



Obscure Composers

John A Sarkett

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"Wonderful compilation" -- Henry Fogel, Dean, Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University; former president, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, American Symphony Orchestra League

"An enjoyable read, and a great conversation starter." -- James McCarthy, Limelight magazine, Australia

"...for those seeking to shake up their listening habits and explore musical rarities -- Opera America

I will let you in on a little secret. The classical world is prejudiced. If it's not Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, (or maybe Bartók), some, most? think it's inferior by definition, and not worthy of the attention.

I know whereof I speak, everyone of us who prefer classical has some degree of symptoms, even if subclinical. Yes, even your humble author. But after having my mind opened a bit, to the assertion of inferiority, we now must invoke the Zen saying, "Not always so."

So, to ameliorate the situation, I set off for musical parts unknown, seeking out obscure composers, those rarely or never heard, and lo and behold, got a set of music to enjoy perhaps 10 times larger than before. From some names I had never heard before (Holmboe, Mompou), and some I had but were not familiar with (Diamond). Plus many, many others.

I share my findings with you to encourage the shaking off of moribund listening habits, the dross and calcium that impacts one's brain after decades of listening to only the top 50 classical pieces, and refresh and reinvigorate your mind and spirit.

You will also learn the answers to the following questions:

NAME THAT COMPOSER

1. After his passing, his manuscripts were used to wrap meat and rose bushes.
2. Once famous, he was later forgotten and his tombstone was used to cover a well.
3. A national hero in Spain, he is rarely heard in North America.
4. A student of a famous Russian composer, he told her: "You do not learn from me, I learn from you."
5. After both he and his wife passed away, his last work, a harpsichord sonata was discovered -- in the freezer, wrapped in tin foil.
6. Celebrated and wealthy as a conductor, he rued that fact that his serious compositions were neglected, even ridiculed
7. He wrote a set of 12 "Transcendental Etudes" in the signature keys the more famous set by Liszt were NOT written in.

8. He wrote a set of 100 Transcendental Studies, banned performances of his works, and lived in a home with a sign posted "Visitors Unwelcome."
9. Admired by Chopin and Liszt, this Irish composer invented the nocturne, and chose to live in St. Petersburg, Russia.
10. He turned from music to earn his living as an orthopedic surgeon, and later, as the manager of a saw mill and glass factory.
11. He rode his bicycle down a hill, struck a brick wall, and was instantly killed, just 44. Since he suffered from depression, some thought this a suicide. We'll never know.
12. He headed and built the most famous music school in the world, and wrote nine symphonies.
13. A hobo during the Great Depression, he built his own instruments to realize his strange music.
14. His Little Suite for Recorder lasts just four minutes.
15. When his wife died unexpectedly, he absorbed his grief with composition and said music "saved him."
16. He wrote an opera satirizing the Nazis while imprisoned by them.

(More such in the book.)

Foreword by Henry Fogel, dean, Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University and former president of both the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the American Symphony Orchestra League.

Special chapter by Alex Ross, music critic, The New Yorker.

This is the new and expanded second edition.

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Juli Gadberry:

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Michael Ogden:

Reading a publication tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information which will give you benefit in your life. Having book everyone in this world can share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire their reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the story that share in the ebooks. But also they write about the data about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on this planet always try to improve their proficiency in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write with their book. One of them is this Obscure Composers.

Scott Hicks:

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Elda Ornelas:

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