

Schubert under his protection—the two of them looked funny together, as the caricature shows—and performed his songs everywhere. Often Schubert's friends would arrange what they called "Schubertiads"—private concerts at the homes of music-loving friends, where nothing was played but Schubert's music. Those who loved music were eager to be there. Of course, Schubert made no money from these.

Few of the usual sources of income were open to him. He was not a virtuoso performer on any instrument. He applied for minor jobs assisting *kapellmeisters*, but no one had heard of him, and his letters were lost. He did begin selling pieces—mostly songs—to publishers in 1821, and had published up to Opus 100 by the time of his death, but made little money in exchange. Most of his instrumental music was not published in his lifetime. Schubert tried another traditional route to fame and fortune—writing opera. But Vienna was in the grip of a Rossini fever and didn't want German operas. While several of Schubert's were performed, they were handicapped by having laughable librettos.

Schubert's unbusinesslike ways helped keep him poor. He really wasn't very interested in money, and he often mislaid his manuscripts: if he lost the piece on which he was working, he could always write something else. A number of pieces ended up "unfinished" because he lost track of them. In the fifty years after his death scholars engaged in one of the great treasure hunts of history looking for Schubert manuscripts. In 1838 Robert Schumann found Schubert's Ninth Symphony, which had never been played, in the possession of Ferdinand Schubert. Wildly excited Schumann wrote Clara, "It is not possible to describe it to you. All the instruments are human voices. It is gifted beyond measure." Mendelssohn conducted the premiere in Leipzig in 1839: Schumann's review said, "It bears within the core of everlasting youth."

In 1822 Schubert was dangerously ill. His hair fell out, and he never entirely recovered his health. But he continued to pour out great music. He became more solitary than ever: although he greatly admired Beethoven's music, and although Beethoven, who kept track of other composers, praised Schubert's works, Schubert was too shy to try to meet Beethoven. But he carried a torch at Beethoven's funeral, to honor him.

Schubert's district of Vienna had infected water; his health already weakened, Schubert developed typhoid. He died November 20, 1828, only 31, and was buried near Beethoven.

All his music was early music: we cannot know where his genius would have taken him. The poet Grillparzer said everything in his epitaph: "THE ART OF MUSIC HERE ENTOMBED A RICH POSSESSION, BUT EVEN FAIRER HOPES."

### HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803-1869)

Berlioz once said, "I took up music where Beethoven left it"; he seems also to have taken up Beethoven's struggle against a life full of pain and griefs. Berlioz was full of optimism, tremendous aspirations, and insatiable openness to experience. "Despite all my efforts, life escapes me, I only catch shreds of it," he once wrote. Like Beethoven he refused to accept defeat: "I defy them to wear me down."

The greatest French composer, critic, and conductor of his century was born December 11, 1803, in La Côte Saint-André, a very small town in southern France where his father was the local doctor. Unlike most great composers, Berlioz had little exposure to music as a child, was not a prodigy, and never became a virtuoso



HECTOR BERLIOZ after Carjat, 1857.

on any instrument. He wanted to study music; his father sent him to Paris to study medicine. Berlioz took one look at the corpse he was expected to dissect, jumped out the window, and went to enroll at the Conservatoire: he would become a composer.

His teachers found him stubbornly set on his own ideas—which they pronounced unplayable. The young man made himself known as a character in Paris by assigning himself the duty of protecting masterworks of opera from the “improvements” of conductors. In his marvellous *Memoirs*, Berlioz describes a performance at the Opéra in which the conductor had dared rescore an opera by Berlioz’s idol Gluck. “Although boiling with rage, I managed to restrain myself until the end of the aria; then in the short pause that followed, I shouted, ‘Gluck put no cymbals there; who has dared to correct Gluck?’” Once he provoked a riot. An audience member who saw Berlioz on such an occasion describes “a young man trembling with indignation, his hands clenched, his eyes flashing, and with a huge head of hair—such a head of hair. It looked like an enormous umbrella of hair, projecting like a canopy over the beak of a bird of prey.”

