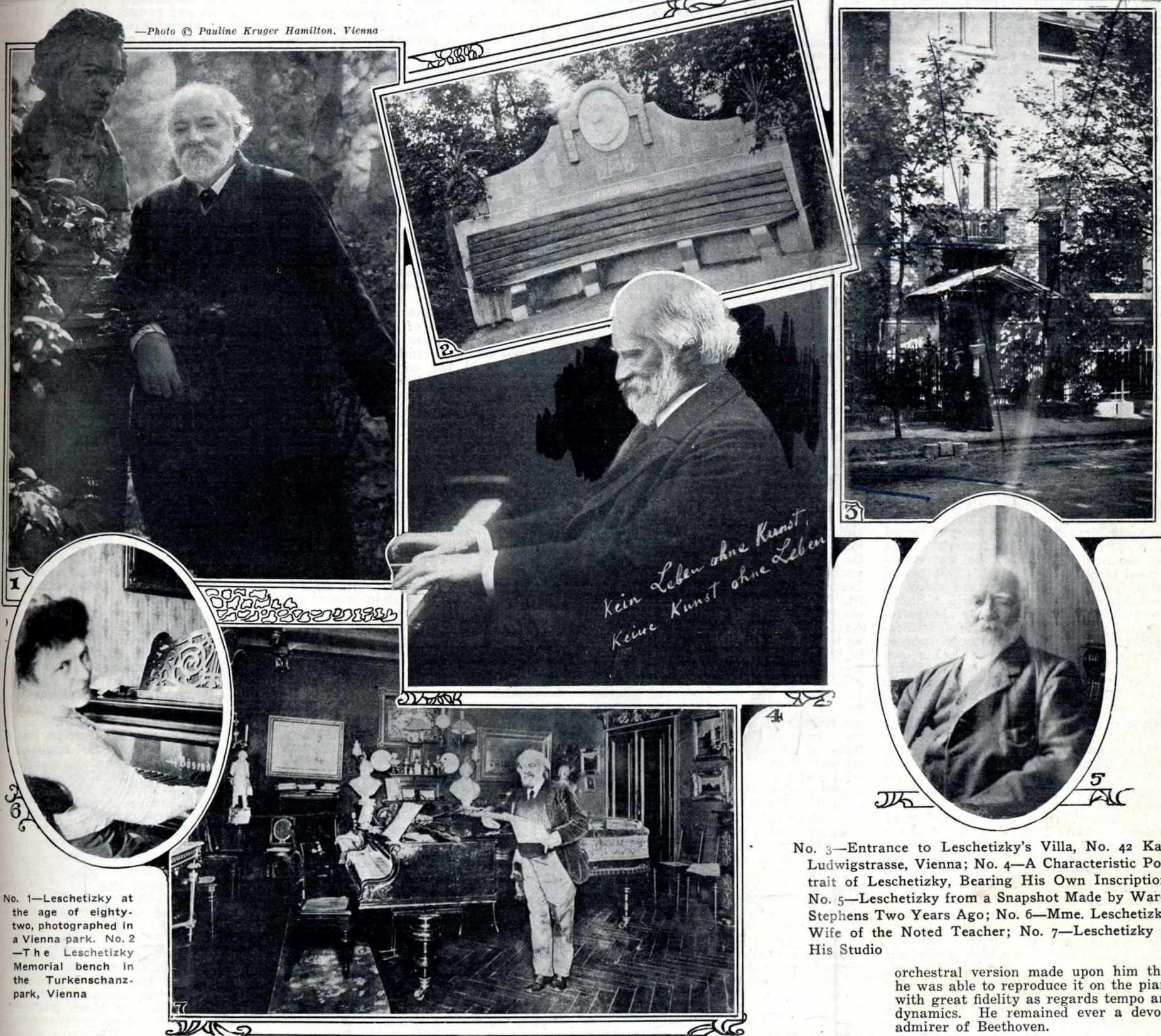


# PASSING OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS PIANO TEACHER

Death of Theodor Leschetizky at the Age of Eighty-five Removes One of the Most Notable and Picturesque Figures in Music of the Last Half Century—Early Studies with Czerny—Career as a Virtuoso—His Many Love Affairs—Long Activity as Pedagogue in Vienna Preceded by Many Years of Work in Russia—The Leschetizky Method—Paderewski His Most Celebrated Pupil—Americans Who Have Studied with Him

