The Third Book of the
GREAT MUSICIANS

Books by
Percy A. Scholes

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The Third Book of the
GREAT MUSICIANS

A Further Course in Appreciation
for Young Readers

by

Percy A. Scholes

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

ITHACA, NEW YORK

This edition, first published in 2021 by Yesterday's Classics, an imprint of Yesterday's Classics, LLC, is an unabridged republication of the text originally published by Oxford University Press in 1923. For the complete listing of the books that are published by Yesterday's Classics, please visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of Gateway to the Classics which presents the complete text of hundreds of classic books for children at www.gatewaytotheclassics.com.

ISBN: 978-1-63334-130-2

Yesterday's Classics, LLC
PO Box 339
Ithaca, NY 14851

TO MUSIC TEACHERS

This *Third Book of the Great Musicians* in intention and plan so much resembles its two predecessors that no Preface is needed. But the author would like to take the opportunity of reminding teachers that his three books are meant to be placed *in the hands of the young people themselves,* not to be read to them, or to be read by the teacher and the contents re-told. The whole design of the books, with the abundant illustrations, and attractive 'lay-out' of the type, surely indicates the method of use.

In Class the books should be used much as school 'reading-books', each chapter being read and then (probably at some subsequent lesson) made the subject of discussion and illustrated by musical performance (the Gramophone will often be useful in this).

But besides the Class the author has had in view the individual young student of Piano or Violin, whose lesson does not allow time for 'appreciative' study, and who, without some such opportunity as these books attempt to give him, is often in danger of looking upon music rather narrowly—as a matter of mere 'lessons'

and 'practice'. Music is just one of many means of human expression (and one of the best) and an implication of the simple humanity of music is one of the aims of the three *Books of the Great Musicians.*

I have once more to offer my thanks to Mr. Emery Walker. And to Mr. F. Page for assistance in finding illustrations, and to Mr. W. R. Anderson, editor of the monthly journal, *The Music Teacher,* for reading the proofs for me.

The Author

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BRAHMS

CHAPTER I

BRAHMS

1833-1897

On Having Musical Parents

Do you want to be a composer? If so, I hope your parents are fond of music. Look back over the list of musicians you have read about in the first two volumes of this work, and try to recall which of them inherited their musical talent. Here is the list:

Purcell.	Chopin.
Bach.	Field.
Handel.	Wagner.
Haydn.	Verdi.
Mozart.	Grieg.
Beethoven.	Sullivan.
Schubert.	Elgar.
Mendelssohn.	Macdowell.
Schumann.	Debussy.

If you think it over I believe that you will find that of all these composers there are only five of whom it is not related that one or both of the parents were musical. These five are Handel, Schumann, Wagner, Verdi, and Debussy. The fact that there have been some composers with unmusical parents is of course an encouragement to any of us whose parents are unmusical. If that boy Handel, whose father positively tried to stop his study of music, could yet develop into one of the world's greatest musicians, there is hope for everybody who seems to have been born with a musical brain and is willing to work. But, of course, the young musician who has inherited his gift, and has, moreover, parents who understand what he is striving after, has the better chance.

The Childhood of Brahms

Brahms had that better chance. His father was a musician. But the father himself had had no such chance, since *his* father was not a musician, and had even tried his best to prevent his having anything to do with music. The boy, however, took lessons by stealth, learned to play all the bowed instruments as well as the flute and the horn, and when he was old enough to earn his living became a professional double-bass player—one of the best in Hamburg.

Now a man who has had to struggle in youth generally does his best to make things easier for his children, and Brahms's father, finding his son inherited his talent for music, took care to give him good teachers in piano

and composition. The mother, too, was musical, and used to play piano duets with her son.

The young Brahms very soon began to compose, and while still a boy occasionally made a little money by arranging marches and dances to be played by the little bands of the cafés. His father, in summer, used to form a party of six musicians who played in the open air for money, and for this party the boy sometimes composed music. The family, as you have observed already from what I have told you, was only a poor one, and all its members had to work hard. Brahms said that his best songs came into his head when he was brushing boots before dawn.

We nearly lost one of our greatest musicians before the world had heard anything of him, for once in the street a serious accident occurred: the lad fell and a cart went right over his chest. However, he recovered, and grew up a particularly sturdy man. At fifteen he gave a public concert, and this was the beginning of his being recognized as a musician of promise.

