

## Mu 21 Week 5 Outline – Bach, Handel, Vivaldi

J.S. Bach – 1685-1750

### Important Dates in Bach's Life

born, 1685, Eisenach

1703 – Arnstadt – student and organist

1707 - Mülhausen, as organist

1708 – Weimar, Wilhelm Ernst, Duke of Weimar, –  
court composer and musician  
Period of greatest activity as organ  
composer; also many new cantatas

1717 – Cöthen, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen –  
court composer and musician

1723 – Leipzig, Thomaskantor

### Bach's Keyboard music

#### Well-tempered Clavier I & II

Best known of B's **clavier** music

Pt. 1 Coethen, c. 1722; Pt II Leipzig c. 1740

Each volume, 24 Preludes & Fugues; 1 for  
each major & minor key

Didactic & Aesthetic qualities of WTC

Prelude – Free, often improvisatory piece. In WTC  
often explores various technical difficulties of  
keyboard playing

Fugue – imitative polyphonic composition; strict  
formal structure

Exposition, Episode, Subject, Answer,  
Countersubject

Temperament (tuning)

Meantone, Well-tempered systems, Equal  
temperament

### Bach and the Cantata

The German Cantata

Chorale

Bach as synthesist of styles

Cantata a blending of many Baroque styles  
& genres: Opera (aria & recitative); concerto

(concerted arias, frequent instrumental obbligatos, fugue, chorale); oratorio (especially use of chorus)

## Handel & Vivaldi

Handel in: Germany, Italy, England  
Oratorio & Opera in England  
French Overture  
DaCapo aria

Handel and the Oratorio  
Saul

Baroque Orchestral Suite (Overture)  
In Bach, frequent combining of suite & concerto

Miscellaneous instrumental forms  
Sonata (da Camera, da Chiesa)  
Chaconne/Passacaglia/Ground Bass

## Vivaldi

Venice & the Ospedale della Pietà  
Baroque Concerto form (see diagram)  
Ritornello (tutti)  
Solo episode  
Confined harmonic progression (usually  
tonic – dominant – tonic w/ little  
Harmonic development)