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By THEODORE STEARNS

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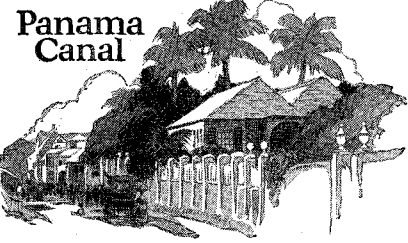
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Franz Schubert in giving to the world his symphonies, operas, and songs brought these great creators of melody undying fame but very little money. Although they toiled with the day-and-night persistency of a Burbank or an Edison, their brain work, strictly speaking, did not pay.

Up to the day of his death Richard Wagner was practically supported by his friends. Schubert died in poverty, and Mozart was buried in a pauper's grave. Beethoven, quite true, left a small legacy, but his case was an exception. As a matter of fact, Mendelssohn was the only composer who lived and died untroubled by the wolf at the door, but this was because he was the son of well-to-do parents. Like Washington Irving, he never had to write for his bread.

With these two general exceptions, our great music of the last two centuries was conceived in poverty, reared in struggle and heart-breaking disappointments. Most of its creators died not knowing that their music was going to live. When the opera "Carmen" was first produced, it was a failure, and its composer, Bizet, died a broken-hearted man.

Classical music is sold everywhere, and for fifty years here in America symphonies, grand operas, and concerts have been largely attended; but it has been the publisher, the singer, and the instrumentalist who have taken in the money—seldom, if ever, the composer.

The reason for this begins to be plain when one realizes that the writer of a great symphony or an opera is a good deal like an inventor. He is a highly specialized man, usually in only one line. His creations, from the point of their conception to the last note on their final pages, have engrossed his entire thought and time. His life-work is to take "the stuff that dreams are made of" and put it down in black and white. He catches his inspiration out of thin air and transcribes it, with his technical knowledge of musical theory, onto paper, that the eyes of others may read and the stranger artist play or sing. But until the composition is finally complete it is not a bankable proposition.

Unlike the novelist, the composer cannot dictate his thought to a trained stenographer or typewriter. Unlike the painter or sculptor, he cannot place his finished product against a wall and say: "There it is. Look at it. How do you like it?" The musical composition must be played—it must be heard. The composer cannot very well carry a symphony orchestra or a grand opera company around with him; consequently his product, for the most part, must be accepted on faith.

There are no general arrangements in this world for paying a composer a salary during the time spent on working out his brain creations. Kings and countesses used to subsidize composers so that they might compose in peace; occasionally rich music patrons have done the same thing for young students, but almost never for composers.

Without a bank account, therefore, the man who starts in to spend all his time in writing music is a self-confessed bankrupt, according to all business standards. He is bound to be. He has to live, it is presumed; therefore, without outside financial assistance, he runs into debt. Your real composer cannot help composing. That's the tragic part of it.

It is all very well to say: "Why not take a job as a salesman and spend the evenings in composition?" Right there, however, the hitch occurs. The man who can give the world a great opera or a great symphony can no more mix business with his creative inspiration than he can stir oil into water. There are no business offices up in the sky. A bird may either fly or walk, but it cannot do both at the same time.

Regarding the purely mechanical labor required in composition, take the full score of "Butterfly," for instance, or "Tannhäuser." In each of these scores there are easily over one million notes and musical notations. Take a pencil and start making just dots on a piece of paper. Do it as fast as you can. How far can you keep up the count?

Roughly speaking, the time necessary to complete an opera is from two to three years. Debussy spent six years on his "Pelleas et Melisande." Now Puccini and Wagner and Debussy had practically to engrave their final full scores, so that, somewhat like a double-entry ledger, they were legible, understandable to other musicians, and without flaw. But, unlike the commercial engraver, these composers drew no salary while doing this. They simply took chances on getting some returns on this labor later on, after the work was produced.

