

Béla Bartók was a small and sickly child, but according to his mother, he could distinguish between different rhythms that she played on the piano even before he learned to speak in complete sentences. By age 4, he was able to play 40 pieces on the piano. At age 7, he gave his first public recital, playing a piece that he had composed himself.

Bartók was captivated by Hungarian folk melodies. He spent 8 years travelling extensively throughout Hungary and Romania writing down on paper or recording on phonograph records over 6,000 folk songs. These songs, with their unusual rhythms, became the basis for Bartók's compositions for the rest of his life.

In 1940, as World War II approached, Bartók considered fleeing Hungary. He was strongly opposed to the Nazis and Hungary's siding with Germany. After the Nazis came to power in Germany, Bartók refused to give concerts there. His opposition to German rule finally caused Bartók to move to the U.S. where he and his wife settled in New York City. After joining them in 1942, their younger son, Peter, enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he served in the Pacific for the remainder of the war.

Although well known in America as a pianist, Bartók was not well known as a composer. He made ends meet by his performance tours and with royalties from his compositions. He also taught music at Columbia University and recorded some for Columbia Records.

In 1942, Bartók started having bouts of fever, but doctors failed to determine the cause of his illness. Finally, in 1944, he was diagnosed with leukemia. As he became increasingly sick, Bartók found more creative energy. One of his last works, *Concerto for Orchestra*, was written from his hospital bed. It premiered in December, 1944 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. *Concerto for Orchestra* quickly became Bartók's most popular work, although he did not live to enjoy all the fame it brought him.

Bartók died at age 64 in a New York City hospital. His funeral was attended by only 10 people. Bartók was initially buried in New York, but in the late 1980's, the Hungarian government requested that his remains be returned to Budapest for burial. He received a state funeral in 1988 and was reinterred at a Budapest cemetery.

Béla Bartók's music is very different from the music of Johann Bach. Bach was the greatest musician and composer of the 1700's, and Bartók was one of the greatest composers of the 1900's. *Concerto For Orchestra* is actually a five-movement symphony. The movements alternate in style from dark and serious (movements 1 and 3) to joyful and playful (movements 2, 4, and 5). Bartók's music makes unusual use of rhythm and harmony. He will often use chords with clusters of notes sounding at the same time, or use complicated and difficult rhythms as in movement 2. *Listen to selections from Concerto For Orchestra and write below the differences between Bartók's music and Bach's music.*



Hector Berlioz in a Dress, Wig, Hat, and Veil



Is it TRUE or is it FALSE?

