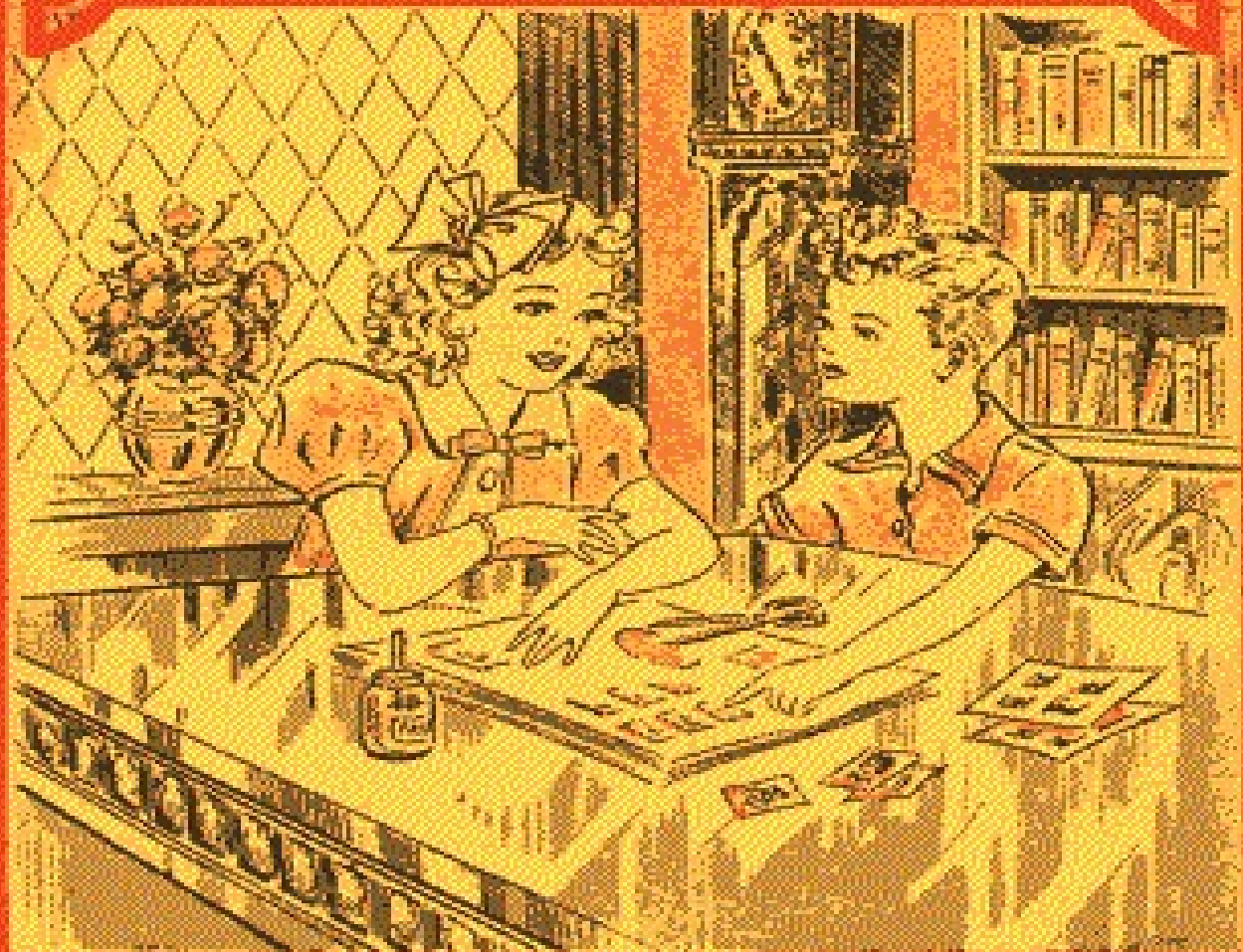


CHILD'S OWN BOOK
of Great Musicians
WAGNER



By

THOMAS TAPPER

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1712 CHESTNUT STREET
• PHILADELPHIA •

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binding diagram

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is one of a series known as the CHILD'S OWN BOOK OF GREAT MUSICIANS, written by Thomas Tapper, author of "Pictures from the Lives of the Great Composers for Children," "Music Talks with Children," "First Studies in Music Biography," and others.

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This series will be found not only to furnish a pleasing and interesting task for the children, but will teach them the main facts with regard to the life of each of the great musicians—an educational feature worth while.



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Schubert

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Schumann
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Verdi
Wagner

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Page one of illustrations

Page two of illustrations

RICHARD WAGNER

The Story of the Boy
Who Wrote Little Plays

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No. 1 Cut the picture of Wagner from the picture sheet.
Paste in here. Write the composer's name below and the
dates also.

