20TH

ANNIVERSARY SEASON

LES MARSDEN,
FOUNDING MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

SPRING CONCERT WEEKEND

SATURDAY APRIL 12 AT 7 PM

first baptist church of mariposa—5005 frank wilson road

— adults $10/students $8 if purchased in advance online; $15/$10 at the door.

SUNDAY APRIL 13 AT 2 PM

garden terrace (room,) yosemite valley lodge, yosemite national park

— free concert, but suggested $10 donation gratefully received at the door.

The program:

our primary fiscal partner is yosemite hospitality, a subsidiary of Aramark.
we've proudly partnered with yosemite national park since 2007.

YOSEMITE HOSPITALITY
A Subsidiary of Aramark

- robert schumann: overture to "manfred"
- edvard grieg: suites #1 and #2 from "peer gynt"
- georges bizet: suites #1 and #2 from the opera "carmen"

visit myso.live for tickets, info and complete program notes

...and please consider supporting this orchestra – the ensemble which makes Mariposa a better place to live - ***AND*** the smallest American town to *have* its own symphony orchestra!

Saturday, April 12th at 7PM – First Baptist Church of Mariposa,
5005 Frank Wilson Road
Sunday, April 13th at 2PM – The Garden Terrace, Yosemite Valley Lodge,
Yosemite National Park

THE PROGRAM:

Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856) ***Overture to "Scenes from Lord Byron's Manfred," Opus 115*** **(1851)**

Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843 – 1907) ***Suites #1 and #2 from the incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's "Peer Gynt"*** **(1876/1886)**

Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875) ***Suites #1 and #2 from the opera "Carmen"*** **(1875)**

Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)
Overture to "Scenes from Lord Byron's Manfred," Opus 115 **(1851)**
Our 20th Anniversary Season continues with a relatively rare look *(as well as the rare photo at right)* at Schumann, at least for us. The last Schumann piece I scheduled with the orchestra was his ***3rd Symphony, the "Rhenish***," all the way back in 2006 - though in our fledgling year of 2002-2003 I did program this, a much-simplified scholastic arrangement of his "***Manfred" Overture***. But it's back now, in all its original glory, just as Schumann intended. The real thing.

Robert Alexander Schumann was born into a life of relative luxury in the ancient Saxon city of Zwickau, on June 8th, 1810. The region, bordering today's Czechia (Republic) in the east of Germany, was settled around 700 AD by Sorbs – a West Slavic ethnic group, until German settlers gradually ab'sorb'ed the region (which is also bordered by Poland) around the 10th century. Zwickau would become the seat of southwestern Saxon government from 1825 until 1951. As for his forebears, Robert's father August (1773 – 1826) was a novelist-turned-publisher who had built his own company from scratch, a highly-successful enterprise which was devoted heavily to the process of editing literary works as well as publishing them. A good chunk of that of that fortune was based upon August's translations of "foreign" works from English to German; among those he converted were works by Sir Walter Scott and – of most importance to this piece on our program:

those of George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron – best known simply as Lord Byron.

Robert's father August originally came from a poor family headed by HIS father – a pastor. A lover of literature, August wrote in various forms beginning in his early adulthood, though there wasn't money in the family for his continuing university-level education, forcing him to drop out of Leipzig University. He published his first play in 1793 while working as a bookstore assistant in the town of Zeitz, while also taking a room in the home of Abraham Gottlob Schnabel -

the respected town surgeon. There, he fell in love with Schnabel's daughter Johanna Christiane, (1767 – 1836), six years August's senior.

(Pictures above and at left: Robert Schumann's parents, both shown in 1810, the year of the composer's birth.)

The couple wished to marry but her father would give his consent *only* if August were to open his own bookstore – creating his own enterprise. This August was able to do in the town of Ronneburg, and so they were married in 1795, taking up residence in that town where August had begun to build his business. By 1808, the bookshop and August's additional literary enterprises were so successful that they moved to Zwickau, where Robert was born two years later. August's brother Friedrich had moved to Ronneburg in 1807, establishing his own bookshop, and the brothers had decided to pool their expertise in order to create not merely a bookstore, but an even greater publishing house, too: "Gebrüder Schumann" – "Schumann Brothers."

By then, and largely through the success of August and Friedrich, Zwickau had become an

important literary/book-dealer center, and August's connections to the literary world itself were impressive. This was the world in which young Robert was born and was raised: an atmosphere heady with the literary world and its authors. He was the youngest of five children, born when his mother was 43. Johanna was a passionate lover of the arts in general and music in particular, herself being a singer. But she was described as being, at times: *violently* passionate – and her behavior frequently raised eyebrows.

By the age of six Robert had demonstrated great natural skill at the piano, a skill developed by piano lessons with Johann Gottfried Kuntsch beginning in 1817; in 1824 his father bought a top-of-the-line instrument for his 14-year-old son. In fact, in 1825 doting dad August promised to send the boy off to study with the great composer Carl Maria von Weber. That probably would have come to pass had not 1) von Weber died soon after on June 5th, 1826, and then 2) August himself died a little over two months later. The loss of his father put Robert's mother in the sole position of determining her son's future, which would upend things a bit, as I write below – but I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

The child's overall education was privileged, weighing heavily in the direction of the liberal arts and literature, and his family background gave him a rare familiarity with the world's most famous writers and poets; he himself was inspired during his schooldays to write poetry and saw that as a possible future vocation. *(Schumann at left in 1826, age 16.)*

While not normally thought of as a revolutionary of music, he WAS an early exemplar of the concept of literary writer-composer, melding his strong literary talents with his drive as a composer, giving birth to the first in a line of Germanic writer/composers which would culminate in Richard Wagner. Years later, Schumann himself was known to have stated that he had learned more about the technique of (musical) counterpoint by reading the German Romantic author Jean-Paul (Richter)'s works than he ever learned from his music theory teacher. Matter of fact, Schumann's 1831 piano work "Papillons" was inspired by the flittering moods of Jean-Paul's ***Flegeljahre*** (*Awkward Age* or *Adolescence,*) composed just 6 years after the death of the author by the 21-year-old Schumann.

From age six until 10 he was enrolled at a private school, and then became a student at the Zwickau Gymnasium (the fancy name for high school) from 1820 until he left at age 18 in 1828. During this

period – as noted above, his father August died and his mother assumed the overall role of parent. Robert did continue to further develop his pianistic skills and took up the study of organ-playing too, gradually becoming interested not only in performing music, but composing it, as well – writing a few little pieces even before receiving formal education in the compositional skills.

After leaving the Zwickau Gymnasium, he was strongly persuaded by his mother to study law, with an eye to a career in the field, but his heart was never really into it. He entered the famed University of Leipzig (one of the world's oldest) to study the legal skills, but – instead began learning the art of song-(or lieder-) writing. And novel-writing. And the joys of champagne and cigars. And piano improvisation (following the lead of Bach's keyboard improvisations) as well as simply: advanced piano instruction. Despite his notes and letters to others that he was coming to grips with law and actually becoming interested in it, he apparently rarely attended classes and expressed NO interest in the legal profession. But it's important to note that even as early as his 18th year, Schumann began to suffer from depression and began to have suicidal thoughts (his eldest sibling – Emilie, born in 1796 – had herself committed suicide in 1825.)

During the summer of 1829, Schumann, done with his legal studies at Leipzig University left for the university town of Heidelberg, ostensibly to study international law, but in reality: partially to *escape* the study of law, and mostly to be much further from his mother's watchful eyes - 400 kilometers (250 miles) to the southwest. There he became influenced by the lieder and piano music of Franz Schubert (who had died only a year prior) and wrote a few waltzes inspired by those of Schubert. His sojourn to Heidelberg was part of his growing process: it was at this time that he began to focus on an emerging new goal: to become a successful concert pianist, and therefore, strove with all his might towards that high target. This period also saw Schumann travel – to Switzerland, to Italy – where he discovered the operas of (among others) Rossini, then at the self-imposed end of HIS brilliant career. In 1830, he attended a concert given in Frankfurt by the great Italian violinist Niccolo Paganini, who (it was rumored) had signed a pact with the devil in exchange for his extraordinary skills on the violin. Schumann was stunned at Paganini's amazing virtuosity and that concert was the culminating event for Schumann's decision to now, completely and totally: leave the study of law and focus solely on becoming the Paganini of the piano. He was able to persuade his mother to allow him to give it a try, and she (in consultation with renowned piano teacher Johann Gottlob Friedrich Wieck) agreed upon a six-month trial period. Weick had met with Schumann to evaluate his skills, and told Schumann's mother that her son could become a great pianist if he studied hard and never gave up.

So now, and done with Heidelberg by 1830, at the age of 20 he returned to Leipzig, where young Robert studied with Wieck *(shown years later, at right in 1850)* and also roomed in the Wieck family home. Schumann had already come to

know Wieck's talented eight-and-a-half-year-old daughter Clara a couple years earlier, a girl who had already shown signs of her OWN tremendous pianistic skills via concert performances. That meeting was to take on lifelong importance in the years yet to come. His studies were initially only for a few months – Schumann had a goal, and it would be up to him to finally have the ticket out of a life in dull law, and to emerge as that which he dreamed of being: a great concert pianist. However, this opportunity would improve his pianism but also permanently end it – more on that below.

First, an aside about that teacher: Wieck was a strange man who had always striven to improve his own position by marrying above his position, and it was through those means that he had become a highly-regarded piano teacher, as well as a teacher of voice, a writer of music criticism, music essays and - also the owner of a piano store. He achieved those ends mostly via the fame and – importantly – the fortune of his wife, noted singer Mariane Tromlitz, whom he married in 1816 when he was 30. Well known in Leipzig, Tromlitz was something of a star at the (Leipzig) Gewandhaus, where she gave weekly concerts. As Friedrich's formal education at the piano had amounted only to some six hours of lessons with Johann Peter Milchmeyer, Mariane would teach her husband's more advanced piano students. But Friedrich WOULD develop his own keyboard theories and technique, eventually to become widely acclaimed for his effective instruction, and: a very distinguished, sought-after piano instructor. His technique was progressive, thoughtful, concerned more about producing a beautiful tone rather than the enforcement of dull old scales and exercises; he believed in keeping the student engaged through the infusion of the joy of creating (or re-creating) music. His course of study also included stretching exercises for the fingers, in moderation. *In moderation.*

Being such a musical household, and ***he*** being such a martinet, when children started arriving: to Friedrich the most important thing was developing their musicality and then, even if they weren't prepared: putting them on tour much as Mozart's and Beethoven's fathers had done with their offspring. Firstborn Adelheid (1817-1818,) unfortunately died in infancy. Next was Clara *(left,)*

born in 1819 – and from the earliest age, a – well, ***a musical genius***. There's no other way to describe her. She was tutored in piano and violin by her father, and would later become one of the most well-known concert pianists and composers of her time (1819–1896) as well as confidant and friend of many many more notable figures, especially Johannes Brahms. Sadly, her music is little-known today and I hope that's NOT due to the stigma of her gender.

Next to be born was Friedrich Alwin Feodor Wieck (1821–1885) who endured his father's overbearing demands, becoming first a fine pianist, but eventually a superb violinist,

which became his career. But Friedrich (II) departed the family as soon as he was able, remaining estranged from them all, including his siblings – until shortly before his 1885 death. Later on came Gustav Robert Anton (1823–1884,) who also escaped his father and family as soon as he could, later becoming a fine instrument maker in Vienna. And lastly, final brother Victor (1824 - 1827) who escaped the family more effectively than any of his siblings would – by cleverly dying only a couple weeks before his third birthday.

So how did Friedrich feel about his sole (at least by his first wife) surviving daughter? He saw her as an extraordinary commodity, and spent his life energy turning her into the brilliant concert pianist she would become. In fact, he seemed to care more about and FOR his daughter than he did his remaining children…which would in time gain STEPsiblings after Wieck's wife Mariane too – grew tired of her bully of a husband and, after having an affair with family friend Adolph Bargiel, she insisted upon a divorce, which occurred after only nine years of marriage, in 1825. Saxon divorce law of the time required that a couple's three eldest children belonged to the father, and so Clara had to live with Friedrich. Who bounced back a couple years later, marrying the 23-year-old Clementine Fechner, (1805-1893.) Friedrich was nearly twice her age, and she bore him three children – the second of whom – Marie – he would also train into a career as a distinguished pianist. Mariane would become Mariane ***Bargiel*** after her 1827 marriage to piano and singing teacher Bargiel, her paramour. A truly fascinating way to keep it all in the musical family.

(*Clara at right, circa 1835 – at 15 or 16 years old.)*

After gates flew open and bridges were burned, with law increasingly relegated to the back burner if not to the butler's pantry altogether, Schumann came to study with and room in the home of – Friedrich and (second wife) Clementine Wieck in 1830. And he – the silly student: made the natural assumption that if a little bit of hand and finger stretching would help, then why not carry those exercises to an extreme? Why not construct a little contraption, some sort of box-like device which would – in effect, place the fingers in traction whenever he wasn't at the piano – or even when he WAS playing, so they could be in a state of CONSTANT stretching? AND pain?

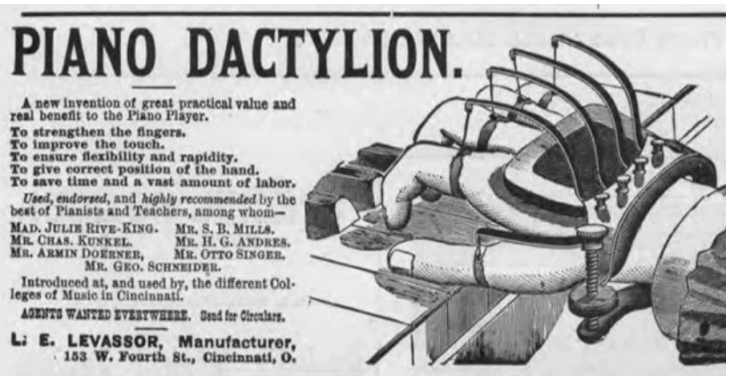
Why not? Because it could, and in the case of Schumann: WOULD permanently destroy his ability to play the piano. However, the ***actual*** reason Schumann did this to himself is the subject of theories. We do know he constructed a box-like device – corroborated by contemporary accounts; he might

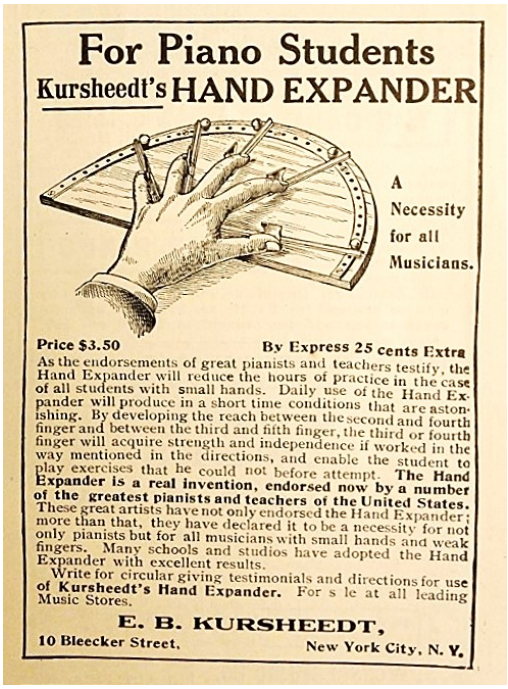
have also used a device prevalent at the time, manufactured to do the same thing: a dactylion, which was clamped to the piano. Or a chiroplast – used for specific fingers. How such devices were ever conceived, marketed, sold – and actually USED by budding pianists is a complete mystery to me.

(At right: a commercially-available 19th century dactylion, which would be strapped to the piano, just above the keyboard; the fingers would be inserted into the rings, and then tension would hold them above the keys, so extra force would be required to actually depress the keys, ostensibly to build the muscles of the fingers. Two other, different types of devices from that same century are shown at the bottom of this page.)

We know Schumann *did* use something of his own devising - but there's a big question of just ***why*** he took this measure.

So, let's just jump right in: in 1831, the then-21-year-old Schumann contracted syphilis from a prostitute. There's no question of that fact: he admitted it in his diary at the time, also mentioning a "wound" which was responsible for a "biting and gnawing pain." But it then went into remission for the most part, leaving him thinking he was one of the very few lucky ones to have somehow "recovered" from syphilis. Which he had not, unfortunately, as he'd discover in a couple decades. After passing through syphilis' first two phases during 20 years with nearly no symptoms, he assumed himself to be cured. But no. In the early 1850s he suddenly entered the tertiary phase with a wallop of symptoms, mental illness, voices in his head and the inability to care for himself, leading to his eventual death in 1856. In his final year, he did scratch out a note for his doctor, a brief note kept in his file:





"In 1831 I was syphilitic and treated with arsenic."

Syphilis DID leave him with a very concerning condition: growing numbness in his fingers. So that alternative theory for why he created that "box" contraption is that Schumann, sure – was trying to stretch his fingers, but the ***real cause*** may have been *<u>their growing neuropathy – lack of feeling</u>*.

