of the hit tune, confessing, "... it does a bar or two of Bach's 'Air on a G String' before it veers off. That spark was all it took. I wasn't consciously combining Rock with Classical, it's just that Bach's music was in me."^v Compare "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BADDeIQWVQ>) with Bach's original music. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMkmQlfOJDk>) The popularity of the rock song was nearly instantaneous: in 1967, "A Whiter Shade of Pale" reached number **one** on the charts in England and number **five** in the U.S.^{vi}

The music of the Beatles also reflects Bach's influence. In the hit single *Penny Lane*, Paul McCartney chose to include a "mock-Baroque" style trumpet solo after hearing trumpeter David Mason perform Bach's second Brandenburg Concerto during a BBC television broadcast.^{vii} David Mason can be heard performing the trumpet on the *Penny Lane* recording. The featured instrument, a piccolo trumpet, was specifically chosen to suit the more ornamental baroque style.^{viii} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-rB0pHI9fU>

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The Bach-effect also inspired the Beatles' 1968 hit *Blackbird*. The melody and baseline find their roots in Bach's *Bourée in E minor* for lute, an instrument which both McCartney and George Harrison learned to play as children.^{ix} For fun, listen first to the *Bourée* performed on lute (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xKdb4rNtyk>) and then to the recording of *Blackbird*. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDxfjUEBT9I>) McCartney explained, "Bach was always one of our favorite composers; we felt we had a lot in common with him... I developed the melody on guitar based on the Bach piece and took it somewhere else, took it to another level, then I just fitted the words to it."^x

Do you remember *Switched-on Bach*? Released in 1968, it was the first album of American musician and composer Wendy Carlos, performed by two artists using a Moog Synthesizer. It was the first time that synthesizers were used in popular music.^{xi} The album was on the US Billboard 200 chart for a total of 59 weeks, reached No. 10 at the height of its popularity, and topped its Classical Albums chart from 1969 to 1972. This ground-breaking music, an engaging synthesized version of the *Brandenburg Concertos*, may be heard at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tc51cnV6YJI> Carlos's work was premiered at Carnegie Hall in 1968 and several months later, Leonard Bernstein and Leopold Stokowski presented a N.Y. Philharmonic Young People's Concert featuring Bach's "Little" *Fugue in G minor*, arranged for Moog synthesizer, organ and orchestra.^{xii}



Heitor Villa-Lobos

folk music, but he was especially fascinated by Bach's music, which led to Villa-Lobos's most famous works, *Bachianas Brasileiras*. The work, written between 1930 and 1945, consists of nine suites for small ensembles. The music is unique and intertwines Bach's classical techniques with the

Heitor Villa-Lobos, one of the most influential 20th century Latin American composers, was also influenced by Bach. His work alternated between classical music and native Brazilian

distinct flare of Brazilian folk tunes.^{xiii} The fifth suite is a good example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anxdAcilnsM> Villa-Lobos's music can also be heard in Brazilian and Hollywood films.^{xiv}



Toccata And Fugue In D Minor

Williams rewrote the melody for electric guitar, with a new arrangement for drums, bass, acoustic guitar, and keyboard.^{xv} Here's the original version, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nnuq9PXbywA>, contrasted with the one created by Williams. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgbgUrp1a70>

Creativity inspires, and, over the centuries, Bach remains a very popular muse. After all, great inspiration has no expiration date.

Join us!

Please join the Hartford Symphony Orchestra for **Bach and Beyond, January 18 – 20, 2019**. Our Masterworks concert presents the music of Bach and his Baroque contemporaries (including French composers, Jean-Philippe Rameau and Jean-Baptiste Lully, Italian composer, Antonio Vivaldi, and Spanish composer, Juan Arañés), as well as the 20th century composers, Heitor Villa-Lobos and Jacques Ibert, who were all inspired by Bach's genius.



WONDERING HOW THE MUSIC WILL SOUND?

Try HSO'S Listening Guide, with links to the pieces you'll hear on our concert stage – and more!

Rameau's Overture to *Le temple de la Gloire*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdiFbtm3uRQ>

Lully's "Chaconne" from *Phaeton*, complete with Baroque dancers, similar to those who will appear on the HSO stage during this concert:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVM0lpxANeg>

Bach's Violin Concerto in A Minor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTr8KHDmMWw>

Arañés' *Gran Chacona*, with vocalists as well as dancers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCjfVWVWErE>

Bach's Suite No. 3 in D Major:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuMtEof9MWs>

Vivaldi's *La Follia*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v8zxoEoA_Q

Villa-Lobos' recording of *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 9, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ccz84743ag>

Ibert's *Divertissement*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njZQTavSdks>

La Folia may well be one of the most remarkable pieces in musical history, with roots going back to 15th century Portugal.^{xvi} Beethoven, Paganini, Liszt and Rachmaninoff are among more than 200 composers who have written some variation of the piece over the span of more than 300 years.^{xvii} We offer two versions below:

La Folia by Arcangelo Corelli, as studied by Suzuki violin students (Suzuki Book VI):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BECZDluqEvA>

Rachmaninoff's Variations on a Theme of Corelli:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eVEP1MrG_g



Toccata And Fugue In D Minor



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Casey's
Classics

This issue of *Prelude* deliberately does not include our usual recording recommendations from **Coleman Casey**, HSO's dear friend, Director Emeritus and beloved in-house audiophile, who explained that the multiple great recordings of the many pieces on this program made his selections redundant!



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