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No. 1—Leschetizky at the age of eighty-two, photographed in a Vienna park. No. 2—The Leschetizky Memorial bench in the Turkenschanz-park, Vienna

No. 3—Entrance to Leschetizky's Villa, No. 42 Karl Ludwigstrasse, Vienna; No. 4—A Characteristic Portrait of Leschetizky, Bearing His Own Inscription; No. 5—Leschetizky from a Snapshot Made by Ward-Stephens Two Years Ago; No. 6—Mme. Leschetizky, Wife of the Noted Teacher; No. 7—Leschetizky in His Studio

orchestral version made upon him that he was able to reproduce it on the piano with great fidelity as regards tempo and dynamics. He remained ever a devout admirer of Beethoven.

### Studies with Czerny

As his technical prowess increased the necessity of a fresh stimulus was engendered in the boy and he conceived a burning desire to meet the noted pedagogue, Karl Czerny. Taken by his father to play for Czerny, Theodor tells of having performed that master's Concertino and the "Alexander Variations" of Herz. Thereafter, Theodor went every Sunday for lessons with Czerny, whom he describes as highly intelligent, deeply interested in politics and commanding seven languages. His method of teaching, according to Leschetizky, was somewhat that of an orchestral director. He gave his lessons standing, indicating the different shades of tempo and coloring by gestures. Czerny insisted principally on accuracy, brilliancy and pianistic effects. Under him the youth played much Bach and some of the works of Alkan, Thalberg and, above all, Beethoven. "Czerny taught that Beethoven should be rendered with freedom of delivery and depth of feeling. A pedantic, inelastic interpretation of the master made him wild. He allowed me to play Chopin as I pleased \* \* \*." Czerny's lessons cost five florins.

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THE dean of piano pedagogues, Theodor Leschetizky, died on Nov. 17, at Dresden, at the age of eighty-five. Unquestionably the most famous teacher of piano that the last half century produced, Leschetizky had lived in Vienna the major part of his lengthy career. Recently he had taken residence in a village near Dresden. Like his most famous living pupil, Paderewski, Leschetizky was of Polish birth, his natal place being Lancut, Galicia, not far from Lemberg, Austrian Poland. The master teacher first saw daylight on June 22, 1830. Until lately his energy had remained unimpaired and he had continued his activities with unflinching zeal.

It was his mother who determined that Leschetizky's musical talent, which should be developed to the utmost. During his hours of practice (according to the Comtesse Angèle Potocka, from whose biographical study many anecdotes are herewith borrowed), Mme. Leschetizky was constantly on the alert, fearful lest an opportunity to help should present itself and be lost. She seldom bestowed praise, but her intuition was

usually infallible and resulted in constructive criticism. Theodor was at that time studying the Italian school. He made his debut in public at the age of nine. Here is his own account of this event:

"My father took me to Leopole (Lemberg) to take part in a concert. I was to play Czerny's Concertino with orchestra, under the baton of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—a son of the immortal Mozart—then musical director in Lemberg. The theater was a miserable, barn-like structure. Moreover, it was infested with rats, and during the rehearsal I noticed a number of these abject animals running about in the body of the house. The concert was a grand affair. I was myself transported with delight by the admirable reading of the great Polish actor, Bogumil Dawison, who declaimed a number of pieces with which I was familiar.

"He was at that time already quite celebrated, especially for his incomparable interpretations of brigand rôles. After the concert, the friend at whose house we were stopping presented me with a real little gun, and next morning I went back to the theater to hunt the rats."

The boy's first love was his cousin, Mincia Merkl, who is described as a charming, blue-eyed blonde. An amusing story which illustrates how ready were the future master's rejoinders is told of Leschetizky when, as a child, he played at the apartments of Prince Metternich, then chancellor of the Empire. His first taste of champagne exhilarated him strangely but pleasureably. Metternich, who enjoyed drawing the boy out, said to him: "Well, Theodor, whom would you wish to marry?" The child, fixing his bright eyes on one of the bottles, rejoined enthusiastically: "Veuve Clicquot, your Highness," an answer eliciting much applause.

Theodor's development was rapid, for before he was eleven, besides being generally well advanced in all his studies, he had acquired very considerable fluency in reading music. His father, who watched his progress sharply, used to take the boy to the "Geistige Concerte." After one of these events, father and son would sit down to play the overture or symphony heard the evening before. In two years the child had been through a great deal of Beethoven's music, and this exercise proved of great value to him; for so deep an impression had the