

Martin Luther (der 10. November 1483—der 2. Februar 1546)

MARTIN LUTHER'S LEGACY

How Martin Luther became the first Christian pop star

Martin Luther not only reformed the Church 500 years ago, but also discovered the power of music as a songwriter and composer. His chorales gave churchgoers a voice and helped spread the ideas of the Reformation.



Schweinfurt, Germany in 1532: A Catholic congregation would like to join the Reformation, but the priest opposes the move. So, one Sunday, the churchgoers start singing a song written by church reformer Martin Luther, namely "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

The congregation wins and the priest flees. In the following days, young people roam the town's streets belting out the song, recounts theologian and journalist Burkhard Weitz: "A short while later, the Reformation was introduced in Schweinfurth."

For the past 500 years, [Martin Luther \(1483-1546\)](#) has been known as an eloquent author of theological writings. But he is far less known as a songwriter and musician, although he not only played a key role as a reformer of the Christian faith, but also initiated a new chapter of spiritual music.

Music from a young age



Reformer Martin Luther portrayed by Lucas Cranach the Elder

Dieter Falk, a successful musician and music producer, said, "In my view, Luther was the first pop musician of the church. And pop means nothing but popular."

At the young age of 14, Luther was trained in music theory while attending the Latin school in Eisenach. He sang in a church choir and a student choir. Later on, he studied theology, music, voice and composition at the Erfurt University. He played the lute and the German flute, wrote four-part compositions and joined a musical circle — a kind of band.

As Burkhard Weitz told DW, "He even thought about becoming a musician, but then opted for theology."