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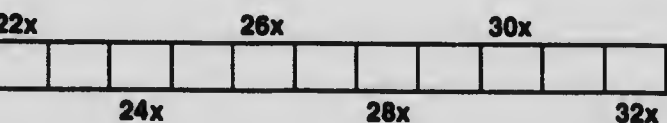
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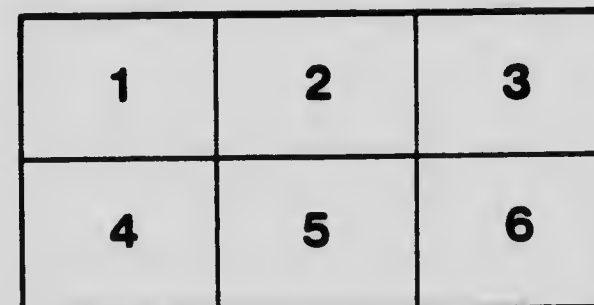
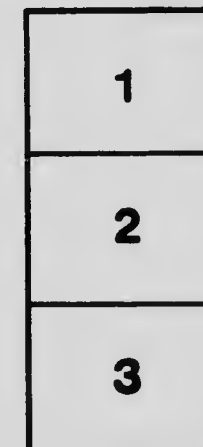
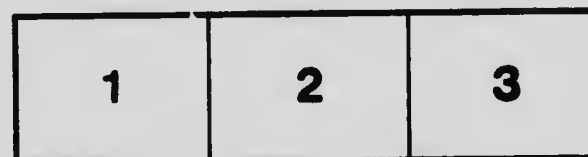
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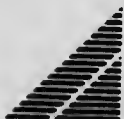
