Read A. Listen, read and choose the best title for the text.

a. Mykola Lysenko and Ukrainian music today
b. Mykola Lysenko: The first Ukrainian composer
c. Mykola Lysenko's most famous works

The composer, conductor and pianist Mykola Lysenko was born in the Poltava region in 1842. His mother was his first piano teacher, but he learnt so fast that he was sent to a boarding school in Kyiv to continue his piano studies when he was just nine years old. Later he studied physics and mathematics at the University of Kyiv. It was not until after he got his degree that he turned to music full-time and his career as a musician really began. He went to Leipzig, Germany, where he worked with some of the most famous composers of his day.

As a young man, he became interested in Ukrainian traditional music – especially the songs that people sang in the villages of his home region. And this is exactly what made his music so special: In his operas, piano pieces and songs, he mixed Ukrainian folk tradition with classical styles. He travelled around the country collecting folk songs and studying the music, lyrics and instruments of traditional singers or *Kobzars*. He also composed music for works by Taras Shevchenko and other famous Ukrainian poets.

Lysenko wanted to celebrate Ukrainian culture and share it with the world. This was not easy at that time! In fact, performances in the Ukrainian language were banned in 1876. Lysenko's most famous opera, *Taras Bulba*, was never performed during his lifetime, because the lyrics were in Ukrainian. But despite the difficulties, he kept composing, performing and encouraging young talent till the end of his life in 1912. Lysenko was such an important composer that he is known as the father of Ukrainian classical music. His music continues to be enjoyed around the world.

B. Read again and answer the questions.

1. When did Lysenko decide to become a professional musician?
2. How did Lysenko use traditional songs in his work?
3. What difficulties did Lysenko face because of the kind of music he composed?
4. How did Lysenko handle the difficulties he faced?

Vocabulary Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

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1. My favourite singer went on a world _____ last year and I went to one of her concerts.
2. My music teacher said I've got a lot of _____ and I should study to be a musician.
3. My brother wants to start a band and _____ an album.
4. Renée Zellweger won an Academy _____ for the film *Judy*.
5. When I bought my house, I signed a(n) _____.
6. A music _____ listened to my demo but he didn't like it.
7. Thousands of _____ visited the famous pop star in the hospital.
8. Look! Rihanna's new music _____ is on TV. Let's watch it.

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