ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	DEPARTURE, CONFLICT, AND REBIRTH IN THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE OF FRANZ LISZT
	Tzu-Yi Chen, Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts 2023
Dissertation directed by:	Prof. Bradford Gowen and Prof. Barbara Haggh-Huglo, School of Music

"Departure" is a starting point to examine how Franz Liszt responded to and expressed his life away from his homeland through the musical language of selected piano works. After his initial departure from Hungary, Liszt's relocations, changes of occupation, and artistic vocations led to conflict and disillusionment and at the same time reawaken his creative craft and religious calling to God to which his emotional experiences and spiritual calling give witness. While the idea of departure in Liszt's case often signifies a geographical separation, it also reflects the resulting inner conflict, which fundamentally shaped his choices of compositional tools that he used to express conformity or deviation from musical traditions. This study examines five spiritually influenced programmatic piano works dating from 1839 to 1877 in light of Liszt's physical and musical departures and demonstrates how he infused an evolving selection of extramusical inspirations into his program music, forms, and harmonic language. It provides a timeline connecting the events of his life and his artistic development.

The tension and conflict of his inner life and creativity, after many twists and turns, will be shown to have led to his reconciliation with his Catholic faith, but first led him to compose program music. Liszt encountered a variety of extramusical inspirations around the mid-1830s. His reading of literature, ranging from epic poems to poetry collections influenced him heavily. As a result, he began to conceptualize program music. All five examples discussed here drew inspiration from literary texts, but his symphonic poems were inspired by poetry and painting. After arriving in Weimar in 1848, he developed his program-music concept in his symphonic poems and in important published piano works including revisions of earlier piano works. He learned to be more selective in quoting from a program in his compositions—he typically included poetry to introduce musical scores or as inserted texts in musical scores—and in the mid-1850s, he further defined his thoughts on musical forms and programs in his essay of 1855, *On Berlioz's Harold in Italy*.

During his subsequent prolonged sojourn in Rome, the unexpected failure of his marriage plan and the loss of his two children brought heightened awareness of destiny and death. These tragic events led him to reduce the numbers of themes expressing different moods. That allowed him to delve into his quoted program more deeply, which he accomplished by experimenting freely with various harmonizations.

In his programmatic works that were spiritually influenced, Liszt responded to the tension he felt between his Christian ideals and his worldly desires by the divine and the diabolical in his music, by including quoted literary texts in the score that inspired him, and by using harmonies based on different scales. His musical conception of the divine was inspired by the musical heritage of the Church, which he evoked with pentatonic and hexatonic (whole-tone) scales, Gregorian chant-inspired themes and melodies, and harmonizations based on the Church

modes. In his spiritually inspired compositions, Liszt also favored F-sharp major, representing heaven, as his key of choice, and he balanced a selection of consonant or perfect intervals versus dissonant harmonies and diminished intervals based on his readings of spiritually inspired literature. In contrast, his diabolical side is manifested in tritones, diminished seventh chords, chromatic scales, unexpected modulations, and his “diabolical” themes, which were part of his programmatic plan and represented by thematic transformations.

This study describes his nuanced compositional progress in his conception and application of new forms—a modified one-movement sonata form, a freely structured passacaglia theme and variation form embedding a recitative and answered by a chorale, a three-act dramatic form—and in his use of increasingly sophisticated compositional techniques. He transformed themes to advance the plot of the quoted poetry, composed melodies to ‘sing’ the syllables of an absent but musically implied and thus quoted text, and even deliberately placed the texts of a Lutheran chorale or from the Latin Bible within his musical scores to make his piano compositions resemble vocal or liturgical choral music.

These observations show how Liszt’s physical departures from Hungary, Paris, Weimar, and Rome fundamentally stimulated his artistic growth, in that his resulting life as sinner and saint, and his inner spiritual conflicts awakened both his diabolical nature and his ultimate search for the divine. Liszt succeeded in representing his strongly felt inner departures with deeply informed imagination in his piano music.

I performed these five compositions on February 16, 2021, in Gildenhorn Recital Hall at the University of Maryland. Both live and studio recordings of this performance can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland.

DEPARTURE, CONFLICT, AND REBIRTH IN THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE OF FRANZ LISZT

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2023

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2023

Preface

Chapter 1 begins by assessing scholarly opinions about Liszt's biography. I then describe Liszt's nomadic existence and explain his five compositions for piano that represent his approaches to programmatic composition in successive stages of his life. A summary of his evolution as a musician and an examination of his approaches to program music provides the reason for an assessment of departure, conflict, and rebirth in his life and in the five selected programmatic piano compositions that are considered here.

Chapter 2 is a biographical chapter. It traces Liszt's departures through various stages of his life. It illustrates his inner conflicts that resulted in particular compositions. Furthermore, it also points to his major changes of occupation, or rebirths, and shows how his musical development corresponded to his life.

In Chapter 3, my comprehensive discussion of *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, describes Liszt's revisions and new additions. Liszt reconsidered elements, such as themes, rhythms and meters, and new accompaniment patterns, and he rewrote sections to link them into a one-movement form. By weakening the recapitulation of the first theme, he compromised its more common function in the three-part sonata-allegro form. In his new one-movement form, he produced a sonata with two functions—as genre and as form. By giving different characters the same theme, Liszt found ways to associate his feelings with Dante's Hell after his reading of Dante's epic poetry.

In Chapter 4, my evaluation of *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, shows that Liszt not only reorganized his early drafts for *Après une lecture de Dante*, but also reorganized the set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*. Tracing the changes Liszt made over

time, I suggest that Liszt's initial melodic idea appeared without a programmatic title. He later moved it into the middle section of the final published version and reworked it. The new opening, a chant-influenced singing melody, was also a new addition, which Liszt associated closely with the programmatic text he quoted as the preface to the composition.

In Chapter 5, with my analysis of *Mephisto Waltz No.1*, S. 514, I demonstrate that Liszt's main achievement of composing programmatic symphonic poems was manifested in his reconfiguration of Lenau's *Faust* as a three-act dramatic poem in music in his *Mephisto Waltz*. His instrumental language includes a range of new 'orchestral' timbres not limited to idiomatic pianistic language. In Weimar, he developed a more expressive program music that perfectly painted the inner transformations of the Faust characters. There, he completely transformed the older three-part musical form into a new dramatic three-act form inspired by his reading of Hegel's analysis of Aristotle.

In Chapter 6, my exploration of *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, relates it to drastic changes in Liszt's life, including tragic events. His references to J. S. Bach and attention to the compositional craft advocated by the Palestrina revival of the nineteenth century, point to a new phase of his composing. He began to synthesize old and new elements in a one-movement form. His emotions continued to serve as the dominant force shaping his programmatic composition. They stimulated his explorations of unconventional harmonies in this composition.

Chapter 7 presents the argument that Liszt's lifelong commitment to Christianity and search for spirituality merged with his idealistic view of church music and resulted in compositions combining church-influenced musical elements with harmony inspired by extramusical (non-musical) elements. This was accomplished in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa*

d'Este, S. 163, No. 4, in a non-conventional two-part form: A-B. In part B, Liszt returned to his three main themes that appeared in part A by transforming them into different tonalities, changing the accompaniment figurations, and shifting the keyboard registers to evoke the images of water suggested by the biblical text. Many of Liszt's late sacred works for piano have always remained enigmatic and have mostly been neglected. However, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* stands out as one of his late works that has become standard concert repertoire and is performed often today. Questions remain. Was Liszt using techniques similar to those that he explored during both of his stays in Rome? Why did this work achieve his ideals in such a particular way? Here, an answer is proposed that is based on his writings, harmonic language, the precedents set by Palestrina that affected church music in his day, his long-time personal investment in the Roman Catholic Church, and artistic calling.

Dedication

To my parents, Jyh-ren and Pei-chun.

Acknowledgements

The turning point that led me as a professionally trained concert performer to undertake this research project was the outbreak of COVID–19. The pandemic contributed a special time that encapsulated me in exceptional solitude. I was able to read as many books as I could, books portraying a world of the imagination of the past, to decode how Franz Liszt conceived and created his musical language. My main challenges, since I was often guided by my experience performing and interpreting his music, were, if possible, to reach some sort of coherent way to describe his life of turmoil and his enigmatic inner feelings, which were inevitable for this most intuitive Romantic figure, and then to find a logical process to present Liszt's kaleidoscopic musical ideas in a written form. It is appropriate to use Liszt's quote of Blaise Pascal's famous sentiment, which that pianist-composer used to describe his non-reasonable reasoning in responding The Grand Duke of Weimar Carl Alexander, "The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing." (*Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît point.*)

This dissertation would not have been possible without my advisor and my true north star, Dr. Barbara Haggh-Huglo. Barbara's enormous passion for research and scholarship has shown through my academic and daily life. Her vast knowledge of Catholic church traditions and chant liturgy, her crystal-clear thinking and reasoning, and her excellent command of Liszt's manuscripts, which included many rounds and levels of reading have guided me as I conducted this research, which is contextualized by a cultural, historical, literal, and philosophical synthesis of the nineteenth century. I deeply appreciate Barbara's enthusiasm and her deep love and care for her students that demonstrated a true work model that I will look up to for my entire life.

Words cannot express my deep gratitude to my esteemed piano professor Bradford Gowen, a mentor who has insightfully commented on many of my performances on-and-off the

UMD campus. Prof. Gowen demonstrated his invaluable patience with my circuitous research process and provided feedback. I also would like to thank my defense committee, Prof. Rita Sloan, Prof. Mikhail Volchok, and Dr. James Harding, for their generous support without which this would not have been possible. I am especially grateful that Mr. Donald Manildi, the curator of the International Piano Archives at Maryland agreed to serve as a reader at short notice.

I thank the many Liszt scholars and specialists whose names appear here in the footnotes. My thanks also extend to the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv in Weimar for providing high-resolution images for Liszt's manuscripts. I thank G. Henle Verlag and Peters Editions for releasing copyrights so that I could reproduce primary texts and translations here. I also thank the resources and service provided by the staff of the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library, McKeldin Library, and Interlibrary Loan service at the University of Maryland, College Park.

I would like to convey my warmest gratitude to Dr. Linda Marci for her wonderful leadership at the UMD graduate writing center, where I found incredible support and made great friendships with other Ph.D. students. I would like to thank Jared and Faith for their feedback that helped me to refine and complete the first draft.

I also would like to extend my sincere thanks to my parents for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding. Without their belief in me, I would not have accomplished this substantial task of writing. Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning the following friends: Angela, Audrey, Catherine, Elizabeth, Hal, Jason, Jorge, Patrick, Stephanie, my friends from Cherrydale, and the CTPC, and TPC communities for their friendships, kind help, and moral support that have comforted me in various ways and made my doctoral study a wonderful time.

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Note to the Reader:

Catalogues of Liszt's Compositions

In this study, catalogue numbers are only cited for the works of Liszt in their final, published state, and are those assigned by Humphrey Searle in *The Music of Liszt* (London, Williams & Norgate, 1954; rev. New York: Dover, 1966; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2012). Searle's numbers are maintained in the revised catalogue of Serge Gut, in his *Franz Liszt: les éléments du langage musicale* (Bourg-la-Reine: Zurfluh, 2008), 312–354, where Gut includes a table of concordant numbers in other catalogues as of 2008. A cataloguing project in progress was described in Michael Short (with Leslie Howard), "A New Liszt Catalogue," in *Liszt and his World*, ed. Michael Saffle, 75–100 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998). The unpublished versions of Liszt's compositions discussed here are named with citation of their manuscript sources (using the sigla of RISM: *Répertoire international des sources musicales*).

The catalogue numbers of the five works studied here are:

Après une lecture de Dante, Fantasia quasi Sonata, S. 161, No. 7

Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude, S. 173, No. 3

Mephisto-Walzer, No. 1, S. 514

Variationen: Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen von J. S. Bach, S. 180

Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, S. 163, No. 4

List of Abbreviations

1. *Après une lecture de Dante* stands as the abbreviation for *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7
2. *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* for *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3
3. CDN-Lu for Western University Canada, Music Library, London, Ontario
4. D-DÜhh for Heinrich-Heine-Institut, Archiv und Bibliothek, Düsseldorf
5. D-WRgs for Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, Weimar
6. D-WRz for Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Weimar
7. Ex. for example
8. *ff* for fortissimo
9. GB-Ob for Bodleian Library, Oxford
10. *Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* for *Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4
11. L.H. for left hand
12. *Maj.* for major
13. *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* for *Erster Mephisto-Walzer ("Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke"), Episode aus Lenau's "Faust,"* S. 514
14. *Min*. for minor
15. mm. for measures
16. Countess d'Agoult for Countess Marie d'Agoult
17. No. for number
18. *pp* for pianissimo
19. *Prelude,* S. 179 *for Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen (Prelude on the Theme after J. S. Bach),* S. 179
20. Princess Carolyne for Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein
21. R.H. for right hand
22. US-NYj for The Juilliard School, Lila Acheson Wallace Library, New York City, NY
23. *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, or *Variations*, S. 180, for *Variationen über das Motiv (basso ostinato) aus der Kantate "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen" und dem "Crucifixus" der H-moll Messe von J. S. Bach für Klavier*, S. 180

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Liszt's Many Departures

According to the literary theorist Edward Said, "Exile is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home."[1] Though Franz Liszt (1811–1886) is better described as a Hungarian expatriate than as an exile,[2] the essence of Said's idea resonates throughout Liszt's travels, career changes and shifts, emotional experiences, religious awakenings and disillusionments.[3] The departure from his homeland of Hungary, initiated by his father, Adam Liszt (1776–1827), was a precursor to his life as that of a traveling musician.

On September 2, 1862, the day after Franz Liszt's daughter Blandine Olivier's death,[4] he wrote a moving letter to his mother, Anna Liszt (1788–1866). In it, he recalled his father's death thirty-five years before:

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[1] Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Convergences)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173.

[2] According to Alan Walker's biographical work on Franz Liszt, his grandfather, Georg Adam Liszt (List), served the estates of Esterházy, the powerful Hungarian family. He was born in Rajka in the Kingdom of Hungary, now known as Ragendorf. Liszt's grandmother was born in Rusovce (Hungary), now Oroszvár in Slovakia. Liszt retained his Hungarian nationality throughout his life as is proven by the church birth certificates of his three children. See Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 1811-1847 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 33.

[3] One of Liszt's manifestos on moments of religious awakening is his article, Franz Liszt, "De la situation des artistes, et de leur condition dans la société (5e article): Du Conservatoire. Des théâtres lyriques. Des sociétés philharmoniques. Des concerts. De l'enseignement et de la critique. De la musique religieuse," in *La Gazette musicale de Paris*, 2e année, no 35 (Dimanche, 30 août 1835): 285–292, especially 291–292 (online at RIPM, Répertoire international de la presse musicale). An English translation of Liszt's "Religious Music of the Future" is in Franz Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique, 1835–1841*, ed. and trans., Charles Suttoni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 236–237. In a letter to Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein written in December 1882, Liszt revealed the heavy burden he felt with his life, "Human life is so full of bitterness and disappointments, that I can no longer rejoice very much at the coming into the world of a little creature subject to all our frailties, follies, and misfortunes. On the other hand, I do not grieve excessively at the death of those I have known. I even find their fate enviable—for they no longer have to bear the heavy yoke of life and of the responsibility it implies…" Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Adrian Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 893.

[4] Blandine Olivier died in St. Tropez due to medical maltreatment that caused further complications after she gave birth to her son.

> I was moved to tears by your pious remembrance of my father, and thank you with all my heart for having on 28 August thought simultaneously of him and of me. My father's presentiments, that his son was to leave the track beaten by others of his social class, and face the hazards of an uncommon destiny, quickly became a real conviction, I could almost say an *article of faith,* with him; that presentiment, I say, conceived in the circumstances of Raiding, the village, far removed from all civilization, whose social amenities were limited with a few priests and colleagues in the service of Prince Esterhazy…How not to be struck by it? He did not hesitate for a moment, nor did he yield to all the rational arguments of rational people. He had to sacrifice his secure position, give up comfortable habits, leave his own country, ask his wife to share a doubtful future, meet the costs of our modest existence by giving Latin, geography, history, and music lessons; had, in a word, to quit the service of Prince Esterhazy, leave Raiding and settle in Vienna…and thereafter face the risks of a very problematical career…Certainly, dearest Mother, you are entirely right when you say that not one father in thousands would have been capable of such devotion, or of such persistence in that kind of intuitive stubbornness possessed only by persons of exceptional character…[5]

Liszt's journey through life was colored by his constant feeling of dislocation, informed early on by his father's presentiment of a better future for his son and later driven by Liszt's own artistic vocation. During his twenties, Liszt wrote a series of sixteen letters to his friends, *Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique*, that were first published in the popular Paris journal *Gazette musicale* and can be considered as autobiographical. In one letter to George Sand, written between 1837–1839, Liszt discussed, explored, and responded to a wide array of topics, including not only the accounts of his travel experiences, but also his opinions of the calling of an artist. He wrote, "What a sad and great journey it is to be an artist! He certainly does not choose his vocation; it takes possession of him and drives him on."[6]

This dissertation takes Liszt's first departure from his homeland in 1823 as its starting point, traces his shifts of role in his career, and examines how his musical language responded to and expressed his experiences of departure and relocation. The resulting tension and conflict in

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[5] Liszt, *Selected Letters,* ed. and trans. Williams, 586–587.
[6] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 28.

his musical language rose from within his innermost being, reflecting the emotional turmoil Liszt experienced during times of personal and spiritual disillusionment.[7] I argue that these departures caused tension which fundamentally shaped his compositions and his choice of compositional tools to craft his music. His inner conflict is thus evident not only in his nomadic existence[8] and that spiritual searching,[9] but also in his musical language. I use selected repertoire dating from 1839–1877 to show how Liszt navigated this deeply felt and solitary space, "the rift," as Said called it.[10] The five piano works demonstrate how Liszt shaped his evolving musical language in response to his life, his reflections on God and the devil, and his search for religious identity—his path that led toward his reconciliation with his Catholic faith.

Much has been written about Liszt's Hungarian national pedigree. Recent scholarly debate about his musical identity has tended either to tie it to a particular nationality[11] or to portray him as a multilingual, multi-cultural cosmopolitan musician.[12] The cited scholars have emphasized Liszt's national, social or class identity. However, using only this geographic or nationalistic lens to define Liszt as a musician ignores the tension and the conflict evident in his

[7] Liszt wrote in his 1837 letter to George Sand, "The first occurred when my father's hopes and expectations tore me from the Hungarian plains, where I was growing up free and untamed among the wild herds..." Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 17. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 33–49.

[8] Charles Suttoni wrote: "Liszt is, moreover, rootless, alone, even when circumstances force him into society." Suttoni, ed., preface to Liszt's *An Artist's Journey*, xxii.

[9] In Liszt's own words: "The artist lives alone, and when circumstances throw him into the middle of the society, he, in the midst of discordant distractions, creates an impenetrable solitude within his soul that no human voice can breach...all passions that arouse mankind, remain outside the magic circle he has drawn about his ideas. There, he contemplates and worships the ideal that his entire being will seek to reproduce. There he can envision divine, incredible forms, and the colors…" Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 28–29.

[10] Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 173.

[11] Dolores Pesce, "Liszt's 'Années de Pèlerinage.' Book 3: A 'Hungarian' Cycle?" *19th-Century Music* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1990): 207–229. Michael Heinemann, "Des deutschen Liszt ungarischer Bach," in *Liszt und die Nationalitäten: Bericht über das Internationale Musikwissenschaftliche Symposion Eisenstadt*, ed. Gerhard J. Winkler (Eisenstadt: Burgenlänisches Landesmuseum, 1996), 127–137. Dezső Legány, *Ferenc Liszt and His Country*, 1869–1873 (Budapest: Corvina, 1983), 129–178, 186–195, 210–220, 234–241, 251–256, 260–286.

[12] Dana Gooley, "Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Nationalism, 1848–1914," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66, no. 2 (2013): 523–49. Joanne Cormac, "Liszt, Language, and Identity: A Multinational Chameleon," *19th-Century Music* 36, no. 3 (2013): 231–247.

musical language. He often incorporates colors from tonal and modal harmonies, combines different types of scales, injects his subjective feelings into traditional forms, and makes use of extramusical sources to create a literary program which he then gives to his listeners to guide them. By exploring Liszt's life of turmoil and conflict, and his reconciliation with Christianity, this dissertation shows that his Catholic faith was a spiritual shelter to which he kept returning and the inspiration for his compositional philosophy.

His spiritual life informed all his output to some degree and his religious works especially. For instance, he used chant melodies and church modes to compose themes and harmonize melodies, theology to revise and structure the thematic elements, and quotation of rhyming spiritual texts to create rhythms or evoke illustrative accompaniment patterns. Indeed, one of his early acquaintances and pupils in Paris, Wilhelm von Lenz, recognized Liszt's deep spirituality, his religious calling, as central to his identity from a young age through his adulthood, Lenz wrote, "His wish to become a priest rose from the innermost core of his being. It was *thematic* [emphasis in original]."[13]

Departure is the predominant theme throughout Liszt's life and his spiritually influenced programmatic compositions. Liszt's departures and his reactions to them were the fuel for his compositional explorations of the meaning of life. These explorations included the tension he felt between his Christian ideals and his emotional experiences, many of which he would have framed as his worldly temptations. For instance, in his 30s, one of his romantic relationships caused him conflict and anxiety, evident in his 1838 *Journal des Zÿi,* where he writes, "I feel two contrary forces within me: one thrusts me beyond all the heavens, the other pulls me down to the

[13] Wilhelm von Lenz, *The Great Piano Virtuosos of Our Time: From Personal Acquaintance: Liszt, Chopin, Tausig, Henselt* (New York: Schirmer, 1899), 2.

lowest darkest region of death and nonexistence."[14] He also struggled with his feeling of a lack of belonging, a feeling that had persisted since his earliest departure with his father.[15] This pattern of departure can be seen in both his relationship with his fatherland of Hungary and in the ways by which he distanced himself from church doctrine as a consequence of some events in his life that challenged his Christian faith, which he would later reembrace. That Liszt never returned to the same geographical or spiritual place, literally or metaphorically, is crucial for understanding his music.

Liszt's lack of stable roots and his nomadic lifestyle caused him many problems, especially emotional upheaval. The challenges Liszt faced started at the age of fifteen, after his father suddenly passed away. The young Liszt was left to become the breadwinner for himself and his mother in France. He described his emotions as melancholic and estranged, his feeling of discomfort at having to compromise his artistic ideals to satisfy the demands of audiences. In his early years, Liszt developed a profound sense of disillusionment about his concert career, commenting, "I was overcome by a bitter disgust for art…, I would sooner have been anything in the world than a musician in the service of the Great Lords, patronized and paid by them on a par with a juggler or the performing dog Munito."[16]

In his later years (1884–1886), he wrote of a strong sense of mourning at the loss of an accepting community. In a letter to Ödön Mihalovich, who succeeded him as head of the Budapest Music Academy, the country's most prestigious musical institution, Liszt poured out

[14] In these years, Liszt sensed an indescribable tension in his relationship with Marie d'Agoult. Whether consciously or not, he seemed to know it would not last long. He had his artistic vocation and sensed the call upon his life that did not allow him to fulfill the desire for family and husband that Marie dreamed of. See Marie d'Agoult, [Daniel Stern, pseud.], *Mémoires, Souvenirs et Journaux de la Comtesse d'Agoult (Daniel Stern)*, ed. Charles Dupêchez (Paris: Mercure de France, 2007), 605–607.

[15] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 28.

[16] What Liszt meant by referring to "the performing dog Munito" was that he felt he had been disrespected by performing piano tricks to entertain Parisian salon audiences. Ibid., 16–17. Cf. [Anon.], *Historical Account of the Life and Talents of the Learned Dog Munito by A Friend to Beasts* (London: T. Maiden, 1817), 1–8.

his anguish about feeling rejected by his religious community and his nation, and that his musical language was often misunderstood:

> Everyone is against me. Catholics because they find my church music profane, Protestants because to them my music is Catholic, Freemasons because they think my music is too clerical; to conservatives I am a revolutionary, to the "futurists" an old Jacobin. As for the Italians, in spite of Sgambati, if they support Garibaldi they detest me as hypocrite, if they are on the side of the Vatican I am accused of bringing the Venusberg into the Church. To Bayreuth I am not a composer but a publicity agent. The Germans reject my music as French, the French as German; to the Austrians I write Gypsy music, to the Hungarians foreign music. And the Jews loathe me, my music and myself, for no reason at all.[17]

These feelings of immense loneliness and solitude prompted Liszt to create his protective barrier from the outside world, which he referred to as the "magic circle"[18] between his soul and his harsh external circumstances. According to Liszt, this magic circle was an impenetrable solitary space, where he was enabled to focus on his creativity and to absorb the shock of the emotional and social struggles he encountered. This counterforce filled the rift and became the source of his creative power, a truth demonstrated repeatedly in his diary, letters, and compositions.[19]

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[17] Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861–1886* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 411 and footnote 22. The letter translated by Walker was quoted by Émile Haraszti in his article, "Aspects du Romantisme: Franz Liszt," in *Histoire de la musique*, vol. 2: *Du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours*, ed. Roland Manuel, Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, 16 (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), 535. In 1884, Liszt submitted his new composition *Ungarisches Königslied* at the rehearsal of the inaugural concert of Emperor Franz Jospeh and Empress Elisabeth. An obstacle to the performance of this work occurred because of Liszt's selection of melody. Liszt clarified to Baron Podmaniczky that the melody of the Rákóczi song was found in the old Bartalus anthology, and not to be confused with the Rákóczy March, but Liszt's argument was not accepted by Podmaniczky and Prime Minister Tisza, thus *Königslied* was not performed. The letter was written after the political issue of the Königslied affair and followed the public's stormy reaction to the publication of the second edition of his controversial book, *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* in 1859. The book was largely rewritten by his loyal partner, Princess Carolyne, who added a chapter declaring her views of Zionism under Liszt's name. The exact date of the quotation remains unknown, but evidence points to 1884–1886, the last few years of Liszt's life. Liszt poured out his feelings of being misunderstood despite all the efforts he made traveling back and forth to his country and devoting himself to Hungary's music education. Emile Haraszti mentioned Liszt's extreme solitude.

[18] See footnote 8 above, and Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, 28.

[19] Ibid., 29. Liszt said, "…A burning fever then seizes him, his blood courses impetuously through his veins, filling his brain with a thousand compelling concepts from which there is no escape except by the holy labor of art. He feels himself prey to a nameless misery; an unknown power demands to be brought to light in words, colors, or sounds. That ideal which takes possession of him and forces him to endure a thirst of desire. . ."

1.2: Liszt's Life in Five Representative Works

Liszt lived a long life that included several distinct phases and role changes. Scholars have different views on how to distinguish the stages of his life, either by using his major residencies, his roles in life, or the milestones in the stylistic developments observed in his musical works. Alan Walker divided Liszt's life into three major stages: the Virtuosic Years (1811–1847), from the Hungarian roots of Liszt's family tree, his youth and upbringing in Vienna and Paris, his formation of a family with Countess Marie d'Agoult (1805–1876) and their three children, and his pursuit of a career as an international pianist; the Weimar Years (1848–1861), which opened with the fateful entrance of Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein (1819–1887), the beginning of his Weimar appointment, and his contributions to the Weimar theater, which had a great impact on the musical and operatic scenes of Europe in the mid-1850s; and the Final Years (1861–1886), covering his first Roman period (1861–1868), including his reception of the four Catholic Minor Orders in 1865 and his subsequent travel among three cities: Budapest, Weimar, and Rome (1869–1886). Walker, whose scholarship has influenced a broad audience, further subdivides these three stages to correspond to six major roles that Liszt played in his life: pianist, composer, conductor, pedagogue, festival organizer, and writer/critic.[20]

Yet Liszt's life and musical evolution can also be understood as being marked by significant events. In *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, annotated by Pierre-Antoine Huré and Claude Knepper, Liszt's life is presented as a drama in three acts (1811–1847, 1848–1861, and 1862–1886), with each act containing short episodes of his life, a total of ten.[21] These dramatic

[20] Alan Walker, "Franz Liszt: A Bicentennial Tribute," *Studia Musicologica* 54, no. 1 (2013): 3–10.

[21] The ten periods of his life were: 1811–1831, 1832–1835, 1835–1839, 1839–1844, 1844–1847, 1848–1859, 1859–1861, 1862–1868, 1869–1876, 1876–1886. See Franz Liszt, *Correspondance*, Claude Knepper and Pierre-Antoine Huré, eds. (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 1987), 53, 57, 77, 113, 199, 379, 443, 479, 525.

episodes are centered on strong emotions and marked by major influences and the people who surrounded him. Analyses of the five piano works presented here show that a more comprehensive approach to Liszt's life is to consider both its geography and significant, emotionally charged events, a synthesis of the two approaches just described.

The five selected piano works correspond to five periods of his life, his departure from Hungary to Paris and his pilgrimage years (1811–1838); international concertizing (1839–1847); his Weimar residency (1848–1860); his Roman residency (1861–1868); and his life in the cities of Budapest, Weimar, and Rome (1869–1886). Two piano works *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7 and *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, spanned several of Liszt's major life phases before they achieved their final form. These five works not only coincide with emotional turning points in Liszt's life, but also correspond to distinctive features of his musical language at the time of composition. They illustrate his deep connections to places and people, and highlight his artistic interests, such as the fascination with church music that drove him to revisit liturgical forms and harmonies to create a highly personalized, spiritually influenced musical language. They also demonstrate his drive to expand the depth and complexity of program music, a process he first began by drawing inspirations from his reading, resulting in departures from musical conventions of form, thematic development, and musical expressions. Finally, after 1869, he abandoned his attempts to write music he had wished to have formally accepted by Roman Catholic Church that represented his idealized stye of liturgical performance, and he started to travel again among Budapest, Weimar, and Rome mainly to educate new pianists and provide support for his musician friends. Therefore, his late musical style was inspired by experimentation with harmonic novelties and

liberally adapted texts[22] as he aimed his works for his private creative satisfaction. In his private space, he could shape his spiritual text and program without the constraints of traditional liturgical forms, and instead from his understanding of religious matters.

These are the five selected piano works listed in chronological order:

1) *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7 (1838–1848, 1848–1858)[23]

2) *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3 (1845–1848, 1848–1853)

3) *Erster Mephisto-Walzer ("Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke"), Episode aus Lenau's "Faust,"* S. 514 (1857–1861)

4) *Variationen über das Motiv (basso ostinato) aus der Kantate "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen" und dem "Crucifixus" der H-moll Messe von J. S. Bach für Klavier*, S. 180 (1862)

5) *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4 (1877)

The composition of *Après une lecture de Dante*, begun during Liszt's first biographical period, spanned three major chapters of Liszt's life: his years of study in Hungary and Vienna, and his stay in Paris, performing in salons (1811–1838); his years of international concertizing (1839–1847); and his Weimar residency (1848–1860). The musical language in this work

[22] Patrick Boencke, "Outside the Public Sphere: Liszt's Late Sacred Music as Private Art Inspired by Religion," *in Franz Liszt: Un musicien dans la société,* eds. Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, Laurence Le Diagon-Jacquin, and Michael Saffle (Paris: Hermann, 2013), 192.

[23] When this work was originally published, the publisher had Liszt's final title printed as *Après une lecture du Dante*, but both "de" and "du" appear in the 1849 manuscript source. Howard explained that it is "une Lecture de" on its title page but "une Lecture du" at the head of the music and in the manuscript used by Liszt's copyist, Joachim Raff, to make the engraver's copy. These titles have different meanings: the "lecture du Dante" is a verb, i.e. Liszt's act of reading *that* [text by] Dante, but "lecture de Dante" is a noun, meaning the reading [i.e. text] by Dante (Barbara Haggh-Huglo proposed this explanation). The editions in the nineteenth century continued to use *Après une lecture du Dante*, as printed on Walter Bache's London recital programmes (Illustration 3.2). Modern editions reverted to *Après une lecture de Dante* as shown in Henle Urtext, NLA, and Peters editions. "de" is used in this dissertation. See the discussion of these sources in Appendix A.

expresses a conflict between the growth and suffering he experienced during his Parisian upbringing and the contrasting fame and personal success of his later years as a virtuosic concert pianist. *Dante* contains stark harmonic departures, greater diabolical allure in its dissonant intervals and harmonies, and a prolongation of tension and resolution, which Liszt would later convert into a modified sonata form.[24]

Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude is from Liszt's second biographical period, his international concertizing in the 1840s, when he carried notebooks so he could revise some of his earlier works and record his musical inspirations and melodic ideas. This second period includes the next significant change to his compositional approach following his installation in Weimar in 1848, where he not only experienced changes in his lifestyle but also in his writing style. *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* demonstrates Liszt's attempt to elevate this instrumental composition for piano by including a stanza of poetry in the score before the music begins. In addition, he finely tuned his religious expressions in his choice of harmony to reflect the inner joy brought by his spiritual exchanges and quasi-religious connection with Princess Carolyne, his companion at this time.

Mephisto Waltz No. 1, as it will be called here, was composed during Lizst's third biographical period. It took its final form during the Weimar residency after Liszt had completed nearly all his symphonic poems. While he was employed at the Weimer theatre, his orchestral compositions, which were revisions of early works, along with his other activities, such as opera productions, fostered his more definitive approach to program music. His advances in orchestration and in representation of the orchestra by a range of virtuosic piano techniques are evident in his compositions for orchestra and piano, called *Mephisto Waltz*. His literary

[24] See Chapter 3.3.2 for discussion.

characterization of the musical themes in *Mephisto Waltz No.1*, as in his programmatic symphonies, is based on the dramatic form of Nikolaus Lenau's poetry "Der Tanz." While Liszt incorporated the dramatic contrast found in the symphonic nature of his program music, he successfully allied three forces: the expressions derived from dramatic poetry, the contrasting instrumental layers and timbres inspired by the genre of the symphony, and the virtuosity of his demonic pianism.

Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen is from his fourth biographical period, which began with his Roman sojourn. Following a series of family tragedies there and his unfulfilled relationship with Princess Carolyne, and with no personal or professional responsibilities, Liszt focused his creativity on studying the old traditions of church music, resulting in his reassessment of past liturgical music by Catholic and Protestant composers and of its forms, harmonies, and polyphonic texture. His focus consequently shifted to writing religious music that expressed his deepening spiritual interest and renewed faith. During this time, Liszt infused many compositions for piano with the undeniable influence of liturgical music, using compositional techniques developed in his Weimar years, such as varying thematic elements and musically elaborating quotations of text to represent a higher spiritual realm and meaning. In these ways Liszt transferred the dramatic gestures and expressions inherited from the tradition of the Lutheran cantata into his piano compositions. From this point on, having turned fifty years-old, Liszt would climb to the height of his religious fulfillment.

Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, from his fifth biographical period, has the characteristics of his former Roman period, such as elements of Gregorian chant, church modes, simple imitation in Palestrinian style, and the antiphonal texture of *a cappella* psalmody. His themes are harmonized in the church modes, and his counterpoint is influenced by the chant. Yet,

in this second Roman period, he set aside the hope of having his liturgical compositions "adopted by the entire Catholic world,"[25] and instead, he began to introduce segments of texts into his music without being bound by any rules for their use or format and to use experimental harmonies that avoided any strong tonal center or tonic.

Liszt's biography as discussed here begins with in Hungary and Paris and continues through his pilgrimage years (1811–1838), which included his years of study (1811–1826), as well as the first part of his life in Paris after the death of his father in 1827, when he began work as a private piano tutor. Other highlights of his Parisian period included the massive impact of hearing Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* in 1830 at its premiere, the July Revolution of 1830, which shocked him out of his depression,[26] and the strong impressions from hearing Niccolò Paganini for the first time. During this period, he met Berlioz and Frédéric Chopin often, and both became his lifelong friends and major musical influences.

Meanwhile, Liszt was socializing and performing in Parisian salons and encountering the most avant-garde literary, religious, and philosophical trends and figures, including both exiles and French intellectuals. That became the context for his passionate love affair with Countess d'Agoult, which started secretly in 1832–1835 and resulted in her pregnancy and their elopement to Italy and Switzerland, where they lived from 1835–1838. This first influential period inspired Liszt's learning, advanced his pianistic techniques, stimulated his creative impulses in both musical and literary compositions, and transformed him into a bold and expressive artist.

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[25] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 508–509. See Chapter 2, footnote 9 for the quote.

[26] In Walker's words, "After three days of bloody fighting—the 'Three Glorious Days'—the French monarchy was again being brought to its knees. The effect on Liszt was immediate. Hearing the sound of gunfire, he rushed out of doors and witnessed hand-to-hand fighting…he joined the crowds shouting in support of General Lafayette, one of Napolean's former officers who had taken up the people's cause…These experiences acted like a therapy and shook him from his lethargy. Anna Liszt, reflecting on these traumatic times, said, 'the guns cured him.'" Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 144.

The second phase of his life, 1838–1847, his virtuosic career on the international stage beginning with his first international triumph in Vienna in 1838, was that preceding his first farewell to Countess d'Agoult in 1839 and their final rupture in 1844. His first meeting with Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein came at one of his concerts in Kiev in February 1847, the same year when Liszt decided to retire from professional concertizing. Thus the years of his second period were a catalyst for Liszt's creative growth, evident in his completion of several early versions of virtuosic piano works, and their premieres in concerts, such as *Fragment nach Dante*, *Grand Galop chromatique*, R. 41, S. 219; *Réminiscences de Robert le Diable* [Meyerbeer], R. 222, S. 413; *Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor* [Donizetti], R. 151, S. 397; and *Réminiscences de Norma* [Bellini], R. 133, S. 394.[27] While these are now seen as early drafts, they already contained surprisingly innovative harmonic language, contrast, and imagery. Liszt's reputation as a virtuoso pianist gave him a highly recognized and respected role in the international artistic community.[28] During this time, his social status rose rapidly, which afforded him the necessary connections that led to the next transitions of his career.

In April and May 1848, at the beginning of the third phase of his life and shortly before Princess Carolyne joined him in Weimar, Liszt took her to visit Raiding, his birthplace in Hungary, and there he relived his childhood memories. During his Weimar residency between 1848 and 1860, Liszt worked as the court *Kapellmeister*. He dedicated himself to writing large-scale orchestral works, rewrote most of his earlier piano compositions, and conducted theatrical

[27] Michael Saffle, *Liszt in Germany, 1840–1845: A Study in Sources, Documents, and the History of Reception* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1994), 187.

[28] Walker wrote "Weimar had appointed Liszt its honorary Kapellmeister in 1842," which occurred during his busiest years of concert touring. Liszt was appointed this role while Weimar's court, theatre, and academia was under the patronage of Grand Duchess Maria Pawlowna, the sister of Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. It was through his connections with Grand Duchess Pawlowna that he was appointed to this role. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848–1861*, vol. 2 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 6, 92.

productions, including the promotion of new operas. In this period of rearranging, rehearsing, and rewriting, he affirmed the following characteristics of the musical language and structures he had been exploring:

1) Liszt developed a modified cyclic form, somewhat varied from the traditional sonata scheme, with loosely connected sections constituting one movement. He used this new form in his revised version of *Dante*.
2) For better structural coherence, Liszt developed techniques of thematic and motivic transformation opposed to the proportionally balanced and structured sonata forms with symmetrical thematic schemes that were common in instrumental genres around 1780 and were further developed after 1800. (Details are discussed in sections 3.3.4. and 5.3.2.5.)
3) Liszt also referred to literary or other extramusical sources in his compositions to point to deeper meanings or to deliver hidden messages.[29] The literary texts he quoted often had philosophical or religious resonance that could have been recognized by listeners from varied backgrounds or literary traditions.

The height of his secular compositional power is marked by his completion of twelve symphonic poems during this period, each of which bears a programmatic title and is closely associated with a literary inspiration. This connection Liszt established between literature and music counts among his most profound means of artistic expression.

The fourth phase of Liszt's life, his Roman residency between 1861 and 1868, was an unexpected and prolonged sojourn prompted by the thwarted attempt at marriage with Princess

[29] Liszt's own preface to the *Album d'un voyageur*, S. 156, marked the beginning of his process of drawing extramusical influence into his compositions. It seemed to Liszt that this was the most natural way to express himself at the time. Jonathan Kregor, *Program Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 100.

Carolyne. The attempt failed due to the Vatican's refusal to annul her previous marriage. To make things worse, the death in 1863 of Liszt's daughter Blandine, following as it did his youngest son Daniel's death three years earlier, caused him deep sorrow. In the wake of these tragedies, Liszt produced an abundance of liturgical music. He completed oratorios, masses, psalms, and other religious choral works. His participation in a reform of Roman Catholic liturgical music, in a time of fascination with the *stile antico* and music of Palestrina, which were used by the Protestant Felix Mendelssohn and others,[30] followed his renewed interest in plainchant that had begun even before Liszt arrival in Rome. By reading and consulting Joseph d'Ortigue's *Dictionnaire Liturgique, Historique et Théorique de Plain-Chant et de Musique d'Église Au Moyen Age et Dans Les Temps Modernes*, Liszt learned the history and terminology of church music, which led him to compose sacred music in a more systematic and technically correct way.[31] Spurred on by his participation in the Palestrina revival, Liszt started to set liturgical text to simple melodies featuring more unison singing in his choral works, which were mostly *a cappella*, including his *Missa Choralis,* S. 10.[32] His inclusion of elements of church music changed the thematic writing of his late piano works.

[30] Mendelssohn initiated the nineteeth-century Protestant church music revival by conducting the choral music of J. S. Bach. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 182.

[31] Towards the end of his first Roman Period, in 1868, Liszt's friend, Franz Xaver Witt founded the Allgemeines Deutsches Cäcilienverein. Liszt was not a member of this movement, which "took the old masters of the 15th and 16th centuries as models for their own compositions… A distinction was drawn between strictly liturgical music for the main divine service, sacred music for shorter devotional services and religious concert music." The Cecilian Movement remained popular in church music throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Grove Music Online, s.v. "Cecilian movement," consulted April. 15, 2023.

[32] Liszt's other choral works created at this time of which most were sacred include *Crux! Hymne des marins avec antienne approbative de N.T. S. P. Pie IX*, S. 35. *Ave maris stella*, S. 34/1. Te Deum II, S. 27; *Dall'alma Roma*, S. 36; and *Mihi autem adhaerere*, S.37.

In the fifth and last phase of his life from 1869 to 1886, which Liszt called his "tripartite existence" in the cities of Budapest, Weimar and Rome,[33] he spent time supervising music education at the Budapest Music Academy, teaching large group masterclasses in Weimar without compensation,[34] and living an increasingly introverted life in contrast to the earlier, more active social life of his first, second, and third biographical periods. Regardless of his efforts, Liszt never achieved the same degree of high esteem for his liturgical music that he did for his piano works. During this time, he wrote most of his religious music for himself and a private, "imagined audience."

The following is a list of the major musical achievements in each of the five selected compositions to be discussed in detail in Chapters 3–7:

1) In *Dante*, Liszt created contrast by using both perfect intervals and problematic imperfect intervals (tritones) that suggest tonal instability. Similiarly, he used chromatic scales to evoke his personal conflict and sufferings, then used diatonic harmonic progressions as redemption to counter this negative force.
2) In *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, Liszt quoted Alphonse de Lamartine's text bearing the same title in the preface, and composed strongly intoned melodies suggesting absent poetic text to create songs of praise that express hidden meanings where music and language intersect.

[33] Ernst Burger, *Franz Liszt: eine Lebenschronik in Bildern und Dokumenten* (Munich: List Publishing, 1986), 219.

[34] Walker wrote, "Since 1847 he had not earned a penny from piano playing, and as he always refused to accept a fee from his pupils, he now had virtually no income…his main source of income during his twilight years was from his published compositions, but this gradually dried up as they became less popular and sold fewer copies." Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 9.

3) *In Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, Liszt depicted Lenau's poetic episode *Faust: ein Gedicht*, which was printed in its entirety at the beginning of the composition. Using selected intervals, rhythms, tonalities, and textures, Liszt transformed the poetry into music, breathed life into wordless musical themes, and changed their moods and emotions.

4) In *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, Liszt created his sacred instrumental passion music by heightening the lamentation expressed by the quoted *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* cantata motif of J. S. Bach. Liszt adopted the style of contrapuntal writing, sounds, and techniques of Bach's organ music. In addition to his incorporation of the passacaglia form, his lamentation progressively expands to brilliant bravura, followed by the cadenza, which contains a recitative and a canonic passage, and ends with the quoted Lutheran chorale representing the congregation's commentary.[35]

5) In *Les jeux d'eaux*, Liszt applied a fluid programmatic accompaniment pattern to evoke the movements and shapes of water. He also constructed the primary theme based on the major perfect triad, suggesting the mystic number three, which will be explored in Chapter 7. He quoted the biblical text, John 4:14, by writing it down in the musical staves. Its description of water symbolizes Christian baptism, which gives access to Christ's salvation and eternal life.

All five works were composed in tandem with noteworthy life experiences and in meaningful locations. A multi-level approach examining these five "departures" reveals corresponding changes in his harmonies, program titles, and the amount of music composed,

[35] In Bach's cantatas or sacred passion, the chorale movement acted as the crowd's commentary, their sung expression of their faith, and views of the depicted biblical story. It usually occurred after a major event or a turning point in the story of the Passion or at the very end of a cantata as a conclusion.

which agree with the emotional content of the quoted text. Additionally, other departures were in Liszt's novel formal organization including his new forms synthesizing traditional musical and literary forms, his use of thematic and motivic transformations to link different sections into one movement, and his dramatic programmatic and extramusically influenced effects, such as changes of rhythm, altered motivic intervals, and varied articulations to depict inner movement and mood changes. These departures in the five compositions are explored in depth with musical analyses in Chapters 3–7. Liszt's invented harmonies combining multiple scales in one work, non-traditional forms, and methods of musical development derived from his program would ultimately free him from formal limits and lead him to even more unconventional solutions for creating music more closely linked to the literary content that inspired it. The result tapped into listeners' imaginations and emotions in much the same way as an immersive reading experience.

1.3: Innovation and Evolution in Liszt's Program Music

As defined by Roger Scruton,[36] "program music" in its strictest sense has a narrative element that is essential to its understanding, such as a melody that is representative of a character or feeling, which reappears in a variety of forms and develops with the changing musical contexts. Liszt's program music fitting this strict definition forms only a small part of his larger body of work. These five piano works require a comprehensive and nuanced approach—a dive into the many layers of Liszt's composition of program music, including his multiple revisions. An examination of the titles which he gave to the five works reveals the gradual process through which Liszt realized his artistic ideal. Additionally, a review of their thematic features and formal organization in his manuscripts and in the first published editions

[36] Grove Music Online, s.v. "Programme Music," consulted April 21, 2023.

demonstrates how Liszt progressively learned to position and to express his deeply felt extramusical content in the right proportions within his newly discovered form.

As mentioned earlier, Liszt began incorporating extramusical references in the early 1840s, as he confirms in his preface to his published *Album d'un voyageur*, S. 156.[37] At this time, according to Liszt, extramusical sources seemed to be the ideal and the most natural way to develop new forms of expression; the music is used to express the meaning of the extramusical inspirations. He wrote that "music has its hidden meaning, its sense of the ideal, which the majority of people do not even suspect because they rarely rise above the comparison of externals, the facile appreciation of some superficial skill."

However, Liszt's organization of his programmatic piano compositions changed as his understanding of his extramusical influences and his programs changed. The main change was first prompted by the secular influence of philosophical literature and poetry, and Liszt's search for new forms that could serve as ideal vessels to display the profound, spiritual content that he found there. His discovery of these new forms and harmonies also allowed him to express his intense emotions. His Weimar residency marked a turning point in Liszt's stabilized compositional career and demonstrated his complete departure from the traditional sonata-allegro form and symphony. He not only confirmed this stylistic departure with his programmatic symphonic poems and 1855 published essay, *On Berlioz's Harold in Italy*, but also through his reconsideration of most of his pre-Weimar works. The flexibility that Liszt demonstrated in making changes and adaptations to form reflected a similar pattern of his life. As a true

[37] For the complete text of this preface, refer to Chapter 2, 40–41. *Album d'un voyageur* is the prototype of his two *Années de pèlerinage*: the first year "Suisse" S. 160 and the second year "Italie" S. 161. Ibid., 202.

Romantic, he gave priority to forms expressing his subjective feelings over traditional forms with balance and order.

During his touring years, Liszt usually sketched his first ideas and preserved drafts so that he could revisit them later. Several notebooks were filled during his travels, containing the early versions of his important works.[38] Some of the early thoughts were of pure musical inspirations and did not necessarily correspond to a program or a programmatic title. On the other hand, other fragmentary manuscripts show that Liszt started writing according to a programmatic or extramusical source, but later abandoned that programmatic title or reference.

Liszt often composed without strictly following traditional forms, especially in his 'secular' piano music, because he thought the forms of his time were insufficient. He deliberately incorporated 'secular' poetic works of his time that exalted not only the power of God but also celebrated the forces of evil. Using literary texts, Liszt explored demonic power, and in his spiritually influenced piano music, he represented the hero, as well as many "ungodly" literary characters with an expanded range of musical expression. His experiments can be seen in *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata, Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, and *Mephisto Waltz No.1*.

Rewriting his earlier manuscripts after he arrived at Weimar was a painstaking task, showing a gradual progression towards his definitive concept of program music. In fact, nearly all his important cyclic piano compositions that he began before Weimar received heavy revisions in Weimar, including his two albums of *Années de pèlerinage* (the first year "Swiss" S. 160 and the second year "Italie" S. 161) and his *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173.[39]

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[38] Most of these unpublished manuscripts are in Weimar, at the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv.

[39] His concert études include *Grandes études de Paganini*, S. 141, and *Études d'exécution transcendante* S. 139; his second piano concerto, S. 125, also belongs in this category.

Through revisions, Liszt achieved what were, to him, the most satisfactory versions by the time of their publication.

The manuscripts also show that even though Liszt was an extremely prolific composer, when he started composing program music his method of composing was not straightforward or precise. He did not have a clearly outlined, properly defined programmatic form. His extramusical inspirations sometimes led to an artistic insight, but he did not always compose based on the title of his initial inspiration. Liszt also prepared multiple drafts for publication,[40] and some of them he later withheld such as *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia: Fantaisie Symphonique pour piano* and *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia*.[41] These versions were completed before his final version of *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7.

In Liszt's pre-Weimar period, as is evident from his surviving drafts of compositions, correspondence, and his frequent performance of freshly composed works to a live audience,[42] his style of writing was strongly characterized by improvisatory inspirations leaning towards the exploration of virtuosity to advance piano techniques, yet the types of audiences at his

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[40] Note that some of his early versions had been already published, such as *Album d'un voyageur*, S. 156 and *Études d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini*, S. 140. He had to make the additional effort to buy out the old, published master prints to avoid duplicates when he reissued new versions.

[41] In a CD catalogue accompanying a recording of Liszt's *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, S. 158a Leslie Howard wrote that "paralipomènes" is "a philosophical term scarcely encountered in the musical world (indeed usually used to describe the biblical books of Chronicles, i.e, the things left out of the books of Kings), but here signifying a supplement to Dante's work rather than a programmatic depiction." Leslie Howard, *Paralipomènes: The Original Dante Sonata and Other First Thoughts and Second Drafts* (London: Hyperion Records, 1998), 8, https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/notes/67233-B.pdf. A "prolegomenon" (plural "prolegomena") is "an introduction or preface to a book, especially when critical or discursive" (Della Thompson, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 9th ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 1094).

[42] Walker describes that, "it can be surely no accident that Liszt's own art placed such a high premium on improvisations. A feature of his recitals during the 1840s were his fantasies on given themes, publicly announced in advance. He was constantly elaborating variations on standard repertory works, even during performance…which got Liszt a bad name until he abandoned it and took a more rigorous view of the printed text." For further references to Liszt's early, and quasi-improvisational composing. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 63, 78, 100, 133, 151, 224, 250, 286, 369–383.

performances and his lifestyle changed after Liszt arrived Weimar. Liszt wrote his new symphonic works not only for a theater orchestra, but also for a regular audience comprised of his pupils, guest musicians, and his partner, Princess Carolyne, each providing feedback based on their regular listening. During his time in Weimar, Liszt's role changed from that of a constantly traveling performer to that of a composer holding a stable, salaried position. This post-Weimar period brought a different way of writing and revising.

All five examples represent Liszt's writing of program music. Liszt changed his conception of program music by unifying the divisions between compositional sections and transforming connected thematic materials, which gave a descriptive quality to his music. He continued to craft unconventional harmonies, and broke free from the classical tradition. The first versions of *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata* and *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* were begun before he arrived in Weimar. In these two works, Liszt imposed his strong programmatic inspirations directly on their thematic and melodic designs, while synthesizing different scales, which was the beginning of his lifelong experiments with harmonies. As seen in *Mephisto Waltz No. 1,* he reached the pinnacle of his mature programmatic style after he completed twelve symphonic poems in Weimar. After leaving Weimar, in Liszt's first Roman period, he continued to include programmatic elements within a modified passacaglia theme and variation form that includes his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,* S. 180. In his second Roman period, Liszt moved from composing explicit program music to taking a more symbolic approach by using free text quotations, this corresponding to the emergence of his renewed Christian faith. The elements of church music also began to influence his compositions for the piano, noticeably in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*.

His travels exposed him to a variety of inspirations that subsequently enriched his ideas for program music. Liszt learned to master writing program music mainly through constant revision of his earlier drafts and his efforts to write symphonic works in Weimar. He refined and condensed his ideas into coherent musical languages and forms. By then he had developed into a mature, accomplished artist who could now focus on examining his methods of composition.

There were also religious influences emerging and becoming more prevalent in Liszt's music after his first Roman period of intensive composing in genres of liturgical music and with their harmonic language. During his first stay in Rome between 1861–1868, he had lived a stable, rather monastic life. At this time, he researched Gregorian chant and the liturgical elements and their meaning. This research was informed by his frequent visits to the Sistine Chapel, the publications he read by his long-time friend Joseph d'Ortigue,[43] and by his study of sources that were brought to his attention by his Hungarian friends,[44] as well as other influences. His references to old liturgical forms such as mass ordinary, modal harmonies, chant melodies, their sung intonations, and the style of performance in the Sistine Chapel reshaped his programmatic compositional style. At the end of his life, Liszt further reduced the number of different moods and characters associated with his quoted texts, but his incorporation of chant and church modes giving religious significance and his mixed use of chromatic, diatonic, pentatonic, modal, and Hungarian minor scales kept illustrating a bold and imaginative sound world.

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[43] Joseph d'Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant et le musique d'église au moyen âge et dans les temps modernes*, vol. 29 (Paris, Migne, 1853), X–1563. The volume was first published in 1853, revised and reprinted in 1860, and Liszt read both editions.

[44] In *The Legend of St. Elisabeth* as first published, the editor wrote in the Appendix about Liszt's "tonisches Symbol des Kreutzes" (sounding symbol of the Cross), often referred to as his "Cross" motif, and that it was derived from his research into Gregorian chant, of which he learned from his friends. See Franz Liszt, *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth: Oratorium für 7 Solisten, gemischten Chor, Kinderchor, Orgel und Orchester*, ed. Olivér Nagy and Otto Roquette (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1975), VII–IX.

1.4: Methodological Approaches to Liszt's Program Music

As with all music, a listener's understanding and appreciation of Liszt's programmatic ideas is highly subjective. The question remains whether his music will speak directly to listeners and whether it will recreate for them the same experiences and impressions that inspired Liszt in his writing. As Alan Walker wrote,

> "The programme merely invites us into the composer's workshop. Once we are here, it may disclose to us the source of his inspiration, explain why the music happens to display those manifold characteristics that attracted us to it in the first place."[45]

This study therefore presents a deep analysis of Liszt's sacro-musical language to inform performers of that evidence of Liszt's intentions, so that they can make better interpretive choices in their performances. They can then associate the right emotional and philosophical meanings for the compositions with the composer's psychological background. By offering these interpretive tools for the selected pieces, I not only uncover the hidden meanings behind his extramusically inspired program music, but also invite readers to reevaluate Liszt's innovative harmonies and synthesized forms to contribute in their performances to the programmatic subject and expressive content. These informed interpretations can be justified by Liszt's choice of program, form, inserted text and title, harmony, and structural technique. However, to some extent, these features of Liszt's music must be understood subjectively, because, after all, it is on this highly subjective level that Liszt intended to communicate with his audience.

Comparing Liszt's musical themes and motives and their development is important if we are to discern the nature of his compositional process and the evolution of his style. *Après une*

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[45] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 308. There is a longstanding debate whether "absolute music" or "programme music" is more authentic and effective. Walker comments on this debatable problem: "Music remains music, a good piece can never be harmed by a bad programme."

lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata and *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude* were each written before his arrival in Weimar in July 1848, but later published in separate named sets of piano works, *Années de pèlerinage* the second year "Italie" S. 161 and *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173, respectively. Liszt later reconsidered the structure and function of each element of those early drafts, functions that had once seemed to him instinctive.

Liszt drafted many ideas during his years of touring, but his constant travel allowed him little time to focus on composing. Furthermore, his early virtuosic music was packed with dense notes and chord-fillers because it was likely developed to suit the acoustics of public concert halls and opera houses holding two thousand or more people. While these dense textures increased the range of dynamics of the piano to make it sound like an orchestra, they also undeniably hinted at his tendency to show off. Liszt's dazzling technique was far beyond what most others could manage at the time: the difficult fingering of fast passages; the proper voicing, such that the parts and melodic lines could clearly project despite the speed, and the thick stacks of complex scales, arpeggios, double-notes, repeated chords, and octave series.[46] Liszt's later revisions often resulted in several different versions of the same piece, and Liszt even made attempts before 1852 to buy all of his earlier engraved plates, so that he could prohibit the production and sale of further early copies.[47] My analyses especially highlight the progressive changes he made to his stylistic language.

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[46] Voicing technique is an immense task that belongs to the aspect of advanced piano playing. This technique demands that a pianist's ten fingers be capable of producing specific orchestral colors or vocal timbres. A pianist's fingers are expected to produce different dynamics according to the context and the acoustic need. Because Liszt's writing is so dense, for the contour of melody in his piano works to be clearly heard, one's fingers must be highly sensitive, have ultimate voicing control, and be able to produce a wider range of dynamics than for piano music of the previous era.

[47] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 147.

1.5: Liszt's Divine and Diabolical Vocabularies Revisited: A Response to Szász

Liszt's newly developed musical language, stimulated by his extramusical sources and literary programs, was his response to the departures he experienced in his outside world, inner conflicts, and quoted inspirational sources. His piano works served multiple functions and bear characteristics of other genres, such as orchestral works, symphonies, sacred art song, sacred cantata. His private devotions became his musical narratives, dramatic music, and even sacred instrumental music for worship.

In 1984, Tibor Szász presented Liszt's use of religious symbols in his compositions as indicative of a spiritual duality. He categorized Liszt's themes, harmonies, and motifs, and suggested a coherent system of religious symbolism within Liszt's religiously influenced music that suggested divine and diabolical musical qualities. He provided a list of symbols embedded in Liszt's spiritual music writing, evident in his B minor Sonata, and concluded that Liszt applied his religious symbols in a consistent way.[48] These symbols include triple meters (*tempus perfectum*), which highlight the number three in a hidden reference to the Trinity.[49] Szász hypothesized that the pentatonicism was associated with Liszt's Cross Symbol, a three-note motive beginning the hymn *Crux fidelis* that was a common intonation of Gregorian chant.[50] Other symbols of the Divinity were the hymn-like theme found in his B minor Sonata; choice of tonality, such as his use of F-sharp major in his *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* and *Les*

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[48] Tibor Szász, "Liszt's Symbols for the Divine and Diabolical: Their Revelation of a Program in the B Minor Sonata," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 15, no. 40 (1984): 62–95.

[49] See Chapter 4.3.

[50] Catholic Church and Congrégation de France, *The Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Society of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée, 1952), 742. Liszt used symbolism of the cross at the beginning of his oratorio about St. Elizabeth of Hungary. See the preface by C.A. Barby to his edition of *The Legend of St. Elizabeth: An Oratorio*. (London: Novello, 1884), v–vii.

jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este;[51] the cadential 6/4 chord suggesting a prolonged eternity without any temporary resolution; and his quotation of John 4:14 from the New Testament. Symbols of the diabolical include the tritone (*diabolus in musica*), the unresolved diminished seventh chord, appoggiaturas, repeated notes, and an avoidance of the first beat.[52]

However, these symbols of the divine and diabolical can only be fully understood and correctly interpreted by considering their unique biographical context, as well as Liszt's often complex harmonies and use of different scales and musical and extramusical programmatic references that he employed for each piece. There is some consistency in his religious symbolism, but the evolution of his musical language was truly informed by his travels, life experiences, and inner turmoil as he became older. Using these symbols, Liszt synthesized his personal experience and spiritual longing into a distinct musical language that reconciled his geographical, religious, and emotional displacements. Because his life was filled with events that influenced his compositions, each of his works must be viewed separately in its own unique context. By exploring the concepts of departure, conflict, and rebirth in his life as they affected his music, one can better understand Liszt's changing approaches to his spiritually influenced programmatic piano music.

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[51] The use of F-sharp major to represent heaven was Liszt's trademark in his sacred music. This key is also used in *St. François de Paule: marchant sur les flots,* S. 175, No. 2; and the *Credo* of *Missa Choralis*, S. 10.

[52] See Appendix A, sets 14, 27, 28, 29, and 34 in Szász, "Liszt's Symbols for the Divine and Diabolical," 75, 88, 89, 90, 95.

Chapter 2: Liszt in Scholarship

2.1: A Man Without a Home

Any scholarship that attempts to label Liszt's music and tie his style to a geographical region or nation, or to apply a particular social or ethnic perspective to track his musical works, would face the challenge that his national and geographical identity cannot fully reflect his personal sense of being nor his lack of belonging. It is true that he maintained an attachment to his native land of Hungary throughout his lifetime, and it is significant that Liszt never applied for French citizenship and that he insisted on establishing a Hungarian inheritance for his three illegitimate children through Austro-Hungarian law, though none of them lived in Hungary.[1] However, most of Liszt's adulthood was spent outside of his Hungarian homeland. His estrangement was conditioned by and interwoven with the many political changes of the time, such as wars, culture clashes, rapid changes of governments, shifting borders, and the declining power of the Church. Yet through it all, he always supported the authority of the Church and never shied away from expressing this support. And even though Liszt claimed national attachment to Hungary, upon his return after many years abroad, there Liszt felt, at times, like a stranger.[2] Furthermore, though Liszt displayed his fluency in French, German, Latin, Italian, and

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[1] In his letter to Lamennais on May 18, 1845, he explained, "All three children bear my name and I have over them an absolute right, which of course imposes an equivalent duty on me. Now, being my children, they necessarily take the nationality of the father: they are therefore, willy–nilly, Hungarian; and, as such, subject to the law of the country. The best and most decisive thing I can do in their interest, therefore, is to ask the Emperor through the Palatine of Hungary for a complete legitimization (which, according to the civil code, corresponding in that with Roman Law, is a prerogative of the prince)." Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 225.

[2] Scholars (see footnotes 9 and 10) tend to focus on how well Liszt seems to fit wherever he goes, but there were also situations into which he did not fit well, or into which he attempted to fit, but was not completely accepted, this due to changes of political climate, growing conservative thought, or differences in religious belief. But Liszt's case can be summarized as a failure to return and to reestablish roots in places where he once felt that he truly belonged. This cosmopolitan lifestyle meant that he was everywhere, but nowhere. One may argue that Liszt lived a cosmopolitan lifestyle because Liszt was extremely tired of long-distance travel, especially when he became old and exhausted from traveling over six thousand miles every year.

English in his reading, writing and conversations, he never learned to speak Hungarian, which presented obstacles during his final years in Budapest. It is plausible that a sense of dislocation developed in Liszt after he spent time living in foreign countries. His travels, careers, and missions[3] as a musician had taken him away from his native land for so long that his definition of home had fundamentally changed. To realize his artistic vocation and compose more music, Liszt rebuilt a personal musical world that could substitute for his lost home, his lost love, and his lost hope. Ironically, within this musical world, he also allowed his internal conflicts to coexist with his explorations of musical form, structure, and traditional church music.

Having come of age in the aftermath of the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris and having been exposed to many new philosophical trends, Liszt started to confront inherited musical traditions in his early twenties. In his manifesto, *Religious Music of The Future*, published in 1835, Liszt developed a vision to "reform" and "regenerate" Catholic church music in France.[4] He wrote that the Church should promote a new type of liturgical music, which should be humanistic and popular in the manner of the revolutionary *Marseillaise,* which was sung by all the people.[5] But forty years later, Liszt would strongly oppose associating the revolutionary voice of the *Marseillaise* with his *humanistic* style of composing Church music. In his 1874 letter to Mme. Olga von Meyendorff, the mature Liszt confirmed his change of conviction when

[3] Liszt envisioned a reformation of Catholic church music in France in an essay of 1835. By the 1840s, before he took the appointment as *Kapellmeister* in Weimar, he made solving his "symphony problem" another goal, which is discussed in Chapter 5, section 2.1. The symphony problem was the shadow of Beethoven on later composers in the nineteenth century with his gigantic nine symphonies, leaving little space for the composers of the next generation to create something new in the same genre.

[4] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 159, and see Chapter 1.1, footnotes 3 and 6.