BORN

DIED

The Story of the Boy Who Wrote Little Plays

A very odd house used to stand in the quaint old Saxon City of Leipzig. This house was called the Red and White Lion. I suppose no one ever really saw a lion that was red and white, but nevertheless that was the name of the house. There, was born Richard Wagner, who was one day to write the wonderful opera scenes of which we will soon read.

No. 2

WAGNER'S BIRTHPLACE

Richard Wagner's day of birth was May 22, 1813. That was more than a century ago! More than twelve hundred months!

Since that time, music has changed very greatly. When

Wagner was born, much of the music that was being written had to follow certain patterns or models just as architects follow certain patterns in building a house. Now the composer when he writes music feels a great deal freer as he knows that he can make his own patterns,—that he is not held in by any such hard laws as those which held back such composers as Mozart, Bach, Haydn and Handel. It was Wagner who did much to set music free from the old barriers. This does not mean that music to-day is better than music that was written by Haydn and Beethoven. Indeed it often is not nearly so good, but it is freer, less held down by rule.

No. 3
TANNHÄUSER

When Wagner wrote his first opera that had any success (Rienzi) he followed the models of composers of the day, but when he came to write operas that followed, such as Flying Dutchman, Lohengrin and Tannhäuser, he struck out in new and fresh paths which made him many enemies at first and many friends later.

As we read of a great man we must learn to see the world as it was in his day.

Today we think of the world as the home of our parents, of ourselves and of our friends; as the world of Mr. Edison, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roosevelt. In the world

of Wagner there was not one of these.

Who were the great musicians when he was a boy? Well, here are some of them. Can you tell one fact about each of the men whose pictures come next?

No. 4

LISZT

No. 5

SCHUMANN

No. 6

VERDI

No. 7

CHOPIN

Wagner's father died when he was only six months old, and the boy was brought up by his mother and his step-father, who was very kind to him. In one way Wagner was unlike most of the other great composers. He did not show any talent for music until he was almost a man. All that he thought of was writing plays. When he did study, he was so bright and worked so hard that he learned in less than a year more than many learn in a lifetime. Here is a picture of Wagner's mother, who cared for him so tenderly.

No. 8

WAGNER'S MOTHER

When we read the stories of Charles Dickens we make many friends. And they are among the very best we ever have. There are Little Nell, Paul Dombey, Sam Weller,

Oliver Twist, and a host of others.

Writers like Dickens bring all sorts of people before us. *But few composers can do such a thing.*

Yet there are some who do this, and one of the greatest is Richard Wagner. In his operas a host of people live,—people as real and as interesting as those in the stories of Charles Dickens.

There is Walter, who sings the Prize Song in *Die Meistersinger*, and Eva, whom he loves. And in the same opera there is Beckmesser, the fussy old schoolmaster kind of a man. And Hans Sachs, the cobbler.

No. 9

SCENE FROM DIE MEISTERSINGER

There is a lovely scene in the third act of this opera. We see a meadow light and bright in the sunshine. A glistening river flows quietly through it. Everywhere on the water there are boats. Scattered over the meadow there are tents. Everybody is out for a holiday time. All is lively and full of color and bright and cheery. Now there pass before us the tradesmen singing in chorus. There are cobblers and carpenters led by the town pipers. And every trade sings its own songs.

Then comes the scene in which Walter and Beckmesser sing in contest. Beckmesser begins. He

stutters and stammers and struggles through his song. And finally, like a school-boy who does not know his lesson, he breaks down.

Then Walter comes to sing the lovely *Prize Song*; a melody that just sings itself into the heart of everyone.

No. 10

WALTER'S PRIZE SONG [Listen](#)

Do you wonder that with such lovely music Walter wins the contest and the hand of Eva whom he loves? Jolly old Hans Sachs is so happy over it all that he sings a rollicking song and everybody joins in with him as the curtain goes down.

No. 11

HANS SACHS

Nor was Wagner satisfied with making characters who were merely people just like ourselves. (For Walter and Eva are people of our kind). But there are in the operas by Richard Wagner, gods and goddesses, giants and Rhine maidens, and Nibelungs.

Many of them have strange names. These names are easy to remember because they are strange: Wotan and Donner are gods. Freia and Erda are goddesses. Fafner is a giant. Flosshilde is a Rhine daughter. Mime and Alberich are Nibelungs.

No. 12
LOHENGRIN

Oh, they are wonderful company these gods and goddesses, and others of the company who tell their story and adventure in the operas of the Nibelungen Ring. Here is Siegfried forging his Magic Sword Nothung.

