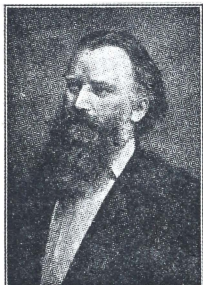


## MUSIC APPRECIATION SECTION

### **GREAT COMPOSERS OF MUSIC**

By BERT PAUL OSBON\*

#### X. BRAHMS, INTELLECTUAL COMPOSER



*Brahms in Earlier Life*

THERE is a group of three of the world's greatest musical composers who are known as "the three B's." They are Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. You have read perhaps about Bach, "the

father of modern music" in the January, 1940, issue of THE YOUNG CITIZEN, and about Beethoven, the musical genius, in the July, 1940, issue. Now you shall learn about Brahms, the third of "the three B's," who, as a musical composer, was, indeed, a most intellectual composer. Brahms was an intellectual genius.

In listening to his great symphonies one must pay very close attention to the music and listen as hard as he can.

Johannes Brahms (pronounced yo-hahn-es brahmz) was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1833. His first twenty years were years of rigid discipline. His father was a double-bass player in a theater orchestra. The father's income was hardly enough to support the family, so young Brahms, in order to increase the family income, did all manner of odd jobs from blacking boots to playing in his father's band.

As a boy, Brahms' first teacher in music was his father. Later he studied with other music teachers, who gave him excellent training in piano-playing and music-writing. His regular schooling and his study of music went steadily forward, and his strong desire for writing music was carefully developed.

Opportunity knocked at the door of the youthful Brahms when Remenyi (ray-men-ye), a famous Hungarian violinist, took the twenty-year old boy on tour as an accompanist. Through this great violinist Brahms learned the gypsy melodies which he later used in his well-known compositions known as *Hungarian Dances*.

Brahms was a youth in Germany when Liszt and Schumann were leaders in the musical world. (Liszt is mentioned in the November, 1940, issue of THE YOUNG CITIZEN in the *Music Appreciation Section*, and there is an article on Schumann in the September, 1940, issue.)

You will remember, perhaps, that Schumann was a music critic. It was Schumann who brought Brahms to the attention of the public, for his articles in music journals drew attention to the excellent compositions of Brahms. Schumann's encouragement spurred him on to greater effort, for he hailed Brahms as "a musical prophet," a writer of music. "the like of which he had never heard before."

During the early part of Brahms' career he appeared frequently as a pianist and conductor; he also spent a few years in teaching music and composing it, and then we see him a mature genius.

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The latter part of his life was given over entirely to composition. Like Beethoven, he passed most of his life in Vienna, which was then the musical center of the world. He never wrote an opera and was never married; he once said, "I do not have the courage to make a start in either."

Brahms' music stands beside that of Bach and Beethoven. To their classic method of composition he added all the beauty and richness of the instrumentation of a modern symphony orchestra. He wrote four glorious symphonies, some pieces called *Hungarian Dances*, a *Requiem* (a setting of the mass for the dead), much chamber music (music to be played by a small group of instruments), many piano compositions, and many songs. His art songs take their place beside those of Schubert. (See

the article about Schubert in the June, 1940, issue of THE YOUNG CITIZEN.)

Brahms was a man of exceedingly broad intellect. That is why he is sometimes referred to as "the intellectual composer." However, he was always cordial with his friends, and magnanimous with other musicians of his time.

He was somewhat like Bach, inasmuch as he took his work seriously, but his

mastery of music was like that of Beethoven. In the time of Brahms other composers were trying new ways of writing music. In the excitement of these new ways of developing musical composition, Brahms quietly recalled to the public mind that nobility of thought and beauty of form are necessary in great music.



JOHANNES BRAHMS  
His last picture, taken June 15, 1896

the period just after 1850. His work is of great interest and value to all good musicians.

Brahms is known as a "conservative" composer, but his music always shows great intellectual ability. A player must have excellent technic in order to perform music composed by Brahms. He always used imagination in his music, as well as dignity. In some ways, his music shows a blending of the old and the new way of writing music.

As a writer of songs, choral works, string quartets, and symphonies, Brahms ranks as the chief master in

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can you name the music composers who are called "the three B's"?

2. Can you spell and pronounce each name correctly? (bahk, ba-to-v'n,

(Please turn to page 477.)

## SHIP OF THE DESERT

*(Continued from page 465)*

traveling 250 or more miles a day across the burning sand and rocky hills. Then the baby camel is put into a hammock, and is carried by one of the freight camels. This freight camel may carry many other things besides—leather bags of water, bales of cloth and dates, jugs of oil, and blocks of rock salt.

There is a curious reason why the baby camel is not put on his mother's back. Camels are so stupid that if the mother could not see her baby, even if he were on her own back, she would be apt to think he had been left behind. Then she might turn and run back to the last camping place. If the baby is on another camel, she can see him, and she follows contentedly.

After the day's march she has her baby all to herself. She nurses him and pets him with her sensitive split lip. He cuddles up to her for warmth, for after the terrible heat of the day, the desert nights are often cold.

There are two kinds of camels—the Arabian, or single-humped camel of Arabia, Syria, and Africa; and the Bactrian camel of western Asia with two humps. The feet of both

## BRAHMS

*(Continued from page 463)*

brahmz)

3. Can you tell of Brahms' early life?

4. What music critic brought the music of Brahms to the attention of the public? How?

5. Can you give a list of compositions by Brahms?

are provided with spongy pads which spread somewhat as the animal walks on the yielding sand.

There are no records of wild camels, so domestication must have been accomplished early. In the Bible we read that Abraham took on his journey "sheep and oxen and camels." We read also that Job at one time had 6,000 camels. In modern times some Arabian and African tribes own hundreds of thousands of these animals.

## REVIEW

1. Why is the camel called "the ship of the desert"?

2. How is the camel adapted to desert life?

3. Tell of the camel's disposition.

4. Why do you think the camel is a stupid animal?

5. How is the camel useful to man?

## PUPPET THEATER

*(Continued from page 474)*

Much of our scenery is homemade. Our favorite scenes are those we painted ourselves. Some pieces of scenery are glued on blocks of wood, like huge boulders for the center of the stage.

Our characters are most of them either of our own designing or cut from magazines and mounted. (This is a good occupation for a convalescent child.)

They move on stiff wires, pushed or pulled invisibly. Some stages have grooves for the figures to move in, but ours can move freely all over the stage. The wires are soldered to flat pieces of zinc with upright bent pieces soldered to the center to hold the figures. We have about a dozen wires. (Figure 4)

If two persons manipulate the wires, standing at opposite sides of the stage (hidden by the curtains), they can work very efficiently and also give greater variety to the voices than if only one person puts on the play.

It is lots of fun to have a puppet theater. First make the theater. Then write the play. Make the necessary scenery and figures. Practice speaking the words and operating the figures. Then you are ready to have an audience.