[5] In Lamennais's and Alphonse de Lamartine's teachings and publications, as well as the Saint Simonian secret meetings, Liszt found common Romantic ideals toward religion that were stimulated by the July Revolution of 1830. He maintained a high interest in every possible answer, innovative thought, and philosophical trend that showed how society in the future might work and be organized.

commenting on Victor Hugo's writing in *Le centenaire de Pétrarque*[6]: "…This part preceding this strikes me as bombastic and false…No, and again No! The *Marseillaise* is not the [voice of the future]."[7] His desire to renew Catholic liturgical music waned as European nationalism intensified, while the Catholic Church's power continued to decline in both France and the Holy Roman Empire.

Despite Liszt's ultimate achievements in virtuosic pianistic and symphonic genres, there are still numerous religiously influenced programmatic works that he composed throughout his life, which are largely neglected and seldom performed. One should not overlook the fact that Liszt was not always successful and that in such times, his faith remained a refuge for him. His goals of promoting new operas to the Weimar theater were not well received by his audiences and patrons.[8] His sacred compositions never gained the attention from musicians of the Catholic Church that he wished for.[9] In addition, his romantic and family relationships did not always work out the way he desired. As a result, Liszt's Catholic faith and identity stood in to protect him, to comfort him in his loss, and to give stability that his native country, family members and

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[6] Victor Hugo's text is from "Le centenaire de Pétrarque," published in his *Actes et paroles: avant l'exil, 1841-1851* (Paris: Librairie de Victor Hugo illustré, 1890), 118.

[7] Written on August 8, 1874, in discussing Victor Hugo's "Le centenaire de Pétrarque," from his exile, Liszt wrote to Olga von Meyendorff, "Merci de la lettre-Pétrarque de Victor Hugo. Je la relis d'autant plus violontiers qu'elle me revient par vous. Les vingt dernières lignes me plaisent extrêmement: Pétrarque est une sorte de Platon de la poésie…mais le mahleur lui manque… Ce qui précède [sur la Marseillaise] me semble ampoulé et faux; aussi, malgré ma profonde admiration pour le génie de V. Hugo et son [é]ton[n]ant labeur, je me refuse à le suivre dans ses aberrations démagogiques. Non et non, la Marseillaise n'est pas la "voix de l'avenir." See Nicolas Dufetel, "La musique religieuse de Liszt à l'épreuve de la *Pallingénésie* de Ballanche: Réforme ou Régénération?" *Revue de Musicologie* 95, no. 2 (2009): 373–374. Franz Liszt, *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff, 1871–1886*, trans. William R. Tyler (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1979), 154–155.

[8] See Chapter 6.1. The complete failure of Liszt's pupil, Peter Cornelius, in his opera première, resulted in Liszt's resignation from the Weimar theater the day after the scandal.

[9] Before Liszt's departure to Rome, having no way to predict that Princess Carolyne's marriage plan would be unceremoniously halted at the last minute by the church authorities, he mapped out an entire research plan: to study church music, to write new compositions, and to make dedications to the Pope. However, none of his liturgical works was ever incorporated into the Catholic church service and was ignored by Roman church musicians. In a letter to Carolyne dated July 24, 1860, Liszt wrote, "in a year's time, I could be in a position to submit this work to His Holiness, and if he designed to grant it his approval it would be adopted by the entire Catholic world." Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 509.

loved ones could not.[10] This longing for spiritual attachment was as significant as his inextinguishable nostalgia for his idealized homeland.

2.2: Liszt's Hungarian Roots

If one's cultural and even geographical connections can be described as roots, it could be said that Liszt's roots exhibited a portability that might be explained through his family's complex history and membership in the serf class. Walker traced Franz Liszt's family back to his great-grandfather, Sebastian List, and described the family of "List" as very poor farm laborers, part of the German-speaking migrant serf class whose assignments depended on the land-owning overlords. The serfs had to move wherever they were called.[11] Franz Liszt was born in Raiding (Doborján in Hungarian), a small town in present-day Austria, near the border of western Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the time of Liszt's birth, the Habsburg monarchy had long ruled a vast territory of the Holy Roman Empire including Liszt's native land.[12] Thus it should be correctly understood that Liszt was also born into the servant class, and his family had to stay loyal to their noble masters.

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[10] An example of this was when Liszt was nearly age 17. He suffered a nervous breakdown and lived through a period of depression due to the disillusionment of his first love, and he wished to become a priest. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 133–139.

[11] Liszt's grandfather, Georg Adam List served on the estates of the Esterházy family, a powerful Hungarian family. Georg Adam List was born in Rajka in the Kingdom of Hungary. Liszt's grandmother was born in Resovce (Hungary), now Oroszvár in Slovakia. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 33.

[12] Politically, the legal matters of Hungary were always separate because of the region's strong nationalistic sentiments. For instance, the King of Hungary was required to be crowned separately so that the Hungarian nobles would respect his authority and so he could promulgate laws and maintain his rights. After the 1848 Hungarian revolution, because of the centralization of power and strong political oppression which exiled many leading philosophical and political figures, strong anti-Habsburg sentiment arose among Hungarians. Then in 1866, because the Habsburg-Austria monarchy was largely defeated in the Austro-Prussia war and lost its influence and leading position in Europe, the Austro-Hungarian Compromise was arranged in 1867 to establish the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a dual monarchy. Hungarian-language speakers and other ethnic groups speaking different languages lived together under this overarching ruling authority of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. This explains why Liszt identified as Hungarian instead of Austrian. Because the Hungarian nobility contributed to the stabilization of the Empire's ruling power through its wealth and military force, Hungarians always kept a strong sense of pride. Before 1870, they still had to function under the law and pay the taxes to Austro-Hungarian empire.

Liszt's grandfather, Georg Adam List, struggled throughout his life with unemployment and was oppressed by the aristocracy. After Georg Adam lost his job with eleven children to support, Adam, later Franz Liszt's father, left home at the age of fourteen and became independent. He was admitted to the University of Pressburg but was forced to drop out after one year for financial reasons, at which time he began work as a clerk for the Esterházy estate. The Liszt family had spoken German at home, so to adapt to the Hungarian language in use at Esterházy, Liszt's father Adam changed his family name from its original spelling of List, a German surname, to Liszt, the Magyar spelling.[13] Because his landowning master, Nicholas Esterházy, was a Hungarian prince, the Liszt family members were henceforth German-speaking Austro-Hungarian citizens in the Holy Roman Empire, but identified themselves as citizens of the Kingdom of Hungary. Adam Liszt had to obtain Prince Esterházy's written permission to leave his work and their homeland of Hungary for Vienna with his son to find opportunities for him to receive a better education. While Liszt was still very young, the servant mentality predestined his continuous movements because a musician of the servant class necessarily needed to follow his royal master. Or, if he should decide to live on his own, he always needed some sort of continuous patronage. Liszt's awareness of his identity as a musician, his pursuit of artistic and religious ideals, and his response to the demand of his talent throughout his life, led to his choices of career change and corresponding shifts in his position in society, exacerbating his lifelong lack of a feeling of belonging. Walker put it this way:

> The ceaseless travel, so we are constantly reminded, was part of his complex psychology, and were we but to unravel it we would see a man of deep insecurities who had to keep moving in order to live with himself…Anyone who is remotely acquainted with the facts of Liszt's life, at least in his later years knows that far from being pushed from behind he

[13] Ibid., 38.

was drawn from in front. It was the demand on his time and talent by others that created his itinerant life-style.[14]

2.3: Departure from Hungary: Liszt as a Child Prodigy and Salon Pianist

Franz Liszt's first of many physical departures from Hungary occurred in 1822 and was initiated by his father Adam, who vividly prophesied the career and future of his son and wanted to assist him using every means possible to receive a better musical education and to pursue higher aspirations. Adam sought out Carl Czerny as a teacher for his son in Vienna. A year later in 1823, Adam Liszt arranged a Parisian tour for Franz that followed the route taken in 1763–1764 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his father Leopold Mozart. Adam took his newly acclaimed son from Vienna through many German cities to Paris. Before arriving in Paris, Adam even secured a letter of introduction from the Austrian Prime Minister Klemens von Metternich, thinking it would help them increase their influential contacts in Paris to negotiate more concerts. Franz's early education and related living costs were entirely paid for by Hungarian nobles, even though he had already started to make a living from his touring and other paid performances.[15] Because Adam and his son's lives depended on the private scholarships and sponsorship provided by these nobles, Adam was always aware of the possibility that one day he and his son might have to survive alone if they were to continue to stay in a foreign country. So, if there was a chance for Adam to promote his son, he would immediately accept the invitation, negotiate a price, and manage the income.

[14] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 377.
[15] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 89–95.

In 1823, at age twelve, Franz Liszt was denied admission into the Paris Conservatory of Music, a rejection that shocked him. For the first time, he felt like an unwelcome foreigner.[16] Then shortly after a period of successful concertizing between 1824 and 1827, the worst news came. Adam Liszt unexpectedly passed away in August 1827, leaving the young pianist-composer, barely 16 years of age, to fend for himself in a foreign country. After his father's death, his mother, Anna Liszt, joined him in September 1827, they settled in Paris in a small, rented apartment. Ten years later, Liszt would admit that at this time he felt abandoned, without any social network to provide sympathy and loving support. He felt that the aristocrats valued him only for his talent.[17] He started to work as a private piano tutor for children from noble families. He worked fourteen hours a day, including his commute, to give these lessons.[18] Liszt thus could not compose and no composition by him was reported or catalogued between 1827 and 1829.

Around this time, while Liszt was still a teenager, he had his first romantic relationship involving one of his students who was his age, but her father quickly quashed their hopes for marriage.[19] Liszt suffered tremendously from this emotional experience. A serious breakdown made him long for the priesthood. Liszt had been familiar with the lives of the saints since childhood. Spirituality was part of his family tradition because Liszt's father Adam, after having been a novice for a year, took the habit of the Franciscan Order in Malacka, Slovakia, where he was a monk from 21 September 1795 until 29 July 1797.[20] At a young age, Franz Liszt had

[16] The reason provided by the administration was that no foreign student was allowed to be admitted. Ibid., 94.

[17] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 16.

[18] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 125–131.

[19] Ibid., 125.

[20] Vševlad Jozef Gajdoš, "War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum*, 6, Fasc. 3/4 (1964): 299–300. Liszt's associations with Franciscans are discussed in Chapter 2, section 9. On Liszt wishing to become a priest, see Chapter 2, footnote 10.

already read the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, a devotional book written in Latin between 1418 and 1427. His depression also moved him every day to visit the church of Saint-Vincent de Paul in Paris.[21]

As the Revolution of July 1830 broke out in France, Liszt's connection to the outside world reset. He found himself once again surrounded by a special community in Paris. At popular social salons and evening banquets, he socialized mainly with French and foreign intellectuals, among them notable poets, thinkers and philosophers, musicians, and religious leaders. This period left a deep impression on the young Liszt, bringing him into an awareness of the most current literary works, the most recent journeys of these elite thinkers, and their radical revolutionary ideas. Liszt soon made French his primary language, being fully immersed in French culture and intellectual life in Paris.[22] Notable intellectuals he met around this time included Hector Berlioz, Frédéric Chopin, Niccolò Paganini, Victor Hugo, Heinrich Heine, and George Sand (Aurore Dudevant), and Liszt was once involved in the short-lived Saint-Simonian social movement. Other influences brought by the radical thinker Abbé Félicité de Lamennais, the progressive socialist Alphonse de Lamartine, and the counterrevolutionary philosopher Pierre-Simon Ballanche further shaped Liszt's view of religion, societial order, and the role and duties of musicians.[23] Informed by these leading French thinkers and their publications, Liszt formulated an idealized model of a progressive Church and State. In this model, he wanted to support the French Constitution, grant people's right to education and taxes, reduce differences in social classes, and free the serfs.

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[21] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 132.

[22] Ben Arnold, "Liszt as Reader, Intellectual, and Musician," in *Liszt and His World: Proceedings of the International Liszt Conference Held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 20-23 May 1993*, ed. Michael Saffle (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 49–54.

[23] A description of the influence on Liszt's thinking of French philosophers concerned with the new social order, and Liszt's evaluation of the reform of religious music was discussed in Section 2.3.

2.4: From Paris to The Rest of the World: The Virtuoso Concert Pianist

Paris was a musically vivid, cultural, literary, and philosophical kaleidoscope that formed Liszt's artistic personality. The influence of hearing the virtuosic Niccolò Paganini nurtured his advances in his piano technique.[24] His mutual friendship and artistic exchanges with Frédéric Chopin enriched Liszt's imaginative piano techniques and inspired his exploration of color including the use of the pentatonic scale. And Hector Berlioz's pioneering *Symphonie fantastique*, which Liszt heard at its premiere also provided new directions with its groundbreaking formal structure. Berlioz's employment of an *idée fixe* exposed Liszt to the endless possibilities of creating varied yet repeated thematic melodies, further influencing Liszt to create his loosely connected, one movement cyclic form. While socializing in Parisian salons, Liszt began to develop relationships with upper class women. Liszt's next few relationships were with married noblewomen and had a profound impact on his life and work. Their literary talents and shared cultural interests inspired Liszt's reading, informing several important compositions that would take him many years to revise, such as the second book of *Années de pèlerinage*, S. 161, and *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173.[25] Their "irregular" unions with Liszt also affected his family and decisions about marriage.[26]

He met the married Countess d'Agoult in 1832 through the fashionable Parisian salons. Three years later, due to d'Agoult's pregnancy, Liszt eloped with her to Switzerland, settled in a

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[24] Paganini stunned Parisian audiences with unprecedented technical inventions. Liszt was recorded being overwhelmed, improvising, and trying new ideas on his piano all night after hearing Paganini's violin recital. See Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 6, and Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 144–145.

[25] Both of Liszt's longterm partners: Countess d'Agoult and Princess Carolyne, were well-versed writers. Countess d'Agoult used a pen name to publish several novels and literary works after they separated. Princess Carolyne, without revealing her authorship, even co-authored several articles with Liszt that were published during his lifetime.

[26] The three children Countess d'Agoult had with Liszt were born against the civil law and Catholic church doctrine. The birth certificates of their three children contained fake details because their birth mother's identity had to stay hidden to avoid further scandal. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 214–215.

temporary home, and in the following years fathered three illegitimate children. In April 1838, Liszt left the Countess behind after reading the shocking news that 50,000 Hungarians had lost their homes in a historic flooding of the Danube. The German newspaper in Venice awakened a sharp nostalgia for his homeland. He confessed this to his friend Lambert Massart, saying that he had long mistaken France for his home soil.[27] Despite living under different jurisdictions, Liszt realized that his heart was still in Hungary and with the Hungarian people. He proved that when, after learning of his people's suffering, he quickly arranged a series of charity concerts in Vienna to raise funds for the victims. Their immense success in Vienna led him quickly to expand the concert series from two pre-scheduled concert engagements to ten, and to extend his stay to two months.

After moving to Paris in September 1823, Liszt did not return to Vienna for fifteen years, until his groundbreaking concerts of 1838 at the age of twenty-six. Liszt later recalled this trip to Vienna in 1838 as a turning point and summarized with this remark, "return performances in Vienna, the success of which determined my path as a virtuoso."[28] This trip to Vienna demonstrated his career aspirations, and the beginning of the deterioration of his relationship with Countess d'Agoult.[29]

In September 1839, while Liszt was in San Rossore near Lucca, four months after the birth of Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult's third child, Daniel, in Rome, Liszt learned that the Beethoven Memorial Committee in Bonn had announced an international appeal to help raise funds to construct a Beethoven monument. Liszt committed to finishing raising the funds for the rest of the project and took on more concerts to make up the balance. For this reason, in mid-

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[27] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 138.

[28] Christopher H. Gibbs, "'Just Two Words. Enormous Success' Liszt's 1838 Vienna Concerts," in *Franz Liszt and His World*, ed. Dana Andrew Gooley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 188.

[29] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 272–273.

October he left for Vienna to embark on another concert tour. He was never reunited with the Countess d'Agoult. The following concert tours would last nearly ten years and take him across Europe and beyond. This was the beginning of what Walker refers to as his *Glanzzeit* (time of brilliance), a period of virtuosic performance unmatched in history. In the next eight years his reputation as a virtuoso swept through all of Europe.[30]

Meanwhile, the Countess d'Agoult took their first daughter, Blandine, with her from Livorno, Italy, taking to sea in Genoa, and on the way back to Paris, their second daughter, Cosima, who had been left at Genoa to nurse, joined them.[31] Liszt's decision to stay outside of his newly formed family challenged the Countess d'Agoult's trust in Liszt. In her memoirs, she wrote that their relationship started to crack when Liszt's chose to embrace his musical career, instead of returning to her.[32] Due to her jealousy and Liszt's intense commitment to his own future and calling, their relationship became strained after 1839 and finally ruptured in 1844.[33]

The combative tension in this relationship, Liszt's extensive travels, and the literature he was reading informed Liszt's compositions during this time. They also informed his choice of extramusical inspirations and the use of a literary program in composing that characterized his pre-Weimar works.[34] This early style was manifested in highly virtuosic and improvisational piano compositions.[35] His creative impulse fully blossomed after he left the Countess d'Agoult. His youth of practicing the piano and concertizing, the frustrated emotional experiences

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[30] Ibid., 285–442. Saffle*, Liszt in Germany, 1840–1845*, 3–300.

[31] Ibid., 272–273.

[32] Ibid., 260.

[33] Gibbs, "'Just Two Words," 187–250

[34] Traveling at this time of the nineteenth century was a trend and an imitation of the path set by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe during his apprenticeship. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship: A Novel from The German of Goethe*. Translated by R. Dillon Boylan. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855.

[35] Stephen Siek, ed., "Liszt, Franz," in *A Dictionary for the Modern Pianist* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 107–109.

including this troubled relationship, and the influence of his previous Parisian period, all strengthened him and powerfully shifted him into a new stage of his career as a virtuosic concert pianist. Works such as the 1837 version of his twelve *Transcendental Études*, S. 139 and the 1838 version of six *Études d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini*, S.140 are ambitious, highly technical, and challenging.

His concert *études* reflect his ambitious, technical advancement that was developed to suit the concert stage and audience. Later, through his revisions of his earlier virtuosic works, he would turn to favoring musical expressiveness over bravura, heightening the drama by reconsidering form, and thus conveying a deeper expressive meaning influenced by his extramusical inspirations. His musical content in the first and the second books of *Années de pèlerinage*, S. 160 and S. 161, was inspired by art he saw during his travels to Italy and sightseeing in Switzerland between 1835 and 1838, when he was accompanied by the Countess d'Agoult. These two collections of works and his concert *études* began to align with his pianistic ideal of a Paganini reborn at the piano.[36]

During the periods of his travels from Hungary to Paris (1811–1838) and of his travels throughout Europe and other parts of the world (1838–1847), Liszt drafted the first ideas of *Après une lecture de Dante*, the future S. 161, No. 7, and *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3. A biographical examination of these two phases of Liszt's life in combination with the reading of his manuscripts in chronological order reveals that Liszt matured and fully absorbed cultural, philosophical, and literary trends over a long period of time, and that upon his arrival in Weimar, he began to apply what he had learned in the revision and rewriting of his earlier drafts.

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[36] Gibbs, "'Just Two Words," 203–204, 225.

Among Liszt's most progressive capabilities as a composer was his creation of a variety of forms to serve his expressive purposes. In a letter to George Sand written in 1837, Liszt launched his search for ideal musical forms and remarked that a feeling for the infinite lies at the heart of music. "The musician is at a disadvantage compared with the painter and sculptor, in that painter and sculptor address themselves to an accurate feeling for form. The forms used for paintings and sculptures are 'far more widespread' than 'the elusive feeling for the infinite' that belongs to 'the very essence of music.'"[37]

Moving in this direction, Liszt began to find ways to use literature in his instrumental compositions:

> Having traveled of late through many new lands, many different places, many locations consecrated by history and poetry, having felt that the diverse sights nature afforded and the scenes related to them did not pass before my eyes as meaningless images, but that they stirred profound emotions within my soul, that there existed between them and me a vague but direct relation, an indefinite but real connection, an inexplicable but sure communication, I have attempted to render some of my strongest sensations, my liveliest impressions in music…
>
> The inner and poetic sense of things, that ideality which exists in everything, seems to manifest itself pre-eminently in those artistic creations that arouse feelings and ideas within their soul by the beauty of their form. Even though music is the least representational of the arts, it nonetheless has its own form and has been defined not without reason as an architecture of sounds. But even as architecture, not only has stylistic order, but also embodies ideas that are pagan or Christian, sensual or mystic, war-like or commercial, so too, even more perhaps, music has its hidden meaning, its sense of the ideal, which the majority of people, truly speaking, do not even suspect, because where a work of art is concerned, they rarely rise above the comparison of externals, the facile appreciation of some superficial skill.
>
> The more instrumental music progresses, develops, and frees itself from its early limitations, the more it will tend to bear the stamp of that ideality which marks the perfection of the plastic arts, the more it will cease to be a simple combination of tones and become a poetic language, one that, better than poetry itself perhaps, more readily expresses everything in us that transcends the commonplace,

[37] Here, Liszt meant that painters and sculptors were working with concrete mediums which take shape more easily than music, and that forms and shapes are what painters and sculptors consider first when creating a new work. Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni. 34.

> everything that eludes analysis, everything that stirs in the inaccessible depth of imperishable desires and feelings for the infinite.
>
> It was with this conviction, this inclination, that I undertook the work which is published here today. I direct it to the few rather than the many. I do not seek success, but rather the approval of a small number of those who think that art has some purpose other than idly passing time and who ask of it something more than the trivial distraction of a fleeting entertainment.[38]

The above quotation comes from the preface to his *Album d'un Voyageur,* published in 1842, in which Liszt revealed his compositional motivations. He explained why music could be a poetic language better than poetry itself. Liszt here confirmed his instinct about a type of poetic and musical language with the potential of harnessing the flow, flexibility, and plasticity of music while capturing the essence of poetry. This preface reaffirms his intention to find a means of communicating profound imagery through music, and it presages the achievements he would realize after arriving in Weimar. Liszt deviated from introducing programmatic characters, musical topics (*topoi*), and musical painting in the manner of his contemporaries, instead favoring increased levels of expressive programmatic content in his music, going beyond the boundaries established by the old forms from the sixteenth century to his day.[39]

2.5: Departure from the International Concert Stage to Residency in Weimar

Liszt was first offered the position of *Kapellmeister* for the Weimar court in 1842, and he finally accepted around October 1846.[40] Liszt's change of career and Weimar residency was the catalyst to his middle stylistic period between 1847 and 1860, a period of emotional stability. In February 1847, Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, a devout Catholic, impressed by one

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[38] Kregor, *Program Music*, 100.

[39] These technical terms are used by Jonathan Kregor. Ibid., 7–68, 4–5.

[40] When the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlona, a Russian Princess, met Liszt during his tour of German cities, she expressed that she deeply appreciated his talents and warmly invited him to work for the court.

of Liszt's successful concerts in Kiev, first invited him to her country estate in Woronińce (now Voronivtsi in Ukraine). The two had initially met several times earlier in 1847. Then, after Liszt gave his final four concerts in Elisabetgrad, Liszt went to stay at Princess Carolyne's country estate between October 1847 and January 1848. He finally moved to Weimar to take up the position in February 1848. Despite having spent comparatively little time with Liszt, Carolyne decided to sell her family lands and follow him to Weimar, Franz and Carolyne quickly established a life together as lovers in Weimar, and they remained together for twelve years. But their unmarried status and Carolyne's illegal escape from her first marriage made the couple unwelcome in this Protestant city, which had been one of the earliest cities to embrace Martin Luther's Reformation. Their cohabitation is one part of what makes Liszt a complicated figure.[41]

The relationship between Liszt and Carolyne was intellectually dynamic. Carolyne knew languages, literature, history, and theology, and their intellectual exchanges inspired Liszt to pour his energy into his work. During this time, he matured from being a virtuosic concert pianist with excellent improvisational skills into a serious composer. He finally found time to make substantial revisions to his earlier piano compositions, which existed as early drafts, sketches, and manuscripts written during his touring years. He also developed the symphonic poem as a programmatic genre. Ironically, Liszt's taste for new music written by contemporary composers and his tireless promotion of new compositions and Wagner's operas alienated him from the Weimar court, where music from past generations was highly valued.[42]

[41] In the1850s in Weimar, adultery was punishable by imprisonment. Liszt relied on his close connections with the court to ensure that the law was never enforced in his case. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 11.

[42] Oliver Hilmes, *Franz Liszt: Musician, Celebrity, Superstar,* trans. Stewart Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 170–172.

In his 1855 essay *On Berlioz's Harold in Italy*, Liszt laid the groundwork for what he saw as a necessary step in the evolution of his programmatic compositions.[43] Liszt realized that traditional forms and musical characters had only a limited capacity to convey the full range of human emotions. Jonathan Kregor summarizes Liszt and Princess Carolyne's lengthy co-authored essay (the points are Kregor's and the quotations are his translations of Liszt's writings):

1) Musical form is but one organizing principle among many. Ideally, musical and non-musical forms should fuse and juxtapose dialectically: "Every element, through contact with another, gains new properties." The amalgamation of originally distinct forms will create in art—just like in nature—either phenomena of new beauty or monstrosities, depending on whether a harmonious union brings to life a homogeneous whole or an awkward puzzle."
2) "In contrast to so-called classical music…in program music, the return, alteration, change, and modulation of motives are caused by their relationship to a poetic idea."
3) "The rationale and goal of a poem is no longer the representation of a main character's actions, but rather of the affects which play out in his soul. It is far more important to show a hero's disposition than his behavior."
4) The program is not prescriptive, but rather "a preparatory suggestion of the composer's mental states that led to the creation of his work, as well as the idea he sought to embody in it."[44]

These passages provide textual evidence that Liszt's compositional process was influenced by feelings first, and that he then considered the depth of characterization in his musical themes. Finally, he determined a suitable form into which to arrange these poetic images. In Liszt's own words, "the amalgamation of originally distinct forms will create phenomena of new beauty or monstrosities," which can be detected in his programmatic compositions with text quotations.

In a letter to Louis Köhler dated July 9, 1856, Liszt explained his compositional process and how he allowed his feelings first and foremost to guide him in his composing. He decided to

[43] Franz Liszt, "Hector Berlioz und seine 'Harold-Symphonie,'" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4, series 3, no. 35/36, ed. Lina Ramann (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1881), 328–405.

[44] Jonathan Kregor, *Program Music*,103–104.

invent new forms when he approached the last stage of composing, only after the form had been completely shaped by the full realization of feelings and expressiveness.

> […my inner experiences] have brought me to the conviction that invention and feeling are not so entirely evil in Art. Certainly you very rightly observed that the forms (which are too often changed by quite respectable people into formulas) 'First Subject, Middle Subject, After Subject, etc., may very much grow into a habit, because they must be so thoroughly natural, primitive, and very easily intelligible.' Without making the slightest objection to this opinion, I only beg for permission to be allowed to decide upon the forms by the contents, and even should this permission be withheld from me […], I shall none the less go on in my own modest way quite cheerfully. After all, in the end it comes principally to this--WHAT the ideas are, and HOW they are carried out and worked up—and that leads us always back to the FEELING and INVENTION [...].[45] [Capitalization added by the composer.]

Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* is one of his most well-known programmatic piano compositions. In this work, he develops primary themes around poetic ideas and literary characters. He also transforms his themes by changing elements such as rhythm, mood, tonality, and intervals to represent changes of literary character. The compositional elements become more dramatic, even representing a supernatural power or demonic spirit.

Liszt's propensity for pursuing women adds an intriguing context to *Mephisto Waltz No. 1.* His Christian teaching and the Franciscan tradition stress obedience and chastity, values that conflicted with some aspects of his behavior. That conflict is described, to an extent, in the programmatic elements of *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. The main character, Faust, motivated and encouraged by Mephistopheles, decides to pursue a nameless black-eyed girl as in Lenau's poem, while all the other men are seduced by Mephistopheles' demonic violin playing and fall into sensual temptations. Liszt admitted to Princess Carolyne late in his life that his father prophesied on his deathbed that the weakness in his son's character lay in women: "…for his

[45] Franz Liszt, "To Peter Cornelius," in *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2, *From Rome to the End,* ed. Ida Marie Lipsius [La Mara pseud.] and trans. Constance Bache (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 258–259.

fifteen-year-old son he feared that women would trouble his existence and come to dominate his life…"[46] Liszt's Don Juan image and his devilish virtuosic technique, pulled him away from his religious beliefs.

2.6: Departure from Weimar and Arrival in Rome

In 1859, the year before he left for Rome, Liszt decided to end his employment as *Kapellmeister* in Weimar. Liszt had always taken his sacred compositions very seriously. In a letter in 1856 to his secret mistress Agnes Street-Klindworth, he wrote, "I took a serious stance as a religious and Catholic composer, but there is an unlimited field for art that I feel called to cultivate vigorously."[47]

Princess Carolyne sought to annul her first marriage through the Church from the beginning of their relationship. Her departure to Rome in 1860[48] and Liszt's later arrival in 1861[49] were primarily aimed at this goal. Their effort to have the Church annul Carolyne's first marriage was initially supported by the Pope. Later, the Pope changed his position due to intense political pressure from Princess Carolyne's family members. Vatican authorities forced them to abandon their marriage prospects in 1860.[50] The wedding ceremony never took place. Liszt moved to the monastery, *Madonna del Rosario,* just outside of Rome and the couple never rebuilt a domestic life together.[51] Around this same time, Liszt was also deeply affected by the death of his son, Daniel, in 1859 and the death of his daughter, Blandine, in 1862. While he had

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[46] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 189.

[47] Liszt, *Correspondance*, eds. Knepper and Huré, 344.

[48] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 492.

[49] Ibid., 528.

[50] For a detailed account of the circumstances and all the legal documents surrounding Liszt's thwarted marriage, see: Alan Walker and Gabriele Erasmi, *Liszt, Carolyne, and the Vatican: The Story of a Thwarted Marriage* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1991).

[51] Hilmes, *Franz Liszt*, 184. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 33.

long possessed a religious faith (evidence of which dating back to an 1856 letter), the death of his two children intensified his religious commitments and interests.[52]

The reemergence of Liszt's interests in writing liturgical compositions is evident in a letter to Princess Carolyne written prior to his arrival in Rome.[53] On July 24, 1860, Liszt described his attempt to compose a liturgical work based on Gregorian chant. He drew up a plan to borrow a memorandum he had seen in Paris at the beginning of 1839 through his friend, Spontini. Liszt wanted to review the memorandum on the topic of church music reform, which had been presented to His Holiness Gregory XVI. Liszt sought to obtain it through Princess Carolyne's familial connection to Mgr. Gustav Adolf, Prince of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, later Cardinal. In the letter Liszt wrote to Princess Carolyne asking for her help to obtain the memorandum, he explained that he hoped to examine the memorandum to truly understand the correct style of church music at the time so he could compose a piece and dedicate it to the current Pope to gain the Church's acceptance of his musical style. Liszt wrote, "I shall do some research in Brussels, Paris, and above all Rome. In a year's time I could be in a position to submit this work to His Holiness, and if he deigned to grant it his approval it would be adopted by the entire Catholic world."[54] Liszt also mentioned that he familiarized himself with the chant books and related literature in the possession of Canon Proske, Johann Georg Mettenleiter, and Mettenleiter's brother Dominicus in Regensburg. At the end of the letter, Liszt sought to advance his research on Gregorian chant by traveling to Brussels, Paris, Rome, and other locations, in

[52] Liszt also identified himself as a follower of the Franciscans: "I could be pretty well defined in German: zu einer hälfte Zigeuner, zur andern Franziskaner!" ("half gypsy, half Franciscan friar!"). Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 410.

[53] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 508–509.

[54] Ibid.

order to submit a composition to His Holiness that reflected his idealized style for church music and to ensure a comprehensive knowledge of chant.[55]

Nicolas Dufetel describes Liszt's stay in Rome beginning in 1861 as a time that "symbolically marks the religious orientation that the composer now wished to give to his career and his inner life."[56] Liszt wrote in 1861 in a letter to his daughter, Blandine,[57] that he had expanded his knowledge through extensive research on liturgical terminology that Joseph d'Ortigue[58] had defined in his *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant et de musique d'église* (Dictionary of Liturgy, History, and Theory of Plainchant and Church Music). Through this dictionary, Liszt developed his understanding of the elements of church music, which led to his use of church modes, parallel consonant sonorities, and *fauxbourdon*.[59] Liszt also hand-copied Palestrina's polyphonic choral compositions, because the Church favored Palestrina's writing of syllabic homophony after the Council of Trent,[60] and Liszt wanted to gain familiarity with that ideal style of church music.

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Nicolas Dufetel, "Les sources français du plain-chant et de la Sainte Élisabeth de Liszt: Ortigue, Montalembert, Raillard, Lambillotte et quelques autres," in *La musique religieuse en France au XIXe siècle: le sentiment religieux entre profane et sacré (1830-1914),* ed. Nicolas Dufetel (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 169.

[57] Liszt and his family, including his children, had formed a long-term friendship with Ortigue during their growing years in Paris, so Liszt mentioned his reading of Ortigue's dictionary to his daughter at this time. The letter can be found in Williams, *Franz Liszt*, 567.

[58] Ortigue had his research published, which Liszt had been informed of, had great interest in reading, and was influenced by these publications, including Louis Niedermeyer and Joseph d'Ortigue, *Gregorian Accompaniment: A Theoretical and Practical Treatise upon The Accompaniment of Plainsong*, trans. Wallace Goodrich (New York: Novello, Ewer & Co, 1905). The book was first printed in 1857 and reprinted in 1859. Joseph d'Ortigue, *La musique à l'église* (Paris, Librairie Académie, 1861), VII–471. Ortigue showed the possibilities of harmonizing Gregorian chant through a keyboard instrument, such as organ or piano. See Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique.*

[59] Evidence shows how Liszt's used modes, favored consonance, and doubled thirds and sixths to sound like *fauxbourdon*. See Chapter 7.

[60] The decision of the Church to favor Palestrina's style of homophony dates from 1562 at the Council of Trent. Because Calvinists had banned polyphony and chose to sing monophonic settings of the psalms, the Council of Trent insisted that Latin texts should be clearly heard. Masses with song citations were removed, and there would be no lascivious or impure music in the service. Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* that saved polyphony was eventually dated as early as 1562–1563.The sixteenth-century style of Palestrina became the model of the *stile antico*, an *a cappella* diatonic counterpoint that continued to be described and was especially encouraged by its codification in Johann Joseph Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum* of 1725.

Furthermore, in the same letter to Blandine, Liszt also described his amazement at the singing style of the Sistine Chapel's choir because he visited the masses daily.[61] In this way, Liszt learned their singing style and liturgical repertory, which included Gregorain chant, *fauxbourdon*, and mensural chant.[62] Zsuzsanna Domokos argued that Liszt hoped to become the director of Sistine Chapel, yet evidence indicates that Liszt failed to build connections with the choir singers, to the point that in 1864 Liszt invited the singers of the choir to participate in a benefit concert, but they gave a false excuse.[63]

Although Liszt's attempted to reform sacred music by composing new works for the Catholic liturgy, his large-scale liturgical works were mostly ignored by the Catholic heriarchy and Roman church musicians.[64] Liszt still fully embraced his faith and received the tonsure,[65] the four Minor Orders of the Catholic Church in 1865.[66] Alberto de Angelis noted that Liszt took the four Minor Orders (acolyte, exorcist, lector, and porter, in descending order), because he hoped to become the Sistine Chapel's choir director. Domokos argued that Liszt sought that position, so that his compositions would be sung by the Sistine Chapel choir, which typically sang music composed by its choirmasters.

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[61] Liszt mentioned to his daughter Blandine that he went regularly to the Sistine Chapel to "bathe my spirit in the sonorous waves of Palestrina's Jordan." Williams, *Franz Liszt*, 567. Zsuzsanna Domokos, "The Performance Practice of the Cappella Sistina as Reflected in Liszt's Church Music," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 41, no. 4 (2000): 389–406.

[62] Zsuzsanna Domokos, "The Musical Traditions of the Sistine Chapel and Liszt's Church Music," in *Liszt and the Birth of Modern Europe: Music as a Mirror of Religious, Political, Cultural, and Aesthetic Transformations*, eds. Michael Saffle and Rossana Dalmonte (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2003), 28.

[63] Ibid., 26–37.

[64] Ibid.," 27.

[65] Ibid., 26.

[66] Gustav Adolf Cardinal Prinz van Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst appointed Liszt to Minor Orders on July 30, 1865. Liszt did not have any of the prerequistes and all four orders were conferred at once. He is listed in the 1879 Honorary Canon. In his obituary, it was stated that Liszt carried with him the ecclesiastical instructions from 1865. David Butler Cannata, "Liszt and Minor Orders," *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, 61-62 (2010): 199–223.

Another of Liszt's failed attempts was in dedicating *Missa Choralis* to the Pope for performance in Sistine Chapel or in St. Peters.[67] Paul Merrick argues Liszt composed *Missa Choralis* in *a cappella* singing in mind for a performance in Sistine chapel in 1866, which did not take place and the organ part was added later for other performances.[68] The 1869 edition of *Missa Choralis* bears no final dedication and has no further mention in Liszt's letters.[69]

While in Rome, Liszt focused on composing mainly sacred choral compositions, including three masses and two oratorios *Christus* and *The Legend of St. Elisabeth*. In both oratorios, Liszt's programmatic use and references to Gregorian chant melodies were described by the editors of *Christus* in the preface[70] and of *The Legend of St. Elisabeth* in the appendix.[71] By studying all types of sources Liszt could find about liturgy, sacred music, and Gregorian chant, many of which were brought to his attention by his acquaintances or from his reading during his long sojourn in Rome, he came to place Gregorian chant as his ultimate priority. Liszt also connected with specialists and listened to the performance styles[72] that allowed him to immerse himself into the inner layer of the church music sound world.[73] The sound of church

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[67] According to a letter to his secret lover Agnes Street-Klindworth on January 26, 1865, Liszt mentioned "A Mass (*a capella* – without accompaniment) that I intend to dedicate to the Holy Father. It will be finished in about a fortnight." Liszt, *Selected Letters,* ed. Williams, 624.

[68] Domokos, "The Musical Traditions," 27.

[69] Ibid., 26.

[70] Hamburger describes Liszt's programmatic citations of Gregorian chants: the Marian Advent introit *Rorate coeli*, the melody of the *Angelus, Beati pauperes,* and the *Benedictus.* Liszt, *Christus*, ed. Gábor Darvas, foreword by Klára Hamburger (London: Eulenburg, 1972), [1–4].

[71] In the appended "Verzeichnis der Motive," Liszt thanked a list of his friends who helped him to assemble the chant melodies he used in this composition. His list of chants that he used included "In festo, sanctae Elisabeth 5. Antiphona *Quasi stella matutina*, Ungarisches Kirchenlied zur heiligen Elisabeth *Lyra coelestis*, Altes Pilgerlied angeblich aus der Zeit der Kreuzzüge, Gregorianischen Gesang Intonation in dem Magnificat und Hymnus *Crux fidelis*." See Franz Liszt, *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth: Oratorium*, ed. Imre Sulyok (Budapest, Editio Musica Budapest, 1982), 458–462. The antiphon *Quasi stella matutina,* CANTUS ID 204082, is part of the office *Laetare Germania* for St. Elizabeth of Hungary in isolated Swiss, Austrian, and Central European sources and was later contrafacted for use in offices for St. Elizabeth of Portugal and St. Ludmila. See https://cantusindex.org/id/204082. I thank Barbara Haggh-Huglo for this information.

[72] Domokos, "The Musical Traditions," 26–37.

[73] D'Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant*, vol. 29.

modes and chant melodies affected Liszt's voicing style and harmonic language. His practice of writing liturgical music, including chant and music for the Mass Ordinary, contributed to Liszt's choice of simple rhythms and melodies often modeled after chant in his late compositions, even those for the piano.

This new focus on writing liturgical music differed from his earlier approach to program music based on secular literary texts, where he declared "new wine demands new bottles" with the content of his Weimar programmatic works (symphonic poems) being the wine, and the expanded formal boundaries the bottles.[74] During his first Roman period, his study of composing liturgical music was according to the liturgical conventions and old elements, including modes, repetitive liturgical texts, separate mass movements, and *a cappella* singing with simple organ accompaniment. Often compared as a parallel to the historicism of the Cecilian movement in Germany[75] that drew Liszt's attention in the later part of the nineteenth century, Liszt's personal discovery and broad references laid the groundwork for his combination of the old traditions of church music with his stylistic language.

Despite taking a drastic turn in his compositional output in liturgical music that shifted from what he envisioned in the early 1830s and from the forms he had incorporated in his Weimar period, the spiritual meaning of the sung liturgical texts inspired him to introduce new expressive elements in his instrumental programmatic works written after 1869. Writing liturgical compositions allowed Liszt to incorporate old elements that moved him away from the programmatic influenced form he used in Weimar period; instead, Liszt expressed the meaning of texts as metaphor or evocation. In his later years, after departing Rome, he became

[74] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 357.
[75] Grove Music Online, s.v. "Cecilian movement," consulted April. 17, 2023.

increasingly introspective and detached from the world and found solace again in his religious faith.[76]

2.7: Homecoming

The second half of Liszt's life, after he arrived in Rome in October 1861, can be understood as a long attempt to fulfill his religious calling and to reconcile his spirituality with his emotional life. Because his liturgical compositions did not receive any recognition in Rome, he left Rome and started to travel again. Accordingly, Liszt's composing again shifted to a new audience. His compositions were no longer written for large crowds, nor did he try to promote his works to be heard. Instead of writing for an intended public, he increasingly lived a lifestyle distanced from the public eye to focus on his inner, private sphere. Consequently, he composed for private occasions, or just for himself.

His main public activity became his piano pedagogy, for which he divided his time between giving masterclasses in Weimar and teaching students in Budapest who would travel internationally to study with him. In the early stage of his career while he was playing predominantly as a concert pianist, his music was written for the public concert audience. His late stylistic language aptly encapsulated his inner conflicts and disappointments, which were still not fully resolved. These works were imbued with chant-infuenced melodies, freely quoted texts, and modal harmonies.[77] At times his music sounds extremely simple, consonant, and intimate, while at other times it is packed with extreme contrasts and harsh dissonance.[78]

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[76] Pierre-Antoine Huré and Claude Knepper, "Génie et Métamorphoses," in *Correspondance,* 13–50.
[77] More musical examples are given in Chapter 7.
[78] Boencke, "Outside the Public Sphere," 190, 199–202.

2.8: Epilogue: His Burial Place Reflects a Life of Conflict

Liszt died in Bayreuth at the age of 74 on Saturday July 31, 1886, due to several heart attacks. The funeral took place the following Tuesday. Even in death, Liszt would remain far from home. The question of where his grave should be located resulted in extended legal conflicts that continued for four generations. Liszt did not specify in his will where his burial place should be, but instead mentioned several places to the people in his inner circle during his later years. These locations included St. Tropez (France), Tivoli and/or Rome the Holy City, Pest (Hungary), and the small church near his birthplace of Raiding (then Hungary, now in modern Austria).[79] Liszt's indecision regarding his burial place is partly responsible for the debate that ensued. To which land does Franz Liszt truly belong, and where should his body be interred?[80] Liszt never imagined dying in Bayreuth and thus never mentioned it as a final resting place. The conflict of Liszt's cultural identity even existed before his death, as was explained at the beginning of this chapter. The lack of belonging to one place was felt throughout Liszt's life and affected his decision to not specify a location for his burial.[81] Liszt could not possibly have imagined that this indecision would posthumously raise so many conflicts between his daughter Cosima Wagner; the executor of his will and long-time partner, Princess Carolyne[82]; his Patron, the Grand Duke of Weimar; and his homeland of Hungary. Although Liszt did not leave a record

[79] Liszt had various personal reasons for naming these places. St. Tropez was near the grave of his first daughter Blandine Liszt Olivier who passed away before him. Rome is west of Tivoli, the location of the Villa d'Este, where Liszt spent most of his late years. Raiding was on Hungarian soil, Liszt's native place, where he felt deeply connected and contributed immensely to music and education. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 526–527.

[80] Ibid., 526–528.

[81] Ibid., 523.

[82] Princess Carolyne was designated as the "residuary legatee" in Liszt's will, however, because they were not married, his immediate family, his daughter, also claimed a legal right to decide Liszt's burial place. Even the Franciscans of Hungary sought out the right to bury Liszt. Everyone who had close ties to Liszt knew his desire to be buried in Hungary. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 523–524.

of a desired physical burial site, in a letter written late in life, Liszt did specify his spiritial wishes that "his body to be covered by the cloth of the Franciscan Third Order," and that his burial should be modest "without pomp and if possible at night."[83] Moreover, Bayreuth was a Protestant town, and Liszt's second daughter, Cosima, who converted to Protestantism because of her second marriage, was unwilling and unable to carry out Liszt's spiritual requests in his death.

Liszt's second will, which was modified from the first that had been written in 1860, could not be located at the time of his death.[84] Not surprisingly, Princess Carolyne advocated for Liszt's funeral to be held in Hungary. Cosima instead insisted on conditions. For his burial in Hungary, she required that he receive national honors from the legislature. For his burial in Weimar, she required that he be buried in a fashion equal to that of renowned German writers Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller. These requirements instigated quarrels about the degree to which Liszt's work contributed to the music of both Hungary and Germany, which further delayed the entire process.[85]

Liszt's choice of lifestyle and his wishes for his burial all point to a spiritual longing and to his wish to return to a reaffirmed Catholic Christianity, a faith inherited from his family but which he failed to transmit to his only remaining daughter, Cosima. As a result of Cosima's interference, his will and his burial wishes were not carried out. No Catholic priest had been called in to Liszt's deathbed. He did not receive the proper absolution, the Sacrament of Penance,

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[83] Ibid., 524. Burial in the habit of the Third Order was a matter of great importance to him. In a letter to Princess Carolyne in 1873, Liszt wrote of his request that a habit be made for him. In 1883, he again requested that a habit be made for him from Budapest for his burial. Gajdoš, "War Franz Liszt Franziskanner?" 307–308. Liszt, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, ed. La Mara [pseud.], 524.

[84] The executor of his will was Princess Carolyne, who was living in Rome at the time of his death, which made handling the legal matters of his death, including the burial location, all the more difficult, given that Liszt's family lawyer, Eduard Liszt, was in Vienna.

[85] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 524–526.

the religious final act granted by a Catholic priest. Ironically, in death, it was his daughter who forced his final state of exile of not being able to return to his idealized homeland.

2.9: Liszt's Catholic Identity: Hungarian Ties, French Thought, and Roman Influence

Liszt's Catholic identity seems to be the characteristic that united his traveling and emotional experiences. No matter how sincere Liszt's Catholic faith was, his repeated search for his emotional freedom, when set against the Christian morality that has been difficult to define and its effect on his music, may seem difficult for the modern historian to evaluate. In the context of larger societal changes, the power of the Catholic church had been drastically diminished by the influence of Josephinism during the second half of the eighteenth century. This secular movement, led by the Habsburg monarchy, resulted in the appropriation of much of the Church's land as well as taxes levied on what had previously belonged to churches or small monasteries. While everyone in the Holy Roman Empire had to profess Christianity, not all actively practiced the religion in their personal lives. Yet Liszt actively practiced and followed Franciscan teachings throughout his life, as had his father. The religious fervor of his father makes it easy to understand Liszt's strong and consistent religious calling that was, therefore, central to his identity.

Through wars of independence and religion that were fought among European nations, the power of the Church was threatened. Liszt had no choice but to adapt to the new political map, but he never extinguished his personal hope of speaking through music about his faith and his beliefs. Eftychia Papanikolaou describes Liszt's immense interest in religious and philosophical compositions this way: "What remained constant throughout all these changes was

an attraction to the ideals of Christianity viewed not through its doctrines but rather in the philosophies of intellectual leaders and writers of the time."[86]

2.9.1: The Family and Hungarian Ties to The Franciscan Tradition

Adam Liszt had entered the Franciscan Order in 1795[87] as a novice in the monastery at Malacka in Slovakia, near Pressburg. Although he did not finish the novitiate and submitted his petition to withdraw, he still remained close to the Order, even naming his son "Franciscus" after St. Francis of Assisi.[88] On September 8, 1856, the monks at the Franciscan monastery in Pest selected Franz Liszt as "confrater" (fellow brother), and on April 11, 1858, in the midst of his concert tour in Hungary, he received a "Konfrater Diplom," an official charter of recognition, from the Pest monks, in a ceremony including a celebratory mass.[89] The Franciscans stressed obedience and chastity, values that were in conflict with some aspects of Liszt's emotional experiences and his relationships. Franciscan monks commit to a life of extreme poverty and engage in acts of charity, the former not possible for Liszt, but the latter which he embraced. Liszt's practice of dedication, love, and sacrifice is evident in his final years, when he truly embraced the Franciscan teachings. He donated his musical knowledge by not charging money for his piano lessons and masterclasses, which could have easily earned him a fortune, and he

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[86] Eftychia Papanikolaou, "Liszt and Religion," in *Liszt in Context*, ed. Joanne Cormac (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021), 163.

[87] From September 21, 1795–July 29, 1797, Adam Liszt was a documented monk with the Franciscan Order in Orddenshabit im Frankziskanerkloster z Malacka (Slowakei).

[88] Adam was not alone in his monastic calling; his cousin did become a Franciscan monk. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 39, 56.

[89] According to Walker, the ceremony held in the Franciscan monastery was a service that had been postponed for two years. In 1856 during Liszt's previous visit to Pest, the monastery decided to admit Liszt as an honorary member. The certificate naming Liszt as a "confrater" of the Order of St. Francis is dated June 23, 1857. Some sources confuse this piece of information, treating Liszt as if he had undertaken preparatory steps of training and studying to become a true member of the Third Order. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 491. These dates and interpretations conflict with those of Gajdoš, "War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?" 299–302, a more reliable source.

refused a salary when he accepted a position as the first president of the Budapest Music Academy.[90]

2.9.2: French Thought and its Influence

Paris in the 1830s was full of pessimistic sentiment in literature, predictions of the future, and new theological and philosophical theories. Many predictions were made about the future of the Church and the new societal order in France and in Europe. As Liszt confessed, he had never received a proper religious education, so to keep up with the newest ideas and to deepen his understanding of his surroundings, Liszt had to make decisions about his spirituality, so books on religious thought and devotion accompanied him everywhere he went. Before 1835, he enjoyed reading Abbé Félicité de Lamennais's *Paroles d'un croyant*.[91] Following his contact with the author as well as his involvement with the short-lived Saint-Simonian social movement,[92] Liszt published his 1835 essay "De la situation des artistes, et de leur condition dans la société" (On the Situation of Artists, and on Their Condition in Society), giving a humanistic touch to his emphasis on religious music.[93] In the essay, Liszt speculated about how Catholic church music in France could adapt to the needs of the people in a post-revolutionary era, stating that church music should connect to common people and break down the differences between classes and levels of education. In the same essay, Liszt also discussed musicians and their roles, including what they should do to respond to the changes in broader society, how musical education should

[90] He declined to serve as director for the academy because he did not speak Hungarian. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 288–289.

[91] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 132–133, 159.

[92] Papanikolaou, "Liszt and Religion," 165–166.

[93] The essay was written to echo Lamennais's working volumes of *Esquisse d'une philosophie*. Dolores Pesce, "Liszt's Sacred Choral Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 224. The translation of this essay can be found in Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 236–237. Papanikolaou, "Liszt and Religion," 168.

be popularized in the school systems, and how church music should be taught in a more universal way. Liszt constantly thought about a more progressive social order, the future direction of the Catholic Church, and the role of the artist in unstable times. He perceived a deeper responsibility for artists and musicians and always hoped to contribute meaningful music to the Catholic Church that not only exalted God, but also spoke directly to the worshipper's heart.

At the same time, he favored his collection of Pierre-Simon Ballanche's four-volume collected edition *Palingénésie* (Palingenesis).[94] When Liszt first moved to Geneva with Countess d'Agoult, Ballanche's *Palingénésie* was among the books he asked his mother to send from Paris. *Palingénésie* was Ballanche's proposal of a progressive Christian philosophy centered on a complex and mystical concept of a period with endings and new beginnings, of looking back to the past while looking to the future.[95] Later, when Liszt moved to Weimar, he requested Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints* and Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* to be shipped from Paris to his new home. With Lamennais, Ballanche, and Alphonse de Lamartine, with whom Liszt had close friendship and spent time together, Liszt shared common Romantic ideals towards religion influenced by the July Revolution of 1830.

Nurtured by these progressive Christian philosophies while in Paris, Liszt's musical perspective of looking back while looking forward was only recognized by later scholars

[94] Liszt exchanged many letters with Lamennais and even attended his summer retreat in St. Malo in Brittany. Between 1832 and 1835 in various letters to Countess d'Agoult, Liszt mentioned Ballanche's name and writing several times. He was also in contact with Ballanche and often gathered with him privately. Later when Liszt was relocated to Geneva, he wrote a letter to his mother requesting a list of books (including his private collections) to be sent to him. Ballanche and Lamartine were on this list. Franz Liszt and Comtesse Marie d'Agoult, *The Liszt-d'Agoult Correspondence: English Translations and Commentaries*, ed. and trans. Michael Short, Serge Gut, and Jacqueline Bellas (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2013), 12, 14, 46–48, 66–68, 252–253.

[95] Ballanche developed a Christian philosophy of progress to give meaning to the consequences of the political and religious doctrines. His believers wanted to reconcile the contradictions of post-revolutionary France by looking both at the times before and after and to create an alliance between the past and the future. See Dufetel, "La musique religieuse de Liszt.".

especially Frenchmen, who found this philosophy in the writings of Ballanche.[96] Liszt's great interest in philosophical debates and spiritual readings throughout his life corresponds to his compositional trajectory that reflects his search for spiritual attachment through music as an answer to the uncertainties prevailing in his nomadic existence.

2.9.3: Rome: The Sistine Chapel's Musical Practice and Liszt's Minor Orders

Liszt's early vision of 1835 on how church music in France should be regenerated together with the archival research he made after 1861 can be viewed as the height of his religious fulfillment.[97] His early vision in finding spiritual meaning in secular poetry that exalted demonic power and dark magic, and his later mission of writing music under the influence of the church liturgy, which resulted in the *Missa Choralis* and his setting of the Lord's Prayer,[98] show that Liszt intended to break down the boundaries set by old norms while finding new ways to invent new forms within the old.

Having learned to respect traditional mass movements and forms, Liszt aspired to more simplicity in themes, motives, and voice-leading and denied that liturgical music should incorporate any theatrical effects. He set some of his liturgical choral works in *a cappella* style, such as his *Missa Choralis* S. 10, which is in the style of Palestrina. Liszt's experiment with traditional theme-and-variation form, countrapuntal writing, and his quote of Bach's cantata theme and sung text can be observed in his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, completed in 1862. Liszt's experimentation with chant-like melody, modal harmonies, the *fauxbourdon*-like style of doubling thirds and sixths, and the style of polyphony of Palestrina

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[96] Ibid.

[97] For more discussion about a list of musical works Liszt wrote after he arrived in Rome, see Chapters 6 and 7.

[98] See Chapter 7.

with clear voice-entries are evident in his 1877 *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4. Intriguingly, Liszt never shied away from practicing his artistic freedom, crucial to his creativity, to quote side-by-side or incorporate new programs in his music that justified his new ideas for new forms, new designs for his themes, and new harmonic novelties as he searched for the infinite.

His Catholic belief together with his study of elements of religious music explained in Ortigue's liturgical dictionary[99] helped him to eschew musical trends of the day in favor of religious music. Nicolas Dufetel describes how Liszt incorporated Gregorian chant in his composing as a way of creating authentic church music and thereby expressing his Catholic faith and giving it a place in his French intellectual foundation. Liszt's approach to composing took account of the political and social aspects of the French reception of plainchant, and he was first of all a Catholic and a composer who seeks to use plainchant to render his modern music 'authentic', taking steps in which aesthetic and philosophical foundations could find their places in the middle of the post-revolutionary French intellectual life.[100] To give an example of Liszt's interest in connecting the church modes to the by then mysterious ancient Greek theory is that Nicolas Dufetel found on p. 112 in Liszt's manuscript, D-WRgs 60/N–4, his handcopied tetrachords associating the church modes with the planets of the universe written in their Latin names, "as if he was defining the characters of the modes."[101]

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[99] Ortigue published his research on Gregorian chant and church modes in 1852, the second edition was revised and published in 1857. Like Liszt, Ortigue was also a follower of Lamennais and Ballanche. In 1833, Pierre-Simon Ballanche published *Essaies de Pallingésie sociale.* See Dufetel, "La musique religieuse de Liszt," 363. At that time, Liszt had already read about Ortigue's research on chant. See footnotes 41 and 56–58 above.

[100] Dufetel, "Les sources français du plain-chant et de la Sainte Élisabeth de Liszt," 195.

[101] Ibid., 185. The association of pitches, intervals, scales, and modes with planets had a place in music theory from ancient Greece until and including the writings of Johannes Kepler.

It was a permanent conflict, an intense inner struggle, and a large gap between the influences from traditional sacred texts and the human emotions and desires described in Liszt's secular literary inspirations and resulting from his inner spiritual world that was a consequence of his exceptionally eventful life trajectory. The drive to re-*form* and re-*generate* traditions prevailed in Liszt's lifetime. While he searched for musical expressions, he continued to reshape and refine his musical language according to his artistic ideals in genres of sacred and secular music.

2.10: Departure, Conflict, and Rebirth in Liszt's Musical Language

Liszt travelled widely. His trips and relocations from Hungary to Austria, Paris, Switzerland, Italy, Weimar, Rome, and Budapest marked influential geographical departures. The concepts of departure and conflict, manifested in those external movements and internal conflicts, and in comparable musical manifestations, such as the resulting tension found within Liszt's complex harmonies, themes associated with moods, modified forms, and a rebirth of musical language, can be traced throughout Liszt's compositional evolution. Liszt's creativity was a realization of his father's initial decision to depart Hungary with his son in pursuit of the boy's artistic future.

Christianity served Liszt as home, solace, spiritual refuge, and space for achieving artistic transcendence. His departures, major influences, and life experiences appeared as external factors at first, but were then deeply internalized in his *magic circle*, a sanctuary where Liszt creatively transformed his inner struggle and suffering into music. His inner, spiritual *magic circle* enabled him to continue to be highly individual, believing that he could not be confined within the Church. This mindset was manifested in his continuous travel between Rome, Weimar, and Budapest after 1869. Rome, where Princess Carolyne lived until the end of her life,

would become Liszt's spiritual center. Weimar was one place where Liszt achieved his main musical goals and where he also promoted new music and taught students. His appointment to serve as the music director of the music academy in Budapest provided an association with his homeland that, being a foreign expatriate, he held close to his heart.

As a result, each of the five selected piano works reflects a specific tension, carries a piece of his life story, and provides answers to his life's questions in his musical language. My analyses in the following chapters demonstrate how Liszt's departure from his native land, his many other relocations, the resulting conflicts and changes in his career, and personal relationships that challenged him spiritually and musically, ended with a reconciled Roman Catholic faith and rebirth of his musical language. The chapters include discussions of compositions that provide evidence for the idea of rebirth as the metaphor that best describes Liszt's artistic growth. These examples also show how breakthroughs and changes in his career influenced his personalized musical language. I address the origins and the special design of Liszt's themes and motives, the implications of his choice of scales and keys, and how he varies and transforms his themes and motives to unite the programmatic or extramusical references within each piece. The musical analyses also illustrate the struggles Liszt went through to change his compositional style. The compositional techniques Liszt would create, such as one-movement form, thematic transformations, and innovative harmonies, resulted in new sounds that at times challenged the audiences of the day. The goal of the musical analyses of his works here is to give performers a set of tools for interpreting his music in ways that reflect his original intentions, as can arguably be deduced from his biography and writings, as well as analysis of his music.

Chapter 3: Introduction and the First of Five Piano Works

3.1: Literary Influences on Liszt's Piano Compositions

Liszt read a variety of literature, which he quotes, and which inspired the literary programs he represented in his compositions. He returned to many of these literary inspirations, such as Dante's *Divina Commedia*, religious texts such as Alphonse de Lamartine's *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, texts from the Bible or Gregorian chant, Goethe's *Faust*, and Nikolaus Lenau's *Faust: Ein Gedicht*, throughout his life. Ben Arnold described Liszt's creative use of literature in this way:

> In literature, philosophy, and religion Liszt searched for answers, for ideas, for great thoughts. He never said he could not live without music, but he did say he could not live without Goethe and Dante. No wonder he told August Stradal that "I always took Goethe's *Faust* and the *Divina Commedia* with me when traveling, and that without these masterworks, which I read over and again, I could not live…No work, had brought about such a revolution in my views as did Goethe's *Faust*."[1]

Madame Auguste Boissier, a loyal supporter whose daughter studied under Liszt in his early years in Paris, valued Liszt's avid reading as a young and promising musician:

> Provided with exceptional intellectual ability, he is going to take giant steps in this career because he chose the right way…he quotes many things; he is well read; he has understood well and remembers well. He told me that, having skimmed books fruitlessly for a long time, he started to read them in a different way: to read over again what seemed to be important, to compare the works among themselves—and finally he thought that he was using the right method. In literature as well as in music, he is the same man.[2]

The inspiration Liszt derived from literature is evident in the titles he gave to his compositions, the extramusical references he made, his themes and characters inspired by literature, and the text in his opening quotations printed between or written in the musical scores. Five case studies

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[1] Arnold, "Liszt as Reader, Intellectual, and Musician," 37–60.

[2] Mme. Auguste Boissier, *The Liszt Studies: Essential Selections from the Original 12-Volume Set of Technical Studies for the Piano, Including the First English Edition of the Legendary Liszt Pédagogue, a Lesson-Diary of the Master as a Teacher, as Kept by Mme. Auguste Boissier, 1831–32*, ed. and trans. Elyse Mach (New York: Associated Music Publishers, 1973), xix.

reveal these literary influences on his compositional methods. The works discussed are *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata; Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude; Erster Mephisto-Walzer* (here Mephisto Waltz No. 1)*; Variationen über das Motiv "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen";* and *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este.*

In Liszt's 1842 preface to the *Album d'un voyageur*, he referred to two main sources of inspiration: paganism (meaning ancient Greek mythology) and Christianity (central in much literature in nineteenth-century France).[3] Around this time, he also started drafting some musical sketches, which would later become part of his symphonic poems, and a series of orchestral works based on literary characters and stories, with titles such as *Tasso*, *Orpheus*, *Prometheus*, *Mazeppa*, *Hamlet*, as well as others.[4] As Tibor Szász suggested, Liszt's harmonic choices support his musical conceptions of the divine and the diabolical. For example, based on Szász's analysis, the diabolical side spurred Liszt's imaginative use of dissonant harmonies such as tritones and diminished seventh chords. By contrast, the divine side was inspired by his interest in earlier church music and can be found in his use of church modes and chant-inspired melodies and motives, which he evoked with pentatonic, hexatonic (or whole-tone), and chromatic scales in his compositions. However, it is only with a thorough understanding of what inspired each harmonic and thematic element that Liszt incorporated into his musical language and of the connections he drew between his textual inspirations and his music that his program and the layers of his harmony and proportions of his forms can become clear. The expressive layers and intended spiritual messages were of equal importance to Liszt. The details to support these claims follow in each section of analysis below.

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[3] Kregor, *Program Music,* 100. See also, Chapter 2, section 2.4, footnote 38.
[4] Ibid., 105.

One example of Liszt's use of the Latin text of the Gospel of John 4:14 underscores the importance of God's salvation of humanity shown in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*. Liszt also used arpeggios to represent an immersive, fluid, and vaporous watery atmosphere, symbolizing the eternal life received due to Christ's salvation.

> "Sed aqua quam ego dabo ei, fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam" ["But whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty. The water that I will give him will become a spring of water within him welling up to eternal life."][5]

In the same work of 1877, to evoke church music, Liszt used Palestrina's style of simple imitation with clear entries of each voice and harmonized his themes in church modes or consonant harmonies as he had done in some of his programmatic choral works written around the same time.[6] Similarly, the peace and joy of a man with renewed faith are described in the first stanza of the poem *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* written by the French poet Lamartine, which is quoted in Liszt's preface to his final published musical version of *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*:

> "D'où me vient, ô mon Dieu! Cette paix qui m'inonde?
> D'où me vient cette foi dont mon cœur surabonde?
> …Un nouvel homme en moi renaît et recommence."
> ["Whence comes to me, O my God, this peace that overwhelms me?
> Whence comes this faith in which my heart abounds?
> …A new man is born again within me and starts anew."]

In this work, Liszt develops melodies and rhythms to match the lyrical expression and singing quality of Lamartine's lyric poetry (mm. 1–39). With strong Catholic emphasis, Liszt also expressed his elevated religious sentiment by placing himself in the music, representing

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[5] English translation from Catholic Biblical Association of America, *Saint Joseph Edition of the New American Bible*, ed. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Bishops' Committee, trans. Catholic Biblical Association of America, Saint Joseph ed. (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1970), 1494.

[6] Demonstrating Liszt's acquired techniques of incorporating church modes and Palestrina's style of imitation is his *Missa Choralis* composed in 1865, the year when he received the four Minor Orders in Rome. His late choral music bears similar traits. See Chapter 2, section 2.9.3.

Lamartine's first-person text with his song-like melodies. In mm. 179–222, Liszt further associated his title, "Bénédiction" (a liturgical blessing) with the Trinity through his use of triple meter, three-note descents, intervals of thirds, and first-inversion chords with thirds and sixths.