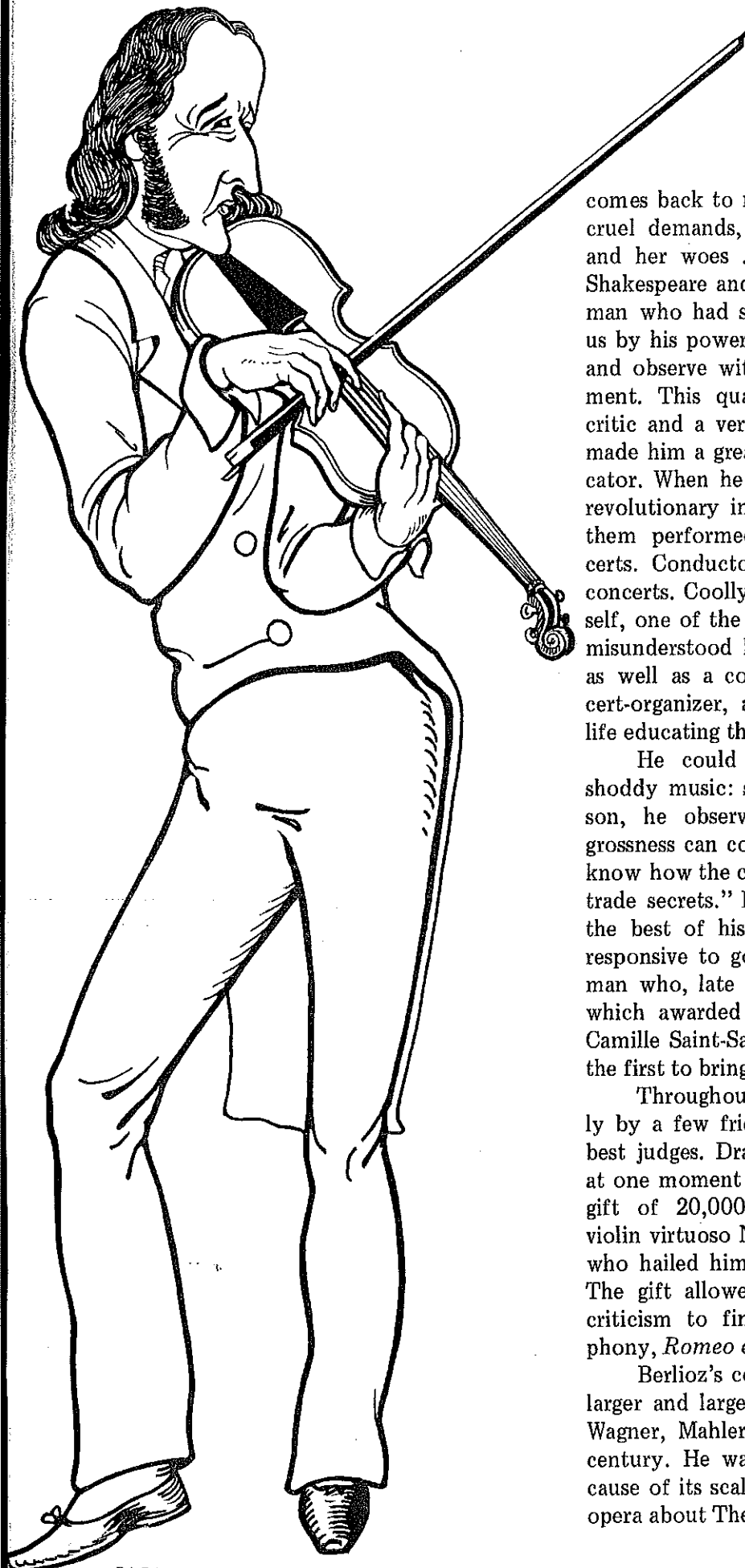
A master of instrumentation and the writer of one of the first books on orchestration, Berlioz took such matters seriously; he was among the first musicians to believe that works of earlier composers should be played as written, not rescored to suit the taste of the moment. He greeted the corruption of works by his favorite composers with fierce indignation: Schumann once said, “Berlioz does not try to be pleasing and elegant. What he hates, he grasps fiercely by the hair; what he loves, he almost crushes in his fervor.”