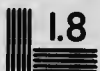
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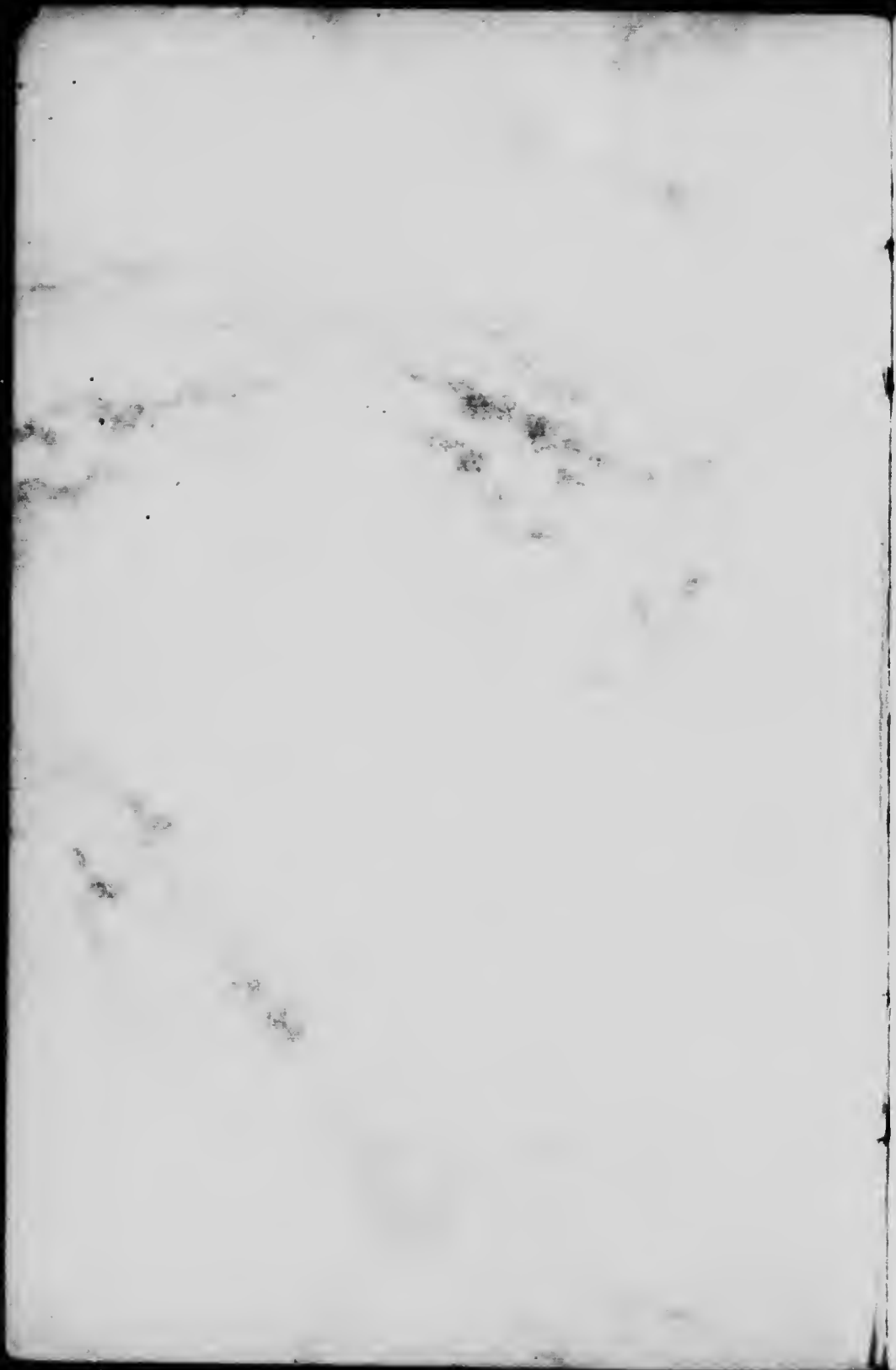
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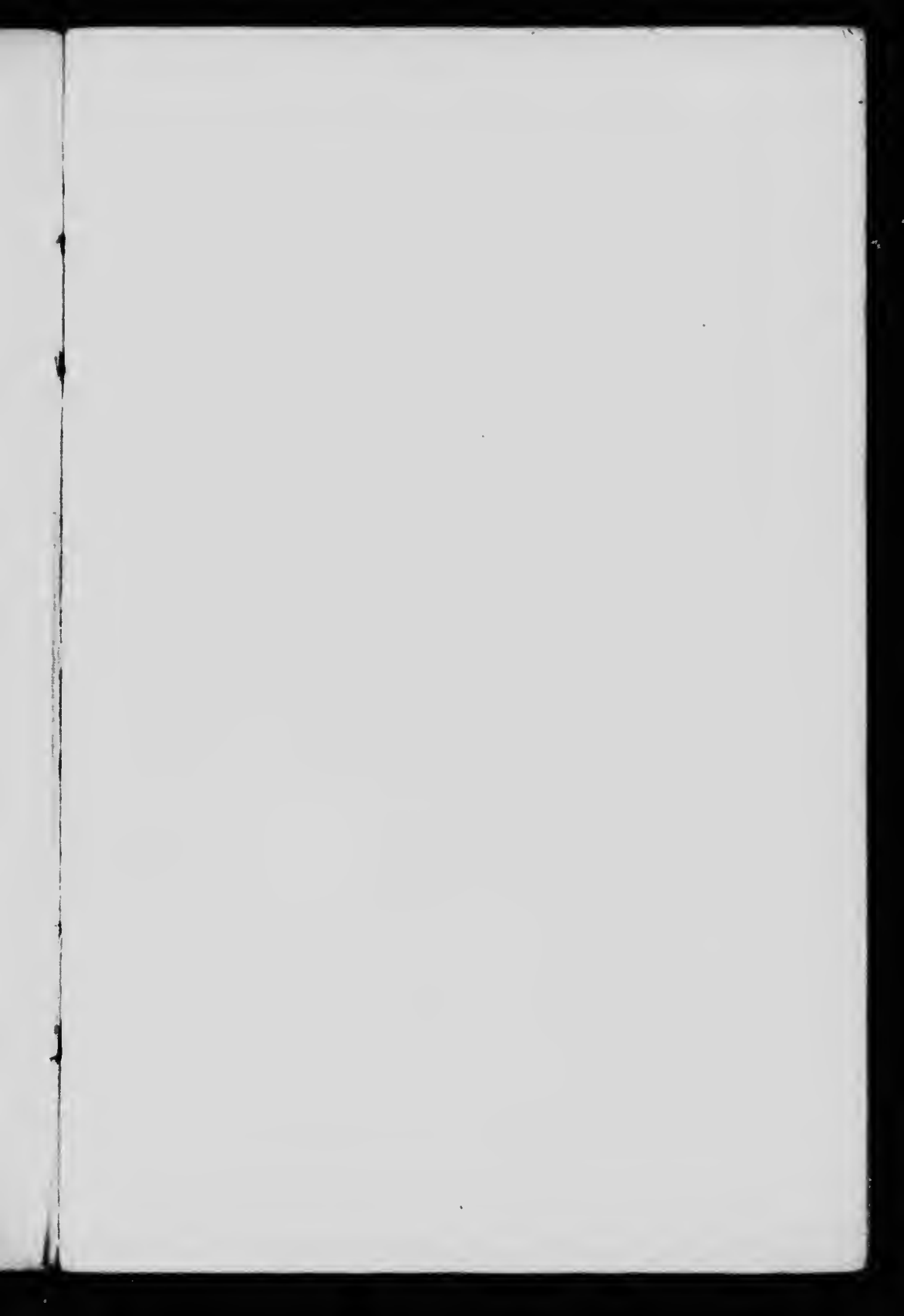
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Teachers ought to find it very helpful in their class where musical history and biography is taught."