The Gipsy Fiddler

A great turning-point in Brahms's life came when he was a youth of twenty. He met the violinist Remenyi, who was a Hungarian, probably with gipsy blood, and who later became famous all over the world by playing his native melodies with great fire. Brahms accompanied this player at some concerts, and then they went on a concert tour together. Once when Beethoven's

'Kreutzer' Sonata was to be played they found the piano was tuned very low, so Brahms transposed its part a semitone higher, which rather impressed Remenyi. The Hungarian dances that Remenyi played attracted Brahms very strongly, and later he himself arranged a good many of these in a most effective way as piano duets; these are very delightful music, and all pianists who love bright, jolly, rhythmic tunes should play them.

Brahms Meets Joachim, Liszt, and Schumann

Up to this time the young Brahms was quite unknown to the leading musicians of the day. But at the concert at which he so cleverly transposed the sonata there was present the great violinist, Joachim, and when the concert was over he came and congratulated the players and offered to give them letters of introduction to Liszt at Weimar and Schumann at Düsseldorf.

They visited both these great musicians and were well received. Schumann especially was delighted with Brahms. He wrote to a publisher, saying that he really must bring out Brahms's compositions, and in a musical paper he wrote an article called *New Roads,* in which he hailed Brahms as a genius of great originality. The Schumanns used to have weekly musical parties, and Brahms played at these, and was accepted by every one as a 'coming' musician of great promise. He played some of Schumann's music in very masterly fashion. When you come to know a good deal of the music of both Schumann and Brahms you will find that it has much in common. There is no doubt that, like Remenyi,

Schumann was one of the great influences in Brahms's life. You already know that Schumann's brain gave way and that he died comparatively young, and his wife, you remember, was a fine pianist who toured Europe making her husband's genius known by her playing. All through Frau Schumann's long widowhood Brahms was her staunch friend. He looked on her almost as a mother, and she on him as a son, and she played his music wherever she went and helped to make it known.

Brahms as Choral Conductor

At twenty-one Brahms had already won such recognition that he had more than one good position opened to him. He accepted that of Director of the Court Concerts and the Choral Society of the Prince of Lippe-Ditmold. This gave him good experience, especially in choral training, and no doubt led to his composing such a great deal of fine choral music as he did now and in after-life. Of his choral works many are frequently heard in English-speaking countries, where they have become very popular.

The First Piano Concerto

When Brahms was twenty-six he brought out his first Pianoforte Concerto. It was performed at one of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Concerts, a very famous series, at which many great works have had their first hearing. There it had no success, but later Clara Schumann played it all over Germany and it became quite popular.

Twenty years later it was played again at the Leipzig concerts and had a triumphant success, but even to this day there are musicians in all parts of the world who do not greatly care for it. Some day you may yourself have a chance of hearing it and of forming your own opinion about it.

Brahms as Pianist and Piano Composer

Brahms himself played this work on its first appearance, and perhaps this was a little against it, for his playing, though in many ways very capable indeed, did not show that he sufficiently considered the nature of the instrument. He was very accurate and very vigorous, and got a big, full tone, but, as Schumann once put it, 'Brahms seemed to turn the piano into a full orchestra.' Many of his piano compositions show this same tendency. They would sound equally well, or almost so, rearranged for other instruments. You will gather better what I mean by this if you think of Chopin's music, which, of all piano music, is perhaps most thoroughly based upon a knowledge of what is effective *on a piano.*

Brahms and the Orchestra

Similarly, when writing for orchestra, Brahms did not get quite the full effect out of his orchestral instruments. If you hear one of his pieces, and then one of (say) Wagner or Elgar, you will feel that these

latter composers get, so to speak, many more 'tone-colours' from their orchestral palette than does Brahms from his. Brahms's orchestral works, which include four Symphonies, are very fine indeed, but their scoring (that is, their laying out for the various instruments) is generally rather thick and not so clear and bright as that of most other great Composers. In this he takes somewhat after Schumann. Of both these Composers it has been said, 'He was more a draughtsman than a colourist.'

Brahms at Vienna

When Brahms was about forty he settled in Vienna, which, as you have already learned, has long been a great musical centre. He became conductor of the great choral society there, and got up fine performances of works of Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, and others.

One pleasure in Vienna was listening to the gipsy bands which played in the various public gardens. He used to stop and listen and clap loudly, and once was very delighted when the conductor, seeing him there, suddenly stopped the music, whispered to his men, and then struck up one of Brahms's own compositions. Earlier in this chapter you read something of the composer's love of the gipsy music.