Berlioz was passionate about everything, not just music. He seems to have had stronger powers of response than most of us, and responded to many things with a violence which frightened others. Late in life, while rereading his beloved Shakespeare and Virgil in preparing the libretto for his gigantic opera *Les Troyens*, Berlioz commented, “I feel that my heart will burst when I come across lines like that.”

Literature led him to one of his volcanic loves. In 1827 Harriet Smithson, an English actress, appeared in Paris in the first productions of Shakespeare seen there. Berlioz saw her as Ophelia and Juliet and fell violently in love with Harriet and Shakespeare simultaneously. His wild letters frightened her; he pursued her in vain, decided she was worthless, wrote a symphony in which she figured as a witch, and fell in love with another woman who, while Berlioz was studying in Rome, married a wealthy older man. Berlioz, enraged, left Rome, taking with him pistols and poison: he intended to kill his faithless love, her husband, and her mother, whom he blamed for the treachery. He paused long enough to finish orchestrating the piece he was writing. He got as far as Nice, paused because he was hungry, tried to commit suicide, failed, ran out of anger, and remained there for three happy weeks, writing an overture.

When he returned to Paris, he returned to loving Harriet. After major traumas, including another suicide attempt, he ultimately married her, and they lived together quite unhappily. Her acting was no longer successful; she became an alcoholic. Berlioz, unable to bear her jealousy, slovenliness, and quarrelsomeness, moved out and took a mistress. Harriet became ill, and needed nursing day and night for some years. Berlioz provided this, and often attended her himself. To earn the money he needed, he continued expending his energy as a music critic—a job he called “my life sentence of hard labor.”

When Harriet died, he reflected that there was “nothing left” between them: “We each suffered so much at the other’s hands.” “How horrible life is. Everything



PAGANINI in London, 1851.

comes back to me . . . her great qualities, her cruel demands, her injustice, and her genius and her woes . . . She made me understand Shakespeare and true dramatic art." The same man who had such volcanic passions amazes us by his power to detach himself from them and observe with great accuracy and detachment. This quality made him a wonderful critic and a very fine autobiographer: it also made him a great conductor and musical educator. When he wrote passionate new pieces, revolutionary in style, Berlioz could not get them performed. Coolly he organized concerts. Conductors ruined his works at these concerts. Coolly he became a conductor himself, one of the best of the period. The critics misunderstood his works. He became a critic as well as a composer, conductor, and concert-organizer, and spent a large part of his life educating the public in the new music.

He could be devastating in reviewing shoddy music: speaking of a work by Clapisson, he observed, "You will wonder how grossness can combine with flatness. I do not know how the composer did it; it is one of his trade secrets." But he was enthusiastic about the best of his contemporaries, and always responsive to good work. One has to love a man who, late in life, after serving on a jury which awarded a prize to his young friend Camille Saint-Saens, ran down the street to be the first to bring Saint-Saens the news.

Throughout his life he was loved strongly by a few friends, and appreciated by the best judges. Dramatic events marked his life: at one moment of despair, he was saved by a gift of 20,000 francs from the incredible violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840), who hailed him as a successor to Beethoven. The gift allowed him to take off from his criticism to finish the large dramatic symphony, *Romeo et Juliette*.

Berlioz's conceptions led him onward to larger and larger works, anticipating those of Wagner, Mahler and other composers of the century. He was never afraid of an idea because of its scale: he once started to write an opera about The Day of Judgement.

# Eugene Ysaÿe

**Eugène Ysaÿe** (16 July 1858 – 12 May 1931) was a Belgian violinist, composer and conductor. He was regarded as "The King of the Violin".