In the beginning of his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (mm. 18–26), Liszt chose the crying, descending-second motif from J. S. Bach's cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, BWV 12, to illustrate mourning and the deeply felt pain for the dead. Bach had used its basso ostinato motif for the 'Crucifixus' in the Credo of his Mass in B minor. Liszt concluded his *Variations* S. 180 (mm. 320–335) with the uplifting Lutheran chorale, "Was Gott tut, das ist wohl getan [what God does, is done well]," to contrast with the crying motives of the opening. Liszt, in the middle of his work (mm. 217–246), through musical dialogues and modulations, transforms and transcends Bach's themes of crying, mourning, grief, and sorrowful tears. Liszt also emphasizes the sighing motif, punctuated by rests, to produce a musical image of Bach's *Thränenbrot* (broken bread)[7] representing Christ's broken body and the Eucharist, which was shared by believers, to be followed by Liszt's use of Bach's joyful ending of the Lutheran chorale.

To signify the spiritual distance between hell and heaven in *Après une lecture de Dante*, Liszt extended his color palette from darkest to brightest in dynamics and pitch, encompassing the entire range of the keyboard to provide the colossal differences in colors and dynamics: in mm. 32–34: pianissimo, mm. 103–115: triple forte, mm. 157–166: triple piano, and mm. 225–246: triple forte. To express the pain, struggle, and suffering he felt after reading Dante's *Inferno*, Liszt invented an extended pedal effect in mm. 35–39 to blur a series of descending

[7] See Chapter 6, footnote 36.

chromatic scales in octaves, thus with fast repetitive motions, to create a mood of agitation and a dark ambience. This technique effectively illustrated sinking into hell.

In *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* (mm. 111–118 and mm. 341–348), Liszt used merry and seductive themes to depict the devilish figure Mephistopheles and applied exciting rhythms to portray dancing at a wedding banquet. He also presented sudden modulations within the same phrase, constructed motivic variants in sequences and repetitions, and assigned different keys to the thematic return to lend power to and unfold the magic of the devilish themes while keeping the plot moving forward. In his *Après une lecture de Dante*, *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* and *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,* Liszt used rests, shifts of the downbeat, fermatas, recitatives or cadential passages, and rhythmic instability to suggest dramatic movement or visual effects.[8] Through varied compositional tools, such as themes, motives, melodies, and musical illustrations of atmosphere, Liszt reminded his listeners of certain distinctive roles, figures, emotions expressed in the poetry—narrative qualities that can be linked to their original literary sources—and reflected his shifting struggles with faith and doubt.[9]

Liszt's harmonic novelties were created to reflect his extramusical or programmatic influences, and later when he composed music based on sacred texts, his musical language reflected church music in a new way. Liszt created a new 'cosmos' out of a mixture of tonal and modal harmonies and many types of scales, combined tonal and modal harmonies, experimented with authentic, plagal, and modal cadences, and chose his unique style of writing dissonance or

[8] Liszt's creative sonorities were programmatic and designed to resonate with listeners in multiple ways, including through sound mimicking (e.g., nightingale, loud fiddle, cries, and sighing effects), sound picturing and movement (e.g., water flowing, soul bearing, sinking into hell, ascending to heaven), and finally, reaching the sound ideal, a philosophical state that corresponds to the level of awakening brought on by his literary inspirations and life experiences.

[9] Dolores Pesce, *Liszt's Final Decade* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 120.

consonance to represent emotional conflict or emotional resolution.[10] He also introduced elements of his personal style of unexpected modulations and unusual harmonic progressions. Liszt's new approach to church music meant prolonging harmonic tension to such an extent that any sense of tonality was blurred beyond recognition.

His extramusical inspirations were the first influences on the themes and melodies he composed. Over time, he refined and restructured these elements using new forms and structural devices, of which he pushed their limits to express the full scope of his imagination. His compositional techniques were also shaped by his use of quoted texts.

Liszt acknowledged the past by adapting some existing organizational techniques, such as linking different sections within one movement or modulating across large sections of the movement using third relationships.[11] But he also invented new ways to unite themes with a variety of returning elements that had been changed by different means of transformation. At the same time, Liszt moved into unknown musical territory by seeking unconventional sonorities that could capture the essence of the Divine or of demonic influences and power.

The centrality of his Catholic faith was mostly reflected in his quoted program texts, but he further extended his theological understanding into the structure of a composition by applying his principles of revision and creation of thematic features, as well as through his programmatic subjects of sin and redemption, the fall of man and salvation, and Satan and Christ/God.[12] His

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[10] Serge Gut, "L'harmonie consonante," and "Critères généraux d'analyse pour l'harmonie dissonante" in *Franz Liszt: Les éléments du langage musical* (Bourg-la-Reine: Editions Aug. Zurfluh, 2008), 146–160, 161–164.

[11] As Ludwig van Beethoven linked separate sonata movements into a single movement in his E-flat major Piano Sonata, Op. 27, No. 1, so did Franz Schubert for his Wanderer Fantasy in C major, Op. 15. Making modulations through the third interval (through the mediant) was favored by Franz Schubert and became a common technique in his compositions.

[12] Liszt intended his audience to experience effects like those of watching a play in a theatre. He accomplished the drama through a detailed work of combining word and music by illustrating atmosphere, imitating speaking tones, and expressing literary characters through his musical themes.

compositions were shaped and given nuance by the literary sources from which he drew his inspiration.

3.2: Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata, S. 161, No. 7

Liszt's interest in the demonic and his musical compositions that depict death, such as his *Totentanz,* demonstrate shared musical patterns and elements that can be traced back to his immediate compositional predecessors, who also contributed to the establishment of the demonic musical genre. Section 3.2.1 shows that both the eighteenth-century Mozart and the nineteenth-century Berlioz conceived their own musical devices that effectively dramatized demonic and dark forces in a large-scale staged opera (*Don Giovanni*) and a symphony (*Symphonie fantastique*) respectively. Section 3.2.2 shows that Liszt's initial attraction to Dante's *Divina Commedia* came first as a result of his superficial reading and interpretation of it. He would extract specific words and lines from Dante's poetry that carried emotional power. As is argued in Section 3.2.3, only when Liszt experienced emotional struggle in his relationship with Countess d'Agoult and found himself in an emotional state like that of Dante's *Inferno* could he develop a more complex musical interpretation of Dante's work. Section 3.2.4 shows that Liszt's feelings not only resulted in personal expression within his music, but also gave Liszt a renewed motivation to compose *Fragment nach Dante*, a new spiritually influenced piano work that conveyed powerful contrasts and evoked many emotions from its audience. Section 3.2.5 includes a comparison of the review of his concert in Vienna in 1839 with Walter Bache's program notes for Liszt's concert of 1877. Both notice that in Liszt's musical setting of *Dante*, most emotions and characters seemed to be evoked by Dante's *Inferno*.

The final section of this chapter examines Liszt's revisions to *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7, after 1847, which shows that the programmatic influence served as a starting point to Liszt's composition, and that Liszt continued to refine his writing techniques. The final musical features in the published version of *Après une lecture de*

Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata, S. 161, No. 7, contain very few traces of the original poetry. Through Liszt's thematic transformation, modified sonata idea, and one-movement form, the final version shows that despite its retaining the original thematic features, whole-tone influences, and unstable harmony, the final musical form moves further away from Dante's text.

3.2.1: Liszt's Inspirations for Demonic Music: Mozart and Berlioz

Derek Scott argues that the musical devices and elements associated with Mozart's depiction of the demonic in *Don Giovanni* saturated Liszt's writing of demonic music and that later, "Liszt added even more of his own."[13] In 1839, the same year when Liszt played his newly-composed *Fragment nach Dante* in a series of live concerts, he also occupied himself with his transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies and worked with operatic themes from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, act 2, scene 5, which led to the completion of his *Reminiscences de Don Juan* in 1841.[14]

Indeed, the motif and the first theme in Liszt's early versions of *Dante* hearkens back to Mozart's dramatic depictions of hell. For example, Liszt reproduced tritones, diminished seventh chords in *fortissimo*, dissonances, and chromaticism to evoke instability, suffering, and darkness, as Mozart also used D minor, chromatic scales, and diminished seventh chords in his opera.[15]

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[13] [13] Derek B. Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic: On Critical Musicology* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), 129.

[14] An edition of this composition is Franz Liszt, *Réminiscences de Don Juan: Konzert-Fantasie über Motive aus Mozarts Don Giovanni: für das Pianoforte* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996). Both Walker and Burger referenced the *Don Juan Fantasie* and dated the work to 1839. See Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 113.

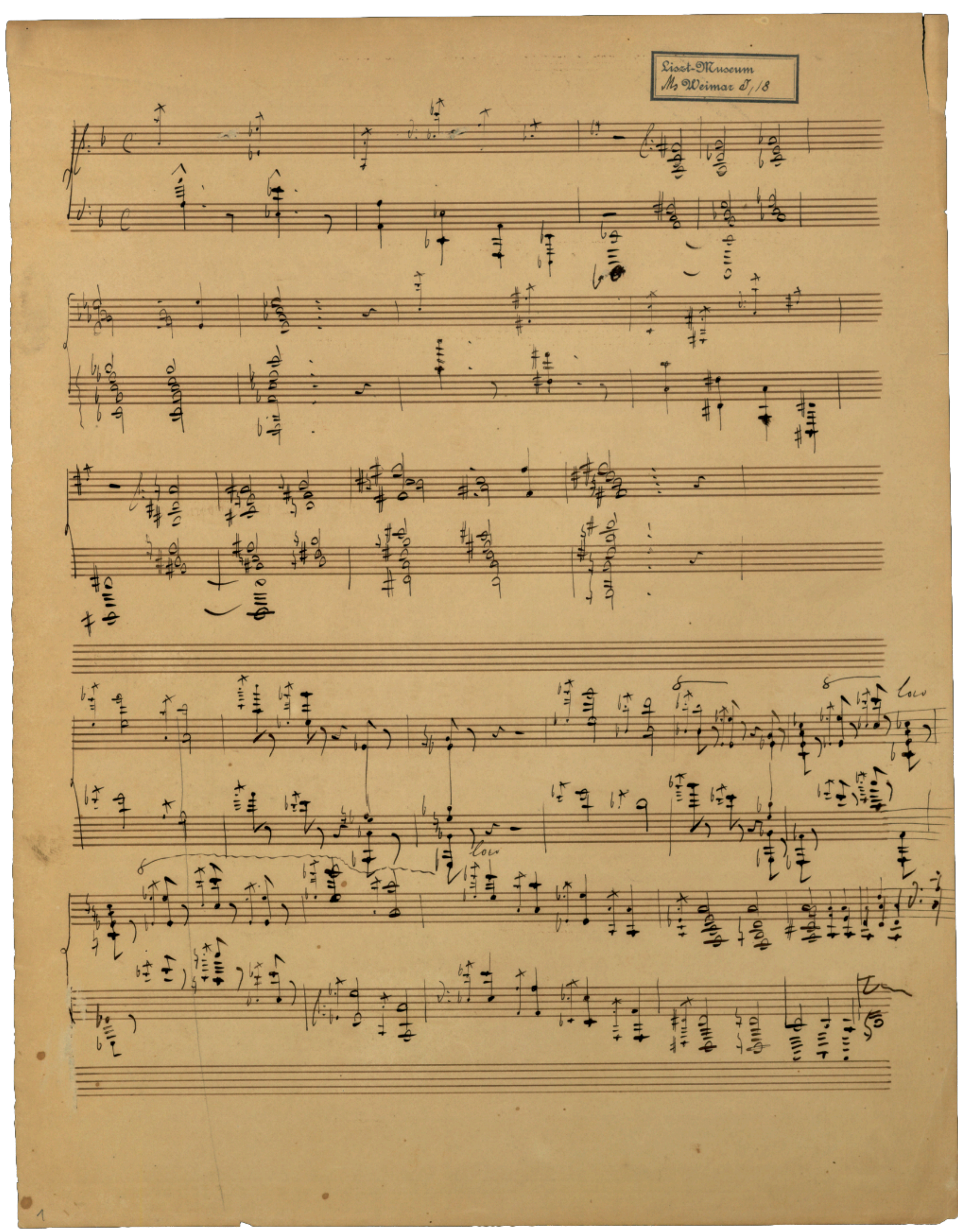
[15] As Derek Scott describes, "Seeking out demonic devices in act 2, scene 5 of *Don Giovanni*, we find a *fortissimo* diminished chord (with prominent trombones) at the sudden appearance of Commendatore, then dissonances, syncopations, chromaticism, even the tritone), an insistent rhythm, a slow chantlike delivery by Commendatore, tritones after his second call for Don Giovanni to repent, and a slithering bass line. Liszt produced his *Reminiscences of Don Juan* in 1841, making much use of the Commendatore's music of act 2." Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic*, 128.

The series of tritones that Liszt created at the beginning of his *Fragment nach Dante* were already present in the earliest surviving sketches of (Illustration 3.1 and Figure 3.1).[16]

Figure 3.1: Opening tritones in Franz Liszt's *Dante Fragment*, S. 701e, mm. 1–12

[16] Medieval theorists recognized the tritone as a dissonance, but the expression diabolus in musica ("the devil in music") is modern. its first use has not been determined. Use of the word "tritonus" dates from the eleventh century. Lexicon musicum Latinum, s.v. "tritonus," https://woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=LmL#1 I thank Barbara Haggh-Huglo for this information.

Illustration 3.1: "Skizzen zur Dante-Sonate", the earliest surviving fragment of "Après une lecture de Dante," in "Années de Pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: Italie," Nr. 7 (D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–18, Blatt 1. Image included by permission from Weimar, Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv.



In addition to the shared demonic musical devices found in Mozart's opera, Liszt's *Dante* symphony also shows the significant influence of Dante's poetry, particularly two quotations from Canto 3 and Canto 5, which illustrate Dante's descent to the underworld in the first movement of his *Dante Symphony*. In the first movement, titled *Inferno*, the opening motif found in the orchestral trombone part ends with a melodic tritone on G sharp, accompanied by a shocking timpani accent sounding in m. 4 and m. 8 (Figure 3.2). This moment corresponds to Canto 3, verses 1 and 2, followed by the quoted text of Canto 23, verse 9, "Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'entrate" ["All hope abandon, ye who enter in!"], which is given at the concluding phrase, played by trumpets and horns in unison (Figure 3.3). Then, the following chromatic descending theme depicts Hell after Dante enters its lower level (Figure 3.4).

Liszt even had a version of the *Dante Symphony* in his portfolio in the early 1840s, demonstrating that Liszt's sound imagination and the influence of his idea of the underworld on it was ahead of its time. The composition was originally intended to be accompanied by lantern slides of scenes from the Divine Comedy and to include an experimental wind machine at the end of the first movement to represent the winds of Hell, but these plans failed for want of financing, so the symphony was set aside until 1856.[17]

[17] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 50.

Figure 3.2: Tritone formed between the lower brass and string instruments and the percussion in mm. 3–4 and mm. 7–8 in Franz Liszt's *Dante Symphony*, S. 109, first movement, mm. 1–8.

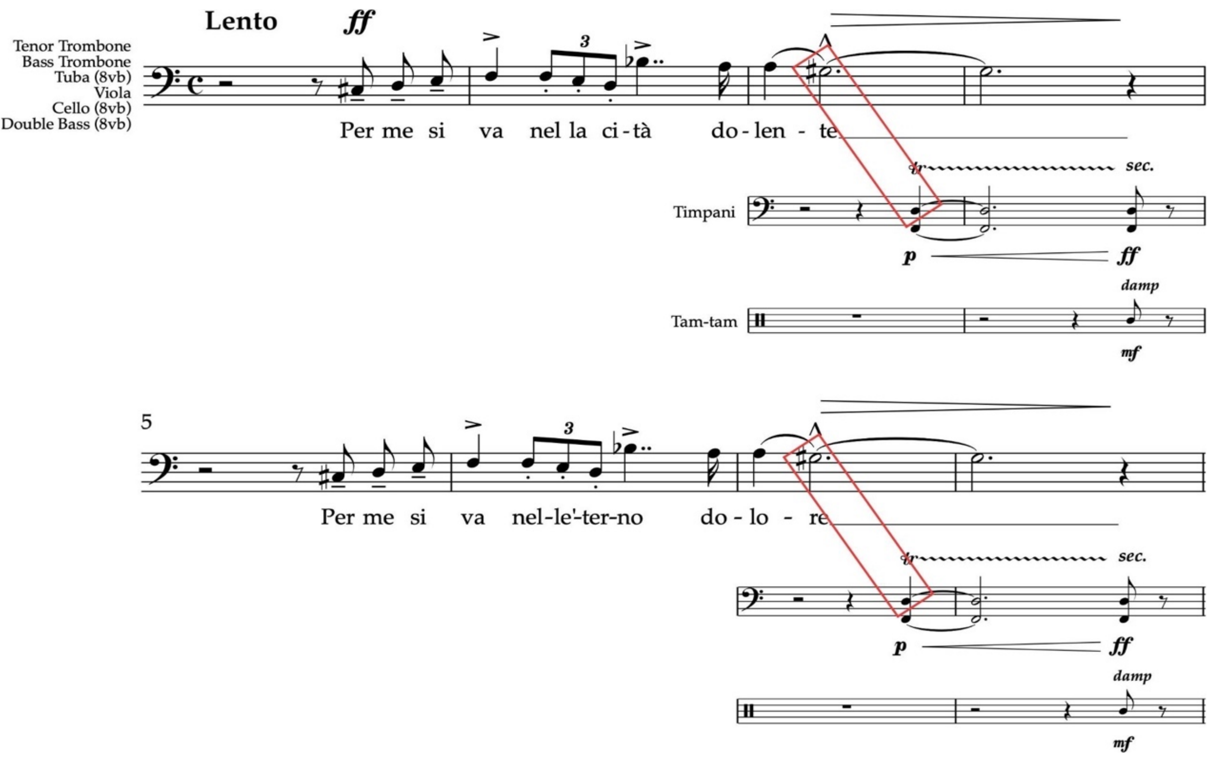
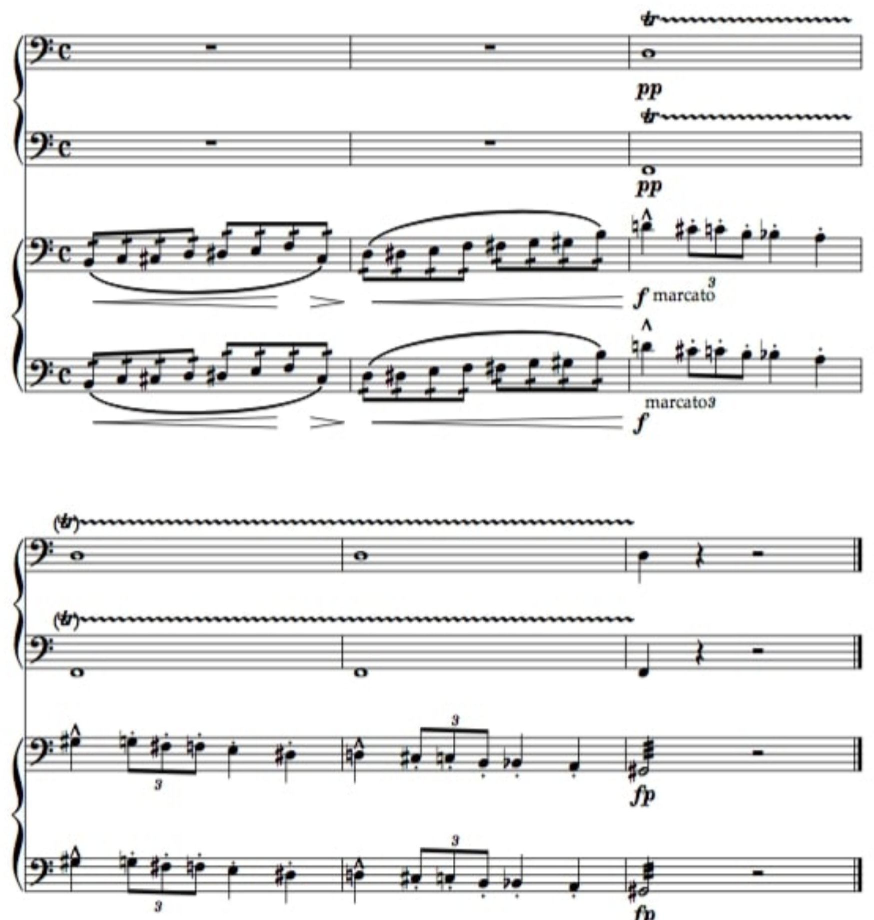


Figure 3.3: Concluding phrase of "abandoned hope" in Franz Liszt's *Dante Symphony*, S. 109, first movement, mm. 12–17, the repeating octaves are played by trumpets and horns with Dante's text written in Liszt's music.

Figure 3.4: Franz Liszt's *Dante Symphony*, S. 109, first movement, mm. 20–25, with chromatic descent to Hell in mm. 22–25.



Berlioz's extramusical program of his *Symphonie fantastique: épisode de la vie d'un artiste* (1830) significantly influenced Liszt's concept of writing program music when he was in Paris.[18] The two musicians even forged a lifelong friendship.[19] Berlioz's groundbreaking symphonic piece is believed to have influenced Liszt to compose music with a written guide to the program because Berlioz was the first person to write a symphony with program notes. Berlioz prepared and printed the notes for the concertgoers, who were required to read them

[18] Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* is a large-scale programmatic work consisting of five symphonic movements with a story connecting the movements.

[19] Liszt, *Correspondance*, eds. Knepper and Huré, 55.

before the concert started. *Symphonie fantastique* premiered in Paris and Liszt attended.[20] Later, Liszt even transcribed the symphony for solo piano.[21] In the last movement of *Symphonie fantastique*, "Dream of a Witches' Sabbath," Berlioz was the first to take the chant melody of *Dies irae* that was sung for the Requiem mass as his demonic musical device to illustrate the psychological destruction of a secular love story. Derek Scott claims that Liszt admired the way Berlioz subordinated musical structure to the poetic idea rather than cultivating "form for form's sake."[22]

In his *Symphonie fantastique*, Berlioz presented what he called his *idée fixe*, a repeating thematic melody representing various characters. Berlioz's *idée fixe* made it possible for him to vary that single melody to represent many different moods throughout his work, thus creating a new means of narrative in music. The *idée fixe*, because it appears in different movements, also enhances unity. Liszt developed his own way of transforming themes and melodies, which can be observed in his later revisions of material from the early sketches of *Dante* to construct his one-movement form.

3.2.2: Liszt's Feelings About Dante Alighieri in His Youth

The dramatic and emotional impact Dante's *Inferno* had on Liszt is recorded as early as 1832. At the time, the young Liszt was living in Paris mainly on an income received from private tutoring for upper-class families. Madame Auguste Boissier took notes to assist her daughter

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[20] "Among Liszt's intimates during the post-revolutionary period was Hector Berlioz. The two musicians first met on December 4, 1830. The following day Liszt attended the first performance of Berlioz's Fantastic symphony at the Paris Conservatorie and was struck with the power and originality of that seminal work." See Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 178.

[21] Liszt transcribed Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* for piano in 1833, giving it the title of "Episode de la vie d'un artiste: Grande symphonie fantastique par Hector Berlioz, arrangé pour pianoforte", S. 470, first published in 1836 (Vienna: Trentsensky & Vieweg, [1836]). The most recent published score can be accessed in the public domain via https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ReverseLookup/774275.

[22] Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic*, 128.

Valérie during Liszt's private lessons. In her seventeenth lesson taken on February 21, 1832, Mme. Boissier made the following observations:

> Liszt had my daughter play Kessler's exercises on [sic] octaves which, in my opinion, is far beyond her technical capacity. He compares this exercise to Dante's *Inferno*…as he wants the mechanics of this exercise [to be] played with flexibility and sharpness. The octaves must be quite full, quite clear, and attacked most of the time with extraordinary vigor. The expression of this composition is fury, horror, indignation, vengeance, delirium. One needs a Herculean wrist to render all this.[23]

Madame Boissier's comments show how Liszt associated the literary subject of *Dante* with dark emotions even during his private teaching in Paris in his early years. Liszt's connection between a fantastic world of imagination, Dante's *Inferno*, and musical techniques in piano performance is exactly what he would later explore in his musical depiction of Dante.

Dante's image as saint, poet, and prophet influenced Liszt throughout his life. His reactions to Dante's language permeate Liszt's writings and music. In fact, Adrian Williams suggests that the three greatest historical influences on Liszt were St. Francis of Assisi, Dante Alighieri, and Ludwig van Beethoven.[24] Dante's influence shaped Liszt's emotional program, the design of his themes, and his harmonic language in *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*.

3.2.3: Liszt's Relationship with Countess d'Agoult's and the Genesis of *Dante*

On November 15, 1864, Liszt wrote his last letter to the Countess d'Agoult, which contains references to Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Liszt wrote:

> While continuing to be impatient to get to know the next part of your dialogue on Dante and Goethe…I resign myself to waiting…You know that the same poetic sources have strongly captivated me and that I have also occupied myself with them as they appeared to me[,] in the motivation of Music and my own. If it should happen that my symphony on the 'Divina Commedia' or that which Goethe's Faust made me write are performed in Paris, I would ask you to hear them and take your pleasure in them with patience…[25]

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[23] Boissier, *The Liszt Studies*, trans. Mach, xviii.
[24] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 590.
[25] Liszt, *The Liszt-d'Agoult Correspondence*, 421–422.

Dante's *Divina Commedia* had been one of their literary interests discussed when their relationship began and developed in Paris. However, Sharon Winklhofer argues that Liszt and the Countess's perception of Dante's story was only superficial. They understood it as a Romantic tale of love and heroism. She writes,

> But it seems clear that for many years they shared only a superficial understanding of the work. The Dante they revered in the formative years of their relationship [1833–1835] was neither the visionary poet nor the political exile, but rather the thwarted lover in the Beatrice sonnets of *La Vita Nuova*. And this perception originated not from an immersion in the sonnets themselves but rather from more general secondary literature, literature which revived the ideals of courtly love and promoted Dante as an idealized hero.[26]

Winklhofer argues that due to the nature of their liaison, it made them more "conscious" of their expectations of each other, and of whether or not their relationship would last. Winklhofer explains that "an important aspect of the Romantic conception of love was its stress on love as a transcendent state of experience" and "for Dante, Beatrice was an immortal goddess of Theological Wisdom in the *Comedy.*" Therefore, the historical "Dante–Beatrice" appeared as an "unusually sensitive" relationship model for the couple. The psychological pressure of that couple's unusual relationship thus caught their attention, but Liszt and d'Agoult only began to read Dante more deeply and as literature once their love affair began to decline.[27]

Winklhofer's interpretation differs from that of Liszt's pupil and biographer Lina Ramann. Winklhofer writes, "rather than being the product of a buocolic 1837 idyll on the shores of Lake Como… the work actually belongs to a boldly outlined complex of pieces conceived later, during a period of personal and creative crisis."[28] By studying Liszt and Countess

[26] Sharon Winklhofer, "Liszt, Marie d'Agoult, and the 'Dante' Sonata," *19th-Century Music* 1, no. 1 (1977): 21–22.

[27] Winklhofer, "Liszt, Marie d'Agoult, and the 'Dante' Sonata," 22. Though Winklhofer argues, "The Dante they revered in the formative period of their relationship [1833–1835] was neither the visionary poet nor the political exile…" she states on 23, "There is no direct mention of Dante or the Comedy in the Liszt-d'Agoult correspondence, from 1833–1835." Ibid.," 23.

[28] Ibid., 16.

d'Agoult's correspondence and their individual diaries, and by comparing the dates and locations recorded during their travels in Italy to Ramann's biography, Winklhofer found five major errors in the latter, epecially for the time before Liszt began to compose *Dante*. As a result, it is now clear that Ramann associated Liszt's psychological condition with an incorrect evaluation of his artistic motivation to compose *Dante* and its genesis.[29]

Just before Liszt began composing *Dante*, he experienced heightened tension and conflict in his relationship with the Countess d'Agoult. In the spring of 1838, Liszt left their family to play charity concerts for the victims of the Danube floods in Hungary, believing it to be the perfect opportunity to use his talent for the benefit of his people. In a letter to his friend Massart, Liszt described his charity concerts as an emotional awakening and reconnection with the land of his birth.[30] The public-facing Liszt was not who the Countess d'Agoult favored, however. She wanted to keep him close to her, fulfilling her ideal image of family and lover, but, as Winklhofer notes, "the vow of fidelity was a *sine qua non* for the integrity of the Dante-Beatrice ideal, and once Liszt revealed his weakness, the artificial construct was in danger of collapse."[31]

Not until their relationship began to deteriorate was Liszt pushed to process all his feelings of emotional pain and conflict, and to reconcile the tension between his family obligations and artistic calling. This pushed him to pursue his personal freedom and exploration of Catholic doctrines, and to draft his musical thoughts in his *Fragment nach Dante*, where he included more explicit references to Dante. While in Lugano on August 2, 1838, Liszt wrote in his diary a more autobiographical "Dantesque identification,"[32] stating:

[29] Ibid., 16–20.
[30] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, trans. Suttoni, 138–144.
[31] Winklhofer, "Liszt, Marie d'Agoult, and the 'Dante' Sonata," 26.
[32] "Dantesque identification" was according to Winklhofer's words. See Winklhofer, "Liszt, Marie d'Agoult, and the 'Dante' Sonata," 26.

> There is a storm in the air; my nerves are irritated, horribly irritated. I took for a prey. I feel the claws of eagle within my breast; my tongue is withered. Two contrary forces struggle within me: one thrusts me into the infinitude of outer space, farther and always farther beyond all the suns and all the heavens; the other pulls me down to the lowest, darkest regions of peace, death, nonexistence. And I stay nailed to my chair, equally miserable about my strength and weakness, not knowing what will become of me…For my interior eye would not know how to turn itself away from these images of desolation, this profound disillusion which hovers over my entire destiny…
>
> To live, to think, to speak, perhaps to act.
> I am like the She-Wolf in Dante:
> …*Che di tutte brame,*
> *Sembiava carca nella sua magrezza*.
> [And a she-wolf, that with all hungerings
> Seemed to be laden in her meagreness.][33]

Winklhofer also cites another significant entry in Liszt's "Journal des Zÿi," which was made in February 1839 when Liszt mentioned a group of works "directly inspired as much by the visual arts as by literature."[34] Liszt wrote,

> If I feel within me the strength and life, I will attempt a symphonic composition based on Dante, then another on Faust—within three years—meanwhile I will make three sketches: the *Triumph of Death* (Orcagna), the *Comedy of Death* (Holbein), and a *Fragment dantesque*. The *Pensieroso* also bewitches me.[35]

Further compositional circumstances of the *Fragment dantesque* are recorded and mentioned by both Winklhofer and Walker. Six months following Liszt's revelation of his ambitious compositional plan, on September 26, 1839, the Countess wrote to Henri Lehmann, "*Le bravo suonatore* began this morning a *Fragment dantesque* which is sending him to the very Devil. He is so consumed by it that he won't go to Naples in order to be able to complete this work (destined to remain in his sketch portfolio!)." Winklhofer also writes: "three months after the original version was written, the *Fragment dantesque* received its first public hearing in one of

[33] Translation by author. Liszt's quotation of Dante's *Inferno* was taken from Canto I, 1.49–50. Liszt's diary entry was kept in his "Journal des Zÿi," published intact in d'Agoult's memoirs and cited by Winklhofer in ibid., 26.
[34] Ibid., 27.
[35] Cited in ibid., 27, and in Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 92.

the six morning concerts he gave in the Vienna marathon between November 15 and December 14."[36]

The first documented live performance of *Fragment dantesque* occurred in 1839 and was performed by Liszt, after which time he spent some twenty years drafting and revising it. Though *Après une lecture de Dante: "Fantasia quasi Sonata,"* S. 161, No. 7, is the published version, it is important to take a close look at the 1839 version. The Viennese concert audience and music critics responded to Liszt's 1839 version of *Fragment nach Dante* with strong reactions after their first hearing, which suggest that many possible programmatic interpretations could be the cause. As the following section explores, the music of *Fragment nach Dante* can be interpreted in association with Dante's original poetry.

3.2.4: The Strong Programmatic Association to Dante's *Inferno*: The First Performances of Liszt's 1839 *Fragment nach Dante* in Vienna and Walter Bache's 1877 Program Notes for *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7, in London

As the early sources suggest, Liszt's first approach to *Dante* may be considered a series of intuitive and vague musical reactions to Dante's epic poem, *Divina Commedia*, which resulted in a confused, mixed reception by the audience present at Liszt's premiere of the composition. The extramusical influence on *Dante*'s genesis was, nevertheless, clearly heard by the audience at this concert and is expressed in the writings of the Viennese concert critics.

Liszt's *Fragment nach Dante* brought an immediate programmatic association with many possible interpretations linked to Dante's literary themes, not only Dante's Hell, but also other demonic characters and figures from the *Divina Commedia*. His critics and listeners noted the great dynamic contrast, marking the "power and boldness, aphoristic in touch, grandioso effects"

[36] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 275. Winklhofer, "Liszt, Marie d'Agoult, and the 'Dante' Sonata," 29.

of the performance.[37] The reviews suggest that the work was avant-garde, even chaotic, lacking a coherent thematic structure and development, and sounding like strange French music to the German audience.

The *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung* critic Heinrich Adami wrote the following on December 7, 1839, after the Vienna premiere of *Fragment Dantesque*:

> About the concert by Mr. Liszt, this time he began with the performance of a very peculiar piece of music of his own composition, which he called, “Fragment after Dante” … A short program would certainly have been very desirable to achieve better understanding of such a fantastic piece, which is capable of so many interpretations. The whole thing seemed to me approximately like an improvisation, to which Liszt felt enthusiastic after (his) reading of the ‘Divine Comedy,’ an aggregate of colorfully-mixed (motley) ideas chasing each other, often quickly breaking off, exchanging one mood with another, bold in designs, aphoristic in execution, overall very close to the character of the new-romantic school, as this school developed itself in France...Incidentally, this fragment in some details contains beautiful and grandiose effects. [38]

Karl Tausenau, also an *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung* critic, wrote about Liszt’s *Fragment nach Dante* on February 25, 1840:

> This strange and spirit-full tone-painting sounds like part of the French Romantic school…for me, the music is also an independent text (script) and not marginal notes of one’s program…So, regarding Liszt’s “Fragment after Dante,” I therefore stick to the music and not to words. The conception of this tone-poem is inspired by Dante’s Hell. But the demonic character, which permeates the same, however, speaks itself not only of Dante’s hell, but also pronounces in other creative parts of poetry. Prometheus of Aeschylus, bound to a desolate rock, who atones for his indignation against the gods with immortal sufferings, and falls without a moan into Tartarus; Byron’s Manfred, who strides along almost in Shakespearean majesty, who with great whimsy carves a hell in his own bosom and burns his ego to ashes with the firebrand of heartache, are demonic figures. In Dante’s hell, however, it is humanity itself, overwhelmed by demonic horrors, trembling with hair-raising misery moans and flaming graves, adder bites, devil tusks, seas of blood and the tumult of centaurs will at best get through in their rugged size at best softened by Francesca Rimini’s love lament.
>
> As far as I know, Liszt was the first to use his diabolical element, and especially to illustrate, through instrumental music, an unbowed heart in titanic elemental strength in the midst of hopeless agony in Hell. Hence the grandiose construction of this so-called fragment, which is actually an orchestral piece with piano effects, and in the development

[37] Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszt: unbekannte Presse und Briefe aus Wien 1822–1886*, ed. Dezső Legány (Budapest: Occidental Press, 1984), 69–71. Translation by the author.

[38] Ibid., 69–71. Translation by the author.

> and multiplication of the important main movement through rich and original modulations proves a progress in which a whole future lies…Incidentally, one has to hear the tone poem several times, and in any case already bring some poetry with one, in order to be able to cope with its understanding…[39]

The Viennese critics' reception reported in these concert reviews indicates that Liszt intended to create an association between his *Fragment nach Dante* and the emotional and spiritual meanings inspired by Dante's literary themes. Even though the work lacked a strong structure, the audience found the programmatic connections obvious; they felt the conflicts and struggles and detected a vivid world of supernatural power.[40]

The program notes prepared thirty-eight years later by the English pianist Walter Bache for his 1877 London recital provide further evidence of the programmatic association between *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7, and Dante's Hell. Bache, Liszt's private pupil, forged the association in his program notes for his all-Liszt recital in London in 1887, during which he gave the first performance of *Après une lecture de Dante* in England (Illustrations 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4).[41] Walker suspects that this programmatic reference must have come to Bache during his private lessons with Liszt while he continued to receive the composer's tutelage into the 1880s. The program notes suggest that on Bache's personal copy of the composition, Liszt or Bache penciled in many annotations through which the three main themes were connected to certain passages in Dante's *Inferno*. Consequently, the following three illustrations suggest the most accurate and authentic programmatic interpretations that could possibly be connected directly to the composer.[42] Liszt himself did not leave any description about which specific reading of *Dante* was associated with *Après une lecture de Dante*. Since

[39] Ibid., 71–73. Translation by the author.

[40] Ibid., 275–279.

[41] Scanned images of Bache's concert program notes courtesy of Alan Walker. (See Illustrations 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 279.

[42] Ibid., 278.

Bache, a concert pianist and former pupil of Liszt, was providing a precise programmatic narrative to interpret this work for his live audience, it surely carries weight as a witness as close as possible to the composer's original intention.

The new narrative suggests the state of Dante's soul after death and presents an image of divine justice due to punishment or reward, describing the soul traveling through hell and purgatory, all the way to heaven. Dante's Canto 3 and Canto 34, and the sounds and moods illustrating Dante's Hell, with their spiritual meanings, according to Bache, provided Liszt's main themes for his program. For today's pianists, the best specific literary references available are those in the program notes written by Bache for Bache's all-Liszt recital.[43]

[43] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 278–279.

Illustration 3.2: GB–Ob, *Walter Bache's Concerts (1865–1888)*, shelf number 17402 e.59.

ST. JAMES'S HALL, LONDON.

October 22nd, 1887.

MR. WALTER BACHE'S PIANOFORTE RECITAL.
(EIGHTEENTH SEASON.)
3.30 *p.m.*

Illustration 3.3: GB–Ob, *Walter Bache's Concerts (1865–1888)*, shelf number 17402 e.59.

"Amor, senno, valor, pietate e doglia
Facean piangendo un più dolce concento
D' ogni altro che nel mondo udìr sì soglia;

"Ed era il cielo all armonia sì intento,
Che non si vedea in ramo mover foglia:
Tanta dolcezza avea pien l' aëre e 'l vento."

e.) **"APRÈS UNE LECTURE DU DANTE."** (1837.)
Fantasia quasi Sonata.

(introductory.) "APRÈS LA LECTURE"!

Andante maestoso.

f

poco rit.

(leading theme)

Presto agitato assai.

p

"Quivi sospiri, pianti, ed alti guai
Risonava per l' aer senza stelle,
Per ch'io al cominciar ne lacrimai.
Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,
Parole di dolore, accenti d' ira,
Voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle,
Facevano un tumulto, il qual s' aggira
Sempre in quell' aria senza tempo tinta,
Come la rena quando 'l turbo spira."

Canto III.

(second theme.)

fff

Vexilla regis prodeunt Inferni!

"La creatura

ch' ebbe il bel sembiante."

The above quotations from Dante's "Inferno" are given without authority whatsoever.

[***Continued on Fourth page.***

Illustration 3.4:: GB–Ob, *Walter Bache's Concerts (1865–1888)*, shelf number 17402 e.59.

"*Vexilla regis prodeunt: Fulget Crucis mysterium*" was a favourite hymn with Thirteenth-Century Christians when accompanying heretics to the stake.

With "*Vexilla regis prodeunt INFERNI*," the Poet opens his XXXIVth Canto, which brings himself, with Virgil, into the very presence of Lucifer. The hard dogmatical Gregorian of the "second theme," merges into an almost modern-Italian cadence. Whether the description of Lucifer before his rebellion, as "La creatura ch' ebbe il bel sembiante," has inspired Liszt with this unusual, but perfectly natural and beautiful juxtaposition, may be decided by more competent critics than myself. These may also tell us whether the episode of Francesca da Rimini can have been absent from the Composer's imagination? To them we may look for the comforting assurance that the work is in "*Sonata-form*"—containing, furthermore, no combination which could fail to secure the approbation of our severest Professor of Harmony.

W. B.

f.) **VENEZIA e NAPOLI.**

1. Gondoliera.
   "La Biondina in Gondoletta," by ***Peruchini.***
2. Canzone del Gondoliere.
   "Nessun maggior dolore," from ***Rossini's Otello.***
3. Tarantella. (introducing a *Canzona Napolitana.*)

☞ ***This piece lasts seventeen minutes, and has no pause between the movements.***

BROADWOOD'S PIANOFORTE.

Printed by J. MILES & Co., 195, Wardour Street, Oxford Street, W

3.3: Liszt's Revisions to Dante after 1847

3.3.1: The Manuscripts after 1847 and First Publication in 1858

Liszt's focus on rewriting earlier compositions and on seeking better ways to realize his early ideas about structural and formal design continued up to his mid-career period in Weimar. While periodically presenting the piece to visiting artists and continuing to make alterations to *Dante*, Liszt still preserved the opening tritones and retained the extreme harmonic tension and instability of his first draft. The final version, *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, was published by Schott in 1858 as the seventh and last work in *Année de pèlerinage*, Vol. 2, *Deuxième année: Italie*.

Exploring the complex history of the compositions of *Dante* is important because it offers evidence of Liszt's search for an appropriate form for his literary-influenced musical expressions, as well as his changing interpretations of Dante's *Inferno*. Even though *Dante* began as an example of program music, due to the many revisions made on *Fragment nach Dante* that resulted in versions bearing different titles, it would appear that the final version, *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7, is not program music composed to follow the order of Dante's original poetry. Liszt changed the musical title four times and the final one, with a title influenced by French poet Victor Hugo's poem, *Après une lecture de Dante,* was published in 1837 in the collection of *Les Voix intérieures*.[44] Four scholars, Mario Angiolelli, Leslie Howard, Adrienne Kaczmarczyk, and David Trippett, each propose different interpretations of Liszt's processes of composing and revising to arrive at these four extant versions: *Dante Fragment* (incomplete), *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia: Fantaisie*

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[44] Victor Hugo, "Après une Lecture de Dante," in *Les Feuilles d'Automne, Les Chants du Crépuscule, Les Voix Intérieures, Les Rayons et Les Ombres. Oeuvres Complètes de Victor Hugo, Poésie*, vol. 2 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1909), 451–452.

Symphonique pour piano, *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia*, and *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7.[45] Most importantly, they have different opinions about the timing of Liszt's revisions, to some extent depending on the manuscripts and fragments available to them, and the purpose of each one. Nevertheless, they agree that Liszt's first draft of the work existed by 1838–1839 and that Liszt premiered it in 1839 with the German title, *Fragment nach Dante* for German-speaking audiences.[46]

These revisions, some of which were substantial, demonstrate how Liszt struggled to sharpen his skills as he made the transition from being a concert pianist to a composer. It was through the tedious process of editing that Liszt repositioned the spiritual program, redefined the themes, reconsidered the proper place for each thematic element, and determined their final conjunction and presentation within his one-movement sonata form. He decided that a one-movement sonata form would more effectively express the emotions and spirituality he wanted to transmit, thus turning the music of Liszt's original manuscript fragment into a quite different work.

3.3.2: Negation Serving as the Main Concept for Revisions

Liszt revealed that his revisions to *Dante* came largely from his reading of *Paradise Lost*, written by the English theologian and writer John Milton, in a January 29, 1848 letter to Princess

[45] Discussed in Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 56–59, 92, and Plates 1–2. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. L, has mention of a letter of Liszt of October 1840 in which he was considering publication but later decided against it. This Album leaf, S163f/1, was published in facsimile in Alexander Buchner, *Franz Liszt in Bohemia*, trans. Roberta Finlayson Samsour (London: Peter Nevill, 1962), according to Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021. It has another similar piece with the correct harmonic progression for mm. 262–263 of Dante which is not to an augmented triad but an E-flat major chord (ibid.). Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, LII, note 202, and transcribed on 172. She incorrectly dates this leaf as March 13, 1840. Also see Chapter 1, note 41 on the meaning of these titles.

[46] See Appendix A for their opinions on the chronology of Liszt's revisions, a state of research on Liszt's sketches and manuscripts with different versions of *Dante*, and the conflicting scholarly interpretations of those sources.

Carolyne after she lent him Milton's book. In the letter, Liszt openly discussed the nature of Satan, and his beliefs about how Satan acts, which appear to have been a topic he had thought about for quite some time. Liszt initiated the conversation by claiming the following:

> …it is very much the sort of thing I like reading, and Milton will make me take up Dante and Homer again…As for Satan, I would voluntarily say something of him…Satan magnified into infinite proportions that can only be Doubt, muted Sorrow, total complete Silence. He projects well –just like Sun—Spirit of Darkness, rays of Negation and of Death—but himself in his essence is not affected by these spirits. He does not deny, does not die—he suffers and doubts. In fact, a Satan made of this sort does not easily let himself be rhymed in an epic poem—but rightly or wrongly, it seems to me that this conception would be a better fit with our poetic feeling today…[47]

Based on Liszt's theological understanding of Satan as made of rays of negation and doubt, Scott further argues that "in constructing the demonic, the primary musical technique for Liszt is that of *negation*: negation of the beautiful so that it becomes the ugly, of nobility so that it becomes vulgarity, of grace so that it becomes awkwardness, of tranquility so that it becomes perturbation, and so forth."[48]

In the 1858 published version *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, Liszt took the concept of negation, broadening its sense from theological understanding to a musical parameter. By introducing strongly opposed musical elements, such as diminished versus perfect intervals, tonal versus modal harmonies, chromatic versus whole-tone scales, minor versus major, insistent and syncopated rhythms versus steady rhythms, and harmonic dissonance versus consonance, Liszt successfully established a spiritually influenced stylistic language. As Section 3.2.1 discusses, Liszt's 'demonic' was informed by that of his prodecessors, and as Scott argues, it was saturated with devices Liszt discovered in staged spectacles (like Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*), but "to which Liszt later added many more of his

[47] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 261–262.
[48] Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic*, 129.

own."[49] According to Scott, "when seeking out demonic signifiers it is important to remember that it is only as signs relate to other signs that their meaning is recognized,"[50] and that "it is important to locate chains of signifiers that, in representing the demonic, will link together some of the following: minor key (especially D minor), chromaticism, dissonance, (especially involving diminished seventh chords and augmented triads), angular melody (especially tritones, syncopation and tempo fluctuation (creating the disintegration of meter and tempo)."[51]

Based on Scott's argument, the revisions shown in Liszt's manuscripts demonstrate that he reworked and rearranged nearly every musical element in *Dante*, including those of harmony, pitch, motif, melody, tonality, and rhythm. This level of effort demonstrates why the final published version, *Après une lecture de Dante,* should be considered an important contribution to Liszt's establishment as a composer of demonic music, and as evidence that his stylistic language was without any doubt achieved on his own, despite the existence of diabolical music by composers that came before him. While "the demonic sign is one that is read as destructive, negation, or mocking because it attacks a particular musical parameter, for example, pitch, regular rhythm, and consonance,"[52] Liszt introduced contrasting elements to emphasize the opposition that was central to the sonata idea. He did not limit himself to the two main themes, and he also presented opposite ideas in his harmony, melody, tonality, and rhythm, thus achieving a greater scale of musical representation of the demonic and spiritual.

In addition, Liszt heightened tension using rhythmic condensation. He assigned new rhythms and changing meters to increase or loosen the tension and to describe moods. Liszt's handwritten instructions to his copyist shown on the manuscript page of *Paralipomènes à la*

[49] Ibid., 129.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 129-130.

Divina Commedia show him requesting that the meter of the first theme be changed from the original 2/4 to 4/4 (Illustrations 3.5 and 3.6).[53] He also asked his copyist to condense the notation of the first theme from eighth notes to sixteenth notes. The notes are regrouped by newly placed bar lines, which are clearly shown on the page (Illustrations 3.6 and 3.7). These changes affect the sound of the work dramatically. The dance-like eighth notes in triple meter were replaced by a series of sixteenth notes with a constant shift forward of the beat, indicating agitation within a steady march-like quadruple meter.

[53] The two different pages that show Liszt's revision of the meters can be traced back to his manuscript, the unpublished draft of the *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–76, RV 10b,7, where the title page indicates "Après une Lecture de Dante Fantasia quasi Sonata," and the meter is marked in 2/4. In his later version, the manuscript D–WRgs, 60/I–17, RV 10b,7, the meter was changed to 4/4. See Liszt, "Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia."

Illustration 3.5: *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia, Fantaisie Symphonique pour Piano*. The earliest, complete manuscript by Belloni, D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–76, Blatt 3.

Illustration 3.6: *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, manuscript image with permission from Weimar, Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, Liszt Noten, 60/I–17, Blatt 8.

Illustration 3.7: *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–17, Blatt 9.

Furthermore, Liszt applied thematic transformation as his structuring device and connected his varied ideas in a coherent narrative from the beginning to the end of his one-movement form in the final version of *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7.

The musical effect of Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante* produces contrary forces that are powerful and dramatic, which are also representative of the emotions and struggles that Liszt experienced in his personal life. As stated in chapter one, Liszt's relationships brought him great conflict and anxiety. When Liszt began to compose *Fragment nach Dante*, he did record his emotional struggles in his *Journal des Zÿi*, describing that he felt "two contrary forces within me: one thrusts me beyond all the heavens, the other pulls me down to the lowest darkest region of death and nonexistence." Liszt's collection, *Années de pèlerinage* was a milestone achievement, summarizing his explorations of his traveling years, his memories of love, his literary inspirations, and his musical growth. These final explorations in his *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, represented the pinnacle of tension that Liszt keenly felt between his Christian ideals and his emotional experiences.

3.3.2: A Musical Analysis of the 1858 Version of *Dante*

Based on my study of the manuscripts and three published musical editions that I consulted, I conclude that Liszt considered at least two types of sonata form and a freer fantasy form before he fully realized his vision of an adapted, one-movement sonata form in the final published version. That publication also showed his powerful desire to express his Christian-centered philosophy that was influenced by his reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In fact, even in the earliest version of *Dante*, Liszt strove to connect his music and his theology by building overarching tension and resolution through tritones and perfect intervals. Liszt also contrasted

harmonic instability versus stability, chromatic versus whole-tone scales, dissonance versus consonance, and unstable beats versus steady rhythms as demonic negation.

3.3.2.1: Tritones versus Perfect Intervals Produce Overarching Tension and Resolution

The same descending tritone motif in the left hand reappears at the beginning of his final published version (Figure 3.5). That final version ends in stark open octaves, and fifths and fourths, with no mediant to anchor the tonal center in the otherwise prevailing key of D major (Figure 3.6). The open octaves at the end not only remind listeners of chanting in church, but also resolve the main conflict announced by the tritone at the beginning of the introduction.

Liszt's unique use of the tritone interval distinguished him from his contemporaries. In fact, the tension established by the tritones at the beginning is prolonged by unstable harmonies and constant modulations for all thirty-four measures of the introduction before it reaches its final resolution on D, a lower octave played by left hand in m. 35. Tritones became one of Liszt's harmonic and melodic trademarks, even in his sacred vocal compositions, and served as a structural element to which he would return throughout his life. The tritone brought tension to the music and blurred the boundaries between primary key areas by allowing modulation to many different tonalities, thus opening an array of choices of keys.

Figure 3.5: Descending tritone motif in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 1–6

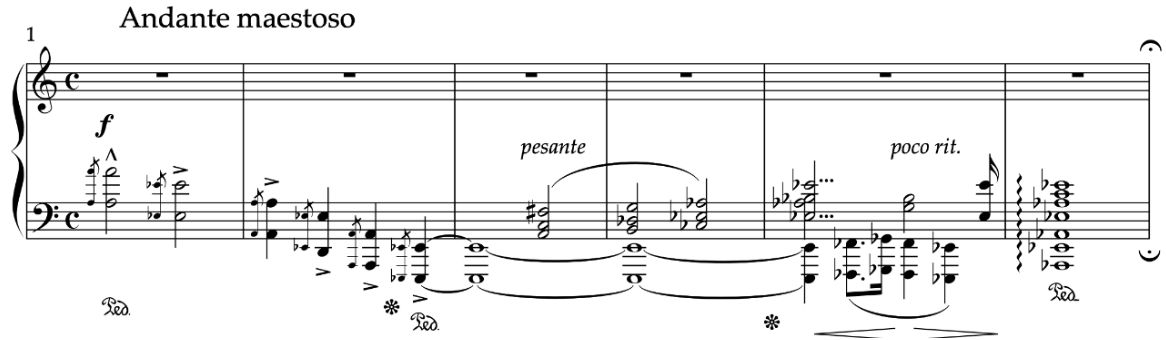
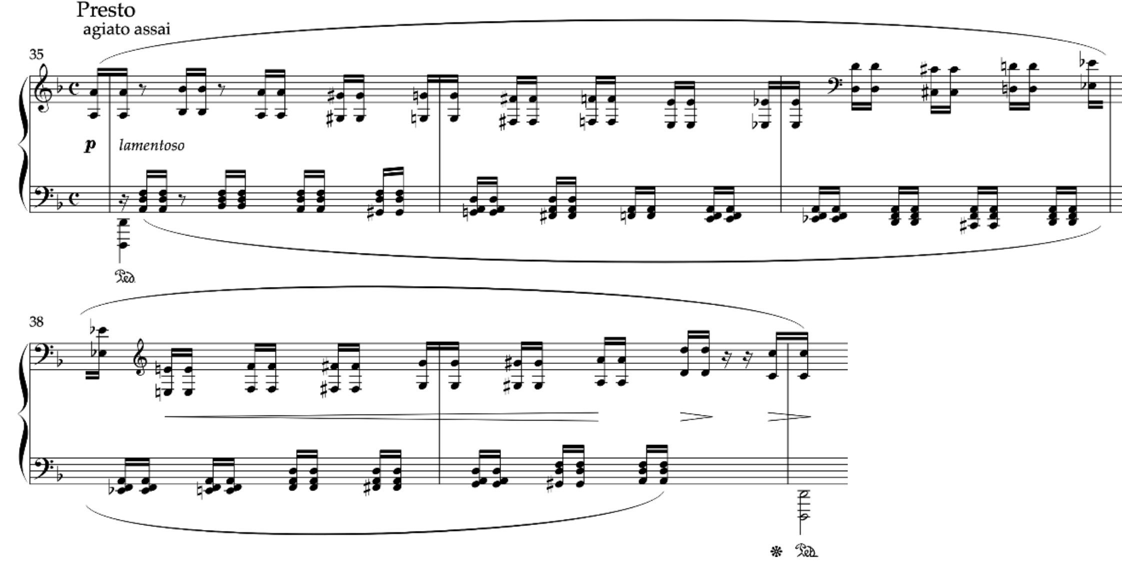


Figure 3.6: Open octaves and fifths in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 366–373

3.3.2.2: A Tonal First Theme Opposed to a Modal Second Theme

The two principal themes present a musical conflict that places tonal and modal harmonies in direct opposition. With the functional harmony of his time, Liszt harmonizes the first theme on a chromatic descending and ascending scale (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Harmonized chromatic descent and ascent in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 35–40



Liszt harmonizes an accompaniment to the melody of his second theme, the latter that is the beginning of the *tonus peregrinus*, also known as the wandering tone. Eva Mary Grew attached a religious influence to the origin of this second theme, which was taken from a medieval psalm-recitation tone called the *tonus peregrinus* (Figures 3.8 and 3.9).[54] The recitation begins on the pitch *A,* but continues on the pitch *G,* unlike all other psalm tones which recite on the same pitch throughout.[55] The *tonus peregrinus* is typically sung to Psalm 113, "In exitu Israel" ["when Israel came out of Egypt"] to begin forty years of wandering. [56]

The melody of this tone is given in Liszt's second theme on the top of right-hand chords at the beginning of each of these measures: 103, 104, 105, and 106. Figure 3.8 illustrates the *tonus peregrinus* and Figure 3.9 shows a harmonization of the *tonus peregrinus* in the

[54] Eva Mary Grew, "Liszt's Dante Sonata," *The Chesterian* 21, no. 148 (1940): 33–40.

[55] In one of Liszt's later versions of *Dante*, the 1849 working version of *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, the second theme of the exposition was entirely transposed to F sharp and mixed with his modal harmonization, exactly as it appears in Liszt's published version of 1858. Liszt, "Paralipomènes à la 'Divina Commedia'. Fantaisie Symphonique pour Piano" (D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–76, Blatt 1–44).

[56] J. F. Ohl, *The School and Parish Service Book: Being the Order of Matins and Vespers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, with Music* (Philadelphia: G.W. Frederick, 1892), 133.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Parish Service Book, which can be compared to Figure 3.10, Liszt's harmonization of it.

Figure 3.8: The beginning of the *tonus peregrinus* at the *fff* and accentuated chords in both hands in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 103–106

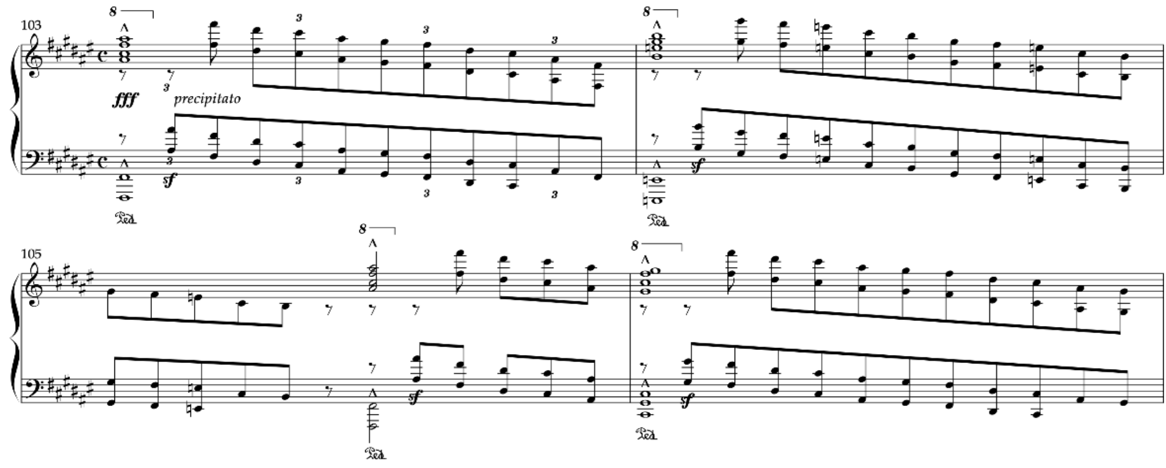


Figure 3.9: The beginning of the *tonus peregrinus* sung to Psalm 113 *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*, which is embedded in the melody in mm. 103–106 (see Figure 3.8)

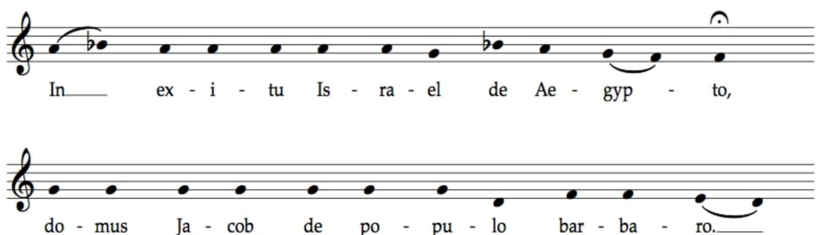


Figure 3.10: A modal harmonization of the *tonus peregrinus* in the Evangelical Lutheran Church Parish Service Book

Tonus Peregrinus

The spiritual meaning attached to the second theme in *Après une lecture de Dante* suggests why Liszt reused its modal harmonization in so many versions. The harmonization of this second theme also demonstrates Liszt's interest in modal harmonies, which Liszt developed

to its full potential later in his career.[57] The same harmonic and melodic contour was found in another religiously inspired work titled *Septem sacramenta*, S. 52, which he composed later in his life (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11: Franz Liszt's *Septem sacramenta*, S. 52, 3rd mvt., mm. 97–109, *Eucharistia*

Additionally, two existing fragmentary sketches reveal Liszt's attempt to harmonize his second theme with modal harmonies: CZ–Pk, MS 1C.51 (Figure 3.12), his handwritten sketch of 1840 from Prague including a modal chord progression beginning and ending in C major,[58] and D–DÜhh without shelf number (Figure 3.13), an autograph album leaf dated 1841 with a "Prelude," in which Liszt presented a different modal harmonic solution for his second theme, resulting in a harmonic progression that fully resolves to A major, the dominant of D minor.[59]

[57] The first identified biographical entry about Liszt's use of modal harmony is his documented improvisation on the piano on the late-medieval monophonic sequence *Dies irae* in Paris in 1833, an improvisation that lasted through the night. Serge Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 29.

[58] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 58.

[59] Howard notes the correct harmony, which is wrong in the other sources. Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021. The album leaf in D–DÜhh is reproduced and discussed in Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, 170–171.

Figure 3.12: Modal harmonic progression, beginning and ending in C in the Prague sketch dated 1840

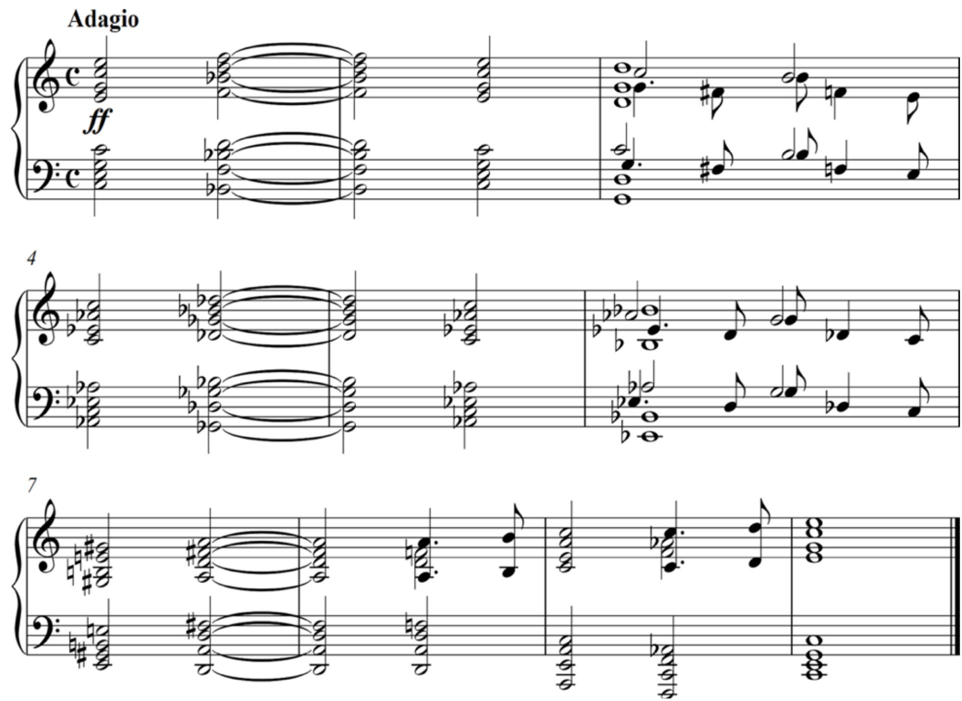
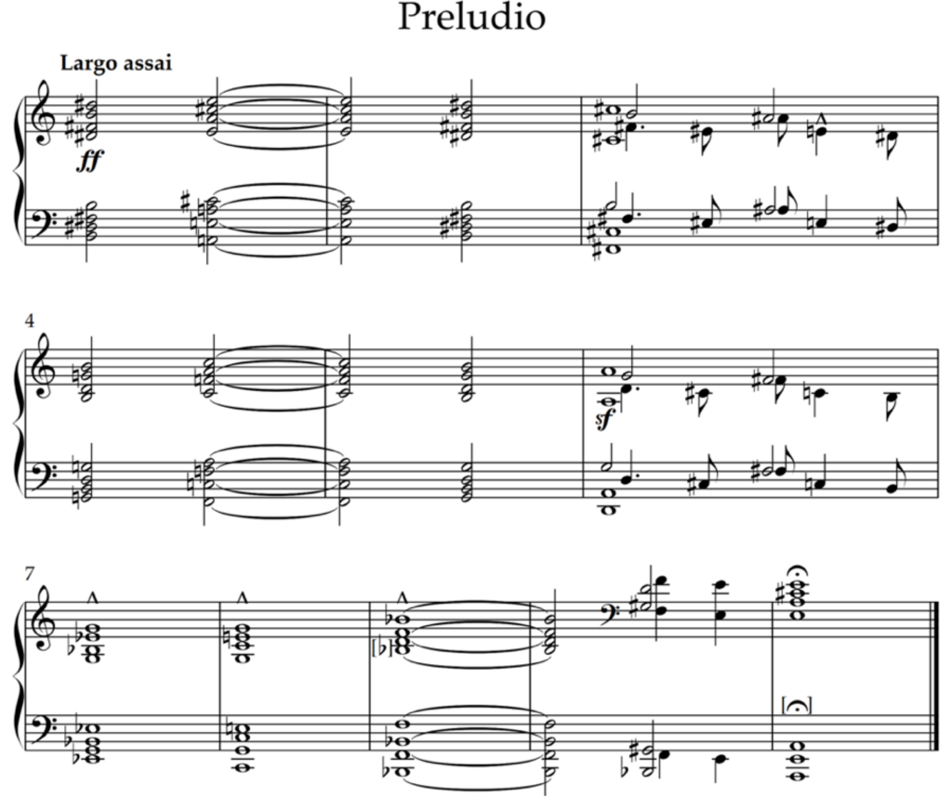


Figure 3.13: 1841 Album leaf in D–DÜhh



3.3.2.3: A Succession of Major Triads Based on The Hexatonic Scale Suggests Tonal Instability

The 1841Album leaf in D–DÜhh (Figure 3.13) has a succession of major triads that is a harmonic progression based on the hexatonic scale (whole-tone scale), following B, A, G, F, and E flat in the bass line played by the left hand.[60] This frequent change of tonality suggests tonal instability. In Liszt's published *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, a variation of the accompaniment of the second theme occurs in mm. 250–267 suggests harmonic instability in a similar way (Figure 3.14).

