CLASSICAL MUSIC READERS

Level 3-1

The Works of Franz Liszt

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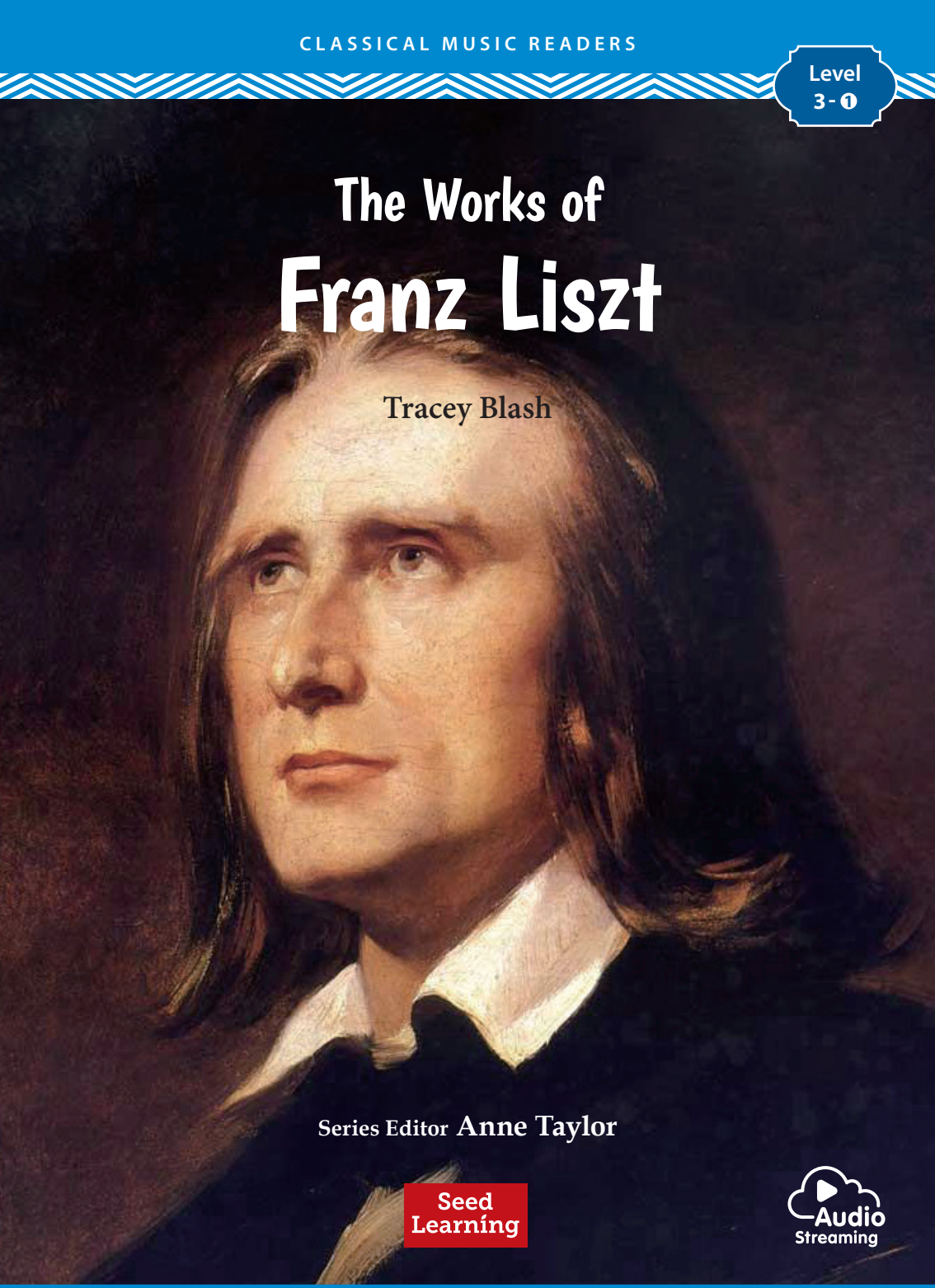

Series Editor Anne Taylor

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Who was Franz Liszt?

Franz Liszt was born in Doborján in Hungary (now part of Austria) in 1811. Liszt (pronounced like "list") was one of the most important musicians of the 1800s. When he was seven, his father started to teach him the piano. He was a musical genius, and within a year or two, he was already playing in concerts.

First known photo of Liszt, 1843

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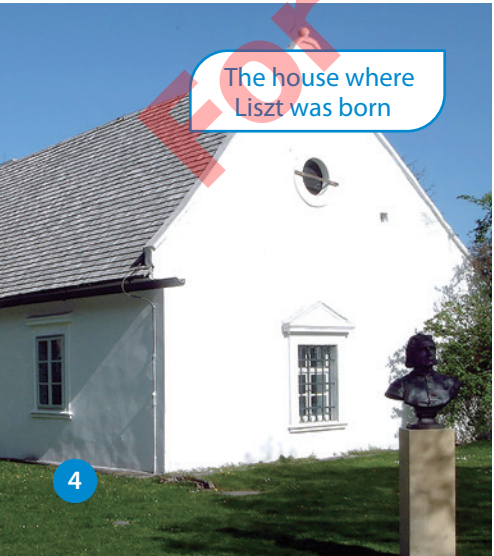

The house where Liszt was born

When he was eleven, Liszt's family moved to Vienna, Austria, a European center of music. There, he received piano and composition lessons from famous musicians. A year later, his family moved again, this time to Paris. He wasn't allowed to study at the Paris Conservatoire, an important music school, because he wasn't French. So, he had private music and composition lessons.

His talent could not be hidden, and soon people were asking Liszt to play the piano everywhere in Paris! He played for everyone, including the King of England, when he was just fourteen! People really enjoyed his amazing virtuoso piano displays.

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Paris is the capital of France.

Liszt playing for the Emperor of Austria-Hungary!

What did Liszt and Paganini sound like when they played together?

Liszt became friends with several other well-known composers of his time such as Chopin and Schumann. The most important influence on Liszt was the violinist Nicolò Paganini.

Paganini convinced Liszt to develop his technique and to try things no one had ever even imagined. Both Paganini and Liszt wrote music which was incredibly hard to play. Often, they were the only ones who could play their compositions!

Paganini, the Italian violin virtuoso, was a close friend of Liszt.

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Composition requires talent.

Liszt seated at a piano

Liszt wrote a lot of music for the piano. Liszt was highly influential in developing the technique of writing music for the piano. In his compositions, he often used new ideas which sounded very modern at the time. Many of his pieces were harder to play than anything that had been written before.

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A symphony being played by an orchestra at the Liszt Academy of Music, Hungary

Not all of Liszt's piano pieces were original works. He also arranged music. This means that he took symphonies or songs written by other composers for other instruments and changed them so they could be played on the piano. In fact, he promoted the works of Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert by performing their music on the piano.

Music today is often arranged on computers.

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