A Lover of Light Music

Brahms was by no means opposed to light, pleasant music if it was good. He used to like to hear the famous dance music of Johann Strauss (Yo-han Strowss—pronounce the 'ow' as in 'cow'), who composed popular waltzes that were played all over Europe and America. When, at a musical party, Strauss's wife was persuading the musicians present to give her their autographs, Brahms wrote for her a few bars of the famous *Blue Danube Waltz* of Strauss and put under it the words, '*Not,* I am sorry to say, by your devoted friend, Johannes Brahms.'

Once, when a friend wrote to him complaining of the rather crude music played by the working men's brass bands and sung by the working men's choirs, he replied saying that he thought these things, though not so good as they might be, were nevertheless the only music then existing in which the working man was able to take part, and hence were to be encouraged.

Brahms's Advice to your Parents

He added something which some of my readers may care to read to their parents. He felt that it was a mistake that all the better-class children should learn the same one instrument, the Piano, and said, 'It is much to be wished that parents should have their children taught other instruments, such as Violin, 'Cello, Horn, Flute,

or Clarinet, which would be the means of arousing interest in all kinds of music.'

Brahms's Requiem

One of Brahms's most important works that has not yet been mentioned is his 'German Requiem'. He wrote this after his mother's death, and much of it is very beautiful and touching. Generally speaking, 'Requiem' means a 'Requiem Mass' (i.e. the Roman Catholic service for the dead), but this 'Requiem' is, instead, a setting of texts from the Bible. The 'German Requiem' is constantly sung by choral societies in Britain and in America, and can sooner or later be heard by any of my readers who live in any large town.

Brahms's Death

There are no adventures in Brahms's life, and little to tell about it. In 1897 his dear friend, Schumann's widow, died, and at her funeral he caught cold, fell ill himself, and died at the age of sixty-four. He was buried in Vienna, in the same cemetery as Beethoven and Schubert.

What Brahms Was Like

Brahms was a big, strong, stout man, who dressed carelessly, and loved the open air. He was very athletic, and loved of all things to go on long walking tours or

mountain expeditions. At the seaside he used to swim a great deal and liked to dive for coins thrown into the water by his friends. When he was a boy he had a lovely voice, but he spoilt it by using it too much when it was breaking, and so his voice as a man was gruff.

He loved children and was always playing with them. Once in a Swiss city he was seen going through all the streets, with the five-year-old daughter of a friend on his back, and from Italy an American lady wrote to her friends, 'We saw Brahms on the hotel verandah at Domodossola, and what do you think! He was down on all fours, with three children on his back, riding him as a horse.' In the street he constantly stopped to talk to the children, and they would follow him about.

Brahms paid very little attention to other people's praise or blame, and just went on his own way, behaving as he liked and composing as he liked and what he liked. He was often rude to people, and hurt their feelings, especially if they came to him with praise on their lips. Once when he was lying under a tree in a garden a stranger came up and began to flatter him, so Brahms said, 'I think, sir, you must be mistaken. No doubt you are looking for my brother, the composer. Most unfortunately he has just gone out for a walk, but if you will make haste and run along that path through the wood and up the hill, perhaps you will be able to catch him.'

Brahms was always very fond of a joke and did not like very 'starchy' people. Nobody could ever persuade him to come to England, because, as he said,

he would have to be always respectably dressed. There is an anecdote about Brahms which illustrates both his kindness of heart and his humour. When he had become a fairly well-to-do man and went to visit his parents at Hamburg, he called the attention of his father, before he left, to his own old copy of Handel's *Saul.* 'Dear father,' he said, 'if things go badly with one the best consolation is always in music. Read carefully in my old *Saul,* and you'll find what you need.' And when the old fellow did look into *Saul* what did he find there?—Bank-notes between the pages!

Brahms and Wagner

Many people who objected to Wagner's music tried to pit that of Brahms against it. They maintained that Wagner's music was very unpleasant, whereas that of Brahms was 'pure' and wholesome. But Brahms himself took no part in this and expressed the greatest admiration for the music of Wagner, although Wagner himself did not care for his. Of course, there is the greatest difference between Wagner's music and that of Brahms. For one thing, Wagner wrote for the stage, while Brahms, on the other hand, never wrote an opera or music drama in his life, as he did not feel drawn to this sort of composition.

Despite the difference in their music both Brahms and Wagner are much indebted to the same inspiration—Beethoven. You have already learned how Beethoven's works excited and inspired Wagner, and now you may learn that they also inspired Brahms. In the first

volume of this book you have learned to understand the differences between 'classical' and 'romantic' music. We may say that Beethoven is both classical and romantic, and that Brahms continued his work more on the classical side, and Wagner on the romantic side. Beethoven, as you know, wrote nine Symphonies, and when Brahms wrote his first somebody called it 'Beethoven's Tenth'. Brahms loved Beethoven's works, and could play from memory almost any one of them you cared to ask for.