Born in Liège, Ysaÿe began violin lessons at age five with his father. He would later recognize his father's teaching as the foundation of everything he knew on his instrument, even though he went on to study with highly reputed masters. At seven he entered the Conservatoire at Liège studying with Désiré Heynberg 1865–1869, though soon afterwards he was asked to leave the conservatory because of lack of progress. This was because, in order to support his family, young Eugène had to play full-time in two local orchestras, one conducted by his father. Eugène went on playing in these ensembles, though he studied by himself and learned the repertoire of the violin. By the time he was twelve, he was playing so well that one day he was practicing in a cellar when the legendary Henri Vieuxtemps, passing in the street, was so impressed with the sound of his violin that he took an interest in the boy. He arranged for Ysaÿe to be re-admitted to the conservatory studying with Vieuxtemps's assistant, the noted Henryk Wieniawski.

When Ysaÿe was twenty-seven years old, he was recommended as a soloist for one of the Concerts Colonne in Paris, which was the start of his great success as a concert artist. The next year, Ysaÿe received a professorship at the Brussels Conservatoire in his native Belgium. This began his career as a teacher, which was to remain one of his main occupations after leaving the Conservatoire in 1898 and into his

last years. Among his more respected pupils are Josef Gingold, former concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra, the viola virtuoso William Primrose, the violin virtuoso Nathan Milstein and more.

Finally, in 1931, suffering from the extreme ravages of diabetes that had necessitated the amputation of his left foot, Eugène Ysaÿe died in his house in Brussels. As a performer, Ysaÿe was compelling and highly original. Pablo Casals claimed never to have heard a violinist play in tune before Ysaÿe, and Carl Flesch called him "the most outstanding and individual violinist I have ever heard in my life."

His brother was pianist and composer Théo Ysaÿe (1865–1918), and his great-grandson is Marc Ysaÿe, drummer of rock band Machiavel.



# Pablo de Sarasate

Pablo Sarasate (10 March 1844 – 20 September 1908) was born in Pamplona, Navarre, the son of an artillery bandmaster. He began studying the violin with his father at the age of five and later took lessons from a local teacher but his musical talent became evident early on and he appeared in his first public concert in La Coruña at the age of eight. His performance was well-received, and caught the attention of a wealthy patron who provided the funding for Sarasate to study under Manuel Rodríguez Saez in Madrid where he gained the favor of Queen Isabella II. Later, as his abilities developed, he was sent to study under Jean-Delphin Alard at the Paris Conservatoire at the age of twelve. At seventeen, Sarasate entered a competition for the Premier Prix and won his first prize, the Conservatoire's highest honour.

Sarasate made his Paris debut as a concert violinist in 1860, and played in London the following year. Over the course of his career, he toured many parts of the world, performing in Europe, North America, and South America. His artistic pre-eminence was due principally to the purity of his tone, which was free from any tendency towards the sentimental or rhapsodic, and to that impressive facility of execution that made him a virtuoso. In his early career, Sarasate performed mainly opera fantasies, most notably the *Carmen Fantasy*, and various other pieces that he had composed.

Of Sarasate's idiomatic writing for his instrument, the playwright and music critic George Bernard Shaw once declared that though there were many composers of music for the violin, there were but few composers of violin music. Of Sarasate's talents as performer and composer, Shaw said that he "left criticism gasping miles behind him." Sarasate's own compositions are mainly show-pieces designed to demonstrate his exemplary technique. Perhaps the best known of his works is *Zigeunerweisen* (1878), a work for violin and orchestra. Another piece, the *Carmen Fantasy* (1883), also for violin and orchestra, makes use of themes from Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*. Probably his most performed encores are his two books of Spanish dances, brief pieces designed to please the listener's ear and show off the performer's talent. He also made arrangements of a number of other composers' work for violin, and composed sets of variations on "potpourris" drawn from operas familiar to his audiences, such as his Fantasia on *La forza del destino* (his Opus 1), his "Souvenirs of *Faust*", or his variations on themes from *Die Zauberflöte*.

Sarasate died in Biarritz, France on September 20, 1908 from chronic bronchitis. He bequeathed his violin, made by Antonio Stradivari in 1724, to the Musée de la Musique. The violin now bears his name as the *Sarasate Stradivarius* in his memory. His second Stradivari violin, the *Boisier* of 1713, is now owned by Real Conservatorio Superior de Música, Madrid.



