

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born in Eisenach, in Thuringia, in 1685 and died at Leipzig in 1750, aged 65.

He lived in Protestant north Germany in the time when music was very important in Church life.

Occupied positions of choir boy, violinist in the orchestra of a prince, organist of town churches, chief musician in a court.

Often known as a Religious composer. He returned from court life to the life of a church musician with some reluctance.

Played many instruments, and as a clavichordist, harpsichordist and organist, he was supreme in his day.

He was twice married and the parent of **20** children, of whom several attained a high position in his own profession.

HOMEWORK

Find out about Bach's musical style. Did he follow the common traits of the Baroque period?

B Minor Mass

A setting of the Latin text of the Roman Catholic Mass by J.S.Bach, for 5 vocalists (2 sopranos, alto, tenor, bass), choir, and orchestra. It consists of the usual five items of the Ordinary of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnes Dei). However, Bach splits up the Latin text into 24 sections, which he sets as separate arias, duets, and choruses. For some of these he adapted music from various cantatas he had written earlier (e.g. the great *Crucifixus*, structured on a ground bass, originates from Cantatas No. 12, *Weinen, Klagen*). Bach took several years to complete the Mass in B minor. The original version of the Sanctus was composed for Christmas 1724. In 1733 Bach composed the Kyrie and Gloria, dedicating them to the new Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus III. It is believed he composed the remaining items, and revised the Sanctus, over the next 5 years.