Like Beethoven, Brahms wrote a good deal of fine chamber music. He also wrote a large number of beautiful songs (more than 200), and a good deal of piano music. In many of his pieces you find several conflicting rhythms going on at the same time. You might look out for this when you hear some of his instrumental music.

Brahms loved Folk Songs and Folk Dances, and a good deal of his music is influenced by these.

QUESTIONS

(To See Whether You Remember the Chapter and Understand It)

1. Without looking back at the beginning of the chapter, write down on a sheet of paper the names of all the musicians you can remember who have been discussed in the two previous volumes of this book. Leave a little space under each name, and then write

under each what you remember as to the parents being musical or otherwise.

2. What do you remember about Beethoven's father and grandfather?

3. Was Brahms born rich?

4. Tell all you remember about that Hungarian violinist whom Brahms met when he was a youth.

5. Do you remember any other great violinist he met?

6. What do you know about Brahms's relations with Schumann?

7. Say what you know (a) about Brahms's Piano Playing style, and Piano Composing style, and (b) about his Orchestration.

8. Where did Brahms settle in middle life?

9. When Brahms heard a good Waltz played by a band in the street did he turn up his nose and say 'What rubbish!' do you suppose? Or do you think he gave the band sixpence? What is *your* idea about 'light music'? Do you like (a) *bad* light music, or (b) *all* light music, or (c) only *good* light music? Have you any idea what makes the difference between good and bad light music? Can you mention any English composer of good light music?

10. What was Brahms's advice to parents?

11. Tell what you know about 'Requiems' in general, and Brahms's Requiem in particular.

12. How old (roughly) was Brahms when he died?

13. Was Brahms a well-dressed man? How did he spend his holidays? Some people did not like him; was he the sort of fellow *you* would have liked? Why? or Why not? (as the case may be).

14. In what way did Brahms continue the work of Beethoven?

THINGS TO DO

(For School and Home)

1. If you have a Gramophone try to get some records of works of Brahms.

2. If you have a Pianola try to get some rolls of his music.

3. If you have neither (or even if you have) try to find some friend who can play you some of Brahms's music, or sing you some of his songs.

4. Look out for the announcement of the performance of any of Brahms's works in your town, and go to hear them. If they are Choral or Orchestral works perhaps you can get in to the rehearsal, so that at the concert you will be hearing the music for a second time, and so understanding it better.

CHAPTER II

CÉSAR FRANCK

1822-1890

If you had seen César Franck in the streets of Paris probably you would have thought little of him—a short man with grey side-whiskers, and a face making queer grimaces, an overcoat too big and trousers too small. But if you had followed him to the church to which he was hurrying, crept up the dark stairs behind him to the organ gallery, and seen him seated at his fine instrument and surrounded by some of his admiring friends and pupils, you would have had a different idea of him. People who have seen him at those moments, as he prepared the stops of his organ and broke into some wonderful improvization, say that 'he seemed to be surrounded by music as by a halo.' The great musician Liszt once visited him there and came away lost in astonishment and saying that to have heard old Bach himself must have been a similar experience.

Franck's Sincerity

It was not only Franck's skill that so much impressed people who heard him; it was his sincerity, too. We say

CÉSAR FRANCK

of a man sometimes, 'he means every word he says,' and people might have said of Franck 'he means every note he plays.' There was in Franck's playing and his composing nothing put in just for effect or to win applause; he did not compose to make money, but to express his true thoughts and feelings, and these were often very deep.

Perhaps you have not yet heard any of Franck's music, but you will some day have the chance, for it is now much performed. If you hear the fine *Symphony* or the *Violin and Piano Sonata,* or the *String Quartet,* or the *Prelude, Choral, and Fugue* for Piano, or the *Prelude, Aria, and Finale* for the same instrument, or any of the *Organ Pieces,* or the great Choral work *The Beatitudes,* I think you will feel the truth of what I have just said. But you must be prepared to study them a little, or to hear them two or three times before making up your mind about them, for great works like this are not to be thoroughly understood the very first time we hear them. If you can get some pianist to play you one of the piano works do so, but, before he begins, get him to go through the work with you, playing you the few chief tunes and showing you how the whole thing is made out of these.

Franck's Early Life

Franck was born at Liège, in Belgium, on December 10, 1822, which was the very day on which Beethoven wrote the last note of what is, perhaps, his greatest work, his Mass in D. This is worth remembering, because,

more even than Brahms, Franck was the continuer of Beethoven, carrying further Beethoven's style and his ideas in the Sonata and Symphony just mentioned, and in other works.