*The Magic Flute* opened successfully. Mozart was increasingly ill, fainting and having severe headaches, but he hung about backstage during performances to hear the audience love his opera. He kept working on the *Requiem*: "Here is my deathsong; I must not leave it incomplete."

Soon he could no longer leave his bed; they took away the *Requiem* score to keep him from working on it. He would look at his watch in the evening, to hear in his mind the aria of *The Magic Flute* that was sung at that point. The day before he died his friends came and sang for him the parts of the *Requiem* which were finished, so he could hear it.

He died December 5, 1791 of kidney disease, nervous exhaustion, and malnutrition. He was given a pauper's funeral in a storm; his grave is lost. The Emperor gave his widow a pension for life—about \$10 a month.

If Mozart had lived twice as long—as long as Haydn—he would have heard all Beethoven's works, and what other composers wrote up to the early works of Berlioz. Who can begin to guess what he would have written?

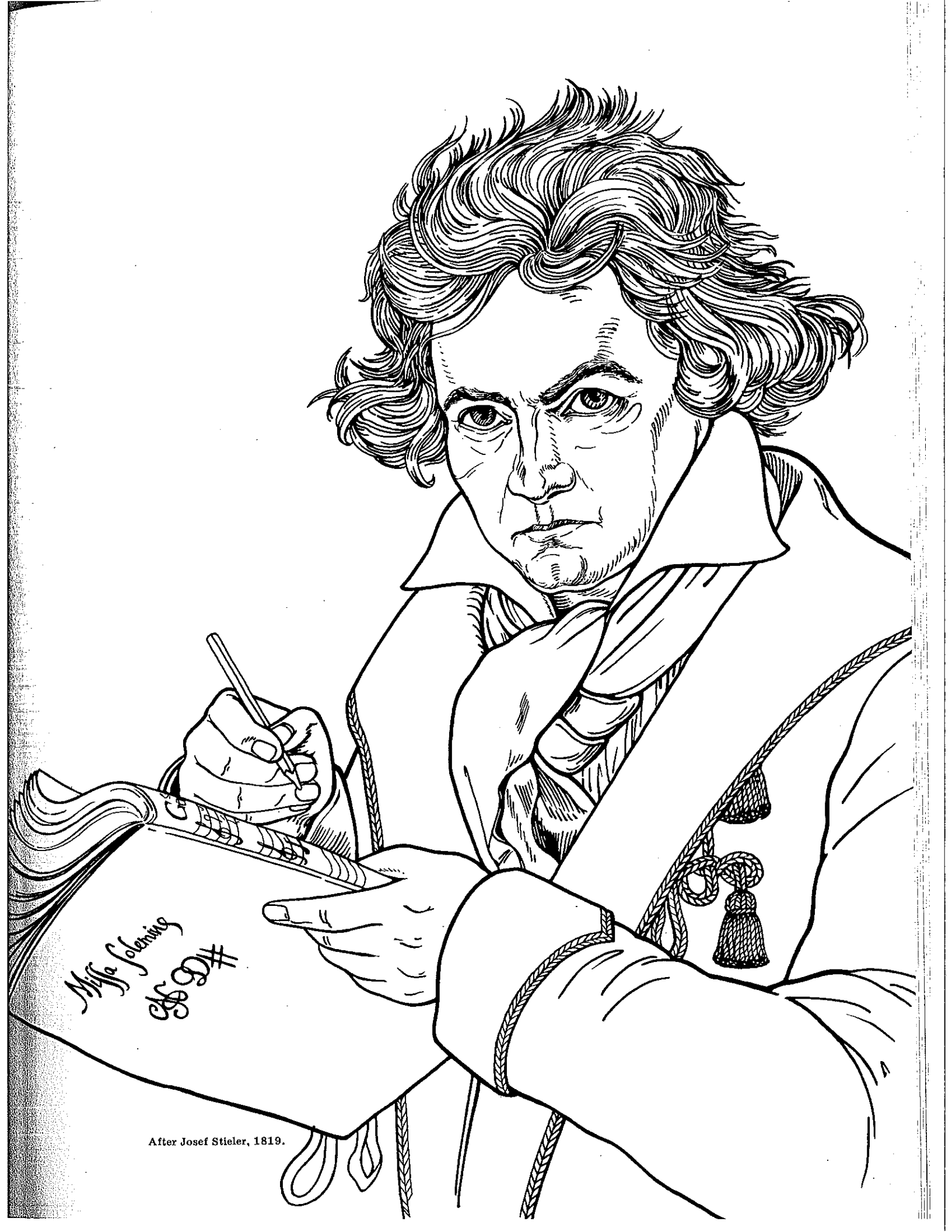
### LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Beethoven was one of those rare men whose contemporaries quickly realize that they are great. Mozart heard him play as a teenager, and said, "He will make a noise in the world some day." Haydn recommended young Beethoven for a job, saying, "Beethoven will in time fill the position of one of Europe's greatest composers." People kept notes of their meetings with Beethoven, knowing that posterity would be interested. In his own lifetime he was recognized as the greatest living musician: when he died, between fifteen and twenty thousand Viennese came to honor him as his body was taken to the cemetery.