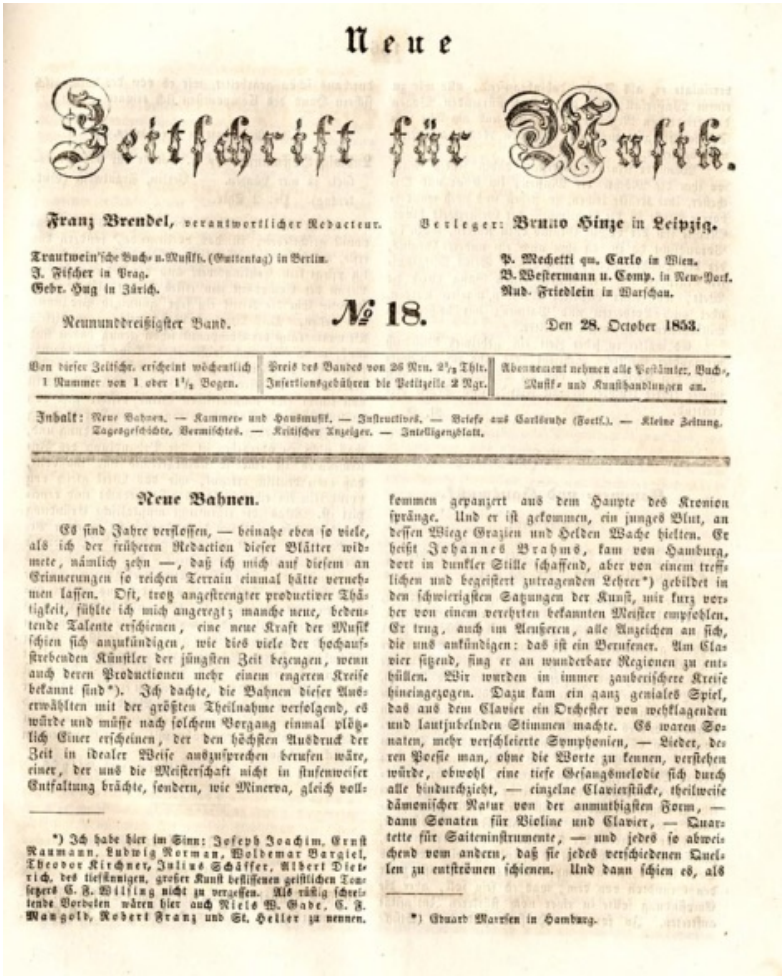
Whatever the cause, and whatever the case: Schumann's unorthodox self-remedy irreversibly, lastingly damaged his right index and middle fingers – permanently ending any aspiration of being a concert pianist, a career which that exacting creator-of-virtuosi Friedrich Wieck had predicted for him, that he himself had dreamed of, worked so hard to make reality – all taken away by his own unfortunate action.

So now, by 1832, Schumann was at a critical life-crossroads: during the previous year he had taken a few divergent pathways: music theory lessons, some of his compositions were first published and

he had begun writing critically on music, including a beautifully trenchant essay on his (near-exact) contemporary: pianist/ composer Frédéric Chopin *(1810 – 1849, at left.)* The two men were aware of one another's compositions and though initially Schumann rejected both Chopin's pianism and composing (from a letter to Clara:) "*Chopin played for me. His playing is very delicate, but lacks power and depth"* - he'd later enthusiastically change his opinion. As Schumann wrote to Chopin himself, *"…your works are like jewels that shine among other stones. Your talent is extraordinary."* As for Chopin? He wrote of Schumann's music in a letter to his friend Tytus Woyciechowski: *"Schumann is one of the greatest composers of our time. His music is full of emotions and deep reflection."* Though the two composers' styles and inspirations were quite different, and with Schumann captivated by programmatic music, or music which portrays things, animals, moods, people – events, etc. and Chopin working in the arena of absolute music, they became friends and mutual admirers. Matter of fact, Chopin added some of Schumann's piano works to his own concert performances. The two first met (according to Schumann's diary) on September 28, 1835 while Chopin stopped in Leipzig on his way home from visiting his parents in Karlsbad. They'd again get together the following year, and later Chopin would invite Schumann to his Paris apartment.

At last, Schumann-as-composer was beginning to take on more importance over other aspects of his professional life. His compositions began to take on more endorsements by those who truly mattered: in 1837 the great virtuoso of the keyboard Franz Liszt received a bundle of Schumann's piano works; until that point he had never seen anything by Schumann and his reaction was quite enthusiastic; the two met three years later in Dresden. And with such famous pianists playing his music in public, the world in general began to discover the music of Robert Schumann.

Back in April of 1834 he founded the musical publication *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (*The New Journal of Music*) which would quickly become an important, respected resource in its field; Schumann served as its editor AND publisher - returning to the family business, in a manner of speaking. And believe it or not, that publication is STILL in operation, these 191 years later. *(Below right: perhaps the most famous edition of the Zeitschrift, volume 39, #18 from October 23, 1853 – more on that below.)* In 1834 Schumann also became secretly engaged to Ernestine von Fricken, and THAT story is important enough to share: Ernestine was born in 1816, the illegitimate daughter of Countess Caroline Ernestine Louise von Zedtwitz and the manufacturer Erdmann Lindauer; at birth, she was "given" to her mother's Countess sister and HER none-too-wealthy husband, the Bohemian Baron von Fricken. Ernestine, even as a child was a pianist of some fine talent – encouraged by her not-formally-adoptive father, and eventually came to study with (you guessed it!) Friedrich Wieck in Leipzig. In 1834 she and her "father" attended a concert by the brilliant piano prodigy Clara Wieck, and the father pressed Friedrich Wieck to take his non-adopted daughter on as a student. This Wieck did, so now SHE came to live in the Wieck household, and imagine that collection: the 24-year-old Robert Schumann, the 18-year-old Ernestine and: 15-year-old Clara Wieck. In the following year, as I wrote above: Robert and Ernestine became secretly engaged – with the encouragement of Friedrich Wieck, who was suspicious of Robert – who seemed a bit TOO interested in his young daughter Clara.



Neue

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Neue Bahnen.

Es sind Jahre verflossen, — beinahe eben so viele, als ich der früheren Redaction dieser Blätter widmete, nämlich zehn —, daß ich mich auf diesem an Erinnerungen so reichen Terrain einmal hätte vernehmen lassen. Oft, trotz angestrengter productiver Thätigkeit, fühlte ich mich angeregt; manche neue, bedeutende Talente erschienen, eine neue Kraft der Musik schien sich anzukündigen, wie dies viele der hochaufstrebenden Künstler der jüngsten Zeit bezeugen, wenn auch deren Productionen mehr einem engeren Kreise bekannt sind*). Ich dachte, die Bahnen dieser Auserwählten mit der größten Theilnahme verfolgend, es würde und müsse nach solchem Vorgang einmal plötzlich Einer erscheinen, der den höchsten Ausdruck der Zeit in idealer Weise auszusprechen berufen wäre, einer, der uns die Meisterschaft nicht in stufenweiser Entfaltung brächte, sondern, wie Minerva, gleich vollkommen gepanzert aus dem Haupte des Kronion spränge. Und er ist gekommen, ein junges Blut, an dessen Wiege Grazien und Helden Wache hielten. Er heißt Johannes Brahms, kam von Hamburg, dort in dunkler Stille schaffend, aber von einem trefflichen und begeistert zutragenden Lehrer*) gebildet in den schwierigsten Satzungen der Kunst, wir kurz vorher von einem verehrten bekannten Meister empfohlen. Er trug, auch im Aeußeren, alle Anzeichen an sich, die uns ankündigen: das ist ein Berufener. Am Clavier sitzend, fing er an wunderbare Regionen zu enthüllen. Wir wurden in immer zauberischere Kreise hineingezogen. Dazu kam ein ganz geniales Spiel, das aus dem Clavier ein Orchester von wehklagenden und lautjubelnden Stimmen machte. Es waren Sonaten, mehr verschleierte Symphonien, — Lieder, deren Poesie man, ohne die Worte zu kennen, verstehen würde, obwohl eine tiefe Gesangsmelodie sich durch alle hindurchzieht, — einzelne Clavierstücke, theilweise dämonischer Natur von der anmuthigsten Form, — dann Sonaten für Violine und Clavier, — Quartette für Saiteninstrumente, — und jedes so abweichend vom andern, daß sie jedes verschiedenen Quellen zu entströmen schienen. Und dann schien es, als

*) Ich habe hier im Sinn: Joseph Joachim, Ernst Naumann, Ludwig Norman, Woldemar Bargiel, Theodor Kirchner, Julius Schäffer, Albert Dietrich, des tiefsinnigen, großer Kunst befliffenen geistlichen Tonsetzers E. F. Wilsing nicht zu vergessen. Als rüstig schreitende Vorderen wären hier auch Niels W. Gade, C. F. Mangold, Robert Franz und St. Heller zu nennen.

*) Eduard Marxsen in Hamburg.

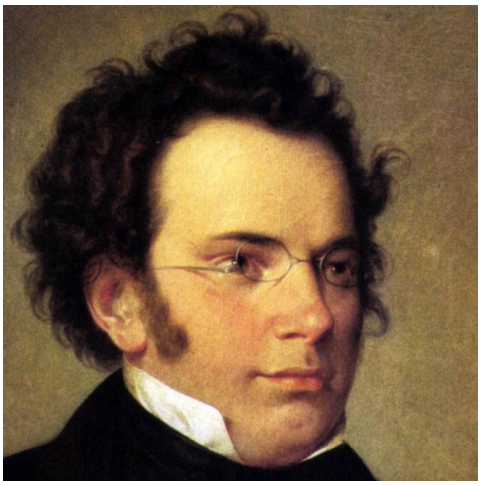
Well, in a nutshell, after gushing to his mother in a letter that he had become engaged to the wealthy daughter of a Countess – and later discovering that she wasn't the adopted daughter of ANYONE, but

actually the birth daughter of a Countess whose mother who had given her away – and though her pseudo-parents DID finally formally adopt Ernestine, her Baron-father wasn't well off financially and her Countess-mother (sister of her Countess-BIRTH-mother) wasn't sitting on any sort of big dowry as Schumann expected: well, he gradually soured on the relationship and ultimately jilted her. Freeing the way, in his mind: to Clara. Not at all cool, of course – churlish behavior, but he felt justified because Ernestine hadn't shared the truth of HER parentage, etc etc. At about that time, Friedrich sent Clara off to Dresden for concertizing – presumably to keep his daughter and Schumann away from one another.

During this time Robert continued to compose – his ***Symphonic Etudes, op 13*** – and ***Carnaval, op 9*** both 1835 works which would increase his fame.

In 1836 his mother died, about which he had some ambivalence; she had stood in the path of a musical career but HAD finally supported his goal and their relationship was good by the end of her life. But in that year, Robert also had something of a "secret" encounter with Clara; he was 26 and she still a minor at 17. So – Friedrich put his foot down, kicking Schumann out of his house and insisting that Schumann stay away from his daughter – forbidding ANY contact between the two. Robert's piano compositions continued to amass; in his 26th year he composed and published his ***C-Major Fantasy, op17***, ***f-# minor Sonata, op 11*** and the ***f-minor Concert Sans Orchestre, op. 14***.

By now, Friedrich Wieck was growing increasingly concerned and increasingly determined. Though he had kept the two separated for well over a year, he discovered they had engaged secretly, and immediately arranged for another concert tour for Clara, with he, her father – accompanying her for the entire trip. He did NOT approve of a relationship of any sort between Clara and Robert, wanted to keep them geographically separated – and made that point thoroughly clear. By no means ceding the battle for Clara to Friedrich, Schumann buried himself in composing: in 1838 he wrote and published his ***Kinderszenen (Children's Scenes) op. 15***; ***Kreisleriana op. 16***; ***Novelettes op. 21***; ***Sonata in G minor op. 22***. ***Kinderszenen*** was culled by Schumann from an original 30 movements down to 13; of those, #1 *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen* – *(Of Foreign Lands and Peoples*) and #7 *Träumerei* - *(Dreaming)* have crossed over into pop culture; both are used well in the 1979 (hard to believe it's been THAT long!) Oscar-Winning film "**My Brilliant Career**" – played on the piano by star Judy Davis herself. The film also uses Schumann's beautiful ***Piano Quartet in E ♭ major, Op 47***.



So by now, he was demonstrating great skill as a composer but also came up with a great musicological find that same year (1838) – the "***Great" C-Major Symphony*** of Franz Schubert *(at left, 1797 - 1828,)* who at that time had been dead for 10 years. This was a VERY big deal – the symphony was Schubert's final one (though probably finished in 1826,) and is an epic taking about an hour to perform. It was never performed in his lifetime, and disappeared after his death. But near the end of 1838 Schumann was visiting Vienna (where he HAD hope to relocate both himself and

the operations of the *Zeitschrift)* and while THAT didn't come to pass, Schumann called upon Franz Schubert's brother Ferdinand during his visit, noting two years later in an 1840 article in his *Zeitschrift,* "Ferdinand let me look among the treasures of Franz Schubert's compositions that still found themselves in his hand…The riches that here lay piled up before me made me shudder with joy. Where to look first; where to stop?" He continues, "Who knows how long this symphony would have lain becoming dusty in the darkness had I not come to an understanding with Ferdinand Schubert to send it to Leipzig to the direction of the Gewandhaus Concerts? Or to the artist himself who leads them *(meaning, of course, Mendelssohn,)* from whose fine glimpse the shyly blossoming beauty can hardly escape, not to mention this obvious, masterful, glorious one? The symphony arrived, was heard, understood, heard again and joyfully almost universally admired."

Schumann had edited and cleaned-up the manuscript, before handing it over to his friend Felix Mendelssohn *(1809-1847, at left and like Chopin, a near-contemporary of Schumann,)* with a commission to conduct the world premiere of the piece. He ALSO sent it to the publishers Breitkopf und Härtel and arranged for the orchestral parts to be delivered to Mendelssohn's Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra, which premiered the piece. Also on that concert? Mendelssohn's own brand-new ***Overture to Ruy Blas*** – one of my favorites of that composer, and one I hope to program with the MYSO in the near future. This was truly distinguished musicological detective work, and resulting in bringing to the world an absolute classic of the orchestral repertoire – the score and parts of which have remained in MY collection for many years – ALSO hoping to be programmed with the MYSO! Schumann was creating quite a legacy of accomplishments.

But in 1839, the fever pitch of antagonism from Friedrich Wieck had reached SUCH a scathing-hot roar that Clara *(just prior to her 20th birthday, as shown at right)* wrote Robert to let him know that her father had threatened both herself - his very own daughter - AND Robert with legal action should she ever marry Schumann, and that he (Friedrich) would disinherit her. He had also promised that such a process could keep them apart for a further three to five years "unless I (Clara) let go of you." She then consulted an attorney – and signed over to Schumann her legal power-of-attorney. What happened next?

Schumann took this paper trail to his own Leipzig attorney with the request that Friedrich be contacted to attempt an out-of-court settlement. Negotiations actually did begin on July 2nd, 1839 – but completely fell apart. And so: in this, perhaps the most famous court case involving any "classical" composer, Schumann had little faith in a positive settlement. He even wrote to Clara, "Now all my hope has disappeared. All of this has affected me so deeply that had we been together yesterday, Clara: I would have readily put both you and me to death."

And then the battle was REALLY met. Two weeks after those negotiations had deteriorated into acrimony, Schumann filed an official complaint against Friedrich Wieck, who was then commanded to appear before the court WITH his daughter to legally find some way to end the kerfuffle and reconcile all parties. Friedrich refused the order outright, and insisted that 1) he could NOT appear because of his business demands and 2) he would never give his "blessings" to such a marriage.

That phase now concluded, Clara left her father's house soon thereafter (in the same year – 1839) to live in Berlin with her mother Mariane. Whom – you'll recall – had divorced Friedrich in 1825 and married piano/singing teacher Adolph Bargiel in 1827.

Wieck? He made a REALLY poor-faith attempt at resolving the whole contretemps in the Leipzig Court – which again, showed his true colors. He said that IF Clara turned over all her earnings from seven years of playing on the public concert circuit to her stepbrothers and IF Clara paid HIM an additional 1,000 thalers (about $750 US dollars in 1840's currency) as his fee for storing all her belongings – including her piano at his house and that furthermore, IF Schumann paid him 8,000 thalers ($6,000 1840 US dollars) to - get this! - *guarantee* that such a marriage to his daughter **would not fail**, then he – Friedrich – would give his blessings to the union. Now keep in mind, for perspective: in Germany at that time, (1840) a comfortable average worker's annual salary was about 300 thalers. Yes, per YEAR. (In the US, it was slightly higher – at least for males – at $250.00.) So in effect, Friedrich was trying to extort approximately 25 YEARS worth of average income from Schumann just to marry his daughter. The marriage he had previously said would NOT take place at any time, in any place, under *any* circumstances…except – for money, of course.