Franck's father was a business man, and, seeing his son had musical talent, wished him to turn it to account. When the boy was ten he took him for a tour in Belgium, giving concerts everywhere, and when he was fourteen he took him to Paris to be trained at the great Conservatoire there.

Young Franck at the Conservatoire

When Franck had been a year at the Conservatoire he entered for a competition in piano-playing. He played very brilliantly the set piece he had prepared, and was then given a piece to play at sight. Some queer idea that came into his head prompted him to do a clever yet foolish thing. Instead of just playing the piece as it stood he transposed it three notes lower—and played it perfectly with this added difficulty. The judges said he had broken the rules by doing this, and so they could not give him the prize, but old Cherubini (Ker-oo-*bee*-ny), the head of the Conservatoire, said such a feat ought, after all, not to go unrewarded, so they invented a special distinction for Franck, and conferred on him the 'Grand Prix d'Honneur', a prize which had never been given before and has never been given since.

A year or two later, at an Organ competition at the Conservatoire, Franck did another strange thing.

Amongst other tests, the students had to improvise a Sonata on a 'subject' given them by the examiners, and then a Fugue on another subject, also given. When Franck came to improvise the Fugue, it struck him that the Sonata subject and the Fugue subject would work together, so he brought them both in, and made a long and elaborate composition out of them that surprised the examiners, but compelled them to say again that the regulations were broken. However, they gave him the Second Prize.

Franck Leaves the Conservatoire

About this time Franck's father removed him from the Conservatoire. He wanted him to be a piano 'virtuoso' (that is, a great performer, travelling everywhere and giving recitals) and also to compose piano music that would have a large sale and bring in much money. This, however, did not attract Franck, who did not care for fame, or desire more money than was really necessary to live upon comfortably, and before long this difference of opinion, and one upon another question, drew father and son rather apart.

He Gets Married

The other question was that of Franck's marriage. When he was 26 he fell in love with a young actress and wished to marry her. His father objected, but Franck was not going to give way, and was supported in his intention by a good priest who was fond of him.

This was in 1848, when Paris was in revolution. To get to the church the young couple had to climb over the barricades that the revolutionaries had set up in the streets, but the armed men who were guarding them helped them over and let them pass.

Pupils were scarce just then, for the city was, of course, in a very disturbed state; thus Franck began his married life in some poverty. However, shortly afterwards, the priest who had helped him at the time of his marriage was appointed to a church where there was a fine organ, and he made Franck the organist. This delighted Franck, who was a great lover of the organ, and, as a very devout Christian, was never happier than when taking his part in the church service. Later Franck was appointed to a larger church with a still finer organ, the new basilica of Sainte-Clothilde.

A Disappointment

Every composer has some disappointments, and Franck had more than most. About this time he spent all the time he could spare, for over a year, in writing an Opera called *The Farmer's Man.* Often he sat up almost all night, working at it, and when it was done he was quite worn out and his brain was so tired that he could hardly think. Yet he never got it performed. But note this—years after, when somebody mentioned it, he said he had come to see that it was not worth very much after all, and he should certainly never have allowed it to be printed.

This is what often happens: one works at a thing, expecting to make a great success and then, instead, comes failure. For a time one is cast down, and not till long after does one realize that the failure was a blessing in disguise. But perhaps no good work is ever really wasted, and one realizes in time that though the thing itself failed, one is the better for the effort and for what it taught one. So although Franck never saw the Opera performed, in writing it he had gained strength as a composer, and no doubt afterwards profited by this.

Later Franck had a little greater success as an Opera composer, but Instrumental Music and Choral Music, not Theatre Music, were really the lines in which he was fitted to excel.

A Modest Life

Many other disappointments came to Franck in the course of his life, but where other men would have been cast down he just went quietly on. Largely his time was occupied in going about Paris and giving Piano lessons here and there, or Singing lessons at schools, or Organ lessons at the Conservatoire, or, on Sundays and Saints' Days, in playing at his church. He rose at half-past five and 'worked *for himself*' (as he put it) for two hours. Then he had breakfast and hurried off to do his teaching. By 'working for himself' he meant composing or studying, for, busy as he was, he never dropped composition and study.

Franck as the Friend of Young Composers

In the evening when he got home he would have dinner and then, often, there would gather round him a group of young musicians who wanted his help and advice. There were at that time in Paris some of these young men who felt that the teaching of Composition at the Conservatoire did not give them what they wanted, since it was so largely concerned with writing in the Operatic style, and they were more interested in Instrumental music, in which France had dropped a good deal behind.