I suppose that even in the musical city of Vienna, where citizens were willing to sign a petition urging Beethoven not to disgrace the city by allowing any place else to have the premieres of his new Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, there were not twenty thousand people who understood his music. Perhaps what they recognized in him was the personality which is reflected in the music, with its great strength and power to win tremendous battles. People writing about Beethoven compared him to a lion or a bear.

Beethoven's life was always a struggle. He was born December 16, 1770, in the small city of Bonn, where his grandfather and his father were both musicians for the reigning Elector. Grandfather was a bass singer and *kapellmeister*—a successful man whose portrait Ludwig kept and prized all his life. Father was a singer—an inventory of the Elector's musicians describes him as having "a rather stale voice"—and gave music lessons. He quickly recognized his son's musical talents, and trained him, hoping to make money, as Leopold Mozart had. But Johann van Beethoven lacked Leopold Mozart's showmanship, and Ludwig lacked Wolfgang's charm. Local well-to-do music lovers gave him financial help, cultural training, and friendship. When he was seventeen, they sent him to Vienna for further training. He went to Mozart for lessons, but within two weeks the news that his mother was dying called him back to Bonn. After her death Ludwig's father fell apart. He took to drink, and his salary had to be given to his son so that his family could survive. Ludwig became responsible for his two brothers.

In 1792 a grant from the Elector helped him return to Vienna, where he remained for the rest of his life. He took a few lessons from Haydn, who recom-



After Josef Stieler, 1819.



mended him for jobs. Although his teachers described him as "headstrong," they recognized that he was a fine pianist and perhaps the greatest improviser of the age. Local music-lovers appreciated his talents and aided him: he spent two years living in the home of Prince Lichnowsky, a Viennese music-lover who was to be a generous patron all his life.

As a composer Beethoven developed slowly. He was not ready to publish an Opus One until 1794, when he was 24. He said that musical ideas came to him continuously, but he worked them over for a long time before being satisfied. His memory, he said, was so good that he never forgot an idea. We have some of his notebooks and scores, which offer a chance to observe genius at work: with infinite pains he tinkers with his phrases until they take on the unmistakable Beethoven sound and strength.

When he composed, his friends say, he was conscious of no one: he "muttered and howled"; he could be heard "singing, yelling, stamping his feet" in an "almost frightening performance." He would forget to eat.

In general Beethoven gave little attention to his daily life. His room was always a complete mess, full of heaps of dirty clothes, manuscripts, and dirty dishes. One visitor found a full chamberpot under the grand piano. Everything was dirty. He kept deciding to change his lodging: in 35 years he lived in 71 places. His servants never suited him, and never stayed long. From time to time he would grow suspicious of them, or of his friends, and accuse them of cheating him. Sensitive and quarrelsome, he was "up in arms at the most trifling fancied slight."

