



J. S. Bach (Volume I) (Collected Works of Albert Schweitzer)

Albert Schweitzer

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This is Volume I of Albert Schweitzer's classic two volume work on the life and music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Beginning with the history of German Protestant church music, Schweitzer lays the foundation for the career of "the greatest German musician". He then follows Bach's life from Eisenach, where he was born in 1685, to his final position as cantor of the St. Thomas School in Leipzig where he died in 1750. Although renowned as the "king of organists" in his day, Bach was not appreciated as a composer until many years after his death when he was rediscovered by other great composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner, and Brahms.

Schweitzer, who was regarded as the greatest Bach organist of his day, then describes the organ, clavier, chamber and orchestral works as well as how such music was performed in Bach's day, basing his opinions on detailed scholarship and his own personal experience performing the music in concerts throughout Europe. It was with the proceeds from such concerts that Schweitzer helped finance his hospital in Africa. Volume I closes with the famous story of Bach's visit to Frederick the Great and Bach's astounding Musical Offering, a six part fugue composed by Bach to a theme given him by the king.

In Volume II (to be released soon) Schweitzer presents his revolutionary theories on the pictorial nature of Bach's music, which, at the time the book was first released, was considered to be the finest example of "pure music". He then discusses in detail the remaining music of Bach.

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