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# THE WORLD'S GREATEST MUSICIANS.

## Preface.



Condensation is the order of the age. This book gives short sketches of the life, character and personality of the great composers and their masterpieces, and tells how they rank in the musical world. The object in presenting these monographs or pen-pictures of the great masters to the public, is to kindle the interest in musical biography. The problem has been as to how this can be done. Teachers and parents will find this book a key to the situation. As music is a universal language, and is being taught in all public schools, every one should know something of its origin. This knowledge, even among music students, is very limited; yet, there is no study more fascinating than conversational music history.

We wish to acknowledge information received from the following works: "The Chicago Record's Home Study Circle," "History of Music," by Emil; "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," by George Grove; "Encyclopaedia Britannica," "General History of Music," by Charles Burney, and also works of Julia Marshall, Dr. Haweis and others.

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BACH.

I.

German Composer

Born 1685—1750.

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1. Describe Bach's place in musical art.
2. What can be said of his genius?
3. Give further account of his genius.
4. Give an account of his playing.
5. Describe his life.

## BACH.

1. He is called the "Father of Music." His works contain an individuality of coloring not to be met with in any other composer. He was undoubtedly the greatest organist that ever lived.

2. He left an almost endless list of vocal and instrumental music, including oratorios, funeral cantatas, trios with pedal obligato, magnificats, motetts, fugues, sonatas, symphonies and a great many other works—His most sublime conception the "Passion Music."

3. On a visit to Berlin Bach inspected the great opera house there, and without hearing a note of music in it, he was able to detect by a glance everything advantageous or detrimental to musical effects. He also pointed out a wonderful whispering gallery in the hall, which not even the architect had suspected.

4. He played before the Crown Prince, Friedrich of Cassel, who was so delighted with his execution of a pedal solo, that the Prince presented him on the spot with a ring set with precious stones. He could perform on pedaling passages which would be enough to provoke many a skilled clavier player.

5. He was as great a man as an artist, and was esteemed everywhere he went. The religious atmosphere in which he grew up showed itself throughout his life and works. Like Handel, he was blind during the closing years of his life. Among his friends he numbered kings and princes.

HANDEL.

German Composer

II.

Born 1685—1759.

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6. How is Handel distinguished from all other composers?

7. How was the "Messiah" received in London and Dublin?

8. Describe Handel.

9. Give an account of the popularity of his works.

10. What is his greatest achievement?

## HANDEL.

6. By his monumental oratorios, the most familiar are the "Messiah," "Israel in Egypt," "Samson," "Joshua," "Saul" and "Jephthah." He also wrote more than forty operas.

7. It took London by storm at the first appearance. When the grand "Hallelujah Chorus" rang out, the entire audience rose as one man, carried away by lofty enthusiasm—thus originated the custom of standing during this chorus. In Dublin it was given with such success that the anxiety to obtain seats became so great that the ladies of rank agreed for the time being to go without hoops and gentlemen without their swords, so that an additional number of people could be admitted into the auditorium.

8. He was highly educated, possessed a great stock of wit and humor, religious in temperament, very charitable, had a noble bearing, and was of fearless independence. He died in affluence.

9. His works after one hundred and fifty years, are as fresh and as universally admired as when first created. He had a special aptitude for appreciating and expressing the sublime.

10. His "Messiah" is the most popular oratorio ever written. It marks the highest point reached in sacred music.

HAYDN.