But it is easy to make Beethoven sound less sociable than he actually was. After an outburst of rage he would apologize the next day, and he was ready to help his former enemies in need. He enjoyed company: he once cooked dinner for a group of friends, who urged him to stick to composing. He liked to make good coffee for friends who visited him. He enjoyed making puns, often on people's names: his puns are terrible.

He got up early in the morning to work, then after breakfast liked to walk in the fields until afternoon, when he would go to one of Vienna's coffeehouses to read the paper and gossip. In summer he liked to move out of Vienna into the country. "Nature was like food to him, he seemed really to live in it," said a friend.

A visitor who met him in 1822 describes Beethoven: "His talk and his actions . . . all radiated a truly childlike amiability, carelessness, and confidence in everyone who approached him. Even his barking tirades—like that against his Viennese contemporaries, which I have already mentioned—are only explosions of his fanciful imagination and his momentary excitement. They are uttered without haughtiness, without any feeling of bitterness and hatefulness—and are simply blustered out lightly, good-humoredly. . . . To this we must add the most cheerful recognition of merit in others, if only it be distinctive and individual. (How he speaks of Handel, Bach, Mozart!) He does not, however, where his greater works are concerned, allow others to find fault (and who would have the right to do so?) yet he never actually overvalues them; and with regard to his lesser things is more inclined, perhaps, to abandon them with a laugh than any other person. He does this the more since once he is in the vein, rough, striking witticisms, droll conceits, surprising and exciting paradoxes suggest themselves to him in a continuous flow. Hence in all seriousness I claim that he even appears to be amiable. Or if you shrink from this word, I might say that the dark, unlicked bear seems so ingenuous and confiding, growls and shakes his shaggy pelt so harmlessly and grotesquely that it is a pleasure, and one has to be kind to him, even though he were nothing but a bear in fact and had done no more than a bear's best."

The great misfortune of Beethoven's life, which cut him off from his fellow men, accounted for many of his eccentricities. When he was 28 the first symptoms of deafness appeared—a humming and buzzing in his ears. Gradually this deafness increased, obscuring all sounds. Beethoven could not hear his works performed; he could not conduct, or perform as a soloist with an orchestra; his friends had to communicate with him by writing their remarks in the small notebook he carried. Beethoven's response, as always, was to fight. Occasionally he pitied himself: we have a letter he wrote in the summer of 1802 to his brothers. He never sent this letter, usually called the Heiligenstadt Testament; it was found among his possessions after his death.

“O my fellow men, who consider me, or describe me as unfriendly, peevish or even misanthropic, how greatly do you wrong me. For you do not know the secret reason why I appear to you to be so. Ever since my childhood my heart and soul have been imbued with the tender feeling of goodwill; and I have always been ready to perform even great actions. But just think, for the last six years I have been afflicted with an incurable complaint which has been made worse by incompetent doctors. From year to year my hopes of being cured have gradually been shattered and finally I have been forced to accept the prospect of a *permanent infirmity* (the curing of which may perhaps take years or may even prove to be impossible). . . . If at times I decided just to ignore my infirmity, alas! how cruelly was I then driven back by the intensified sad experience of my poor hearing. Yet I could not bring myself to say to people: ‘Speak up, shout, for I am deaf.’ Alas! how could I possibly refer to the impairing *of a sense* which at one time I possessed in the greatest perfection, even to a degree of perfection such as assuredly few in my profession possess or have ever possessed—Oh, I cannot do it; so forgive me, if you ever see me withdrawing from your company which I used to enjoy. Moreover my misfortune pains me doubly, inasmuch as it leads to my being misjudged. For me there can be no relaxation in human society, no refined conversations, no mutual confidences. I must live quite alone and may creep into society only as often as sheer necessity demands: I must live like an outcast. If I appear in company I am overcome by a burning anxiety, a fear that I am running the risk of letting people notice my condition. . . . But how humiliated I have felt if somebody standing beside me heard the sound of a flute in the distance and *I heard nothing*, or if somebody heard *a shepherd sing* and again I heard nothing—Such experiences almost made me despair, and I was on the point of putting an end to my life—The only thing that held me back was *my art*. For indeed it seemed to me impossible to leave this world before I had produced all the works that I felt the urge to compose; and thus I have dragged on this miserable existence—a truly miserable existence . . . *Patience*—that is the virtue, I am told, which I must now choose for my guide; and I now possess it—I hope that I shall persist in my resolve to endure to the end. . . . At the early age of 28 I was obliged to become a philosopher, though this was not easy; for indeed this is more difficult for an artist than for anyone else—Almighty God, who look down into my innermost soul, you see into my heart, and you know that it is filled with love for humanity and a desire to do good. Of my fellow men, when someday you read this statement, remember that you have done me wrong; and let some unfortunate man derive comfort from the thought that he has found another equally unfortunate who, notwithstanding all the obstacles imposed by nature, yet did everything in his power to be raised to the rank of noble artists and human beings.”