No. 13
SIEGFRIED

Now, as we have said, when we learn of so great a man we always wonder what sort of a boy he was. Well, when this boy was nine years old he went to a classical school. One of his teachers at least must have been very fond of him, and he must have been fond of his teacher, for when Richard Wagner was only thirteen years old he translated from Greek into German twelve books of the *Odyssey* for this teacher.

No. 14
WAGNER AS A BOY

"I intend to become a poet," he used to say. He read *Romeo and Juliet* in English. Then he wrote a play in which were *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. And there were forty-two other characters. All of these died or were killed in the fourth act and were brought back as ghosts in the fifth! He played the piano, too, and seems to have been quite as busy a boy as he was a man.

Of one composer's music he was very fond. This composer lived nearby and passed the Wagner house almost every day. Richard always ran to the window to watch him coming. This musician was the composer of *Der Freischütz* and of *Oberon*. Can you guess his name?

This composer's father was also a musician as well as a military man.

No. 15

WEBER

Children will be glad to know that Wagner was very fond of animals. Here he is with a picture of one of his dogs. His favorite dogs are buried in the garden of his home at Bayreuth, where Wagner is also buried.

Wagner called his home at Bayreuth "Wahnfried," which really means "Fancy Free."

It is beautifully located in the heart of the old town.

No. 16

No. 16 WAGNER AND HIS DOG

Later on the boy read about the contest of *Die Meistersinger*. He was then sixteen. And he read, too, a poem called *Tannhäuser*. He kept these stories in mind until he became a man and then he wrote an opera about each.

Thus we see that we carry childhood thoughts into manhood.

No. 17

No. 17

Here is a list of the operas by Richard Wagner, with their names pronounced:—

The Fairies (1833).

Das Liebesverbot (1836) lee-bes-fehr-bote.

Rienzi (1842) ree-ent'-see.

The Flying Dutchman (1842).

Tannhäuser (1845) tan'-hoy-ser.

Lohengrin (1847) lo'-en-green.

Das Rheingold (1869) rhine-gold.

Die Walküre (1870) dee val-kee-reh.

Siegfried (1869) seeg'-freed.

Tristan and Isolde (1865) e-sol'-deh.

Die Meistersinger (1867).

Die Götterdämmerung (1876) dee getter-day-meh-roongk.

Parsifal (1882) par'-se-fal.

Wagner also wrote symphonies and a few works for chorus and orchestra, but he is so much greater as a composer of music dramas that he is known mostly for his works for the stage.

SOME FACTS ABOUT RICHARD WAGNER

Read these facts about Richard Wagner and try to write his story out of them, using your own words. When your story is finished, ask your mother or your teacher to read it. When you have made it, copy it on pages 14, 15 and 16.

1. Richard Wagner wrote operas.
2. He was born May 22nd, 1813.
3. How long did Wagner study music?
4. His operas, like the novels of Charles Dickens, are full of wonderful characters.
5. Besides people of every day kind there are gods and goddesses, and giants, and other strange beings in his operas.
6. As a boy Richard Wagner went to a classical school.
7. He was always fond of music.
8. He could translate Greek when he was only thirteen years old.
9. Even as a little boy he said: I intend to become a

poet.

10. He wrote plays and he read the plays of Shakespeare in English.

11. As a boy he studied the piano and was fond of the music of Von Weber.

12. Among the books that Richard Wagner read as a boy were the story of *Die Meistersinger* and the story of *Tannhäuser*.

13. He always kept these stories in mind.

14. When he became a composer he wrote an opera upon each of these stories.

15. Tell something about Wagner and animals.

16. Richard Wagner died at Venice on Feb. 13, 1883.

SOME QUESTIONS

1. What kind of music did Richard Wagner compose?

2. When was he born?

3. Can you name some of the musicians who lived when Richard Wagner was a boy?

4. How many characters from the Dickens' novel can you name from memory?

5. In what opera by Richard Wagner is *The Prize Song*?

6. Who sings it?

7. Tell what kind of a man Beckmesser is.

8. Who was the jolly cobbler singer?

9. What happened to Beckmesser in the contest with Walter?

10. What sort of characters occur in the operas?

11. See if you can describe each of these: Donner, Fafner, Mime, Freia, Wotan.

12. What is the name of the house in which Richard Wagner was born?

13. Tell some of the things he did when he was a boy.

14. Who composed *Oberon*?

15. What other opera did this composer write?

16. What should we remember about childhood thoughts?

THE STORY OF WAGNER

Written by.....

On (date).....

Write a short story about Wagner and copy it on these pages.

No. 18

Transcriber's Notes:



On page 9, "Odessy" was replaced with "Odyssey".

On page 11, "Die" and "Parsifal" were italicized.

The music depicted in the illustration is not from Walter's Prize Song in Die Meistersinger, but is instead the opening of the overture to that opera.

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