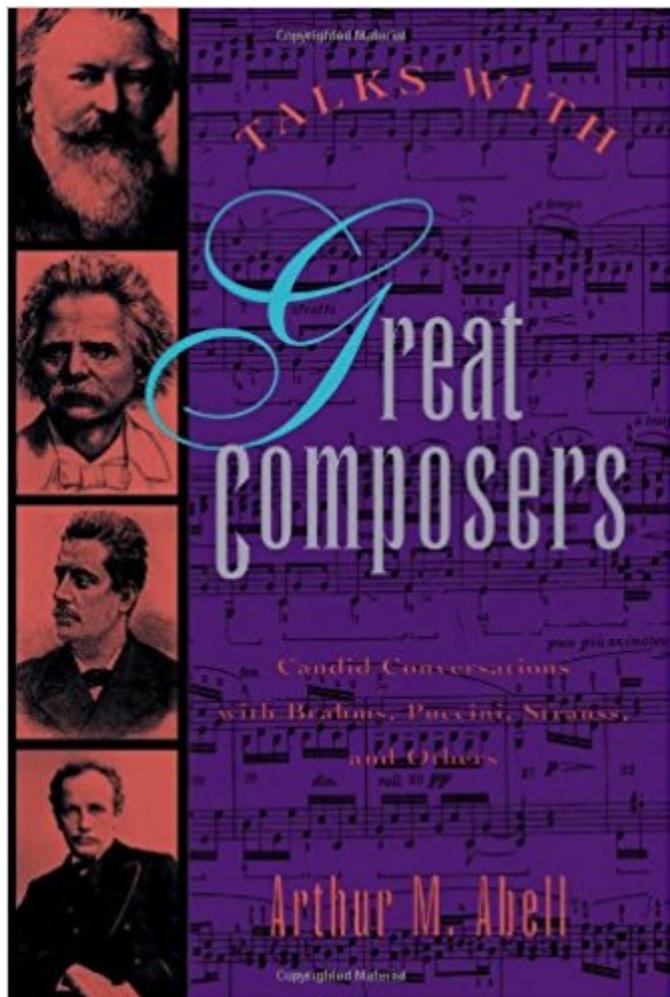


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# Talks With Great Composers



## Synopsis

What Inspires Creativity? Between the years 1890 and 1917 Arthur M. Abell engaged in lengthy, candid conversations with the greatest composers of his day-- Johannes Brahms, Giacomo Puccini, Richard Strauss, Engelbert Humperdinck, Max Bruch, and Edvard Grieg-- about the intellectual, psychic, and spiritual tensions of their great creative endeavors. The result of their probing and insightful discussions is quite simply a masterpiece-- a document that reveals the agony, triumphs, and the religiosity inherent in the creative mind. The six composers readily agreed to explore with their friend their innermost thoughts regarding the psychology of the creative process. Brahms insisted, however, that his disclosures not be published until fifty years after his death, because, he said, "I will not find my true place in musical history until at least half a century after I am gone." A tribute to creative inspiration, "Talks with Great Composers" sparkles with wit, candor, humor, and the genius of the most cherished composers of all time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The difficulty validating this book is not easy, because it was subjected to unique stipulations and circumstances. First and foremost, its author was asked to wait until 50 years after Brahms died before publishing his interviews. The 50th year was 1948. When finally published here, it was 1955. By then, Arthur M. Abell was virtually unknown to American readers. Precious little can be found of the man outside of this book. I bought the book in 1962 in a used book store in Seattle. Philosophical Press? I was very skeptical. Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading it. It was a captivating read. Rather

recently, I have learned more and much that validates its author. First, for 25 years (1893-1918), Arthur M. Abell was the chief music critic and correspondent for The Musical Courier in Europe. He wrote reviews of much of the music being given first performances in Europe. (The Musical Courier stopped publication in 1961.) Arthur Abell died in 1958 at his home in Hastings on Hudson, New York. His widow, Louise Abell, subsequently gave her husband's articles, photos, correspondence and manuscripts to the New York Public Library. A description of what is in those 17 boxes can be found online at <http://archives.nypl.org/mus/20021>. You'll find letters from and to such musicians as Richard Strauss, Max Bruch, Rudolph Ganz, Robert Haven Schauffler, and hundreds of other first-rank composers, conductors and performers. One example of Mr. Abell's high regard in Europe, is illustrated by what happened at one of his dinner parties. He had invited to his home in Berlin a gathering which included many of the most accomplished violinists of his day. They were invited specifically to hear the first Berlin performance of a young Jascha Heifetz.

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