In another letter Beethoven says, "Resignation, what a wretched resource! Yet it is all that is left to me." He defied life to defeat him: "I will seize Fate by the throat; it shall certainly not bend and crush me completely." He lived his life in this spirit, deferring to no man. Not for him a job as the servant of a nobleman: he treated noblemen as his equals if he respected them, and ignored the others. Nor did he cut himself off from loving people because of his deafness: we know he was in love, although we do not know the lady's name, and we know that when one of his brothers died, Beethoven took over responsibility for the raising of his nephew Karl, and gave him all his love. He managed the job poorly, having too much love and too little wisdom: the result was a great deal of grief for Beethoven.

But he rose above his suffering and defied it to create his major works. When his final illness came, Beethoven fought to live: he still had projects in mind. He died during a tremendous thunderstorm, March 16, 1827: friends report that during a thunderclap Beethoven raised himself on his bed, clenched his fist and brandished it at the sky, then fell back dead. It would have been in character. His contemporary, the Austrian poet Grillparzer spoke a funeral oration: "He . . . was possessed. Seeking one goal, caring only for one result, suffering and sacrificing for one purpose, thus did this man go through life."

#### CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826)

At one point in his career Carl Maria von Weber planned to write a guide to Europe for the traveling musician, which would tell all the things Weber had had to learn the hard way—how to get publicity for a concert, what hall to give it in, the quality of local musicians, and who to approach to hire them. By Weber's time there were enough traveling virtuosos to provide a market for such a book. Fewer musicians had permanent jobs with the church or a noble employer: more needed other ways of making money.

Sometime before the French Revolution began in 1789 a new attitude started to spread, which was to be called Romanticism: it influenced music, as well as the world in which the musicians worked. People rebelled against monarchs and a system in which the nobility had all the power and the money; nationalism developed as a strong force. Weber was consciously writing *German* opera and *German* music. Romantic artists tended to be multi-talented—Weber was a musician, writer, and artist—and they became stars in a way they had not been before. Audiences swooned over the great virtuosos, such as Liszt and Paganini. They loved the pale, handsome, sickly Weber as pianist and conductor. (Weber was one of the first great conductors: the idea that the conductor was the dictator of the orchestra first emerged in this period.) And Romanticism's pre-occupations provided new subjects for operas such as Weber's—the supernatural, national themes, the Orient, and the medieval world. Where Metastasian opera had demanded a happy ending with all reconciled to society's rules, opera now often took an interest in the outcast, the man who rebels against society's rules.

Weber came from a family of musical vagabonds whose lives would have appealed to Romantic artists as a good subject. His father Franz Anton (1734?-1812) was a man of many careers and talents, serving as a soldier, a steward, a musician, the manager of a traveling theatrical troupe, and a lithographer. His brother Fridolin's daughter married Mozart; somewhere in his wanderings Franz Anton became a self-made nobleman by adding the "von" to his name. His second wife, a pretty young singer, gave birth to Carl Maria, we think on November 18, 1786. He was a sickly, lame child, who may have inherited tuberculosis from his