III.

German Composer

Born 1732—1809.

11. How is Haydn popularly known as a composer?

12. What event gave Haydn an ambition to write "The Creation?"

13. Give a sketch of his life.

14. How is Haydn characterized, and what are some of the striking qualities of his music?

15. Give an account of the performance of "The Creation" on his seventy-sixth birthday.

## HAYDN.

11. By "The Creation," one of the most beautiful oratorios ever written, and, next to Handel's "Messiah," has the strongest hold on the affections of the people.

12. He had been present at a rendering of Handel's "Messiah," when the "Hallelujah Chorus" uprose in its great wave of sound. Haydn, unable to restrain his emotions, wept and exclaimed, "Handel is master of us all!" From that moment he was fired with an ambition to compose an oratorio, which was "The Creation."

13. He was charmingly sociable, unprepossessing in appearance. In disposition he was cheerful and even-tempered, but sensitive, and always led a very religious life. It is said that in composing whenever he felt the ardour of his imagination decline, he rose from his work and resorted to prayer, which, he said, never failed to revive him.

14. By his instrumentation he is said to be "Father of the String Quartette." He indulged largely in musical pleasantries. In oratorio he rivals Handel in majesty and power. The most striking characteristic of his "Creation" is the skill and beauty of the counterpoint in the choruses.

15. A grand performance of "The Creation" was arranged by the nobility of Vienna in honor of his approaching birthday. The aged master was carried into the concert hall, accompanied by princes and nobles. When Haydn entered, the whole audience rose, and then was seen the affectionate regard in which the master was held.

MOZART.

IV.

German Composer

Born 1756—1791.

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16. Give an account of Mozart's musical precocity.
17. Give a sketch of his life.
18. Tell of his life in Italy.
19. Mention some of his masterpieces.
20. How does he rank in the musical world?

## MOZART.

16. At three years of age, he would amuse himself by picking out chords upon the harpsichord; at four he could play minuets correctly, at five was a composer, at eight had completed a symphony, at nine he had become an accomplished violinist and organist, and at ten his first opera and two concertos were written.

17. His home life fostered all that was good and true in him and sweetened the first notes he put in musical order. He was as much at court in his boyhood as Handel was in his old age. The account of his Italian tour reads like a dream or fairy tale. Despite the fact that his career in childhood and youth was of the greatest brilliancy and success, his life from the time he reached manhood was a life of defeat, poverty and distress. In regard to his financial troubles, it must be said, he was careless, extravagant and generous to a fault.

18. Everywhere he was received as a prince. He was commissioned while at Milan to write an opera. This production was the greatest event of his life. A boy of fourteen conducted to his own music, amid applause, the largest orchestra in Europe. He stood on a chair to wield the baton. The flowers that were rained upon him nearly covered the lad from view.

19. "Don Giovanni," "Magic Flute," "Figaro's Wedding," and the sublime "Requiem," composed in anticipation of death.

20. Mozart is the world's greatest musical genius, having composed in his short life nine hundred and twenty-two compositions. He wrote in every possible form of music. His knowledge of counterpoint was something marvelous.



**BEETHOVEN.**

**V.**

**German Composer**

**Born 1770—1827.**

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21. What can be said of Beethoven's greatness as a musician?

22. Describe Beethoven's piano playing.

23. What can be said of his character?

24. What are considered Beethoven's masterpieces and how does he rank with other composers?

25. Give an account of his social environment.

## BEETHOVEN.

21. He was called "The Homer, the Shakespeare of the musical world." To him belongs the highest realization of music as a language of the emotions. His greatness was achieved in the realm of instrumental music.

22. It was spiritual rather than technically brilliant, both majestic and emotional in a pre-eminent degree.

23. His character was spotless; he had a lofty ideal of life. In a letter he says, "Never, never will you find me ignoble. From childhood up I have learned to love virtue and all that is beautiful and good." On account of his suspicious manner a more difficult person to transact business with would be hard to find. His manners were never conventional and were sometimes outrageous.

24. His nine great symphonies—the works upon which he spent the power of his genius. Beethoven of all musicians has thought with most grandeur, force and liberty; beside him Bach is scholarly, Mendelssohn elegant, Schumann obscure and Wagner extravagant.

