

NAXOS
AudioBooks

NON-
FICTION

...or back and limb breaking
between two wounded men
I was calling constantly on me to
I heard or gave them a full
my water bottle, in the impossibility
to make a single inch, holding a candle
in one hand - as there was no other place
to put it, breathing a pestilential
atmosphere that burned one's throat

Composers' Letters

Edited by **Jan Fielden**

Read by **Jeremy Nicholas • Daniel Philpott • Edward de Souza**

...came to my attention. At that time
the Boche having made sure that
no new attack was coming usually
slowed down his shelling for an hour

1	George Frederick Handel (1685–1759)	3:38
2	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)	8:51
3	Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787)	6:04
4	Josef Haydn (1732–1809)	5:18
5	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)	12:04
6	Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770–1827)	4:17
7	Franz Schubert (1797–1828)	4:25
8	Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)	7:33
9	Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)	8:57
10	Robert Schumann (1810–1856)	10:30
11	Richard Wagner (1813–1883)	9:09
12	Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)	8:25

13	Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)	6:28
14	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)	11:47
15	Antonin Dvorak (1841–1904)	5:32
16	Edward Elgar (1857–1934)	3:44
17	Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)	2:14
18	Claude Achille Debussy (1862–1918)	4:37
19	Frederick Delius (1862–1934)	2:55
20	Erik Satie (1866–1925)	4:20
21	Gustav Holst (1874–1934)	5:35
22	Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)	3:36
23	Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)	7:35

Total time: 2:28:07

Jan Fielden

Composers' Letters

In these composers' letters, as well as in their music, we can hear the voices of the men themselves. Through their own words expressed simply on paper and committed to the postal services – whatever they may have been like at the time – a portrait of the composer as a human being emerges. Frequently, this shows a different, perhaps unexpected side to the master of sound and artifice known to us more usually through a series of symphonies or concertos.

It is impossible to give a rounded portrait of each composer through a small selection of correspondence and music such as this; however, it is hoped that the incidents and feelings related in the composers' letters, coupled with their own music, will give us a vivid impression and distinctive flavour of the man.

From the truly fascinating – and huge – library of letters that exists from

European composers of the past four centuries, several broad themes emerge. These include creativity, the struggles of earning a living, friendships (particularly with other composers), romance, the composers' place in society, travelling, and of course, performances.

This collection begins in the eighteenth century with George Frederic Handel and ends in the mid-twentieth, with Benjamin Britten, and it is possible to detect from the letters how over the centuries the status and role of the composer has changed. Handel, Bach and Mozart were little more than servants or tradesmen to minor princes or city and church officials now long forgotten except for their, often parsimonious, patronage of their 'servants'. Fortunately the creativity of these composers survived to leave us the Vespers of 1610, the Mass in B minor and *Così fan Tutti!* Gradually, as

the centuries passed, composers became less dependent and were able to live, often precariously, on what they earned from their music, unencumbered by a commanding patron. As the practice of subscription concerts and private and public commissions developed, so they became more independent.

It is striking, on reading the correspondence of composers, how efficient they had to be – so often their own publicists, agents, and travel managers. Nowadays the pressure is relieved by agents, though a well-organised, worldly musician is still at an advantage.

The community of composers has always been important. Few people like working in a vacuum and it becomes evident through the letters how composers thrive on musical gossip, meeting and playing with other musicians, writing letters, listening to each other's work. The influence of one composer upon another is important. For example, Frederick Delius and Edvard Grieg inspired and supported each other, Wagner appreciated having Liszt to write to, especially when he was in exile in Switzerland, and Prokofiev

and Stravinsky, despite their uneasy, competitive relationship, were good friends, as were Berlioz and Mendelssohn. Then of course there are the love affairs – Schumann's, Tchaikovsky's and Wagner's, to name a few.

Each composer experiences the events and turmoils of his age and this is reflected in his music.

Despite the gradual change in status of composers, there remains a constancy of themes in their letters. The struggle to get on and do what they wanted and not what was expedient, the struggle to make a living, the common experience of the hurt inflicted by the critics. In compiling this collection one is forcibly reminded that though music was the primary creative medium of these composers, they have also proved to be expressive letter writers. It is hoped that you too, in listening to these letters and hearing again the music, will gain fresh insight into the lives and times of those composers we so admire.

