

The *Tocatta con Fuga* in D minor, BWV 565, is a piece for organ composed by Johann Sebastian Bach between 1703 and 1707. It is one of the most famous classical music work and has been used in popular media such as movies or video games but also rock music and cellular ringtones.

Beside the popularity of the piece, the attribution to Bach has been challenged since the early 1980s by musicologist Peter Williams and a number of scholars, and remains a controversial topic. Some stylistic aspects (like parallel octaves, a pedal statement of the subject unaccompanied by other voices, primitive harmonies throughout the piece, conclusion of the piece on a minor plagal cadence, etc.) are typical for post-1750 music, and for this reason *Tocatta con Fuga* may be an exercise by a later composer, who tried to imitate Baroque idioms.

As with most organ works by Bach, no autograph manuscript of BWV 565 survives. The only near-contemporary source is a copy by Johannes Ringk, which brings the title *Tocatta con Fuga*.

This work has been transcribed many times. The most famous instrumental versions are probably by Ferruccio Busoni and Carl Tausig for piano and by Salvatore Sciarrino for flute.

In 1927, great conductor Leopold Stokowski transcribed the piece for the first time for large orchestra with success: the 1927 78rpm disc was an international best-seller and Stokowski himself directed his version in Disney's film *Fantasia* (1940).

Pop version of *Tocatta con Fuga* BWV 565 to be remember are the Violin one by Vanessa-Mae (it reached #24 on the Billboard charts) and the one by John Williams with band Sky, which entered Top 10 pop hit in 1980.

FLORALEDA SACCHI