25. He was often misunderstood, savagely abused, and even regarded as crazy, however, he never lacked admirers. He found appreciation and friendship among cultivated society. Brilliant artists worshipped him. He was feted and invited everywhere. His name was a passport into princely homes.

**SCHUBERT.**

**VI.**

**German Composer**

**Born 1797—1828.**

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26. How do Schubert's songs and instrumental music compare with those of other masters?

27. Give a sketch of his life.

28. What songs represent Schubert at his best?

29. Describe his appearance.

30. What are some of the important elements of his character?

## SCHUBERT.

26. In song he is prodigious and stands apart from every other composer, but in other branches he has his superiors. He is called the "Burns of Music." He composed nearly six hundred songs. His quartets and other chamber music are among the best beloved of this class.

27. His life was commonplace, obscure and even sordid. His poverty was his own fault, for he was too fond of gay carousals, and spent his short life without any home of his own. In money matters he was like Wagner, a child squandering one moment and starving the next. He was like Mozart in the enormous quantity of music he wrote during his short life, and also the public neglect under which he suffered. The "Erl-King" was the first of Schubert's compositions that appeared in print, and this happened in the year of his death, thirteen years after the ballad was composed. The publishers refused for years to have it even as a gift. He was known to write five songs a day.

28. His "Erl-King," "Serenade," "Ave Maria," and "Wanderer."

29. There was little in his exterior person to betoken an artistic temperament. Schubert is perhaps the only instance of a truly great artist whose outer life was utterly at variance with his sublime works, and whose inner life can never be interpreted except through them.

30. The love of truth, sincerity, affection, sociability, modesty, frankness and indifference to praise.

MENDELSSOHN.

VII.

German Composer

Born 1809—1847.

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31. Describe Mendelssohn's musical precocity.
32. Give an account of his social environment.
33. Enumerate his masterpieces.
34. What were some of the important elements of his character?
35. What is his position and influence in the world of musical art?

## MENDELSSOHN.

31. At eight years of age he played the most difficult fugues of Bach's at sight; at ten he made his first public appearance as a pianist; at eleven he began to compose. On his fifteenth birthday his fourth opera was played to an admiring audience. He gave concerts in London with wonderful success.

32. He had an ideal career, surrounded by wealth and culture. His circumstances were all that could be asked—honored by musicians and worshipped by the people.

33. "Elijah," his most admired production, "The Midsummer Night's Dream," containing the famous "Wedding March," "St. Paul," and "Songs Without Words."

34. He was thorough, studious, earnest and religious. He never indulged in ease or sloth, had a dignified and gentle personality. Every one who knew him loved him. "Not a day passed," said Schumann, "in which he does not utter thoughts worthy to be graven in gold." His utter freedom from conceit was his greatest charm.

35. His genius is shown in an original system of romantic expression, and has been a powerful influence in shaping the thoughts of the musical world. He is called the "Tennyson, the Longfellow of musical art." His songs, like his life, are all sunshine.

CHOPIN.

VIII.

Polish Composer

Born 1809—1849.

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41. Give an estimate of Chopin's position and influence in the world of musical art.
42. Give a sketch of his life.
43. Describe Chopin as a piano virtuoso.
44. What are some of the characteristic merits of his music?
45. Upon what does Chopin's reputation depend as a musical poet?

## CHOPIN.

41. He is a typical representative of Polish music. He has been compared to an artist whose greatest labors were exerted on carving a minute piece of ivory into a marvel of delicate beauty. His forte lay in small forms of music. He was a composer of eminent individuality.

42. He was brought up among sons of Polish nobility; at the age of nine improvised in public and excited general admiration. In character he was weak and vacillating. There was a pronounced ironic and comic vein in his character. He was painfully fastidious; had an engaging personality. The devotion of his pupils bordered on fanaticism.

43. His playing was too delicate and refined for large audiences. This lack of success on a large scale was a great disappointment to him. He said the crowd paralyzed him with their curious looks, but with congenial spirits he delighted in showing his unique mastery of the piano. (George Sand called him "Velvet Fingers.") His indescribable mechanical dexterity, the melancholy tints in his style of shading, the rare clearness of his delivery and unique mastery of the pedal, are qualities which bear the stamp of genius.

44. The exquisite modulation into foreign keys, abound in all his works. No one has written more soulful melodies, most of his preludes being outbreaks of wildest anguish. His music is an exact reflex of his character and history. His songs are highly dramatic.

