

The Bach Town Arnstadt

Created on Monday, 10 June 2013 09:15 - Last Updated on Wednesday, 12 June 2013 07:46
Published on Monday, 10 June 2013 09:15

Arnstadt is not only a Bach town because Johann Sebastian Bach worked here from 1703 until 1707, but more so because the town was the home and workplace of his ancestors. "The Bachs", as the members this family of musicians was known, established themselves from the end of the 16th Century throughout Thuringia and beyond and decisively influenced the musical life of that time.

One can trace back through four generations almost without interruption to see how eleven male Bachs were variously active as tower keeper and house husband, musician's boy, court musician, organist at various churches, instrumentalist in the Court Chapel, town music director, composer or as instrument maker in the one-time residence town.

With great manual skill they dominated and enriched the musical life of Arnstadt in a period extending for over 100 years. The association between Arnstadt and members of the musician family Bach was established in 1620 when Caspar Bach the Elder moved from Gotha to Arnstadt. It ended in 1739 with the death of Ernst Bach, the last male descendant in Arnstadt.

Prominent Bachs before Johann Sebastian Bach arrived in Arnstadt:

- Caspar, from 1620, the first of the Bachs in Arnstadt.
- Heinrich, for 51 years organist at the Oberkirche (Upper Church) and the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady), died in 1692 in Arnstadt.
- Christoph, Johann Sebastian's grandfather, from 1654 court and town musician, died in 1661 in Arnstadt.
- Johann Christoph, J. Sebastian's uncle, from 1671 court and town musician, died in 1693 in Arnstadt.