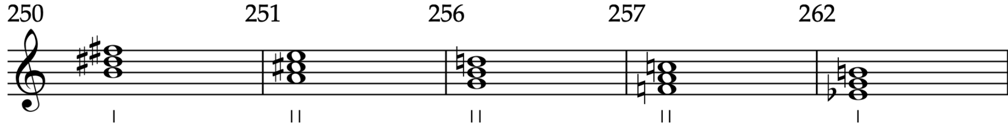
Furthermore, Liszt introduces a series of major triads resulting in a whole-tone scale and an augmented triad, which is considered a probable error by Leslie Howard.[61] The major triads appear in the following order (Figure 3.14): B major (m. 250), A major (m. 251), G major (m. 256), F major (m. 257), and E-flat augmented (m. 262). Then the augmented triad with a B-natural is found in mm. 262–263. Due to the preceding series of major triads harmonized with the same whole-tone scale, Howard asserted that this B natural in mm. 262–263 is a byproduct of copyediting and printing errors and suggested that it be corrected to a B flat to result an E-flat major tonic triad instead of the augmented triad.

[60] The harmonization based on a whole tone scale also corresponds to mm. 253–273 of the final published version of *Dante* (Figure 3.15). The bass line in Figure 3.15 is given to the right hand that crosses over the left hand, to play a whole-tone scale: B (m. 250), A (m. 251), G (m. 256), F (m. 257), and E flat (m. 262). See Leslie Howard's editorial notes in Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard, 107.

[61] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard, 107.

Figure 3.14: Harmonic instability brought by whole-tone scale and disputed augmented triad in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 250–267

Figure 3.15: Progression of major triads ending with the disputed augmented triad in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 250–262, Henle Urtext Edition

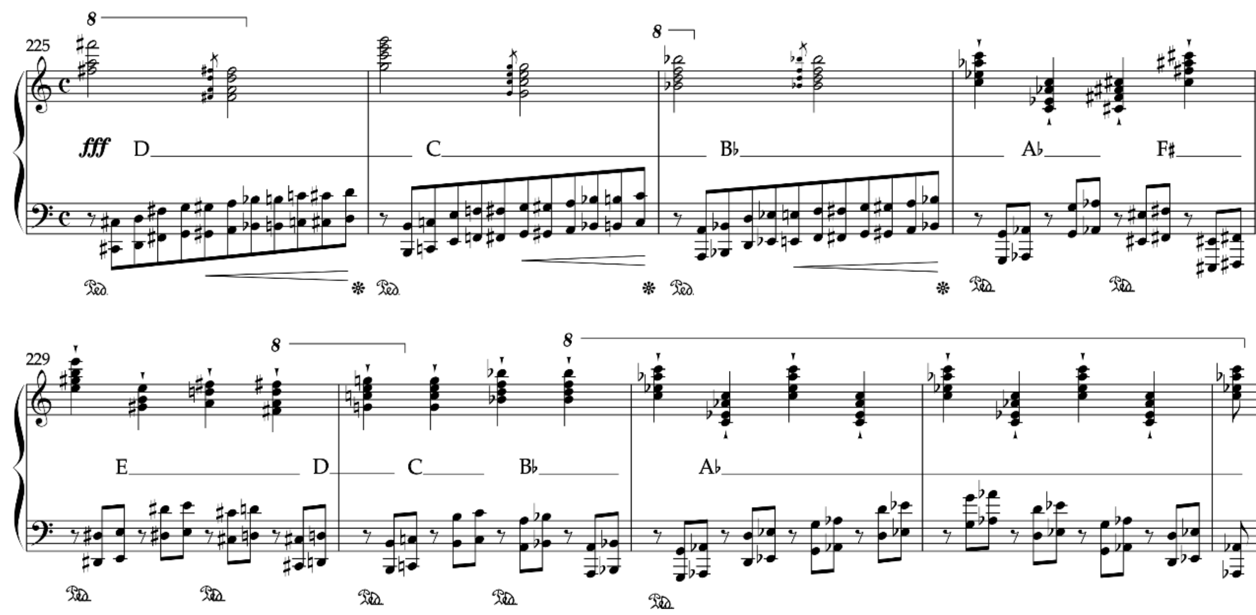


3.3.2.4: Tension Introduced by Chromatic versus Hexatonic Scales

In *Après une lecture de Dante*, Liszt explored many possibilities for his harmonies, including his use of chord progressions by chromatic pitches and whole tones to illustrate contrast in his first and second themes. The hexatonic scale intensifies the effect of harmonic instability. Tension and darkness is first established by the dense chromatic descending and ascending scale of the first theme (Figure 3.7). This contrasts with the following harmonic progression of major triads based on the hexatonic scale (whole-tone scale) at the climax of the development (Figure 3.16), where the tonality moves stepwise by major seconds: D major, C major, B-flat major, A-flat major, F-sharp major, then E major. To maximize the tension and contrast, Liszt also set opposite dynamics and keys when his choice of interval changes: *p* versus *fff* and D minor versus D major.

Finally, in the last measures of the coda, Liszt concludes the work with a succession of major triads in root position built on a descending whole-tone scale in the bass line, which begins D, C, B flat, A flat, F sharp, and E, and ends on the tonic D (Figure 3.17). This whole-tone scale at the end again contrasts starkly with the chromatic scale at the very beginning of the work. In this way, Liszt conquered the minor seconds of Dante's Hell with major seconds.

Figure 3.16: Whole-tone harmonic progression in Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 225–233



One of Liszt's innovations was to set a whole-tone scale as a harmonic foundation and replace traditional cadences by removing any strong emphasis on a tonal center. Liszt's unconventional approach to ending sections of *Dante* strayed from standard authentic or plagal cadences. Serge Gut suggests that Liszt's invention of harmonizing perfect major triads on the whole-tone scale was his end goal.[62] Gut also observed that Liszt's mixed-use of tonal and modal harmonies and his invention of whole-tone scale harmonization also appear in some of his other compositions, such as at the end of the *Magnificat* movement of his *Dante* symphony, where Liszt realized an interesting harmonic progression of major triads over a whole-tone scale that sounds like a walking bass (Figure 3.18). In a letter written to Julius Schäffer on August 20, 1859, Liszt noted that his whole-tone scale was his carefully crafted harmonic solution.[63] The two musicians exchanged opinions about the types of polyphony, contrapuntal techniques, and

[62] Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 71, 150.

[63] Liszt, *From Rome to the End.*, ed. La Mara [pseud.] and trans. Bache, 148.

voice-leading that should be used in the composition of future liturgical or sacred choral compositions, which were mostly to be sung without accompaniment.

Liszt’s harmonic experiments in *Dante* established a procedure that later appeared more often in his other works, including *Der nächtliche Zug*, *Totentanz, Christus, Les jeux d’eaux à la villa d’Este,* and *Via Crucis*.[64]

Figure 3.17: Root-position triads and descending whole-tone scale in the bass line in Franz Liszt’s *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 353–373

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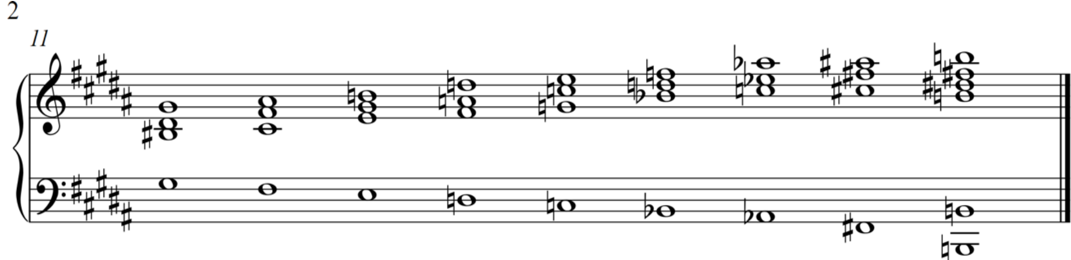
[64] Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 35–38.

Figure 3.18: Franz Liszt's closing harmonies for his *Magnificat* movement in *his Dante Symphony*, S. 109, showing a series of perfect major triads.



3.3.3: Connecting the Transformed Themes

3.3.3.1: Translating the Character of Good Triumphing over Evil into Music

The second part of Liszt's final title *Fantasia quasi Sonata* shows that he made changes to lend more structure to his freely developed extramusical inspirations. His sonata scheme in one-movement form resulted from his experiments seeking to balance different sections to fit into a unified whole. For structural unity, he also paid careful attention to the transitional material.[65] The following six musical examples (Figures 3.19–3.24) show the transformation of the first theme of *Après une lecture de Dante* from its agitated, sweet, amorous, joyful, dance-like, and passionate states into a final celebratory character by Liszt's clever use of rhythms and tonalities.

In Figure 3.19, mm. 35–40, the tonality is in D minor, the atmosphere is dark, and the tempo is Presto. The constant shift of the beat for the entrance of the main theme using the non-stop sixteenths alternating in both hands creates a chaotic instability, and the mood is agitated

[65] Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor, a landmark of piano literature of the nineteenth century with its full display of Liszt's structural techniques, such as thematic transformation and one-movement form, is not considered here, because Liszt did not give this sonata a programmatic title or base it on a program, and this study concentrates on five selected piano works, all which were composed with extramusical programs in mind. Abundant scholarship discusses thematic transformation and form in the B minor Sonata, its dissonant subjects and motives, as well as Liszt's cross motif, but since they are not used to illustrate a specific program in that work, they are not considered here.

and lamenting, showing a motion being pulled down due to the harmonic gravity that struggles to climb up from the darkness. Liszt created this effect by indicating a long pedal marking of five measures with a chromatic descending scale, which produces a striking blurred sonority that is completely personal to Liszt.

Figure 3.19: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 35–40

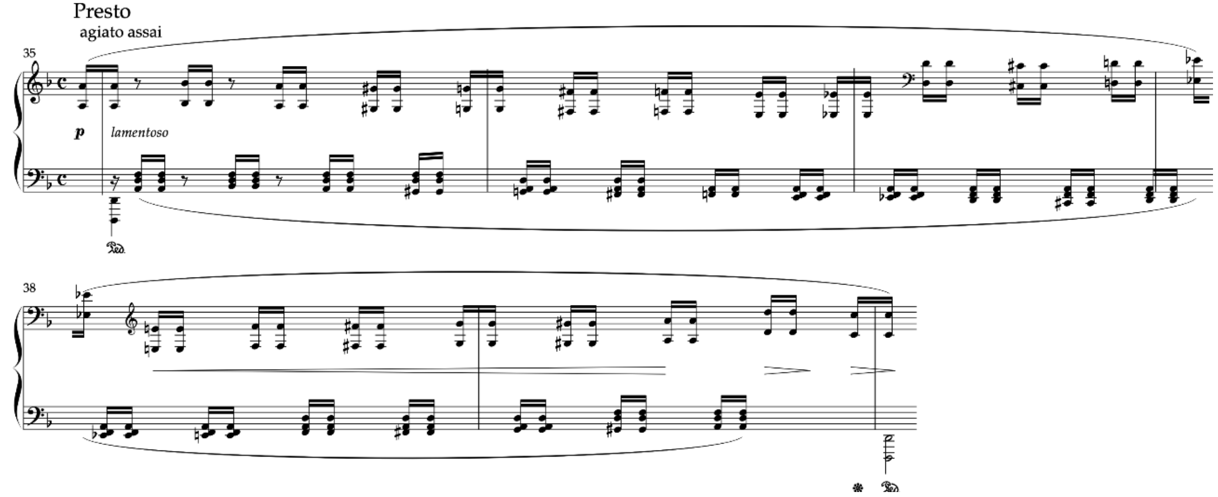
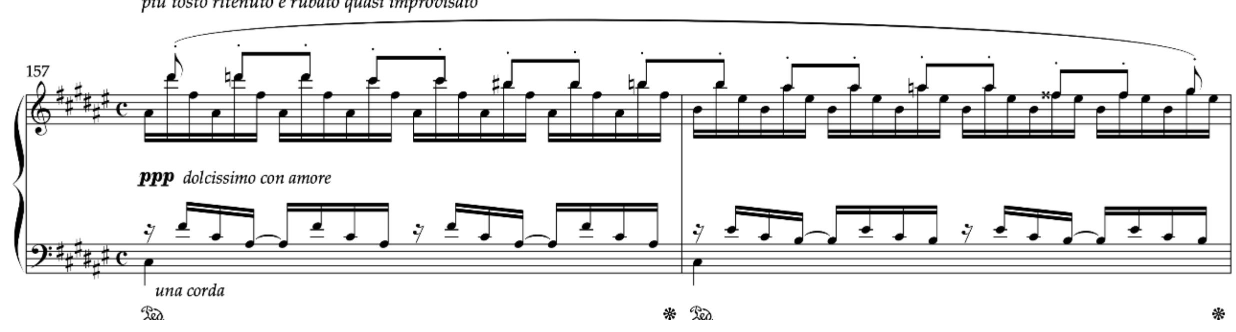


Figure 3.20: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 157–158



In Figure 3.20, mm. 157–158, there is a sustained dominant C sharp in the bass in F-sharp major, while running octaves sweep down the keyboard in a precipitated motion. The character is sweet, amourous, and dreamy. The tempo is relaxed and free, and the cross-rhythms played by both hands create a floating sensation in triple piano. In the right hand, six beamed sixteenth-

notes are set against the left hand's four sixteenth notes, showing the compound meter against the simple duple meter. The held dominant suspends the tension. The hands move in opposite directions jubilantly, and the large leaps of both hands keep reaching upwards to the top lines.

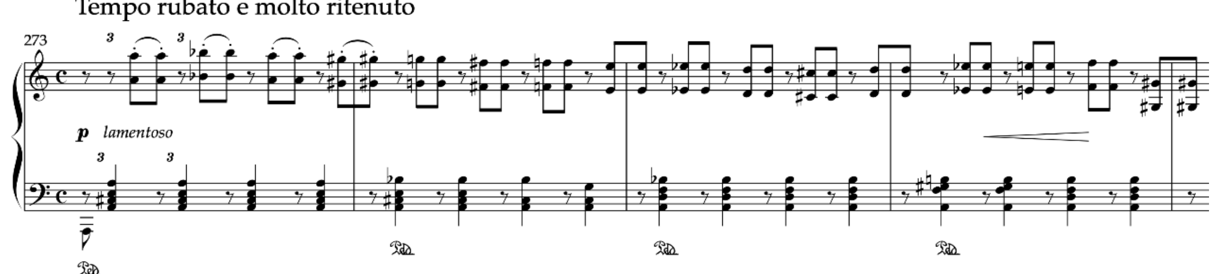
In Figure 3.21, mm. 167–170, the tonality is in F-sharp major, but this time the bass reaches up to the tonic F sharp. The character is joyful, and the articulation adds an effect to illustrate the bubbly mood. The three beamed eighth notes make the 4/4 meter look as if it were a 12/8 compound meter. The rhythm in hemiola suggests a dancing quality. The left hand's accents on the weak beat bring a slight forward motion, and the tempo acceleration adds momentum to the next twelve measures that become more and more exciting.

Figure 3.21: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 167–170

In Figure 3.22, mm. 273–276, the tonality returns to D minor, and the tempo gradually slows down, given its free tempo indication. The bass holds an unresolved dominant for the next twelve measures, and the rhythm in eighth-note triplets produces a loss of energy. The left-hand's syncopated quarter note held over within a triple rhythm leads to the delayed entry of the

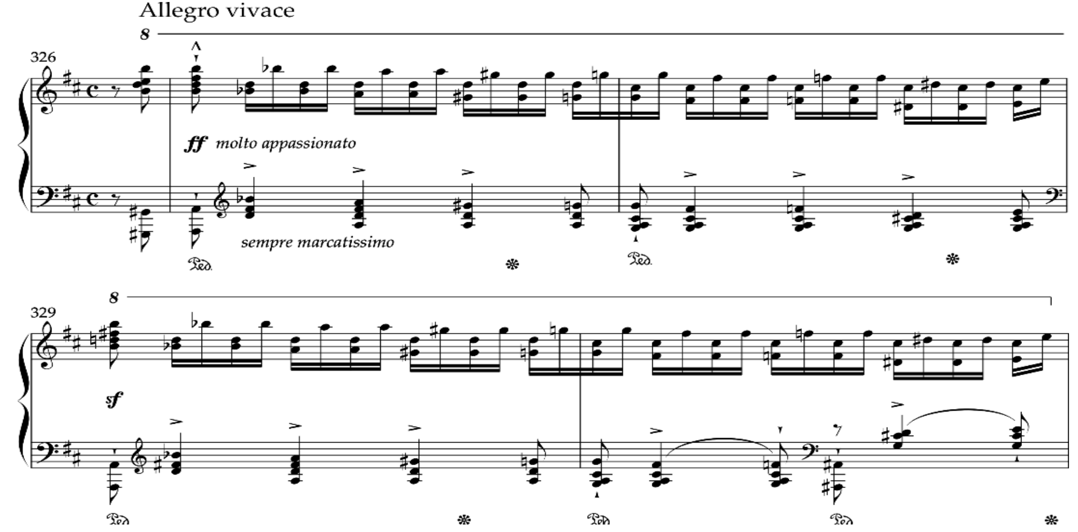
right hand which further slows the tempo to produce a lamenting and increasingly tired character without any agitation.

Figure 3.22: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 273–276



In Figure 3.23, mm. 326–330, the tonality modulates to D major, the final key of resolution. The tempo is *Allegro vivace*, the character is lively and passionate, and the syncopated rhythms anticipate the mood as if the character is embracing joy and hope brought by the choice of the major key (Figure 3.23).

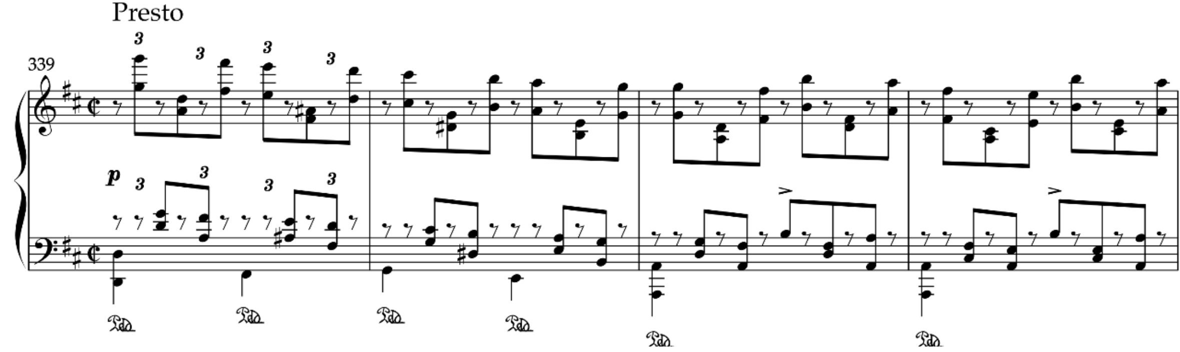
Figure 3.23: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 326–330



In Figure 3.24, mm. 339–342, the tonality is in D major, the meter changes to cut time (2/2), so that the six eighth-note triplets are worth one half-note beat. The mood is celebratory and light without force, as if the character is shaking off all the previous suffering. The six

leaping triplets in every half-note beat are played by both hands moving in opposite directions (Figure 3.24).

Figure 3.24: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 339–342



3.3.3.2: The Transformation of the Second Theme

The following four musical examples (Figures 3.25–3.28) illustrate the second theme and its transformations. In mm. 103–111, the long-held whole note represents the second theme in F-sharp major. The loud dynamic is written as triple forte, and the character is bright and majestic. The running octaves sweeping down the keyboard in precipitated motion require high pianistic virtuosity (Figure 3.25). In mm. 136–138, the tempo slows down to Andante and the F-sharp major second theme played by the right hand in octaves sings a smooth melody that is quiet and meditative (Figure 3.26). In mm. 290–296, the second theme played in pianissimo by the left hand starts in D major but ends in F-sharp major. The right hand, which is playing trills in tremolando adds vibrations into the atmophere as the left-hand theme flies up to join the high register of the right hand (Figure 3.27). In mm. 306–314, the second theme in D major enters triumphantly in tempo Allegro, triple forte, with a steady, march-like rhythm (Figure 3.28).

Figure 3.25: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 103–111

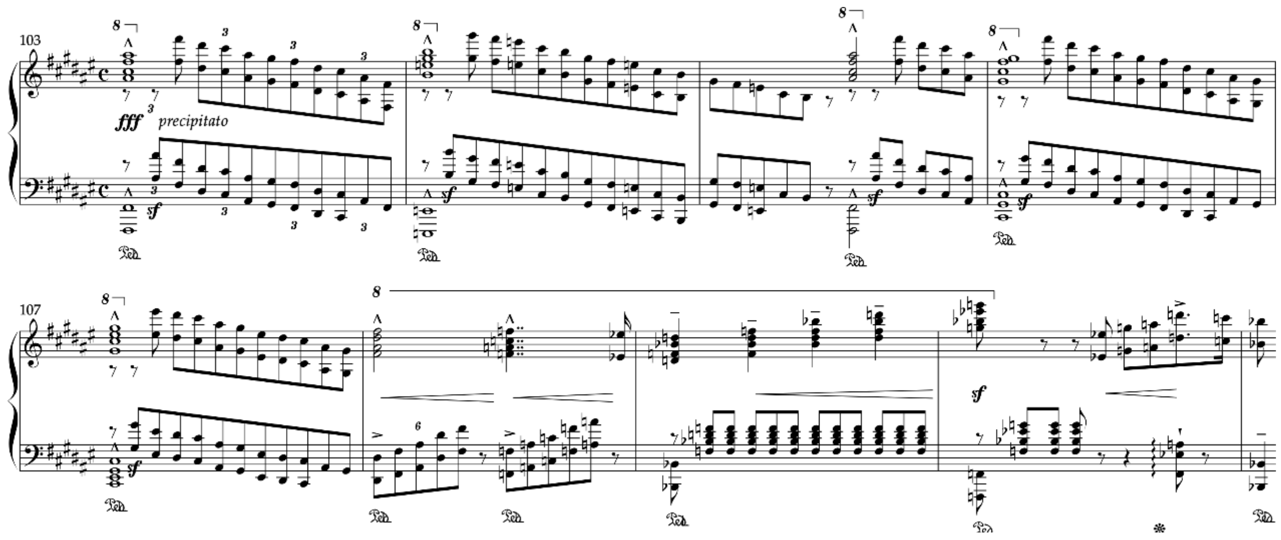


Figure 3.26: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 136–138

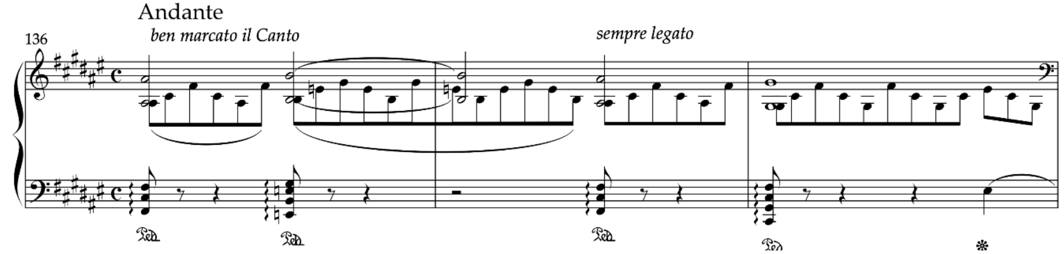
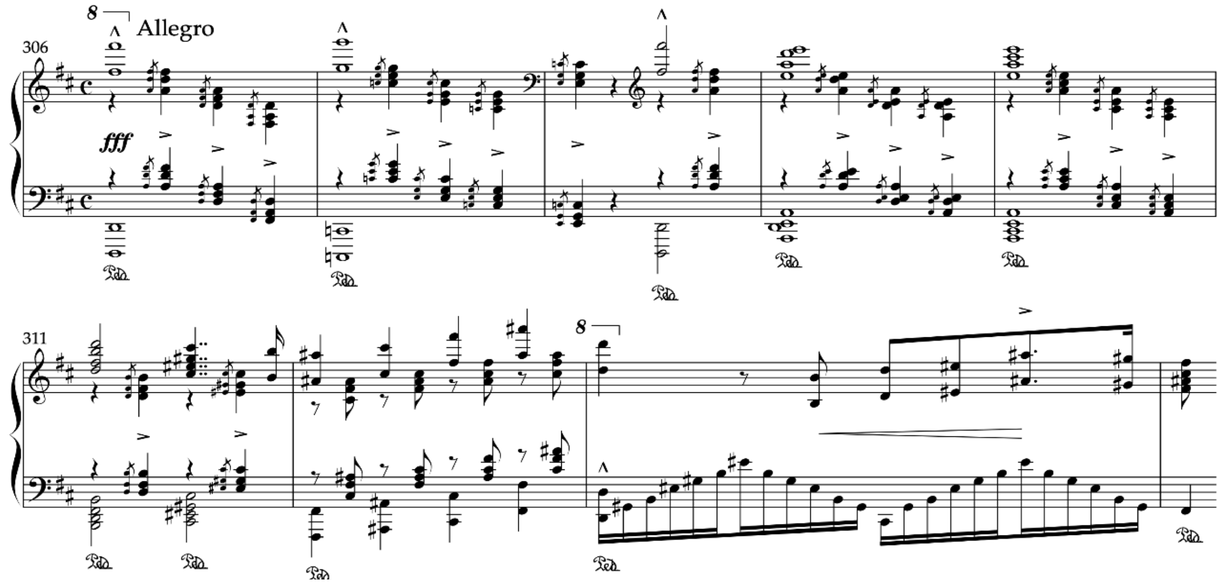


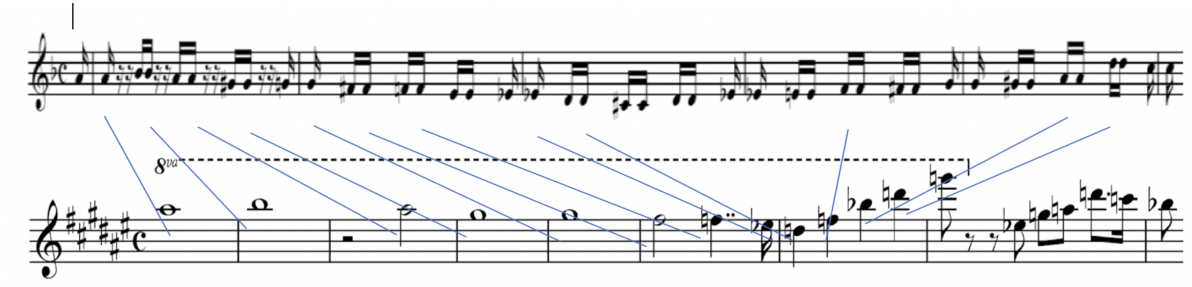
Figure 3.27: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 290–296

Figure 3.28: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 306–314



Grace Yu points to the similarities in pitch and in interval between the two themes, revealing that they were derived from the same material (Figure 3.29).[66] Their similarities point to Liszt's idea of repeatedly inserting similar transitional material to connect the thematic materials within his one-movement form.

Figure 3.29: The similarities between Liszt's first and second theme in Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7



[66] Grace Chung-yan Yu, "A Semiotic Interpretation of Liszt's Piano Works in Light of Their Extramusical Sources" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2012), 121.

3.3.3.3: Transitional Materials Used to Connect Separate Parts

In many instances, Liszt used his transitional material or even a fragment of it to illustrate changes in atmosphere or to preview tempo changes. Figures 3.30–3.38 show the similarities between the transitional materials that Liszt used to connect different parts of the sonata and for those purposes. Similarities include connecting different registers of the keyboard, augmenting or diminishing the dynamics, previewing tempo changes, and supporting modulation. Here Liszt does not use repetitive music but uses the transition as a connecting device to smooth out the differences between tempo changes and mood changes. His similar transitional material reinserted throughout the work serves as a thread connecting the fast, slow, and fast sections of his one-movement form. The transition in mm. 134-135 modulates to major and is played in a slower tempo. Liszt reverses the order of the intervals and begins with the large leap first in the row (Figure 3.33).

Figure 3.30: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 25–28

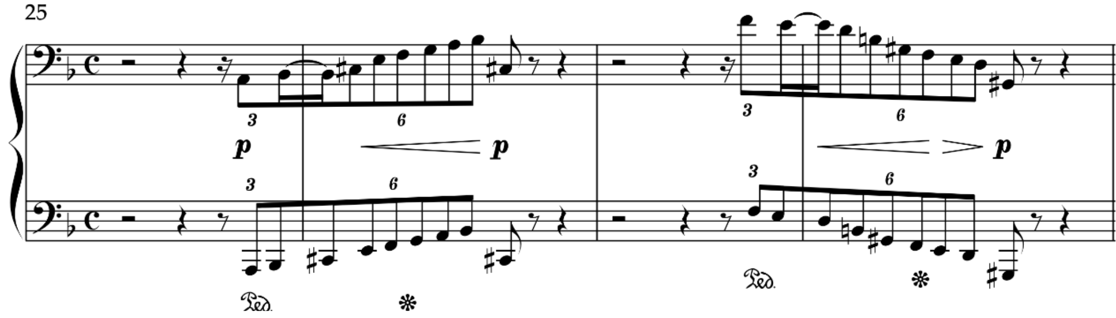


Figure 3.31: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 52–53

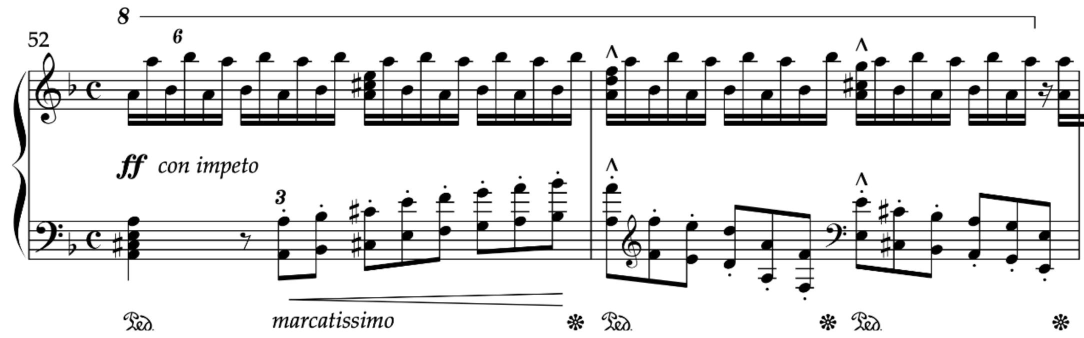


Figure 3.32: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 77–79

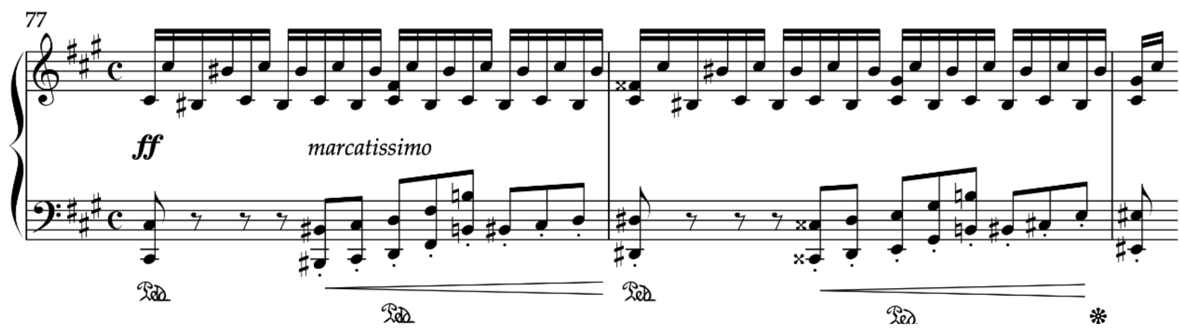


Figure 3.33: Modulating transition in Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 134–135

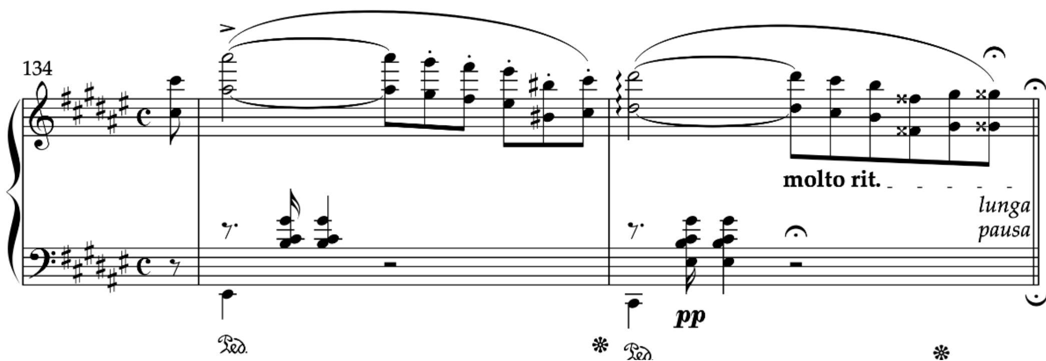


Figure 3.34: Change to a rubato tempo with large leap falling down into a lower register in Franz Liszt’s *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 153–156

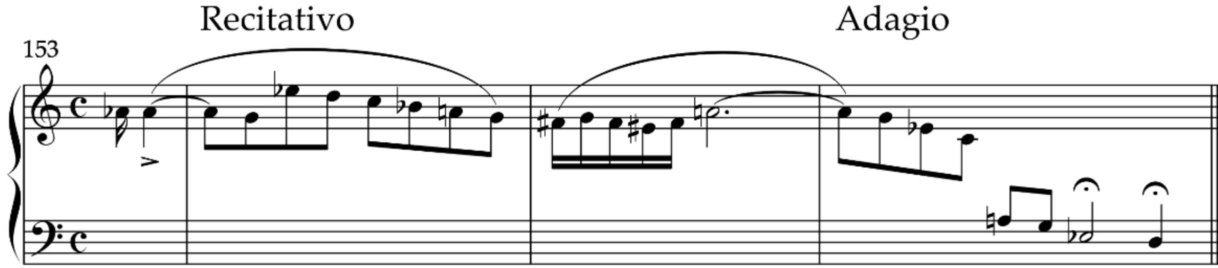


Figure 3.35: Franz Liszt’s *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 190–194

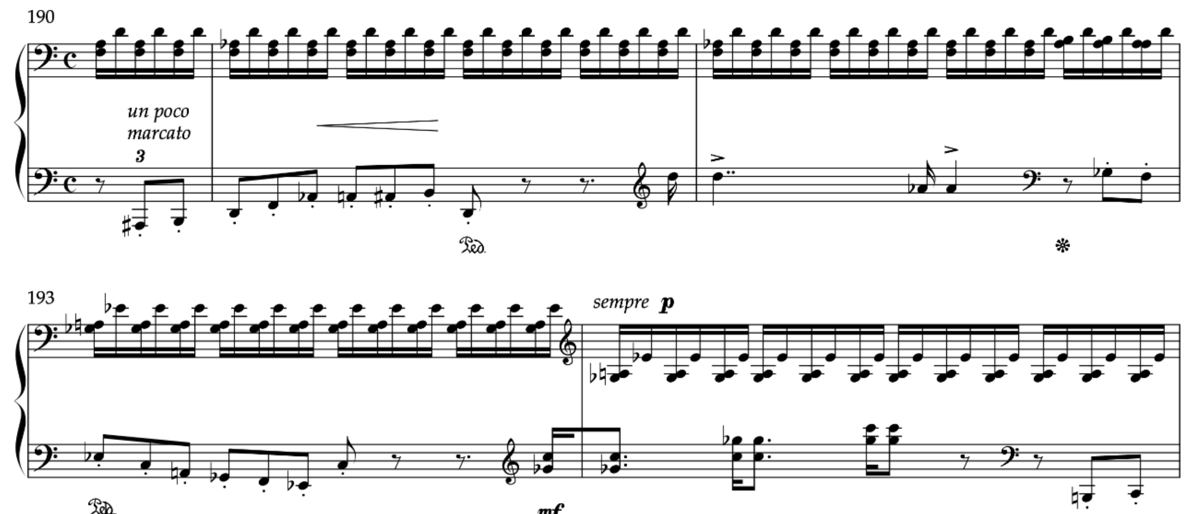


Figure 3.36: Franz Liszt’s *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 208–211

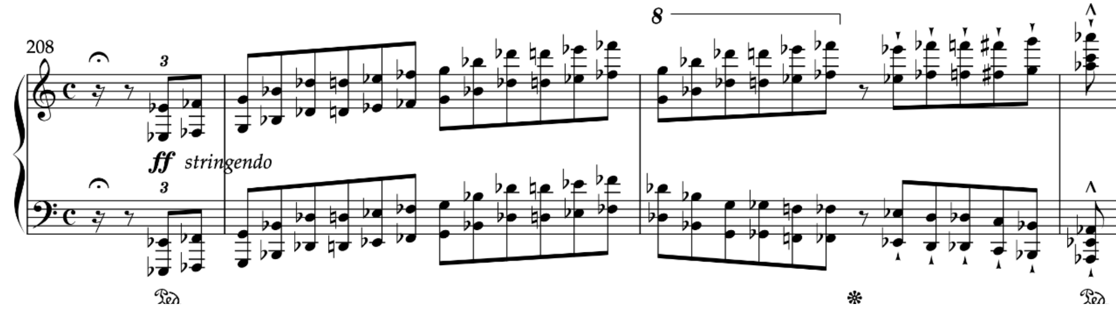


Figure 3.37: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 270–272

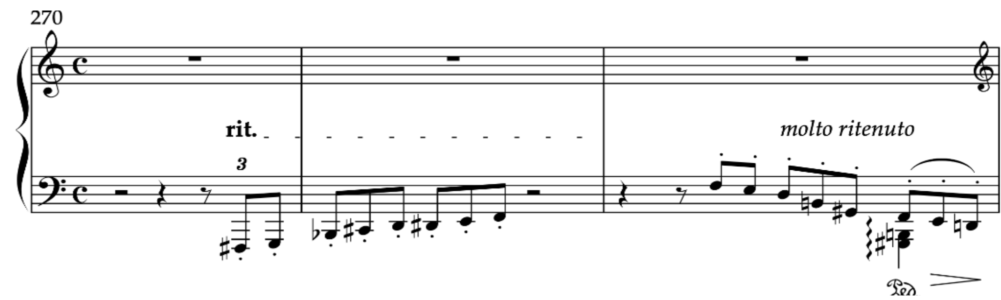
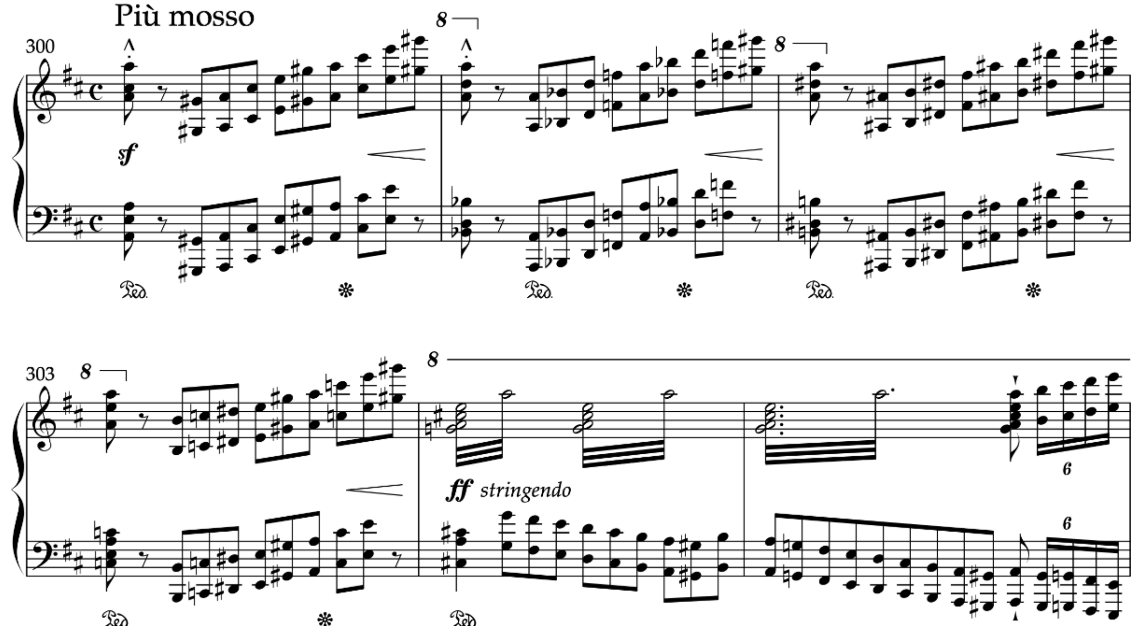


Figure 3.38: Franz Liszt's *Aprés une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7, mm. 300–305



3.3.4: Liszt's Modifications to Produce his One-Movement Sonata Form

One of the most important changes Liszt made was that he reworked a sonata form with multiple sections into a one-movement form, preserving his themes with original musical characters and moods. To connect two movements into one, Liszt rewrote a new development section, entitled "seconda parte," where a new thematic progression with sequences and imitations was identified by Trippett, which replaces the original two movements, entitled

"prima parte" (Illustrations 3.8 and 3.9).[67] Liszt removed the double bars between the two movements, deleted the opening material of the original second movement, as well as its development section in fugal imitation, and removed dense chords and double notes to clarify the texture so that the harmony would not overpower the melody. He also changed the texture of the coda. Finally, he outlined the melody and the contrasting themes more clearly. This intensive process of revision resulted in a new emphasis on expression rather than bravura.

Liszt's final version published in 1858, a one-movement form, is effectively a modified sonata form that functions both as the first movement of a traditional sonata and as a complete three-movement sonata: fast-slow-fast. The primary innovation occurs at the reappearance of the two themes in the recapitulation, where their levels of tension and resolution have changed. The phantom-like first theme in the recapitulation is intentionally weakened from its earlier appearance, and the second theme was revised to have an elevated heavenly quality and religious significance (Figures 3.7 and 3.27). Liszt also prolonged the victorious return of the second theme in the coda (Figure 3.28).

[67] The two-part form can be found in the earliest manuscript of *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, where Liszt wrote a double bar to separate two sections. See Illustrations 3.5 and 3.6. D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/ I–76: "Paralipomènes à la 'Divina Commedia' Fantaisie Symphonique pour Piano" (später "Après une lecture de Dante," in "Années de Pèlerinage," Deuxième Année: Italie, Nr. 7).

Illustration 3.8: *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, the earliest complete manuscript of "Après une lecture de Dante" in "Années de Pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: Italie," Nr. 7. D–WRgs, Liszt–Noten, 60/I–76, Blatt 21. https://ores.klassik-stiftung.de/ords/f?p=401:2:::::P

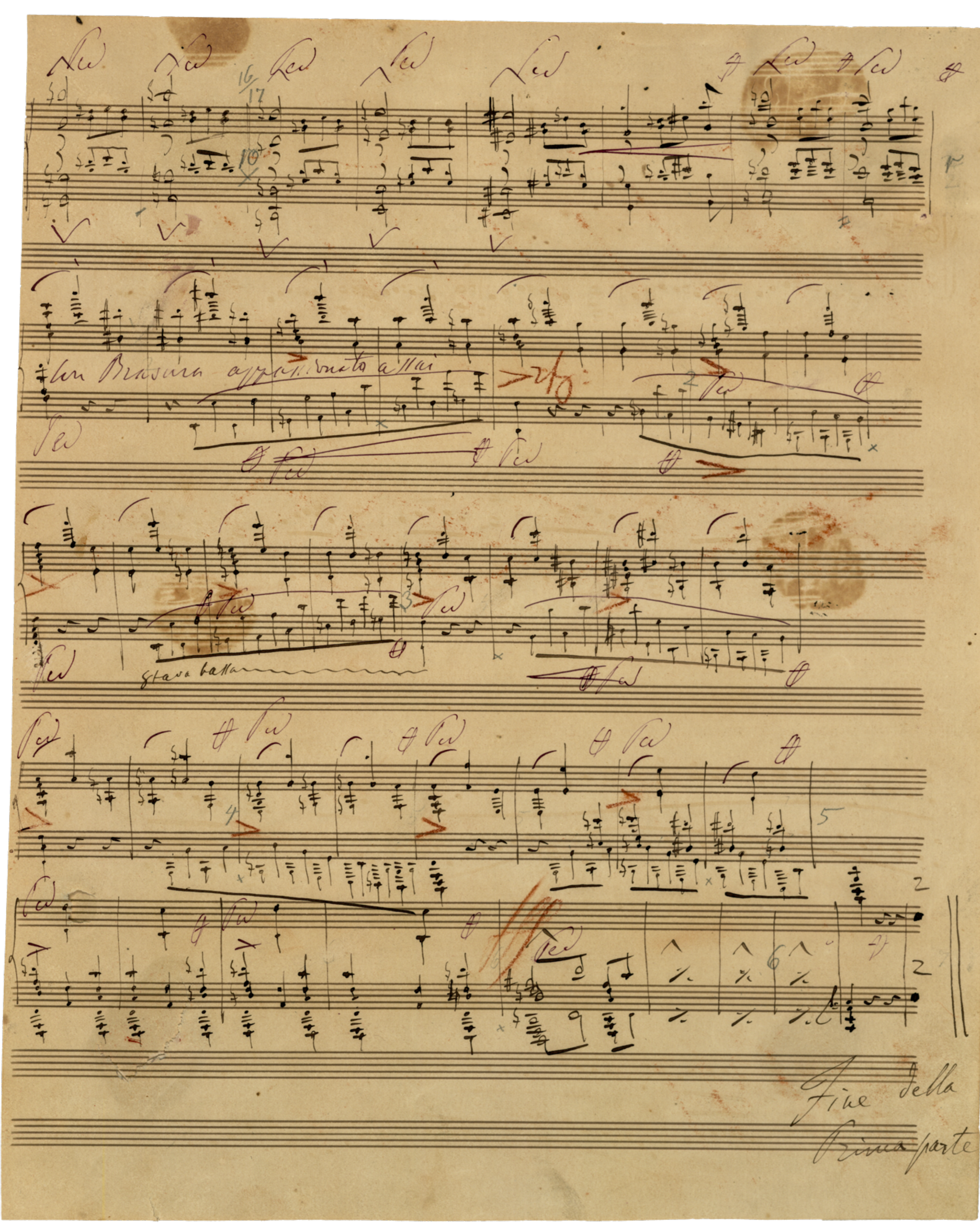


Illustration 3.9: *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, the earliest complete manuscript. D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–76, Blatt 23 (see the same link as above)

This restructuring gave a different meaning to the struggle, despair, and agitation of the opening theme. In this new version, the struggles seem to have ceased due to the emphasis given to the later thematic material. In the first movement of a standard sonata, the climax comes at the half cadence before the return of the themes, and the recapitulation normally serves as a counterweight to the tension created in the exposition and development. In Liszt's modified format, the recapitulation of the second theme is elevated to the very high register of the keyboard and resolved in D major instead of the tragic D minor, with the right hand's tremolos accompanying the left hand's second theme in broken chords, giving a heavenly effect (Figure 3.27). The final statement of the second theme, a victorious, triumphant, battle-winning return in D major, is postponed until the long coda, where the music must be played in a march-like manner (Figure 3.28).

Dolores Pesce provides an analysis of the overarching harmonic scheme of this sonata form with Liszt's final decisions about the key areas.[68] In the exposition, the first theme appears in D minor, which is commonly understood as tragic, demonic, and related to Hell, as in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.[69] The second theme moves to F-sharp major, and the end of the exposition concludes in C-sharp major, the dominant of F-sharp major. As previously discussed, the early manuscript shows that the harmonic progression of the second theme was originally resolved in different keys, while the later complete manuscript confirms Liszt's final choice to harmonize this chant-inspired material in F-sharp major. The inner accompaniment is written with a series of descending octaves on pentatonic scales, a technique that was first used by

[68] Dolores Pesce, "Expressive Resonance in Liszt's Piano Music," in *19th-Century Piano Music*, ed. Larry Todd (New York: Routledge, 2004), 419.

[69] Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic*, 128.

Frédéric Chopin in his *Étude*, Op. 10, No. 5 (the "Black Key Étude"). His set of 12 *Études,* Op. 10, was dedicated to Liszt.[70]

Returning to Liszt's *Dante*, his Andante section begins in C-sharp major (the dominant of F-sharp major). The operatic singing style of the F-sharp major second theme then appears in the slow section (Figure 3.26), where it is transformed into a lyrical and meditative singing melody that modulates through B-flat major and G minor (harmonic-related minor key), then connects with a free recitative-like passage (Figure 3.34) based on a Neapolitan chord (N6 – V/64 – II/65 – V). After the recitative-like transition, the transformation of the first theme (Figure 3.20) on C sharp into a celestial, amorous melody follows in a section marked dolcissimo and pianissimo. Here, a long dominant pedal (first as I/64, then V of F-sharp major) is heard and followed by the transformation of the first theme in F-sharp major into bright, dance-like, and luminous music (Figure 3.21).

The sonata's development section then moves through a series of sequences based on the introductory tension and conflict established by the tritones in opposition to the perfect intervals as well by the broken diminished-seventh chords, which constantly shift the resolution into different keys, creating continuous tonal instability and even a lack of any tonal center as at the possibly erroneous augmented triad (m. 262) and through Liszt's removal of the key signature between mm. 189 and 289. Within this mixture of conflict and heightened harmonic tension, D major, the parallel major key of D minor, makes its first appearance in m. 225, harmonized by the whole-tone scale progression in contrast with dense chromaticism, which adds a hint of hope and final spiritual victory.

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[70] Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 43.

The recapitulation of the first theme is on the pedal point A (V of D minor). The assigned *Tempo rubato e molto ritenuto* corresponds to the rhythm, which is loosened from sixteenth notes to eighth-note triplets, and the exhausted expression *lamentoso* where the diabolical side of the theme appears. All these features contribute to a gradual loss of energy (Figure 3.22). The fermata and the double bars indicate a total break from the first theme's dark power. Liszt contrasts the recapitulation of the second theme by scoring both hands to play in the high register of the keyboard in D major. At the end, the coda restates the second theme in D major with a forceful, march-like, and triumphal character.

3.4: Conclusion

In the context of Liszt's career, the evolution of *Dante* is a prime example of how Liszt developed from a virtuoso pianist known for his improvisations into a thoughtful composer by revising his work and extracting expressive layers from his early extramusical inspirations. This includes his addition of a one-movement form, reworking of thematic transformations, and designing of subtle rhythmic devices, such as syncopations and insistent rhythm, which are found in his final published version, *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161 No.7. Liszt's revisions of *Dante* over several stages of his career demonstrates a continuous refinement of his compositional techniques.

The revisions of *Après une lecture de Dante* show Liszt's departure from the traditional, threefold sonata-form with breaks between sections and movements to his employment of a one-movement form with two functions. By linking that double-function sonata form with literary feelings and emotions, Liszt followed the compositional lineage of Beethoven in crossing the formal boundaries and adding an expressive quality by giving his themes vivid characters,

thereby creating a literary-musical language. He also injected a quasi-Dantesque, literary soul into his form.

Madame Boissier observed in 1832 that Liszt always played music in such a way as to express a variety of feelings, when she wrote that "…one needs a passionate soul, an ardent soul, but ingenious, simple, unsteady, at times devoted to despair or to tenderness, sometimes shaken by love, by jealousy, then tired and exhausted, diffusing itself in music—that is Liszt's expression."[71] Her words not only illustrate Liszt's performance style, but also perfectly describe the passion, contrast, and dramatic power of *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7. Dante's epic poem *Inferno* resonated with Liszt, who created music inspired by its literary themes. He represented Hell with the sharp juxtaposition of harmonies based on different scales, using dissonance in the main themes and motives and then countering them later in the work with new harmonic solutions, as he attributed a spiritual meaning to dissonance as the negation of consonance. Through this use of consonance and dissonance, Liszt grasped the tension and suffering of Hell, heightened by the musical and emotional expression of the themes of Dante's work. He created a modified sonata form to lessen the power of evil and ultimately to highlight the triumphant victory of good.

In this final version, Liszt was less interested in subordinating his musical themes to literary characters, so he does not follow Dante's literary plot. Instead, he focused on using musical themes to portray darkness or his inner turmoil and agitation. He managed to focus on his feelings and mood changes by emphasizing musical contrasts representing light over darkness and good triumphing over evil, such as a major key winning over a minor key, a perfect interval healing the defective interval (the tritone), and the diatonic scale as the resolution to a

[71] Boissier, *The Liszt Studies*, trans. Mach, xix.

chromatic scale. Liszt thus freed himself from the obligation of translating Dante's epic poem into a musical act. I argue that his tempestuous relationship with the Countess d'Agoult, which occured while he was composing Dante, along with his reflections on program music and the limitations of traditional sonata-allegro form, all shaped his invention of thematic transformations and his one-movement form. In this way, the composition can be regarded as a commemoration of his pilgrimage with the Countess d'Agoult and their reading of Dante's work. During his international concert tours, Liszt searched for a new form to accommodate this literary and personal content. The version of *Dante* published in 1858 differs greatly from the first version of 1839, as only the main thematic features remained, with the rest altered to develop themes and arrive ultimately at a different conclusion. The published version shows the evolution Liszt made during his Weimar residency, transitioning from a concert pianist to a composer.

Chapter 4: *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3

4.1: Alphonse de Lamartine and Liszt

4.1.1: *Harmonies* in a Shifting Europe

Liszt was a great admirer of Lamartine's best-selling collection of poetry *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* when the book first appeared in Paris in 1830.[1] He mentioned his interest in Lamartine's poems numerous times in his correspondence with the Countess d'Agoult, and he wrote in his letters to her that he wanted to write music to pay homage to Lamartine's literary influence on him. During his travels between 1841–1847, he always carried notebooks for sketching his musical ideas. In those notebooks, scholars found early drafts of the set, which were small fragmentary musical thoughts written to express religious sentiments. Liszt conceived of many plans for composing works to represent the rich variety of poetry in Lamartine's *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, while he was forming a new relationship with Princess Carolyne against a backdrop of great political uncertainty across Europe.[2]

In April 1848, Liszt and Princess Carolyne traveled from Kryzanowicz through Vienna and Eisenstadt[3] to Weimar, while a Hungarian uprising broke out. Students and working-class people filled the streets in revolution, as well as soldiers preparing for war. Liszt and Carolyne managed to ignore these crowds, but there was no way for them to avoid the mayhem entirely. Walker defended Liszt's attitude towards these events, stating that Liszt would have been unable

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[1] Alphonse de Lamartine, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (Paris: C. Gosselin, 1830).

[2] At this time, France formed a new republican government and "Dupont from the Eure was nominated President of the Council and Lamartine became the Foreign Minister. […] When Liszt was writing this present letter, the Hungarian revolution was just beginning. It ended in bloodshed, with the crushing of the Hungarian insurgents by the troops of Czar Nicholas I, allied to those of Austria." See Liszt, *The Liszt-d'Agoult Correspondence*, 412, footnotes 332, 333, 335, and 338 to Letter, no. 462.

[3] Liszt made his way back to Eisenstadt to provide news about his life and to introduce Princess Carolyne to his acquaintance Father Stanislaus Albach at the Franciscan monastery, where his father often brought him to visit when he was a child. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 68.

to fight in Hungary, because “apart from the fact that Liszt had doubts about the revolution…it is evident that his personal situation with the princess would not allow him to return to Hungary.” At this time, Liszt faced Heine’s poetic ire in his poem “Im Oktober 1849,” which was later published in 1850:

> Franz Liszt lives,
> He is not stretched out
> Bleeding on a field of battle;
> Neither a Russian nor a Croat killed him.
>
> He will live long.
> And while Hungary bleeds to death
> The beknighted Franz remains unscathed;
> His sabre also—it lies in a chest of drawers.
>
> He lives, the noble Franz, and as an old man
> Will relate to his grandchildren
> The great deeds of the Hungarian War.
> “This,” he will say, “is how I made the thrust
> and held the sabre.”[4]

Princess Carolyne’s decision to follow Liszt to Weimar led her to live as an exile from her family Iwanowsky’s lineage and her massive inherited lands in Polish Russia for the rest of her life. In fact, she died in Rome on Ash Wednesday, February 23, 1887, and was buried in the Vatican’s German Cemetery, an exile even in death.[5]

A parallel, then, could be drawn between this biographical segment of Liszt’s life and his musical version of Lamartine’s *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*. In the sixth stanza of Lamartine’s poem, there is mention of “the time of Rachel” (italics mine),

> Mais le sommeil, doux fruit des jours laborieux,
> Avant l’heure tardive appesantit nos yeux;
> *Comme aux jours de Rachel*, la prière rustique

[4] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 70.

[5] Today, this land would be considered Polish Ukraine. At that time, the Russian czar was still giving orders to the front line. Princess Carolyne and her daughter Marie of Sayn-Wittgenstein had to flee across the Russian-controlled border to join Liszt in Krzanowice, and they safely arrived on April 18, 1848. Liszt, *The Liszt-d’Agoult Correspondence*, 412, letter no. 462.

Rassemble devant Dieu la tribu domestique,
Et pour que son encens soit plus pur et plus doux,
C'est la voix d'un enfant qui l'élève pour tous.
Cette voix virginale, et qu'attendrit encore
La présence du Dieu qu'à genoux elle implore,
Invoque sur les nuits sa bénédiction,
Ou murmure un des chants des harpes de Sion;
On y répond en chœur ; et la voix de la mère,
Douce et tendre, et l'accent mâle et grave du père,
Et celui des vieillards que les ans ont baissé,
Et celui des pasteurs que les champs ont cassé,
Bourdonnant sourdement la parole divine,
Forment avec les sons de la voix enfantine
Un contraste de trouble et de sérénité,
Comme une heure de paix dans un jour agité ;
Et l'on croirait, aux sons de cette voix qui change,
Entendre des mortels interroger un ange.

In the Bible, Rachel is a mourning mother seeking an end to the exile that followed the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians in ancient Jerusalem.[6] In the *Preface* of his musical version of *Bénédiction*, Liszt includes only the first stanza of Lamartine's poem. Even though he does not explicitly reference these stanzas about Rachel, Liszt's evocation of Lamartine's poetic title may be symbolizing his and Princess Carolyne's exile in Weimar. His muted voice in the midst of the European political crisis and Hungarian uprising can be described as his discovery of spiritual solace, a place where peace and love still exist. By comparison, Liszt later composed *Funérailles*, a separate new work that was included as the seventh work in the final set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173. There, Liszt

[6] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Rachel: Bible," in *The Shalvi / Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women.* December 31, 1999, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/rachel-bible, accessed April 25, 2023. Barnabas Lindars, "'Rachel Weeping for her Children' Jeremiah 31: 15–22," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 4, no. 12 (1979): 47–62. This is interpreted in Judaism as Rachel crying for an end to her descendants' sufferings and exile following the destruction by the Babylonians of the First Temple in ancient Jerusalem. According to the Midrash, Rachel spoke before God: "If I, a mere mortal, was prepared not to humiliate my sister and was willing to take a rival into my home, how could You, the eternal, compassionate God, be jealous of idols, which have no true existence, that were brought into Your home (the Temple in Jerusalem)? Will You cause my children to be exiled on this account?" God accepted her plea and promised that, eventually, the exile would end, and the Jews would return to their land.

connected the famous sound of the funeral bells in the opening to the turbulent Hungarian revolution, Liszt's musical rendition of Lamartine's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* can be understood as Liszt's ironic reflection on his romance with Princess Carolyne, who with determination went into exile to pursue love.

4.1.2: The Genesis of Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*

The compositional process for *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, the third and longest work of the cycle *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses,* S. 173*,* differed from that of *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7. Rather than having a clear literary inspiration that he developed on a large scale over time, Liszt began drafting this piece in small fragments without a literary title, only later linking them to poetic texts. Liszt then made a series of revisions to that original, non-programmatic idea. The compositional process for the entire set of religiously inspired *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* is rather complex. Liszt composed *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S.154, as one single piece begun in 1833 and completed in 1834, but the music it contains includes no work that resembles the final version of *Bénédiction*.[7] After 1834, Liszt developed a new set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* between 1845–1846 in eight parts[8]:

1. E-flat major *'Prélude'*
2. C minor *'Langueur'*
3. E major
4. D-flat major *'Dernière illusion'*
5. G-flat major'
6. A major *'Attente'*
7. E major *'Alternative'*
8. D-flat major *'M.K.'* [*Marie Kalergis*]

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[7] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 313.

[8] No. 16a (p. 318) in Serge Gut's catalogue has a series of nine works, including a *Prélude* as the third work in the set, but does not correspond to what Howard gives here, nor does Gut recognize an earlier set as here: Gut gives it another number, No. 27 (p. 329). No. 16a was first published by the Muziekuitgeverij XYZ in Huizen, Netherlands, in 2003.

Liszt's E-flat major *Prélude* in this version was later catalogued as S.171d and counted as the first version of *Bénédiction.*[9] Liszt revised the collection between 1847–1848 and the result was a new set, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 172a, with eleven parts[10]:

1. *Invocation*
2. *Hymne de la nuit*
3. *Hymne du matin*
4. *Litanies de Marie*
5. *Miserere*
6. *Pater noster*
7. *Hymne de l'enfant à son réveil*
8. *Les morts – De profundis*
9. *La lampe du temple*
10. *Hymne*
11. *Bénédiction*

Here no. 11 is only titled "Postlude" in the manuscript (D-WRgs, Liszt Noten 60, N9) but in Howard's email correspondence he called it *Bénédiction*. Only in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses,* S.173, which is the final ten-part composition, is *Bénédiction* listed third[11]:

1. *Invocation*
2. *Ave Maria*
3. *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*
4. *Pensée des morts*
5. *Pater noster*
6. *Hymne de l'enfant à son reveil*
7. *Funérailles*
8. *Miserere, d'après Palestrina*
9. *Andante lagrimoso*
10. *Cantique d'amour*

The genesis of *Bénédiction* begins in Liszt's non-programmatic *Prélude*, which is a complete short piece that is now catalogued as S. 171d, No. 1, and dated 1845.[12] The main theme

[9] Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021, regarding Liszt's revisions to *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*.

[10] This corresponds to No. 16b in Gut's catalogue, p. 319, where it is dated 1847.

[11] This corresponds to No. 16c in Gut's catalogue, p. 319, where it is dated 1848–1853.

[12] Franz Liszt, "Préludes et Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, S. 171d," IMSLP, accessed October 13, 2022, https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ReverseLookup/600618.

is very similar to the right-hand melody between mm. 223–252[13] of the final published version, except that it is written in E-flat major. Albert Brussee stated that in Liszt's autograph travel sketchbook, D-WRgs, Liszt Noten 60/N–5, under the heading *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, there is a *Prélude* that is a complete draft. Liszt marked it, "Nancy, 16 November, 1845," indicating the French city where he was on that day.[14] The sketchbook N–5 was where he jotted down his melodic ideas and tried to realize in his first drafts most of his intuitive topical elements including a simple melody and its harmonic solutions.[15] This *Prélude* would become the central section of the *Bénédiction* in the twelve-part series.

Between March 1840 and October 1845, Liszt gave 298 concerts in German-speaking regions alone.[16] He decided to retire from the stage in 1847 due to the exhaustion brought about by this intense concertizing. He played his last four public concerts in mid-September to mid-October 1847, then spent time with Princess Carolyne at her country estate in Woronińce, where he stayed from October 1847 to January 1848. Liszt had already completely reworked his 1845 version of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*.[17] When he left for Weimar to take up the position of *Kapellmeister* that had been negotiated earlier,[18] Liszt used his time in Woronińce to revise his 1845 version of that set, which resulted in 1847 in a new version with the same title. The 1847 version of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* was discovered and edited by Albert Brussee in 1997. In Brussee's edition, the 1845 *Prélude* found its place in Liszt's 1847 version of

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[13] Franz, Liszt, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses (1847 version)*, vol.1, ed. Albert Brussee (Huizen, Holland: B.V. Muziekuitgeverij XYZ, 1997), 85. Brussee included notes for performance, writing that from m. 244, "a climax is built, intensified by dialogue between soprano and tenor."

[14] Ibid., VII.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Saffle, *Liszt in Germany,* 3.

[17] Ibid.

[18] In a letter dated October 8, 1846, written in Dáká, Hungary, Liszt wrote that 2/3 of *Harmonies* was finished. See Liszt, *Correspondance,* eds. Knepper and Huré, 165.

