

## PRESSE KONTAKT

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## LEIPZIG RESEARCH TEXT

### **On the trail of Bach in Leipzig** (last update: January 2025)

In 1723, Johann Sebastian Bach took up the office of Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir in Leipzig. This marks the beginning of the most productive period of his life: from 30 May 1723, he composed musical masterpieces every week, stunning and everlasting, including 150 cantatas in four years, the St John Passion, the St Matthew Passion, the Coffee Cantata and the Christmas Oratorio. The musician presented Leipzig audiences with an incredibly rich and complex musical cosmos. The composer spent 27 years working in Leipzig and rests eternally in St. Thomas Church. Today, Johann Sebastian Bach is not only the most-played classical composer on Spotify but also Leipzig's most renowned musician, with his legacy celebrated throughout the city.

### **Bach Archives and Bach Museum**

Located at St. Thomas' Churchyard 15/16, the Leipzig Bach Archive is a world-renowned research centre dedicated to studying the life, work, and influence of Johann Sebastian Bach and his extensive family of musicians. The adjoining Bach Museum, located in the historic Bose House, features a permanent exhibition dedicated to Bach's life and work. Original Bach manuscripts and jewels from the collection are exhibited in the treasure chamber. The historic baroque summer hall regularly hosts chamber concerts.

<https://www.bachmuseumleipzig.de/en/bach-museum>

### **St Thomas' Church - Centre of Bach's Work and Final Resting Place**

St Thomas' Church is probably the best-known Bach venue in Leipzig. Here he worked as Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir (Thomaskantor) and performed many of his works for the first time. Every Friday and Saturday, motets are sung in the church by the St Thomas Boys' Choir (Thomanerchor), which has existed for over 800 years and is regarded as the "Bach Ensemble". In front of the church is the famous Bach statue by Carl Seffner, a popular photo motif. The Old Bach Monument, which was created in 1843 on the initiative of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, is also located near St Thomas' Church - on the Promenadenring. It is the world's oldest memorial to Bach.

<https://www.leipzig.travel/en/poi/thomaskirche>

### **St Thomas Boys' Choir - Musical Tradition for Over 800 Years**

St Thomas Boys' Choir Leipzig (Thomanerchor) was founded in 1212 and is one of the oldest boys' choirs in Germany and the oldest cultural institution in Leipzig. The St Thomas Boys' Choir, which Bach conducted for 27 years and for which he originally composed his Leipzig works, has maintained its structure for over 800 years. The musical focus of the St Thomas Boys' Choir Leipzig is on Bach's oeuvre, but its programmes include choral works from all eras of music history. Every Friday at 6 pm and Saturday at 3 pm you can

listen to the St Thomas Boys' Choir during the cantatas in St Thomas' Church. Andreas Reize has been the Thomaskantor and Artistic Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir since 2020.

<https://thomanerchor.de/en/>

## **St Nicolas' Church - Bach's First Concert Location in Leipzig**

Bach began his Leipzig ministry here on 30 May 1723 with a Cantata Performance during a church service. As Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir and Leipzig's "Director musices", Bach was responsible for the church music at both main churches, the St Nicolas' Church and St Thomas' Church, as well as the Neue Kirche "Matthäi" and the St Peters. Most Cantata performances under Bach's direction took place at St Nicolas Church. Bach's major works were also premiered here, including the St John Passion on Good Friday 1724 and the Christmas Oratorio in 1734.

<https://www.leipzig.travel/en/poi/nikolaikirche>

## **City History Museum - Bach-Parcours and Haussmann-Portrait**

The famous Bach portrait by Elias Gottlob Haussmann can be found in the City History Museum in the Old City Hall. Here Bach signed his contract as Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir in 1723 and began his legendary work in Leipzig. Leipzig's Old City Hall was the seat of the City Administration until 1905. The digital Bach trail in the museum shows the urban environment in Bach's Leipzig period as well as his connections.