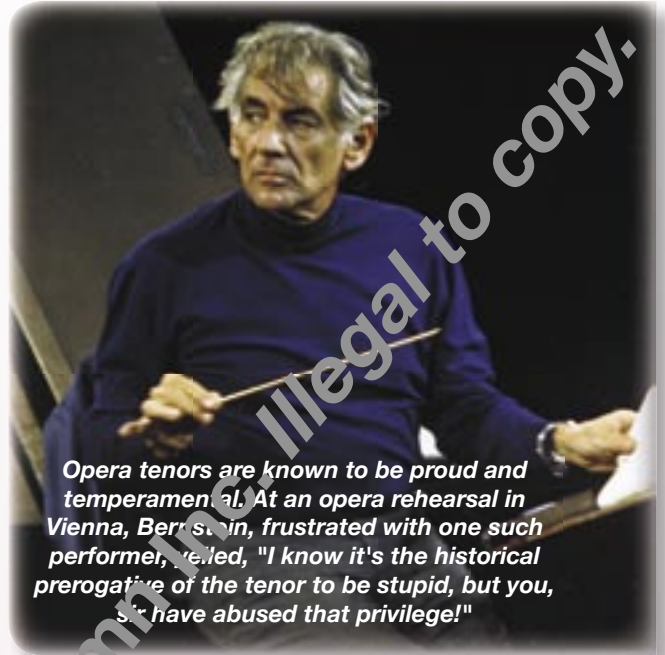
- _____ 1. Hector Berlioz was born in France and became the most famous French Romantic composer.
- _____ 2. Unlike other composers who were child musicians, Berlioz didn't begin studying music until age 12.
- _____ 3. Berlioz never learned to play the piano but he did become proficient at guitar and flute.
- _____ 4. As a conductor, Berlioz sometimes performed with as many as 1,000 musicians.
- _____ 5. At age 18, Berlioz was sent to study medicine, which he hated, especially after viewing a human corpse being dissected.
- _____ 6. Despite his father's disapproval (his father was a doctor), Berlioz finished medical school then began a career in music.
- _____ 7. Berlioz fell in love with Camille, but her parents forbid them to marry because Berlioz was a penniless musician.
- _____ 8. Berlioz's most famous work, *Symphonie Fantastique*, was composed during a revolution in Paris. Despite bullets flying everywhere, Berlioz stayed in his room and finished the symphony.
- _____ 9. *Symphonie Fantastique* won the Prix de Rome in 1830. The prize included money for five years which was much-needed income for the struggling composer who wanted to marry Camille.
- _____ 10. Camille's parents agreed to the marriage.
- _____ 11. Berlioz moved to Italy to fulfill part of the Prix de Rome prize agreement.
- _____ 12. Berlioz received a letter from Camille's mother informing him that their engagement was off and that Camille was marrying someone else.
- _____ 13. An angry Berlioz decided to kill his fiancée, her mother, and the man she was marrying. He purchased a dress, wig, hat, and veil to disguise himself as a woman.
- _____ 14. Berlioz even stole pistols to kill them.
- _____ 15. After a long carriage ride back to Paris and misplacing his disguise, Berlioz came to his senses and called off the plan.
- _____ 16. Berlioz fell in love with Harriet who spoke no French. Berlioz spoke no English. They married anyway.



"Berlioz loved a choir of thousands."
A cartoon that appeared in the 1800's
lampooning Berlioz's concerts.

Leonard Bernstein, Composer, Conductor New York Philharmonic

Originally named Louis, his parents changed his name to Leonard when he was 15. Bernstein studied at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music where he received the only “A” grade that the famous conductor and teacher Fritz Reiner ever gave. Bernstein was the assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic when the conductor Bruno Walter came down with the flu just before a nationally broadcast concert. Bernstein stepped in and received rave reviews for his conducting. He became principal conductor of the Philharmonic in 1958 and conducted and recorded 53 Young People’s Concerts broadcast on CBS and in forty other countries. In addition to conducting, he was also an active composer of symphonic works, opera, and the musical *West Side Story*. A lifelong smoker, Bernstein’s last concert at Tanglewood in 1990 was interrupted by a coughing spell; he died of pneumonia less than a month later.



Opera tenors are known to be proud and temperamental. At an opera rehearsal in Vienna, Bernstein, frustrated with one such performer, yelled, "I know it's the historical prerogative of the tenor to be stupid, but you, sir, have abused that privilege!"

Photo by Allan Warren

1. “Music can communicate the unknowable.”

2. “To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not quite enough time.”

3. “Life without music is unthinkable. Music without life is academic.”

4. “I’ve been all over the world and I’ve never seen a statue of a critic.”

**5. “I can get plenty of first violinists,
but to find someone who can play the second fiddle with enthusiasm, that’s a problem.
And if we have no second fiddle, we have no harmony.”**

6. “Music is at the top of the spiritual must list.”

Emmanuel Chabrier's "España"



The wife of the famous painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir, a friend of Emmanuel Chabrier, wrote, "One day Chabrier came and he played his España for me. It sounded as if a hurricane had been let loose. He pounded and pounded the keyboard. The street was full of people, and they were listening, fascinated. When Chabrier reached the last crashing chords, I swore to myself I would never touch the piano again. Besides, Chabrier had broken several strings and put the piano out of action."