And the best part? After Wieck came up with that ridiculous offer, he again failed to appear for the hearing.

But it gets even BETTER!!

Now growing desperate, on December 14th (1839) Wieck again filed for an appeal: he posed two questions. Did the court believe that 1) Schumann and Clara had the financial income to guarantee a lasting marriage and 2) did they have (and by this, he primarily meant Robert) the character to ensure a provident, happy marriage?

To offer support to his supposition that the couple (again, primarily Robert) could NOT have a successful marriage, Wieck wrote this about the man her daughter loved; a man who was NOT (as Wieck had) marrying for money, a man who had successfully published his own well-received

music and had created what became the leading journal on music:

"I have observed Schumann closely and he is unable to support himself, has squandered his inheritance, and was lazy, unreliable and conceited, a mediocre composer whose music is unclear and almost impossible to perform. Schumann had paralyzed one of his fingers and made it useless through stupidity, defiance, and senseless conflict. In addition, he is an alcoholic, has been drinking in public beer and wine every night since his youth, and he really didn't love Clara but only wanted to exploit her."

The rotten elder Wieck had gone so far as to break into his daughter's locked personal correspondence trunk, read through all her private letters and writings – and had even copied many of these missives. Which he now tried to use against her.

The presiding judge of the Leipzig Court gave Wieck two weeks to prove his case – the deadline being January 4th, 1840. The same year during which Clara would turn 21.

Schumann – who had already begun to assemble evidence to support his own character and success, really stepped it up. He even provided official documents from Leipzig officials claiming Schumann to be a "quiet and decent citizen."

The judge accepted and approved Schumann's defense, but – oddly, Schumann couldn't provide evidence disputing the alcoholism charges. Then, Wieck later that same month pulled some REALLY underhanded mudslinging: he not only legally claimed that Schumann was financially incapable of supporting a marriage, but also attempted to destroy his own daughter's career and reputation by making sure that HIS side of the picture, HIS charges against the couple: were publicized in every city in which there would be Clara Wieck touring concerts for the entirety of 1840 – nearly a full year in advance.

Schumann became despondent, seeing that his own love for Clara *(at left)* would end up ruining her hard-won career as a pianist. But, not yet ready to give up the fight, he provided testimony and records by which he wished to convince the Court that he WOULD earn the minimum amount Wieck had insisted his daughter and a marriage would require – he even had his friend Mendelssohn ready to testify on his behalf. All that remained was to wait for the official decision, which would take months for the Court to provide. Schumann and Clara both plunged themselves into their respective work, and then, on the 12th of September that year (1840) – the day BEFORE Clara's 21st birthday, and in something of a thumbing of the nose at her father: the couple married. Why was that something of a provocation? Because the very next day would have seen Clara come of age, into her independence, with absolutely no need for ANYONE to answer to.

Why wait? What are you gonna do, Pops – if we marry one day early? Moot point, old man, so THERE! Made even MORE moot by the fact that the court's ruling DID come down, and it was overwhelming in favor of the young couple *(shown below left.)*

Creatively, 1840 was also the year in which Schumann tackled a form he heretofore had a bit of contempt for: lieder or "songs." A quick sidebar: I really am puzzled by those who refer to a symphony or other work by (say) Beethoven, claiming "I really like that song!" Wellllllllll….. A symphony is a SYMPHONY. An overture is an OVERTURE. A concerto is a CONCERTO. A string quartet is a STRING QUARTET. An etude, a sonata, a symphonic poem - none of those are "songs." Yes, there are "classical" songs, but those too are ***specific forms*** of music and that word is NOT an all-inclusive word for ***all*** forms of music! If you DO want an amorphous descriptor for some piece of concert, or serious, or classical – (or as one of my composer friends describes our sort of music: ***non-pop***,) then it's a "work." A "piece." Or a symphony or a concerto or…whatever it really is! Sorry; rant over!

So – Schumann set about writing (German) ***lieder***, or songs during his 31st year – about 140 of them. And thus begun something of an unconscious pigeonholing of music forms/styles by an annual basis. In 1841 he finally set about composing for the orchestra (though he had attempted the symphonic form a decade earlier with the 1832-33 so-called "***Zwickau" Symphony*** – a two-movement work,) and in that year produced his first symphony (the ***"Spring" Symphony in Bb-Major***, op 38) and the initial draft of another symphony in d-minor, (eventually to become his ***4th Symphony op 120*** – though Schumann at the time of its final version in 1851 referred to it as a looser "***Symphonic Fantasia***" – but upon its being published, Breitkopf und Hartel ignored his wishes and stamped it as his ***Fourth Symphony***,) and the first movement of a piano concerto in a-minor. That one-movement work, first noted as a "***Fantasia" for Piano and Orchestra***, was expanded by Schumann to become the very famous ***Piano Concerto in a-minor***. In 1842? While Clara was off on a tour to Denmark, Robert also toured – as a conductor, to Northern Germany – while devoting most of his compositional output to chamber music that year: the three ***op 41 String Quartets*** and the two ***Piano Quintets – ops. 44 and 47***. This time also gave rise the three-movement ***Overture, Scherzo and Finale***.

Having been awarded an honorary doctorate of music by the University of Jena (Thuringia) in 1840, Schumann was appointed to the Leipzig Conservatory in 1843 and it was also during that year that the Schumanns began a reconciliation with Friedrich Wieck.

And this was a juicy story, too: old man Wieck continued to act like a royal jerk after Clara and Robert married and he even refused to give Clara her childhood piano – a piano which had been

given to her, and upon which she had played since a child. Wieck finally turned it over, but only after a court order required him to do so. But by 1843, things had changed: not only was he now a grandfather thanks to the couple, but – his son-in-law was now becoming a respected, well-regarded composer. And he was making money. And so, Wieck sent them a letter, changing HIS tune considerably, by whining that really, shouldn't they patch things up "for Clara's sake"?!! And then, the old crank played the "family" card – because after all, now that Robert was a father (read: Wieck wanted to worm himself into his grandchildrens' lives) – so "you too are now a family man – is a longer explanation needed?" he whined. Yeah, right. Robert was becoming a hot commodity - being recognized for his art, and making money at it. (*At right: Friedrich Wieck late in life; that life spanned the years 1785 – 1873, dying at an amazing – for that time – 88 years old. Perhaps it was his crankiness which kept him alive; while there's no record of a second divorce, we DO know that in 1844, Friedrich Wieck left and relocated to – alone. His second wife – again, 20 years his junior – outlived him by 20 years, dying in 1893 at the age – also – of 88.)*

Clara, though deeply hurt by the wretched behavior of her father in the 1830s while trying to keep them apart by any means necessary – including trying to throw the law book right at his talented daughter: was extremely forgiving, though her husband didn't trust the old man OR his motives. I would think that Schumann DID gloat to a certain extent, especially by the way Wieck – also a prolific chronicler/journalist on the topic of music: began to brag about his son-in-law in his essays during this period. Wieck went so far as to refer to Robert Schumann as the premiere model for art, including him at the pinnacle of achievement with Mendelssohn, Chopin and Ignatz Moscheles - another pretty brilliant pianist/composer of the time whose work really is memorable though not at all inspired at the level of the other three – and those works have mostly fallen out of favor, only being resurrected now and then as "newly discovered" works. He, like his major competitor Sigismond Thalberg – (whose works are ALSO more than listenable) composed chiefly for his instrument: piano solo or piano concerti (with orchestra) works to display

his talents on tour. And also to wring more money out of the hiring organizations – by charging for the privilege of hearing his OWN works! By the next year (1844,) Wieck had again become his daughter's producer/manager, but only for about five years.

During this time, Schumann also composed in yet a different form: an oratorio – for soloists, chorus and orchestra, and it remains one of the best-kept secret greatest oratorios to come out of the 19th century: ***Das Paradies und die Peri***. Schumann himself conducted the premiere of the piece on December 4, 1843 in Leipzig. He spent the next year on a concert tour of Russia and then the Schumanns moved to Dresden, but now he had something of a health crisis. Despite that fact, he began composing his C Major Symphony (eventually to be published as his 2nd Symphony, op 61) and finally completed the transformation of the one-movement Piano Fantasia into his three-movement (and single) Piano Concerto – in a-minor, op 54. That Piano Concerto was published and premiered in 1845 and Edvard Grieg (also on this program) clearly followed Schumann's structure, key, etc by modeling his OWN 1868 Piano Concerto in a-minor after that of Schumann. Unmistakably.

During the next year (1846) Schumann completed that symphony begun the previous year (C-Major, to be published as his Symphony #2) but did require some weeks of health rejuvenation during the summer at a spa; he also led a concert tour to Vienna – the city he had once wished to move to, and from which to publish the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* from; by this time he had given up editing the magazine himself two years earlier, selling the publication to Franz Brendel on July 1, 1844. Overseeing, writing and publishing the now-highly-successful literary journal had begun to overtake the career he really wished to focus upon: that of composer. And while he was now free of all the administrative and editorial demands of the journal, he still contributed his writings and beautifully-philosophized musings on music, and on the status of contemporary music. *(Illustration at right: the Schumanns in 1847.)*

He undertook the concert tours because the income was good and by conducting, he was able to promote works he truly believed in – mostly his own. That Vienna tour was extended into the next

year (1847) and his travels took him to Prague and Berlin before he returned to Zwickau for the "Schumann Festival" – his name was growing! His responsibilities increased when he was tapped to be the "Liedermeister" – or Song Master of the Liedfertafel in Dresden.

In 1849, Schumann composed what IS one of my favorite works by any composer: his three-movement ***Konzertstuck (Concert Piece) in F-Major for Four Horns and Orchestra, op 86***. This IS a magnificent and innovative work: the horn writing is extremely virtuosic, the energy is always on display and it's one of those pieces which is so rousing that it might be able to raise the dead! His years in Dresden were the most productive as a composer in his life, but he also organized and promoted (in effect) the art of the voice – and more important, an organization for choral singing which he taught and conducted. There, he composed his piano works ***Album für die Jugend*** (***Album for the Young) op. 68*** and ***Waldszenen (Forest Scenes) op. 82***, as well as his opera ***Genoveva op 81*** which premiered in Leipzig in 1850, *(Schumann, right – a Daguerreotype from that very year of 1850)* ***Lieder-Album für die Jugend (Song Album for the Young***) op. 79 and two very major choral/orchestral works: ***Szenen aus Goethes Faust (Scenes from Goethe's Faust***) and – pertinent to this program: ***Manfred – Dramatisches Gedicht in drei Abteilungen von Lord Byron für Soli, Sprecher, Chor und Orchester, op 115 (Manfred - Dramatic Poem in Three Sections from Lord Byron for Soloists, Speaker, Choir and Orchestra, op 115.)***

Along with Schumann's appointment as municipal music director in Düsseldorf, his composing frenzy continued with two more very major works in 1850: the ***Third Symphony in E ♭ major, Op 97 ("Rhenish"***) featured on a past MYSO program as stated at top – back in 2006 or so, and Schumann's ***Concerto for Violoncello in a-minor, op 129***.

But unfortunately, by this point in his life the tertiary phase of syphilis became not just an annoyance but a growing crisis. He still had a few works left in him: between and during his stays at spas hoping for some sort of recovery or at least a temporary cessation, he would compose a second draft version of the ***d-minor Symphony*** which would eventually become his ***Fourth*** and final one, the choral/orchestral ***Der Rose Pilgerfahrt, op 112 (The Rose Pilgrimage, op 112,***) the ***Violin Sonatas in a-minor and d-minor (op 105 and 121,***) his final concert overtures, the ***Mass in c-minor op 147*** and the ***Requiem in D ♭ major op 148.***

The creative juices were not merely flowing but gushing like a geyser – almost as if Schumann

realized his time might be drawing near and he had to compose as much as he could WHILE he still could. Unfortunately, his mental stability began to be affected by among other things: minor seizures; he began having major disagreements with the concert committee in Düsseldorf, jeopardizing his continued employment there.

In 1853 he suffered what was described as a "nervous attack" while visiting Bonn – but on September 30th of that year one of the most wonderful connections in musical history was also made: between both Schumanns and a talented 20-year-old pianist named Johannes Brahms. Brahms at that time was the piano accompanist for violinist Eduard Remenyi on a concert tour. The brilliant violinist Joseph Joachim (who would be Brahms' close friend and professional collaborator for many decades to come) sent a recommendation to the Schumanns, insisting that they meet the young man, and so he did, at their Düsseldorf home (where, by now – they had produced seven children between 1841 and 1851; another would be born and die in 1854.) The spark was lit immediately, with an immediate, lasting friendship – and mentoring of the young Brahms began. He stayed with the Schumanns for two weeks, becoming a delighted young "Uncle" to the kids. Brahms *(shown above left, age 20 – the very year he came into the Schumanns' lives)* played many of his unpublished compositions for piano for the Schumanns, who were deeply impressed by the young man's genius. Schumann wrote a grateful letter to Joachim, and then took his admiration to the public. Shortly after that first encounter with Brahms, Schumann wrote an article for his formal journal - the *Neue Zeitschrift,* entitled "*Neue Bahnen*" ("*New Paths*"). In that article, he introduced the world to his young discovery, writing of Brahms that he was "…called to give expression to his times in ideal fashion: a musician who would reveal his mastery not in gradual stages but like Minerva would spring fully armed from Kronos's head. And he has come; a young man over whose cradle Graces and Heroes have stood watch. His name is Johannes Brahms…" Well well!

It was also Schumann who encouraged Brahms to compose for the orchestra. Brahms' piano works ARE largely symphonic in their all-encompassing, complex and polyphonic writing – and just have an orchestral sweep to them. Credit to Schumann for picking up this nature, and though Brahms wouldn't compose for orchestra for another couple decades, he did so with the memory of Schumann's estimation of his talents.

Schumann did, in that article: effectively bring great public attention to the young composer, and

while Brahms now felt he had a high standard to meet, at least the public WOULD be watching, waiting – and would be rewarded for their attentions.

But back to Schumann – during that year of 1853, and despite his growing psychological problems, he WAS able to undertake a successful concert tour to the Netherlands and composed his ***Violin Concerto in d-minor***.

He did have one last concert tour, which fortunately went well – to Hanover in 1854. But the voices in his head, hallucinations and mental instability were impossible to live with any longer. His psychological disturbances became so severe that he literally became frightened he'd harm Clara *(at right)* and their children, and asked to be institutionalized. On February the 27th of that year, he tried to kill himself by leaping into the freezing Rhine River – but was fortunately rescued. However, it was at this time (March 4th) that he was consigned to a mental sanitarium in the town of Endenich, near Bonn. There he languished for his final 29 months – at times his mind cleared slightly and his health improved, but, according to his doctors' records, the overall condition of the patient consisted of "convulsive fits, the gradual loss of the ability to speak clearly, aggressive behavior and protracted periods of screaming" – and Schumann was under the impression he was being poisoned.

Brahms and other friends were allowed to visit Schumann, but Clara was kept largely in the dark and could rarely see her husband. And then – Clara was called to the hospital to see her husband at last, but arrived to be told that he had just died of pneumonia on July 29, 1856 – aged just 46. He was subsequently buried in Bonn.

During that entire final couple of years and for the decades following, Johannes Brahms went from being Schumann's young discovery to a part of the family, an incredibly helpful aide to both Robert and Clara (who herself needed to concertize more frequently now that she was the near-sole support of their children, including a tour to England – a first for her.) Brahms became Clara's dear friend, protector, admirer – it's believed that Brahms even fell in love with Clara, but that's all that's known for sure. His letters to her even while her husband still lived, albeit in the sanitarium: are at times extremely passionate; was it a crush? Brahms – at the time of Schumann's death – was 23 and Clara 37 and it's become one of the most-discussed conversations in all "classical" music. Brahms was – after his early adulthood at least: largely asexual and never married – but their affection for one another – at least in my opinion: was platonic at the very highest level.

In any event, Brahms would do all he could to help Clara and advance the reputation of her talented dead husband in the decades to come, until Clara died in 1896 at 76 – some 40 years after the death of Robert, whom she missed terribly and continued to love deeply. Brahms died the following year at 64 – though in his case, it's not surprising: it was oral cancer, which wasn't unexpected for a man who was rarely without a cigar in his mouth.

Clara the composer mostly ceased writing music after her husband's death; instead – and with growing zeal after the children were mostly grown: she toured constantly in a number of countries, with a first tour to England while Robert was dying in the sanitarium in 1856, returning to that country every year after. She also constantly toured with the great violinist Joseph Joachim, as I noted above – who at the time of HIS introduction to the Schumanns in 1840 was a prodigiously talented boy of 14, and upon whom they showered admiration. Three years older than the 20-year-old Brahms he would draw to their attention (detailed above,) and after Robert's death the three would have a lively, admirable friendship. Clara offered the world premieres of works by her husband, by Joachim and especially Brahms; she Clara enjoyed actively concertizing with Joachim – and in fact, they gave a total of 238 concerts in Germany and Britain over the years! By 1878, Clara – who had been showered with praise and respect from her earliest days as a pianist AND composer: now became a hugely influential instructor of piano, at Dr. Hoch's Konservatorium in Frankfurt – and such was her fame that students came from far abroad just to study with her. She also edited her husband's works, preparing the yet-unpublished FOR publication. And it was there, in Frankfurt – that she ended her days, buried in Bonn next to the husband she continued to adore in those 40 years until her death. The photo above is from Clara's 1896 funeral; at center in profile is the portly, white-bearded Brahms, her friend and admirer of the past 43 years. No longer that 20-year-when they first met.