Notes by Jan Fielden



Jeremy Nicholas is an actor, writer, musician and Radio 3 presenter. He has presented numerous radio series, has written *The Beginner's Guide to Opera* and an album of songs called *Funny You Should Sing That*. He also reads *The Phantom of the Opera* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Daniel Philpott trained at LAMDA and, after success in the prestigious Carleton Hobbs Award for Radio Drama, has been prolific in BBC Radio and the Spoken Word industry. His theatre work includes numerous productions on the London fringe. For Naxos AudioBooks he has recorded *A Life of Shakespeare*, *Famous People in History – Volume 2*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Pygmalion* and *Our Island Story*.



Edward de Souza has read *Don Quixote*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Island Race*, *The New Testament*, *Hamlet Prince of Denmark* and *The Life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* for Naxos AudioBooks. He has played leading roles in over a dozen West End plays and in several seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford, at the Old Vic and the National Theatre. His film credits include *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*.



Anton Lesser, one of Britain's leading classical actors, has worked extensively at the National Theatre, and is an associate artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company. His many television appearances include roles in *The Cherry Orchard*, *King Lear*, *The Politician's Wife*, *Vanity Fair*, *Perfect Strangers* and *Dickens*. Films in which he has appeared include *Charlotte Gray*, *Fairytale – A True Story*, *Imagining Argentina*, *River Queen* and *Miss Potter*. He is a familiar voice on radio, and has become particularly associated with his award-winning readings of Dickens for Naxos AudioBooks. He has also read *Tristram Shandy* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Benjamin Soames trained at LAMDA. He appeared in the popular TV series *Sharpe* and toured worldwide in the acclaimed Cheek by Jowl production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* directed by Declan Donnellan. He has read *The Tale of Troy*, *The Adventures of Odysseus*, *More Tales from the Greek Legends*, *Great Rulers of Ancient Rome*, *Stories from Shakespeare: The Plantagenets* and featured in *From Shakespeare – with love* for Naxos AudioBooks.

Acknowledgements

- The New Grove Bach Family* by Christopher Wolff, Macmillan.
The Letters of Beethoven, ed. Emily Anderson, Macmillan, 1961.
The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz, ed. David Cairns, Panther, 1970.
Debussy by Edward Lockspeiser, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1970.
Delius: A Life in Letters 1862-1908 by Lionel Carley, London Scolar Press in association with The Delius Trust, 1983.
Dvorak by Alec Robertson, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1964.
Elgar O. M. by Percy M. Young, White Lion Publishers, 1973.
The Collected Correspondence and Papers of Christoph Willibald Gluck, edited by Hedwig & E. H. Mueller Von Ason, Barrie & Rockliff, London.
Handel by Christopher Hogwood, Thames and Hudson.
Mozart's Letters, ed. Eric Blom, Penguin Books, 1956.
Puccini: A Critical Biography by Mosco Carner.
Satie Seen Through His Letters by Ornella Volta, translated by Michael Buelock, 1989, Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd
Schubert A Biography, George R. Marek, Robert Hale, 1985.
Clara Schumann The Artist and the Woman, Nancy B. Reich, Victor Gollancz, 1985.
Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Letters to His Family, translated by Galina von Meck, Stein and Day, 1982.
Verdi: A Life in The Theatre by C. Osborne, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987.
The Real Wagner by Rudolph Sabor, André Deutsch, 1987.

Credits

Edited and produced by Jan Fielden. Music production by Simon Weir.
Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording Company
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, BROADCASTING AND
COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.