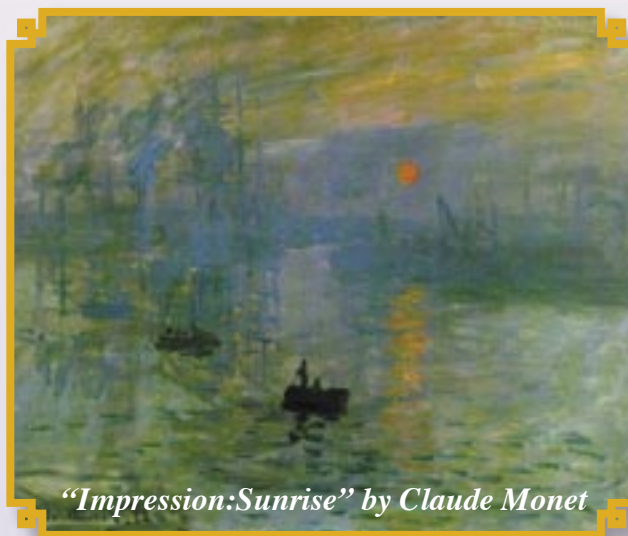
Alexis-Emmanuel Chabrier was born in France in 1841. He began music lessons at the age of 6 and was composing for the piano at 9. At 20, Chabrier graduated from law school and began working for the French Ministry of the Interior. But his passion was music, and Chabrier's dazzling harmonies changed the course of French Romantic music. In 1882 Chabrier visited Spain which resulted in his most famous work, *España*, a mixture of Spanish melodies and his own musical imagination.

Chabrier was friends with many of the leading writers and painters of his time, especially Impressionistic painters Claude Monet and Édouard Manet. Chabrier collected Impressionist paintings, and a number of paintings from his personal collection are now displayed in some of the world's greatest art museums.

In his later years, Chabrier was plagued by financial problems, failing health, dementia, and depression. Paralyzed for the last year of his life, he died at age 53.

España Check List...

- Sudden loud to soft or soft to loud changes.
- "Off beat" melodies and rhythms.
- Spanish-sounding melodies and rhythms.
- Melodies that stop and start again.
- Rhythm instruments (drums, triangle)
- Reoccurring melodies throughout.



"Impression: Sunrise" by Claude Monet

"Romantic" music is _____ music that gives an _____ or expresses _____ and _____.

"Impressionism" is _____ that emphasizes the _____ given by a scene rather than the _____ of the scene.

All American Music



Aaron Copland, called “the Dean of American Composers,” was accused by the House of Representatives as being a Communist sympathizer. He testified before Congress that he was never a communist, and his music is “all-American,” with titles like Lincoln Portrait, Appalachian Spring, Billy the Kid, and Rodeo.

Copland was a composer, teacher, writer, and conductor whose style was distinctly American. He was born in Brooklyn, New York of Jewish parents. His father changed the family name from “Kaplan” to “Copland” while on his way to America. Copland’s father had no musical interest, but his mother sang and played the piano, and arranged for music lessons for her children.

By age 15, Copland had decided to become a composer. He later moved to Paris to study composition with Nadia Boulanger, of whom he wrote, “No one to my knowledge had ever before thought of studying with a woman.” Though he planned on only one year, he studied with her for three, finding that her teaching inspired his musical development. He would later write of Boulanger, “I shall count our meeting the most important of my musical life.”

Copland returned to America optimistic and enthusiastic. Determined to be a full-time composer, he rented a studio apartment in New York City close to Carnegie Hall and music publishers. He lived and composed there for the next 30 years. Although Copland lived frugally, he amassed a multi-million dollar fortune by the time of his death from royalties from his compositions.