(At left: George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, FRS (January 22, 1788 – April 19, 1824) or: Lord Byron, painted at age 25 in 1813.)

The ***Overture to Manfred*** was composed at the peak of Schumann's genius and prowess. No mere toss-off to serve as an introduction to the larger work, this is a beautifully-constructed overture which stands well on its own. Opening

with three mighty orchestral chords which – not on the beat, but on the after-beat, (or the "and" of each beat;) this was pure genius in itself. It gives that opening orchestral tutti an altogether different sound than if the three chords had been – as logic and ease might have preferred: ON the beats. The effect, in itself: presages the inner torment of Manfred himself, as if being dragged rather than propelling himself. The *Manfred* story? Well – it's more or less Lord Byron's answer to Goethe's *Faust, Part One*.

Schumann had first encountered Byron's 1816-17 ***closet*** theatrepiece or dramatic poem as Lord Byron referred to its form (meaning, though written in the form of a script with lines assigned to the characters, it wasn't really meant to be performed) little more than a decade after Byron wrote it – in 1828, when Schumann was still a teen. The first two acts were written by Byron during a voyage (appropriate to the story) over the Alps and the third act during the next year while Byron was in Venice. German theatrical productions followed about a decade after the completion of Byron's writing. By way of short bio/background, Byron was a former Member of Parliament (House of Lords) and something of a scalawag, roué and hard-living romantic idealist who burned his candle at both ends, extinguishing it after a brief life.

Now pardon me HERE for a brief digressive essay on the early 19th-century British poets, but it's somewhat important to the story of Lord Byron's *Manfred*, which Schumann brought to musical life. That, and the fact that English literature is a favorite of mine, and I've always (particularly) been drawn to the man v. the elements/man v. the universe/man v. himself schools of literary philosophy into which the Faustian and Agrippa legends - and Byron's *Manfred* fit nicely.

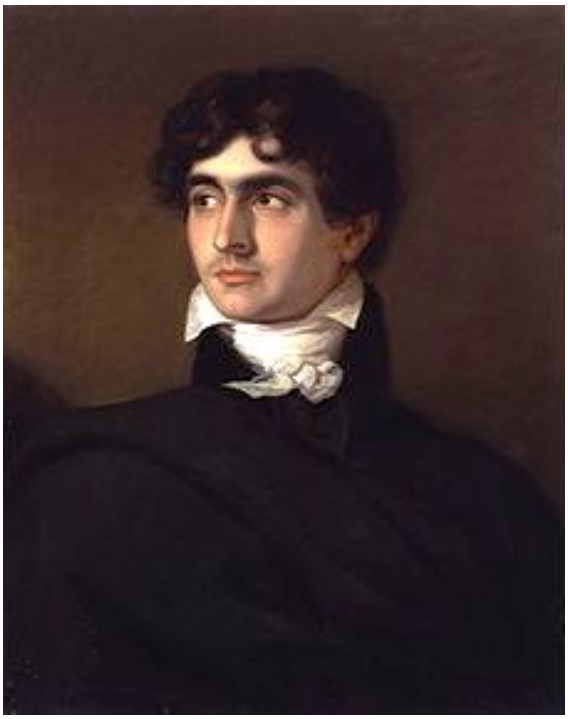
Percy Bysshe Shelley *(1792 – 1822 at upper right,)* along with John Keats *(1795 – 1821, at left – who would die at 25 of tuberculosis)* and Byron have been called a "Romantic Trinity" – as part of the Second Generation of Romantic Poets, an extension of the First Generation's establishment of the style which is an expression of the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Hence, Romanticism. THIS was literature of the time – and the sort of literature which inspired Schumann not only as a literary writer but more importantly: as a composer.

The dawn of 19th century literature was also full of the merging of science and the supernatural even as this "new age" of largely British and nearly entirely

young poets built upon the revolution of their immediate-predecessors' late 18th century First Generation movement; may I only need mention Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's 1818 masterpiece *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*?

These writers and many more (for the most part) knew one another, and their relationships were

At left, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797 – 1851) the longest-lived of the entire group, if you consider age 53 to be long-lived. This 19-year-old, at this point yet-to-be-married-to-Percy Bysshe Shelley, on that dark and stormy night in June 1816 - conceived the basis of what became the entire gothic horror novel Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus, published two years later in 1818. Like most of this group who died young, her husband died at 29 by drowning in Italy after his boat sank.



fascinating and mutually-spurring when it came to creativity. Another sad fact is that most of them died quite young: in their 20s or 30s with only a couple of exceptions. So: it was in the creepy year of 1816 (more on THAT below) that Byron and his physician Dr. John William Polidori *(1795 – 1821, Keats' exact contemporary, and something of an oddball – shown at right, who would commit suicide at age 25 by drinking prussic acid)* rented the remote Villa Diodati (actual name: Villa Belle Rive, but Byron changed it to honor its owners during his stay and the name stuck to this day) in the village of Cologny near Lake Geneva from June 1st to November 1st. Percy Bysshe Shelley and not-yet wife Mary Wollstonecraft – with her stepsister Claire Clairemont (briefly Lord Byron's lover,) took a house nearby, but mostly spent their time at Villa Diodati *(shown at right, present day.)*

The setting could not have been more dramatic as this was also the "Year of Darkness" or the "Year Without a Summer" because Indonesia's Mount Tambora had blown its top with a massive eruption during the previous year; the ensuing ash in the atmosphere created a global drop in temperatures and also blocked sunlight. Sadly, thousands died, but the important thing for our little poetry coterie at Lake Geneva is that they experienced the unusually cold and wet conditions which affected North America and Europe. So things are already clammy, dark and gloomy, conditions I enjoy! Utterly bored by the fact they had been spending days indoor in June, one night Byron challenged the group to come up with ghost stories, and – it was said that on that night, *Frankenstein* was born. But a little less-known is that the basic modern Dracula story was ALSO born there, 81 years before the Bram Stoker horror short novel was written: Polidori's *Vampyre*. In which the character of the "Earl of Marsden" is a disguise used by the title character, who's loosely based on Byron, but - - I digress even FROM this digression. And so back to Byron's *Manfred*.

At its most basic, Manfred (like Faust) is man at his most desperate to know the secrets of life, of the planet, of himself, self-debating the meaning and nature of existence, but above all – how to assuage the massive guilt he feels over his past relationship with his beloved, dead Astarte – a relationship which is only hinted at by Byron. The difference lies in the fact that Faust is a scholar who seeks (for the most part) the scientific answers to the universe while Manfred's more Freudian approach lies with the fact that Manfred (himself) is all about guilt, seeking the answers of who HE, himself is - and of his own existence rather than that of mankind as a whole. *(1842 painting above by Ford Madox Brown, depicting Act I Scene II: Manfred's planned suicide leap from the Jungfrau - averted by a chamois hunter.)*

The Faust story predates even Goethe's 1806/1808/1828-29 Part I, – with the 1831 Part II published posthumously in 1832; one of my favorite treatments of the "legend" of Faust is Christopher Marlowe's 1590s Elizabethan dark *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* - we know how the Elizabethans loved their grisly tragedies…just ask Shakespeare!

The legend itself predates Marlowe's version – a long history of the tale of Dr. Faustus; it's related to another of my favorites: the *Agrippa* alchemist legend – subject of an orchestral tone poem I myself composed more than 50 years ago at age 16, but that's getting WAY off track…

So okay: Byron's *Manfred* was written about a decade after the 1806/1808 publication of *Part I* of Goethe's *Faust*. The story is largely autobiographical: Manfred was in love with his half-sister Astarte *(in Byron's own real-life case, with his stepsister Augusta Leigh, leading to whispers of incest and scandal;)* in the fictional version, Astarte is dead and the implication is that she was his sister or half-sister. Manfred flees on a pilgrimage of self-discovery throughout the Alps *(as did Byron, whose wife divorced him over this scandal – but Byron's travels took him much farther; from England to France, Switzerland, the Alps, eventually to Rome, Venice, Athens – and eventually to Missolonghi [Greece] where, on April 19, 1824 he died of a fever while fighting for the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire - at the age of 36!)* and is rejected by society – beginning his hunt, his journey: for the answers of existence, on a personal scale – of HIS life, the torture of not knowing himself.

In Faust, the secrets of the mind and humanity are revealed to Dr. Faust by entering into a pact with the Devil [Mephistopheles] for Faust's soul but I won't spoil the ending; in Manfred, there are supernatural elements which are – for the most part – extensions of Manfred himself, though they exist in the story in the form of witches, evil spirits, etc. To cut it short, Manfred – who had some sort of non-defined relationship with his beloved Astarte, is wracked with guilt over – well, we're not really told. Over that relationship, which remains a secret – but is alluded to as a sin? Over her death? How to get over it? How to forget? Manfred (who's not only a filthy rich man with a huge castle in the Alps, but a magician to boot!) summons seven spirits hoping they can take away his memory, but they're not of much help as they have power only over specific natural elements. Their suggestion? Death! That'll help you forget… *(At right: Thomas Cole's 1833 painting Scene from Byron's "Manfred" depicting the moment at which an Alpine fairy appears to Manfred in a rainbow created in a waterfall's mist.)*

It's not the right answer, but IS tempting. Instead, Manfred seeks out the Witch of the Alps. His hope is that she can either resurrect Astarte or – allow Manfred to join her in death. Of course the Witch can grant him either wish, but only if Manfred becomes her slave. But – he's far too proud for that trade off. This is where Lord Byron really diverges from Goethe's Faust, who DOES go along with Mephistopheles' bargain of Faust's soul – after a period – for knowledge and experiences now.

As a magician, Manfred CAN summon up Astarte's spirit, if not corpus – and he does so. His intention is that perhaps he can be freed from his guilt if she absolves him OR condemns him. But the spirit of Astarte remains silent – the only gleaning of ANYTHING he receives from her is that **he WILL die**. Soon.

So his next step? He meets with the Abbot of St. Maurice, who offers to absolve him through Christian redemption, but – Manfred rejects the offer as by now is past repenting for his sin, and has come to the conclusion that the only way to resolve his terrible situation IS through death.

This, again – is a major divergence from Faust, who DOES accept redemption, and thus ends his contract with Mephistopheles, ascending to Heaven. But Manfred? No. He's tried both supernatural means and the help of the sacred, but – again, this proud nobleman rejects all, and now fully embraces the peace and absolution he will find only through death. At the very end, as he dies, he utters the words "Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die," as he gives his soul not to Heaven OR Hell, but – to the peace of nothingness.

(The Abbey of Saint Maurice, Agaunum - the Swiss monastery in the Canton of Valais, which Manfred of the story enters, hoping for help from the Abbot. This amazing 1,500+-years-old facility dates from the 6th century, and is shown as it appears today.)

So there's the story. Schumann wisely decided on setting "Scenes" rather than the whole complex shebang; the hour-long piece is organized into three parts, with 15 separate "scenes" for orchestra and soloists, orchestra and chorus, or all three; there are also linking spoken sections for narrator. All opened up with the magnificent Overture which accounts for a full near-fifth of the entire work's timing.

Now – I already described the opening of the Overture – those full-tutti orchestral chords on the afterbeats rather than beats in that first single bar, starting things off feeling just a tad off-kilter – perhaps uncomfortably unsettled, as Manfred himself is. But what follows is pretty extraordinary AND remarkable both for Schumann's innovation, and sheer skill. The overture doesn't quote themes from the rest of the work as a standard overture to such a work usually would. Instead, Schumann utilizes motifs – brief snippets which he develops, and which build and allow us to experience MOODS – which Byron's writing suggested to him. The overture (after that first bar) is in *Sonata-Allegro* form – resembling far more a full-fledged, complex symphonic movement rather

than any of the many far simpler forms an overture might take. It's in three parts, representing three basic ideas: the first part (which follows that initial bar) consists of slow, chromatic, mournful, pulling and straining – representing, it appears: the mourning of the dead Astarte – to whom Manfred had sworn his love, in some incestuously-hinted manner. This section builds both in volume and speed, until arriving at the overture's second section – lengthiest of the three, with a far more aggressive and masculine tune clearly representing Manfred himself; a restless, churning exposition with presentation and some development of many motivic bits – both brief and extended. The material mercuriously moves between positive and negative, major and minor, hope and depression – and even when it takes on a more lyrical quality, there's always a nervous drive at work as a riptide, or undertow. The third section once again conjures up the suggestion of Astarte – through that sinuously disturbed use of chromaticism again; this section contains the major development of the entire overture. One of my favorite uses of the orchestra in all the rep occurs in this section: while the strings and winds are trying to calm things down with a beautiful descending tune, played in a cantabile – or sung style, the violas keep pushing with a nervous motif built upon four repetitively-played notes in the interval of a diminished octave – an uncomfortable sound, which strives for, but never reaches resolution.

At the conclusion of the development, the overture then moves into an extended coda, which returns us to the mood of that first section – that slow, chromatic, mournful, pulling and straining miasma which now has the added feeling of resignation – much as Manfred eventually resigns himself to death as the only escape from the torture of existence. The overall mood throughout all three sections, however: is always one of a somber mien, even during the moments when there might be a little tiny bit of light (but not sun) trying to break through before it's quickly swallowed up in the entirety of this e ♭ minor striving against the hopeless gloom.

(Above right – the private sanatorium of Endenich in the 19th century, where Robert Schumann drew his final breath on July 29, 1856 - aged only 46.)

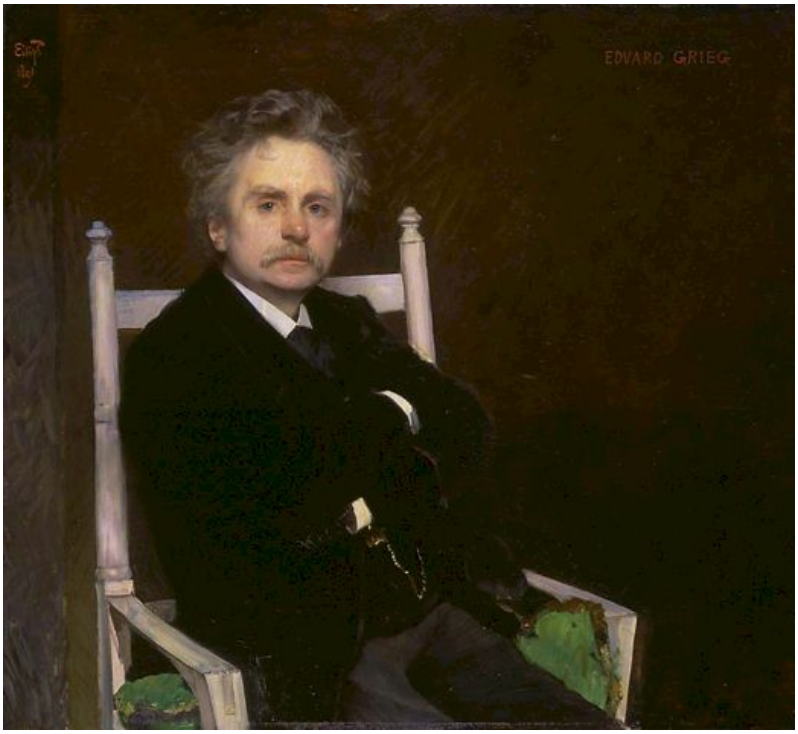
One last note: another composer was also inspired by Byron's *Manfred*: in 1885, between his ***Fourth*** and ***Fifth Symphonies***, Tchaikovsky produced his ***Manfred - Symphony in Four Scenes in***

b-minor op 58. It's unnumbered; its four movements were conceived apparently as four related tone or symphonic poems depicting specific scenes from Byron's work. Its thoroughly programmatic nature is the reason believed for Tchaikovsky not including it among the other six numbered symphonies, but formally, structurally – and from the standpoint of the movements' relationship with one another, it's as much a symphony as any of the others. And – it's also his most lengthy symphony AND the one demanding the largest orchestra (including organ.) And the key he chose is also significant, and would be used less than a decade later when composing his final, and in my estimation, his greatest, most personal, most tragic work: 1893's ***Sixth Symphony in b minor "Pathétique***." And who was one of Tchaikovsky's favorite composers?

Robert Schumann.

But now, after spending an inordinate amount of time and space describing the shortest work on this program, I'm going to mercifully be a little more circumspect with Grieg!

Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843 – 1907) *Suites #1 and #2 from the incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's "Peer Gynt"* (1876/1886) Just as Schumann was a complex, tortured man to whom little came easily, Grieg *(at left, aged 50 in 1893,)* led one of the sunniest, happiest lives of any composer. And just like Schumann (and Bizet) Grieg was a colossus of a trained pianist – but he would come to be recognized as Norway's greatest composer. Grieg was well-trained both in his own country and abroad, spending his student and later years learning the art in Denmark, Germany, Rome and throughout much of Europe. He was also a pioneer of Scandinavian Nationalism in music – at a time when composers of all nationalities were discovering and expressing the "sound" of their particular countries: those such as Bedřich Smetana and his slightly-younger compatriot Antonín Leopold Dvořák in Bohemia (Czechia,) Mikhail Glinka, Aleksandr Dargomyzhsky and the *"Kuchka"* or "Mighty Five" in Russia, Liszt in Hungary, born-in-Poland Frédéric Chopin, and later – those such as Copland in America, Ralph Vaughan Williams in England, Giuseppe Verdi in Italy, Isaac Albéniz in Spain, Jan Sibelius in Finland, Bela Bartok in Hungary and so on: created or adapted the music which would become the signature sounds of their lands.



Grieg the composer deserves far more credit than he receives. I think part of the reason is that by nature he was a miniaturist. That is, a man most at home in simple, brief structures: dances, simple sonata form and the like. He DID produce two long-form works, one of which is in the standard repertoire and another less so, but worthy of being played more often than it is, sad to say. He also wrote one concert overture of about 12 or so minutes, and was an excellent – if not revolutionary – master of that at-times widely-varying form/structure. But I'll get to that below; the thing which makes his name to this day is a 100-minute set of incidental pieces, all of a few minutes' length, but which – when strung together as he intended, make for an impressive listen…

I programmed both *Peer Gynt Suites* early in the existence of the MYSO, and brought them back about a decade later. One of the unfortunate things about this orchestra is that the MYSO has a limited amount of concerts each year, and therefore a limited amount of programming I can schedule each season - and that's only when we're up and running. I'd love to program more of Grieg's music, as well as that of so many other Nordic composers - and I'll explain why below.

But uh oh - I DO feel a major sidebar essay in the offing...

Sure, he wasn't an innovator, nor the composer of monumental barn-burner works, nor - aside from one example each as noted above: did he compose symphonies or concerti but - he *did* leave us with some really wonderful music, much of it redolent expressions of that beautiful Norway of his. To most people, or to well...most *ANY* people aware of Grieg, they can probably name two or perhaps three of his works: the famous 1869 ***a-minor Piano Concerto, opus 16***. This piece was clearly, and successfully – modeled after that of Robert Schumann, right down to the same key and an extremely similar opening intro, right off the bat. The ***opus 40 (1885) Holberg Suite for Strings*** (which began life as a set of piano pieces.) And of course, this: Grieg's most famous music: the suites drawn from his complete, opus 23 incidental score to (fellow Norwegian - and its greatest playwright) Henrik Ibsen's remarkable *Peer Gynt*. A brilliant verse-drama which is one of the playwright's most famous, oft-performed works. And which elicited from the young composer some equally brilliant, remarkable music.

Now, I'll get into Grieg's life in a moment, but first - in addition to those pieces, the composer wrote some really good - and at times *great* music which is as worthy of performance and renown as anything else he composed – but again, all short-form pieces either by themselves or strung together - the ***opus 54 Lyric Suite*** is played on occasion. The ***Suite*** drawn from Grieg's incidental score ***(opus 22) to Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's play Sigurd Jorsalfar*** is heard now and then, with the ***Homage March*** played more frequently than the other two excerpts from the suite - but as with ***Peer Gynt***, the entire 35-minute ***Sigurd Jorsalfar Incidental Music*** really should be known and played in its entirety. The ***opus 35 Norwegian Dances*** (originally a piano-duet suite which was orchestrated in 1890 by Hans Sitt at the urging of Grieg's publisher Peters Edition; Grieg was blasé about the idea but went along with it anyhow) is wonderfully evocative and occasionally shows up on concert programs.

And then there's the ***opus 64 Symphonic Dances*** and the ***opus 68 Two Lyric Pieces*** - beautiful, really worthy stuff. And the once-de rigueur piano piece, found in every home parlor back in time: ***Last Spring, opus 34, number 1*** - brief, but yes, it's been orchestrated too.

The truly wonderful, youthful 1863-64 ***Symphony in c minor*** has been finding more and more performances lately; the only foray by Grieg into that form came when the composer was 20 and had already studied in Germany at the Leipzig Conservatory since the age of 15(!) He had then moved on to Denmark for further study in Copenhagen, eager to apply that which he had learned to a more Nordic style. The ***Symphony*** shows the influence of (aha!) Schumann's legacy joined by a Scandinavian twist - and it's a really accomplished, tuneful and thoroughly enjoyable work. However, after well-received performances of individual movements or the entire completed ***Symphony*** in Copenhagen, then-Christiana-now-Oslo and Bergen - Grieg in 1867 put the ***Symphony*** away with the notation: "Must Never Be Performed." He had several reasons for doing so - but none, I feel were justified. In any case, it wasn't until 1981 that the custodian of Grieg's donated manuscripts (The Bergen Public Library) felt it wouldn't be a betrayal of his wishes, and so in that year the ***Symphony*** was finally released for public performance. And in the ensuing 40 years, it's become increasingly well-known. Thankfully.

Also from about the same time (1866) while Grieg was living in Rome and bearing the ***opus 11*** catalog number, Grieg's really great (and only) concert overture ***I Høst*** - or, in English: ***In Autumn***. This - above all else I feel: should be a regular of concert programming. Grieg's three ***Violin Sonatas,*** the ***First*** (completed) and ***Second*** (incomplete, but finished by Julius Röntgen) ***String Quartets***, huge wealth of songs and piano pieces - well, it's all must-hear music at least once, and much of it bears repeated listening and performance.

So why ISN'T it?

Good question, and I'm glad I asked it...so I can provide the answer:

And the answer is: I have no idea. But that won't stop me from elaborating anyway.

Perhaps because Grieg, like so many other composers - never quite became a major SUPERstar *outside* his own country in his own day, and therefore never became a household name in ours. Was the sound of Nordic-inflected music too exotic for 19th-century Victorian America? Was our then-thirst for culture too Germanic-focused because that's what we THOUGHT "quality" music was supposed to be - the "Three Bs" of Beethoven, Brahms and Bach? And when our tastes began to become more informed, by the early 20th century, had Grieg's flame already died with his 1907 demise?

Why!?

But even more important, why not *TODAY?* Perhaps because cyclical popularity experienced by nearly all composers except the very MOST popular - has, in Grieg's case - a huge orbit and he's still

- out there, past Pluto, waiting to return. Perhaps his music is less universal in its appeal and sound - though only slightly. Perhaps because his output wasn't huge; his entire orchestral oeuvre amounts to less than eight-and-a-half hours worth of listening, give or take - and a good deal of that is merely the orchestration of some of his piano works. He began ideating a ***second piano concerto***, but abandoned the project, unfortunately. Perhaps because he was overshadowed by many of his contemporaries; ironically - many of those famous contemporary composers were his friends or acquaintances who loved Grieg's music. Tchaikovsky. Brahms (both were his friends and huge fans.) Dvorak. Saint-Saëns. The British composer Frederic Delius, who was also something of a Nord-o-phile. Franz Liszt. Julius Röntgen (1855 – 1932) – who was another extremely talented composer whose works are nearly never heard beyond his country's borders. Not all major names, but some certainly cast very long shadows to this day.

And let's not forget: this *was* the time of a huge number of OTHER nationalist composers boasting a broad number of countries' styles and influences. And there were also musicians who were remarkable innovators, amazing dramatic composers, self-promoters and perhaps most significantly: representatives of countries which were perhaps, just *MAYBE*: more respected components of the world creative arts community.

Which is NOT to say that Norway wasn't, but - in the mid to late 19th century, Scandinavians - as was also the case with Americans, British and others: had to go to Germany to study, and to learn the "proper" approach to composition, performance and music in general. The Germanic traditions. And even then, when they returned home or composed, these largely Germanic-imitators weren't considered on the same plane with the real thing. It wasn't until later on, when the Americans moved past the first New England School, and the Scandinavians and the Brits and others - found their own voice: that they were found to have something worth heeding. In some countries, that esteem came early; in others it wasn't until their composers grabbed the traditions, shook them with all their might: and produced truly revolutionary nationalistic-based music that they garnered respect. And Scandinavia, with perhaps the exception of Finland's Sibelius a little later than Grieg: didn't achieve that upper echelon of popularity known even to the casual listener until later rather than earlier. I mean: when's the last time you heard any music by Grieg's Danish, Norwegian, Swedish or Finnish contemporaries - or even those who came along slightly earlier or later than Grieg? His fellow Norwegians Christian Sinding (aside from his piano evergreen ***Rustle of Spring***,) or Ole Bull, or Johan Halvorsen, or Johan Svendsen, Rikard Nordraak, or the later composers Harald Sæverud (who composed his own ***Peer Gynt*** music - and it's a wonderful alternative to Grieg's music of 72 years earlier,) and Geirr Tveitt? No, perhaps they're not of the absolute first-rank among all composers, but they all composed music which ranged from good to great to phenomal; all are worth knowing. But: they were also Scandinavian - and somewhat ignored.

Howzabout any of the wonderful symphonies by Denmark's Niels Gade - who was also one of Grieg's teachers? Others from Denmark? How well is the music of Johan Hartmann known to you, or that of Vagn Holmboe? Hans Christian Lumbye? Rued Langgaard?

Or howabout composers from Sweden? Ever heard of the great Carl Nielsen of (or his predecessor countryman Franz Berwald, whose symphonies I've planned to program with the MYSO for years!,) – in the case of Nielsen, a composer whose time extended even - later? HE, among all the others is the one Nordic composer (aside from Sibelius, again) whose music is known perhaps to the general public, but - how WELL? Berwald is one of my favorite mid-19th-century symphonists though he left only four complete symphonies behind…but ONE of these days! Wilhelm Stenhammar? Or heard any of the symphonies or even merely the MUSIC of Hugo Alfven (other than his first Swedish Rhapsody - ***Midsommervaka*** and trust me, you've heard THAT one!) or Kurt Atterberg or Wilhelm Peterson-Berger or Ture Rangström or Lars-Erik Larsson or Hilding Rosenberg or Dag Wirén?

Again, aside from Sibelius, have you even heard of Finland's magnificent Leevi Madetoja? Or Armas Jarnefelt, Erkki Melartin, Uuno Klami or Toivo Kuula or the (later) great innovator Einojuhani Rautavaara? Yup - I thought so!

I've barely touched upon the huge number of Nordic composers who've lived either before or slightly after Grieg, *(at left, at the age of 23 as photographed in 1866)* or were his direct contemporaries; I've given examples of high competence and yes, those who attained great accomplishment as composers, yet who've never achieved worthy fame outside their countries, even if THERE. There are many more who were either born or died within Grieg's lifetime, and a considerable number I've deliberately omitted who live now or lived and composed during the 20th AND/OR 21st centuries. I have, however: named those contiguous with Grieg's life who HAVE become known outside their region of the world - if only slightly, and you'll have to agree there aren't many of THOSE at all. And so, I think I've made - or really, as usual: OVERmade my point. And that is:

Scandinavian composers - aside from Sibelius and Nielsen - and Grieg to the extent that he's best known to the general public only for two or three pieces: have been given very short shrift to the larger common audience only by dint of their sound. It's a sound largely identified with Scandinavia, and the subsets of Scandinavian countries. You may argue with my contention, but the

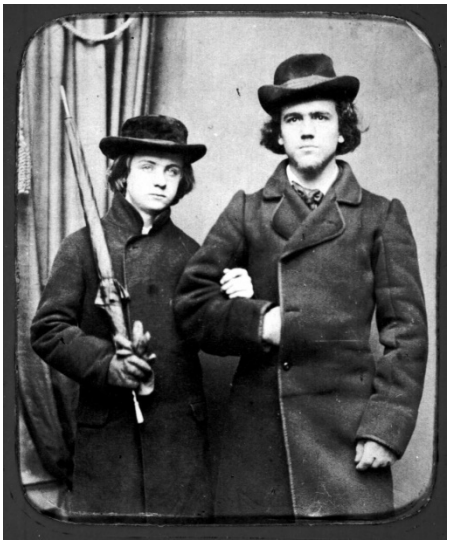
bottom line is that ALL these composers I've listed in the preceding paragraphs wrote music which should be in the mainstream of listening, and to return to central point: that Grieg's music SHOULD be known to a far greater extent even than it is. (And don't even get me started on the fascinating Japanese, Chinese - and OTHER "serious" composers nearly totally unknown to Western listeners!) Grieg's work also served to influence composers already working during his lifetime and others to come, among them Bela Bartok, Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy. And he simply doesn't deserve the relatively remote position he occupies on the composers' pantheon in the least.

And with THAT, now for a little - or a LOT - on Grieg the man.

Edvard Hagerup Grieg was born in Bergen (Norway) on the 15th of June, 1843 into a family long steeped in the tradition of serving Britain as consuls - as they had done for three generations. His family lineage was paternally Scottish - hence the non-Norwegian "Grieg" (pronounced "Greeg.") The name had originally been "Greig" in Scotland, but his great-grandfather Alexander - who emigrated to Norway after the loss of all Stuart claims to the thrones of Scotland and England following the April 16, 1746 battle of Culloden: altered that surname's spelling. Young Edvard's Scotch-Norwegian father Alexander *(above right)* married the Norwegian Gesine Judithe Hagerup *(at left - both shown in 1850 portraits)*, who - fortunately for a kid drawn to music, or because of it: was a highly-accomplished concert pianist. As for that maternal side? An adopted male antecedent had taken the last name "Hagerup" from his adoptive parents (the Bishop of Trondheim and his wife) and that young man grew to become a provincial governor. So both sides of the family were employed by governments, and both sides were well-to-do.

At right, Grieg's birthplace – and the home in which he grew up. The family's impressive house located at 152 Strandgaten in Bergen was unfortunately destroyed a century after young Grieg's birth in 1944, when a Dutch munitions ship exploded in the nearby harbor - only about 100 paces away – see photo at right, unfortunately the only memory of it prior to being blasted to smithereens.)

sisters Maren (1837,) Ingeborg Benedicte (1838) and Elisabeth (1845). Young Edvard received his earliest musical training directly from that accomplished musical mother of his - and his earliest composition was a set of piano variations, written at the age of nine *(young Edvard is shown below left, aged 11.)* It was, however at the age of 16 that Grieg was subjected to an attack of pleurisy and was first diagnosed with tuberculosis, with the unfortunate lasting effect of permanently weakening Grieg's health to the end of his days; among his ailments were weakened thoracic vertebrae and an endangered respiratory system. Eventually, heart and lung disease would kill Grieg, but fortunately not for nearly five decades.



The Grieg household was a hotbed of artists, including (as I listed him above) the famed composer/violinist Ole Bull - and it was he who persuaded the parents that the child really needed to be educated in Germany, in music at the Conservatory in Leipzig, beginning at age 15. *(Edvard is shown in Leipzig with his older brother John, in the photo at right.)* There, however, Edvard even in his mid-teens asserted his personality by rebelling against many aspects of his "proper" training. He later noted of himself that he was a "lazy" student who ultimately learned very little from his days at the Conservatory. He disliked his initially-assigned exercise-bound, dry and old-fashioned piano coursework, which was strongly skewed to the work of Carl Czerny and Muzio Clementi.

He managed to transfer to a teacher more in line with his own tastes - one who respected the level of accomplishment he had attained under his mother's tutelage. It was here – in the very city of Schumann – that he learned to love the piano music of Schumann, whose style became incorporated into his own. He was exposed to great orchestral concerts of the Gewandhaus Orchestra - the orchestra which traces its roots back to 1743, and which Mendelssohn had served as music director from 1835 to his 1847 death - it's an ensemble which thrives to this day. One highlight was Grieg's attendance at a concert in which Clara Schumann (the brilliant pianist I noted in the program notes above, regarding her husband) performed her late husband's ***a-minor Concerto*** (you see where the young man picked up HIS model for his own ***a-minor Piano Concerto***? Grieg's is a tremendous concerto replete with Nordic influence, but the resemblance to Schumann's is more than obvious.) Grieg was present for performances of Wagner's opera ***Tannhäuser***, met the young composer Arthur Sullivan, who would become the *Sir* Arthur Sullivan of Gilbert and Sullivan - and advanced his personal art. He would however - later on: come right out with it in a German publication, when he noted that the "*heavy and philosophical*" components of German culture and the cultural arts were not in

themselves what Norwegians needed in their musical and artistic expression - more on that below.