<https://www.stadtgeschichtliches-museum-leipzig.de/en/>

<https://www.stadtgeschichtliches-museum-leipzig.de/blog/2023/09/25/machtzentrum-leipzigs-und-authentische-bachstaette-der-neue-bach-parcours-im-alten-rathaus/>

## **Bach's Leipzig Works - Concerts at the Location of the World Premieres**

Bach's official duties as Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir included to compose around 60 cantatas per church year for the Sunday and festive services. Bach's first Leipzig cantata cycle has survived almost in its entirety. In addition, some of Bach's most important works were premiered in Leipzig, including the only completely preserved authentic passions by Bach: the St John Passion (BWV 245) from his first year in Leipzig in 1724 and the St Matthew Passion (BWV 244) in 1727. At the turn of the year 1734-1735, the six parts of the Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248) were performed for the first time from 25 December to 6 January in the St Nicolas' Church and St Thomas' Church. Every year, these works are performed at their original venues during Easter and Christmas. More than 50 concerts featuring parts of the Christmas Oratorio are held in Leipzig and the surrounding area during Advent and Christmas alone.

<https://www.leipzig.travel/en/entdecken/musik/leipziger-komponisten>

## **Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum - Bach and the Coffee Cantata**

Saxony's favourite drink has been served in Germany's oldest coffee house since 1711. Johann Sebastian Bach was also a frequent guest at the famous Leipzig coffee house "Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum", where numerous other prominent personalities have stopped by throughout its 300-year history. Bach composed the so-called coffee cantata, "Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht" (BWV 211), in 1734 - the premiere probably took place in Café Zimmermann.

<https://www.bachakademie.de/de/bachakademie/nachrichten/saison-2023-24/johann-sebastian-bach-kaffee-kantate.html>

## Bach and Leipzig's Music Trail

The Leipzig Music Trail connects 23 authentic places of music history, including the Mendelssohn House. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy campaigned for the revival of Bach's works, including the St Matthew Passion in 1829, which brought Bach back into the public consciousness and ushered in the Bach Renaissance.

<https://www.notenspur-leipzig.de/en>

## Special Bach tours

Various guided city tours "Discovering Bach" or "City of Music – A Walk on the Leipzig Music Trail" can be booked all year round via Leipzig Erleben. Leipzig Stadthafen (city harbour) offers a special musical voyage of discovery from April to October. On a motorboat tour with musical accompaniment, guests gain an insight into Bach's work in Leipzig and how the Leipzig river landscape inspired Bach.

<https://leipzig-erleben.com/en/>

<https://www.stadthafen-leipzig.com/motorbootrundfahrt-johann-sebastian-bach-tour>

## Bach Festival Event Leipzig

Every year in June, thousands of Bach fans from over 50 nations come together at the Leipzig Bach Festival event to celebrate Bach's music. Renowned performers from all over the world can be experienced in over 200 events over eleven days, including the St Thomas Boys' Choir and the Gewandhausorchester. In 2025, The Constellation Choir & Orchestra conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Ton Koopman with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, and András Schiff will also take part. Tickets go on sale at the end of November for the following year.

<https://www.bachfestleipzig.de/de/bachfest>

## Bach Specialities, Bach in Film, a Forest for Bach

Culinary Bach specialities include the "Bachtaler", a mixture of nougat, marzipan and a coffee bean at Café Kandler, and the Leipzig Lark Coffee Edition at Konditorei Kleinert. Bach fans will also find what they are looking for in the Thomas Shop. The film "Living Bach", available on DVD and streaming, shows what makes the Leipzig Bach Festival event and the worldwide Bach family so special.

To reduce its carbon footprint, the Leipzig Bachfest is supporting the "Wald für Sachsen" foundation in the permanent creation of a new Bach Forest at the historic Bach site in Störmthal, south of Leipzig. J.S. Bach tested the new Hildebrandt organ here in 1723 and played the cantata "Höchstewünschtes Freudenfest" BWV 194 at the inauguration. <https://www.thomasshop-leipzig.de/startseite/>

<https://www.cafekandler.de/produkt/original-bachtaler/>

[https://www.baeckerei-kleinert.de/shop/shop\\_detail.php?kat=128](https://www.baeckerei-kleinert.de/shop/shop_detail.php?kat=128)

<https://www.schmidt-film.com/living-bach-93138.html?language=en>

<https://www.bachfestleipzig.de/en/bachfest/forest-bach>

## Travel Offers for Bach Fans

Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing offers general travel packages all year round to get to know Leipzig as a City of Music. The tailor-made travel offers including concert tickets with the St Thomas Boys' Choir are particularly attractive for Bach fans: <https://www.leipzig.travel/en/package/ostern-in-leipzig-mit-dem-thomanerchor>

Bach Festival event 2025: <https://www.leipzig.travel/en/package/reiseangebot-bachfest-2025>

Christmas Oratorio: <https://www.leipzig.travel/en/package/weihnachtsoratorium-leipzig>

Music city in general: <https://www.leipzig.travel/en/package/kurzurlaub-musikstadt-leipzig>

## **Further Information**

<https://www.leipzig.travel/entdecken/musikstadt-leipzig>

<https://www.leipzig.travel/recherchetext/leipzig-hier-lebt-musik>

## Event Highlights for Bach in 2025

Leipzig offers music lovers a unique experience centred around Johann Sebastian Bach all year round —a combination of history, culture, and enjoyment that is second to none.