After 1960, Copland did more conducting than composing. He found new ideas for composition hard to come by, saying: “It was exactly as if someone had simply turned off a faucet.” Copland had developed Alzheimer’s Disease (a dementia that results in memory loss). He never could remember what year it was, and when told, he would laugh and say, “Why it was just 1926 the other day!” Copland’s health deteriorated through the 1980’s, and he died of Alzheimer’s disease in 1990. Much of his large estate was bequeathed to the creation of the Aaron Copland Fund for Composers, which bestows over \$600,000 per year to performing groups.

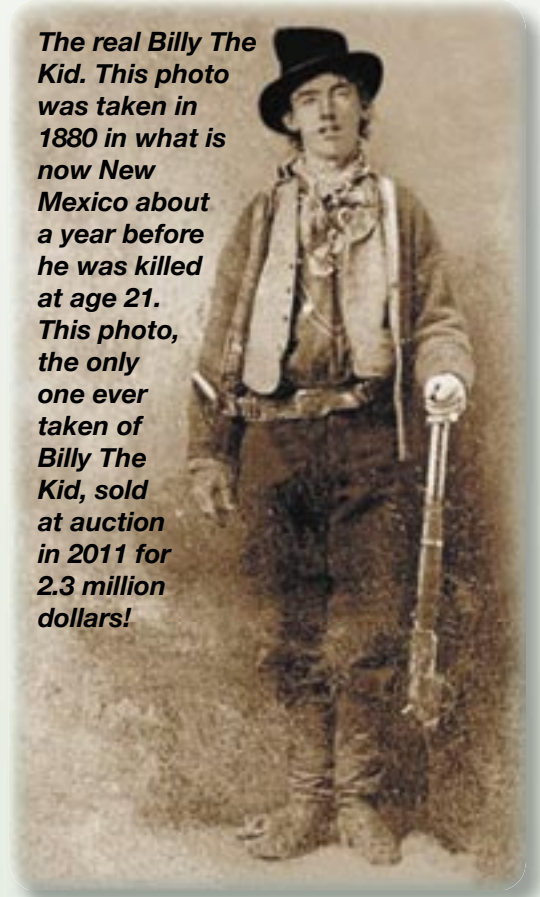
Aaron Copland’s music is fun to listen to. So instead of writing about him, let’s just listen to him!

First, listen to the *Fanfare For The Common Man*.

Next listen to a selection from the ballet *Billy The Kid*.

Finally, listen to “Hoe Down” from *Rodeo*.

The real Billy The Kid. This photo was taken in 1880 in what is now New Mexico about a year before he was killed at age 21. This photo, the only one ever taken of Billy The Kid, sold at auction in 2011 for 2.3 million dollars!



Gustav Holst and "The Planets"



Gustav Holst was an English composer. He was taught to play the piano and violin, and began composing when he was about 12. He attended the Royal College of Music on a scholarship, where he became life-long friends with another to-be-famous English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. Holst hoped to be a professional pianist, but had a nerve disorder that affected the movement of his right hand. He gave up the piano for the trombone. He played trombone with several orchestras including the "White Viennese Band," conducted by Stanislas Wurm. Disinterested in the music but needing the money, Holst called playing in the band "worming" (a pun on Wurm's name). His "worming" ended as his music writing became more profitable.

During World War I, Holst tried to join the army but was rejected because of his bad eyesight and weak lungs. As an Englishman, his new music benefited from the growing resentment of all things German, including music. Holst's popularity increased because of the success of *The Planets*. Holst hated publicity, and when asked for his autograph, handed out cards that read, "I do not hand out my autograph."

Holst took advantage of the new technology of sound recordings, personally conducting the London Symphony for the Columbia Records recording of *The Planets*.

Holst experienced poor health throughout his life, and his health worsened due to a concussion he received from falling backward off the conductor's podium. Holst grew ill with stomach problems and died of complications following stomach surgery.

Holst combined a melody from "Jupiter" (from *The Planets*) with an existing poem entitled "I Vow to Thee My Country." The first and second verses refer to England and the sacrifice of those who died during World War I. The last verse, shown below, is a reference to heaven. The final line is based on Proverbs 3:17, which reads in the King James Bible, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." This hymn was sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997.