The most startling thing of all is that the inspired modern composer of to-day is facing the same handicaps that faced Schubert, Wagner, and Mozart. One reasons, Why compose at all? The answer to that is that real composers can't help composing. If the world calls them inspired freaks, that is probably the fault of the world, not of the man who composes. Grand-opera performances and concert halls continue to be crowded, and it is natural that musical literature must be added to as time goes on. Meanwhile the composer is the goat, and very unjustly so.



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## By the Way

FOUR years ago there were fifty popular story magazines. To-day there are over three hundred. Unfortunately, many of them are of the confession-tale group and have warranted the label of "Gutter Literature" which has been given them. Book publication has also increased in volume. There are now printed an average of twenty books per day, compared to the average of six per day four years ago.

The "Arkansas Gazette" wonders if the magazines one finds in the dentist's waiting-room are put there to indicate how long the dentist has been practicing.

Press items of the week tell us that every ten persons engaged in private business and industry in the United States are supporting an eleventh who is totally dependent upon public funds. . . . Billy Sunday is reported as having received \$18,500 for his share of the offerings at a recent six weeks' evangelistic campaign in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. . . . The troubles of a Newark, New Jersey, theater owner with his union spotlight operator are chronicled. He asked the spot-light man to stay an extra hour for a rehearsal. The regular rate of payment is \$2 per hour. The operator replied that he would have to charge the union rate for the extra hour—that rate being \$11.66. In the same theater the orchestra were asked to wear velvet coats provided by the management. They donned the coats, but stated that it would mean a payment of \$5 more per man each week. . . . A new excuse for the busy-office man has been invented. Instead of replying, "He's in a conference," a young lady secretary in Wall Street coined a new "turn-away" phrase, "He's in a temper."

It takes about 1,500 nuts to hold an automobile together, but one can scatter it all over the landscape.

Kid McCoy, ex-pugilist, received serious newspaper publicity for his claim that the Volstead Act is a force for evil because it has forced many women "who used to grab their weekly expense money from a tipsy husband's pocket to go to work." . . . Prohibition enforcement agents in San Francisco were fooled recently by the rum-runners' subterfuge of smuggling in real liquor when supposedly posing for a motion picture of a ship unloading "prop" cases of liquor. The Federal agents turned the tables the next week by staging a fake moving-picture

scene in the main street of Watsonville, California. While the merchants were enticed from their stores by the shouts of the film director to the supposed actors, the sleuths entered every store and found large supplies of liquor in four of them. . . . The booze stream continues to flow into San Francisco, however. Ned Greene, the leading enforcement agent, had been puzzled by the smiling countenances of the rum-runners when boat-loads of contraband were seized. He understood their unconcern when he found liquor insurance papers in the pocket of one of the men captured. The boat and contents were insured for a safe landing and at a surprisingly low rate. It is said that the very small percentage of captures along the coast has led to the very nominal premium rates for the insured. Mr. Greene has asked Washington to pass upon the legality of this insurance.

"Why didn't you send your man to mend my electric bell?"

"I did, madam; but, as he rang three times and got no answer, my man decided there was nobody home."

Movie items of the week include the announcement of a film called "Her Husband" starring Count Salm, husband of Millicent Rogers, and the report of the return to the films of Theda Bara, former screen "vamp." She will now appear in two-reel comedy features. Up to the time of this writing no humor has been seen in the fact that her comedy director will be Richard Wallace, formerly an undertaker.

A new trade trick is reported in the "New Yorker." An automobile purchaser decides on an expensive club coupé, but hesitates at the prospect of paying the full list price for it. A thought occurs to him. He visits a second-hand auto shop and pays \$100 for the most decrepit motor he can find. He then goes back for his club coupé and is granted a turn-in allowance of \$475 for his old car.

United States Attorney Buckner tells a story about a Unitarian minister who, when asked to whom he addresses his prayers, replied, "To Whom It May Concern."

Here is another riddle. The answer will be printed next week:

In my first my second sat,  
My third and fourth I ate.

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