These men realized that in Franck they had a man who could guide them and they liked to get his advice, and to bring their compositions to him, for him to suggest to them where these could be improved and strengthened. But Franck was very modest, and would sometimes play *his* music to *them,* and ask what they thought of it, and if they made suggestions that seemed to be sound, he would accept them and put them into practice. Thus there grew up a sort of Franck 'school', as we say—using the word 'school' to mean a set of people more or less influenced by the same ideas and having much the same way of looking at things.

The 'Schola Cantorum'

After Franck's death there sprang out of his teaching a school in the other sense of the word—an institution where music was taught much on the lines of his teaching.

This still exists and is called the 'Schola Cantorum'. Its head is a composer called Vincent d'Indy (*Van*-son *Dan*-dy is as near as I can get the pronunciation, in English spelling). D'Indy has written a fine book about his old master, Franck, and a good deal of what I am telling you now is, of course, what I have learnt from that book.

One thing which they do at this school is to go back to the works of Palestrina and Bach, and others of the greatest writers of the best periods of old-time music, and to learn from them as much as they can. Similarly they study the old Plainsong (the traditional chants of the church). In this way they feel they are laying a solid foundation, and after such training as this their pupils may write in as modern a way as they like but will not be out of touch with the past. For of course the present-day music must be founded on that of past days, and future music, we may be sure, will be to some extent founded on that of the present.

Some of Franck's Sayings

When Franck was talking to some of his pupils he would say, 'Don't try to do a great deal; rather try to do a little *well*.' And when he set them an exercise in composition he expected them to work it in all possible ways, and show him the best working they could make—'Bring me the results of *many* trials, which you can honestly say represent the *very best* you can do.'

Then he would add, 'Don't think you can learn

anything from my corrections of faults of which you were aware—unless before bringing the exercises you had done your level best to correct them yourself.'

All these are sound maxims, and should be applied by all students. It really comes to this—'Don't rely on your teachers to do things for you that you can do yourself. Learn for yourself everything you possibly can do, and then let your teacher's help be *additional to that*.' This applies to Piano practice as much as to Composing, and, indeed, to every possible subject of study.

A Concert That Failed

When Franck was 65 his pupils and friends felt it to be a wrong thing that some of his best works had yet hardly been heard in public. So they got up a subscription to pay for a great concert of his works. A famous Parisian conductor was to direct the first part and Franck the second. But the famous conductor got quite muddled in the middle of one of the pieces, and conducted it at double its proper speed, so that it broke down. And as for Franck, when his turn came, he was so busy thinking of the music he had written that he did not pay enough attention to helping the singers and players, so that he, too, made rather a mess of things. (It often happens that fine composers are poor conductors.)

When the concert was over Franck's pupils gathered round him and said how sorry they felt that things had gone so badly, but he replied, 'No, no, my dear boys; you

are really too exacting; for my part I was *quite* satisfied.'

I suppose he heard the music in his mind as he meant it to be, and not as it was really performed. And it was a great treat to the dear old man to hear any sort of performance of his works, since they had up to then been so much neglected.

Franck's Death

When Franck was 68 his beautiful String Quartet was performed, and the audience applauded very heartily. Franck could not believe his ears when he heard the applause, and thought it was all for the performers. But it was applause for him. And he had to go on to the platform and bow, and to be made much of. When he got home he said, 'There, you see, the public is beginning to understand me at last!'

It is pleasant to think that this had at last happened, but success came only just in time, for later in the same year he was knocked down by an omnibus. He seemed to recover, and went about his work as usual, but in a few months he was taken ill and died.

He had written three beautiful Chorales for the organ, and wanted very much to be able to go to the church to try them over, but this was not possible, and they were lying on the bed when the priest came to give him the last comforts of religion.

His was a noble, hard-working, self-sacrificing life.

What Franck's Music Is Like

It is always difficult to describe music in words. Franck's we may say was very fervent, and very pure, and often very tender, and generally mystical. By mystical, what do we mean? It is as difficult to describe mysticism as I just said it was to describe music, but I think I can make you understand if I say that in a piece of Franck's you can generally feel that its composer was not just thinking of the things around him, but in a sort of vision was peering forward into a life beyond what our eyes can see.

QUESTIONS

(To See Whether You Remember the Chapter and Understand It)

1. When and where was Franck born?

2. What great musicians were then alive? Think of four or five, and say whether they were old men nearing the end of their work, or young ones beginning their lives.