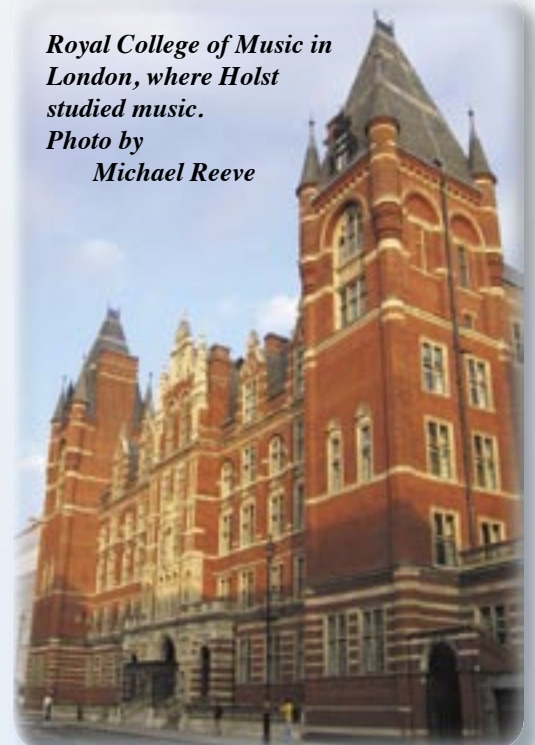
*And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.*

Politically, Holst was a socialist. His religious beliefs leaned toward Hindu mysticism and astrology, and he was a reader of astrological signs and fortunes. So...

*...do you judge a musical composition
by the lifestyle or beliefs or the composer,
or do you judge a musical composition by the music alone?
What do you think?*

*Royal College of Music in
London, where Holst
studied music.*

*Photo by
Michael Reeve*



Fun with music and musicians...

Nero, Emperor of Rome, was a singer who accompanied himself on the lyre. He planned a concert at an amphitheater in Naples that seated 10,000. Attendance was mandatory. Applause was mandatory. He performed music he had written, and no one was allowed to leave. Nero (and only Nero) enjoyed it so much that he did it all over again the next day. Again, attendance was required, applause was required. Nero kept singing until an earthquake hit and ended the concert. The Neapolitans secretly praised Poseidon, the god of earthquakes, for his timely intervention!

Arnold Schoenberg was a famous composer that few people ever listen to. He suffered from “triskaidekaphobia” (fear of the number 13). He never numbered the 13th page of music, never used a title that had 13 letters, and dreaded his 76th birthday ($7 + 6 = 13$). Schoenberg died on July 13, 1951 at 13 minutes before midnight. He was 76 years old!

John Cage said “music should be purposeless.” He was known for his “prepared piano” pieces where he would place metal, rubber, even fish on piano strings to alter their sound (and smell). He also believed that silence in music was important, so he wrote a three-movement piece without a single note being played. His composition, *Water Walk*, featured him playing a kitchen blender. Really, it's true! Cage died in 1992.

During a violin and piano recital, famous violinist **Fritz Kreisler** had a memory lapse and lost his place. He walked over to the piano and whispered to **Rachmaninov**, “Where are we?” Rachmaninov, without missing a note whispered back, “Carnegie Hall.”

Van Cliburn was a Texan who entered the International Tchaikowsky Piano Competition in Moscow, Russia. Cliburn's performance was so stirring that he received an eight-minute standing ovation. The judges, who were partial to selecting a Russian, had a dilemma: Should they declare the American the winner or choose a Russian? Fearing retribution, they asked Premier Nikita Khrushchev. “If he is the best,” Khrushchev said, “then give him the prize!”

Gustav Mahler's shortest composition lasts an hour; the longest nearly two. His Eighth Symphony is called “The Symphony of the Thousand” because it required so many musicians. Mahler was a grouchy workaholic and not too socially aware: he stirred his tea with a lit cigarette.

