

The Genius of Bach  
A Five Week Online Seminar  
Rhythmix Cultural Works  
Stephen Schultz  
Spring 2021

Thursday Nights 7:00-9:00pm  
April 22, 29, May 13, 20, 27

**OVERVIEW:** This class will be a chronological retrospective of Bach's life and works, covering major aspects of his instrumental and vocal music. We will be discussing the principles of historically informed performance practice in relation to modern and period instrument performances of his music. We will show the musical influences that affected Bach's work as we work our way through his incredible musical journey and finish up with the masterpieces of his final decade: B Minor Mass, Goldberg Variations, and the Art of the Fugue.

**Week I:** Introduction + Instrumental music: organ and keyboard. We will cover Preludes and Fugues for organ, harpsichord concertos, and the English Suites for keyboard.

**Week II:** The Brandenburg Concertos. An in-depth survey of these six masterpieces of 18<sup>th</sup> century chamber music.

**Week III:** Cantatas and St. John Passion. A selection of movements from the over 200 surviving cantatas and a guided tour through Bach's first musical account of the last days of Jesus.

**Week IV:** The B Minor Mass. An exploration of Bach's own compilation of his "greatest hits". One of the towering monuments in all Classical music.

**Week V:** The Goldberg Variations and Art of the Fugue. Bach's great exploration of the theme and variations form and a look at the summation of his art of writing fugues.

**Performances:**

This website is a vast resource for Bach's works. Just type in a piece and you will be able to watch great performances:

<https://www.bachvereniging.nl/en/allobach>

**Readings:**

Please read the following articles for background information:

- 1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Sebastian\\_Bach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Sebastian_Bach)
- 2 <http://www.baroquemusic.org/biojsbach.html>
- 3 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Johann-Sebastian-Bach>
- 4 <http://www.jsbach.org>