**All year round:** The St Thomas Boys' Choir performs every Friday at 6 pm and on Saturdays at 3 pm during the motets in St Thomas' Church and can be heard during church services on Sundays. This does not apply during holidays and when the St Thomas Boys' Choir is on concert tour.

**21 March 2025: Special exhibition 'Milestones in Bach research' at the Bach Museum to mark the 75th anniversary of the Leipzig Bach Archives and the 40th anniversary of the Leipzig Bach Museum**

When the Bach Archive was founded in November 1950 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Johann Sebastian Bach's death. The primary aim of the new institute was to bring together, analyse, research and make accessible all the widely scattered source material on the life, work and influence of Johann Sebastian Bach in one place. In addition to the practical cultivation of Bach's music, which had already been carried out intensively by the St Thomas Boys' Choir at an early stage, a central collection and research centre was now established as a scientific equivalent.

<https://www.bachmuseumleipzig.de/en/bach-museum>

**17-18 April 2025: St Matthew Passion** by the Gewandhausorchester and St Thomas Boys' Choir under the direction of Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir Andreas Reize in the St Thomas' Church.

<https://www.gewandhausorchester.de/en/>

**5 March/7 May 2025:** In collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts Leipzig (MdbK), musicians from the Orchestra and Chorus of the Musikalische Komödie (Operetta and Musical Theatre) will present a diverse programme as a tribute to Bach: "Echoes in the Museum".

<https://www.oper-leipzig.de/en/programm/nachhall-im-museum/177>

**1/2/15 June 2025:** Oper Leipzig presents performances of 'Amadis, the Knight', composed by Bach's son Johann Christian Bach. He is known as the 'father and inventor' of Viennese Classicism, as he greatly influenced the style of the young Mozart in particular.

<https://www.oper-leipzig.de/en/programm/amadis-der-ritter/720>

**12-22 June 2025: 2025 Leipzig Bachfest** under the motto 'Transformation' will focus on the creative development of Bach's works and their European influences in 2025. Works will be performed that Bach himself subjected to a fascinating transformation process, which he created in the style of various European sound preferences, as well as compositions by third parties that he rearranged. Advance ticket sales for the 2025 Leipzig Bachfest started on 26 November 2024.

<https://www.bachfestleipzig.de/en/bachfest/2025/konzerte>

**13-16 & 20-22 June 2025:** With "Virtual Bach", Johann Sebastian Bach returns, brought to life by augmented reality technology and AR glasses from OVRLAB. In the historic summer hall of the Bach Archive, where Bach once performed, visitors can experience him at the harpsichord, gaining insights into his life, works, and character. After the 2025 Leipzig Bachfest, this immersive experience will become part of the permanent exhibition.

<https://www.bachfestleipzig.de/en/bachfest>

**15/16/17 June 2025:** As part of the 500th anniversary celebrations of Auerbach's Cellar Restaurant, *Bach's Faust* will unite two cultural highlights during the 2025 Leipzig Bachfest, featuring texts by event director Prof. Michael Maul.

<https://www.bachfestleipzig.de/en/bachfest/2025/konzerte>

**28 July 2025: 275th anniversary of Bach's death in Leipzig in 1750.** Bach's sarcophagus was transferred to the choir of St Thomas' Church in 1950, the 200th anniversary of his death. To commemorate the anniversary of Bach's death, a festive organ concert will take place at St Nicholas' Church in Leipzig in 2025.

<https://www.nikolaikirche.de/kirchenmusik/musik/konzerte/>

**12/13/14 December 2025: Christmas Oratorio** with the Gewandhausorchester and St Thomas Boys' Choir under the direction of Director of the St Thomas Boys' Choir Andreas Reize in the St Thomas' Church.

<https://www.leipzig.travel/en/package/weihnachtsoratorium-leipzig>