Ferde Grofé, born in New York City, was a milkman, truck driver, usher, newsboy, elevator operator, iron worker, musician, and composer. Four generations of his family were professional musicians. Grofé played piano, violin, viola, baritone horn, and cornet. He arranged Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* for orchestra, but is most famous for his *Grand Canyon Suite*.

Edward Elgar was the band director at the Worcester Lunatic Asylum. He wrote *Pomp And Circumstance* (often played at graduations). Money from the song allowed him to set up a small science lab in a shed outside his house. After nearly blowing up the shed, a neighbor came out and asked, “Did you hear that noise? It sounded like an explosion!” “Yes,” said Elgar, “I wonder what it was?”

O. de Cologne*

On October 5th, 1880, a friend actor went to Offenbach's apartment to check on him.

"How is he?" he asked the servant who answered the door.

"Offenbach is dead...he died peacefully without knowing anything about it," the servant replied.

*"Ah," sighed the actor,
"He will be surprised when he finds out."*

Jacques Offenbach was born in the German city of Cologne. At age 9, **O** began playing the cello. **O** was so good on cello that he went to audition at the Paris Conservatory. Chances were slim that **O** would be accepted (even Franz Liszt was rejected), but the Conservatory agreed to let him audition. **O** began to play, but the auditioner interrupted him, "Enough, young man," he said, "you are now a student of this Conservatory." But **O** became bored at the Conservatory and left after a year. **O** found a job playing in orchestras, but he often had his pay docked for playing pranks during performances. On one occasion, **O** sabotaged some of the music stands to make them collapse during a concert.

But **O's** cello playing was, as the London News wrote after a performance, "astonishing." His reputation and his bank account grew greatly from his performances. Soon **O** shifted from being a cellist who also composed to being a composer who also played the cello. **O** wrote more than 90 operettas. (An operetta is an opera that is light in both music and subject matter. It was the forerunner of modern musicals.) **O's** operettas were mostly humorous, and in them he poked fun at famous people like Napoleon. Napoleon liked it so much that he granted **O** French citizenship and made him a member of the Legion of Honor. Debussy, Bizet, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov loved **O's** operettas. **O** often parodied their music. Some of them accepted the joke and others did not. Meyerbeer enjoyed **O's** parodies and attended all his productions, always seated in **O's** private box. Berlioz and Wagner were poor sports and criticized **O's** parodies.

O did more than any other composer in developing the musical. Modern musical composers like Rodgers and Hammerstein and Andrew Lloyd Weber owe a lot to **O**!

**"Eau de Cologne" is a perfume that originated in Cologne in 1709. "Eau" is pronounced "Oh," and "de" in French means "of" or "from." Offenbach thought it would be a fun play on words to abbreviate his name "O" and use the phrase "O de Cologne" to mean "Offenbach from Cologne," the city of his birth.*



Cartoon drawing of O from 1866

A name almost as long as an opera!

Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini, an Italian composer famous for his operas

RED or GREEN...underline the answer you think is correct.

1. At age 17, Puccini walked **18 28** miles to see the opera *Aida* performed in Pisa, Italy.
2. Puccini **loved hated** *Aida*, and it **encouraged discouraged** him to be an opera composer.
3. In 1880 Puccini enrolled in the Milan (Italy) Conservatory where he was a **poor excellent** student.
4. Puccini stole pipes from a church organ and sold them for scrap metal to buy **cigarettes food**.
5. Puccini wrote some operas that were **just average total failures** before writing his three most famous *Madame Butterfly*, *La bohème*, and *Tosca*.

At the end of *Tosca*, the leading lady, a soprano named Tosca, jumps to her death from a tower.

To keep from being injured, the singer usually landed on a mattress or something soft.

In a performance of *Tosca* in Chicago, the stage crew decided to use a trampoline instead of a mattress.