He then returned home to Norway, albeit briefly - before moving to Denmark. Copenhagen was something of an artistic base for both Denmark and its neighbor up the Fennoscandian Peninsula - and it was there Grieg impressed the great Danish composer Niels Gade, who offered him much approbation and encouragement. Perhaps even more important, at this time Grieg befriended another young Norwegian living in Denmark: the composer Rikard Nordraak (below right.) It was he who really pointed the way for Grieg: how to truly reflect and incorporate the spirit, folk idioms and very nationalist sentiment into his music – and he did so to the extent that his own song from a cycle of six - ***"Ja, vi elsker dette landet"*** ("Yes, we love this country") eventually achieved widespread fame as a patriotic Norwegian song, then informally became something of a national anthem of Norway forty years after his early death, and finally: officially, in 2019 – it became THE National Anthem of Norway. But back to THAT time, in 1864 he and Grieg *(shown upper right at age 23)* became very close friends, and then after this tremendous friendship had been made and blossomed, but just as if in a bad Hollywood bio-pic, Nordraak traveled to Berlin in March 1865, was diagnosed with tuberculosis that October and died of the disease in Paris the following March (1866) at age 23. His friend Grieg was devastated - and worked through his grief in part by composing his ***Funeral March in Memory of Rikard Nordraak*** for piano solo on April 6, 1866 - the very day he learned of his friend's death. He later added a trio section and the piece was published that summer. Grieg later orchestrated the (slow) march for brass and percussion, and also re-scored the piece for the full military band requirements of the day; it was published in that final form many years later in 1899. It's a very accomplished piece for such a young man, and deserves to be heard.

But a far more lasting memorial to Nordraak WAS the permanent impact he had on Grieg's style and music. Grieg took Nordraak's words to heart, and followed his example, eventually far outpacing Nordraak's youthful accomplishments. Grieg took a long 1865-66 winter's trip to Rome, and it was there he met Norwegian expatriate playwright Henrik Ibsen *(1828 – 1906, shown at left in 1867, still in Rome after Grieg had departed the year earlier)* - one of my own favorite playwrights ever since playing son Ivar Helmer in his *A Doll's House* yes, 55 years ago when I was 13. Ibsen had just had his first major

breakthrough with the play *Brand* - and the following year would write his next: *Peer Gynt*. Ibsen was well on his way to becoming Norway's most famous playwright.

As mentioned above, it was in Rome that Grieg composed that wonderful concert overture ***I Høst - (In Autumn)*** - a piece bounding in Italianate energy and boisterousness, demonstrating more a sunny Italy autumn than anything north of the Jutland Peninsula. But there ARE Nordic touches, just the same - including intervals of the fifth (*used just like a hardanger fiddle – see below right,*) frilly-ornamented tunes in the woodwinds suggestive of Norwegian folk songs, and the quotation of an actual Norse harvesting song near the end of the piece.

Grieg DID write of his need for the impact of other musical cultures, and not only that of Norwegian folk and nationalistic spirit - specifically mentioning the Italian light, the rich range of Russian color, and the deftly-polished legerity of France - even a touch of what would become Impressionism. He found that - to cite the most important component: the sense of barbarism or primitivism (on great display in sections of his ***Peer Gynt*** score) could not be expressed through the Germanic approach which had formed the basis of his musical training. But overlying it all: the very essence of Norway.

Back home in Oslo (then still named Christiania) he slowly began to make a name for himself and it was there he - along with his first cousin Nina Hagerup (a gifted soprano who would become his wife) and the violinist Wilhelmine Norman-Neruda produced a concert which drew attention, admiration and a position of standing in his country.

But it wasn't all rosy. There ensued a period of struggle as Grieg worked to establish a truly Norwegian musical tradition; the concert of 1866 noted in the previous paragraph DID eventually bear fruition as the Norwegian Academy of Music was established in 1867 - the year in which Edvard and Nina married. Grieg received support and constant encouragement from - among others, the great Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt, as well as the Norwegian playwright and director Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, author of *Sigurd Jorsalfar* - as I wrote in paragraph three above.

In January 1874, Grieg received a long letter from Henrik Ibsen, *(shown at left in 1869 – back home in Norway)* whom you'll recall he met in Rome eight years earlier. By 1874, Grieg had secured a name and reputation for himself. As had Ibsen, but to a far greater extent. Now, the 45-year-old playwright asked the 29-

year-old composer to write incidental music to the massive, just-about-impossible-to-stage five-act, six-hour-long drama in verse - and if that wasn't challenge enough, Ibsen already attempted to tell Grieg just where music belonged, how it should be written; he even told Grieg he planned to cut the entire fourth act, and that it would be replaced by a huge, grand, extensive musical tone poem he - Grieg - would compose. Grieg was, to put it mildly: not impressed. Ibsen had based the work on the Norwegian folk-tale *Per Gynt*; the story as Ibsen had written it as *Peer Gynt* for the stage moved ceaselessly from scene of fantasy to absurdity, all in a farce based in the sort of modern realism Ibsen would pioneer and continue to develop throughout his classic plays yet to come. Though none of THEM would be written in verse...

Ibsen also completely disregarded the technical stagecraft of his time, deliberately writing a play which would demand unbelievable ingenuity to transfer from the page to the stage.

Grieg thought it unappealing. He considered the play impossible to stage ang also to musically represent and though he realized it was too important a project to refuse, he found his end of the bargain - composing the score - to be slow, uninspired work. That August of 1874, he wrote:

"*I have written something for the Hall of the Troll-King which smacks so much of cow-dung, ultra-Norwegianism and smug self-satisfaction that I quite literally cannot bear to listen to it. But I imagine the irony will also be apparent, especially when afterwards Peer Gynt is forced to say that 'both the dance and the playing were – (the devil take me) - really nice.'*"

The play - though written AND published initially in Italy in 1867, and scored by Grieg in 1874-75: wasn't produced until February 1876. Grieg was thoroughly ashamed of himself - and in fact didn't even bother to give indications in the massive score of when each musical number was to begin and end - mostly because Ibsen hadn't provided such guidance to HIM.

Realizing that he needed to do something rather than leave it in the hands of the play's producer, Grieg wrote a 28-page letter to the hapless conductor with full indications provided after the fact. *(At right: from the famed Arthur Rackham illustrations; this one is of the Woman in Green and Peer.)* The complete score contains 26 movements taking nearly two hours (alone) to perform and Grieg orchestrated it for vocal soloists and full four-part chorus, three flutes all doubling piccolo, pairs each of oboes, clarinets and

bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, a tuba, timpani plus four more percussionists playing a battery of noisemakers, two harps, optional piano - and full strings to counter that array. A MASSIVE orchestral force for theatre music, and Grieg used it to a brilliant degree in all its variety – and: tutti power.

And despite Grieg's own misgivings, despite his stated embarrassment at having created what he referred to as a "hotch-potch," it is *one* magnificent score. I can't express HOW wonderful it is. The first recording of the entire score remains the best, by far – and lucky for you, it's been posted to YouTube. **http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIk5oxSnrIw** Do yourself a favor: find an hour and three-quarters to listen to it – believe me, you haven't heard ***In the Hall of the Mountain King*** until you've heard it with screeching choral trolls plus much more great music not included in the famous two Suites! Instruments are used in completely novel ways - and you might be surprised by how Grieg decided to underscore the scene with the Bøyg: an indescribable, massive - INVISIBLE creature!

Neither Ibsen nor Grieg attended that premiere performance. They SHOULD have: it was a massive success - as much for Grieg's brilliant music as for Ibsen's audacious, remarkable script. Which truly must be read - or to be seen UNCUT - to be believed. Ibsen's source material - which he elaborated and made wholly original - was a story first published in Peter Christen Asbjørnsen's *Norwegian Folk Tales* in Copenhagen in 1848. Although it's believed that the folk tale's protagonist was based upon a real-life person from late 18th-century Norway's Gudbrandsal district.

The title hero of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* - is an egotistical, lying peasant boy – the HERO! How's that for starters? In the play's five acts and 40 scenes, absurdity is piled upon absurdity, with psychological incest, a massive pig which serves as a steed, fantasy, heart-touching pathos, the hero (Peer)'s abduction and rape of a bride (Ingrid) whom he abandons in the forest the next day, next having his way with three mountain herd-girls who actually implore him to come home to their hut for - the deed. The Woman in Green (later revealed as the daughter of the Mountain [Troll] King) whom Peer is forced by her father to bargain for *(at left, again: by Rackham)* until Peer insults her grotesque, bizarre dancing - whereupon he is sentenced to die, narrowly escaping a screeching mob of trolls, goblins and gnomes who had wanted to kill him from the very moment he

arrived on the back of the pig with the Troll King's daughter - before leaping from the frying pan and into the fire, personified by the invisible, massive Bøyg! Much later: an autumn snowfall on the hut Peer has built deep in a pine forest where he's discovered by the gentle, innocent Solveig - who was introduced right from the start of the play as the polar opposite of the braggart Peer. Peer's surreptitious return home to visit his dying mother Åse - in order that he won't be caught for his misdeeds and punished by those in his village; Åse has suffered because of Peer's abduction of Ingrid - and she then dies.

There's so much more - and in fact, the play spans more than 40 years, with Peer finally a returning elderly (but sprightly) bearded reprobate about to be melted down by a button-molder, sent to make of Peer an example of a wasted, foul life - but - these are episodes about the Suites and not the entire remarkable play and the entirety of Grieg's music itself, so - I'll move on and explain only a bit more with each Suite's movements, below in the video texts.

And thus his ***Incidental Music for Peer Gynt*** truly established Grieg as Norway's most eminent composer. Over the years, he was constantly surprised when Ibsen's play was produced over and over, or offered in cut form, or - most surprising of all, presented outside Norway. He was often persuaded to create a new piece here or there for the score for a particular production; once he refused - but upon being told that another composer would be hired to adapt Grieg's music, he immediately changed his mind.

From his thirties following the success of ***Peer Gynt***, Grieg's name and national standing as its most respected composer grew. *(At left, the interior parlor of Edvard and Nina's home near Bergen, as it stands today.)* For the remainder of his life, Grieg - despite his frail health, worked tirelessly and constantly: serving as the music director/conductor of the Bergen Harmonic Society in the 1880s, producing and participating in concerts, touring both as a pianist and conductor, composing when he could - and doing all he could to both spread the word AND provide examples directly through his own musical compositions of what a nationalist movement of Norwegian music COULD be all about. His marriage suffered with both Edvard and Nina leaving the other at various times. It's believed when he left home in the summer of 1883 on a lengthy trip he had no intention of returning to Nina at its conclusion. She in turn left to stay with Grieg's oldest friend and confidante Frants Breyer and his wife Marie - and it was only through the mediation of Frants that the couple reconciled a year later

and their life together resumed. 22 years of their married life were spent in the villa near Bergen designed by Grieg's cousin and built in 1885 - the couple called their home "Troldhaugen" from the Norse words meaning "Troll Hill" *(previous page, bottom right is a photo of the exterior today - as the Grieg Museum.)* The years of struggle, of touring - all wore at Grieg and combined with his frail health finally resulted in his death at the age of 64 on September 4th, 1907 - from heart failure. It's reported that his final words were, "Well: if it must be so." Which sounds exactly to be the sort of final words to pass from the lips of that character long associated with Grieg himself due to the success of his best-known music: ***Peer Gynt***.

By then a national hero of the highest renown, it's estimated that more than 40,000 people took to the streets at the time of Grieg's funeral in Bergen. Following her husband's death, his widow Nina Grieg *(below, at the age of 89 in 1934)* moved to Denmark, where she survived Edvard by 28 years, dying at the age of 90 in 1953. The ashes of the couple were interred in a niche near Troldhaugen overlooking a nearby fjord.

Above right, together at last: this is how their cliffside tomb appeared in 1935, just after Nina's ashes joined those of her husband.

In 1888, Grieg extracted eight movements from the complete score, reordering them for logical stand-alone performance and for musical sense.

Suite I begins with the ***I. Prelude to Act IV – "Morning Mood,"*** – one of the most immediately-recognizable and oft-utilized pieces of music ever written. But despite the fact that it sounds just like the dawn and sunrise over some snowy Norwegian Fjord, but nope! This is the music for the rising sun in the Sahara Desert! In the play, the now-middle-aged Peer has made it to coastal Morocco after the death of his mother Åse.

The second movement is ***II. Åse's Death***, scored only for strings – a mournful, ballad-like gem of economical writing. In the play, this is actually the ***close of Act III***, during which the rascally son

Peer risks his life and capture to furtively spend a few minutes with his dying mother *(Arthur Rackham illustration is below left: Åse on the Millhouse Roof.)*

The third movement is ***III. Anitra's Dance***, drawn from Act IV of the play. Still in the Sahara, Peer is now an Arabian-robed false prophet and master; Anitra's sultry dance is meant to tempt Peer.

Suite I ends with again, one of those immediately-recognized and completely evocative strokes of genius – as Peer now finds himself ***IV. In the Hall of the Mountain King***. This great movement has turned up in pop culture since before there WAS a pop culture. A staple of commercials, TV, video games, films – well: you DO know this one! It occurs during Act II of the play, while Peer is still in Norway amidst the "magical folk" of Norse mythology. This is the music of the land of Trolls: the mountains of Norway. Peer has courted the daughter of the King of the Trolls and this music is heard while Peer stands before the King, surrounded by gnomes and goblins. There's a huge uproar, with the music building to a huge climax as the grotesques turn on Peer, shrieking "Kill him, Kill him!" But don't worry: he escapes. In the full incidental score, this music is scored for full orchestra AND chorus and the motifs heard in this movement recur throughout the music for the rest of Act II. Grieg does some really satisfying work with these motifs, including later on when they're gently tweaked into the music for the scene with the Bøyg: a massive, trollish being who just so happens to be completely invisible…

Suite II opens with ***I. Ingrid's Lament*** – which in the entire score is the opening of Act II. The young Peer is mercilessly teased and then attacked at a wedding party. In revenge, he abducts the bride (Ingrid) and despite her frantic pleas, carries her off, has his way with her and then abandons her deep in the forest. This touching lament is – in the incidental score – scored for orchestra with a solo soprano gently, sadly mourning her fate in a touching, poignant and expressive gem.

II. Arab Dance – is the next movement, taken from Act IV of the incidental score. Its oriental exoticism is beautifully captured by Grieg, and occurs just before ***Suite I***'s second movement (***Anitra's Dance***.) In the ***Arab Dance***, the now middle-aged Peer is depicted arriving in purloined Arabian robes and is mistaken for a prophet. He is regaled, drinks coffee and smokes a hookah while being entertained by beautiful dancing girls.

Suite II's final two movements are played *attacca* – that is, with ***movement IV*** immediately following ***movement III*** without break. The incidental music's Act V ***Peer Gynt's Homecoming and Storm*** becomes ***Suite II***'s ***movement III***. By Act V, Peer is now quite elderly and in it, returns home to Norway after a dissolute lifetime spent traveling the globe. But life has one last adventure in store for him: after all those years, and with Norway finally so close, a massive storm suddenly blows up, wrecking Peer's ship by dashing it to pieces on the shore. This is a wonderful depiction of

"storm" music and then as the storm gradually winds down into nothingness – and as noted above: immediately transitions into the final movement of the Suite: the touching ***IV. Solveig's Song***. In the incidental score, it's scored for orchestra and solo soprano; as will all other movements of the ***Suites***, voices are replaced by instruments. Solveig – in their youth – had been deeply in love with Peer – and as the decades have passed with Peer long gone, Solveig *(at left, Solveig and Peer at the Wedding, illustrated by Arthur Rackham)* has kept the mature embers of her youthful love of Peer alive, and just as warm as they always were. Now, as an elderly woman, she's blind – but has been brought to the dying Peer, whom she cradles in her arms, singing this absolutely beautiful melody to her love; it's a tune which is predominantly somber, but occasionally becomes positive – and positively youthful, with her voice mirroring the mood of the song. But finally, as the song enters its final poignant passages, it's a soothing, dark lullaby which sings Peer to his ultimate rest. And thus, the play, the entire incidental score – and the second of these two ***Suites*** - ends.

Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)
***Suites #1 and #2 from the opera "Carmen"* (1875)**

I've programmed both ***Suites*** on a couple of our long-past MYSO seasons. And the thing about this opera? I can think of few other operas which contain so MUCH music that's immediately recognizable, containing so much music which has entered popular culture. ***Carmen*** has an absolute wealth of spectacular, inspired, once-heard-forever-recalled music. So: be prepared to hear music you already know, possibly know well, and may know with great affection...

Bizet's personal story is itself the stuff of an opera libretto. *(The photo at right is from 1875: the year both of* ***Carmen*** *but also of Bizet's death.)* Born "Georges Alexandre César Léopold Bizet" in the French town of Bougival on Oct. 25, 1838, he decided he just liked the "Georges" part – and so that's how he came to be known. He was born an only child into a musical family – both parents were singers. And in addition to being a singer, young Georges' father was also a voice teacher who recognized his son's prodigious musical gifts early on – and intended a music career for young Georges. And yes, as with so many of the great composers, Bizet the kid WAS a remarkable child prodigy who was admitted to the famed Paris Conservatoire - that training ground which has figured prominently in the careers of so many French composers - at the nearly unbelievable age of NINE.

