Preface

My previous book, *You Can Do It!*, was written for the complete newcomer to programming. I made no assumptions about the reader's prior knowledge and skills other than that they were capable of using a Microsoft Windows−based machine at the general level of accessing the Internet. It should not matter to such people what language is used for their practical experience of programming. I chose C++ because I felt certain that it was well up to the task, as long as I used a carefully chosen subset and augmented the Standard Library with a library of my own design that would support writing programs that newcomers would find interesting. The priority of that book was learning sound programming.

This book is intended for a very different readership: you should already be comfortable with the basics of programming. Exactly how you have acquired those basics will result in different expectations and problems with learning C++. One of the delights of C++ is its ability to handle the programming paradigms of most of the principal language groups. If your first language is Lisp and you are fluent in expressing problems in that language, then C++ is going to cause you a lot of mental readjustment, but most other languages will provide a good basis for moving to C++, as long as you have an open mind about how the solutions to problems should be expressed in source code.

I do not intend to provide comprehensive coverage of the whole of C++: it is far too big a language to do that. I am not going to attempt to show you all the ways in which C++ can be used: C++ is far too rich a language to attempt that in a single book. Indeed, I doubt that any single author knows enough to provide adequate coverage of all the ways C++ can be used.

My aim is to provide my readers with a sound introduction to a reasonably large working subset of C++. Along the way, I will demonstrate how C++ can be used to handle a variety of programming problems.

You will get as much from this book as you put into reading it, or, more correctly, studying it. I do not believe in trivial, make-work exercises. You should be able to provide yourself with those without any help from me. That means that the exercises in this book, along with the experiments and actively trying the code in the body of the text is part and parcel of reading this book successfully.

If you want to try C++ and have a basic knowledge of programming fundamentals, this book was written for you. I hope you enjoy the journey and feel motivated at the end to continue onwards, because C++ is the most challenging programming language available. It does not seek to constrain what you can do or how you do it. That is one of the ways in which it differs from all the other popular computer-programming languages.

If you can master C++ you will be mistress of programming and able, should the need arise, to adapt to other languages quickly.

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