Tosca jumped, hit the trampoline, then bounced into the view of the laughing audience 2 or 3 times.

No one knew whether it was an effort by the stage crew to improve safety

or whether it was a practical joke, but the soprano playing Tosca did not think it was very funny.

6. Puccini's operas brought him **little great** wealth.

7. Puccini had a passion for fast **cars horses**.

Puccini and famous conductor, Arturo Toscanini had a falling out. Toscanini, however, was still on Puccini's

Christmas gift list and was sent a special Italian cake called a Pannetone cake.

When Puccini discovered that the cake had been sent to Toscanini, Puccini wired Toscanini:

"Pannetone sent by mistake. Signed, Puccini."

Toscanini wired back: "Pannetone eaten by mistake. Signed, Toscanini."

8. Puccini was a chain smoker of cigars and cigarettes. He began to complain of a sore **arm throat**.
9. Puccini was diagnosed with **cancer pneumonia** and died as a result of surgery to correct his illness.
10. When news of Puccini's death reached Rome during a performance of *La bohème*, the opera was immediately stopped, and the orchestra played Chopin's **Piano Concerto Funeral March**.
11. Puccini's unfinished final opera, *Turandot*, was completed by **Toscanini another composer**.
12. When **Toscanini Bernstein** conducted the premiere performance of *Turandot* in April 1926, he stopped the opera where Puccini had stopped and said, "Here the opera finishes, because at this point the Maestro **died finished it**."

13. Benito Mussolini, the Fascist dictator of Italy at the time, claimed that Puccini was a member of the Fascist Party. In fact he **was wasn't**.

14. "O mio babbino caro" from *Gli ugonotti* and "Nessun dorma" from *Turandot*, are two of the most **loved hated** melodies from Puccini's operas.

Left: A photo of Puccini in 1908.

Right: Puccini and Toscanini.



What about Wagner?

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was a German composer, philosopher, and writer. He is famous, in part, for his grandiose operas. *The Ring of the Nibelung* (usually called “The Ring”) are 4 operas based on medieval German mythology that take place over 4 nights with a total performance time of about 15 hours. Much of the music is over-dramatic, loud, boring, and, of course, long. Mark Twain once said, “I have been told that Richard Wagner’s music is better than it sounds.”

Wagner was banned in Germany and spent 12 years in exile for supporting a failed uprising to unite Germany into one state. When allowed to return, Wagner struggled to get his music performed and stayed constantly in debt. Miraculously (at least Wagner thought so), he was invited by King Ludwig II of Bavaria to come to Munich. The young king, an great admirer of Wagner’s operas, offered to pay off Wagner’s debts and stage many of his operas, including “The Ring.”

It had been almost 15 years since a Wagner opera had been performed. In Munich his operas were conducted by Hans von Bülow who was married to Cosima, the daughter of Franz Liszt. Soon Cosima divorced von Bülow and married Wagner. Cosima was 24 years younger than Wagner and Liszt disapproved of their relationship even though Liszt and Wagner were friends.

Wagner wrote hundreds of books, poems, and articles. His essay, “Jewishness in Music” attacked Jewish composers Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, and accused Jews of being a harmful element in German culture. Wagner stated that the German people had an “involuntary repugnance” against Jews, and that Jewish “speech was intolerably jumbled blabber, incapable of expressing true passion [which] bars them from creating song or music.” Wagner argued that Jewish musicians were only capable of producing shallow music, and they composed music to achieve popularity and financial success, as opposed to creating genuine works of art.

Wagner’s anti-Semitic views have caused his music to be boycotted by some Jews and Christians. What do you think? Should Wagner’s music be boycotted because of his Jewish beliefs? Write your opinion in the box on the right.



Built by King Ludwig II, Neuschwanstein Castle was built in Wagner’s honor, and many rooms in the castle’s interior were inspired by Wagner’s characters.

Photo by Jeff Wilcox