Harmonies poetiques et religieuses, D-WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/N–9,[19] where it had become the *Postlude*, S. 172a, No. 11 in E-flat major, the closing work of the 1847 set.[20] The thematic materials of that version are located between mm. 223–252 in the final 1853 published version. This B-flat major section only contains thirty measures.

With a detailed account of Liszt's process of gathering ideas for his *Harmonies*, Rena Charnin Mueller, Joan Pauline Backus, Sonia Tripathi, Tish Anne Kilgore, and Bo Ra Kim have thoroughly explored the compositional process of the earlier drafts and the final published set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173.[21] They reconstruct that Liszt was constantly adding or removing the music that reflected his original programmatic inspirations before his ideas finally settled in their final form with definitive titles. I limit my comments to the programmatic elements therein that could possibly be related to the final version of *Benediction de Dieu dans la solitude*.

As noted, Liszt made a final revision to the set after he arrived in Weimar, and transcribed the main thematic material of the *Postlude*, S. 172a, No. 11 (Figure 4.1) into B-flat major with a simplified melody and in a condensed form, fitting it into the second part of the middle section of the published version (Figure 4.2). *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3 bore this literary title now, finding its final place in *Harmonies poétiques et*

[19] Mueller, "Liszt's Tasso Sketchbook," 273.

[20] Liszt, "Harmonies poétiques et religieuses," D-WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/N–9.

[21] Mueller, "Liszt's Tasso Sketchbook," 251–277. Joan Pauline Backus, *Aspects of Form in the Music of Liszt: The Principle of Developing Ideas* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1986), 41–63. Sonia Tripathi, "Franz Liszt's Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses: The Inspiration Derived from the Poetry of Alphonse de Lamartine, with an Analysis of the 1853 Piano Cycle" (DMA diss., University of California-Santa Barbara, 2011), 45–84. Tish Anne Kilgore, *"Liszt's Bénédiction de Dieu Dans La Solitude*: Élements of Transcendence and Transformation in the Context of the Compositional Evolution and Musical Structure of the Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses," (DMA diss., Boston University, 2009), 7–25, 63–91. Bo Ra Kim, "A New Perspective on the Interpretation and Performance of Franz Liszt's Piano Cycle, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2015).

religieuses, S. 173, which was published in 1853 and dedicated to Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein.

There was little direct programmatic influence on the thematic material of the earlier, shorter versions of the piece, which bore no programmatic titles, only "*Prélude*" or "*Postlude.*"[22] But in his final published 1853 set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, received its final literary title. That final published version is in an extended A-B-A' form with a coda. Liszt added a programmatic title referencing Lamartine's poem, of which the first paragraph is printed as the preface to Liszt's composition. Liszt composed new themes corresponding to the mood expressed in the poem.

[22] Liszt, *Harmonies*, vol. 1, ed. Brussee, X. A thorough revision of Liszt's 1847 cycle in 1850–1851 resulted in less pronounced unity of the cycle.

Figure 4.1: The borrowed material taken from Franz Liszt's *Postlude*, S. 172a, No. 11, mm. 3–12, and later reworked into his *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3

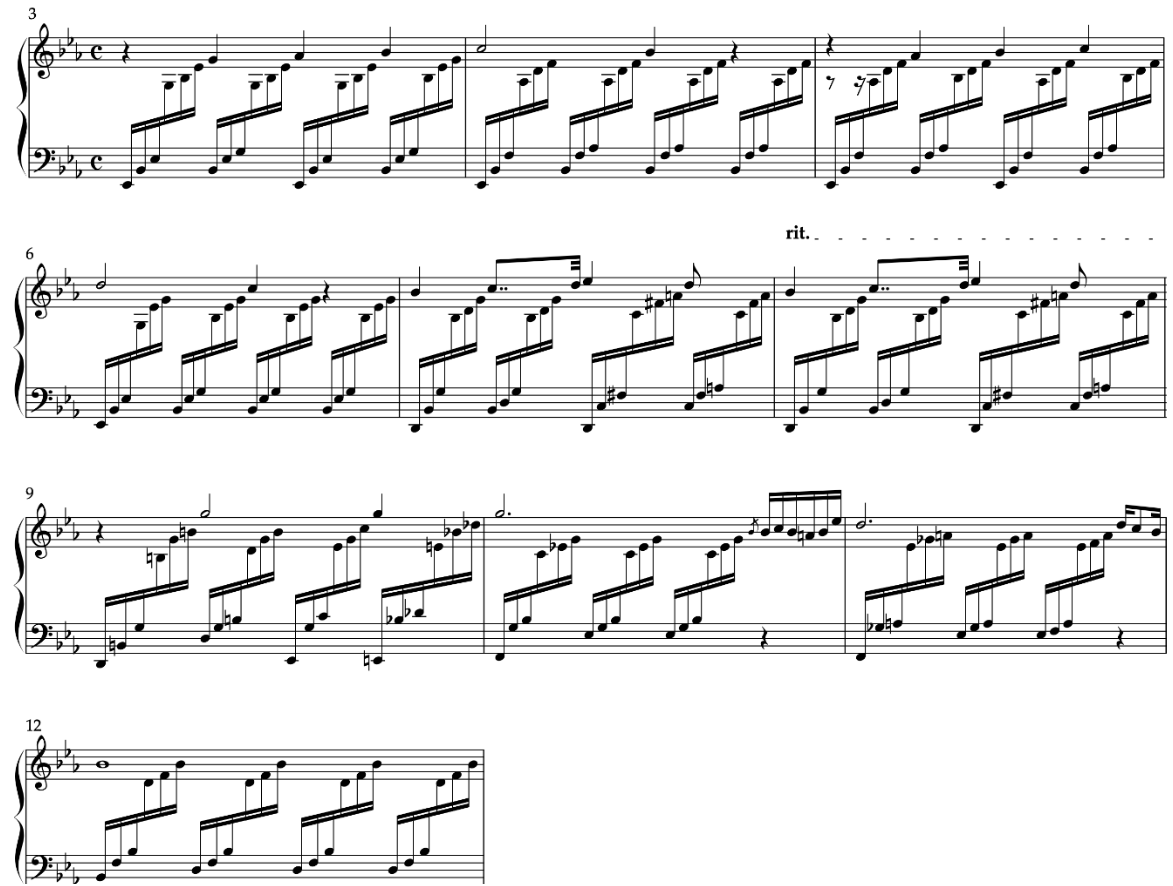
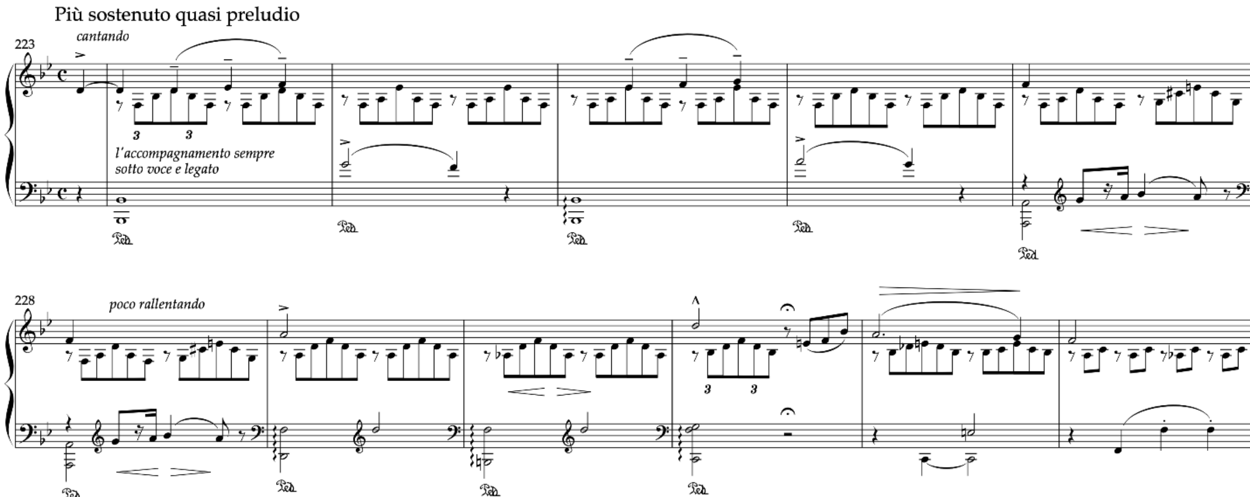


Figure 4.2: The material of the *Postlude* reworked and added to the middle section of Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 223–233



4.2: Chant-Influenced Melody, Rhetorical Quality, and First-Person Voice

4.2.1: The Influence of *Tantum ergo* on the Opening Melody

At the beginning of the A section of the final version of *Bénédiction*, Liszt wrote an entirely new section with a well-known melody played by the left hand. It has the same rhythm as the quoted poetry of the hymn *Tantum ergo*. Comparison of these opening measures (Figure 4.4) with the beginning of the hymn *Tantum ergo* (Figure 4.3) shows he was borrowing this melody. This hymn, which expresses the Adoration of the Host, comes from the last two stanzas of the Eucharistic hymn *Pange lingua*, and was sung in Liszt's day in the Catholic mass at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament during the Catholic Eucharist.[23] It could be speculated that Liszt had heard this melody so many times during mass that it was a natural choice, given the subject of his poetic inspiration.

Figure 4.3: The melody of *Tantum ergo* from the end of the Catholic Eucharistic hymn *Pange lingua*

[23] Schola Sancte Scholasticae and St. Cecilia's Abbey, UK and others, "Tantum ergo (Pange)," Gregorian Chant Hymns, June 30, 2014, consulted April 28, 2023: http://gregorian-chant-hymns.com/hymns-2/tantum-ergo.html

Figure 4.4: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 1–8

4.2.2: Rhetorical Quality and the First-Person Voice in Liszt's Musical Expression

Judith Barban found that Lamartine's original poem *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* contains rhythms corresponding to classical French Alexandrine poetry (consisting of twelve syllables with a medial caesura dividing the line into two half-lines of six syllables each). Lamartine's original poem has eight stanzas, a number that is symbolic of the Resurrection of Christ.[24] I compared the poetic setting to Liszt's music and found that Liszt composed rhythms which are metrically aligned with this syllabic meter as if he wanted to sing the poem himself.[25] The first stanza of Lamartine's poetry and John Wagstaff's English translation are quoted here:[26]

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[24] De Lamartine, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses,* 22–28.

[25] Judith L. Barban, "Liszt and Lamartine: Poetic and Religious Harmonies," *The Comparatist*, no. 16 (1992): 115–22.

[26] The use here of the original first stanza of the poem and its English translation with permission granted by Henle Verlag. See the Preface in Franz Liszt, *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (Munich, Henle Verlag, 2010).

Figure 4.5: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, fermata in the left-hand melody in m. 1 of mm. 1–19

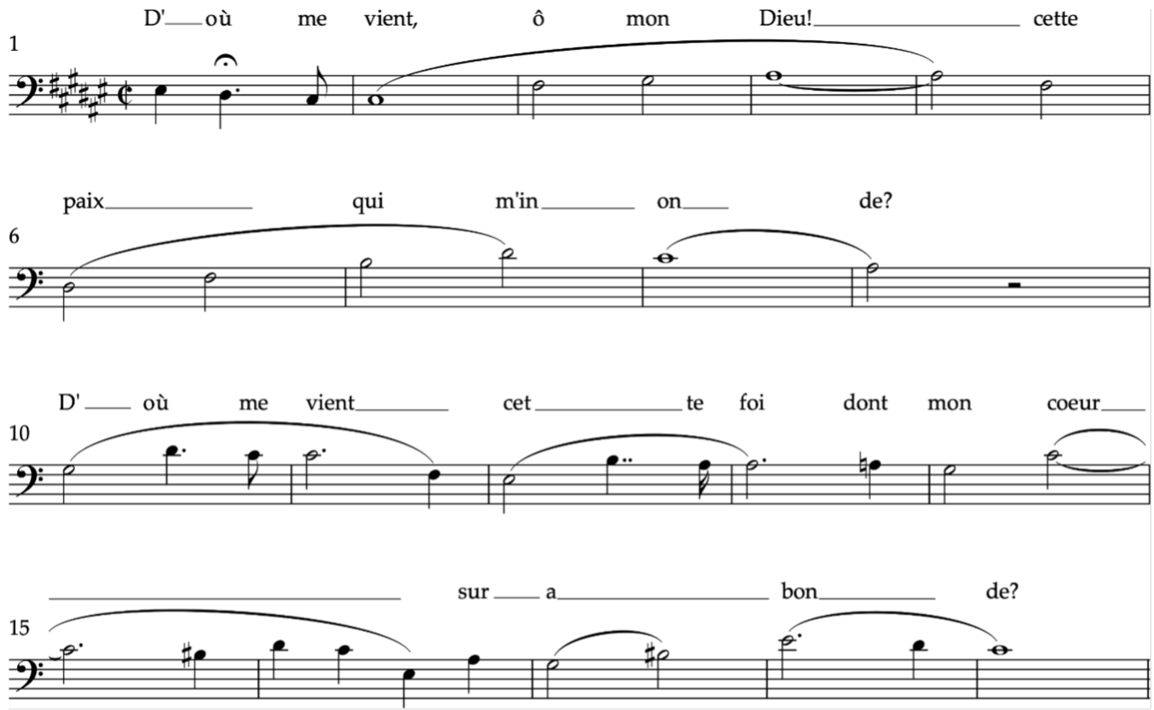


Figure 4.6: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 21–39

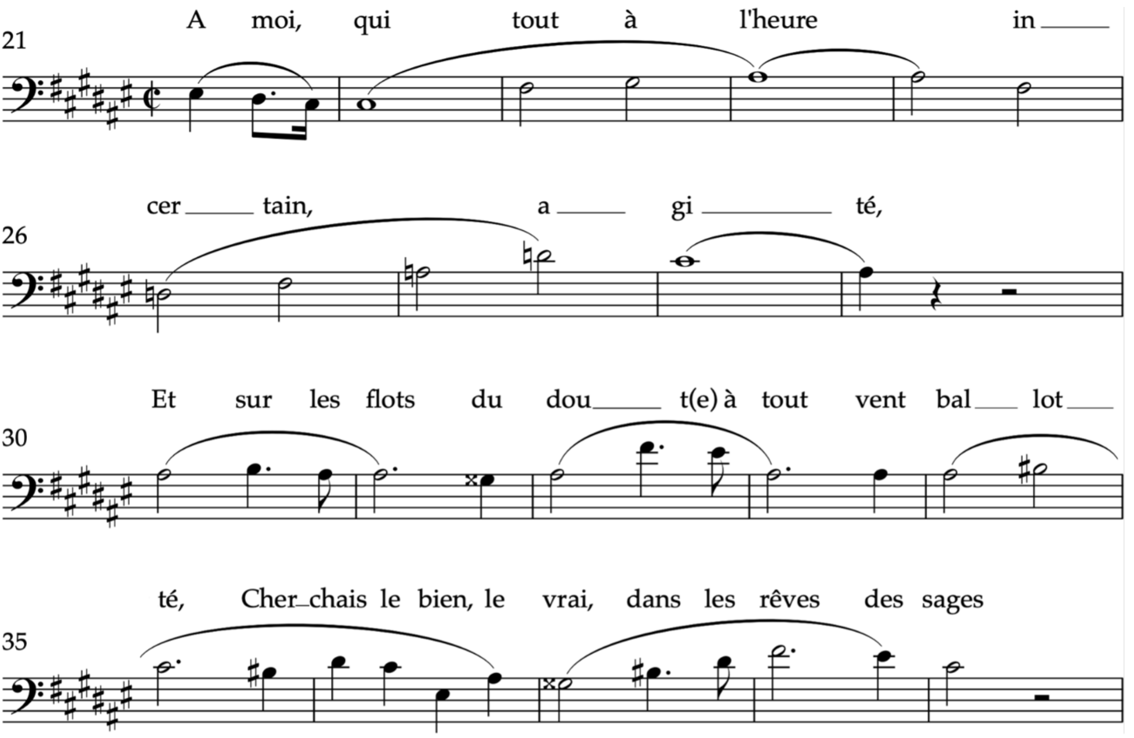
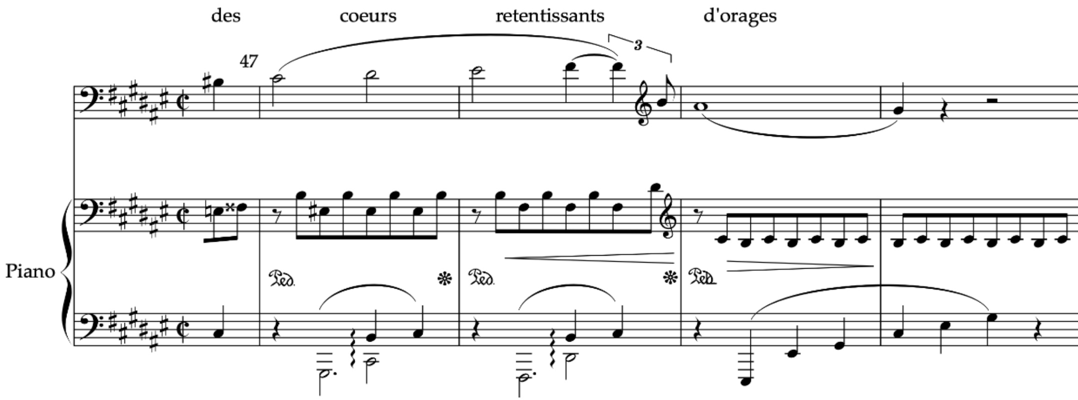


Figure 4.7: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 47–50



Another example of Liszt's mixing of textual meaning and music is the melody written for the poetry of lines 6–10 (Figure 4.7). The melody in mm. 43–76 does not perfectly match the rhythm and the syllabic meter of poetry line 7, as it did in the previous lines 1–5 (Figures 4.5 and 4.6), but the meaning of the word "glissé" and its poetic content is manifested by gliding intervals, which Liszt marked *un poco ritenuto* and *dolcissimo* in mm. 51–58. The melody is to be played with a gliding legato, passing through a few notes and ending on a half cadence of A major, with a slight moment of hesitation given that captures the essence of the passage of time, that "*quelques jours ont glissé* (a few days have passed)" (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: The gliding melody in Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 51–58

To evoke the atmosphere of the last line of quoted poetry, Liszt first modulates to C major in m. 69 to make the harmony correspond to the idea of being reborn as a new man. Then,

he pairs the end of the verse, “Un nouvel homme en moi renait et recommence (A new man revives within me, and begins again),” with the cadence on a prolonged dominant pedal C sharp, which is, in effect, a harp-like broken chord bathing in a pentatonic sonority, including B, C sharp, D sharp, F sharp, and G sharp (Figure 4.9), after which there is a sprinkle of descending seventh chords (Figure 4.10) linking back to the return, the new beginning of the opening melody. The influence and the meaning of the pentatonic scale will be discussed later.

Figure 4.9: Evocative transition in Franz Liszt’s *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 67–76

Figure 4.10: Descending seventh chords in Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 76–85

Throughout the piece, Liszt employs melodic invention intended to recreate a poetic singing quality, its form, intonation, and rhythms, and he closely tailors the musical quality to the meaning and changes made by the words. He uses this kind of melody having text-based rhythms and varied harmonies and ranges of pitch to give emphasis to selected words, achieving his ideal of a poetic musical language. The technique Liszt used to color and to harmonize his melody mirrors the Italian operatic singing style of *bel canto* with the qualities of perfect legato, the use of a light tone in the higher registers and flexible delivery. Liszt reserved this technique primarily to heighten the expression of certain words with an open vowel, or to highlight certain syllables with longer notes.

4.2.3: The Mystic Number Three in Liszt's Music

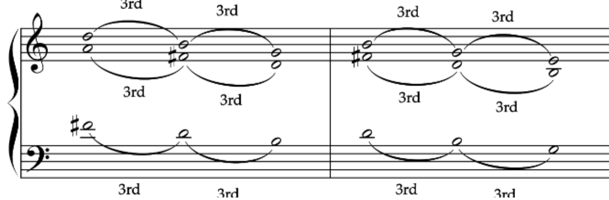
A benediction in the Catholic church is a liturgical blessing and event. In Liszt's musical depiction of benediction, God is sending blessings to the meditator. The thematic materials found in the middle section, also called the B section of *Bénédiction*, are arguably Liszt's

representations of such blessings, since this section is at the center of his work. Based on the concept of benediction as a descent from God, Liszt created a motif consisting of a series of descending thirds in the first part of the B section (Figure 4.11). The triple meter of this section differs from the 4/4 meter of the previous A section. These descending thirds were an appropriate reference to God's three natures, the Trinity.

The second part of the B section is comprised of material taken from his 1847 *Prélude*, transposed from the original E-flat major to B-flat major. For the recapitulation of the A section, Liszt brought back the opening material in a slightly varied form and enriched the left-hand accompaniment to make it sound like a harp, perceived at the time as a divine instrument. The modulations between each section are achieved using third relationships (F-sharp major, D major, B-flat major, and F-sharp major), which again invoke the mystic number three. The theme descends in consonant thirds and sixths to enhance the religious atmosphere (Figure 4.11). This movement evokes musically God's blessings and peace descending from above through the Holy Spirit at the Incarnation of Christ but also aligns that Trinity with God's blessing on the solitary pianist, tying Liszt himself and his composition to its title, "The Blessing of God in Solitude."

Figure 4.11: Motive of descending thirds in Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 179–187

The motive goes down with the 3rd intervalic relationship.



4.3: Musical Elements to Express Religious Ideas

4.3.1. Avoidance of Dissonance and Motivic Connections for Unity

As previously mentioned in the description of Liszt's revisions of his earlier works, such as *Dante*, the 1845 version of the set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* was revised in 1847 while Liszt stayed with Princess Carolyne at her country estate, Woronińce. Between 1848[27] and 1852, he reworked the cyclic set again and added most of what would become the later

[27] Liszt, *Harmonies,* vol. 1, ed. Brussee, ix. October 1847–Jan 1848 Liszt worked in Woronińce on a complete cycle in twelve parts with seven from older sketches. In this cycle, the "Benediction" is no. 11 before the final "Postlude." This complete series is in D-WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/N–9.

Benediction.[28] These revisions comprised the pinnacle of the emotional journey that Liszt started when he met Carolyne, a fervent Catholic, with whom Liszt exchanged literature and religious readings on inexhaustable theological topics. Their lively conversations and exchanges of letters spurred Liszt to discover John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, grounding one of the important theological ideas of Liszt's musical language, namely his idea about the nature of Satan, which is based on negation.[29] This idea also affected the harmonic choices in his spiritually informed compositions at this time. Liszt's experimentation with dissonance and unresolved harmonies could be seen as part of his attempt to explore theological negation in music through a move away from consonant and perfect harmony.

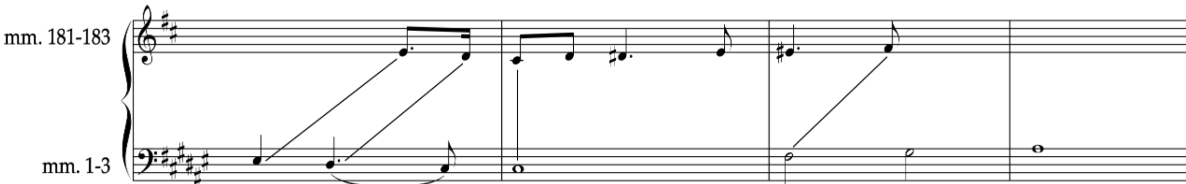
Derek Scott proposed, "…in music, terms that form binary oppositions are rarely of equal status. One term is usually the negative rather than the opposite of another, its identity is, as it were, that of the other term with a minus sign. Dissonance is a lack of consonance, yet consonance is not a lack of dissonance." Based on Scott's proposal, I argue that Liszt's favoring of consonant harmonization throughout this entire work was, for him, an expression of his conception of spiritual unification. On the other hand, he also intentionally avoids the use of tritones, diminished chords, and sharp chromaticism, which would create restlessness, agitation, and anguish. Liszt added new thematic material as a means of lengthening the work, but he was careful to unite sections that were written at different times. Similarities are found at the beginning of the opening melody in the A section (mm.1–3) and in the latter part of the melody

[28] Liszt*, Harmonies poétiques et religieuses (1847 version),* vol. 2, ed. Brussee, xv. Brussee suggests that *Benediction* was not composed in 1850 or 1851. A variant of the leitmotiv linking the 1847 cycle numbers is in first measures of the work but is less pronounced in the version of 1853. In formulating that cycle published in 1853, Liszt decided to include no. 12 as the central section of no. 11, which did not require revision. *Benediction* so inspired corrections hardly necessary that Liszt tore pages out of the sketchbook and added a central section and coda (Brussee, xvi) and prepared the work for publication. The "Postlude" transposed to B-flat major became the central section of the *Benediction*. The "Postlude" is only in the sketchbook N–9 (edited by Brussee, 65–70).

[29] See Chapter 3, section 3.1.

in the B section (mm. 181–183) that Liszt created motivic connections between two main thematic melodies to enhance work's unity (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 1–3 and 181–183, similarities between melodies in the opening and middle sections



He also maintained flow and continuity through consonant harmonies, modulations between major keys in the third intervallic relationship, unifying color in F-sharp major, and the diatonic scale and pentatonic arpeggiation as an accompaniment sounding like a harp, all of which combine to create a meditative mood, at times moving the piano singing into joy and exaltation. The music flows smoothly from one section to the next despite a fermata, a pause, and double bars between sections, such as at m. 178, m. 222, m. 252, and m. 329.

4.3.2: Liszt's Graphic Design Suggests a Frame for the Religious Ritual

Liszt provided his specific graphic drawings to frame the middle *Andante* section (mm. 178–222, the B section in *Bénédiction*'s general A-B-A' form) separately from the remaining parts of this work. Liszt also gave performance indications, such as a fermata, double bars, and a *Lunga pausa* (long rest) to separate this section from the next.

In the first, published edition of the 1853 set of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S.173, published in Leipzig by Kistner,[30] before and after mm. 179–222 dots were written that form two symmetrical ascents and descents, each consisting of 8 conjunct dots to add up to 31 dots. This framed musical section contains the descending third intervals (Figure 4.11) as the

[30] The complete manuscript of the 1853 version of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* is lost.

meaning with the movements evoking God's blessings descending from above were argued in 4.2.2. The editor of Henle's 2010 edition, Ernst-Günter Heinemann mentioned this special design in the editor's individual comments, noting "this is an example of Liszt's occasional use of special graphic signs, which serve to communicate particular pieces of musical information better than traditional signs (here marking a strong break)."[31] I argue that the insertion of this unorthodox graphic design suggests a holy musical space that requires extended peace and quietness for unity with the Holy Spirit, and that the meter change and other elements associated with the mystic number three elevate this section to a different theological position. The praising melodies of the A and A' sections, written to sing Lamartine's first stanza, illustrate Liszt's first-person voice. But here, in the B section, which is heavily embedded with the symbolism of the number 3, a mystic sense of the Holy Trinity descending from God to humanity–and the pianist–is suggested (Illustrations 4.1 and 4.2).[32]

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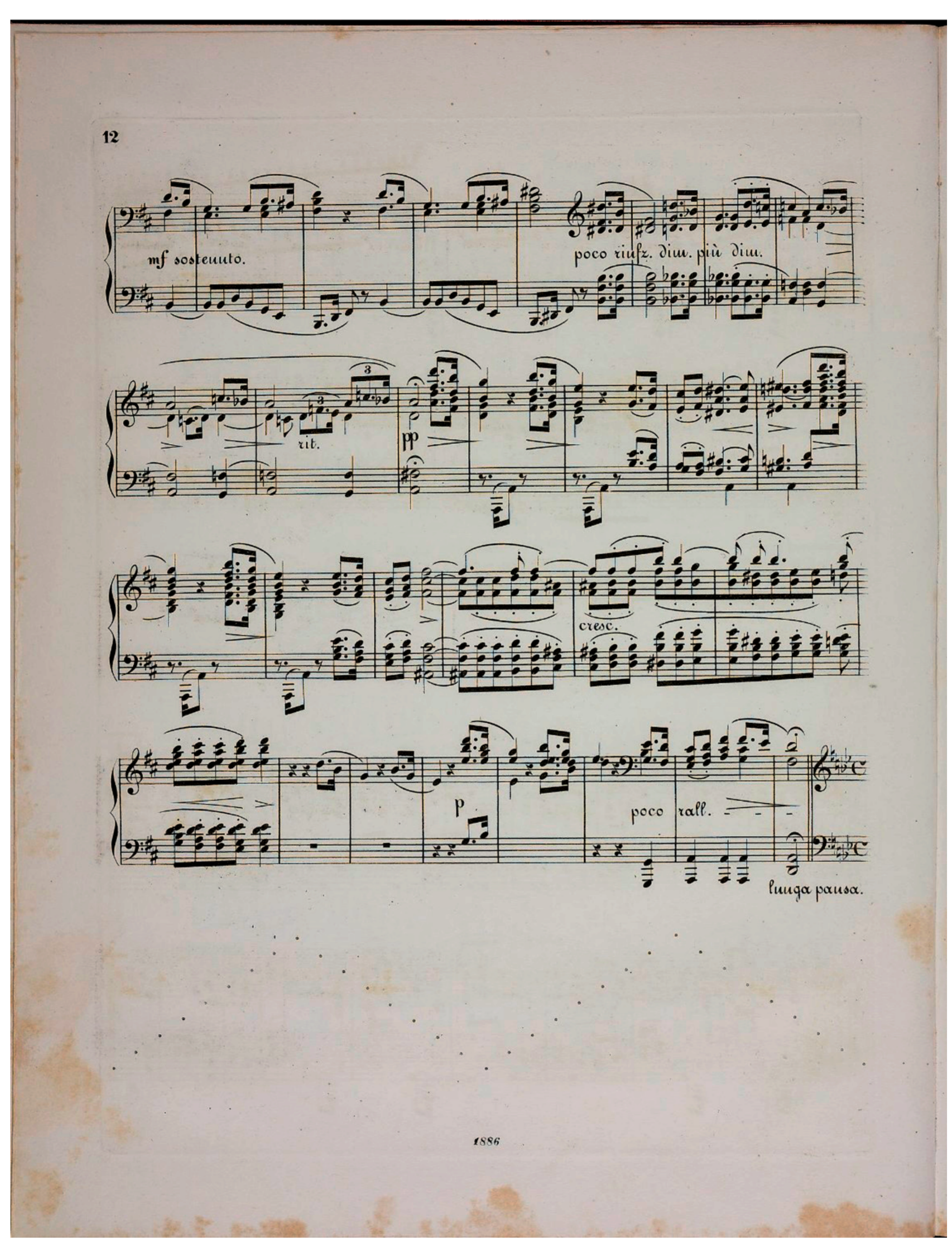
[31] The editor Heinemann's comments can be found in Franz Liszt, *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (Munich: Henle Verlag, 2010), 19.

[32] On the rich symbolism of the number 3, see Heinz Meyer and Rudolf Suntrup, *Lexikon der Mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1987), cols. 214–331. Illustrations 4.1 and 4.2 are of D-WRz, I–20, *Harmonies* poëtique*s et religieuses pour le Piano par F. Liszt.,* Liv. II, No. 3, "Benediction de Dieu dans la Solitude," Blätter 39–40. To access the entire set of *Harmonies* poëtiques *et religieuses* online https://haab-digital.klassik-stiftung.de/viewer/image/801825318/2/.

Illustration 4.1: D-WRz, I-20, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses pour le Piano par F. Liszt*. Liv. II No.3, "Benediction de Dieu dans la Solitude," Blatt 39, https://haab-digital.klassik-stiftung.de/viewer/image/801825318/31/LOG_0008/

Illustration 4.2: D-WRz, I-20, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses pour le Piano par F. Liszt*. Liv. II No.3, “Benediction de Dieu dans la Solitude,” Blatt 40

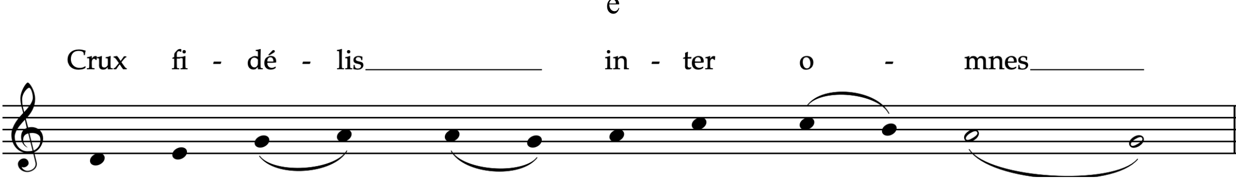


4.3.3: “Cross Motif” and Liszt’s Use of a Pentatonic Scale

Liszt’s use of a pentatonic scale in *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* could have been derived from his preference for certain chant intonations. In a note appended to the full score of his oratorio *Die Legende von der Heiligen Elisabeth* (The Legend of St. Elizabeth), S. 2, he acknowledged that through his Hungarian friends, he was able to study liturgical books with antiphons, graduals, and hymns, etc. and identified three pitches that served as an intonation (a beginning) of many chants. He only specifically named two, however, the tone to the *Magnificat* and the beginning of the hymn *Crux fidelis* (Figure 4.13), thereby associating that intonation to the Cross (Figure 4.14).[33] Liszt wrote,

> Finally, it should also be noticed that the intonation G a c is used very often in Gregorian chant; for example, in the *Magnificat* G a c c c, the hymn *Crux fidelis* D E G a a G, etc. The composer of this work used this named succession of pitches several times among others in the Fugue of the Gloria of the Mass of Esztergom [Gran];[34] in the final chorus of the Dante Symphony, and in the symphonic poem ‘The Battle of the Huns.’ It forms in the obligatory composition of the *Legend of St. Elizabeth*, so to speak, the sounding symbol of the Cross, the main motive of the choir of the Crusaders (no. IIIa) and of the Crusade March (IIId).[35]

Figure 4.13: “Crux-fidélis” from the Gregorian Chant

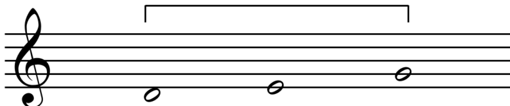


[33] *Crux fidelis* is a stanza from the hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis*, composed by Venantius Fortunatus for a procession that brought a part of the True Cross to Queen Radegunda of Poitiers. The hymn is sung on Good Friday during the Adoration of the Cross, in the Liturgy of the Hours during Holy Week, and on feasts of the Cross. See “Crux fidelis,” Choral Wiki, July 4, 2121, https://www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Crux_fidelis, consulted April 28, 2023.

[34] The full title of this work is Liszt’s *Missa Solennis*, S. 9.

[35] Translated by Barbara Haggh-Huglo. Liszt, *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth*, eds. Nagy and Roquette, vii-ix.

Figure 4.14: Liszt's "Cross" motif



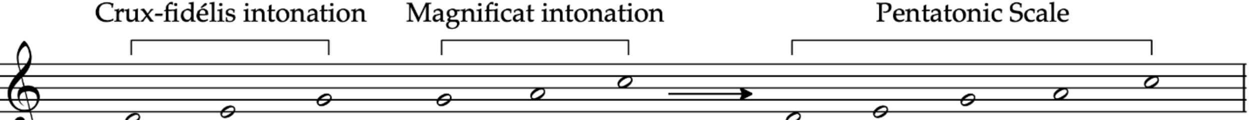
The origin of *Crux fidelis* is as the hymn sung on Good Friday, but it is also used as a Gregorian antiphon for Matins of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.[36] This Cross motif appears at the most declamatory moment of the entire *Bénédiction* in m. 307, where Liszt used the three-pitches for his religiously glorifying, exalting moment (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 299–307. The three pieces are identified in the climax in m. 307

[36] See "Crux fidelis," Cantus Index, September 2, 2019, https://cantusindex.org/id/001962f, consulted April 28, 2023, for its melodies in manuscripts of chant.

Tibor Szász, in his Appendix B, "Sources of Musical Examples Set 4", took Liszt's mention of *Crux fidelis* one step further. By stacking up two sets of the three pitches D-E-G and G-A-C to form the pentatonic scale: D-E-G-A-C. Szász speculates that Liszt's use of the pentatonic scale was taken from the three pitches beginning the melody of *Crux fidelis*, a common chant intonation which became Liszt's "Cross motif" in Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor (1853), in the 'grandioso' section, mm. 105–109, according to Szász (Figure 4.16).[37] Liszt's pentatonicism was subsequently applied throughout his spiritually inspired piano compositions, and even transposed into a different starting pitch, as in Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor.

Figure 4.16: Pentatonic permutation



Serge Gut had a different view. Gut traced Liszt's usage of the pentatonic scale chronologically and proposed that its connotations evolved through the different stages of Liszt's life and can be identified in two categories of his compositions.[38] These categories include the religiously inspired pentatonic sonorities seen in *Litanie à Marie* (1846) and a bucolic style.[39] The bucolic style appears in his youth and continues until the beginning of his mature age. Such works include *Le Lac de Wallenstadt* (No. 2a from the *l'Album d'un voyageur* and No.2 from *l'Année de pèlerinage: Suisse)*, *Églogue* (No. 7 of *l'Année de pèlerinage: Suisse*), and *Sposalizio* (No.1 from *l'Année de pèlerinage: Italie*). The other style of using pentatonic sonority comes

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37 Szász, "Liszt's Symbols for the Divine and Diabolical," 65.
38 Gut, *Franz Liszt,* 45–46.
39 Ibid., 48.

later in his life in his sacred vocal compositions. In the case of *Die Legende von der Heiligen Elisabeth*, which was completed in Rome in 1862, the pentatonic motif is a borrowed Gregorian intonation rather than one composed by Liszt. Gut also argues that Liszt became more precise as he arrived at a mature age and took a different direction by using a pentatonic scale during his Roman period. Gut suspects another possible source of Liszt's use of the pentatonic scale—his friendship with Frédéric Chopin, who used it often in his novel harmonies. Chopin was the first to compose a piano *étude* entirely on black keys, effectively producing a pentatonic scale.

Given the years of composition of *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, and the fact that Liszt did not explain its meaning in writing or provide a reason for using its pentatonic sonority, it is speculated by Gut that the work belongs to the bucolic genre. In this work, Liszt used the common chant intonation to form various accompaniments based on a pentatonic scale. Gut referred to it as "an evocation of the nature, the fields, the shepherds and the sheep." The bucolic style is also closely associated with Alphonse de Lamartine's style of poetry, as he gave free reign to imagination and sensibility by his passion and lyricism.

In the history of nineteenth-century French literature, Lamartine was regarded as being the first poet to use the first person singular to express his most intimate emotions directly. He thus described landscapes which reflected his qualms, and his poems dealt with themes dear to the Romantic ideals such as the fleeting nature of time, melancholia, depression, elation in love, the divine, and wilderness as shelter.[40]

Based on the two scholarly views above and Liszt's own reference to his study of chant sources, I propose that Liszt's use of the pentatonic scale is indeed strongly associated with his

[40] For an online biography, see "Alphonse de Lamartine," Château de Saint-Point Maison D'Alphonse de Lamartine, accessed September 3, 2022, https://chateaudelamartine.fr/alphonse-de-lamartine/.

religious sentiment, as well as with bucolic scenes, though this sound connection was not documented in his early years. Liszt previously associated the pentatonic sonorities with F-sharp major in the inner octave accompaniment of his *Dante Sonata*'s second theme, and much later in his life, in the climax of *Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este* in mm. 206–219 (Figure 7.17).

Indeed, his entire *Bénédiction* is infused with a pentatonic sonority, so it is impossible not to notice this special sound effect that he created so differently than anything else he had invented previously, when instead he had favored harsh dissonance, dense chromaticism, shifting beats, and more. Liszt's use of the pentatonic scale not only reveals his effort to minimize the use of diatonic major and minor scales,[41] but also suggests Liszt's search for unconventional harmonies to portray a unique sound world that is almost utopian. The following examples show places where Liszt uses pentatonic sonorities in a mixture of the double-note intervals and arpeggios in his accompaniment. These decorative accompaniment figures played by the left hand imitate harp playing, which Lamartine describes in his poem: "ou murmure un des chants des harpes de Sion" (or the murmur of one of the songs of the harps of Zion). The harp-like accompaniment enhances the feelings of floating and gives a sense of flying and provides an atmosphere of great peace and divine serenity (Figure 4.17–4.21).

[41] Western harmony based on major and minor scales usually leads to a dominant (V) degree and a leading tone, which not only introduces harmonic tension but also emphasizes the strength of the tonic that requires the dominant or leading tone to resolve on that tonic.

Figure 4.17: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 1–8; The opening section, played by the right hand

Figure 4.18: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 169–178; Accompaniment figures played by the right hand

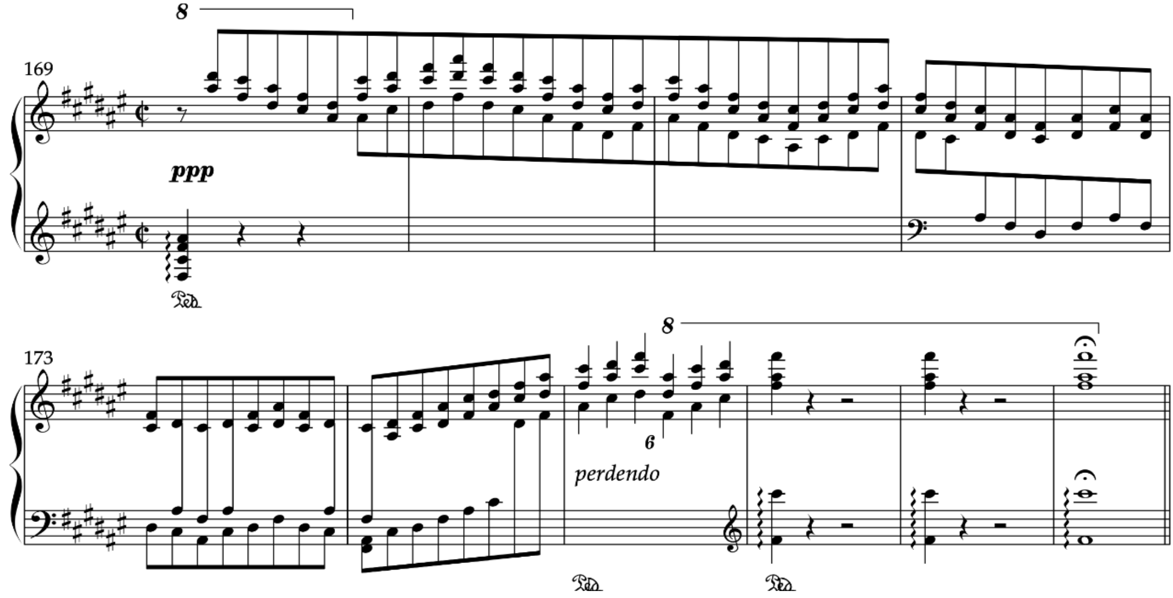


Figure 4.19: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitud*e, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 253–260; Arpeggios played by the left hand as flowing waves

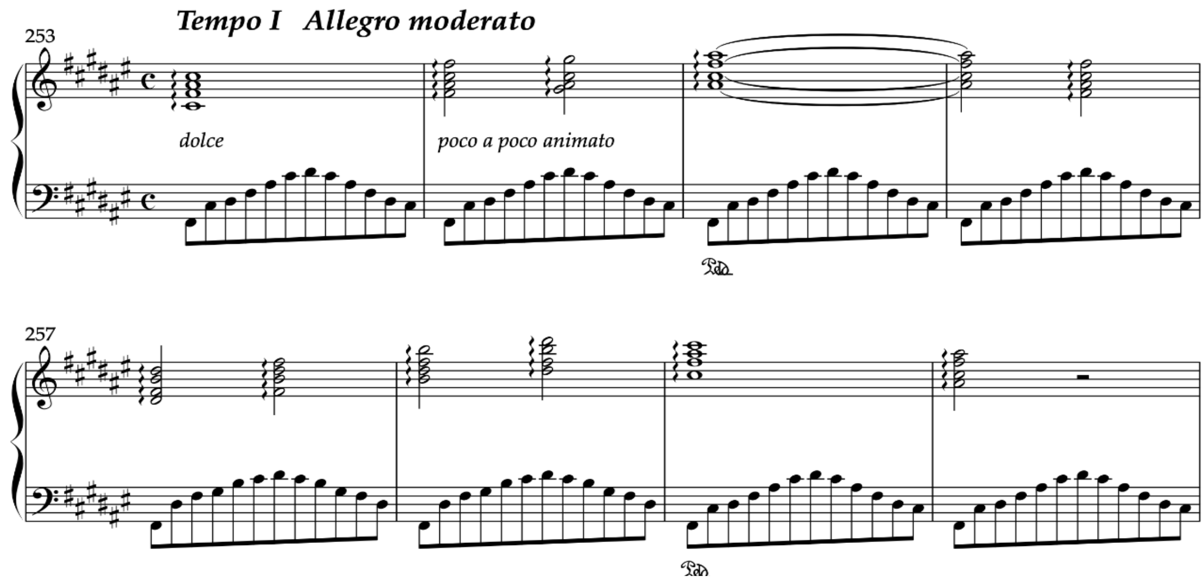


Figure 4.20: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 308–312; Arpeggios played by the right hand simulating harp playing

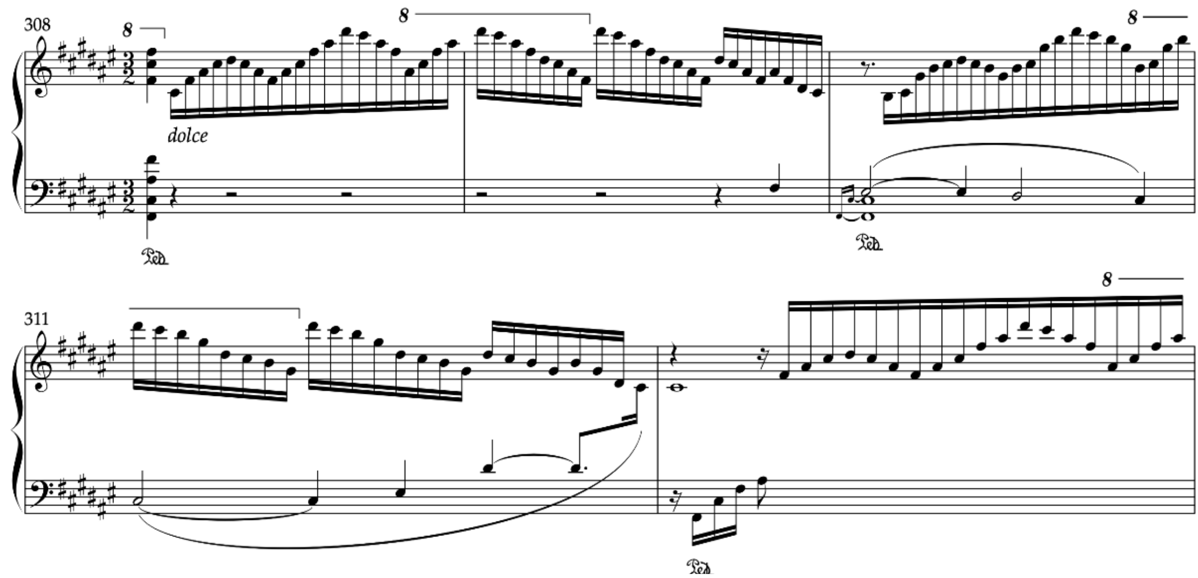
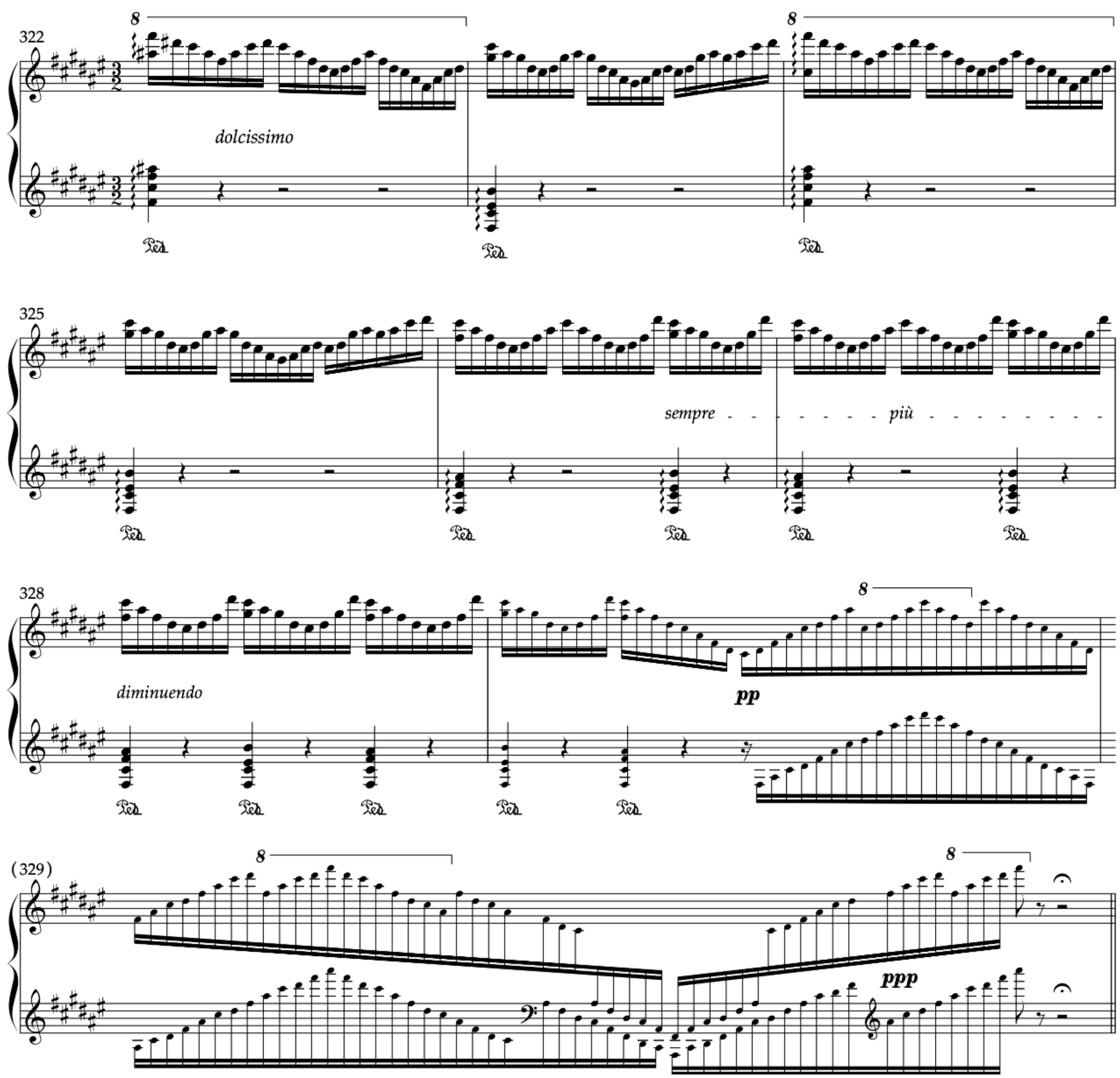


Figure 4.21: Franz Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No. 3, mm. 322– 329; arpeggios gliding like a harp playing



4.3.4: Plagal and Modal Cadences in the Coda

In the last seven measures of the coda, Liszt uses plagal, modal, and authentic cadences, plausibly, even though they are from tonal and modal harmonies. Measures 356–357 end on the dominant of B major. If it continues through B major and lands in the tonic F sharp, it will

conclude in a plagal cadence, which is also known as an “Amen cadence” as commonly sung to the word “Amen” at the conclusion of Protestant hymns. Next, in mm. 358–359 the harmony is derived from a Lydian mode transposed down to D: in the stack of notes in mm. 358–359, a Lydian scale can be found as D. E. F sharp. G sharp. A natural. and B. The church mode should lead to a modal cadence, but Liszt ends the section softly with an authentic cadence C sharp to F sharp, but with a tonally ambiguous open fifth to give a sense of openness. (Figure 4.22).

Figure 4.22: Closing section of Franz Liszt’s *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, S. 173, No.3, mm. 348–362

4.4: Conclusion

Liszt arrived at his first-person voice in his reading and understanding of Lamartine's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*. If *Dante* was an example of how Liszt adapted significant portions of literary moods into musical expressions after figuring out a way to compromise between extra-musical literary influence and form, it follows that the earlier drafts of *Bénédiction* are examples of how his earlier musical sketches inspired him to seek out literary companions for his work, as he found common ground between music and text. In *Bénédiction*, Liszt's lyrical treatment of his melody gave a melismatic effect to the words he wanted to emphasize. His thematic connection to the mystic number three and his special graphic design to separate the B section, showing the importance of Catholic theology, his favoring of consonant and pentatonic scale sonorities instead of chromatic dissonance to evoke a peaceful mood, and his accompaniment imaginatively recreating the sound of harp-playing all point to Liszt's approach to programmatic style in this stage of his life, when he was exploring the connecting tissues that could be found to join music and poetry.

Furthermore, *Bénédiction* shows that his early notes and sketches from his time as a touring pianist were such a rich source of material that he returned to them during the Weimar period when he enjoyed much more stability as a composer-in-residence and composed and published *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173 in 1853; the first book of *Années de pèlerinage*, S. 160 in 1855, and the second book of *Années de pèlerinage*, S. 161 in 1858 in which *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata* is also included.

In Liszt's musical *Bénédiction*, he reflected his poetic longing for peace and serenity, despite all the political crises and critical noises that surrounded him. He successfully linked a number of harmonious, peaceful, meditative, and singing elements, which connect with each

other through different sections in one long and continuous flow. He did this without strongly opposing traditional forms and themes, and without making a contrast between each thematic and motivic element.

The newly added singing melody at the beginning of Liszt's *Bénédiction* aligns closely to the first stanza of Lamartine's poem sharing the same title *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*. The sixth stanza of Lamartine's poem suggests a hidden meaning of weeping for the spiritual exiles as a literary mention of "the days of Rachel." Liszt's status as a Hungarian expatriate living in a shifting Europe could have affected his ability to connect deeply with Lamartine's poem, especially because Lamartine's *Bénédiction* was written as contemplation of various religious layers, stories, symbols, and images (angels and biblical figures).

Liszt's imaginative poetico-musical language shows his shifting emphasis between the various layers of rhetoric, poetry, "sung" meaning, programmatic gestures in depicting the Trinity descending from above despite an absent text, a mystic façade of Catholic faith framed by his graphic designs, and the quasi-improvisational, harp-like accompaniment, allow performers of this work to find places where they can freely interpret the music. This work also demonstrates Liszt's tendency to use consonant harmonies to reflect mood, his early consideration to include modal harmony and a pentatonic scale, and his attraction to the mystic layer of Catholicism. Liszt's writing allows the wordless piano to sing and praise like a cantor, to meditate like a prayer giver, to bless like a priest but also to receive the given blessings as a human, and also to glide the arpeggios over the keys like a heavenly harpist. Through all this, Liszt shows his faithful programmatic writing for his version of *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*.

In Chapter 2, I mentioned Liszt's religious music manifesto *Religious Music of The Future*, appeared on *Gazette musicale* in 1835 in which Liszt proposed "regenerating religious music of the future." He meant to reinvigorate the traditional church liturgy outside of the church in France. Even though he knew that church music "normally refers only to the music performed in church during the ceremonies of worship," in an era of revolution, he placed emphasis on the comforting, encouraging, and soothing qualities for which people were looking to music. These were their common needs:

> when the altar creaks and totters and religious rites have become matter of doubt…, it is essential that art leave the temple and stretch itself and seek to accomplish its major development in the outside world…and comforting mankind while it blesses and glorifies God. And to bring this about, the creation of a new music is imminent.[42]

Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* is the product that he conceived after realizing the necessity of writing this type of personal worship music. This composition was heard often by his students, and today is heard in churches and public concerts, achieving the broadest possible diffusion. Thereby, he successfully combined the sacred and secular genres and elevated the role of instrumental music in Catholic worship to the same level that sacred vocal music had achieved exclusively for centuries.

[42] See Liszt, "Religious Music of the Future," in *An Artists Journey,* ed. and trans. Suttoni, 236–237. Liszt, *Selected Letters*, trans. Williams, 893.

Chapter 5: *Erster Mephisto-Walzer*, S. 514

5.1: Liszt's Solutions for Program Music

5.1.1: From Pianist-Composer to Symphonic Composer

Between 1848 and 1860, Liszt made the transition from being a concert pianist to a music director at the Weimar court, where he established himself as composer-in-residence. Jonathan Kregor made the following comments:

> By the time Liszt left Weimar for Rome in late 1861 to begin yet another phase in his professional life, Liszt had produced most of his best-known works: the definitive versions of the 'Paganini' and 'Transcendental' études, the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, the first two books of the *Années de pèlerinage*, the Piano Sonata in B minor, the *Faust* and "Dante" Symphonies, and a dozen symphonic poems. Yet no less important is how many of these compositions also document his wide-ranging exploration of how to effect an ideal unification of poetry and music—in other words, how to compose programmatically…[1]

As such, the scale of Liszt's composition increased from mainly technically advanced solo piano pieces and vocal works to a group of large-scale orchestral works. Writing with an ear towards extra-musical inspirations had been Liszt's most natural and intuitive way to express himself before he reached Weimar. As he described it in his preface to *Album d'un voyageur*, which is dated from the 1840s, "there existed between them ['many locations consecrated by history and poetry'] and me a vague but direct relation, an indefinite but real connection, an inexplicable but sure communication."[2] Yet at the time, Liszt did not have sufficient compositional tools, e.g., ideas about form and structure, to fully realize this vision, and it was not because the depictions taken from complex literature were incomprehensible. To convey effectively the mood changes in the multiple inner psychological and philosophical layers of the literary subjects that he chose,

[1] Kregor, *Program Music*, 99.
[2] Ibid., 37–38. See Chapter 2, p. 40.

Liszt was driven to explore new compositional techniques that could illustrate such expressions and reach the hearts of his audience. Walker explains this matter:

> Music cannot portray a poem, a picture, a storm, what it does is more subtle. It expresses the mood that such a poem or picture evokes in the heart of the recipient, and transmutes it into musical experience, an experience to be perceived on a purely musical level. Of all the places where it is possible for a composer to seek stimulation, Liszt seems to be saying, the other arts are the best place for him to be, for they inhabit a similar emotional world, even though they may express that world in very different ways.[3]

Learning by doing, Liszt came to realize that the main stumbling blocks involved his choices of form,[4] his extramusical sources of inspiration, and his method of composing. Writing programmatic, large-scale orchestral works during his Weimar appointment eventually pushed him to deal with all these problems simultaneously. He also found new ideas by reworking his earlier compositions and drafts.

5.1.2: A Literary Focus Shifted from the Lyric to the Dramatic

Section 3.1 previewed Liszt's text quotations and discussed how his extramusical inspirations prompted formal discoveries and experimentation with a given program. The composer's active participation in literature festivals, which were an initiative led by the Grand Duke to revive Weimar's long literary history, immediately broadened Liszt's poetic palette, giving him more source material to work with, and it shifted his focus from lyrical poetry to dramatic poetry.

Weimar was a city with a rich cultural history suffused with the spirit of major German philosophers and authors such as Goethe, Schiller, and Herder, so it provided Liszt with an ideal

[3] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 358.

[4] The main issue was that the existing musical forms were too traditional. Liszt could not find a ready-to-go form to use at the time when he composed, so he turned to literature, paintings, and sculpture—any artistic medium outside of music—to see what resonated the most with him. He had to examine external forms to find the direction he might take.

setting for exploring new compositional forms and programmatic approaches. While overseeing the theater orchestra, he began to write commissioned works for the preschedanduled literature festivals and other memorial and ceremonial events. At the same time, he was given the task of planning the festival programs.[5] Additionally, he conducted opera, ballets, and incidental orchestral music for the theater, and wrote overtures, music for entr'actes, melodrama, and *tableaux vivants.*[6] Gradually, Liszt shifted his focus from epic and lyric poetry in first-person voice, to dramatic poetry, emphasizing dramatic characterization. Following his work with theatrical and orchestral productions, his music began to feature dramatic elements, including demonic dances, dramatized character portrayals, and superimposed contrasting musical themes to expand upon the quoted text.[7]

As Liszt experimented with literary genres, he became aware of the major differences between them. Grappling with the nuances of time and expression, he discovered and developed new ways to shape the literary content to his musical language, linking multiple movements and sections into a single movement, building connections by creating thematic transformations, and emphasizing characters and moods as central to his musical expressivity. Most significantly, he used the element of time to create space for his musical expressions. Since music, theater, and dance deal extensively with time, Liszt drew on his experiences in the Weimar theater as an important cultural and practical reference point. By creating symphonic poems, promoting new opera productions, and delving deeply into different literary genres, Liszt explored the scope, content, and expressive potential of his quoted sources. For example, in his two essays,

[5] Liszt oversaw the literary festivals while he served as the court music director. While serving as a festival organizer, he planned orchestral concerts, invited guest artists, commissioned works for festival concerts, dramas, and plays, and occasionally directed and premiered opera productions.

[6] Joanne Cormac, *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017), 21.

[7] Ibid., 111–113.

"Boieldieu's *White Lady*" and "Schubert's *Alfonso and Estrella*," both written in 1854, Liszt suggested that theatrical drama delivered its emotional and even philosophical content in a way that was more condensed and powerful than a novel. He wrote, "The novel's most essential element is its psychological attributes. We can see inner workings of the heart based on these conditions…The novel can expand elements of time and place; the drama will retain both elements mostly through the densest concentration possible."[8] Furthermore, in his essay, "Schubert's *Alfonso and Estrella*," he points out the differences in expressiveness between lyricism and drama:

> Lyricism is mostly a matter of subjectivity, and dramatic works demand the objectification of characters and plots…dramatic poets distinguish themselves as lyricists once they take possession of the dramatic elements and enrich their lyrical nature. Since the musician is expected to master *every element of the scene*, just like the tragic poets…he must endow his work with every amount of *mental* and *spiritual* benefit.[9]

Liszt's Weimar theater appointment provided him with experience that led him to examine critically each source he used, resulting in his deeper understanding of how to represent their expressive layers in his music. As his writing suggests, Liszt was coming to terms with how to adapt literature to music through a mixture of lyrical and dramatic expressions, a combination that would have the capacity to move the audience deeply, both intellectually and spiritually.

5.1.3: Between Music and Literature: Issues of Size and Proportion

Perhaps not surprisingly, new challenges arose as Liszt became more precise and thoughtful about the connections he drew between different artistic mediums. He gradually became more adept at determining how much music to compose to capture the essence of certain

[8] Franz Liszt, *The Collected Writings of Franz Liszt: Dramaturgical Leaves: Essays about Musical Works for the Stage and Queries about the Stage, Its Composers, and Performers*, vol. 3, ed. and trans. Janita R. Hall-Swadley and Cornelia Szabo-Knotik (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 174.

[9] Ibid., 140. Emphasis mine.

lines of poetry. He sought out more sophisticated philosophical texts to inspire his compositions and deliberately referenced his programmatic sources. According to Richard Taruskin, Liszt was "staking out a loftier expressive sphere than any composer save Beethoven had previously addressed, and doing so, moreover, with an explicitness that seemed to exceed—or at least claimed plausibly to exceed—Beethoven's powers."[10] Here, the powers Taruskin refers to are Beethoven's compositional freedom and subjectivity, which enabled him to transcend the conventions and formal boundaries of music at the time.[11] Beethoven's stylistic language and inventions set high standards for the next generation of nineteenth-century composers, including Liszt. Moreover, Liszt's piano teacher, Carl Czerny, had been a pupil of Beethoven's, and had inherited the harmonic language and improvisational techniques of Beethoven's era. Liszt embraced this pedagogical lineage. He borrowed heavily from philosophical literature to ground his Romantic expression and learned how to make poetry and music complement each other rather than allowing one to overpower the other. This challenge of finding a balance between music and literary texts is particularly evident in Liszt's musical depiction of Lenau's *Faust*.

Evidence that Liszt understood his two versions of *Faust* as complementing each other can be found in a letter sent to his publisher, Schuberth, just before he submitted his finished manuscript. There, Liszt described the connection between the two, "The two *Épisodes* (of [Nikolaus] Lenau's *Faust*)—following [Arthur] Schopenhauer—are to be understood as

[10] Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 420.

[11] By the mid-century, the composers influenced by Beethoven separated into two different camps, one led by Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner proclaiming the path of program music, and the other led by Hanslick, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, who composed absolute music. Evidence of the Romantic concept in Beethoven's works includes the joint vocal and instrumental forces in his choral symphony No. 9, the programmatic approach in his "Pastorale" symphony No. 6, and the heroic concept introduced in his "Eroica" symphony No. 3. In Liszt's case, he chose to make new forms that were inspired by extramusical content. Some scholars think he succeeded, whereas others dismissed Liszt's programmatic approach as pretentious or vain.

accessories to the Faust symphony" [original emphasis].[12] Liszt seems to suggest that his symphony depicts the main philosophical subject of Goethe's *Faust* by portraying the three main characters. The final, 75-minute product consisted of three movements and incorporated a male chorus into the final movement. The *Mephisto Waltz*, on the other hand, is much shorter, at around eleven minutes. It draws from Lenau's more sensual approach to the story, showing that the Devil temporarily succeeds in getting the fallen souls. Lenau's poem in its entirety appears with Liszt's music, as Liszt chose to quote the text before his music starts. Moreover, the music is geared toward public entertainment and emotional excitement rather than lengthy philosophy.