45. Exclusively upon his piano music. His range though limited, reached perfection in finish and originality.



SCHUMANN.

IX.

German Composer

Born 1810—1856.

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36. What place does Schumann hold among the masters of music?

37. What is said of his youthful powers of portraiture in music?

38. Give an account of his literary ability.

39. What are some of the distinguished characteristics of his music?

40. Describe Schumann as a man.

## SCHUMANN.

36. He is the most advanced and most difficult to understand, and will probably live in history by his piano music, especially the Novelettes and Forest Scenes, and by his Songs.

37. He delighted in musical characterization. When a child he would portray scenes and characters through music.

38. His musical articles are delightful. They are collected and translated under the name of "Music and Musicians." His power for expressing thought in fantastic form made his criticisms as interesting as little plays. They are treasured for their flashing keenness and their wit.

39. He was particularly successful in reproducing in music that mixture of humor and tragedy, and was fond of syncopation, which gave his rhythms a unique interest.

40. He sometimes spent hours in company without entering into conversation. He never conversed on common every day subjects, for empty chatter was odious to him. His bearing was distinguished and calm. His countenance produced an agreeable, kindly impression, although it was without regular beauty. He had an exceptionally refined and cultivated mind. He died in the insane asylum near Bonn. His malady is said to have been caused from excessive smoking.

LISZT.

X.

Hungarian Composer

Born 1811—1886.

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46. Describe Liszt's musical precocity.
47. Describe his appearance, personality and life.
48. What is the general opinion of the world in regard to Liszt's greatness as a musician, and by what achievement will he be known in history?
49. By what qualities did he become popular?
50. Give an account of his playing, the scope of his genius and generosity.

## LISZT.

46. In his youth he gave evidence of that precocity which distinguishes genius. He was called the "Hungarian Wonder Child." At the age of nine he made his first public appearance, and at twelve was without a rival as a pianist.

47. He looked like a magician. His manner was kingly and imposing. On crowds and on individuals alike the magical fascination of his personality exerted an influence that was irresistible. His life was a long series of artistic triumphs. It is said of him that his nature consisted of uneven proportions of demon and angel.

48. He is one of the most brilliant stars in the whole firmament of musical achievement, but not a star of the first magnitude. He will be known as a man who, more than any other, developed the modern piano to its highest capacity by the demands which his works make on the instrument.

49. By the influence of his personality, the dazzling brilliancy of his performance as a piano virtuoso and the quiet audacity with which he commanded worldly success, as well as by amiable and generous qualities.

50. He played with such force that the audience could hear every note above the thunder of a full orchestra. His seventy songs are worthy of immortality. His famous oratorios "St. Elizabeth" and "Christ" both show his genius for religious music. His generosity knew no bounds. Though he earned millions, he had in the last years of his life just enough to live comfortably. Few monarchs have been so magnificent in their charities as he.

WAGNER.

XI.

German Composer

Born 1813—1883.

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51. In what is Wagner's genius so remarkable?

52. Give an account of his mental activity in childhood and youth.

53. Upon what works does his fame rest?

54. Give an account of his personal history.

55. Describe the scope of his genius.

## WAGNER.

51. Wagner is the greatest and most original dramatic composer of all time — the greatest composer of orchestral music the world has ever produced. His music dramas are ideally perfect and stand today acknowledged as among the most colossal products of human genius.

52. In childhood he was noted for his brilliant mind and vivid imagination, having displayed much poetic talent, translated twelve books of the "Odyssey" when he was thirteen and wrote a grand tragedy in Shakespearian style at the age of fourteen.

53. "Nibelungen Ring," "Parsifal," "The Flying Dutchman," "Tannhauser," "Lohengrin," and "Tristan and Isolde."

54. He had splendid noble qualities and also had extraordinary faults, going to extremes in everything. He was honored in the last years of his life, but he was forty-four years old and had written all but three of his operas before a single one of them was performed. He paid dearly for his genius, but his heirs are millionaires. One German opera establishment pays an annual royalty of \$3,000. Other cities pay handsome royalties.

55. No composer ever possessed such command over the resources of the orchestra. The originality of his combinations is as startling as their effect is vivid and beautiful. He can make them express whatever he feels to be needful for the effect of the scenes he is treating; and he frequently does it with such complete success that the meaning would be perfectly intelligible if the voice parts were omitted. He furnishes the highest type of purely declamatory music—the only music he considers admissible to the drama.

