**Chapter 5**

EXPLORE: Cantatas

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YC5KpmK6oOs>

What was hot during the Baroque era? Coffee! Coffee was new to Western Europe during this time. It was so popular that composer J.S. Bach even wrote a piece of music about it, *The Coffee Cantata.* Bach wrote many sacred cantatas for use in the Lutheran Church service. He also used the cantata form as a small theatrical piece to explore secular and timely topics such as the coffee craze that started in Vienna and Venice during Bach’s lifetime. This YouTube video of The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir is a casually staged performance of Bach’s *Coffee Cantata.* Just as is shown here this cantata was not used in a church but rather in a café, or perhaps in a home.

EXPLORE: Performance Practice

<http://www.baroquemusic.org>

This beautiful site has a great deal of information on important composers of the Baroque era. Make sure you scroll down and click on the tab “Baroque Music Performance”. Here you can listen to modern performers playing in the Baroque style and a talk on Authentic Performance by George Malcolm.

RESEARCH: Bach

Bach was interested in the symbolism of numbers and his favorite numbers were said to be 14 and 41. In gematria each letter of the alphabet is assigned a number, from 1 to 26 corresponding to A-Z. The sum of the numbers assigned to B (2), A (1), C (3), H(8) equals 14 and the sum of J S Bach is its reverse, 41. Bach also seemed intrigued by the number 7 and its special use in the Bible and Christian theology. He used these numbers, and others throughout his compositions, and whole books and papers have been devoted to the discussion of their meaning. As an external research project, search the internet for entries connecting Bach, numerology, or gematria. What musical works can you find in which Bach used numbers in a special way? How might these numbers be related to his fervent religious beliefs? Share your findings on the textbook Dashboard.