

Bach reception

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Activities and occurrences in 19th Century Arnstadt can be identified, which can be said to have promoted Bach appreciation. In 1829 the "Singverein Arnstadt" was founded, which performed Bach works. Through the reorganisation of the Arnstadt church choir in 1925 the appreciation of great church music was permanently guaranteed and there began a period of new quality in Bach appreciation.

With the founding of the Bach Choir in 1934 and the preparations for the 1935 Bach-Handel-Schütz Celebration Year, a capable performing body was created, without which the organisation and implementation of the celebrations in that Bach commemorative year and in those that followed could not have taken place on the required scale.

Since the 21st March 1935 there has been a Bach memorial site in Arnstadt. In the course of the decades this has been overhauled, moved around and extended. The present-day exhibition in the Palace Museum is the largest and most comprehensive.

In 1935 the Neue Kirche was given Johann Sebastian Bach's name. The statue in the Market Place of the young, confident and ambitious musician, unveiled on the 20th March 1985 was created at the request of the District Council and Arnstadt Town Council with the support of the GDR Cultural Ministry. It was fashioned by the sculptor Prof. Bernd Göbel from Halle between 1982 and 1984 and cast in bronze by VEB Kunstgießerei Lauchhammer.

"By the way, Bach never placed himself in the centre of things or on a high pedestal. And the way he sits – I don't believe he is lounging. There is something active, not firmly rooted, not permanently static in this expectant position."

Prof. Bernd Göbel, April 1985