He was a brilliant student - and that's no exaggeration. His was a natural, inspired talent and won many prizes within a range of musical disciplines, meanwhile developing into a phenomenal pianist. His skill at the keyboard was praised by no less than that great god of the piano Franz Liszt - as well as Hector Berlioz, among many others. And in fact he was such a remarkable pianist that THAT talent could have provided for the basis of his career, but – he really wanted to be a composer. And to that end, Bizet studied with Jacques-François-Fromental-Élie Halévy, who had (among his many accomplished works) in 1835 written a masterpiece of an opera in La Juive (The Jewess) – which became a cornerstone of the French Grand Opera tradition, and the one work for

which he - Halévy - would be remembered even to this day. He was to be an influence on Bizet – and more even than that. There'll be a bit more about Halévy below.

Bizet's student compositions during his teen years are polished, mature – and often amazing works for one so young. His opera ***La maison du docteur*** was composed at 14; the early-masterpiece opera ALSO involving a doctor - ***Le docteur Miracle*** was written by a 19-year-old Bizet and received universal praise as well as the first prize in the premiere year of an operetta competition founded by the master of THAT form, the great Jacques Offenbach. The perhaps-cocky young man wrote at that time to his mother, "When you have talent, you break doors down and you owe nothing to anyone!" The impulsive, impetuous young man Bizet had no patience for working quietly, diligently for years while his career was slowly being constructed – he wanted it all, and right NOW. But perhaps his genius lay partially in the audacious: and quickly now, aside from the young Bizet's ***Le docteur Miracle*** do YOU know of any other opera – comic or not – whose plot revolves around an unpalatable OMELET – and even has a number for vocal quartet singing about that omelet?! The omelet, incidentally: will serve as a key plot point which eventually results in the marriage (against parental disapproval) of a loving young couple!

But anyway, Bizet's symphonic works from this period include an ***Overture in A*** (written at 17) and the amazing ***Symphony in C***, written at age 16/17. That symphony, incidentally: was virtually lost and unknown, not to be discovered until some 60 years after Bizet's death – finally having its premiere in 1935. It was immediately recognized as a masterpiece and frequently shows up on concert programs of symphony orchestras all over the world. Including: ours - I programmed the Bizet ***Symphony in C*** back in 2008.

In any event, at the age of 19, Bizet won the coveted, highly-prestigious *Prix de Rome* (about which I've ALSO written quite a bit in the past) which awarded him with two years of study in Rome, then one year in Germany and finally, two years back home in Paris, as well as the financial support to cover all his needs during that five-year period. Freed from the distractions of teaching or performing merely to be able to meet his living expenses, Bizet's work during those years in Rome (beginning in January of 1858) was unfortunately uneven to say the least – and he was

distracted by all the attractions of Rome. The condition of the Prix required him to compose and submit major works, one per year. Bizet was averse to writing religious music; instead of a required Mass, he wrote and submitted a two-act Italian comic opera: ***Don Procopio*** – fortunately without incurring the wrath of the Prix de Rome's liberal administrators. That opera wouldn't actually be produced until three decades after Bizet's death – finally seeing the light of day in 1906. *(Above: the 1564 villa Medici in Rome, home of l'Académie de France à Rome - and it was in this extraordinary structure Prix de Rome winners were housed, and in many cases, received educational experiences.)*

In that first Roman year Bizet did begin (and destroyed) a couple of symphonies; one WAS later resurrected by the composer, and Bizet would eventually tinker with it for a full decade - beginning in that Prix de Rome period all the way up to its eventual 1869 premiere. And even fiddled with it for a few years AFTER. Known today as "***Roma***" or the ***Roma Symphony***, it's a really impressive work and a favorite of mine - don't be surprised if I program it on a future MYSO concert! Bizet barely completed his required work for the second year – a symphonic poem ***Vasco da Gama*** – for orchestra AND chorus – which, fortunately again: passed muster back home. He completed his two years in Rome, asked to substitute his proscribed year in Germany for a third year in Rome (a request which was granted,) but in the autumn of 1860, cut that final Roman year abroad short after being told his mother was near death back in Paris.

He returned home with the remainder of that year and his final two years of financial security before him. Home to Paris – but somewhat adrift. He recognized in Paris a music-loving yet largely conservative public which had little interest in the works of new composers, and oddly enough: scarce interest in new FRENCH composers. Italian opera ruled the day, though incursions were being made by Gounod and other Frenchmen. In 1861 Bizet attended the French premiere of German revolutionary Richard Wagner's ***Tannhauser*** – and was immediately converted. Wagner was no longer the outlandish, bizarre outlier of opera as Bizet previously dismissed him to be: now Bizet truly saw Wagner as the wave of the future of opera, and of music in general.

Not long after he returned to France, Bizet's ailing mother died, thus cutting yet another tie to his past. And how did he react? Wellllllll….the clearly non-too-distraught Bizet consequently began an affair with his mother's nurse, who would bear him a son in 1862 – a son the inexcusably churlish 24-year-old Bizet never acknowledged, sad to say.

But – despite all: the young composer turned his energy to - composition. And by this time, he had realized – wisely, perhaps – that he was best suited not for symphonies or concerti or chamber music, but for the stage, and principally for opera. However, he was not to achieve success on the stage – at least not for now. But he was correct regarding his estimation of just where his talents would best be served. As a matter of fact, there's a story that he ran into fellow composer Camille Saint-Saëns one day. Saint-Saëns, *(at left, shown approximately at that time)* feeling similarly adrift and ignored due to the then-lackluster reception of HIS stage works, said to Bizet, "Since no one wants us in the theatre, let's take refuge in the concert hall!" Bizet replied – according to the story: "I am not made for (composing) symphonies; I need the theatre and cannot accomplish anything without it."

And so: Bizet plunged the genre of operas. A mere two years after returning home from Rome, he began writing ***Ivan IV*** – an opera about that man better known as Russia's Ivan the Terrible. He worked on it for many years, but was distracted by other projects and the need to make money. One distraction was his opera ***La guzla de l'emir*** (***The Guzla of the Emir*** - *"guzla" is a variant spelling for the gusla/gusle – a Balkan single-stringed musical instrument played in the lap with a bow)* which was also composed in 1862 – a one-act comic opera. He submitted that opera to the Paris Opera-Comique – which approved it for production, but: Bizet himself later withdrew the opera before it could be mounted. And that was because Bizet received a major commission for a new grand opera from Léon Carvalho, director/manager of the Théâtre Lyrique, which was a very big deal indeed.

A requirement of Carvalho's commission was that this newly-commissioned opera was to be the first-ever publicly performed opera by the 24-year-old Bizet. A brand-new work, and fortunately the performances of student pieces (such as the 19-year-old's award winning student work Le docteur Miracle mentioned above) didn't count against him. Bizet COULD get away with re-purposing some of the music he had intended for ***La guzla de l'emir*** and so he tore bits and pieces off that withdrawn ***Guzla*** and padded them onto his next major work, the commissioned grand opera: ***Les pêcheurs de perles*** ***(The Pearl Fishers***,) which was produced at the Théâtre Lyrique in

1863 – to a mostly savage critical reaction and ho-hum public.

*(At right: a Bizet caricature from the magazine Diogéne in 1863 - spoofing the young composer at the time of **Les pêcheurs de perles** - see his spiffy "catch"?!)*

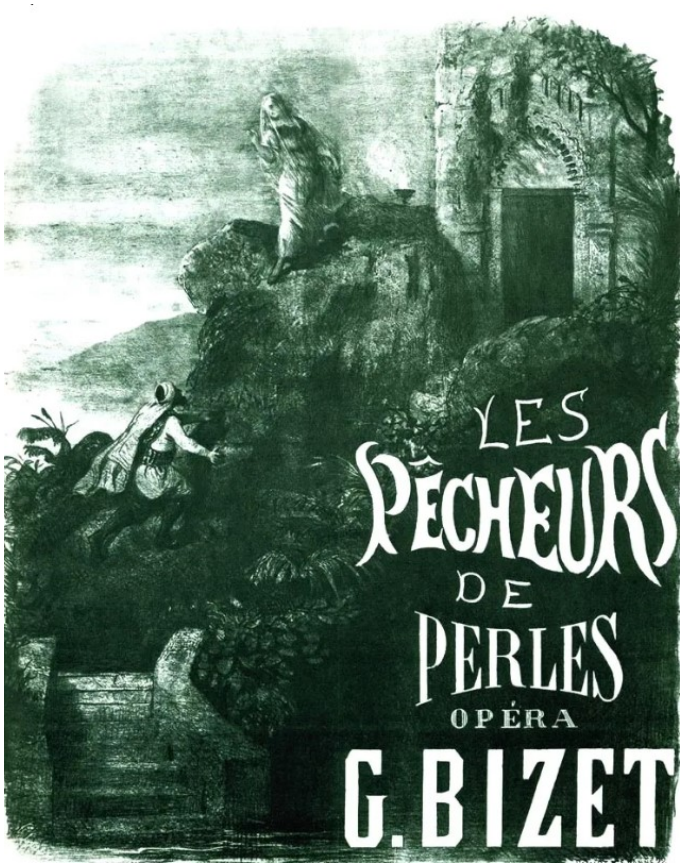
Les pêcheurs de perles is occasionally performed today, and is well worth experiencing, despite that unfair reaction at its premiere. The approval it DID have from – among others: Hector Berlioz, was more for Bizet's writing and far less for the libretto by Michel Carré and Eugène Cormon. Next up: the composer slaved away on a one-act opera ***Djamileh*** – (which finally had its premiere a decade later in 1872): a fascinating piece but one which was about as dully received as ***Pearl Fishers*** had been.

(And in case it's not clear, I should probably mention at this point that I'm not just flapping my fingers on the keyboard! I KNOW these very obscure works. For half a century, I've compulsively tracked down literature and recordings of even the most hard-to-find, "unknown" compositions; yes, I know my compulsion is a sickness, but one which I have no plan to cure! But anyway - on with Bizet.)

At the end of 1862, the income from the *Prix de Rome* ended, and Bizet was – after years of financial independence: forced to work for a living. The decade of the 1860s was a tumultuous one for Bizet – his life took many turns, his struggles were rampant – his course was nothing like that which he intended. He taught piano, served as a music critic, created literally hundreds of transcriptions of other composers' music for a publishing house, and did whatever he could to keep food on the table. One particularly galling assignment of hack-work was the chore of transcribing 50 Italian opera arias from a full orchestral score to piano accompaniment reduction. He continued to compose throughout the 1860s, returning to ***Ivan IV*** when he could, working on other operas as well – and was apparently outraged when the premiere of that opera at the Théâtre Lyrique was announced in the press more than once, every few months for a few years – with no production forthcoming. He sent the score to the copyist's in the summer of 1865, angrily broke off from the Théâtre Lyrique and then sent the score to the Paris Grand Opéra – which never had any intention of producing the piece. Consequently: ***Ivan IV*** – the opera which obsessed Bizet for so many years and took so much of his working life: was never produced in his lifetime, finally being staged for the first time in 1946. It's only been recorded once, as far as my research shows: and that recording (now out of print but which I have, of course!) demonstrates it to be an accomplished opera totally undeserving of the anonymity it's experienced for the past 150 years.

Incidentally: and though Bizet angrily broke with the Théâtre Lyrique, Léon Carvalho commissioned another opera from him the very next year – ***La jolie fille de Perth*** (***The Fair Maiden of Perth.***) Based upon the novel by Sir Walter Scott, it incidentally takes place in Perth, Scotland, not Australia. Bizet composed it during the summer and fall, and the opera premiered on

December 26, 1867 – to the same sort of critical and public reaction his past operas had been dealt, but in the case of THIS one, much of the blame lies squarely on the wretched libretto which was terribly adapted from the original book by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jules Adenis. It's among the worst of libretti ever set to music – and THAT is saying quite a lot. The music in many ways DOES valiantly overcome the trite, banal and mentally-insulting, predictable-yet-far-fetched libretto. But still – no great overriding final product, no totally-whole major, classic work of art. *(At right: from the original production at the Theatre National De L'Opera-Comique, which premiered December 26, 1867.)*



Backing up a bit, though: in 1862, Bizet's former professor, the famed Fromental Halévy (remember him?) had died, and at that time, his widow asked Bizet to consider looking at her husband's unfinished opera ***Noé***, and perhaps even to compose sufficient music to put it into a performable version. While Bizet could not take on such a project at that point in his life, he did become a fixture in the Halévy household which was, to put it mildly: a very bizarre place. To (further) be delicate: mental illness ran in the family's genes – both sides. The widow Halévy was left with two daughters and when the elder of the two died in 1864, her mother found it impossibly sorrowing to live with or even be in the company of her remaining daughter (Geneviève) and so: sent the 15-year-old away to live with other relatives. Bizet, meanwhile: had become infatuated with the girl, and made it clear he wished eventually to marry her, even though the widow Halévy firmly refused on the grounds that Bizet was poor, was politically a leftist and an atheist to boot. Although: he WAS good enough to be expected to complete ***Noé***, of course. Eventually the family (and widow) came around – and in 1869 Bizet married his deceased former professor Halévy's daughter: that very same Geneviève. *(Seen at left – as the young widow fate would have HER become - as you'll discover below. And the*

irony of the DATE upon which she was widowed! It's just astonishing and again: you just can't make up this sort of thing! Though I hope I haven't given away any plot details too early...)

Bizet's new wife Geneviève was – well, a bit unstable, as I noted above of the entire clan Halévy. But despite all, Bizet held things together, had a good relationship with his mother-in-law and proved to be a good husband for Geneviève – which was difficult, considering her erratic behavior and decline. He even (finally) acceded to his mother-in-law's persistent request that he try to do SOMETHING with her seven-years-dead husband (Halévy's) unfinished opera ***Noé***.

Bizet diligently set to work – and cannibalized his own music (including sections from his early symphonic poem ***Vasco da Gama*** – remember? From his second year in Rome? - and music from that on-again, off-again ill-fated opera of his ***Ivan IV***) to help pad out ***Noé***. ***Noé*** is – just to explain: the French name for "Noah" and the opera itself is based upon the Biblical story. Bizet strongly urged the widow to allow him to call it ***Le Déluge*** – ***(The Flood)*** – but no good. ***Noé*** is what Halévy intended for it to be called, and ***Noé*** is what the finished opera WAS called. Bizet – and the Halévy family managed to get a production scheduled at Bizet's old friend/nemesis Léon Carvalho's Théâtre Lyrique: just in time for Carvalho to go bankrupt. The production didn't happen – and in fact, THAT opera - Jacques-François-Fromental-Élie Halévy's ***Noé***, completed nearly a decade after Halévy's death by his erstwhile student Georges Bizet: wouldn't see the light of day in performance until 1885: 23 years after Halévy's death and a decade after Bizet's own demise.

So. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 was greeted with a patriotic groundswell and even the 32-year-old Bizet enlisted, though he complained bitterly about the antiquated equipment which – he claimed, was more likely to kill the operator than the target. That relatively brief period of war service further eroded Bizet's already delicate health; more on that below. Not only physically harmful to Bizet, but that war was, of course: nearly immediately disastrous for the French nation, and with the capture of Napoleon III, the armed conflict ended within months of its beginning. But with the end of the Prussian war, things remained difficult within the nation, and particularly so in Paris. The situation made things a bit uncomfortable to most French citizens: famed composer Charles Gounod (for one) fled Paris for England with his wife, wherein no end of unfortunate shenanigans on the part of Gounod AND that of the family the Gounods lived with in London - resulted.

Things in Paris – and particularly the arts: were in turmoil, but the Paris Opéra tenuously re-opened, the Prussians withdrew after the armistice was signed in January 1871 – but in the vacuum which followed, France became splintered and factionalized, with fighting in the streets for control of the government – or rather, over the lack of a government which had existed since the fall of Napoleon III's Second Empire. The resulting Third Empire was initially on shaky ground, and FINALLY, Bizet realized Paris itself was no longer safe due more to the internal strife over control of that city's municipal government than the (former) threats from the Prussians. Bizet evacuated his clan to safer areas outside Paris, but after only a few months, by mid-June of 1871, things were settling down in the capitol. They returned, he was offered the security of the job of chorus-master at the Paris Opéra and: for reasons unknown, it fell through. Despite ALL the distractions, 1871 DID

see the completion of Bizet's opera ***Djamileh*** (referenced above – its 1872 premiere was a flop) and also the winning piano duet suite ***Jeux d'enfants***. That piano suite contains 12 movements and Bizet later orchestrated five of those movements, creating ***Jeux d'enfants – Petite Suite***. Charming, deliciously fun music in either incarnation.