5.1.4: The Complexity of the Faust Literature

Liszt was introduced to Goethe's *Faust* through Berlioz during their first meeting in Paris in 1830, and Liszt was immediately fascinated by the story.[13] He meditated on a musical version of *Faust* but struggled to find the best way to compose it.[14] Liszt frequently discussed a musical solution with his peers and friends beginning in 1849 and preserved some early sketches and even planned an opera, but he later rejected these ideas.[15] Berlioz visited Weimar in 1852 and presented his composition, *La damnation de Faust*. After witnessing Berlioz's piece, a *légende dramatique* as the composer described it, Liszt was again overcome with creative anxiety. As he

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[12] Franz Liszt, *Mephisto-Walzer: (Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke): Episode aus Lenaus "Faust,"* eds. Norbert Gertsch and Veronika Giglberger (Munich: Henle, 2008), VII.

[13] Berlioz, *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, 93.

[14] As stated in Chapter 3, Berlioz, the composer who first introduced *Dies Irae* in his secular orchestral work *Symphonie Fantastique*, inspired Liszt to borrow liturgical chant melody for the secular instrumental genre, yet Berlioz's influence did not stop there. He also introduced Goethe's *Faust* to Liszt during their first meeting in Paris in 1830. Liszt, in turn, dedicated his three-movement *Faust Symphony*, which premiered in 1857, to Berlioz. Liszt's intense friendship with Richard Wagner and his frequent artistic exchanges with Berlioz throughout his Weimar period led him to keep sharpening his approach to writing program music with an emphasis on literature and drama. As a result, Liszt confirmed his thoughts on the forms and programs in his writing during his middle Weimar period with his essay "On Berlioz's Harold in Italie," published in 1855. See Leo Treitler and Oliver Strunk, eds., *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History* (New York: Norton, 1998), 1158.

[15] Gertsch and Giglberger, eds., preface to *Mephisto-Walzer*, VII.

wrote to Carolyne, "anything connected with Goethe is dangerous for me to handle."[16] Alan Walker contends that these years of procrastination were due to Liszt's fear of being "overwhelmed" by Goethe's *Faust*, since Goethe's version focused on the hugely significant subject of God's redemption of sinners and the mighty power of salvation through love. The long-awaited orchestral version of Goethe's *Faust* was finally hatched as his *Faust Symphony* between August and October 1854. The symphony's première was directed by Liszt on September 5, 1857, at an event celebrating the unveiling of the Goethe-Schiller monument in Weimar.[17] After the premiere, Liszt immediately started drafting the musical setting for *The Dance of the Village-Inn (Mephisto Waltz)*, an episode in the poetry about the wedding banquet taken from Lenau's *Faust: ein Gedicht*, another poetic rendition of *Faust* that takes a completely different approach from Goethe's version.

Goethe's grandiose version of *Faust*, set both in heaven and on earth, portrays the old German legend about Faust entering into a contract with Mephistopheles in which he sells his soul in order to taste infinite worldly pleasures. Mary Angela Hunt has summarized a detailed account of the *Faust* literature from the sixteenth century to the present day, stating,

> Throughout history the Devil has assumed a myriad of forms—human, animal, and the combination of the two—in religious, legendary and literary spheres, but certainly the most complex and intriguing portrayal of him is in the Faust literature. Even here, the character of Mephistopheles is not static, for each author endows him with a particular role or personality appropriate to the work at hand.[18]

Goethe's *Faust* starts with a prologue in heaven between Mephistopheles and God. During this conversation, Mephistopheles seeks God's permission to seduce Faust's soul with worldly desires in order to corrupt him. Faust, the title character, is a deep thinker and well-read

[16] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 327.
[17] Ibid., 335.
[18] Mary Angela Hunt, "Franz Liszt: The Mephisto Waltzes" (DMA diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1979), 2.

philosopher who is then seduced into striking a deal with Mephistopheles to experience a moment of transcendence on Earth. When Faust wishes this magical time to last forever, he is instantly sold to serve the Devil in Hell. In the end, Faust's inability to accept death leads him to sell his soul to Mephistopheles, but God intervenes and sends angels to save him. Despite granting permission to Mephistopheles, God has a vested interest in saving Faust's soul. Goethe also added a new character, *Gretchen*, to the legend, a woman whom Faust pursues, impregnates, and then abandons.

Lenau's version focuses on the mysterious and dark side of the Devil's influence over the non-believers he could lead to mental and physical destruction. In this case, Liszt did not incorporate all twenty-four scenes of the poem but instead picked one folk-wedding scene, the sixth episode entitled "Der Tanz" (The Dance), to serve as the basis of the program for his *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. In the text of *The Dance*, Lenau first uses the poem's lines 1 through 50 with metrical verses to create a conversation between the disguised Mephistopheles and Faust.[19] By this point, the scene of the wedding and the main characters and their different aims have already been established in the storyline.

In the second half of the poem, lines 50–100, the voice shifts to that of a narrator, who describes how Mephistopheles' musical spell turns a wedding party into seductive love encounters that facilitate Faust's pursuit of the black-eyed girl. While the demonic dance music takes effect on the guests and distorts their minds, the music transforms their behavior as they gradually forget moral teaching, leaving only the primitive desires portrayed by the hunting and chasing scenes. The erotic picture portrays girls publicly undressing and bathing under the eyes

[19] See Appendix B at the end of this dissertation for the entire poetic text as translated by Michael Short and published in Franz Liszt, *The Procession by Night; The Dance in the Village In: Mephisto Waltz No. 1: (Two Episodes from Lenau's 'Faust'): Piano,* ed. Leslie Howard (London: Edition Peters, 2007), 16–18.

of hidden young men. Their naked forms seduce the desires of the boys, which causes them to fight and later force the girls to have sex. Under the influence of Mephistopheles' powerful music, the scene picturing the courtship of Faust and his favorite black-eyed girl is also colored by the sexual pursuits by other young men of other women. Led by Mephistopheles' violin as all sounds become entangled in the promiscuous crowd, the atmosphere devolves into one of unbridled lust that quickly descends the banquet into orgiastic excess. At the end of this episode, Mephistopheles briefly wins by tempting Faust to succumb to his desires, "…as though the singer were summoned by the Devil, then the power of yearning drew them down and noisily they were engulfed in the sea of bliss" (lines 98–100). This tragic ending serves to instruct readers and listeners that giving in to temptation will lead to destruction, and that is the moral message to be delivered in this episode as the hero's fall helps the Devil prevail. Liszt also set different versions of this tragic ending in the poetry to music. The ending of the piano version, S. 514, rumbles in *fortissimo* as the Devil casts the magical spell and successfully escapes from the wedding scene, but the orchestral version, S. 110, disappears with a descending chromatic scale as the souls dissolve in the sea. Those two endings show that Liszt arrived at two different readings and interpretations of the poetry.

Liszt handled Lenau's *Faust: Ein Gedicht* by extracting an entire episode with a clearly defined sequence of action, which ends in Mephistopheles' victory. The action is mainly produced and further stimulated by the opposite aims of the two main characters. The development of that action also brings forth the final disastrous consequences in a limited timespan that suited Liszt's structural plan. The selected text includes poetic qualities such as the dramatic, fictional, descriptive, and tragic, and Liszt used the text to produce drama and

condense the characterizations of themes in his music. The result is his extensive treatment of form, themes (including intervals), emotional colors, and instrumental timbres.

5.1.5: A Compositional Timeline for Liszt's Musical Renditions of *Faust*

For twenty-eight years, Liszt had been drawn into Faustian literature, and when the right moment came, he eventually delivered three different instrumental versions for *Zwei Episoden aus Lenaus Faust* (Two Episodes from Lenau's "Faust"), in which *Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke: Erster Mephisto Waltz*, S. 514 (Dance in the Village Inn: Mephisto Waltz) is listed as the second work, proceeding from the first work *The Procession by Night*, S. 513a. The three versions are the piano solo version, *Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke: Mephisto Walzer* (*Dance in the Village Inn: Mephisto Waltz*), S. 514; the orchestral version, S. 110; and the piano duet version, S. 599.

David Larkin's detailed evaluation of the sources of "Dancing to the Devil's Tune,"[20] which is based on the Henle and Peters editions of the solo piano version of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, and the dating of the work provided by Ernst Burger,[21] both shed light on the compositional timeline. Burger concludes that the piano version of *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* was begun by Liszt in 1859 and published in 1862. Liszt worked on his orchestral version ca. 1860, which was published in 1865 and received its public premiere in Weimar's Hoftheater on March 8, 1861.[22] According to the Henle edition, immediately after the orchestral premiere on March 13, 1861, Liszt sent his publisher his engravers' copies of the orchestral version of the *Two Episodes* with his piano duet (four-hands) version of the *Two Episodes* and the solo piano

[20] He discusses this in his *Chronicle on Liszt's Life in Pictures and Documents*. David Larkin, "Dancing to the Devil's Tune: Liszt's Mephisto Waltz and the Encounter with Virtuosity," *19th-Century Music* 38, no. 3 (2015): 196.

[21] Burger, *Franz Liszt*, 217.

[22] Ibid., 215, 217, 220.

(version for two hands) for *only* the second piece (of the set), *Mephisto Waltz.* Liszt claimed that this solo piano version was arranged as a concert piece.

Because the orchestral version was made known to the public first, and due to the existence of multiple versions and Liszt's own confusing explanation for them, there have been doubts about the order of each instrumental version in his creative process. Two editors of Henle clarify that the piano version should be undoubtedly viewed as the first in which Liszt sought to set his poetic inspirations down. They write, "the autograph clearly shows that the composition was first of all sketched in this version, and the expansion for orchestra must have followed afterwards…"[23] Despite the controversy, scholars agree that the two versions, for piano and for orchestra, have many similarities in their treatment of the themes and melodies, although some significant differences are found in cadenza-like sections, where the virtuosic quality of the different performers was showcased. Reading them together offers the best way to understand Liszt's musical depiction of Lenau's poetry.

5.1.6: The Function of Liszt's Program and its Subjectivity

In the nineteenth century, one of the factors that contextualizes the concept of program music, so that it could be seen as a product of its time, was that musical venues shifted from courts to private wealthy salons and then to public concert halls. As public concerts took on immense popularity, concert halls welcomed new types of audiences including a significant contingent of wealthy industrialists. Nevertheless, due to the decline of aristocratic patronage and the rise of the upper middle classes, these changes created an appreciation of higher education and the popularizing of entertainment that had previously been designed for and enjoyed mainly

[23] Gertsch and Giglberger, eds., preface to *Mephisto-Walzer,* VIII.

by the aristocrats. The rise in public concerts also influenced Liszt's desire to control interpretations of his work to guard its value. In the *avant-propos* of his symphonic poems, Liszt explained in a modest way his specific usage of a program:

> Since the musician's language is more arbitrary and more uncertain than any other, and lends itself to the most varied interpretations, it is not without value for the composer to give a few lines the *spiritual sketch* of his work and…convey the idea which served as the *basis* for his composition. This will prevent faulty elucidations, hazardous interpretations, idle quarrels with intentions the composer never had […].[24]

Examining Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* through the lens of program music shows an important shift in how Liszt dealt with the change in audiences, in that he explicitly pointed to his source of inspiration. In a letter to his publisher in 1861, Liszt requested that the music engraver print Lenau's texts *before* his music, to serve both the performer and the audience as a guide. His text quotations also provided the audience with a predetermined story rather than allowing them to invent their own interpretations.

While Liszt planned a program tailored in sophisticated ways that could influence how his audience experienced and perceived his work, subjectivity would always be a factor in how listeners interpreted his (or anyone's) work. Liszt was, in effect, channeling the emotions of the performers and audience members along a path that he determined. As William Wallace pointed out more than a century ago:

> The process is more complicated in regard to an abstract idea, and depends to a great extent upon the balance between imagination and reason...when the description is of an emotion, the mind which communicates the idea cannot produce anything more definite than a suggestion or atmosphere of these. It cannot particularise, it can only generalise…Its idealisation of the emotion which another has felt, depends upon psychological conditions which lie beyond the control of the individual…In other words, the appropriateness of a composer's interpretation of a poetic idea cannot be analysed by the faculty of reason since it appeals primary to our emotions.[25]

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[24] Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 421.

[25] William Wallace, "The Scope of Programme Music," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 25 (1898): 142–143.

There are obviously many debates surrounding program music, with some scholars arguing against its aesthetic qualities and philosophical aims.[26] Questions persist as to whether music can really express a content that comes from outside of music,[27] whether music given with a program would function differently than a piece of absolute music,[28] or whether undereducated audience members could truly follow such a program guide for a highly educated audience.[29] While these points are all important, they do not fall within the scope of the research presented here.

Given the new environment for performances of music in the nineteenth century, one must pay close attention to Liszt's sources of inspiration and quoted program to understand his compositions. While Liszt believed music should be its own language, he also felt that the use of a detailed program was the best option for guiding the audience along the path of the composer's intention.

5.1.7: Three Dramatic Forces

Mephisto Waltz No. 1 joins the following three significant dramatic forces: the traditional symphonic sonority full of contrasts and textural changes, the theatrical and dramatic expressions represented by the "extramusical" layer, and the virtuosic pianistic techniques of Liszt. These are used to illustrate the carefully chosen program of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No.1*, which offered poetic scenes, contrasting characters, and possibilities for musically developing the literary model, especially the devilish power placing *Mephistopheles* in the spotlight. Regardless of the arguable aesthetic concept of program music, Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* not only successfully

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[26] Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 425–426.

[27] Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1986), 32.

[28] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 307–308.

[29] Wallace, "The Scope of Programme Music," 146.

represents his ideal program music based on his theories described in the essay,[30] but has also enjoyed lasting popularity since its first publication. Compared to the mixed critical reception of his symphonic poems and two symphonies, *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* serves as one of the best examples of Liszt's program music to this point. He committed its music to be a description of a lustful, emotional experience and its stormy consequences. He also crafted musical characters and moods reflecting details found in literature by relying on compositional techniques he developed during his completion of the symphonic poems.

According to Joanne Cormac, Liszt's programmatic approach to his *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* was to create a mimetic representation of poetic scenery. Cormac described the method of Liszt's program music:

> First of all (but least importantly) the source subject matter is sometimes dramatic, taken from the stage. Second, if we measure the approach to the subject matter against the Hegelian concept of drama, it is clear that the music regularly deals in dramatic reversals of fortune, dialogue between characters, movement, and action. Even more so, it offers direct mimetic representation of its subject, including external scenery. It is not limited to the inward movements of the soul. And finally, the music itself is often more indebted to the dramatic music of opera and melodrama than the symphonic tradition, even in its formal features…[31]

But Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* cannot be fully understood by viewing it only as imitative of life and poetry, because Cormac erroneously placed Liszt's piano version of *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* in her categorization of "Mimesis" under "Drama in Liszt's Music." She describes that it contains an imitation of the tuning of the strings of the violin to prepare for Mephistopheles's diabolical performance, and an imitation of nightingales singing while *Faust* seduces a village girl and takes her into the woods.[32] Cormac's list of programmatic elements in Liszt's writing is

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[30] Here it means Liszt's 1855 essay "On Berlioz's Harold in Italy."
[31] Cormac, *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem*, 339.
[32] Cormac, *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem*, 332.

worth comparing with that of William Wallace which was published near the end of the nineteenth century. Wallace wrote:

> First, music which attempts to symbolize sounds not primarily produced by musical instrument…Second, music which attempts to symbolize in sound visual impressions…it will be seen that these are objective and that they also suggest rhythm. Third, music which attempts to symbolize in sound ideas which are entirely subjective and appeal to the intellect, such as love, revenge, grief—all the emotions.[33]

Even though the two theories were proposed centuries apart, their authors concluded that Liszt used similar approaches and methods. Cormac and Wallace were not *wrong* about the influence of poetry and its demonic depiction associated with *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, but there is more: the drama-influenced form shows even more of the subtle work Liszt planned for the poetic content as he designed the thematic characterization, pianistic effects, and versatile harmonies. The synthesis of dramtic poetry and the musical tone poem, and the combination of three dramatic forces into one: 1. the dramatic contrast inherited from the symphonic tradition, 2. dramatic poetry and its typical condensation of character, and 3. Liszt's own demonic pianistic virtuosity, made it possible for Liszt to realize a unique poetic-philosophical representation of Lenau's Mephistopheles and Faust in piano music.

5.2: Dramatic Elements in Liszt's Instrumental Language

5.2.1: Dramatic Traits Inherited from the Genre of the Symphony

First-time listeners can surely detect the incredibly emotional drive and dramatic force in Liszt's piano music, particularly in *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. Here, it is necessary to explore the dramatic elements contained in the timbres found in the instrumental genre of the symphony that inspired Liszt, in the extra-musical qualities found in his quoted program, and in his dramatic

[33] Wallace, "The Scope of Programme Music," 140.

virtuosity that provided additional stage appeal. All three of these elements are important stylistic signifiers and together elevate the nineteenth-century secular piano instrumental genre to new levels. In addition, these features can all be observed in Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. Not only does this work lead to a deeper understanding of Liszt's musical language, which evolved considerably between 1848–1861, but it also demonstrates that at this time he was effectively working out a purely instrumental language to represent the literary or dramatic expressions that tie back to his program. These formal innovations set his work apart from the traditional sonata form while the eye- and ear- catching technical effects reinforced the literary depiction.

Between 1848 and 1861, Liszt wrote all his major orchestral works including a dozen symphonic poems. There should be no doubt that Liszt's symphonic poems were his formal answer to the classical symphony. That genre, which was derived from the *sinfonia* or overture of Italian opera, which is a type of instrumental incidental music that was first offered between or before the acts in an opera and was popular in the eighteenth century. The truth is that the classical symphony—an indication of where the genre was born—naturally bears traits of theatrical influence, such as contrasting textures and themes evoking operatic expressions and melodies. This purely instrumental genre inherits touches of drama but without words and actions. The form, movement, structural balance, and proportion of the symphony were standardized in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. All these conventions were inherited from the eighteenth-century Viennese composers.

Cormac argues that Liszt's symphonic poems should be re-classified as a dramatic genre, based on theatrical influences on characteristic features and gestures that she identified in them.[34]

[34] Cormac attempted to classify Liszt's symphonic poems as a dramatic genre separate from the traditional symphony.

According to Cormac, Liszt was influenced by work he was doing at the theater in Weimar. She wrote, "Liszt's preoccupied question in Weimar was of what the content of music really is." The answers lay in his symphonic poems… Analysts stress their symphonic logic, thereby neglecting their 'extramusical' subject matter."[35] Cormac argues that the symphonic poem needs to be viewed as a dramatic genre. However, the same point was made by Taruskin, among others. He stated that symphonic poems represented new technical and expressive aims in their adoption of earlier forms and thematic ideas rather than breaking with classical tradition. Though the programmatic writing method identified by Cormac can be seen in Liszt's multiple evocative sound effects, the symphonic genre incorporates drama inherently, so drama in the genre does not need to be reclassified as separate, as Cormac proposed.

Yet, and most importantly, in contrast to composers of the previous era who had absolute respect for the ideal of balance and harmony brought by the Enlightenment, Liszt was moved by subjective feelings. His musical expressions that were characterizations influenced by literature, heightened emotions, and at times rich but complex harmonies, reflected his Romantic tendencies. Alternatively, Walker describes Liszt's growth as a composer and his shifts in compositional approach as far beyond what the term "program music" can summarize, define, and classify. He wrote:

> …in fact, the problems facing Liszt's orchestral works were of an entirely different order, unresolvable by a mere shift of position within the programme as whole. These pieces represented a quantum leap forward in their use of musical materials…and it was only to be expected that contemporary audiences would find them puzzling…Moreover, they poured out of Liszt's workshop at an alarming rate…With the passing years some of these pieces have assumed historical importance—that is to say, they have changed the way in which subsequent composers have handled musical form, to say nothing of the orchestra.[36]

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[35] Cormac, *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem*, 326.
[36] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 301.

Lastly, Liszt incorporated dramatic elements from the symphonic overture into his works for piano. These included his innovative pianistic color, which implied various imagined instrumental timbres that he used to represent different characters; and changes of texture such as using different parts of the keyboard compass to produce a wider range of dynamics resembling the sounds of changing sections of instruments in an orchestra. These increase the liveliness of each thematic element related to quoted or implied poetic lines. While the program demonstrated a layer of inspiration and condensed emotion derived from poetry, in addition to dramatically intensified thematic characters, Liszt's influences mainly came through the instrumental language itself, which had its roots in the symphonic tradition.

5.2.2: Liszt and the Instrumental Language of the Nineteenth Century

Since Liszt had direct access to a group of orchestral musicians, he was able to determine quickly whether his orchestrations worked or not, allowing him to broaden the instrumental timbres, coloring choices, and textures and to develop them as necessary. Because of these experiences, Liszt began to merge various types of instrumental sound into his pianistic writing by imagining and imitating fantastic colors produced by orchestral musicians rather than textures typical of a keyboard instrument. Liszt would imagine sonorities, set down a version for different parts, give them to the orchestra to test, and then revise the piece based on what he had heard at the most recent orchestral performances. This process, along with feedback he sought from peers and friends, eventually allowed him to complete major orchestral works more rapidly than had previously been the case, and to make use of more varied colors in his piano music.

Initially, he had spent a lot of time molding the sound to fit his vision, but over time his techniques became more efficient. The "Dante" sonata took him almost twenty years to finalize in its one movement form and with interrelated themes (thematic transformation), and a

progressive approach to composition inspired by extramusical or programmatic influences, as did his final version of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*. The situation was different for the *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* for which he wrote only one main draft for piano. Other editions include his orchestral version of the same piece. His compositional technique was first to actively imagine the orchestration, a process which eventually improved, allowing him to discover the right form more quickly. He learned to use orchestral colors to speak, representing different voices as a complement to the poetry that inspired him, a technique that is also seen in his piano music. *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* serves as an excellent example, because Liszt simultaneously produced several versions for different instrumental combinations. This proves that he could imagine different instrumental timbres for the same music.[37]

As the result, the "Faust" symphony, once he decided to write it, took him from August to October 1854 to complete seventy-five minutes of music. The process of proofing his symphonic poems was described in his letter to Louis Köhler on May 24, 1856:

> "I have been hindered by multifarious occupations from getting through the proofs of my Symphonic Poems quickly…these proofs have taken up a great deal of my time…in the first proofs, to have things altered in the scores many times, yet many things looked different to me in print from what I wished them to be, and I had to try them over again plainly with the orchestra, have them written out again, and ask for fresh proofs…I have labored too much in order to realize the requisite proportion and harmony, for them to be able to give me any other pleasure if some sympathy…However that may be, tell me without any compliments, what impression the pieces have made on you."[38]

The remarkable result of this tedious process demonstrates that Liszt gradually became a better composer as he became more productive. While Liszt focused on bringing programmatic associated moods and influences on his instrumental music, especially symphonic works, his

[37] Note that the timbres of orchestral instruments were also to be found in the pipe organs of his day; the stops are named after orchestral instruments. Liszt did not start writing organ music until after the 1850s, when he also started thinking about instrumental music other than for piano.

[38] Liszt, *From Paris to Rome,* vol. 1, of *Letters of Franz Liszt*, ed. La Mara [pseud.], 269–271.

Piano Sonata in B minor, written in a non-programmatic, one-movement sonata form with two functions, stands out as a contrast to everything else he was doing at this time. This work shows his in-depth process of moulding the contrasting sections of the Classical sonata idea into a long one-movement form while using a varied and extensive treatment of rhythms, harmonies, and themes to reflect its changing emotional content. As musicologist William Newman argues, "this work marked the end of much of his important writing for piano. As he [Liszt] himself remarked just after Breikopf & Härtel published it in 1854, 'I shall have done for the present with the piano, in order to devote myself exclusively to orchestral compositions…'"[39] Liszt's B Minor Sonata was written in 1852–1853, published in 1854, and received its first public performance in 1857, though the February 1853 manuscript contains evidence that Liszt completed one of the greatest piano works of the nineteenth century in less than four months.[40]

Liszt also gradually acquired a knowledge of orchestration, including a familiarity with each instrument's range, timbre, and expressive layers. This helped him to explore the technical and expressive potential of the instruments. Walker describes Liszt's explanation of color in his orchestral writing,

> The presence in the Weimar orchestra of individual virtuosi made it possible for Liszt to call for effects which were unobtainable elsewhere…some of the most imaginative harp writing of the nineteenth century may be found in Liszt's orchestral scores. The source of his inspiration was Jeanne Pohl. He was the first to write a true harp glissando in the harp cadenza near the conclusion of the orchestra version of the First 'Mephisto' Waltz.[41]

The harp cadenza of his orchestral version of *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 110, demonstrates the highly evolved techniques of orchestration that he explored in Weimar by showcasing a novel way to portray a surreal, extraordinary atmosphere. In this section, the harp plays a series of

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[39] William Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven: The Third and Final Volum of a History of the Sonata Idea* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 364–365.

[40] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 327, 150.

[41] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 316.

diminished-seventh arpeggios, which first add accents and then sudden dynamic changes that are blended in the remaining resonance. Close examination of Liszt's notation shows two different ways of writing the same diminished harmony. The first tone row of the harp cadenza has the following notes: A flat, G sharp, F natural, E sharp, D natural, C flat, and B natural. The second row has two A flats, two Fs, D natural, and two B naturals. This instructs the harpist to set up the right pedals for the descending diatonic scale, A-G-F-E-D-C-B. Once the pedals are set, the harpist only needs to put fingers on the strings and glide through them, and the diminished-seventh chord will easily emerge. The same passage would be almost impossible for a pianist to repeat in such a fast and smooth way.[42]

The musical realization of this magical world is designed specifically for his orchestral version and not for his piano version. The spooky feeling evoked in the music is so fantastic that it seems like a demonic spell is about to take effect (Figure 5.1). This example proves that Liszt had advanced his technique of orchestration into the compositional analogue to his virtuosic piano techniques acquired in Paris after hearing the devilish lines played by the violinist Paganini.

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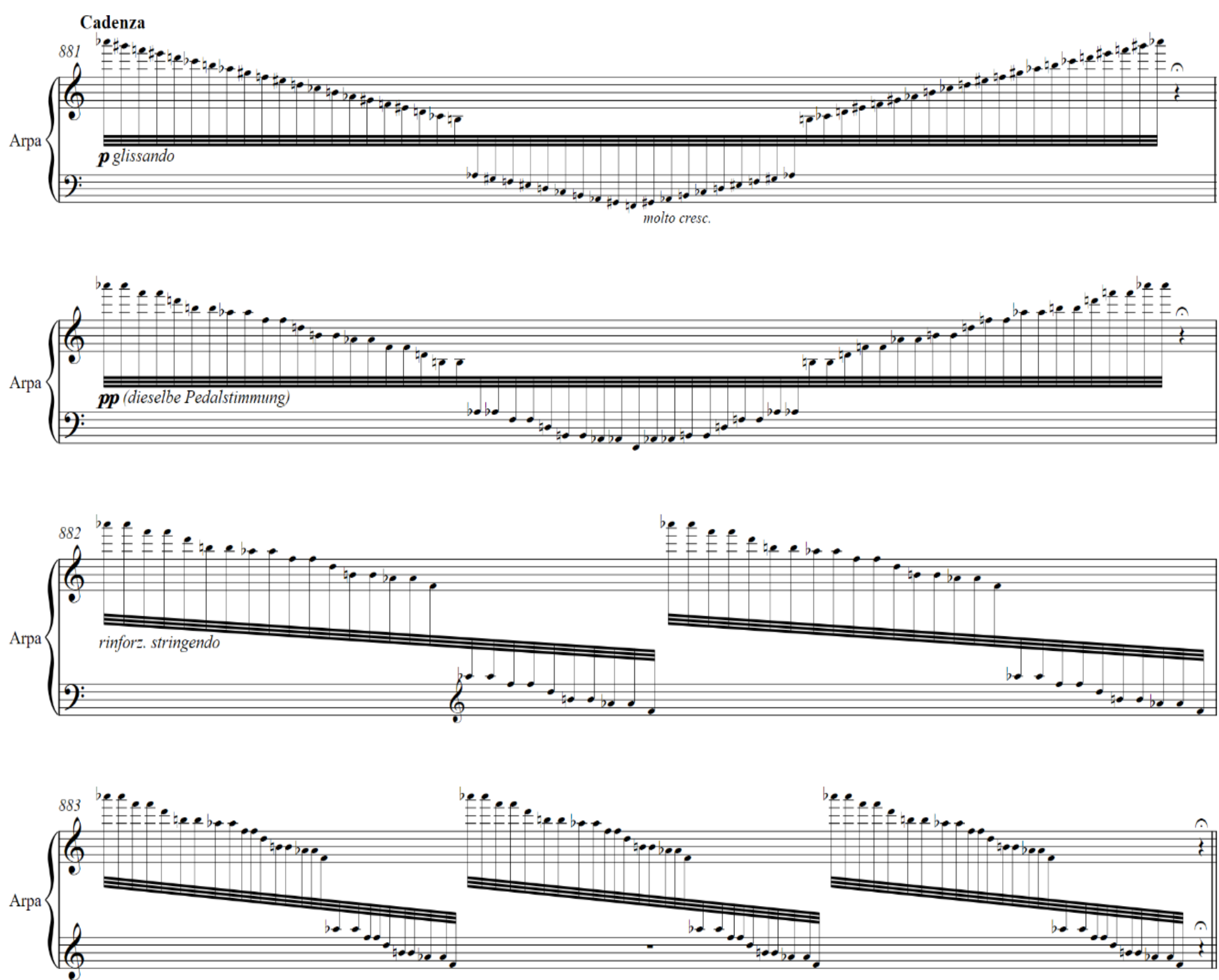
[42] Susan Brady, interview with the author, November 4, 2022.

Figure 5.1: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 110, m. 881



Additionally, it is worth noting that the *Liszt Society Journal* published another fragmentary leaf with sketched piano music (Figure 5.2), which could potentially fit into an intended cadenza measure of the *Mephisto Waltz* piano version, i.e., the silent m. 864 inserted right after the long fermata found in m. 863.[43] While the harp cadenza contains a series of downward figures leading all the way to the bottom of its range, the patterns in the piano fragment are to be directed from

[43] Franz Liszt, "Cadenza, S.695f," IMSLP, accessed March 12, 2023, https://imslp.org/wiki/Cadenza%2C_S.695f_(Liszt%2C_Franz). The reproduction of the cadenza is in *The Liszt Society Journal* 29 (2004), 1.

the bottom to the top of the keyboard compass. The dissolving sonorities blend as the magical world fades into reality.

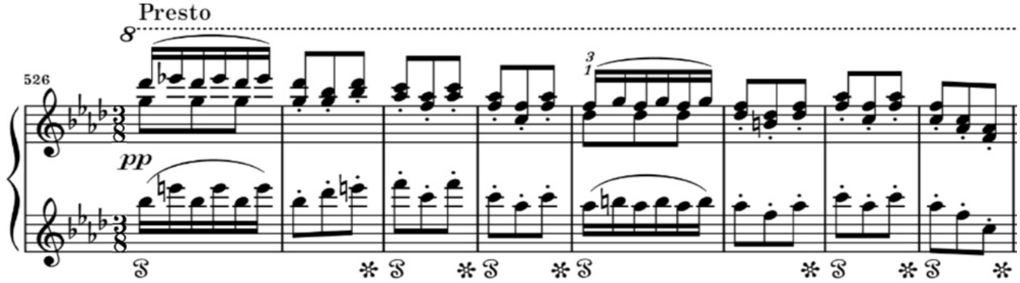
Figure 5.2: Howard's 2020 edition, alternative solution for Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 514, m. 864

Moreover, the timbres of the individual orchestral instruments and their combined coloristic qualities also inspired Liszt's writing for the piano. In some cases, Liszt appears to have imagined sound through multi-colored choices, thus producing even more vivid sound images. By examining the orchestral version of *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 110, mm. 509–516, and the piano solo version, S. 514, mm. 526–533, I demonstrate that Liszt's solutions derive from the same inspiration but also bear distinct characteristics. In the orchestral version, Liszt incorporates the flute trio together with the violins playing *spiccato* (Figure 5.3), a type of bow stroke which, by its rebounding off the string, produces a rapid, light staccato, delivering an atmosphere of fairies and fantasy. The same crystalline sonority appears in his piano version (Figure 5.4). He

wrote the bouncing staccatos in a similar way, combining them with fast trills so that everything should be played *pianissimo*—lightly, floatingly, and without any aggressive energy.[44]

Figure 5.3: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 110, mm. 509–516

Figure 5.4: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 526–533



The colorful instrumental timbres observed in this transition (mm. 526–550) and in other transitional passages (mm. 457–481, mm. 818–841) stimulate the listener's imagination by mimicking the devil's mockery and laughter. As Mary Hunt proposed, "this stroke on Liszt's part captures perfectly the essence of a laughing, gloating Mephisto."[45] However, this

[44] James Stern, interview with the author, April 4, 2023.
[45] Hunt, "Franz Liszt," 30.

imaginative extension of such programmatic meaning cannot find a direct literary counterpart in the poetic text. One can only presume that Liszt personally injected his poetic commentary on the text that inspired him.

Liszt's advances in orchestration, together with his invented piano virtuosity, shows the effort it took for him to create coloristic choices in his musical language to respond to the quoted textual content. In fact, without writing a single memorable tune or melody that can remind listeners of the poetic, sung meanings, Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* for piano takes a path of musical revolution towards the "superiority of instrumental music to vocal" that characterized the Romantic era.[46]

5.2.3: A Demonic Pianist and Liszt's Autobiographical Image

In addition to the virtuosity that is easily heard by most listeners on the first hearing, this work also showcases Liszt's planned literary component, his depiction of Faust's fleshly desire, sensual and provocative expressions, and of Mephistopheles' aim of depraving the human soul. As the piece is titled *Mephisto Waltz*, it appropriately provides a vessel for exhibiting a demonic image, with Liszt using instrumental virtuosity and displaying his full command of keyboard techniques. Equating virtuosity with demonic power or even sexual dominance was somewhat autobiographical, as Liszt's own virtuosity had often been characterized by such associations.[47] In addition, the work was dedicated to Liszt's pupil Karl Tausig, another famous virtuosic pianist of his time, an indication of the exceptional pianistic skill Liszt believed would be required to interpret *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*.

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[46] Carl Dahlhaus cited in Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 415.
[47] Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 540.

The concept of virtuosity is presented in two ways. The first is taken directly from Lenau's text through a metaphor depicting that the disguised Mephistopheles disliked the lifelessness of the background music at the banquet so much, so that he snatched a violin from the band's players and led an aphrodisiac dance that put all guests in the party under his magic spell. Lenau's decision to have such a virtuosic violinist as a character, and Liszt's subsequent musical depiction of Mephistopheles' entry with a violinist as representation of the devil, had a contemporary association with the legendary Paganini. Paganini shocked Liszt during his concert tour in Paris in the 1830s and inspired him to practice day and night.[48] Paganini drove Liszt to test and explore the limits of what could be done with a piano and to transcend technique to become a virtuoso.[49] In this regard, both Mary A. Hunt and David Larkin suggest that "in making Mephistopheles a violinist, Lenau may well have drawn on the popular perceptions of Paganini, who may have been perceived as an exemplar of the demonic instrumentalist in general."[50] In fact, Paganini was thought to be possessed by, and thought of as a "conduit" for, the devil. Goethe also referenced the demonic power associated with highly skilled performers like Paganini who were able to deliver bewitching music, writing, "…among artists, musicians are pre-eminently disposed to the daemonic…Paganini shows it to a high degree which accounts for the spell of his performance."[51]

However, *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* highlights another image of a virtuosic pianist, namely the performer of this work, most likely Liszt himself directly pointing to his devilish allure as a pianist. Liszt had a public reputation for appearing possessed by demonic power when he performed on stage, as observed by fellow musicians of his time. Specific musical examples

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[48] Larkin, "Dancing to the Devil's Tune," 199–200.
[49] Hunt, "Franz Liszt," 10–13.
[50] Larkin, "Dancing to the Devil's Tune," 200.
[51] Ibid., 199.

(Figures 5.5–5.9) include a showy device Liszt used to elevate sensational technical tricks and effects over musical substance. Some of these were invented by Liszt after witnessing Paganini's violin techniques including leaps and interlocking octaves. In Liszt's case, he composes virtuosity to conjure a demonic image.[52]

Among Liszt's most memorable and advanced piano techniques is the "Liszt octave," or "interlocking octave." Played with alternating hands, thumbs slightly overlapping so that they can quickly switch, the double octaves permit unattainable speeds and create a thundering effect. Liszt's interlocking octaves are not the only pyrotechnics observed in *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, mm. 900–911 (Figure 5.5). His other technical inventions are included as well, such as the glissando observed in m. 202, jumps and leaps in mm. 771–774, and cadenzas in m. 525 and m. 813. Similar virtuosic techniques can be found in Liszt's *Six Grandes Études de Paganini*, S. 141. For example, the E-flat-major étude No. 2 has fast interlocking octaves with overlapping thumbs, while *Étude* No. 3 (nicknamed *La Campanella*) features such tricks as fast, wide leaps that both hands have to make at the same time. The E-major *Étude* No. 5 has similar glissandos.

Figure 5.5: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 900–911, the interlocking octave technique

[52] Rosen, *Romantic Generation,* 540.

Figure 5.6: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, m. 202, glissando

Figure 5.7: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 771–774, jumps and leaps of both hands

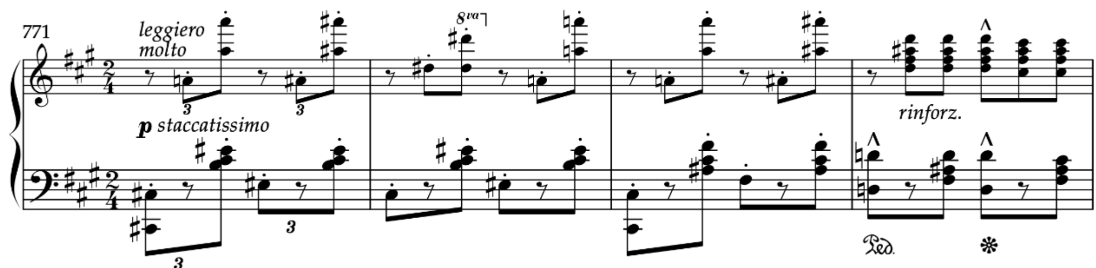

Figure 5.8: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, m. 525, a short, inserted cadenza

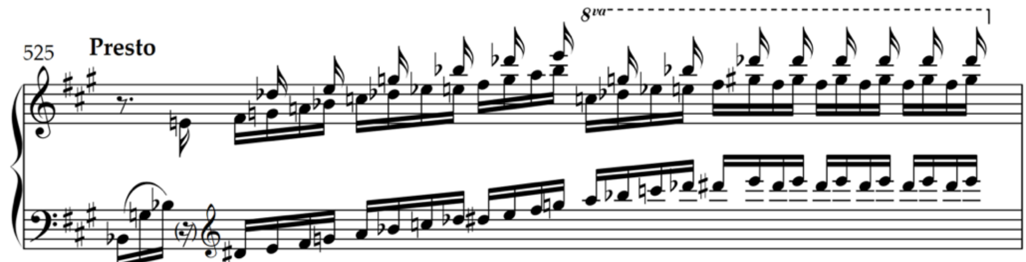

Figure 5.9: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, m. 813, cadenza section towards the end

5.3: Liszt's Demonic Dance as a Three-Act Drama

5.3.1: The "Demonic Dance" in the Nineteenth Century

Liszt's choice of a waltz to represent Lenau's devilish dance scene draws upon a long history. Apart from the *danse macabre*, which is described by Derek Scott as "a processional dance toward death that involved all social ranks" and was popular in the Middle Ages, Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* also belongs to a genre of "demonic dance" known as "the dance of death." The dance of death was immensely popular in the nineteenth century and "was supposedly performed by the dead rising from their graves at midnight." The associated musical images have been identified by Robert Samuels as the masked ball and the waltz.[53] Throughout the century, depictions of Satan in secular music became increasingly popular, an especially prominent example being the waltz or scherzo "dance of death" or "dance of witches."[54] As Scott claims, "Liszt played a major role in establishing the genres of demonic dance and demonic scherzo as formerly the minuet overlapped with the scherzo…and he contributed to this genre by building on the work done by his predecessors and contemporaries, such as, Modest Mussorgsky, Mily Balakirev, and others."[55] In total, Liszt produced many "demonic dances," composing four *Mephisto* waltzes, one *Mephisto* polka, and his *Totentanz* for piano and orchestra.

According to the literary context of *Mephisto Waltz No.1*, the sexual desire of the wedding guests is stimulated by the Devil's violin playing. It is made clear by the fact that Liszt printed the entire text of Lenau's sixth poetic episode before the beginning of the music, ensuring that Lenau's words would pave the way for Liszt's own interpretation of the demonic waltz.[56]

[53] Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic,* 139.
[54] The most popular example of this type was Camille Saint-Saëns's *Danse macabre*.
[55] Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic,* 137–138.
[56] Liszt frequently included quoted poetry in his works, but never to the extent seen in his *Mephisto Waltz No. 1,* where 100 lines of poetic text are included. Quotations in other works are much shorter, such as his reference

5.3.2: A Three-Act Structure as Drama Inspired by Hegel

5.3.2.1: Hegel's Theory Adopted as a Formal Scheme of Dramatic Poetry

It soon became apparent to the Romantic-leaning Liszt that the musical expression, thematic development, and formal qualities he sought could not be found in the existing three-part form as heard in the typical first-movement sonata-allegro form of his day, with an exposition, development, and recapitulation, or the minuet or scherzo form (ABA or ABA'). Therefore, he would have to seek a new form. Unlike other nineteenth-century composers who were content to work within formal boundaries, Liszt found the limits of traditional forms extremely frustrating. His letter to the German music critic Louis Köhler on July 9, 1856, shows evidence of his concerns:

> Certainly. You very rightly observe that the forms (which are too often changed by quite respectable people into formulas) "First Subject, Middle Subject, After Subject, etc., may very much grow into a habit, because they must be so thoroughly natural, primitive, and very easily intelligible." Without making the slightest objection to this opinion, I only beg for permission to be allowed to decide upon the forms by the contents…In the end it comes principally to this—what the ideas are, and how they are carried out and worked up—and that leads us always back to the feeling and invention, if we would not scramble and struggle in the rut of a mere trade[…].[57] (The capitalization was added by the composer.)

What Liszt was reflecting upon was that composers of the previous era mainly focused on the traditional three-part sonata form with a coda. He preferred unconventional forms instead. By at least 1854, Liszt had already adapted the traditional three-movement sonata form to fill one movement, as observed in his two piano sonatas, the *Dante* sonata and Piano Sonata in B

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to Lamartine's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (one paragraph) and Lamartine's *Invocation* (two paragraphs) in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, S. 173, or reference to Petrarch in the three *Sonnets of Petrarch* (each of 14 lines) in Liszt's *Années de pèlerinage*, Book II.

[57] See Franz Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2: *From Rome to the End*, ed. Ida Marie Lipsius [La Mara pseud.] and trans. Constance Bache (London: H. Grevel & Co. Press, 1894), 272–273.

minor.[58] While reading philosophy and theology, Liszt found ways to arrange his quoted content, which spurred his breakthrough.

As previously stated, Liszt described his definition and approach to his program music to its fullest extent in his 1855 essay "On Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*." According to Liszt, Hegel's identification of three main types of poetry, epic, lyric, and dramatic, helped him achieve a new aesthetic concept. Liszt also credited the influence of dramatic poetry on his programmatic instrumental writing. According to Cormac, Liszt's discovery of three types of poetry is based on Hegel's book, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*,[59] in which Hegel drew upon Aristotle to define the three-act structure of drama. Cormac explained the essence of Hegelian three-act drama as follows, quoting Hegel:

> Characters in dramatic poetry drive the action forward through their own volition. They have aims which must be resolved and their destinies are tied to success or failure of their own action. However, the action can only truly be called dramatic if it meets with 'obstruction in its relation to other active individuals'. An essential feature of drama is a 'collision' with another character whose aims are opposed to those of the protagonist. The collision provides the forward momentum and the structure of the drama…which should ideally fall into three acts. The first act should provide 'the situation out of which the future devolution of that conflict, despite the fact that it has not as yet broken out'...In the second act the collision occurs 'as the positive difference of such discord and its progression' and in the third act 'the resolution of the discord and its development is secured in every possible respect.'[60]

Cormac noted that the Hegelian influence on Liszt's 1855 essay was even more pervasive than what Liszt admitted in his essay, because Hegel also provided detailed reasons for the poetic-literary characters and their interactions that should all occur in a three-act drama.

[58] The idea of using his new sonata form, which he derived from the expressive layers he found in his reading, was discussed in Chapter 3 with *Après une Lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7.

[59] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, vol. 4, trans. F. P. B. Osmaton (London, Bell and Sons, 1930), 110–111.

[60] See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art,* vol. 4, trans. F. P. B. Osmaton (London: Bell and Sons, 1920), 263 and Cormac, *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem*, 16–18.

Because this essential structure Liszt found in drama was based on Hegel's discussion following Aristotle, I argue that Liszt's discovery of Hegel's description of ancient Greek dramatic poetry and its three acts provided the composer with artistic insight: and inspired his choice of that form, which he adapted for music, for his *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. However, in my opinion, Cormac, as quoted in 5.1.7, misplaced Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* under the wrong categorization, that of "Mimesis," in the section of "Drama in Liszt's Music," because she overlooked Liszt's novelty of structuring a three-act drama in *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* and she did not analyze his techniques in animating literary characters with his musical themes. I argue that it is crucial to view Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* through the lens of the three-act dramatic structure of Hegel, so that Liszt's method is not limited to the scene-painting and mimicking sound, but also includes his subordinate characters influenced by literature, and his handling of poetic and musical development. That permitted dramatic emotions and expressions to come through effectively.

In fact, Liszt created a new three-act drama by interspersing music between the two parts of Lenau's poetry (lines 1 to 50 and lines 51 to 100).[61] This subtle practice misled all the previous analysts to assume that Liszt's only goal was to connect individual verses and musical themes, or to introduce virtuosic techniques simply with Mephistopheles' violin playing, but it omits a more thorough interpretation that shows how vital literary form was to Liszt's evolution as a composer. It must be emphasized that Cormac, by overlooking the poetic form and the dramatic force behind *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, renders Liszt's music merely as an ordinary representation of life, lacking the artistic imagination for which he was known.

[61] Hunt, Larkin, and Cormac missed the correct way to understand this form by not recognizing that in Liszt's conception of his use of music to express verse, the two mediums could hardly be separated.

Right from the beginning of *Der Tanz*, Lenau establishes the dance scene, the two main characters, and their opposite aims. Thus, the dramatic scene is made clear to the audience and shapes their imagination before the music even begins. Applying Hegel's and Aristotle's theories reveals that the first act consists of several elements. First, Mephistopheles, the antagonist, disguises himself as a hunter and attends a wedding celebration, looking for any chance to fulfill his "unspoken" aim (lines 1–4). Second, Mephistopheles acts to fulfill his aim to corrupt human souls by setting up a series of temptations to sin (lines 9–14), with the goal of taking them down to Hell. Joining the wedding together with Mephistopheles is Faust, the protagonist, who is sexually attracted to a black-eyed girl whom he desperately wants to pursue. Faust's desires present an opportunity for Mephistopheles to achieve his goal. Third, Mephistopheles faces an obstacle: Faust's morality, which limits Faust's confidence and keeps him from pursuing his objective (lines 15–36). He expresses sexual desire to Mephistopheles but does not dare to realize it. In order to achieve his aim, Mephistopheles must overcome Faust's reservations by putting him under a spell.

5.3.2.2: The Demonic Dance Fueled by Increasing Energy and Forward Momentum

The demonic influence in *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* is noticeable in its fervent dancing energy marked by a series of accelerations of rhythm and tempi leading towards the very end (Figures 5.10–5.15). Liszt uses this progression of energy, dynamics, and virtuosity to portray the excitement of the wicked dancing in which Mephisto sweeps over the audience in his final victory.

Figure 5.10: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 651–658

Figure 5.11: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 683–686

Figure 5.12: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 699–706

Figure 5.13: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 723–742

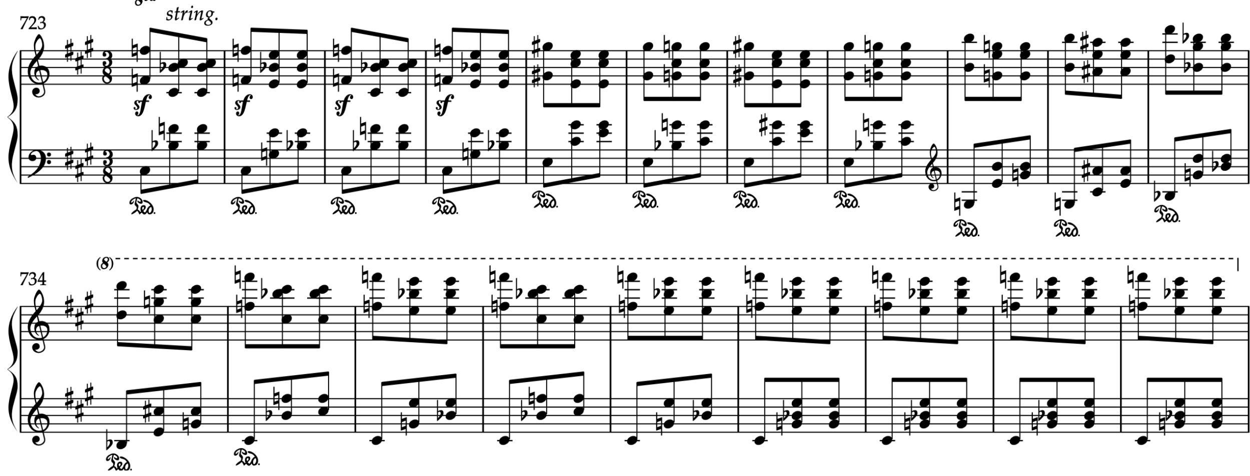
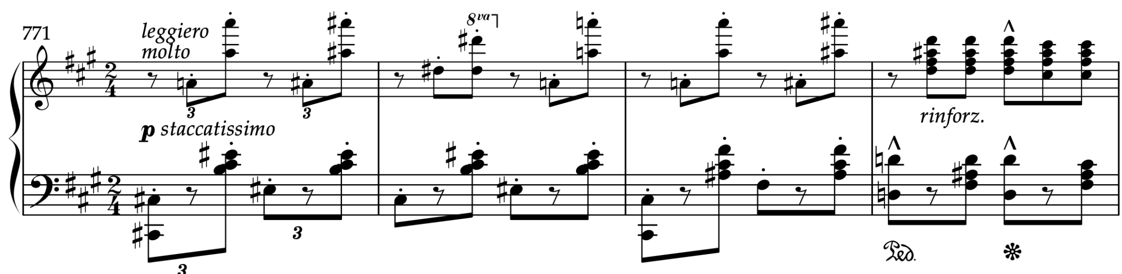


Figure 5.14: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 743–748

Figure 5.15: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 771–774



While the intensity of energy increases as the waltz becomes more frantic, the scene that comes next is depicted with a gradual, energetic crescendo towards the end, which sees the souls descend into a lustful Hell as they are finally swallowed by a sea of pleasure.

5.3.2.3: The First Act: Presenting a Conflict Resulting from the Dramatic Collision of Two Characters

5.3.2.3.1: The Poetry Seen as Prologue Contextualizes the Dance before Liszt's Waltz Starts

Lines 1–42 of the poem act as a first part—a prologue to Liszt's music. This prologue sets up the first conflict between the protagonist and antagonist. The conflict, described by Hegel as a collision, occurs between the protagonist (Faust) and antagonist (Mephistopheles), who are pursuing contradictory objectives. Liszt requested that the entire poem be printed before the music, to provide context for the audience and the performer before the demonic dance begins:

1. The first act: Lenau's poetry, lines 1–42 (poetic prologue) + lines 43–50 (Mephistopheles claims his use of magic) + Liszt's waltz music (the turning point of Lenau's poetry, because the violin of the wedding music is transferred from a "human" player to the hunter, who is the devilish player) + lines 52–55 (Mephisto's musical spell) + Liszt's waltz music, mm. 1–340
2. The second act: Lenau's poetry, lines 56–76 + Liszt's waltz music, mm. 341–650 (Despite the comma in the original at the end of line 55, Liszt's music suggests that the meaningful division comes here, because of the word "night" in the context of Liszt's musical setting.)
3. The third act: Lenau's poetry, lines 77–100 + Liszt's waltz music, mm. 651–911

Here, it should be understood as the conflict between Faust's desire to pursue the girl with black-eyes (lines 15–34), while being morally strong (lines 35–36), and Mephistopheles' desire to claim Faust's soul by setting up temptations (lines 9–14) and drawing him to succumb to his desires of flesh and lust (lines 37–42). In addition, Mephistopheles' disguise as a hunter works in two ways: as sexual metaphor representing a man's pursuit of a woman, and foreshadowing his role as a hunter of human souls. Faust's hesitation forces Mephistopheles to use magic to get his way. The corresponding music, which describes the spiritual conflict of the first act, is found in the first part of the *Mephisto Waltz* from mm. 1 to 340. Once Lenau's poetic voice turns from dramatic dialogue to narrative description in second person (line 43), Liszt's music picks up this transition and turns it from introductory background music to the animated waltz itself. The dramatic elements Liszt uses here suggest that he found a skillful compositional solution for his programmatic music.

5.3.2.3.2: The Waltz Begins: The Violin Tuning Effect Shows Liszt's Method of Mimicking Sound

According to Lenau's poetry, the music of the beginning of the original wedding celebration is ordinary, simple, and uninteresting, but later, the magic of Mephisto's violin gives it life with energetic movement representing heightened pleasure. In Lenau's poetry, line 43, Mephistopheles offers to play a new type of waltz that would spin more and excite everyone to the point of fainting. That is where Liszt's waltz music begins. With the demonic presence already established in Lenau's verses, the virtuosic pianist can play the role of the virtuosic violinist, creating an intoxicating and passionate atmosphere. Liszt showcases his programmatic approaches of mimicking sounds at the beginning of the waltz, first through a combined sonority of fifths (Figure 5.16): Liszt imitates a group of strings tuning their instruments by stacking up a series of perfect fifths, but such orchestral tuning usually occurs before a concert begins. The tuning effect Liszt shows here functions as background music preceding his presentation of the main characters in the first scene.

Figure 5.16: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 1–28

In measures 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, and 16, the grace notes before the first beats shift between the correct note and the false note, mockingly depicting mediocre musicians trying very

hard to get the peg pins to slide between two different notes to get the strings in tune. At the same time, on top of the prolonged dominant bass E, the stacks of fifths should span E, B, F sharp, C sharp, and finally reach G sharp, but Liszt intentionally avoids this. Since G sharp is the leading note that will force the tune to resolve to the original A major, Liszt instead skips G sharp in favor of A, thus moving the entire fifth interval a half step up to D-A. By doing so, he reaches two complete sets of double-fifths in m. 18 (including E-B-F sharp and D-A-E); then, he obstinately repeats the two sets of double-fifths, creating an unusual dissonance without a specific tonal center with the intention to confuse his audience about the true key center. There, he also inserts pedal signs to blur the sonority, hinting at "lifelessness," and he makes the repeating *staccato* sound less detached and bouncy than the *staccato* octaves coming later in mm. 75–78, which here increase the demonic energy (Figure 5.18).

5.3.2.3.3: Mephisto's Disguise in Reversed Intervals

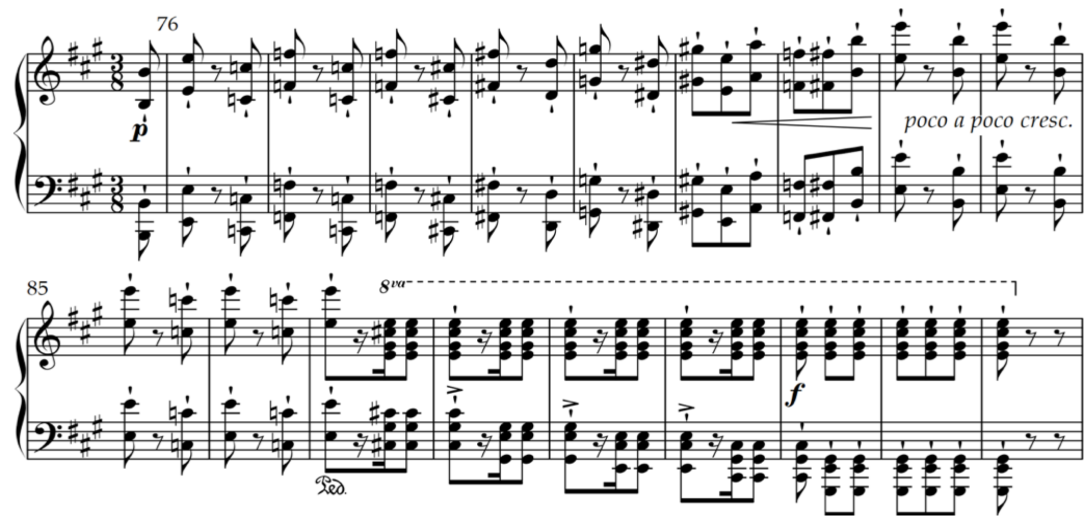
To depict certain poetic situations in the text, Liszt uses subtle changes of interval that suggest the inner thoughts and moods of his main characters. For example, he illustrates how Mephisto sneaks through the window and mixes into the crowd by flipping the introductory perfect fifth to its inversion, the perfect fourth, in mm. 30–34. And by shifting the weak beat to the strong beat, he evokes Mephisto's awkward movement (Figure 5.17).

Figure 5.17: The awkward movement of Mephisto in Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 514, mm. 30–34

While Liszt associates Mephistopheles's devilish character and sneaking movement with the interval of a fourth in the groups of off-beat slurs (Figure 5.17), when the same figures appear again in mm. 63–67, the interval of a fourth is inverted as a fifth, cleverly foreshadowing a breakthrough in the situation. The tumultuous energy is gradually increased by the consecutive jumping octaves continuing in leaps of perfect fourths (Figure 5.18). Contrary to the beginning's pedaled muddy sound effect, in this case the articulation is drastically changed to a sharp *staccato*, signifying the arrival of someone significant. The bass in mm. 91–93 finally reaches the leading tone G sharp, forming a full C-sharp minor chord (Figure 5.18).

In this brief introduction, Liszt mixes the intervals of fifth and fourth to prepare the entrance of the inhuman character Mephistopheles without anyone recognizing the magical excitement that will later infect and spread through the dancing crowd. By a simple inversion of interval, Liszt transforms the motif of the perfect fifth, which represents an ordinary orchestral tuning effect, by inverting it into a perfect fourth. The character and way in which Mephistopheles appears in the human mind is thus suggested in a subtle, almost unnoticeable way.

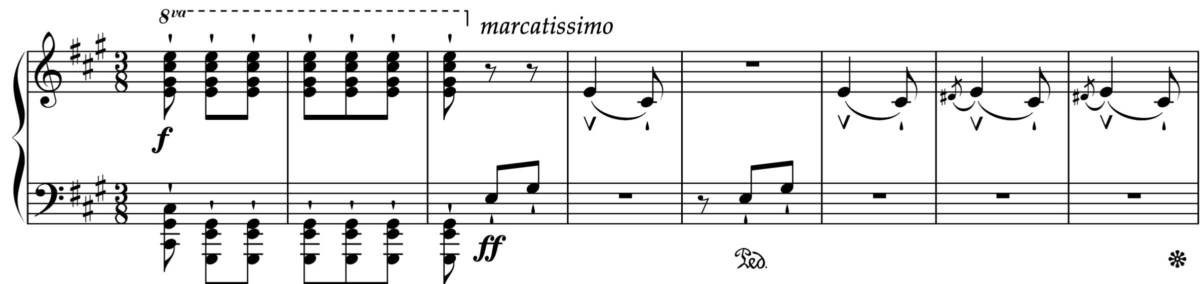
Figure 5.18: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 514, mm. 76–93; emphatic approach to C minor



In mm. 93–94, near the climax of the introduction, Mephistopheles' motivic statement dramatically enters, thereby cutting through the loud and repetitive chords accumulated by the prior jumping octaves in consecutive fourths between mm. 75–93 (Figure 5.19). At m. 93, Mephisto's speaking voice is reinforced with an exaggerated tone and grotesque manner and appears in a *staccato* style with a sharp accent in *fortissimo* as he offers the players to play a new waltz tune. The musical setting corresponds to Lenau's poetry, where Mephistopheles makes his suggestion to change the type of music he wants in lines 43–50:

> Mephistopheles
> (addressing the players)
> You dear people, your bows,
> are yet too drowsily drawn!
> To your waltzes should spin,
> ailing pleasure to lame feet,
> But youth not full of blood and fire.
> Hand me a fiddle
> And another sound will come directly
> And give a different life to the Inn! [62]

Figure 5.19: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 514, mm. 91–98; Climax of the introduction followed by Mephisto's entry presented in a grotesque way.



Liszt also inserts *marcatissimo* as a performance indication at mm. 93–94. This motivic statement of Mephistopheles, consisting of major thirds then a minor sixth (E-G sharp-E), moves the middle note down a half step to disguise him in a slightly modified interval. Compared to the

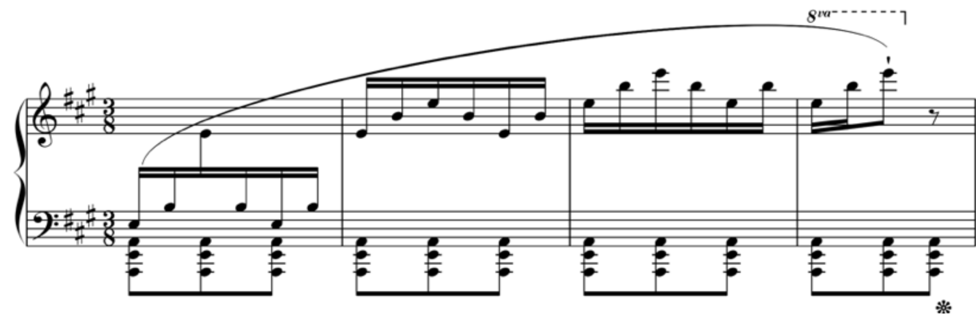
[62] See Appendix B for the entire poetic text.

opening motif of the first theme (Figure 5.20), Mephisto's entry presents a motivic modification where a perfect fourth followed by a perfect fifth (E-A-E) is found to portray the joyfully dancing mood.

Figure 5.20: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 111–118. The first theme illustrates a joyful waltz.

For the remaining transitional passage (Figure 5.21) leading to the main dancing melody in A major starting in m. 111 (Figure 5.20), the increasing volume and spinning energy features Mephistopheles' authoritative violin playing. There his power is gradually infused into the dance music with extreme happiness and excitement (Figure 5.21). The associated poetic text reads, "the player handed over the fiddle to the hunter, the hunter bowed the fiddle mightily, soon the playful tones surged and dwindled" (lines 51–53).

Figure 5.21: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 107–110; Excited Dancing



5.3.2.3.4: The Devil's Tricks: Liszt's Method of Painting Scenes in Music

Lenau pens the scene of the marriage banquet as a celebration that happens while Mephistopheles and Faust are passing by and plan to join. The first theme, repeated three times in the first dramatic act, presents a merry dancing mood filled with excitement (Figure 5.20). The entire first act is under the governance of Liszt's demonic virtuosity, in which he piles up highly virtuosic segments that are written with a purpose to incite and make his audience wonder at them. These techniques include the following:

1. Fast running scales (mm. 165–172, 261–268)
2. Arpeggios and broken chords (mm. 195–198, 235–236, 239–240)
3. Broken octaves (mm. 173–181, 269–273)
4. Rapid octaves with alternating hands (mm. 182–190)
5. Rapid octaves and chords in succession (mm. 203–232, 277–281, 285–291)
6. Naughty, playful grace notes (mm. 137–138, 141–-142, 233–234, 237–238)
7. Quick moving two-note slurs (mm. 149–152, 157–164, 245–248, 253–260)
8. Quick jumps, changes in octave register, and shifting accents to emphasize the weak beat (mm. 145–148, 153–156, 241–244, 249–252)
9. Two-hand glissandi (m. 202)

All these devilish tricks further elevate the atmosphere to be even more cheerful and entertaining, proving that Mephistopheles' music could heat up the crowd to a higher emotional state. Many intensely rhythmic places are combined with drastic modulations and harmonic surprises, which result in quick shifts in emotion and affect listeners' inner imagination of Mephistopheles enjoying his catnip, spinning, laughing, and mocking the wedding guests. Figure

5.22 is an example of Liszt modulating drastically between key signatures containing all sharps (m. 137) or all flats (m. 145).

Figure 5.22: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 137–152; Modulations

Through the means of music, Liszt depicts Mephistopheles heating up the wedding party with his violin. This also creates an incredible forward momentum throughout the entire piece that is impossible to overlook (further discussed in 5.3.2.6).

