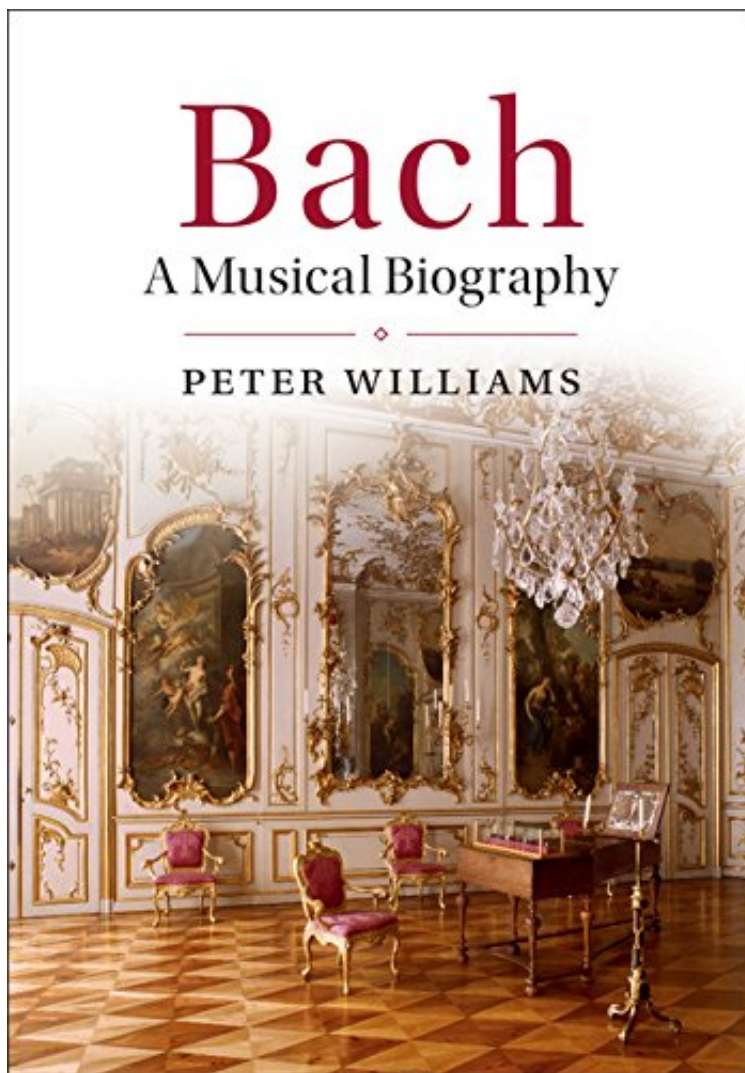


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Bach: A Musical Biography

Peter Williams

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Peter Williams : Bach: A Musical Biography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bach: A Musical Biography:

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J. S. Bach composed some of the best-loved and most moving music in Western culture. Surviving mostly in manuscript collections, his music also exists in special and unique publications that reveal much about his life and thoughts as a composer. In this book, Peter Williams, author of the acclaimed J. S. Bach: A Life in Music, revisits Bach's biography through the lens of his music. Reviewing all of Bach's music chronologically, Williams discusses the

music collection by collection to reveal the development of Bach's interests and priorities. While a great deal has been written about the composer's vocal works, Williams gives the keyboard music its proper emphasis, revealing it as crucial to Bach's biography, as a young organist and a mature composer, as a performer in public and teacher in private, and as a profound thinker in the language of music.

'A big read, stimulatingly rigorous, and an excellent follow-up from Williams's concise *Life of Bach* (2004).' Five stars, BBC Music Magazine 'The joy of this [...] book is the human touch that underlines the title, a musical biography ... Not only a fascinating read but brings a great composer and his art brilliantly to life.' Ken Walton, *The Scotsman*... the reader must be prepared to put in the hours to find these things. The going is not always easy, and the mixture of forensically researched and ingeniously practical considerations on which Williams bases his speculations are many and various, with many a tangent taken along the way. No doubt it is inevitable that a mind so crammed with Bachian detail should wander off the point from time to time, but the sheer accumulation of meticulously considered observations eventually makes its mark, leaving one in renewed wonder at this astonishing composer's compulsive intellectual drive, rumbling life-force and superhuman ability to move listeners with the sheer power of organised musical notes.' Lindsay Kemp, *Gramophone* 'Bach: A Musical Biography represents an important addition to Bach scholarship, and is a vital possession for the serious Bach enthusiast.' John Robert Brown, *Classical Music* About the Author Peter Williams (1937-2016) held the first Chair in Performance Practice in Britain at the University of Edinburgh, where he was first Director of the Russell Collection of Harpsichords and latterly Dean of Music. He was also the first Arts and Sciences Distinguished Chair at Duke University, North Carolina. His first book on Bach was for the BBC in 1970. After then, he focused chiefly on music for the organ (with the three-volume *Organ Music of J. S. Bach*, Cambridge, 1980-84); on music for the harpsichord (with *Art of Fugue*, 1986, and *Bach: The Goldberg Variations*, Cambridge, 2001); and on music for ensemble (with *Musical Offering*, 1986). In more recent years, he focused on biography, with *The Life of Bach* (Cambridge, 2003) and *J. S. Bach: A Life in Music* (Cambridge, 2007).