3. Where was Franck trained in music?

4. Repeat any anecdotes you can remember of his work as an examination candidate.

5. What traits in Franck's nature came out in his disagreement with his father?

6. What sort of a life did Franck lead in Paris?

7. What did he mean by working *for himself?*

8. How did he influence younger musicians?

9. What is the Schola Cantorum, and who is the head of it?

10. Repeat some of Franck's advice to young composers.

11. Was Franck an old man or a young one when he died?

12. Try to give in words some idea of Franck's music.

THINGS TO DO

1. Of course the chief thing to do is to hear and study some of Franck's music. Try to find a good pianist who can play some of it, and get him (or her) to play you the 'subjects' of a piece before playing the piece as a whole, and to show you how the piece is made out of its subjects.

2. Get a Gramophone record of something of Franck's, e.g. his *Chasseur maudit* (or *Accursed Hunter*). This is published by the Columbia Company, and they give away with it a leaflet telling the story Franck has illustrated in his music.

3. Be on the watch for the announcement of any performance of the great Symphony by Franck. If you see it announced try to get somebody to explain it to you and to play you the 'subjects', before you hear the

performance. Do the same with the Violin and Piano Sonata. Both these are very beautiful works that you are sure to like as soon as you really know them.

4. Older readers might get d'Indy's book on Franck (translated by Mrs. Newmarch and published by John Lane), and read it carefully.

CHAPTER III

RUSSIAN MUSIC

Russia is a big place—twice as big as the whole of Europe, one sixth of the world's land surface! And, of course, so big a country, lying partly in Europe, and partly in Asia, extending from the Arctic Ocean almost to India, and from Central Europe to China, has amongst its inhabitants people of many different nationalities. So when I write a chapter about Russian Music I must narrow down my subject, or it would become not a chapter, but a book. Roughly speaking, then, this chapter will leave out Asiatic Russia altogether, and will discuss, quite simply, the music of European Russia, and even about that will only give a few main facts, such as everybody who cares about music should know.

Russian Folk Music

As you have learnt in *The First Book of the Great Musicians,* all peoples have their Folk Music, and of course the Russians have theirs. Naturally in so vast a country the Folk Music is of many different kinds. If

you have heard a few English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Folk Songs you can generally, ever after, tell whether any British Folk Song or Folk Dance Tune you may hear comes from England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, which shows us at once how people in different countries, or different parts of a country, produce differing styles of Folk Music. And if we have several different styles in these tiny British Isles, of course the Russians, in their vast country, must have still more. Not much has been known of the Russian Folk Music by people in the east of Europe until lately, but Beethoven got hold of some Russian Folk Tunes long ago, and used them in his famous Rasoumovsky String Quartets, so they have not been altogether overlooked.

What the Music Is Like

Since there are so many different styles of Russian Folk Tunes, it is difficult to describe them in a general way, but perhaps we can say with truth that, to us, they generally seem to be either very mournful or very excited and gay. Here is one of the qualities of the Russian character. Russians, as their literature shows, are a very up-and-down people—easily depressed into sadness and just as easily excited into joy.

At various periods the Russian priests have taught that music is a sin, and have tried to banish it, but nobody in any country can get rid of music, because music is a part of human nature, and so Russian Folk Ballads and Folk Dances have gone on, carrying down

with them, from generation to generation, the legends of olden days and stories from early Russian history.

Russian Church Music

The orthodox Russian religion is that branch of Christianity which we call the Greek Church. This looks upon Constantinople as its headquarters, as the Roman Catholic Church looks upon Rome, and uses the Greek language in its services as the Roman Catholic Church uses Latin. Like the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church has both old Plain Chant melodies that have come down from the early days of Christianity, and also music made for it by skilful composers.

The singing in some of the Russian churches has long had a reputation for great beauty. It is not accompanied by instruments, and one very remarkable thing is that the Russian basses can sing very low notes—far and away lower than any notes our basses can sing.

So far the music we have been talking about is what we may call the real Russian music—the Songs and Dance Tunes that have grown up in the Russian villages, the Church Plain Chant that has grown up in the Eastern Church and come down from the early days of Christianity in Russia, and the composed Church Music. Much of this latter, however, though it is by Russian composers, and written for the Russian churches, has yet been influenced by the style of Church Music in other parts of Europe.

Italian Music in Russia

We now come, however, to music that was not merely influenced by the music of other parts of Europe, but brought complete from them, music that, though performed in Russia, was not in any sense Russian. During the eighteenth century the Imperial Family, who loved splendour of every kind, used to send to Italy for some of the best Italian performers, and used to have performances of Italian Operas at court. As you have already learnt, Italy is the native country of Opera, so it was natural to send there for the musicians to compose and perform it. In this way Italian Opera became popular amongst the aristocracy, both in Petrograd and Moscow.