5.3.2.4: The Second Act: A Positive Discord in The Seduction Scene

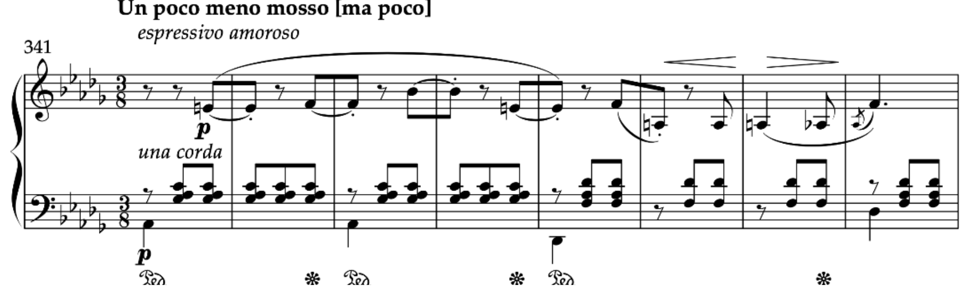
According to Hegel's concept of drama, the second dramatic act should present a progression and development that is produced by the positive difference arising from the main collision, which was previously described in the first act. This dramatic concept informs Liszt's second act, where the scene evolves into erotic temptation. The seduction emerges as the pivotal scene in the act. This corresponds to the middle section of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* (mm. 341–

650), in which he is inspired by the poetic images (lines 56–76) that are perfectly depicted by his music. This positive change, compared to the original conflict, is seen in how Mephistopheles adjusts his plans to achieve his goal. Now, Mephistopheles will act in accordance with Faust's purposes and let Faust and the other humans become trapped in their lustful desires. Lenau's poetry is informative here, and specifically describes the dancing girls disrobing at night ("night" is referred to in line 56), while bathing in full view of the public (lines 58–59). In revealing their naked forms (line 59), the girls stir up desire, creating a context of sensuality and disturbance. Each young man in the scene is watching and waiting for his opportunity to grab a girl for himself (lines 60–64). The temptation results in some men's success (lines 65–68) and leaves others to fight over the girls (lines 69–71). Finally, the increasingly sensual atmosphere takes the lovers to the height of their pleasure (lines 72–74, 75–76).

While Liszt's music does not always match every single detail or follow the linear order of events described in the text, he nevertheless extracts the essence of it, making the scene-change particularly meaningful. Liszt repeats the main melody three times in the second act (mm. 341–650). Each time the melody is more developed, with a variation that elaborates on imagery suggested by the poetic depiction.

It is important to view the new second theme (mm. 341–348) as an imitation of Faust's shyness and inability to speak a full expressive sentence. Liszt crafts a second thematic phrase that imitates Faust stammering in broken words first (Figure 5.23). The musical equivalent is a series of slightly interrupted tones. Harmonically, the key starts in D-flat major, but Liszt uses notes outside of the regular harmonies and intervals, such as E natural and A natural, to create a short moment of uncertainty and a feeling of strain.

Figure 5.23: Faust's stammering in Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 341–348



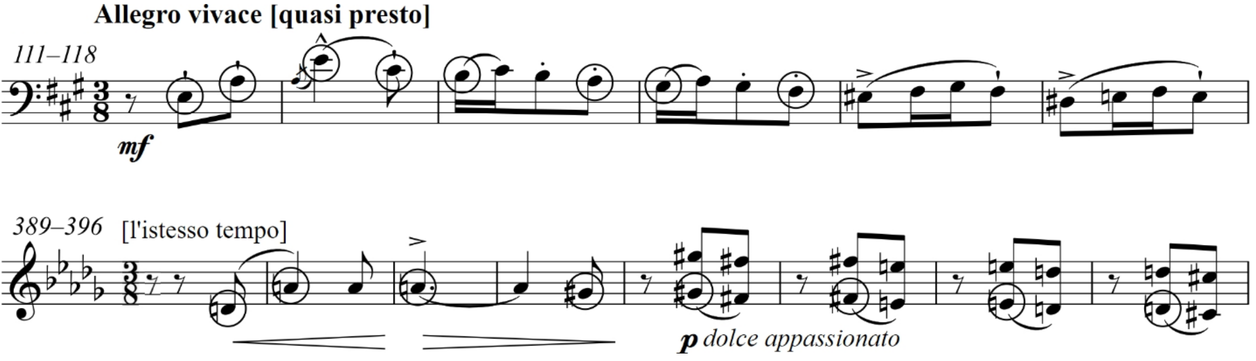
Then in Figure 5.25 between mm. 389–396, similar intervals occur in the second and first themes. Liszt produces a more connected line using an expressive vocal leap up a fifth in mm. 373–374. The response can be heard at the following descent of a fifth in mm. 377–378, which enables a musical dialogue between the newly confident Faust and one of the women, presumably the black-eyed girl (Figure 5.24).[63]

Figure 5.24: A dialogue in Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 373–380

After this dialogue repeats three times in sequences through B-flat minor (mm. 373–380), A-flat minor (mm. 381–388), and finally F-sharp minor (mm. 389–396), Liszt continues to develop the girl's response, which takes the shape of a complete phrase very much like the first thematic dancing melody. There are intervals in the second theme when the melody repeats for the third time, in mm. 389–396, that resemble those of the first theme, mm. 111–118 (Figure 5.25).

[63] Faust referred to a black-eyed girl in the poetic prologue and shows an immense interest in her, admitting to Mephistopheles that he lacked the courage to approach her.

Figure 5.25: Similar intervals in the second and first themes in Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514

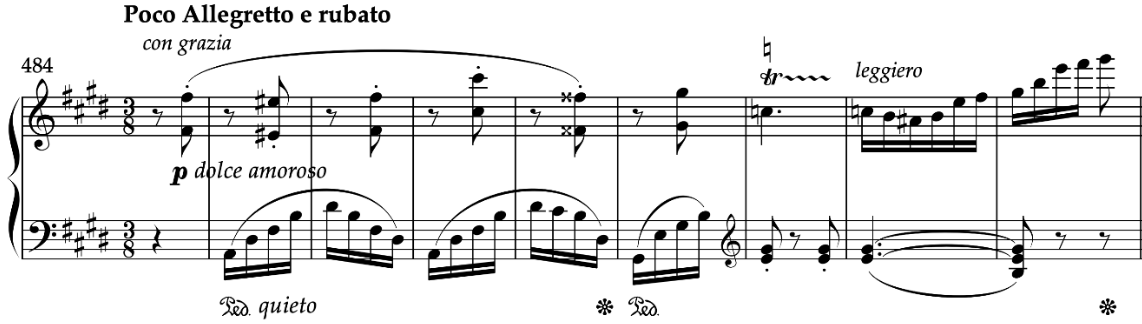


Liszt's depiction focuses on a courtship initiated by a man (this can very well mean Faust, the main protagonist), and illustrates the man's inner emotion and change of attitude.

Given the specific poetic context, the opening dancing melody is produced under the magical influence of Mephistopheles. Here, Faust's success in retrieving a response from the girl, can be considered the result of the spell of Mephistopheles, given the fact that the entire phrase is surprisingly similar to the first dancing melody. Therefore, as Faust's secret wish of getting close to his favorite girl is now fulfilled by Mephistopheles, the Devil does not hesitate to hypnotize this loving couple, leading them to even deeper sexual desires.

From m. 484, the phrase is now fully connected, the right-hand melody is now floating on the waves in the form of spread-out arpeggios played by the left hand (Figure 5.25). Through a successfully established dialogue, at times quite flirtatious (mm. 490–492), Liszt achieves the level that has the lovers finally in each others' arms and contemplating the sensual pleasures of love.

Figure 5.26: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 484–492



In the next development section from m. 558, Liszt writes for two hands, joining the theme in mm. 341–48 (Figure 5.23) in different registers of the keyboard, but slightly offset (Figure 5.26). By combining two hands echoing the same melody, and by writing a third staff above the middle register, Liszt introduces repeated notes playing the same melody on the top register, creating a similar poetic effect of "strings sounded in triple stops" (line 69, Figure 5.27). This musical setting possibly evokes the poetic scene describing a man and a woman finally intertwining in fleshly union. The second act does very little to advance the story's plot and provides no additional details about the opening conflict, neither establishes an absolute climax before returning to the opening theme nor repeats any thematic or emotional element in the first act. Instead, Lenau uses the pleasure in this section as a temporary release from the final suffering. Liszt uses this seduction scene to complement his planned three-act structure, providing a calm before the storm, which will soon unfold in the third act.

Figure 5.27: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 558–565

Liszt's plan for his second act is remarkable in three ways. First, Liszt clearly articulates the characters' motivations using only music. Second, this depiction temporarily diminishes the conflict and highlights feelings of pleasure and love brought on by the conversation. Finally, the sensations achieved in this second act can be speculated as Liszt's own imagination of sexual desire and physical affection. The pianist therefore must give the impression of a sensual touch by playing the lower bass notes extremely smoothly and playing the rest of the wavy arpeggios by caressing the keyboard. Those running chromatic scales and repeated notes sound at times like a murmuring whisper, and at other times louder and more passionate. Corresponding to lines 56–76 (the second act), Mephisto's spell not only affects Faust and the girl, but also subdues the entire crowd, sinking everyone deeper into a temporary reverie of enjoyment. All the sensual expressions and imagery in Lenau's charming text are successfully transferred and transformed into a musically seductive scene by Liszt.

5.3.2.5: The Third Act: Thematic Transformations Representing Demonic Distortion

In Hegel's three-act structure, the resolution of the main conflict, previously described as the different aims harbored by Mephistopheles and Faust, should be fully developed in every possible respect in the third act. Liszt was inspired by the poetry of lines 77–100, starting with a call back to the sound of violins playing (line 77). Every living creature seems to be possessed by

Mephistopheles' demonic spirit, so that the dance is turning into an orgiastic circle (line 78) including all instrumental players (line 79–80). Even the surrounding objects are emotionally awakened, becoming alive and wanting to join the frenetic dance (line 81–84):

> (Associated text)
> The violins sounded temptingly,
> And all entwined in a orgiastic circle.
> How crazy the village players acted!
> As one, they threw their fiddles to the ground.
> How crazy the village players acted!
> As one, they threw their fiddles to the ground.
> The enchanted whirl moved,
> With anything living within the inn.
> The echoing walls, with pale-faced envy,
> Rued that they could not dance along.

To depict such a scene, Liszt starts his third act with a series of harmonic and rhythmic transformations of mood. Based on the materials used in the earlier acts, he begins with the first theme (mm. 111–118) found in the first dramatic act, transforming it further in the second dramatic act (mm. 341–650, mm. 389–396), and later also in the third dramatic act (mm. 651–911). He begins with the the first dancing melody, then presents the second courtship melody. At this point, it is almost certain that the role of the original themes and their distinctive differentiation according to the classical definition are not as important as Liszt's departure from the traditional musical form with the return of the themes. The importance is the form of the poetry, and the dramatic evil force that is hidden backstage as a manipulator who decides the winner of the situation, either the protagonist or the antagonist. Like a doomed gamble, it does not matter how many chips are being put in and who puts them in, what matters is the power behind it.

On line 77, Lenau reapplies the violin sound to recall the dancing scene of the banquet. Liszt takes Lenau's word as his musical motive and starts the transformations by transposing the

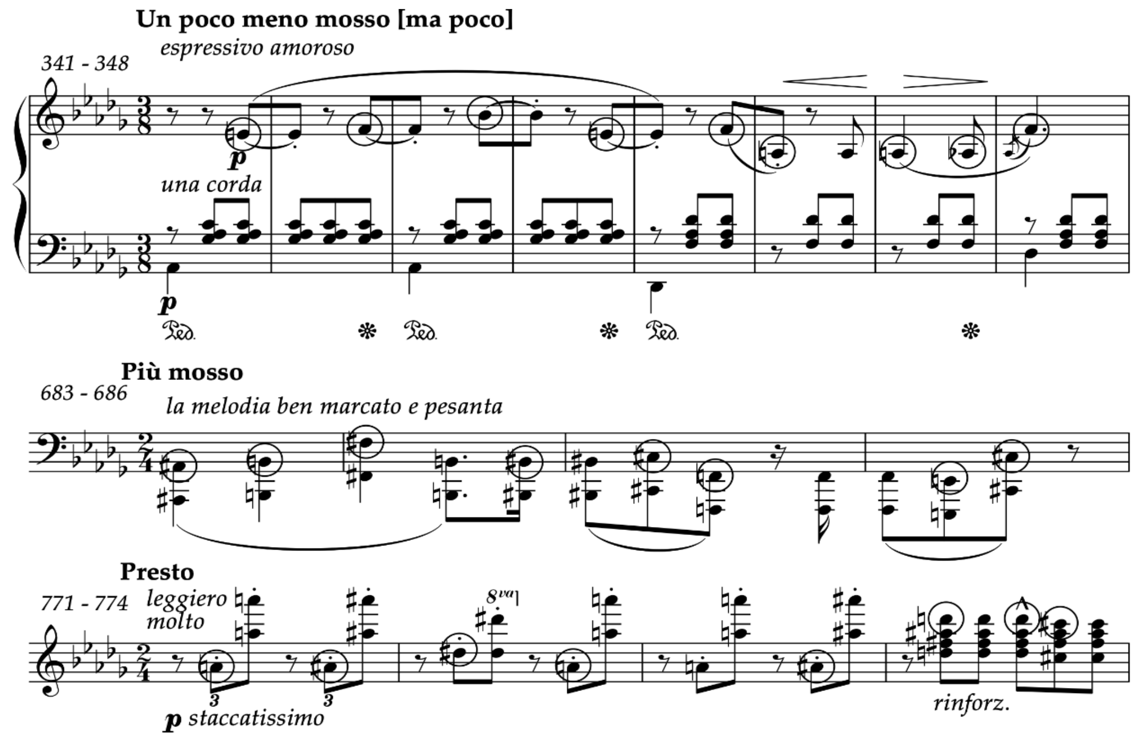
returning dancing melody first a half-step up to B-flat major. Disguised temporarily in this fake key rather than in its original A major, the tune was primarily used to depict Mephistopheles' magical violin playing in the first act, enhancing the atmosphere to make all guests dance happily together. This theme returns in a much lower register, hiding its upcoming threat (Figure 5.28).

Figure 5.28: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 651–658; The Magical Violin in a Fake Key

By directing his characterized themes and motives through modulations to different keys, and through rhythmic alterations in every possible way, Liszt reconditions these themes in new moods which automatically reflect the characters' inner emotional transformations. These transformations also remind listeners of the development of the overarching plot drawn from the previous acts (Figures 5.29 and 5.30).

Figure 5.29: The first theme and its transformations in Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514

Figure 5.30: The second theme and its transformations in Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514



Liszt allows himself to reveal the degree of Mephistopheles' dark power to its full extent by releasing the devilish energy of the demonic dance to an even crazier, more wicked spinning.

> (Associated text, poetry lines 85–92)
> Above all, though, the blessed Faust
> Rushed to the dance with his brunette;
> He took her by the hand, stammered vows
> And danced her through the open doorway.
> They dance through meads and garden paths,
> Whilst behind them chased the viol sounds;
> They dance giddily out to the woods,
> And the violins faded gradually away.

The whirlwind of Mephisto's demonic power climaxes in the orgiastic dancing party that leads everything to being crushed in absolute dissonance during the cadenza measure, and it occurs without any final harmonic resolution (Figure 5.9).[64]

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[64] The music of *Götterdämmerung* was completed much later due to the complexity of Wagner's orchestration for the large orchestra he required. It is speculated that Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* had an impact on

5.3.2.6: Demonic Momentum and Liszt's Hidden Structural Technique that Controls it

As previously mentioned, the pressing momentum accompanied by the demonic instrumental virtuosity was inspired by the pre-conditioned collision between the two main characters. No matter how the themes are transformed in rhythm, line, and harmonic shape, nor how many of Mephistopheles' devilish tricks intervene, Liszt's organizational method remains tied to his four-bar phrase structure that often groups the theme and its development into repeated sequences. Leslie Howard's preface in the newly published Peters edition of *Mephisto Waltz No.1* points to Liszt's orchestral version of the same work, in which he instructed conductors to beat as if it were in 4/4 (one beat per measure with every four measures forming a four-beat cycle). There are even instructions for the conductor of how to beat time.[65] The opening measures in the piano version of the Neue Liszt Ausgabe (NLA) appear with the numbers of the conductor's beats as well (Figure 5.31). They show the first empty measure where Liszt silenced the dance music; it starts again with an upbeat in m. 2.

My marking of the measure numbers through m. 136 allows me to make this four-bar phrase structure stand out even more clearly (Figures 5.31, 5.32, and 5.33). Based on this strict arrangement, this symmetrical system contains the devilish, passionate force. If the four-bar

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Liszt's view of the total harmonic destruction brought by the demonic power. "On 4 October 1848, Wagner already outlined a prose résumé for his drama, the story at this stage largely follows the order familiar from the finished work. In autumn 1848 Wagner next compiled a libretto for *Siegfrieds Tod* (originally spelt *Siegfried's Tod*). This created much back-narration of earlier events. However, in 1851 he subsequently drafted *Der junge Siegfried* (originally *Jung-Siegfried*) and finally *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold* in 1851–1852. In the summer of 1850, Wagner made some preliminary musical sketches for the prologue and began a composition draft, which was discontinued after the opening of the leavetaking scene for Siegfried and Brünnhilde. Having then added a preliminary drama, *Der junge Siegfried* (1851), and *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold* (1851–1852), Wagner found it necessary to subject *Siegfrieds Tod* to revision: Siegfried had already been replaced as the central figure of the cycle by Wotan; the ending was altered so that the gods and Valhalla are all destroyed by fire..." Grove Music Online, s.v. "Wagner (Wilhelm) Richard," consulted April 6, 2023. The text for Wagner's four epic operas was completed in December 1852 and privately published and distributed by Wagner in February 1853. Evidence shows that Liszt and Princess Carolyne read Wagner's libretto first printed in limited copies during Liszt's Weimar period and strongly applauded it. The first complete draft of *Götterdämmerung* was begun on 2 October 1869 and finished on 10 April 1872. See Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 234–235; 438.

[65] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard, IV–V.

phrase unit were to be broken, interrupted, or shaken, it would create rhythmic and structural instability in Liszt's development, sometimes thematic and sometimes sequential, that would add force into the flow of the performance, disrupting it to the point of breaking the work apart. Taking into consideration Liszt's conducting instruction to beat four measures as a single 4/4 gesture (making mm. 1 and 3 as strong downbeat measures, and mm. 2 and 4 as weak upbeat measures), any point where Liszt inserts strong accents and emphasis on a weak-beat measure eventually creates a feeling of syncopated force inside the four-bar unit. In fact, an inner swing is crafted within this constant emphasis through syncopation, and that helps to achieve the absolute climax of the first act (Figure 5.34). Liszt constantly puts accents on the second and fourth measure of the group, creating that asymmetry to destroy the symmetrical measure-grouping. In this way, a forward momentum representing demonic persistence is further created by a first silent measure and accents on downbeats at irregular intervals of time. Such rhythmic instability results in actions and movements that create a section of dynamic climax. Thus, the music becomes a "play" bearing all its own magical power. Even between the transitional passages in the second act, the four-bar structure is preserved as Liszt inserts an appropriate measure of silence to complete the four-measure count (Figure 5.35). Using this method, Liszt intentionally holds back the demonic dance and virtuosic energy, which later becomes an explosive, savage, sexual impulse. Liszt ingeniously embeds within the Hegelian concept of drama an inner passion, an unstoppable dancing impulse, and a swinging feeling, each which reflects Mephistopheles' persuasive demonic power.

Figure 5.31: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 1–42

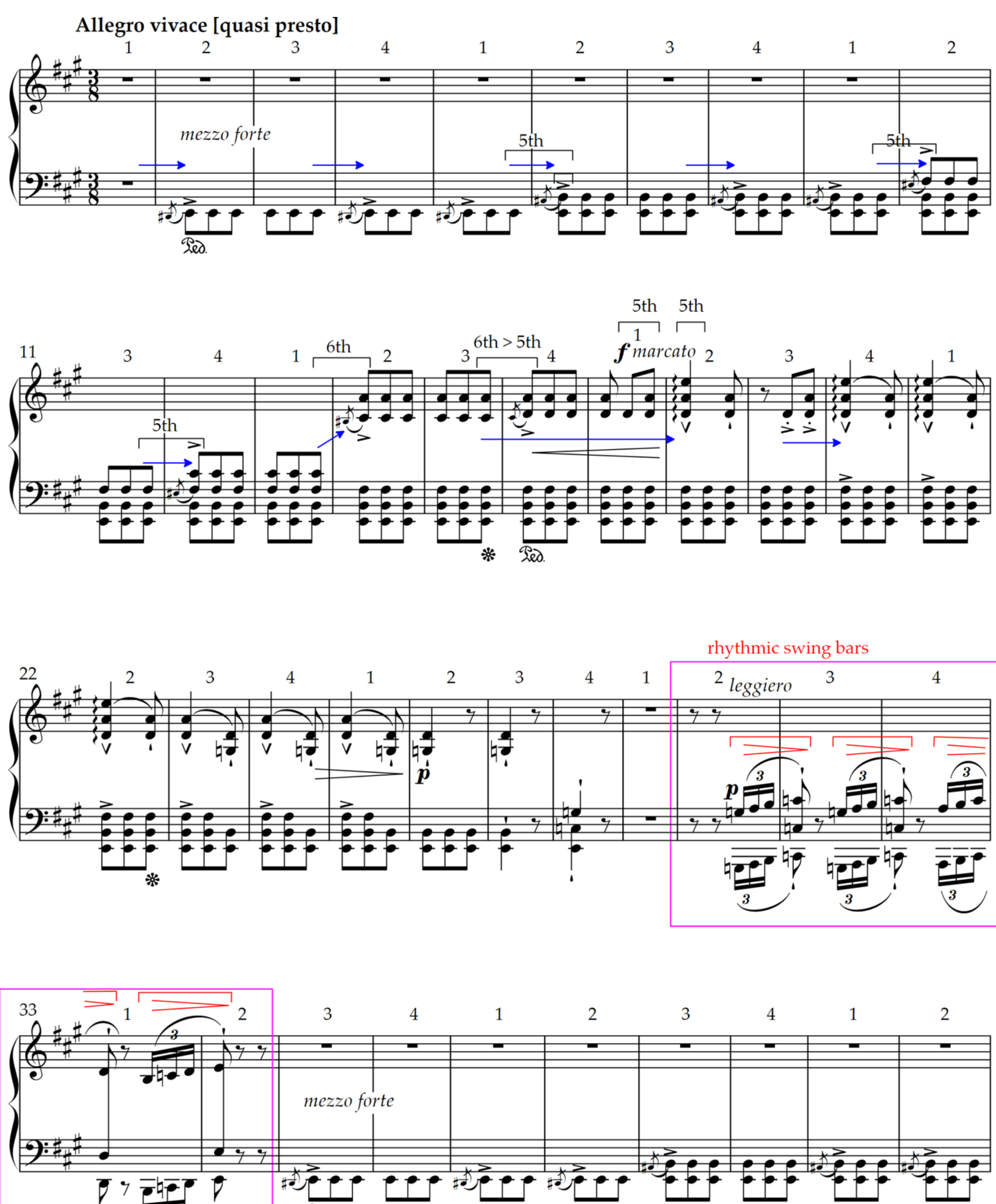

Figure 5.32: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 43–90

Figure 5.33: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 91–136

Figure 5.34: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 269–304; climax of First Act

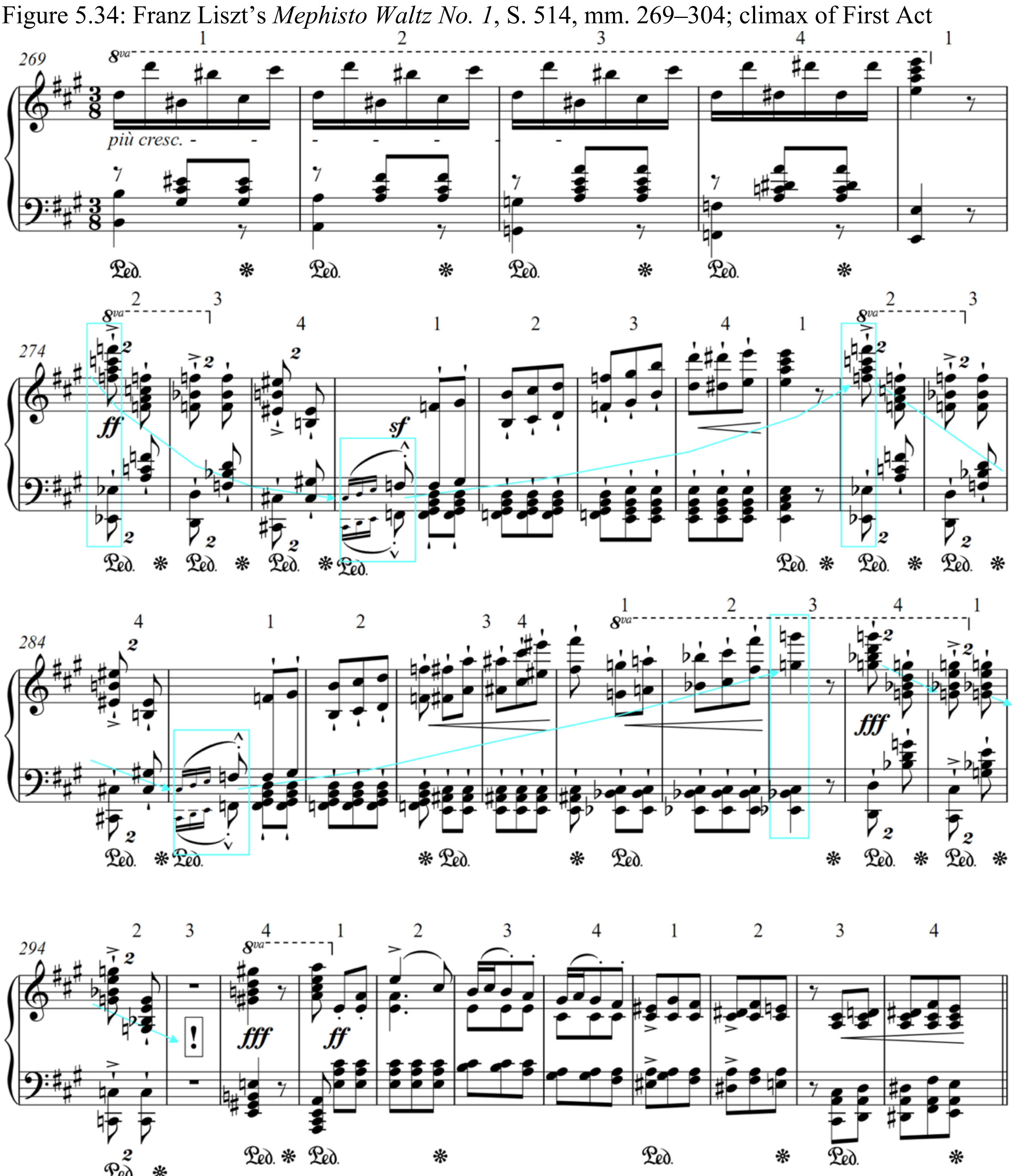

Figure 5.35: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, mm. 465–492

In Christianity, any demon or devil demonstrates a destructive power that will destroy anyone possessed by such entities from within. For Goethe, only God's grace will prevent Faust from being seized by Mephistopheles. Goethe's version begins with a conversation between Mephistopheles and God regarding permission to take Faust's soul, which shows God's power over the devil, who has nevertheless had some control over the forces of darkness. Christian belief in God's sovereign power prevails in Liszt's version of the *Faust Symphony*, as Walker states, "so confident is the Lord that Mephistopheles must fail, he allows him to proceed…from the start, Goethe has been interested in Faust's salvation."[66]

In fact, the demonic power was claimed by Goethe himself, writing in his biography, as a force of active, if not entirely detrimental, contradiction to all existing principles,

[66] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 329.

> He thought he could detect in nature, something which manifested itself only in contradictions, and which, therefore, could not be comprehended under an idea, still less under one word…All that limits us it seemed to penetrate; it seemed to sport at will with the necessary elements of our existence; it contracted time and expanded space. In the impossible alone did it appear to find pleasure, while it rejected the possible with contempt. To this principle, which seemed to come in between all other principles to separate them, and yet link them together. I gave the name of Demoniac.[67]

Goethe is saying that demonic power can accomplish strange, seemingly impossible things. However, Liszt's best realization of the total destruction of humanity is through the sonorities of catastrophe without any tonal center of the piano cadenza. He cannot compose *true* destruction because true destruction in music is total nothingness, **so** the music should not be able to continue after this cadenza-measure (m. 813) in the third act. What Liszt does instead is to create a warning against succumbing to temptation here.

Although Lenau's character, Faust, is a darker version than Goethe's Faust, Liszt's way of structuring the demonic spirit is still grounded in his Christian world view that was similar to Goethe's philosophy. By setting the strict bar-numbered structure straight, he was able to prevent the music from falling apart in an accumulation of shifted beats, deformed rhythms, false intervals, sudden modulations, and all the distortions one could possibly use to change themes and melodies, even the complete dissonance that he achieves in the cadenza measure (Figure 5.9). In other words, Liszt "constructs" the seemingly freely evolved, intuitive, and highly virtuosic sonorities with masterful hands instead of letting the demonic themes and characters move out of proportion and destroy the texture and overarching form. It gives pianists a second thought as to how he views demons or demonic possession, because the mighty God still takes control and plans for everything to unfold in this worldly experience.

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[67] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Autobiography of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, trans. John Oxenford (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 423.

5.3.2.7: The Second Orchestral Ending as the *Weltschmerz* of Lenau

Because Lenau's Faust did not end redeemed by God but sank to his death in the sea of desires, Liszt's second orchestral ending provides a musical depiction of the poetry's lines 99–100, where he lets Mephistopheles prevail, taking the drunken lovers to be engulfed by the roaring ocean of pleasure.[68] The destructive demonic force not only mirrors the poet's own personal despair but also conveys a broad sense of anguish at the state of the world, a reflective pessimism of this time, known as *Weltschmerz*.[69] This literary term translates to "world weariness," "world sadness," or "the world's pain," and describes an important Romantic literary concept of the nineteenth century that affected many musicians and writers at this time. Hunt wrote that *Weltschmerz* "exemplifies a spirit of melancholy and *ennui*, following in the footsteps of Lord Byron."[70]

Lenau's alternate Faust commits suicide, which not only reverses the morality introduced by Goethe but also confronts Lenau's deeply absurd life, in which he found no absolute values. Lenau's Faust trusts neither God nor science, nor is his final fate redeemed by faith or love. In the moment before the last scene, depicting the nightingale, Liszt uses repeated notes to imitate the birdsong (Figure 5.36, mm. 858 and 860) described by the poetry within lines 93–98:

> The lingering tones rustled through the trees,
> Like lecherous, flattering dreams of love.
> There raised the warbling sounds of joy
> From the nightingale in the fragrant bushes,
> That swelled more hotly the pleasure of the drinkers,
> As though the singer were summoned by the devil.

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[68] Franz Liszt, *Procession by Night and Mephisto Waltz: After Lenau's Faust*, ed. Robert Collet (London: Ernst Eulenburg, 1976), 74–77.

[69] A term defined by *Encyclopedia Britannia* as "the prevailing mood of melancholy and pessimism associated with the poet of the Romantic era that arose from their refusal or inability to adjust to those realities of the world that they saw as destructive of their right to subjectivity and personal freedom. "Nikolaus Lenau," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 18, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nikolaus-Lenau, consulted August 18, 2022.

[70] Hunt, "Franz Liszt," 8.

He also brings back the second-act courtship melody but transforms it into a drugged, lazy form that imitates the fatigue of the drinkers.

Figure 5.36: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514, mm. 846–863

Liszt's piano version of the ending escape-scene consists of interlocking octaves (Figure 5.5) that disappear in a whirlwind movement to stormy effect. The orchestral version offers a different rendition with a soft ending (Figures 5.37, 5.38, and 5.39) closer to the image that the poetry offers: "Then the power of yearning drew them down, and noisily they were engulfed in the sea of bliss."

Figure 5.37: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 110, mm. 920–931

Figure 5.38: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 110, mm. 932–941

Figure 5.39: Franz Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, S. 110, mm. 942–955

5.4: Conclusion: Mephisto Waltz No. 1 as an Example of Liszt's Mature Style

Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* represents some of the best of Liszt's mature instrumental style, because it not only includes his distinctive formal and extramusical solutions to compositional challenges but also draws on his personal, emotional experience through literature that had for years inspired and moved him deeply. This work contains all of Liszt's prominent stylistic characteristics, including his compositional beliefs, his advanced piano techniques, the poetic quality he expressed through his music, and most importantly, his imagination, which shows his philosophy. To situate Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* within the significant progress he made during 1848–1858, three observations explain Liszt's more mature style that he achieved towards the end of his Weimar residency.

First, *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* was written *after* Liszt's twelve programmatic symphonic poems and his two symphonies, *Eine Symphonie zu Dantes Divina Commedia* (*A Symphony to Dante's Divine Comedy*) and *Eine Faust-Symphonie in drei Charakterbildern* (*A Faust Symphony in Three Character Sketches*), were completed. This shows that he had already tried his hand at many compositions influenced by literature on profoundly philosophical and even mythological topics, before achieving possession of the skills for presenting these abstract ideas. He also gained knowledge of orchestration through the methods he had used to revise his earlier works.

Second, *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* was written *after* the publication of his 1855 essay, *On Berlioz's Harold in Italy*, in which Liszt described his definition and approach to his program music to its fullest extent.[71] As such, *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* demonstrates that Liszt had figured

[71] Intriguingly, scholars identify the prose style of this essay as a collaboration with Princess Carolyne, because her philosophical view, writing style, and method of debate can be detected in it. See Liszt, "Hector Berlioz

out how to tailor his program according to a particular selection of literature. By analyzing Hegel's formal concept of drama and by seeing through the expressivity and meaning of the poetry, Liszt worked his themes and transformations within a three-act form out of the two-part dramatic poetry and was able to create a "tone poem" for the piano.[72]

Third, Liszt's role as Kapellmeister and his involvement with the theater exposed him to plays, operas, melodramas, and other semi-staged works. This experience working with orchestral musicians, singers, and actors also provided valuable artistic stimuli. Through his observation of the visual aspects of production, and the movements and gestures of the theater players, Liszt was inspired to achieve versatility in developing his compositional ideas, as Cormac stated, "[His] methods include: scene painting, sound mimicking, sound picturing and movement, and finally reaching to the sound ideal, a philosophical state that corresponds the level of awakening brought by his literary inspirations and life experiences."[73] As such, when he began drafting *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, Liszt's method of representing poetic ideas in music had blossomed to the point of not only projecting his imagination more fully, but also achieving instrumental timbres functioning as what Walker describes as "stereophonic contrasts."[74] This type of program music provides the audience with vivid images of scene, character, movement, and action, as well as mood changes. In Liszt's musical rendition of *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, his musical language shows his detailed work of characterizing, mobilizing, and caricaturing

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und seine 'Harold-Symphonie,'" in Leo Treitler and Oliver Strunk, eds., *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History* (New York: Norton, 1998), 1158–1174, and Kregor, *Program Music,* 103.

[72] "Tone poem" is the English equivalent of the German "Tondichtung." By implication, if not in fact, a tone poem is less dependent on symphonic procedures than a symphonic poem. See Grove Music Online, s.v. "Tone Poem," consulted April 20, 2023.

[73] The five symphonic poems discussed in Cormac's book include *Tasso*, *Prometheus*, *Orpheus*, *Festklänge*, and *Hamlet.* Cormac, *Liszt and the Symphonic Poem*, 21.

[74] A term Walker used to describe Liszt's multifaceted solutions for presenting his imagined sounds. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 312.

Mephistopheles' disguised demonic nature through thematic transformations that produced the effects of demonic, dark power.

Liszt arguably spent less time finishing this work because he had already completed the gigantic Faust symphony. This time, he did not revise his work multiple times as he did in composing the earlier works discussed here, when he was still seeking solutions. The precision, confidence, and certainty with which Liszt completed *Mephisto* show that he had transformed himself in Weimar from a touring pianist who moved from place to place to a composer who knew how to use his structural tools and techniques and had reached maturity in that art.

In a discussion of the new type of musical language that Liszt fully developed around the mid-1850s through his symphonic poems, Walker proposes that Liszt made three major departures from the compositional techniques of the past century.

> 1. He invented the single-movement cyclic structure, so-called double-function form, which rolled the separate movements of the sonata into one movement.
> 2. He preferred the "transformation of themes" technique, in which contrasting ideas are developed from a single musical idea.
> 3. He believed the language of music could be fertilized by the other arts, especially poetry and painting.[75]

Each of these three characteristic musical departures in *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, S. 514 was identified here. To emphasize the centered conflict, Liszt not only invented his three-act form and synthesized music and literature, thereby creating a dramatic form within the piano instrumental genre, but he also connected the poetic depictions in a single movement. This one-movement form comprised of three subordinate acts was based on his understanding of dramatic poetry, and included transformations of highly characterized themes, and musical momentum that is strongly associated with the conflicts found in the plot. With its concise three-act form,

[75] Ibid., 357–358.

varied thematic characterization, continuous momentum, and structural counterbalance, sensual literary content, comic characterizations, and appealing virtuosity, Liszt created a musical depiction which closely imitates the literary world of Lenau's text and elevated Lenau's work to a close depiction of tragic poetry, an idealized literary form of which Liszt claimed ultimate mastery in his 1855 essay.

The Faust legend has been commonly understood as a tale to teach morals. Liszt, by his musical treatment of the hero's fall, renders a tragic ending that results in the pursuit of a purely fleshly desire. This image of Mephisto was illustrated by Liszt as a supernatural virtuoso who can easily be understood to be himself. From the musical setting, Liszt also expresses the emotional conception and the psychological level of the poem in detail. Those wild, showy, virtuosic piano techniques that were known as his personal stamp symbolized a release of devilish power. When performed properly, the required massive and devilish energy places high demands on the performer's state of mind. Yet Liszt also represented his religious and philosophical depth in an internal musical layer that was his strict periodic phrasing interwoven in the music of the surface. This layer is somewhat hidden behind the poetic scenes and the virtuosic passages describing lust, evil, and the final burst of disintegration. An interpreting pianist must thus express both freedom and control, Liszt's music provoking them to have to play both sides, the good as well as the evil.

The necessity of attaching a printed program even before the beginning of *Mephisto Waltz No.1* is made clear because of the dramatic context of the plot which comes with an assigned location, character types, and a conversation describing their purposes. Thanks to the interplay between music and text, the structure of the whole work is programmatic and dramatic. Liszt intended this programmatic music to resonate with listeners in multiple ways, including the

poetic scenes, characters, the progression of gestures and expressions, and the concluding force that shows a magical disaster as its climax. This sound depiction reveals his feelings of the poetic inner layers, interwoven in the emotional, spiritual, and philosophical facet, as seen in his handling of Lenau's poetry.

Due to his infamous love affairs and two long-term cohabitations with married noblewomen, Liszt's feelings towards (i.e., drawing connections to) Faust and Mephistopheles can be seen as autobiographical. The disastrous outcome of the poetic finale symbolizes an advance notice for the moral lesson Liszt was going to learn in the next chapter of his life, when Liszt and Princess Carolyne's marriage appeal to the Holy See was called off hours before their official ceremony, after which they could no longer maintain a domestic life together. Following the loss of two of his children, both of whom were illegitimate and lacked parental care during their childhood, made this part of Liszt's family story exceptionally sad.

His structural technique of a set of strict, four-bar phrase-units served to control Mephisto's fugitive evolution and destructive power. Seemingly unchangeable and rigid, it represents a spiritual counterforce that was perhaps to Liszt the doctrines of Christianity. Liszt's structure keeps these elements from falling apart. Lenau's Faust, recreated by Liszt, is not at all a philosophical thinker and researcher like Goethe's Faust redeemed by God's salvation. In contrast, Lenau's Faust wanders in a world of absurdity, attracted and fueled by fleshly desires that sustain him through each scene, and whose absolute denial of both God and science results in his final death due to his inner destruction. The strict measure-grouping indicates Liszt taking ultimate musical control over Mephisto's spiritual negation and distortion, as it is set against Mephisto's dark, corrupt, and disruptive magic.

As a final note before the next chapter, in Liszt's recreation of Lenau's *Faust*, the matter of deciding whether Mephistopheles should be placed instead of Faust as the protagonist, and not the antagonist, remains itself an interesting question reflecting Liszt's own conflict within his personality. The story shows that Mephistopheles prevails at the end. It could also be possible that Mephistopheles takes the place of the hero. Liszt's conflict between his Christian ideal and his humanly sinful behavior remained a concern of the composer for his life and afterlife. This conflict became a moral weakness. The next chapter of his life, his arrival in Rome, eventually put a stop to much of his past emotional turmoil and led him to live a life of repentance. He turned into a devout Catholic, practicing his religion intensively every day, even receiving his Minor Orders in Rome from Gustav Adolf, the Cardinal Prince of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst on July 20, 1865.[76]

[76] Cannata, "Liszt and Minor Orders," 204, explains that all four were conferred at once. See Chapter 2.6 for discussion of Liszt's associations with Franciscans.

Chapter 6: *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180

6.1: Trials of 1858–1862

The first two chapters explored Liszt's periodic changes of role or employment. Chapters 3–5 then showed how Liszt developed his program music by creating a program-influenced form as the result of extramusical influences and exploring ways to craft his themes, melodies, and harmonies. In Weimar, Liszt's creativity and visions were not always appreciated or fully understood. Rising conservative tastes in Weimar's theater audiences and political conflicts with the newly appointed theater director and literary and artistic director, Franz Dingelstedt, put even more pressure on Liszt. The final straw came when the premiere of *Barbier von Bagdad,* written by Liszt's pupil Peter Cornelius, failed completely on December 15, 1858. Liszt resigned the next day.[1] He later wrote two long letters dated February 14, 1859, and February 6, 1860, to the Grand Duke of Weimar, which reaffirmed his resignation from the conducting podium.[2]

Additional emotional distress came when Liszt's son Daniel died in Berlin on December 15, 1859. In a state of mourning, Liszt composed *Les Morts* S. 112 No. 1, the first of a set of three funeral odes. This work includes a male choir singing Lamennais' poem bearing the same title. Paul Merrick has argued that this work should have been listed under Liszt's choral compositions but has always been catalogued under his orchestral works instead.[3]

Facing an uncertain future, both Liszt and Princess Carolyne drafted their wills before departing to Rome, the Holy City, in anticipation of getting married there on his fiftieth birthday.

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[1] Prior to this, Liszt made an enormous effort to promote new composers, especially his students and followers of his aesthetics. While Weimar's audiences appreciated Liszt's role as conductor when he produced concerts featuring canonic repertoire, Liszt's advocacy for newer composers such as Richard Wagner proved controversial. See Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 338–367.

[2] Liszt, *Correspondance*, eds. Knepper and Huré, 375–378, 402–404.

[3] Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 260–264.

Liszt dated his first will on September 14, 1860, and added the second part on August 15, 1861.[4] Unfortunately, their plan was interrupted when they received a message the night before their wedding withdrawing the sanction from the Pope for their marriage.[5] This scandal made it impossible for the couple to resume a domestic life together, since it would be viewed as a public sin against the Church. This breaking point led Liszt to the lowest point in his personal and spiritual life. Moreover, Liszt's disinterest in returning to Weimar left him no choice but to settle in Rome temporarily at the end of 1861, the beginning of his first Roman period.

The most significant and devastating event during Liszt's first Roman period was the death of his eldest daughter, Blandine Olivier.[6] On September 9, 1862, two months after a series of complications caused by the birth of her first son, Blandine died. In a letter to his close friend and musical ally, Dr. Franz Brendel, on November 8, 1862, Liszt revealed his immense depression and sadness:

> Dear Friend,
> You will have heard of the grievous shock I received in the middle of September. Shortly afterwards Monsieur Olivier came to Rome, and during his stay here, which lasted till the 22nd October, I could not calculate upon being able to take any interest in other outward matters. This last week I have had to spend in bed. Hence my long delay in answering you.[7]

In another letter sent to Liszt's cousin, Eduard Liszt, on November 19th, 1862, Franz Liszt described the grief that urged him to compose music to mourn the dead,

> Blandine has her place in my heart besides Daniel. Both abide with me bringing atonement and purification, mediators with the cry "Sursum corda." When the day comes for Death to approach, he shall not find me unprepared or fainthearted. Our faith hopes for and awaits the deliverance to which it leads us…My soul's tears must, as it were,

[4] Princess Carolyne may have drawn up her will shortly after seeing Liszt's first version in 1860, but she intentionally dated her will October 23, 1861, the day after their marriage plan was called off, and changed her signature therein to Carolyne Liszt. *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years,* 563–565.

[5] See Chapter 2. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 28.

[6] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 47–51.

[7] Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2: *From Rome to the End*, ed. La Mara [pseud.] and trans. Bache, 31–32.

> have lacrymatoria made for them; I must set fires alight for those of my dear ones that are alive, and keep my dear dead in spiritual and corporal urns. This is the aim and object of the art task to me.[8]

Being his first composition after two months of silence following Blandine's death, Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, was completed in November 1862. Reading and reflection on the philosophical and theological meaning of death inspired Liszt to rework Bach's theme and to augment its form. Liszt refined his sampling and imitation of Bach's style and revised a work he had written earlier, the short set of variations on the same ostinato named *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (*Präludium nach Johann Sebastian Bach*), S. 179. In the *Variations*, S. 180, he borrowed freely, including old and new stylistic features, and extended programmatic elements.

Liszt's effort to study Bach's polyphony can be traced back to that shorter work, S. 179, which he completed in 1859. There he used Bach's chromatic descending bass from the beginning of Bach's cantata as *cantus-firmus* in order to experiment with Baroque-style polyphonic writing. The polyphonic texture and voice leading in this work imitated the style of Bach. According to Liszt's pupil, August Stradal, Liszt said that when S. 179 was first written in 1859, he had not yet developed the idea of furnishing the final diatonic chorale as an antithesis to the suffering portrayed by the chromatic descending motif introduced at the beginning.[9] After S. 179, Liszt produced two more versions of the *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, one for organ, S. 673, and one for piano, S. 180. Liszt's later version S. 180, vividly evokes the suffering that deeply afflicted him and changed the course of his life.

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[8] Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2: *From Rome to the End*, ed. La Mara [pseud.] and trans. Bache, 38–39.
[9] Heinemann, *Die Bach-Rezeption*, 148.

6.2: Tragedies Catalyze Liszt's Highest Religious Fervor

6.2.1: Liszt's Lifestyle and Changes in his Musical Style in Rome

Before 1861, Liszt's interest in writing religious music led to his composition of two early masses, *Missa Quattuor Vocum Ad Aequales Concinente Organo* (*Male-Voice Mass*) S. 8 and *Missa Solemnis zur Einweihung der Basilika in Gran* (*Gran Mass*) S. 9. However, his arrival in Rome marked a turning point. The unexpected family tragedies and personal crises between 1858 and 1862 had a considerable impact on his compositional plans, lifestyle, and faith.[10] In 1865, he received the four Franciscan Minor Orders (acolyte, exorcist, lector, and porter) of the Catholic Church, an indication of this expression of his spirituality, which is reflected in his music in his first Roman period.[11] He became a prolific composer focused on religious-influenced program music and liturgical music. The characteristics of his musical language prior to Rome included pianistic techniques, operatic and singing melodies, dramatic and theatrical characterizations in musical themes, some use of chant-inspired modal harmony, and melodies illustrating implicit poetic meanings.

During his first Roman period between 1861 and 1868, Liszt started to cultivate a close relationship with the Church, observing Catholic church services daily. Through his study of the most recent publications about church music and liturgy, Liszt took an interest in renewing Catholic church music and participating in the Palestrina revival popularized in the nineteenth century.[12] The nineteenth-century reforms of religious music came during a time when faith in

[10] During an emotionally tumultuous *Sturm und Drang* period of youth in Paris, Liszt explored his personal freedom, expressed extreme emotions, and developed romantic relationships with married women, fathering three children out of wedlock with the Countess d'Agoult. For further biographical information and background, see Chapter 2, sections 4 and 6.

[11] See Chapter 2, section 6, footnote 63.

[12] Merrick, *Revolution and Religion*, 87.

the Church, its political power, and the future of church music were challenged. Carl Dahlhaus summarized the reforms this way:

> The nineteenth century witnessed a revival of church music in the Palestrina renaissance (shared by Protestants and Catholics alike), the restoration of the chorale (whether Gregorian or Lutheran), the Protestant awakening (with Prussian Agenda), and, on the Catholic side, the Cecilian movement, of which we should stress not the weakness of its music but rather its flair for organization. In all respects, this revival represented a return to 'established truths' in which refuge was sought from the unwanted strangeness of the present.[13]

Liszt examined the Catholic musical heritage, reconsidered the meaning of religious texts and the formulaic nature of chant, and the purpose of choral polyphony, and he created sacred choral music for the liturgy, which expressed his personal faith and emotions. In plainchant and Palestrina's polyphony, he found suitable materials to be used as themes and melodies for his mass and oratorio. Liszt also explored Bach's sacred choral works and fugues. Because of his renewed interest in setting sacred choral music for the church, he produced liturgical music, such as his *Missa Choralis*, S. 10, *Hungarian Coronation Mass*, S. 11, and *Requiem*, S. 12. During this period, Liszt also set biblical texts, such as Psalms 18, 23, 116, and 137, texts of the Mass and Office, such as the *Pater noster* and *Te Deum*, the Marian hymn *Ave maris stella*, and he composed programmatic works about saints: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis of Paulo, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and even about Jesus Christ himself (*Christus,* S. 3). Paul Merrick describes Liszt's arrival in Rome to fulfill his wish to become a musical prophet:

> Liszt had a plan, yet Liszt's church music is not composed to a plan of what the Church should use; taken as a whole the pieces form a highly variegated group, drawing much of their character from the texts. In this respect their poetic qualities parallel those in the secular music. Liszt's own approach to the problem of church music finds expressions in the advice he gave to Cornelius on the subject in September 1852: "…You have only to assimilate Palestrina and Bach–then let your heart speak, and you will be able to say with the prophet, 'I speak, for I believe; and I know that our God liveth eternally.'"[14]

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[13] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 181.
[14] Merrick, *Revolution and Religion*, 87, 316.

Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, is a single movement with an introduction, the passacaglia theme and variations, a recitative, and imitative sections in which the ostinato theme breaks away from its chord progression and reaches into new harmonic regions independent of a key area. A transition to the climax then leads into the final chorale.

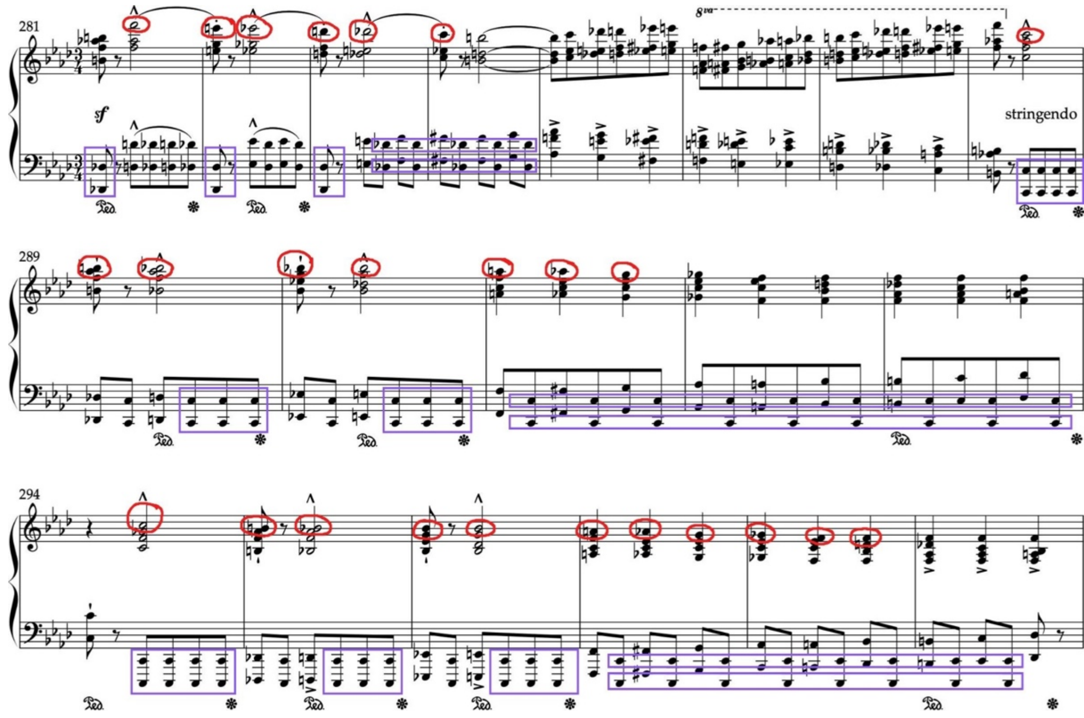
S. 180 shows Bach's musical influence on Liszt. Liszt revived the quoted theme in his title and and used it throughout his work, even in his passacaglia as variation form.[15] Liszt follows Bach to use text-painting in the opening theme, a descending chromatic scale grouped into two- or three-note slurs representing grief, and the closing chorale, with its stepwise ascending diatonic scale representing salvation and hope. He combines his contrapuntal polyphonic writing with a dense texture of heavy octaves in the lower bass and running arpeggios covering the full span of the keyboard to produce a sound resembling that of the organ. During his Weimar period, where Liszt introduced orchestral timbres in his piano works, Liszt extended his sound palette to include organ techniques in his variations to enrich the texture. For example, he expanded the keyboard register to its full extent (mm. 197–202), he added a sustained pedal tone, and built somewhat stormy and blurry sonorities resembling the sound of an organ in a resonant church (Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

[15] Grove Music Online defines the passacaglia variation in nineteenth and twentieth-century music as a set of variations on a ground bass or ostinato, usually of a serious character. Alexander Silbiger wrote that "when nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers returned to writing passacaglias, they found their models in a handful of 'rediscovered' pieces by the German masters, especially Bach's Passacaglia for organ, BWV 582. The association of the passacaglia genre with Bach and with the organ also contributed to a mood of gravity." See Grove Music Online, s.v. "Passacaglia," consulted April 23, 2023. The passacaglia was an ideal vehicle for Liszt, and his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, is a single work without any sectional break. Liszt respects the ostinato melody in each variation but avoids inserting double bars between each variation for enhanced continuity, and he allows the ostinato to pass through different parts. The origin of variation form can be found in early instrumental tablatures. Cf. Tannenbaum, "Suite," 2–3.

This organ-influenced instrumental language is noteworthy, because liturgical music at this time, such as the Ordinary of the Mass, was mostly intended and composed to be sung *a cappella*. In Rome, Liszt learned to compose the harmony and voice-leading for a four-part chorus without using orchestral instruments. But later he added an organ to accompany and assist the singers, who were not accustomed to the sudden modulations and unusual changes of pitch in his music.

Figure 6.1: Pedal tones in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 247–272

Figure 6.2: Pedaling in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 281–299



6.2.2: The Characteristics of the *Variations*, S. 180

Liszt introduced new programmatic meanings. These included his allusion to two of J. S. Bach's works: the "grief" of Bach's sacred cantata BWV 12 and the *Crucifixus* of the *Credo* of the B-minor Mass, thereby extending the programmatic meaning to his grief and suffering from the loss of his son Daniel and his daughter Blandine. The original cantata text "weeping, lamenting, worrying, despair" provided a programmatic plan of emotional development within the passacaglia. The emotion gradually intensifies as the texture thickens and the rhythms become condensed. Liszt also writes indications for expressive performance corresponding exactly to this emotional program.

The characteristics and features of *Variations*, S. 180, included Liszt's musical devices inherited from his earlier compositions: dissonant harmonies, close associations between words

and music, and a longer one-movement form linking multiple sections, an extended range of the keyboard, sound production comparable to organ sonorities, intensified rhythmic condensation, the inclusion of the central recitative followed by a distinctive fugal passage that wanders in chromaticism without a tonal center (mm. 237–242). Like Bach, Liszt's work ends with the final chorale. By including the text of the Protestant chorale above the right-hand part, Liszt emphasized the role of the congregation in Lutheran singing.

6.2.3: Scholarship on Programmatic Influences on Liszt's Form

Scholarship comparing and contrasting the different instrumental languages and forms of the three versions of *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, includes analyses of pianistic and organ techniques derived from the shared narrative source: Bach's choral cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, BWV 12.[16] This chapter instead examines the structure of Liszt's emotionally driven programmatic form, the meaning of his program, and how he used the compositional technique of variation, taking melodic features drawn from the genre of passacaglia, combining them with polyphonic features, and letting bold harmonies express what he experienced as intense feelings that he claimed could not be adequately portrayed through thematic devices and programmatic forms alone. My analysis draws primarily on the scholarship of Michael Heinemann,[17] Michele Horner Tannenbaum,[18] and on Lina Ramann's notes taken at one of the masterclasses given by Liszt in Weimar that she attended in the 1870s and 1880s,[19] which

[16] Xiuwei Yu, "A Study of Franz Liszt's Variations on 'Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen'" (DMA diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2021), 43–74.

[17] Michael Heinemann, *Die Bach-Rezeption von Franz Lisz*t (Cologne: Studio, 1995), 148.

[18] Franz Michele Horner Tannenbaum, "Suite from Liszt's 'Variations on a Motive of Bach.' (I) Prelude. (II) Passacaglia. (III) Recitative. (IV) Aria. (V) Gigue: 'Was Gott tut, das ist Wohlgetan'" (Ph.D. diss., Kent State University, 1993), 26–27.

[19] Liszt, *Liszt-Pädagogium: Klavier-Kompositionen Franz Liszt*, ed. Lina Ramann (London: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902), 14–18.

featured Liszt's oral teaching on performing his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180.[20] Liszt's technique of elaborating the emotional content and extending the programmatic meaning extracted from the sung text of Bach's cantata sung text is described in Ramann's transcription of the masterclass.[21]

Michael Heinemann drew further connections between *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, to J. S. Bach's BWV 12, proposing that the one-movement form of these variations can be divided into the following subsections: introduction, chorus, recitative, conflict, lento recitative, climax, and final chorale.[22] Liszt's way of expanding the variation form is viewed by Heinemann as comparable to the structure of Bach's BWV 12: sinfonia, chorus, recitative, alto aria, bass aria, tenor aria, and chorale. Heinemann further examined the size and proportion of each variation-section and found them to be close to the proportions of the sections of Bach's cantata. Given the formal organization and freer thematic development of Liszt's variations on *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,* S. 180, Heinemann thought it should be better understood as a cantata-paraphrase extended to the form of fantasia, which would explain the free and more improvisational thematic development. Heinemann's conclusion drew a close

[20] Liszt had left Rome a second time upon an invitation from the Grand Duke of Weimar to open a seasonal masterclass held in Schloss Hofgärtnerei, the court gardener's house. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 195. In these masterclasses of the 1870s and 1880s, for which Liszt did not charge, students were privileged to see Liszt's teachings and demonstrations by example. Liszt had left Rome a second time on an invitation from the Grand Duke of Weimar to open a seasonal masterclass held in the court gardener's house, the *Hofgärtnerei.* Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 195. In these masterclasses of the 1870s and 1880s, for which Liszt did not charge, students were privileged to see Liszt's teaching and demonstrations. Liszt had retired from public concerts, but he continued to play for his pupils in these masterclasses. These accounts are, in a time without recording, first-hand evidence of Liszt as teacher: "Liszt liked to teach by example, and he often sat down at the piano in order to illustrate how a particular passage should go. Such experiences were priceless." Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 12. Many students noted their live impressions, with Ramann going so far as to observe Liszt's lessons as well as to write a biography of Liszt. For Liszt's return to Weimar, see "The Hofgärtnerei: The Return of a Legend," in Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 193–211.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Heinemann, *Die Bach-Rezeption*, 89–151.

association between Bach's music and Liszt's imitation and close reworking of Bach's cantata form.

I argue that Liszt's retaining of Bach's chorale at the end of this set of variations and Liszt's linking the sections of his *Variations* into one movement represent his wish to refashion a devotional ecclesiastical piece for the Protestant church into a private pianistic genre, for his own devotion. This argument takes Liszt's changes of role in his life and deaths in his family into consideration, and views his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* as a cantata-inspired, religiously functioning piano variations, as was suggested by Heinemann.[23]

The performance practice of liturgical music prior to the nineteenth century had mostly been rigidly prescribed for worship in churches, not large public concert halls. Not only had Liszt exited the concert stage as a pianist in 1847, but his Roman sojourn also marked the beginning of his further retreat from the public eye. For the rest of his life, he refused to give performances for profit, and had no interest in promoting his religious music, but rather composed for himself. On May 3, 1862, Liszt wrote to the British pianist Jessie Laussot, "now, although I have become very indifferent to the fate of what I write…I write therefore simply to write–without any other pretensions or care–and for this it suits me best to remain in one place."[24] In his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, his suffering now became the main program he wanted to express through music. Another aim in Rome was to resolve what he termed his "oratorio problem," that is, to discover how he wanted to compose large-

[23] See below, footnote 41.

[24] On May 3, 1862, Liszt wrote to the British pianist Jessie Laussot, "now, although I have become very indifferent to the fate of what I write… I write therefore simply to write—without any other pretensions or care—and for this it suits me best to remain in one place." Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2: *From Rome to the End*, ed. La Mara [pseud.] and trans. Bache, 10–11.

scale choral oratorios.[25] Liszt's return to the heritage of the Church triggered an intriguing question: since the concept of program music continued to determine Liszt's artistic choices, could he still find value and emotional capacity in the traditional forms again?

6.3: Liszt Interprets J. S. Bach

6.3.1: Liszt's References to Bach's *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*

Liszt's piano variations, S. 180, have a very long title–*Variationen über ein Motiv (basso ostinato) aus der Kantate "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen" und dem "Crucifixus" der h-moll Messe von J. S. Bach für Klavier*–in which Liszt references two choral works of J. S. Bach: the cantata, BWV 12, and his Mass in B minor, BWV 232. The former, *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,* BWV 12, includes a *basso ostinato* that supports the sung text in the second "Chorus" movement of the cantata (Figure 6.3). The same repeating bass line was also used in Bach's *Crucifixus* at the center of the *Credo* in his Mass in B minor (Figure 6.4). Tannenbaum emphasizes the continuity introduced by the ostinato through its repetition and use in different voice parts.[26]

The connection Liszt had with Bach was that both musicians had worked in Weimar.[27] Bach composed BWV 12 in Weimar for Jubilate Sunday, the third Sunday after Easter, and led the work's premiere on April 22, 1714. BWV 12's title conforms to the scripture reading and

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[25] In a letter to Franz Brendel, Franz Liszt wrote: "I am firmly resolved for some length of time to continue working on here undisturbed, unremittingly and with an object. After having, as far as I could, solved the greater part of the *Symphonic* problem set me in Germany, I mean now to undertake the *Oratorio* problem (together with some other works connected with this)…To other people this anxiety on my part may appear trifling, useless, at all events thankless, and but little profitable; to me it is the one object in art which I have to strive after, and to which I must sacrifice everything else." Merrick, *Revolution and Religion*, 161. See the discussion in Chapter 2, section 2.6, about his two complete oratorios.

[26] Tannenbaum, "Suite," 49–51 and 64–71.

[27] Bach was appointed as an organist by the Weimar court in 1708, where he worked until 1717 before continuing to his next position in Cöthen. For more information, see Sutter, "Liszt and the Weimar Organist-Composers," 203–314.

spiritual message preached on that third Sunday was the First Epistle of Peter 2:11–20, and John 16:16–23.[28] Tannenbaum explains the Lutheran interpretation of this biblical text as follows: "the Epistle reading for the third Sunday after Easter urges the listener 'not to indulge your carnal desires' and to 'suffer injustice and endure hardship.'" And he also cited the words of Jesus, "as he bids farewell to the apostles: 'I tell you truly: you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices; you will grieve for a time, but your grief will be turned into joy.'" Later, in 1724, when Bach started his first year working as *Kantor*, or director of church music, at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, he reworked the chromatic descending basso ostinato of this cantata, BWV 12, transposing it to E minor for the *Crucifixus* in the *Credo* of his Mass in B minor. In these two works, Bach illustrated through this crucifixion that the subject of extreme grief could be theologically transformed and expressed by the feeling of joy in celebration of humanity's salvation through Christ.[29]

[28] Tannenbaum, "Suite," 26–27.
[29] Ibid., 28.

Figure 6.3: J. S. Bach's *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen Cantata*, BWV 12, *Chorus*, mm. 1–5

Figure 6.4: J. S. Bach's *Mass in B minor* BWV 232, II. *Credo: Crucifixus*, mm. 1–9

By naming his source, Liszt immediately constructed a connection, suggesting a programmatic association between these two separate choral works and his composition.

When Liszt chose this chromatic descending *basso ostinato* to be the theme of his variations, he implied that this could be understood as both "grief" and "Jesus's Crucifixion." Liszt's programmatic plan for his variation form plausibly represents his psychological state as he worked through his anguish after the death of his children. To revive Baroque text painting, Liszt made the decision to express in his music the long phrase from Bach's original German sung words, "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, Angst und Not sind der Christen Tränenbrot, die das Zeichen Jesu tragen" ("weeping, lamenting, worrying, despair, anguish and distress are the bread of tears [the consecrated Host of the Eucharist] of Christians who bear the mark of Jesus").[30] The emotions found in these German and not Latin texts, provide the structure for his programmatic theme and its development.

