

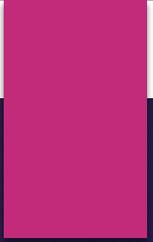
# Composer of the Week

**J. S. BACH**





**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH**



**Born in Eisenach (Germany) in 1685**  
**Died in Leipzig (Germany) in 1750**

**One the most celebrated composers of all time.**  
**The most well-known of a large family of German musicians.**

**He composed over 1,000 works (pieces of music).**

**He was an organist and keyboard player and was employed throughout his life by local Noblemen.**  
**Because of this, many of his compositions were Church Music.**



He wrote four Passions – very long works for choir, soloists and orchestra – based on the Passion story as told in the four Gospels. Just like our own Passion Play!

His St Matthew Passion is the longest and most famous. It was first performed on Good Friday, 1727 at St Thomas Church, Leipzig

**Bach had 20 children many of whom were musicians.**

**One of them, Johann Christian Bach, settled in London and was a court musician to Queen Charlotte.**

**When the young Mozart travelled to London JC Bach met him and taught him and it is said that he greatly influenced Mozart's compositions.**



Bach was an amazing organist and keyboard player.

He would have played on a harpsichord.

What do you notice about the harpsichord?



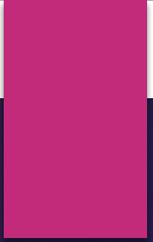


Bach once walked two hundred and thirteen miles to hear a performance by an organist whom he admired. Once he had heard the concert, he turned round and walked straight home again

**How many miles altogether?**

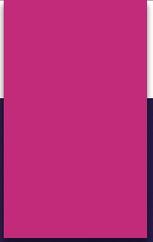
**426**

That's a similar distance as walking from London to Blackpool and back.



During this time new versions of the harpsichord were beginning to be produced which were more like our piano of today. It was mostly to do with how the instrument was tuned, the new instruments kept their tone and didn't need to be retuned regularly.

To prove how good this new way of tuning was, Bach composed a Prelude and Fugue one in a major (happy) key and one in a minor (sad) key for each note of the scale.



**There are 12 notes in a whole scale**

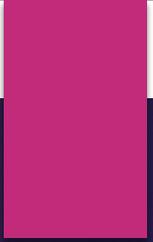
**Bach composed 1 major and 1 minor prelude and fugue in each key. That = ?**

**24 Preludes and fugues**

**He wrote 2 books of these which altogether =**

**48 Preludes and Fugues**

**These are also known as 'The Well Tempered Clavier'.**



**Preludes are fairly simple compositions while Fugues are complicated, mathematical works.**

**Listen to this fugue in C minor from Book 1 .  
Listen out for the theme or tune and how it's repeated in different parts of the keyboard.**

**See if you can notice how many times it re-appears.**

**Maybe you could lift your hand every time you hear the theme repeated.**