Now we come to 1872. In July Geneviève bore their one and only child: a son whom they named Jacques *(at right, age 10 in 1882.)* But a major event in Bizet's compositional career also occurred in 1872: Bizet was asked to compose the incidental score to Aphonse Daudet's play – the tragedy *L'Arlesienne*. A somewhat harsh, shocking (for its day) piece of drama, it had begun life as a short story by Daudet, published in 1869 in the volume Letters From My Windmill. The story is alleged to have been based upon a true incident, and was a bit shocking for content and its then-avant-garde style. And for what it's worth, both Bizet's ***L'Arlesienne Suites*** derived from that incidental score was featured on our December 21, 2019 MYSO Festive Holiday Concert *(below: Van Gogh's 1888-89 Painting L'Arlésienne: Madame Joseph-Michel Ginoux (Marie Julien, 1848–1911), which I used for that concert's art.)*

So: Bizet provided orchestral incidental music for Daudet's play - a score which included a chorus, though a pit orchestra of only 26 musicians, not a full symphony orchestra. And this is where Bizet REALLY rose to the challenge. He captured the "folk" sound of Provençal – devising tunes that could have been folksongs, but also DID include three actual existing tunes from the region: *La Marcho di Rei (The March of the Kings)*, *Danse dei Chivau-Frus,* and *Er dou Guet*. *La Marcho di Rei* would – in particular: have resonance down to our very day, and it's why the ***Farandole*** movement of the score and suite is associated with Christmas.

The composer's work on that score was ultimately TOO good. Or at least too good for a play which left audiences disgruntled and puzzling over – among other things, the fact that the maddening title character (the girl from Arles) is never actually seen! People either loved the music (which was considered to be complex - calling for, among other things: a saxophone) while disliking the actual

play and its style, or: were in the audience intending to experience an intellectual, literary event – and found music, and particularly THIS music to be intrusive.

So.

What was next for Bizet? For the most part, he was completely focused on composing a great opera, the opera that would finally mark his breakthrough as a composer of real talent. That elusive goal had eluded him for far too long. Fortuitously, he was commissioned by the Opéra-Comique in mid-1872 to compose a three act opera; the source material was a novelette by Prosper Mérimée. The libretto was to be written by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, nephew of Bizet's deceased father-in-law – and a very old friend of the composer. Matter of fact, Ludovic was one of the few in the Halévy clan who had wholeheartedly endorsed Bizet's desire to marry Geneviève – and had made it clear he saw a brilliant future for the then-young composer. Bizet began his work on the music.

But the only problem was that the subject matter for this newly-intended opera was considered pretty salacious for those staid times and the planned production was put on hold. And so Bizet halted HIS work on THAT opera and in the meanwhile, began to compose instead his ***Don Rodrigue*** hoping that THIS opera might be booked into the Opéra-Comique while the whole question of that other vulgar, suggestive proposed opera was mulled.

Don Rodrigue was based on the ever-popular story of *El Cid* (or "*Le Cid*" in French) which had its origins in a 12th century epic poem; Pierre Corneille's tragi-comedy play of 1636 further popularized the tale. In 1783, the Italian composer Antonio Sacchini's version drew ho-hums. The Corneille play would be turned into his OWN opera by Jules Massenet in 1885, and it's one of my favorite operas by the man. In the early 1890s Claude Debussy worked but never completed HIS version of an *El Cid* opera, also based on the Corneille.

But in 1872, might Bizet's new opera ***Don Rodrigue*** - with a libretto adapted by Louis Gallet and Édouard Blau FINALLY bring the composer that high level of recognition and acclaim he had long sought? Maybe, maybe maybe: THIS would be the one - and he launched himself into the music. But then on the evening of October 28, 1873 - the Opéra-Comique burned down. Completely, totally: the Opéra was reduced to a very large pile of ashes. You just CANNOT make this stuff up.

Perhaps it wasn't all that big a tragedy, though - because in the aftermath of the fire, the powers-that-were finally decided that "other" opera with that salacious book could proceed, the libretto COULD be written, the music COULD be composed - and the final product WOULD be produced. You know: that other disgusting, obscene opera I haven't yet named though it's pretty obvious – and so Bizet suspended ***Don Rodrigue*** (which he in fact never completed,) returned to the Mérimé-Meilhac-Halévy project, and after a great deal of work, difficult rehearsals, continued delays, postponements galore: Bizet finished his new opera – the one which he REALLY hoped would make him a successful, well-known composer.

You know: ***CARMEN.***

At last! Would THIS one finally bring Bizet the respect he truly merited? Finally, when ***Carmen*** opened on March 3, 1875:

(At right, a poster from the 1875 premiere of Carmen at l'Opéra-Comique in Paris.)

...the critics DESPISED it. HATED it. TRASHED it. And that critical reaction to this, the latest child Bizet had poured himself into creating: just destroyed him. To be blunt: Bizet was somewhat physically sickly and also suffered from depression for nearly his entire life. Among other physical problems, Bizet suffered from painful complications following an 1868 tonsillectomy: he was plagued by a condition then known by the whimsical name of "quinsy" – though we now know it as a peritonsillar abscess. For much of the remainder of his life, his throat became habitually abscessed in the area of the removed tonsils, but that in itself led to miserable pain: swallowing became difficult, he suffered from frequent fevers and was susceptible to infections, colds and other illnesses due to a lowered resistance. He had constant throat swelling and neck pain, headaches, and with swallowing difficult, food and drink became challenging. And so what would ANYONE with such a condition do? Why, smoke like a chimney of course!

And that's what the man did. After the trashing ***Carmen*** received, Bizet, totally dispirited - pretty much gave up. His quinsy actually led to deafness – and while ***Carmen*** continued to play to small audiences, barely able to struggle on, Bizet couldn't. He had a stroke – at the age of 37. And then died (his weakened heart may have experienced a heart attack – we're not sure, and then a couple days later, a second attack) on the evening of the 33rd performance of that initial run of ***Carmen***.

June 3rd, 1875.

And to make things even more tragic, that day? The day upon which he died**?** **<u>It just happened to also be the sixth wedding anniversary of Georges and Geneviève Bizet. Wow.</u>**

His life, his story - packs all the high drama and irony of a tragic opera itself - though for those who don't know that it's all true, they'd scoff at such a story as wholly improbable.

But wait: it gets even better and even MORE improbable!

Almost immediately upon Bizet's death ***<u>Carmen,</u>*** critical and public opinion suddenly spun on a dime 180 degrees. The opera was instantaneously seen as the masterpiece we now know it to be. Everyone from Tchaikovsky to Nietzsche to Brahms to even Wagner raved about ***<u>Carmen</u>***. A BRILLIANT opera composed by a tremendous genius; eventually ***<u>Carmen</u>*** became one of the most beloved, famous, often-produced and unforgettable operas EVER written. Literally within only two to three years, the opera had been produced across the globe and everywhere the opera went, it drew massive crowds and new generations of believers. Success came to Bizet at last – just a shame he wasn't around to experience it. And it STILL carries with it to this very day that popularity it achieved just after its composer died nearly 150 years ago. *(At right, Celestine Galli-Marie, who created the title role for the premiere production of Carmen. It's a beautifully idealized portrait; to see Celestine Galli-Marie as she really appeared in the role, scroll down...)*

Bizet's funeral drew a crowd of 4,000 and all the major lights of the day. If ONLY he might have known how his death would be greeted. His wife Geneviève would outlive him by a half century, dying in 1926. His son Jacques (the one shown well above via a photograph at age 10) committed suicide in 1922 - 47 years after his father died.

(At left: Celestine Galli-Marie as she actually appeared in the title role, in that premiere production.)

And his unrecognized son – the one Bizet had as the result of a fling with his mother's nurse just after mom died? That son, Jean Reiter - was awarded the Legion of Honor – and became an officer of the order. He had a very successful career as press director of Le Temps and died

in 1939 at the age of 77.

And Bizet's place as an immortal in the world of opera and classical music was assured – all because of that one last project he believed to have been a miserable failure – and that's the knowledge he took to his grave with him. If he ONLY knew…ah well.

And now, the story of ***Carmen***, as concisely as I can encapsulate it. Wish me luck. It takes place about 1820 - or then-abouts. And something to keep in mind: Carmen and Don José via the original source by Mérimé: are monsters. Carmen in particular: is a monstrously nasty character. Just a horribly unlikable wretch. Fortunately, the opera's book by Meilhac and Halévy softened and simplified Carmen's character, and Don José as well. The tragic nature of their characters is padded out in the opera, wisely. But anyway, here's my synopsis of the opera - one of the most beloved and most-often performed operas ever composed:

ACT I (and the opera itself) begin in a large public square in Seville. There's a military guardhouse directly across from a cigarette factory. The soldiers appreciate their easy city duty as Micaëla - a country girl - enters searching for Don José, who - she's told - will be arriving with the next guard change. The soldiers prove to be a little - disconcerting, so she leaves, planning to return later. The guard changes, and with it the little street urchins play soldier with their satiric interpretation, accompanied by Bizet's charmingly playful march. Don José arrives with Lieutenant Zuniga; Don José is told of Micaëla's inquiry for him. Zuniga is new to Seville and wants to know about those women working in the cigarette factory but Don José has little to share because - as he tells Zuniga: he's only interested in a girl from his own village: Micaëla. That's it. Micaëla! Right? This upstanding, moral man - nothing could ever turn HIS head, right?

(At left: a stamp commemorating Carmen, issued in 1967 by Magyar Posta, the postal service of Hungary. Carmen is, after all: a gypsy, and Hungary is the traditional home of the Roma/Romani people.)

The factory women come out on a break, and all the soldiers except José leer at the girls. One - the gypsy Carmen - sings a *habanera* (you'll recognize the tune - it's in ***Suite Two***) - and then tries to lure the attractive Don José, who's not interested. But on her way back in to work, she tosses him a flower; that act - in its apparent sincerity: does impress him. Micaëla then arrives with money and news from their village, as well as a letter and kiss from José's mother; the old lady raised the orphaned Micaëla and in her letter, implores her son to return home and to marry Micaëla.

A huge uproar is heard from inside the factory, where Carmen has pulled a knife on another woman and slashed the woman's face with it. Lieutenant Zuniga questions Carmen, who ignores him - humming impudently. Don José is ordered to take Carmen to prison for holding, but the little vamp persuades José to let her go in exchange for an assignation later on at Lillas Pastia's tavern; the sap

has been hooked and does indeed let Carmen go. She scrams - and he's nearly immediately arrested for letting her go. See? The effect that little hussy ALREADY has on Don José?

ACT II takes place in Pastia's tavern outside Seville two months later. Carmen is there with her gypsy friends including Mercédès and Frasquita, as well as a band of smugglers. The soldiers along with Lieutenant Zuniga amorously swarm the gypsy women; Carmen's knife assault of two months ago is all but forgotten and she sings the famous *séguedille* (you'll recognize it!) Lillas Pastia REALLY wants to close the tavern as Zuniga tries to talk Carmen and her friends into going to the theatre with him. Carmen discovers that Don José had been arrested for allowing her to escape two months prior, but has now been freed. Suddenly there's an eruption accompanying the entrance of the bullfighter Escamillo, who after singing the extremely famous *Toreador Song* (which you'll hear in ***Suite Two***) flirts with Carmen - who's not interested....despite the fact all the other women ARE. Eventually, all leave except the gypsies, Pastia and the smugglers. The two smugglers Dancaire and Remendado enter with plans for a job later that night which calls for the assistance of the three women. Carmen refuses as she knows Don José will be arriving soon; Dancaire asks Carmen to persuade Don José to join their cause. They leave (save Carmen) and José arrives.

Things are tense: he's in love with her and she belittles his sense of propriety - playing hard to get.

(Above: Scene from Carmen by Luigi Morgani – 1900)

She mentions the fact she was just dancing with other men - then bewitches him by dancing sensuously for him. The retreat is heard in the distance and he must return to the barracks; she further derides him for placing his duty above HER. He professes his love for her and even pulls out the flower she gave him two months earlier as proof. She tries her best to pull him away from his

responsibility but his honor to service is too great; she's furious. Zuniga arrives, ordering José back to the barracks; there's a general tumult as Zuniga draws his sword - Carmen's comrades pull them apart and lead Zuniga away. José now feels an allegiance to the gypsies and smugglers and dedicates himself to THEIR life - the freedom of the outlaw, as glorified in an act-ending chorus.

ACT III First, the camp of the gypsies and smugglers off in the wilds; the smugglers arrive with their contraband. José asks Carmen to forgive him, but the little tart refuses, insisting upon living the unencumbered life and orders him to leave her presence. She joins Mercédès and Frasquita in a little fortune-telling and of course, the cards promise nothing other than death for Carmen and Don José. The leader of the smugglers shows up and tells the women they must distract customs officials while Don José keeps watch.

Micaëla (remember her?) arrives at the hideout thanks to a guide. She's hoping she can still save Don José from this life of crime. Just as she sees him, he (José) takes fire at the approaching Escamillo. And WHY is Escamillo approaching? He's in search of Carmen, of course - further complicating this already-complicated love triangle...err: rectangle...err: whatEVER it's become. He (Escamillo) heard that Carmen had become bored with Don José and wants to be there to pick up the pieces. But of course, there's another knife fight - this one between the two would-be-lovers duking it out over Carmen. José nearly kills Escamillo; you'd think a bullfighter would have the superior moves in a fight...but Carmen and the smugglers interrupt the fight anyway.

Escamillo invites the smugglers and Carmen to his next bullfight - in Seville - and leaves. Micaëla confronts José with the news that his mother is nearly dead, begging him to come with her to his mother's deathbed. He agrees, telling Carmen he'll be back.

ACT IV - at the bullfight. Carmen is now flouting her relationship with Escamillo; she arrives at the fight all decked in her gaudiest best. Don José, dejected, desperate and haggard, arises from the crowd and in a last futile act, proclaims his eternal love for Carmen, who reacts by laughing in his face. He once gave her a ring - and she now throws that ring into the dirt. This final insult is too much for him to bear and his mind snaps. He - in a furious rage, pulls out a knife and stabs Carmen to death with it, then collapses on her body. As we hear the triumphant cheers of the crowd from inside the bullring - the sounds of Escamillo's victory which Carmen's dead ears will never experience.

And that - is that. The end of the opera.

After Bizet's death, his friend Ernest Guiraud (an accomplished composer in his own right) stepped up to see what he might do to help the estate, and to further popularize his friend's music, and here's where there's a distinctly American connection to Bizet AND these ***Carmen Suites*** on our program.

Guiraud - born in New Orleans in 1837 - had a pretty impressive pedigree: his father was his first tutor, with the son's studies transpiring in Louisiana.

Now that may not sound like much, but Ernest's father was Jean-Baptiste-Louis Guiraud, a man who had won the 1827 Prix de Rome himself. At 15, Ernest Guiraud *(at left)* wrote his first full-length, three-act opera - on the story of King David. That opera proved to be a huge success in 1853 at the Théâtre d'Orléans in New Orleans. Impressive, eh?! In any event, the man knew what he was doing, and in addition to his own music - much of which consisted of successfully-produced, operas he pulled two suites of music from his late friend's ***Carmen***, in order that the music might find a wider audience than that restricted to opera houses.

Though both suites consist of six numbers, the Carmen Suite #1 is the shorter of the two - clocking in at around 12 minutes, as compared to the second suite's performance time of roughly 20 minutes. Below: the movements of this week's suite, and from where in the opera each movement's music is drawn. You notice, of course - that the ordering of the suite's movements doesn't follow their chronologic appearances in the opera, but rather that they're carefully placed so that each suite will have its own fulfilling sense of structure:

CARMEN SUITE I

I. Prélude – Act I, prelude - including the fate motive's eerily modal construction

II. Aragonaise – Interlude (entr'acte) before Act IV

III. Intermezzo – Interlude (entr'acte) before Act III

IV. Séguedille – Act I - as noted above, this is Carmen's alluring aria in Lillas Pastia's tavern, "Près des remparts de Séville"

V. Les Dragons (the French noun for "Dragoons") d'Alcala – Interlude (entr'acte) before Act II

VI. Les Toréadors – Theme heard in the Act I Prelude - and Procession of the Toreadors from Act IV "Les voici! voici la quadrille des Toreros!"

CARMEN SUITE II

I. Marche des Contrebandiers – Act III Chorus: "Écoute, écoute, compagnon!" - reorchestrated by Guiraud to replace the chorus.

II. Habanera - Act I - Carmen's habanera, as I noted in my synopsis: "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle"

III. *Nocturne - Act III - Micaëla's aria "Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante"

**(Note – we'll exclude this movement, as most orchestras do. This movement is just a tad too long and disrupts the flow of the Suite.)*

IV. Chanson du Toréador – Act II introduction and Escamillo's aria "Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre"

V. La Garde Montante – Act I - "Avec la garde montante, nous arrivons, nous voilà!"

VI. Danse Bohème – Act II - Gypsy Dance: "Les tringles des sistres tintaient" - this is about as rousing and stirring as it gets!

A great way to end this suite, too.

At right: the tomb of Georges Bizet in Paris, at the Père-Lachaise cemetery on the Boulevard de Ménilmontant in the 20th arrondissement.

Sadly, the bust has been stolen more than once.