VERDI.

XII.

Italian Composer

Born 1813—1901.

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56. What has been Verdi's success as a musician?

57. By what dramatic lyric is he best known?

58. What is the secret of the vitality of "Il Travatore," and what are some of the characteristic merits of his music?

59. Give an account of his life, the scope of his genius and the popularity of his works.

60. What are the most celebrated works by which Verdi has achieved success?

## VERDI

56. Verdi is the greatest of Italy's musical dramatists. He has put a girdle of melody literally around the world.

57. 'Il Trovatore'. It is based upon a Spanish tragedy entitled "The Troubador."

58. Millions find tune in it. It is full of melodic charm and very dramatic in style. The real strength of the operas lay in the character of the composer's music. The melody is fluent and fascinating. His music is generally recognized to be both artistic and scholarly, his operas spirit-stirring, their orchestration rich, full and charged with feeling.

59. For years he lived the life of an Italian nobleman. In 1890 he was offered the title of marquis, but declined it. The kindness of his heart was as great as his genius. Money was often sent anonymously to those in want. His "Aida" is a lasting monument to his genius and is excelled only by his later opera, "Othello." He received \$20,000 for his first presentation of his "Aida."

60. "Il Trovatore," "Othello," "Aida," "Falstaff," and "Rigoletto," are the greatest specimens ever contributed to the repertoire of Italian opera.



GOUNOD.

XIII.

French Composer

Born 1818—1893.

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61. What place does Gounod hold among the more modern musicians?

62. How does he compare with other musical artists, and what are some of the masterly qualities of his music?

63. What can be said of his character and life?

64. By what compositions has he gained celebrity?

65. Give an account of the popularity of "Faust."

## GOUNOD.

61. He is one of the most distinguished and original composers of the French school. By virtue of his characteristic symmetry, Gounod is a pure classic. As a song writer he has greatly distinguished himself.

62. To be the composer of "Faust" is in itself sufficient to give him a right to occupy a place among the greatest and most original composers of the century. His music is marvelous in harmonic coloring, poetical, full of melody and dramatic force. He handles orchestration with a powerful grasp.

63. He had a strong and noble character, was deeply religious, possessed a mind as refined as nature and study could make it, was a witty and eloquent conversationalist, possessing that peculiar qualification known as personal magnetism. It is said Gounod attributed his all in life and in art to his mother.

64. "Faust," "Romeo and Juliet," "Sapho," "Death and Life." Gounod considered "The Redemption" the work of his life.

65. It has been one of the very greatest successes the modern stage has known.

**RUBINSTEIN.**

**XIV**

**Russian Composer**

**Born 1829—1894.**

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66. How has Rubinstein enriched musical literature?

67. Give an account of Rubinstein as a piano virtuoso.

68. Give a sketch of his life and character.

69. Describe his appearance.

70. Give an account of his work other than a song writer.

## RUBINSTEIN.

66. His Hebrew melodies and songs of spring are the exquisite perfection of poetry. These alone are sufficient to secure for him deathless fame. His "Leonore" is one of the most superb pieces of piano literature. As a melodist he has had no rival. He has worked in all fields and failed in none.

67. His concert tour through Europe was one triumphal march. In America he gathered enthusiastically proffered laurels everywhere. He could sing on the piano with all the beauty, pathos and feeling of a human voice. His playing was not remarkable for the absolute perfection of technique, but he had the fire and soul which only a true composer can have. He played everything from memory.

68. By nature he was proud, reserved and silent, free from all affectation, was a patriot to the heart's core, was extremely well read on all subjects, speaking many languages fluently. In 1862 he founded the Imperial Conservatory at St. Petersburg, and for some time was its director. His last days were most gloomy from loss of sight.

69. He had the appearance of a genius. His face expressed more character than beauty. If a splendid manliness of carriage, a face capable of all expressions and a striking individuality be things admired, then Rubinstein had no rival.

70. He originated a sort of Biblical drama, which is an oratorio designed to be staged and acted. Being of Israelitish race, the stories of the Old Testament appealed to him with intense force. His "Tower of Babel," "Moses," "The Maccabees," "The Demon," and "Paradise Lost" are very important and interesting works.