The First Real Russian Composer

But cultivated Russian musical people began to wish for a real Russian composer, and by and by he came. His name was Glinka. He was born in 1804. His father was a rich man, and at his country house used to receive many visitors. When he had a big party of these in the house he would send a message to Glinka's uncle, who lived a few miles away, and who kept a private Orchestra for his entertainment. Then the uncle's Orchestra would come over, and little Glinka was in a heaven of joy, and if he was not watched would pick up an instrument and try to join in the music.

GLINKA

His governess taught him the piano and one of the orchestral players taught him the violin. When he went to school at Petrograd he had piano lessons from the famous Irish musician, of whom you have read in *The Second Book of the Great Musicians,* John Field. Then when he was a young man he was sent to Italy for some years, for the good of his health, and there he heard a lot of music, and took regular lessons in composition. At first his compositions imitated those of the Italians, but at last he realized that he was wrong in this, and that as a Russian he would never write really good music by imitating composers of such different national feeling from his own as the Italians. So, after visiting Germany and having some lessons in the technique of composition there, he returned to Russia, where he began to compose music with Russian feeling in it,

rather than either Italian or German feeling.

'A Life for the Czar'

The first great work that he wrote was the opera, *A Life for the Czar,* which tells a story from Russian history, the story of a peasant who was forced to act as a guide to an army that was coming to attack that of the Czar, but who led it into the forest, so that the Czar might be saved, although he knew the enemy would kill him when they found that he had tricked them. A good deal of the music of this opera was much in the style of the Russian Folk-Music, rather than in the style of the Italian or German operas. So both in its subject and in its music *A Life for the Czar* may be truly called a national work.

This opera became very popular with patriotic Russians and when, in 1886, the fiftieth year after its composition came to be celebrated, every theatre in Russia made a point of performing it, and so doing honour to its composer—the first really national composer Russia ever had.

Glinka wrote another opera *(Russian and Ludmilla)* and some orchestral music, chamber music, and piano music. There is no need to describe this other music here. For the moment I just want to impress upon your mind the name of Glinka as the first really national composer, and therefore the founder of the Russian 'School' of composition. He died in 1857, so he did not have a very long life. You may sometimes hear his music at concerts, but not very often.

Dargomysky and 'The Five'

Another early Russian composer, born a little later than Glinka, was Dargomysky, and then we come to a group of composers, who worked together in the effort to produce a real 'School' of Russian music. They were always spoken of as The Five. I am going to give their names and dates. You need not learn the dates, but they will be there for you to refer to whenever you want them. The names, however, you ought to learn, so that when you hear any of their music you will be able to listen to it with a little more interest, knowing it to be the work of one of this little band of comrades who set out to bring into existence a body of real Russian music—

Balakiref (1836-1910). The leader of the 'School'.

Cui (1835-1918). Partly of French descent.

Borodin (1834-1887), wrote the Opera, *Prince Igor*.

Moussorgsky (1839-1881), wrote the opera *Boris Godounof*.

Rimsky-Korsakof (1844-1908), the first Russian to write a Symphony.

From a glance at that list you will at any rate get into your mind the fact that the famous 'Five' were all born in the eighteen-thirties or eighteen-forties, and that one or two of them lived almost down to your own time. Sometimes instead of 'The Five', these composers are known by the very grand title of 'The Invincible Band'.

They really deserve such a title, for they wrote some very great works, and it was *their* works which, when they began to be performed in Britain in the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth, really proved to British people that Russia was to be looked upon as an important musical country.

QUESTIONS

(To See Whether You Remember the Chapter and Understand It)

1. Roughly, how big is Russia?

2. And what deduction about Folk Music can we draw from this?

3. Tell anything you remember about Russian Church Music.

4. How did Italy come to influence Russia in music?

5. And who first cast off the Italian influence?

6. Whom do we mean by THE FIVE?

7. Give their names, if you can.

THINGS TO DO

1. If you have a Gramophone, and are so magnificently rich that you can afford to buy any records that you want, search the Catalogue and you will find some pieces by Cui, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakof, and

Moussorgsky (and, perhaps, by the time this is printed, other composers). Get these records and learn to know them thoroughly.

2. Look out for concerts where music by any of the composers mentioned is to be given, and attend them.

3. Ask your English teacher to go through this chapter with the form, and then to set an essay on 'Russian Music'.