Cover Image: Fiona Seddon

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

HANDEL MESSIAH	8.5506678
The Scholars Baroque Ensemble	
BACH B MINOR MASS	8.550585-6
Capella Istropolitana/Christian Brembeck	
BACH TOCCATA & FUGUE IN D MINOR	8.550184
Wolfgang Rübsam, organ	
GLUCK DANCE OF THE BLESSED SPIRITS	8.551131
Slovak State PO/Johannes Wildner	

HAYDN FAREWELL SYMPHONY Capella Istropolitana/Barry Wordsworth	8.550382
MOZART OVERTURES Capella Istropolitana/Barry Wordsworth	8. 550185
MOZART STRING QUARTET 'DISSONANCE' Moyzes Quartet	8.550105
SCHUBERT OCTET Schubert Ensemble, Budapest	8.550389
SCHUBERT SONGS Tamara Takács/Jenő Jandó	8.550476
SCHUBERT SYMPHONY NO. 9 BRT Philharmonic/Alexander Rahbari	8.550502
BERLIOZ SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE Czecho-Slovak RSO/Pinchas Steinberg	8.550093
MENDELSSOHN VIOLIN CONCERTO Takako Nishizaki, Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Kenneth Jean	8.550153
VERDI OVERTURES Czecho-Slovak RSO/Ondrej Lenárd	8.550091
BRAHMS CLARINET QUINTET József Balogh/Jenő Jandó/Csaba Onczay/Danubius String Quartet	8.550391

BRAHMS PIANO CONCERTO NO 2 Jenő Jandó/BRT Philharmonic, Brussels/Alexander Rahbari	8.550506
TCHAIKOVSKY ROMEO AND JULIET RPO/Adrian Leaper	8.553017
DVORÁK NEW WORLD SYMPHONY Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Stephen Gunzenhauser	8. 550271
ELGAR ENIGMA VARIATIONS Czecho-Slovak RSO/Adrian Leaper	8.550229
PUCCINI MANON LESCAUT Miriam Gauci/Czecho-Slovak RSO/Will Humburg	8.660019-20
DELIUS IN A SUMMER GARDEN Czecho-Slovak RSO/Adrian Leaper	8.550229
SATIE GYMNOPIEDIE NO 1/RAGTIME Klára Körmendi	8.550305
STRAVINSKY FIREBIRD BRT Philharmonic/Alexander Rahbari	8.550263
MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 2 THE RESURRECTION Polish NRSO/Antoni Wit	8.550523-4

For a complete catalogue and details of how to order other
Naxos AudioBooks titles please contact:

In the UK: Naxos AudioBooks, Select Music & Video Distribution,
3 Wells Place, Redhill, Surrey RH1 3SL.
Tel: 01737 645600.

In the USA: Naxos of America Inc.,
1810 Columbia Ave., Suite 28, Franklin, TN37064.
Tel: +1 615 771 9393

In Australia: Select Audio/Visual Distribution Pty. Ltd.,
PO Box 691, Brookvale, NSW 2100.
Tel: +61 299481811

order online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com

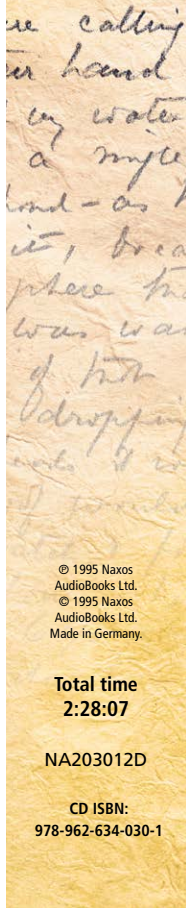
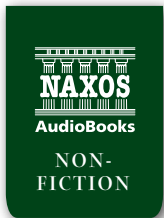
Composers' Letters

Edited by **Jan Fielden**

Read by **Jeremy Nicholas • Daniel Philpott • Edward de Souza**
with **Anton Lesser, Benjamin Soames and Hugo Godwin**

In Composers' Letters, the voices of the great figures of classical music come alive through their correspondence. Set against the music we know and love, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Tchaikovsky and many more talk openly about their music, their hopes and fears, their love, their sadness and their struggles in realising their artistic hopes in a commercial world.

Poignant, funny, revealing, informative and so often direct and honest, these letters offer a fascinating insight into the personalities that created our Western musical tradition.



© 1995 Naxos
AudioBooks Ltd.
© 1995 Naxos
AudioBooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

Total time
2:28:07

NA203012D

CD ISBN:
978-962-634-030-1

AMD250213

View our catalogue online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com