First, by imitating the two-note slurs, which were a rhetorical effect Bach placed in the upper voice parts of the cantata's chorale (Figure 6.3), Liszt separated the vocal entries of his theme. Liszt even went a step further to strengthen the rhetorical effect of his borrowing from Bach by also giving the two-note slurred groupings to his *basso ostinato* line (Figure 6.4). Bach had initiated this rhetorical effect by working this sung text into each voice part with a chromatic stepwise descent in two-note slurs appearing successively in soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. This setting of "weeping, lamenting, worrying, and despair" would have given listeners the feeling of becoming heavier and heavier with their burden of grief.

However, Bach's initial basso ostinato was written in continuous quarter notes played without any rest in the bass part (Figure 6.3 and 6.4). Liszt's approach was to begin with the

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[30] This text was originally sung during the first chorus of Bach's cantata with his variations.

bass, the lowest part, and to add slurs to that line to make it his ostinato theme but emphasizing the weak beat. Gradually this theme would move to the upper voice (Figure 6.5). In this way Liszt worked Bach's ostinato into a melody. Yet he dropped in eighth rests to separate the continuous line into two-note slurred groups, imitating the rhetorical effect of Bach's original. Through each note of the opening theme, Liszt underlaid the meaning of the "unsung" text as "weeping," which is painted by the chromatic descending line, and the downward motion of falling tears emphasized by the inserted eighth rest.

Figure 6.5: Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 18–27

Liszt worked out the development of the theme based on the emotions conveyed by text sung in BWV 12. Taking the repetitive ostinato from Bach's bass line, Liszt worked it into a theme of a passacaglia, an overarching variation form he chose.[31] The passacaglia in the nineteenth century was a set of variations on a ground bass, characteristically a chord progression in triple meter that outlined a harmonic progression from tonic to dominant and back to tonic having a serious character. The upper parts could be improvisational and freer – or in strict counterpoint. Liszt intensified each group of variations through rhythms, texture, and

[31] See Grove Music Online, s.v. "Passacaglia," consulted April 15, 2023. The term has its origin in seventeenth-century Spain, then called *pasacalle* and an improvisational sequence of cadential chords played between a vocal work's strophes, with later examples of this type appearing in Italian guitar tablature.

range, thus developing his work to express “weeping”, “lamenting”, “worrying”, and “despair” leading to “anguish”, and “distress”. Finally, Liszt composed a recitative to deliver a variation based on “the bread of tears of Christians.” Besides the musical notation, Liszt also included expression marks to describe his planned emotional effects.

The *Variations* S. 180 are based on the same chromatic, descending motif, previously quoted in Liszt’s *Prelude after Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 179. Bach’s same chromatic-descending ostinato was used in Liszt’s other Baroque-influenced keyboard works, the organ version of *Fantasie und Fuge über den Namen BACH*, S. 260, and the piano version, S. 529, in which he clearly focused on imitating Bach’s harmonizations.[32] In Bach, Liszt found the best model for tragic music bearing religious significance, even though Liszt made his own idiomatic use of dissonance and polyphony.

Liszt’s addition of a Lutheran chorale with a text in German at the end of later version, S. 180, points to his aim to elevate the congregational response among Catholic worshippers instead of relying only on the well-trained Catholic church musicians to be the main singers.[33]

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[32] Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2: *From Rome to the End*, ed. La Mara [pseud.] and trans. Bache, 66. Liszt referenced Bach’s style of polyphony, fugal techniques, and organ virtuosity in a letter to Dr. Gille from Jena dated September 10, 1863, in which he clarified his stance on reviving Bach’s music: “However, notwithstanding with all my admiration to Handel, my preference for Bach still holds good, and when I edified myself sufficiently with Handel’s common chords, I long for the precious dissonance of the Passion, the B minor Mass, and other of Bach’s polyphonic wares…”

[33] When Martin Luther initiated the Reformation, he sought to preserve a large portion of Catholic musical tradition, including chant and polyphony. Yet Lutheran churches added vernacular translations of the original Latin hymn texts and added new sacred compositions in German known as chorales.

6.4: Major Features of the Programmatic Form

Liszt was known for transcribing other composers' works. Here, he borrowed from Bach but applied a pianistic language that conveys a nearly autobiographical program surrounding death. Liszt had developed skills in applying textual meaning as programmatic inspiration in his transcriptions of other composers' works.[34] Transcribing *Lieder*, symphonies, or operatic arias were familiar methods of composition for Liszt. In these *Variations* S. 180, he elaborated the quoted theme on the main emotional, spiritual, and theological subject: death.

My analysis to follow examines Liszt's familiar techniques of using extramusically influenced themes. Because Liszt's main programmatic approach prior his arrival to Rome was to create his own new programmatic musical expression (including themes, melodies, harmonies, and expressive devices), Liszt could have designed his themes and melodies to illustrate his program of "death," and to find new forms that helped to make sense of his spiritual messages. Following this, Liszt could have also created a story to "characterize" or "personalize" the role of death, as he frequently did when he took a programmatic approach to compose, but this time he did not do so. His programmatic inspiration at this time emerged from his innermost feelings, and he chose Bach's thematic device of repeated descending seconds to represent his continuous sorrow. These variations arguably reflected his newfound relationship to religion and God through music.

These *Variations* S. 180 express a single mood, the mourning of death. The variations begin with a relatively faithful imitation of Bach's original cantata, but soon expand to develop

[34] Liszt not only transcribed, but also extracted themes and melodies from J. S. Bach, Mozart (opera), Schubert (art songs), Wagner (opera overture), and even from entire symphonies of Beethoven and Berlioz. On Liszt's earlier transcriptions, see Chapter 2. For a recent catalog of Liszt's transcriptions as well as his earlier paraphrases of operatic works, see Arnold, *The Liszt Companion*, 139, 188.

the emotions with changes in pitches, rhythms, accompaniment patterns, and texture. The passacaglia was an appropriate framework for emotional expression since the theme could be freely developed among different voice parts. Liszt applied musical equivalents to the weeping, lamenting, worrying, and despair of the title in developing his variations. One of the main techniques Liszt applied in order to depict his inexplicable, self-centered pain and anguish was a series of rhythmic condensations that gradually filled and thickened the texture, and his expansion of the range of the keyboard to include the very top and bottom keys.

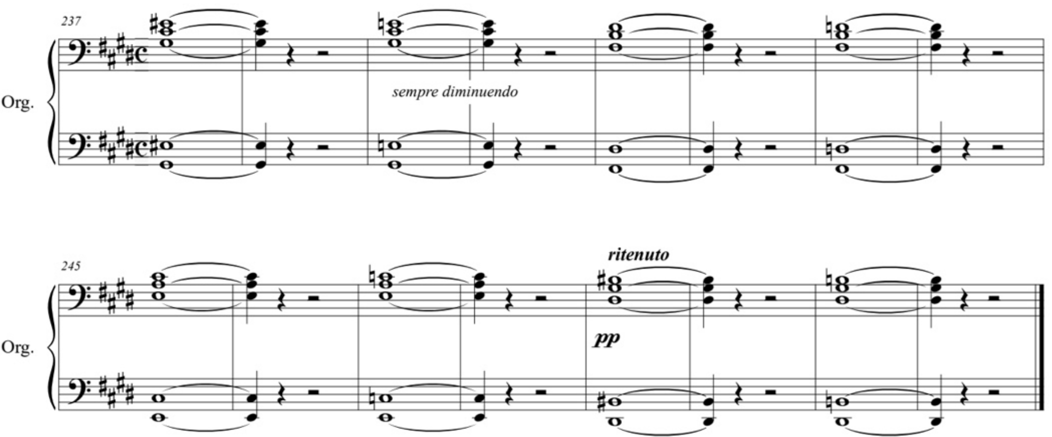
6.4.1: The Opening Introduction

The introduction begins with the declamatory, descending chromatic scales, emphasizing two-note slurs found in Bach's bass line, though Liszt moved the main notes to the top voice (Figure 6.6), and strengthened the rhythmic emphasis on the weak beats, including the first chord, which enters on upbeat. Liszt presents intense chromaticism with a descending chromatic scale spanning the entire introduction of 18 measures. It sinks to the lowest register of the piano keyboard.

Figure 6.6: Opening section of Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 1–18

This introduction does not contain any functional cadence, and the two appearances of the second inversion 6/4 chord of D-flat minor, do not lead to further resolution in any tonality. Rather, Liszt chose to keep the descending chromatic scales, fortified with descending octaves. His setting of a succession of 6/4 chords is rather unusual since the 6/4 chord must be carefully approached. A similar example of Liszt's unresolved inversions of triads can be seen in his late sacred choral works, such as *Psalm 129*, S. 16 (Figure 6.7).

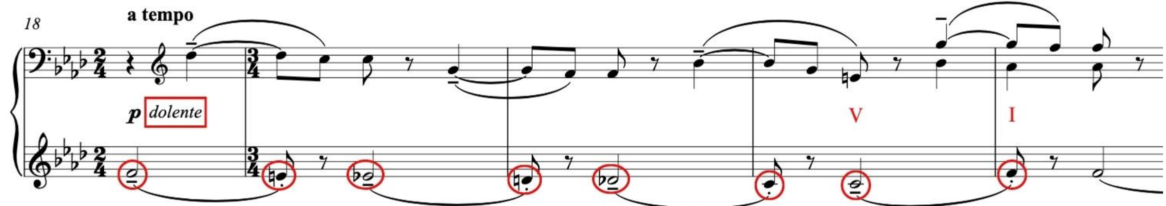
Figure 6.7: Parallel unresolved 6/4 chords in Franz Liszt's *Psalm* 129, S. 16, mm. 237–252



6.4.2: The Effect of Weeping

The effect of weeping and of falling tears is associated with the chromatic descending line of two-note slurs found in the theme (Figure 6.8). This bass line is marked diminuendo at each slur over the bar, contributing to a gesture of sighing or of falling tears. Great similarities are found in the opening theme between Bach's and Liszt's harmonic language. The quoted theme in F minor was copied from Bach's chorale of BWV 12. The bass line is grouped in slurs constantly emphasizing the second beat, thus shifting the strong beats and weakening the others to make the painful cry more introverted.

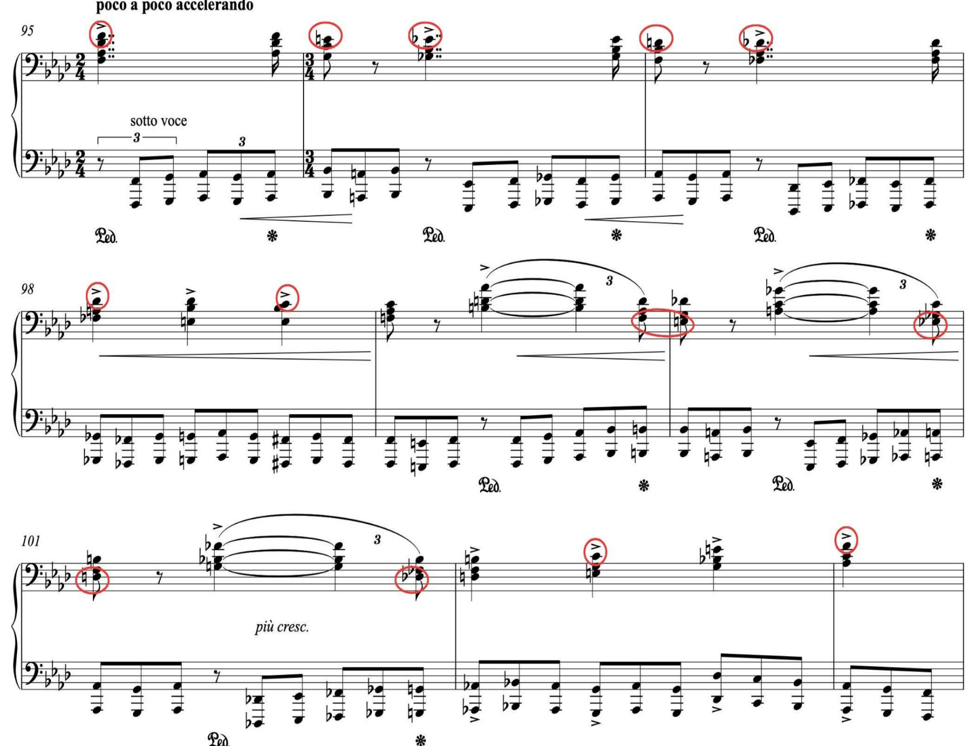
Figure 6.8: Falling tears in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 18–22



Additionally, to demonstrate an increase of emotion, Liszt used a technique common in baroque and classical keyboard music: transitional rhythmic values that became faster and faster—from

regularly paced eighth-notes in one variation to triplets (Figure 6.9) in the next, and then to running sixteenth-notes in that following (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.9: Triplets in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 95–103



6.4.3: The Effect of Lamenting

The effect of lamenting begins with the variation that Liszt marked *plintivo,* meaning "plaintive," to suggest the mood change (Figure 6.10). The color intensifies in the texture with doubled voices (Figure 6.11) and the keyboard range is expanded by added broken octaves in both hands (Figure 6.12). Liszt quickly broadened the range of expressivity to the next emotional level by using the same rhythmic pattern while shaping the texture in a variety of ways.

Figure 6.10: Sixteenths in Franz Liszt’s *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 125–133, in 3/4 time

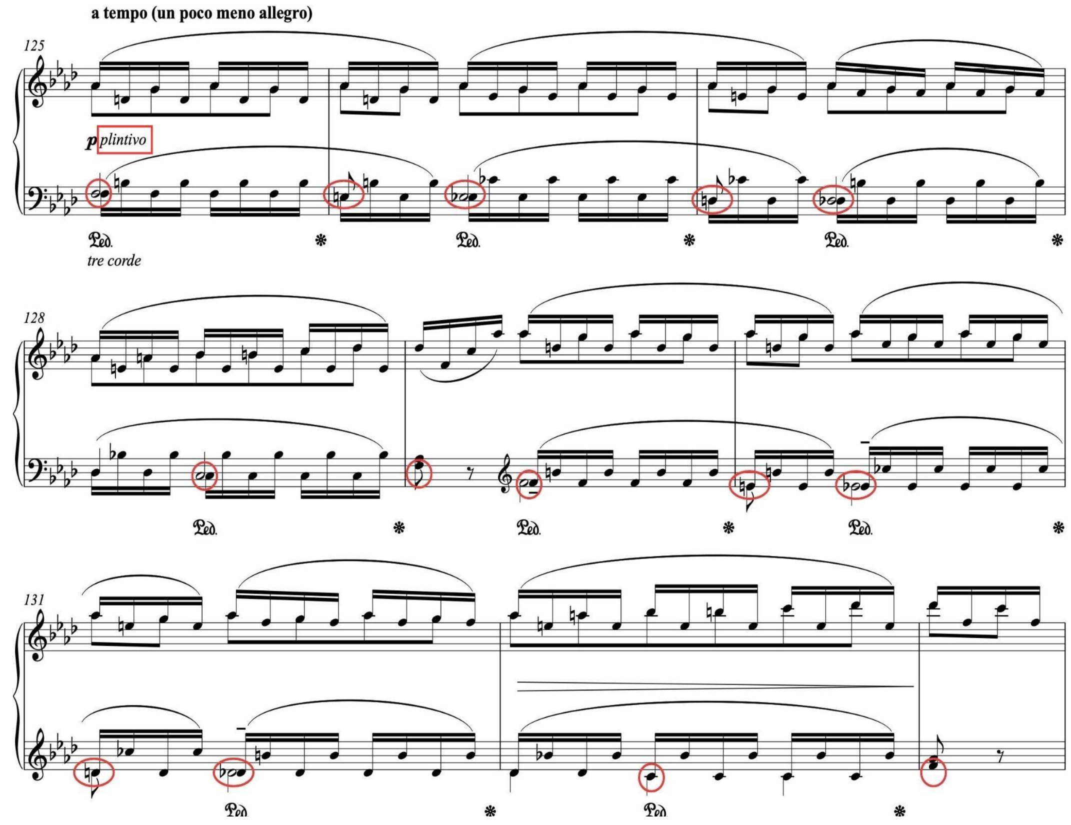


Figure 6.11: Thickened texture in Franz Liszt’s *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 149–158, in 3/4 time

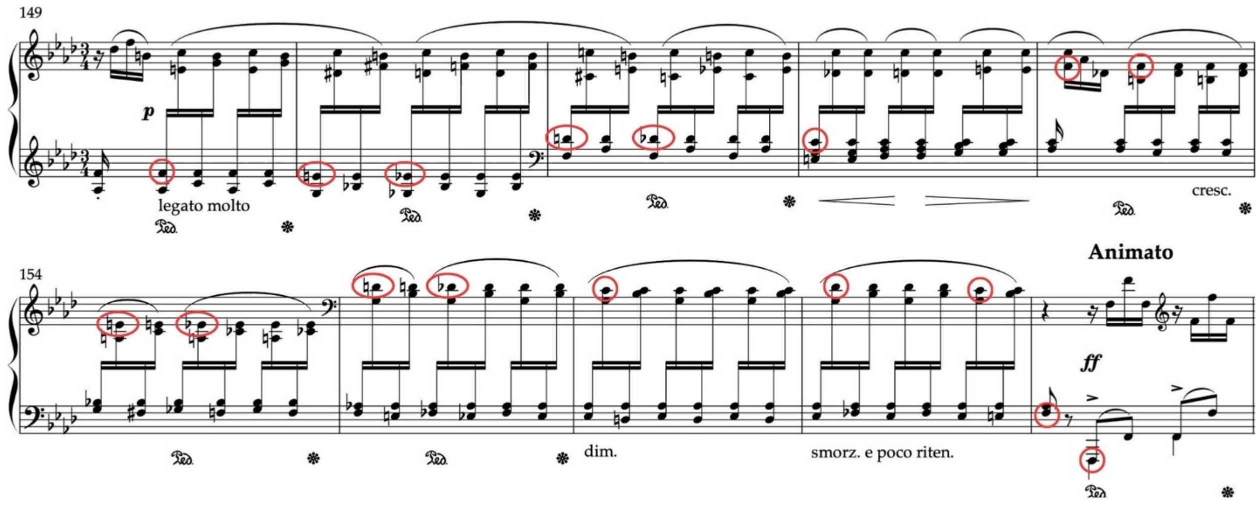
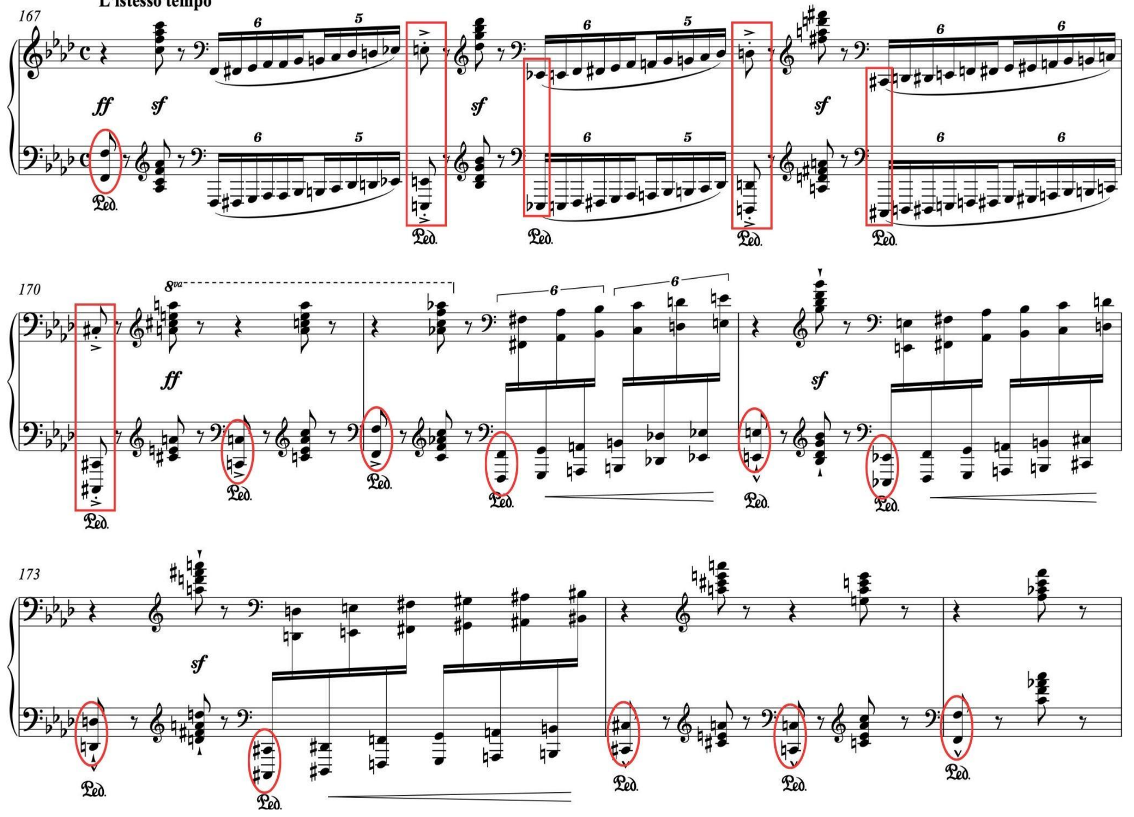


Figure 6.12: Added broken octaves in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 158–167, in 3/4 time

6.4.4: The Effect of Worrying

The effect of worrying is where the previously sorrowful, agitated mood intensifies through the assigned sextuplets. Liszt again used rhythmic condensations to illustrate agitation. The quick ascending chromatic scales could represent racing thoughts based on the obsessive passacaglia theme (Figure 6.13).

Figure 6.13: Agitation in racing chromatic scales in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 167–175



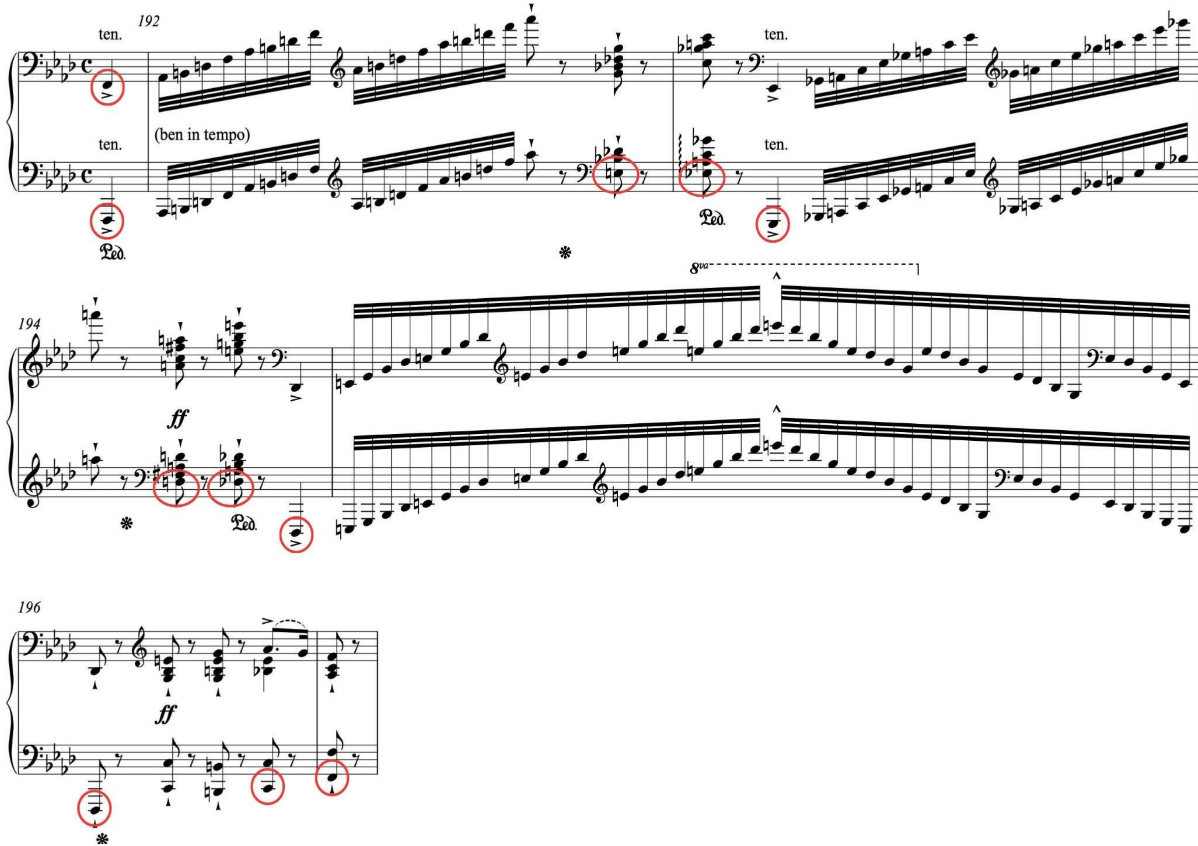
6.4.5: The Effect of Despair

The effect of despair begins in the new *Allegro* section (Figure 6.14). The assigned dynamic *ff* and the frequent crescendo and diminuendo indications in every measure add a musical depiction of the stormy mood. In m. 175, which Liszt marked *tempestoso*, the variation begins to portray the heightened psychological state of quasi-hysteria, which is immediately followed by a series of repetitive duplets (Figure 6.15) topped by another layer of arpeggios in thirty-second notes rising from below like the motion of a tsunami (Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.14: Hysteria in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 175–179

Figure 6.15: Duplets in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 183–191

Figure 6.16: A tsunami of thirty-second notes in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 191–197



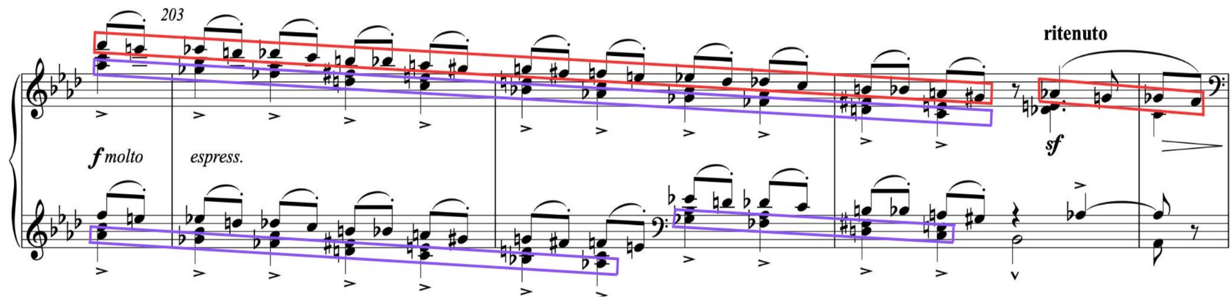
By measure 167, for Liszt to achieve the even more heightened emotion after the sequence of weeping, lamenting, worrying, and despair, he began to change meter often from triple to quadruple, expressing and developing the lamenting until a first emotional climax of fear and distress was achieved in the transitional mm. 202–216.

6.4.6: The Climax Achieved by Combining Two Different Scales

This first climax is emphasized by a combination of two scales in the transition just mentioned, which leads to the imperfect C that surprisingly ends in *pp* as if the suffering has been drained of all its strength. Liszt expressed his changing feeling from anguish to the final stage of fear and distress by using two different scales together: the whole-tone scale and the

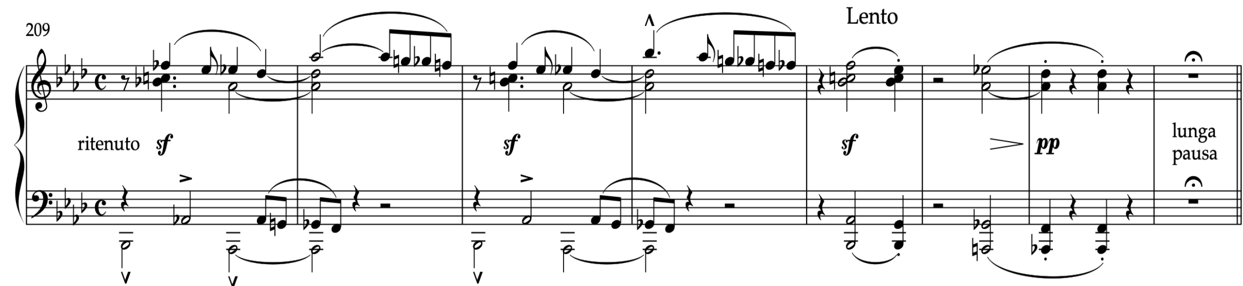
chromatic scale (Figure 6.17). The extreme harmonic tension and complexity of this passage obscures the sense of the main key area. While the musical texture could not be expanded and intensified in dynamics, color, range, and keyboard register, the remarkable downward motion began – a showering of 6/4 chords descending from the top register (m. 202) downward with both hands playing a continuous chromatic scale and whole-tone scale at the same time. The mixing of the two scales stands out because of Liszt's accentuation of the first note in each pair, which emphasizes whole tones (Figure 6.17).

Figure 6.17: Mixed scales in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 202–206



The unconventional cadence ends this chordal transition (Figure 6.18). The melody closely imitates the human voice and ends with *pp* and then in total silence where Liszt inserted a whole rest and wrote *lunga pausa* and placed *fermatas* (m. 216).

Figure 6.18: Slowing to a halt in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 209–216



After the pause, the next section is a cadenza-like variation with the recitative-like melody passed between the bass and treble.

6.4.7: The Recitative and the Canonic Passages

After the *lunga pausa* in m. 216, Liszt changed the tempo of the recitative to be slower but in a freer rhythm that corresponds to the quality he assigned with the words "*Lento, Recitativo,* and *Lacrimoso.*" This dramatic and expressive recitative is a melody as monologue, an abrupt change from the previous obsessive, loud, and busy texture. Here the reciter elaborates his pain and mourning (Figure 6.19). Figures 6.19 and 6.20 are played first by the right hand, then by the left hand, as a dialogue. The unresolved phrase ending seems to pose a wordless series of rhetorical questions without an answer. The recitatives closely imitate distinct human voices. The alternation of the hands produces an effect of call and response, first initiated in the soprano register in mm. 217–224 and then repeated in the tenor in mm. 224–229.

Figure 6.19: Successive dialogues in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 217–224

Figure 6.20: Continuing dialogues in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 224–229

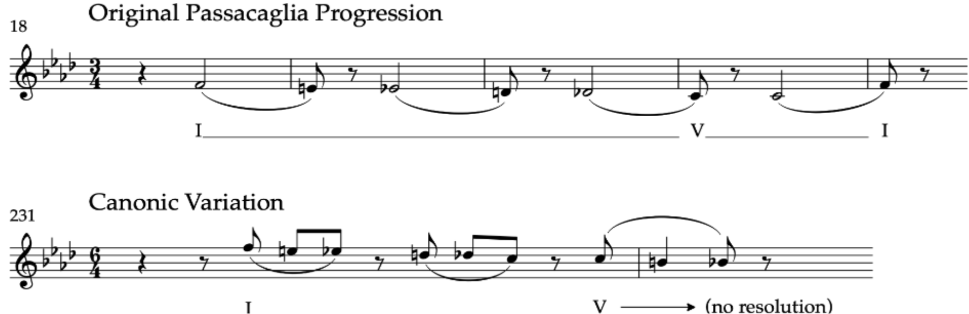
The end of the recitative section, where the tenor voice reaches up to G4 in m. 231 with heightened tension, is gradually dissolved through the descending chromatic scale (mm. 231–233) that is broken into three-note groups, which lead into the next canonic variation (mm. 229–246). There Liszt begins his extended harmonic experimentation with the fragmented theme (Figure 6.21). The next canonic variation begins with the left hand leading a chromatic descent in m. 229, which the right hand follows at m. 231. There, Liszt changes back to triple meter (meter 6/4) and breaks the original theme into shorter motives transposed with altered intervals.

Figure 6.21: Chromatic descents in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 229–246

Liszt assigned the specific performance indication *dolce piangendo* (crying softly) at mm. 231–246 to represent the inner expression for the pianist to convey in this harmonically complex, contrapuntal section. The canonic theme consists of chromatic fragments of three notes inherited from the previous recitatives (Figures 6.19 and 6.20). The harmonic progression of the original passacaglia theme of tonic – dominant – tonic (I - V - I, F - C - F) was extended by Liszt, with

the chromatic ostinato descending lower, past C (the dominant) to B natural, then finally reaching B flat. Liszt seemingly meant to break this rule of the passacaglia to follow his emotional program and challenge death fundamentally in this way (Figure 6.22).

Figure 6.22: Beginning basso ostinato compared with its later canonic variation in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 18–22 and mm. 231–232



Furthermore, Liszt chose the first note of each entry of the canonic melody to form a hidden whole-tone scale (Figures 6.23 and 6.24c). The chords shown in Figures 6.24a and 6.24b were Liszt's experiment with chromatic alteration that implies whole-tone harmony within a generally tonal framework. In the middle of this strange sound palette, Liszt built a layer of diminished chords (Figure 6.24a) moving in parallel whole-tones, while he placed more diminished chords in the lowest part (Figure 6.24b), which gradually descend by semitone as a counterpoint to the whole tones of the entrance of each upper part (Figure 6.24d).

Figure 6.23: Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 229–246. The circled chords are the whole-tone harmonies within the tonal framework.

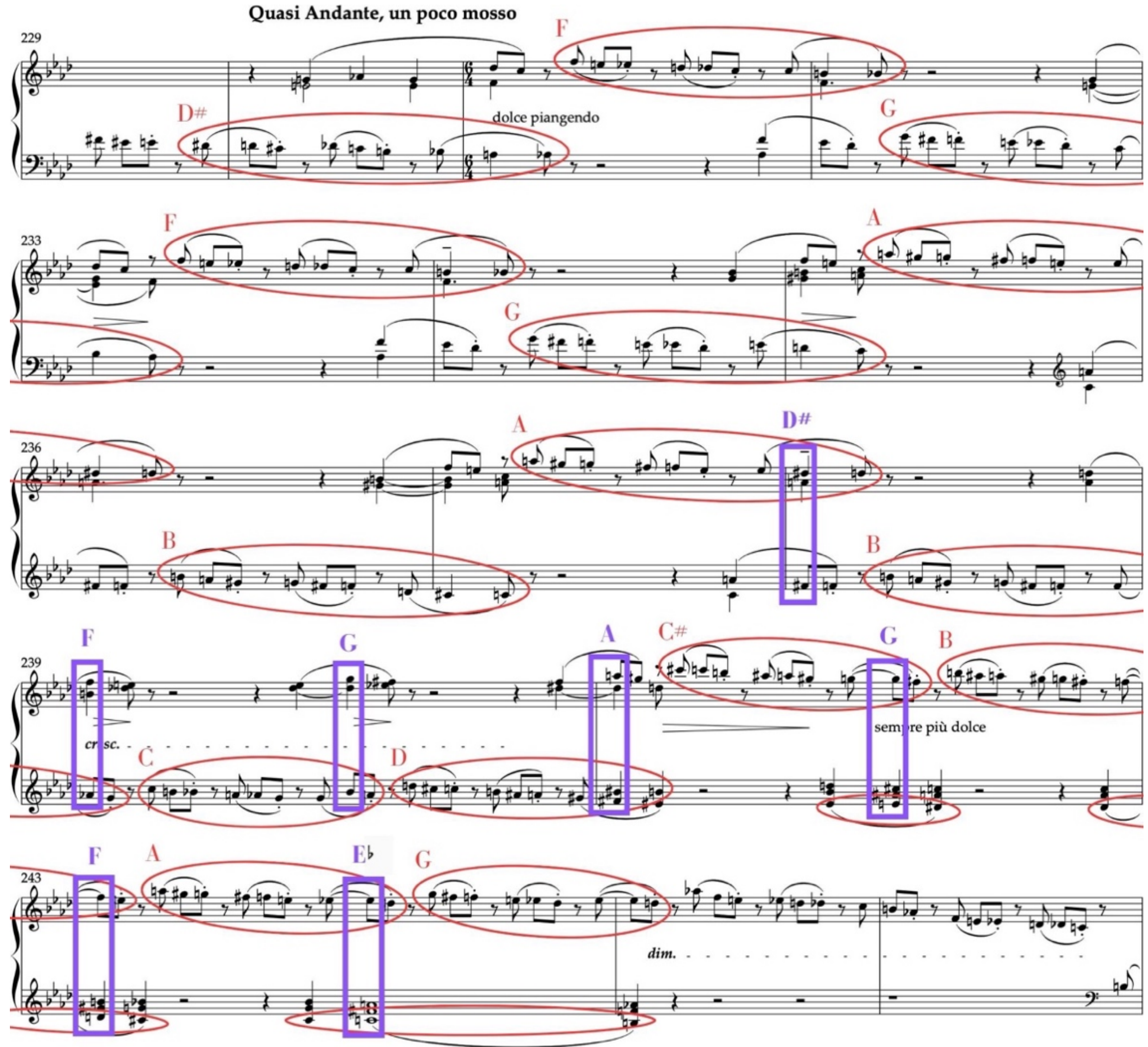
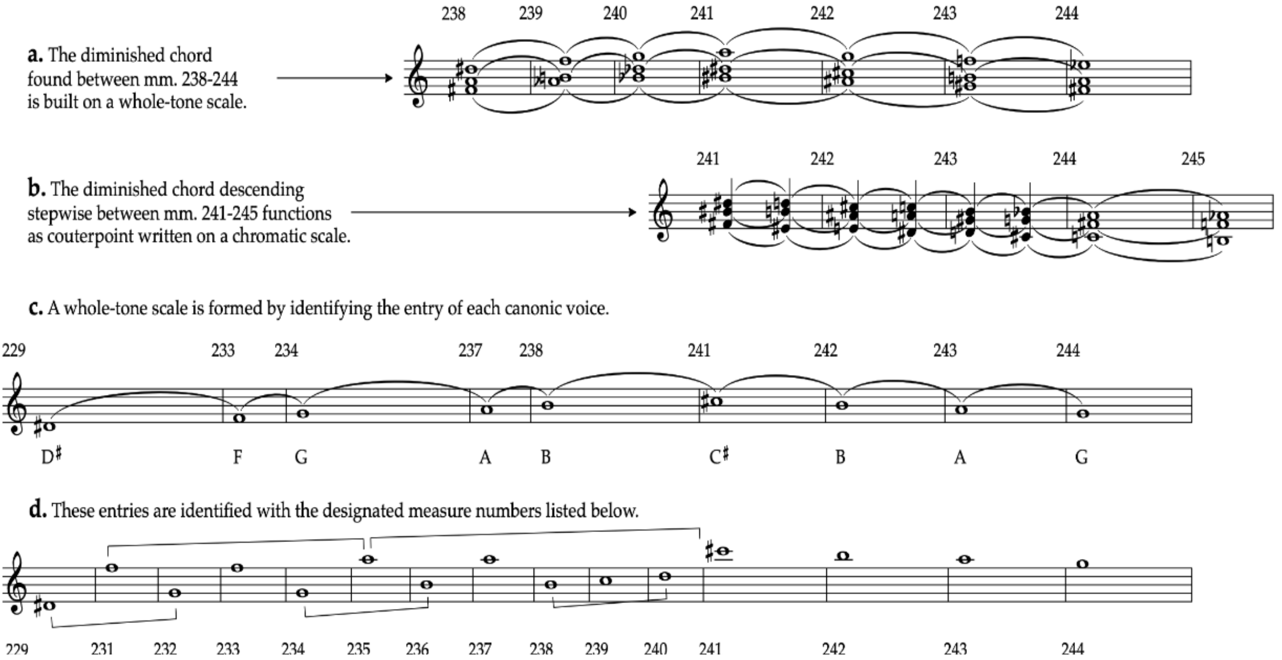


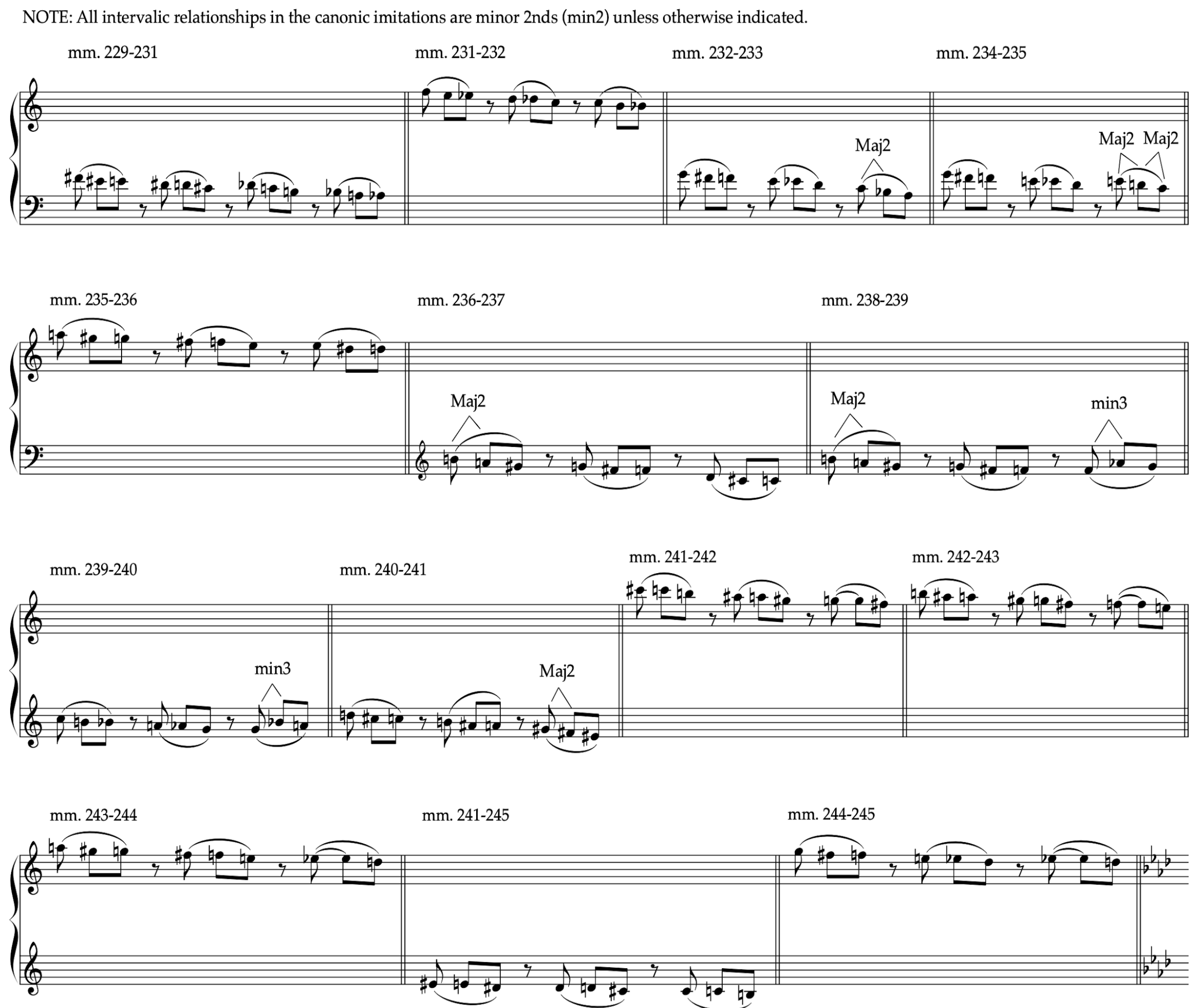
Figure 6.24: Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 229–244. The interwoven counterpoint is comprised of whole-tones and semitones.



Liszt's harmonic and contrapuntal writing in this section is so radical that when he piles the diminished chords based on a whole tone scale on top of the dense chromaticism (Figure 6.24), he obscures the places where one expects these harmonies to be resolved. Thus, the original functional key and cadences lose their places. The combined sonorities in this canonic passage far exceeded the listener's expectations of Liszt's time.

Moreover, when the entries of each canon are compared with each thematic group one sees that Liszt purposefully transposed the theme to make a series of "tone rows" moving to different pitches (Figure 6.25). Here, small alterations in the intervallic relationships in some of these canons have been made by Liszt. For example, they are made in order from minor second to major second or to minor third to suit the contrapuntal texture that sets whole tones against semitones (Figure 6.24).

Figure 6.25: Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 229–245. Minor 2nds, major 2nds, and minor 3rds in imitative entries



One can imagine that such compressed and reduced harmonies made it hard for listeners to follow the structure. Liszt's brief experiment in this passage shows how he broke down the theme and distanced it from tonality to express the mood that he wanted.

To understand such an unusual passage, Ramann provided commentary on Liszt's description of it to explain the awkwardness of Liszt's mystic harmony in this place. Any pianist playing this variation should take her text into account to understand this variation. According to Liszt, this canonic passage bears a theological meaning. The original text of the chorale of

Bach's cantata is "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, Angst und Not sind der Christen Tränenbrot, die das Zeichen Jesu tragen."[35] (Weeping, lamenting, worrying, despair, anguish and distress are the bread of tears of Christians who bear the mark of Jesus.) Liszt transposed the thematic elements to remote keys and used wandering chromatic melodies, creating a series of dissonant or diminished chords (Figure 6.24).

These new and strange harmonies and their symbolic meaning of Bach's "bread of tears" resonated with his personal faith and belief as he described it to his pupils. In Ramann's *Liszt-Pädagogium*, a published book with her written annotations and masterclass commentary, she describes a masterclass Liszt gave in Nuremberg in 1877 that was open to the public. Liszt was demonstrating his *Variations* S. 180 on the piano, and since Ramann became extremely sad from hearing this, they had the following conversation.

> When Liszt introduced me to this work on the piano (1877 in Nürnberg), I was taken unintentionally by the pp-Variation after the recitative: [Liszt said] "*Hingegeben an das Thränenbrot der Christen* (Here devoted [to] the tearful bread of Christians)*",* [Lina surprisingly replied] "*Hingegeben!?* (Devoted!?)" —he interrupted his playing in an almost bitter tone, saying—"*Ich sage Ihnen**, es ist**. (*I tell you, **it is**!*)*"[36]

Liszt's own, significant verbal interpretation of this passage suggests that the emotional program here must shift its emphasis to Christian salvation through the "bread of tears," the consecrated bread of the Eucharist that is the body of Christ—the result of the crucifixion. For that reason, Liszt recalled the form of speech that was recitative rather than the more operatic, lyrical style

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[35] The cantata text, presumably, was written by Salomon Franck, the Weimar court poet in J. S. Bach's time, who wrote most of the sacred texts for Bach's compositions during his time in Weimar. In the list of works under Bach, next to Salomon Franck, there is a question mark. It is assumed that Franck wrote the text, but it is not confirmed. See Grove Music Online, s.v. "J. S. Bach Works," consulted April 4, 2023.

[36] See Ramann's masterclass commentary in Liszt, *Liszt-Pädagogium*, ed. Ramann, 14–18. Ramann wrote, on p. 14 of Liszt *Pädagogium*, "Als Liszt mich mit dem Werke am Klavier vertraut machte (1877 in Nürnberg), entfuhr mir willenlos bei der pp-Variation (nach dem Recitativ): "hingegeben an das Thränenbrot der Christen". — "Hingegeben!?" — unterbrach er fast bitteren Tones sein Spiel — "Ich sage Ihnen, es ist." [bold letters replaced by italics here].

that he used to imitate singing; the Eucharistic prayer is a long recitation that is not sung.[37] In Liszt's own mind, he mentally transformed the motif into the "bread" of the Eucharist, thereby sending a higher spiritual message that rises to religious mysticism. The transformation from suffering and despair into hope comes about through the indescribable spiritual redemption of the Christian bread. Liszt gave this programmatic description to his pupils when he verbally described how they should play this work.

To give spiritual meaning to this section, Liszt designed canonic imitations with broken sentences in slurs, and melodic wandering away from the home key. The thematic fragment is chromatic with occasional major seconds or minor thirds to accommodate the counterpoint or suit the voice-leading of the diminished chords. These fragmented themes without a clear tonal center appear not to move towards any immediate resolution. Even though Liszt chose to reduce the time needed for modulation to a remote key, he nevertheless kept the chromatic phrases in tonal areas where he felt they were needed to express the text best, as in the "bread of tears" section of mm. 229–246.[38] Liszt chose to transpose his theme and alter its intervallic composition, so he changed the descending minor second in the opening ostinato to a descending major second or, at times, a leap of a minor third.

For Christians, regardless of denomination, death and sin can only be resolved by God's grace and salvation through the death of Christ. By transposing the chromatic tone row to distant keys, contrasting the chromatic and whole-tone scales, and substituting the major second and minor third for the essential minor second, Liszt indicates a spiritual transformation. "Death"

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[37] Franz Liszt, "III. "Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude," in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses III* (Leipzig: Peters, ca. 1913–1917). Franz Liszt, "VII. Après une Lecture du Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata," in *Années de pèlerinage II* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, ca. 1858).

[38] See Chapter 6, footnote 36.

was a collective term, shared as a common pain by all humanity. God's grace and hope could only be found in the essence of the Holy Sacrament, the bread of the Eucharist representing Jesus' crucifixion. By meditating on Christ's suffering and death, Liszt was able to reconcile his own mourning of death, grasp the significance of Christ's sacrifice for all human beings, and transmit it in his music. This path could bring him real peace and acceptance of his destiny.

Liszt chose Bach's theme symbolizing death and Crucifixion, and the passacaglia variations to permit the powerful development leading to the canonic variation devoted to the "bread of tears" borrowed from Bach's BWV 12. Its theological meaning explains why Liszt decided to step away from the accustomed harmonic tradition so that he could create this section of his work, and that approach aligns with Alan Walker's description of his compositional method in old age:

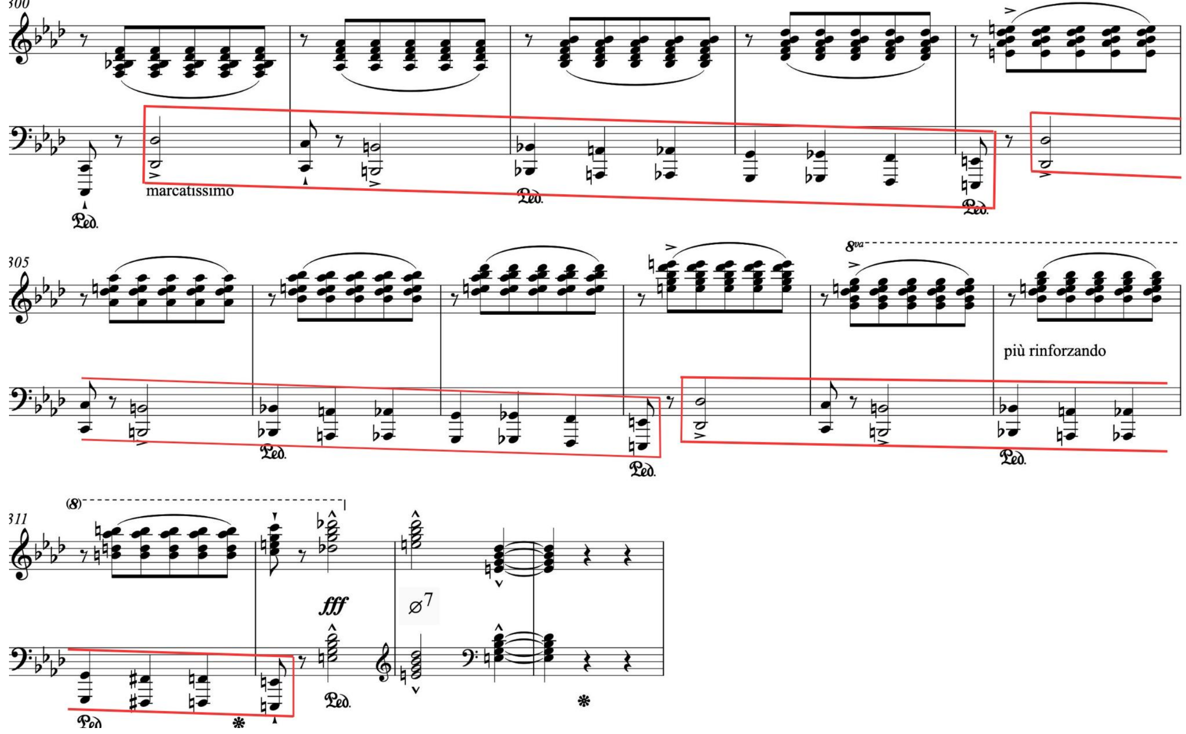
> His experiments in harmony, his audacious handling of form, his unparalleled ability to draw strange sonorities from his instruments—all confirm that he was one of the truly revolutionary spirits in music. Yet this is but one side of a complex picture. We make a mistake when we detach his late music from the disturbed emotions from which it emerges.[39]

Liszt's religious mysticism could serve as one way to understand his music written later in his life, in which he often steps away from conventional harmony to transmit mystic meaning.

After the recitative passage, Liszt recalls the opening theme by reinserting the opening triple meters and chromatic descending bass line. He wrote the following transitional passage using chromatic descending lines leading to the second emotional climax (Figure 6.26).

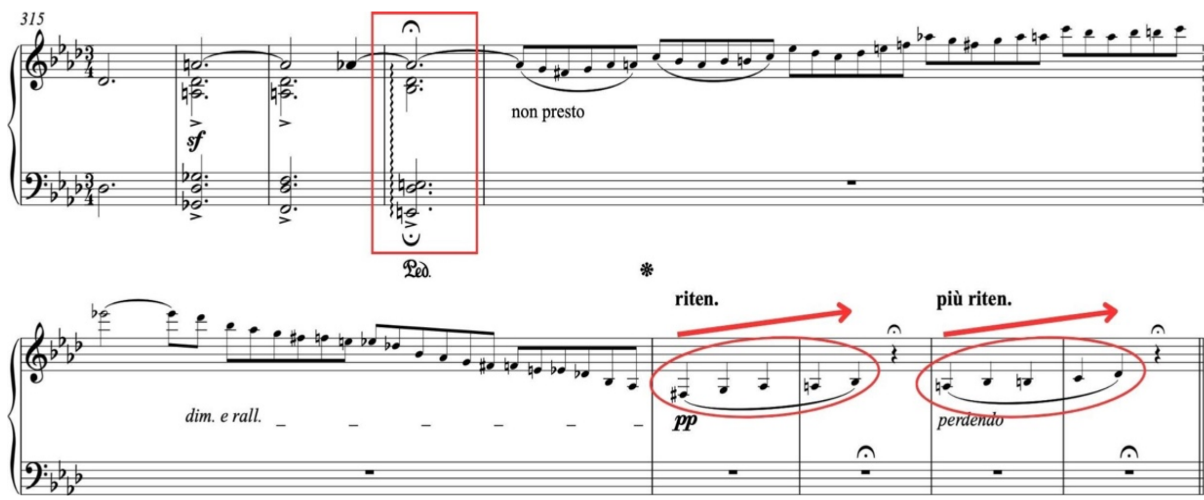
[39] On the music of Liszt's old age, see Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 437.

Figure 6.26: Recollection of the chromatic descending line in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 300–314



This monologue (Figure 6.27) in Liszt's chromatic style of melodic writing leads to the final climax where the coda with the Lutheran chorale is presented as Liszt's final statement. The chorale contrasts with the previously displayed intense diminished-seventh chords through its open, harmonic, diatonic ascending scale that is a Lutheran praise of God.

Figure 6.27: Coda of Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 315–322



6.4.8: The Coda

The quoted Lutheran chorale (Figure 6.28) is transposed from B-flat major to F major and harmonized diatonically in a series of triumphant quarter-note triads (Figure 6.29), a complete contrast to the dense chromatic sonorities at the beginning of the work. In this way, like Bach, Liszt uses the contrast of the opening chromatic and ending diatonic scales to create an overarching tension and resolution. Functional cadences, as well as the cascades of descending chromatic chords, are in the first climax that was shown in Figure 6.17.

The final chorale text was written by Liszt above each note of the right-hand to recall his voice speaking the chorale text in devotion using only the piano:

> What God does that is done well, I shall stay with this.
> It may be that on the rough road**,**
> I shall be driven by distress, death and misery,
> yet God will just like a father hold me in his arms.
> Therefore, I let only him rule over me.[40]

[40] Translation by Francis Browne from the German: "*Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan. Dabei will ich verbleiben. Es mag mich auf die rauhe Bahn. Not, Tod und Elend treiben, so wird Gott mich ganz väterlich in seinen Armen halten. Drum lass ich ihn nur walten.*" "Chorale Melodies used in Bach's Vocal Works: Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan," Bach Cantatas Website, consulted May 30, 2017, https://www.bach-cantatas.com/CM/Was-Gott-tut.htm.

The quote makes the audience think twice about whether "death" is an element that can or cannot be transformed or twisted by a human hand. For Liszt, only through the power of the "bread" could the meaning of death be transformed from mourning and grief into hope and acceptance. In this regard, Liszt's quotation of Bach's chorale represented his spiritual reconciliation with death. This conclusion is based on the composer's own psychological state and the programmatic context of this work.

Liszt's use of a Lutheran chorale recognizes that religious singing and practice should be part of daily life, and not a separate realm distanced from it. The chorale thus represents his aim to reform Catholic church music in France as expressed in his 1835 essay. Liszt's inclusion of Bach's chorale demonstrates its significance in harmony, emotional program, and religious function. First, the final diatonic harmony contrasts with the opening dense chromaticism harmonizing the theme at the beginning of the *Variations* and counterbalances the obstinate, tear-falling motif as a joyous emotional counterpart. It thus resolves the overarching tension established at the beginning. Second, Liszt elevates the value of unified congregational singing, a very Protestant gesture contrary to Catholic practice. Third, his inclusion of Bach's German texts exhibits his support for sacred texts that the common people could understand and identify with more than those in Greek or Latin.[41]

[41] The original chorale text was written by Samuel Rodigast (who wrote the text in 1675 for his friend Gastorius when the latter was severely ill). This text shows the influence of the German Pietist movement, with its portrayals of longing from ordinary people for the emotions and mysticism that were viewed as a Protestant reactionary movement in response to Enlightenment rationalism. "Pietism as a movement is officially dated from the publication in 1675 of Spener's *Pia desideria*, but it was the natural outcome of the mysticism and religious emotionalism that had been increasing throughout the seventeenth century. The efforts of the Pietists to replace the formality of regular church services with private Bible classes and home devotions further transformed the character of the chorale and the hymnbook." See Grove Music Online, s.v. "Chorale," consulted March 15, 2023.

Figure 6.28: The chorale in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 320–335

Figure 6.29: Diatonic ascending scale in F major in Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, mm. 349–364

Other essential features of this work include its rhythmic condensation and the metrical changes used to represent a passionate and stormy mood. The opening theme is in strict four-bar phrases, and through the changes of the rhythmic figurations throughout the piece—the eighth eighth notes, the eighth-note triplets, the sixteenth notes, the sextuplets, the thirty-second notes, and the passages of cadenza-like running notes—Liszt reshapes this texture to correspond to his expressive markings and to intensify the representations of pain, crying, and falling tears. Liszt

also used organ pedal points and extended the very high and low registers of the piano to create the impression of two instruments being played.

Liszt used the four words of Cantata BWV 12 to structure his variations and to guide listeners and performers through the work. Liszt's literary understanding of this text, his musical treatment of the passacaglia theme, his symbolic placement of the "bread of tears" in the central recitative, and his coda incorporating the final chorale of BWV 12 constitute a profound interpretation of his quoted literary program. In the coda, the chorale text was quoted by Liszt and spelled out in German, syllable by syllable, above each note. Liszt decided to harmonize the chorale entirely diatonically. Pianists should see the lyrics in the music and feel the singing of the Lutheran congregation, experiencing their unity with humanity.

I have demonstrated that this work is more than a cantata paraphrase or cantata fantasy but is theologically relevant as it reveals Liszt's intention to introduce a religious program to tell his personal story. By revisiting liturgical music and the theological meaning behind each musical section, Liszt arguably reworked his programmatic elements to reflect his current spiritual state.

According to Ramann's notes, Liszt's musical expressions were developed following the four words of the sung German text: weeping, lamenting, worrying, and despair. Though Liszt's own notes for his masterclasses do not survive, Ramann explains that Liszt had verbally taught the programmatic meanings of the *Variations* S. 180.[42] By comparing his pain to the enormous

[42] Lina Ramann's "pedagogical glosses" (see footnote 19) reference conversations she had with Liszt when sitting in on his lessons. Her writing is also based on the pupils of Liszt, August Stradal and August Göllerich, who made annotations to scores of the composer's works. They gave Ramann their annotations from their lessons on different compositions, including the *Variations*, S. 180. Lina Ramann confirmed reading the students' scores. She combined other students' lesson notes with her own masterclass observations to produce the first in-depth critical analysis of Liszt's selected piano works. Liszt, *Liszt-Pädagogium*, ed. Ramann, 14–18.

pain of Christ's suffering on the Cross, Liszt was able to accept the pain of losing his children and make peace with himself. That best explains the program of Liszt's unique set of variations.

Given the devastating circumstances that Liszt experienced, I argue that Liszt clearly confronted and processed the meaning of death in his way. Derived from Bach's theme based on a passacaglia ostinato, Liszt developed a variation based on his program. Liszt might have gravitated to the Bach quotation because it helped him express a profound spiritual longing for life after death and to imagine the afterlife with his lost children. A desire for salvation is evident in his programmatically influenced form, in his central recitative and in his final text quotation written above the notes played by the right hand in the concluding chorale.

With the *Variations*, Liszt shifted from composing music based on a broad reading of secular literature and poetry to a concentration on sacred choral music and religious texts. However, the *Variations* show that Liszt still experimented with how best to combine music with language, here sung and written but also with the profound meaning of death and the powerful idea of the Christian Eucharistic bread.

6.5: Conclusion

Franz Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, show how, during his stay in Rome, he turned his primary focus away from writing secular symphonic music towards sacred choral music intended for practical religious use. In turn, his music went from depictions of mythic narratives or demonic powers to feature religious figures or subjects. Yet in his *Variations*, Liszt retained his previous compositional tendencies to maintain observable structural continuities, such as his application of a one-movement form including multiple sections, dense chromaticism as a compositional device for conveying intense affects, a mixed

use of harmonic experiments including whole-tone scales, and extreme harmonic contrasts, as between the opening's chromaticism and the coda's dramatic use of rigid diatonicism.

In Liszt's *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, he also continued to experiment with creating instrumental timbres on the piano. Thus, his sound palette was extended from sung operatic melodies and orchestral timbres to the sounds of the organ and even of choral polyphony. Furthermore, he added dramatic elements. While his main goal in his first Roman period was focused on writing liturgical choral repertory and reconsidered forms, which had made his compositional approach more technical and methodological, here he coped with the loss of his daughter by employing the emotional ideas of weeping, lamenting, worrying, despair, anguish, and distress from J. S. Bach's programmatic text, thus rendering his emotions embedded in *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* in a version that can touch every listener.

Liszt studied Bach's sacred and liturgical music and was inspired by the emotional musical content of the *Crucifixus* in the *Credo* of Bach's Mass in B minor. Liszt sharply contrasts the dense chromatic harmony at the beginning of his *Variations* to the steady, calm, solemn, and roundly diatonic chorale at the end and added contrapuntal voices to intensify the texture, and expanded the keyboard register to imitate the sound of an organ.

Drawing inspiration from the musical practices of Lutheran church services, Liszt viewed his invented genre of the cantata-paraphrase, according to Heinemann, with its free variations, as a step towards realizing his earlier vision for the future of church music as described in his 1835 religious music manifesto. According to Liszt, this new style of church music ought to sound, "…essentially religious, powerful, and stirring, that music will sum up both the Theater and the

Church on a colossal scale. It will be at once both dramatic and sacred, stately and simple, moving and solemn, fiery and unruly, tempestuous yet calm…" [43]

Liszt's earlier essay had proposed a humanistic approach to regenerating Catholic liturgical music,[44] and indeed he later adapted Bach's chorale cantata intended for public singing, into his set of variations for piano. I argue that these variations should be understood not only as a reflection of his time, with Liszt extracting new meanings from older musical elements and exercising older forms, but also as a transformation of the extreme emotions he experienced, a condensation of his suffering through quotations of religious vocal texts alongside harmonic innovations.

In his earlier *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude*, in which Liszt showed a piano work of devotional music resembling a religious song with absent "sung" text bearing theological meanings. In the *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180, which Liszt composed when he was no longer seeking public recognition for his sacred music, it seems possible in view of his deep sorrow that he was composing for God to seek comfort for his mourning and for his own private devotion. In this way, he could remember Christ's salvation without needing to attend Mass.

Tragic events, including the end of his marriage plans and the death of two of his three children, presented Liszt with harsh trials that initiated a life of repentance for him after 1861. He received the four Minor Orders in 1865 and committed himself to writing sacred music for some time thereafter. His subjects for programmatic musical depictions changed from extramusical, literary works to expressions of the very essence of Christian theological meaning.

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[43] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey,* ed. Suttoni, 236–237.
[44] For more context on Liszt's essay, "Religious Music of the Future," see Chapter 2, section 3.

Neither Liszt's sacred nor his liturgical choral music were performed frequently pin Rome. His sacred music also did not receive great appreciation among the contemporary concert-going public. While Liszt's life and emotional experiences exhibited a continuous tension with the Church, he reconciled his faith with the spiritual program embedded in his *Variations on Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, S. 180. As Carl Dahlhaus suggests, the idea of restoring church music traditions or regenerating church music seems somewhat out of place in nineteenth-century history, because "the period from the French Revolution to the First World War was a bourgeois age."[45] Yet, "the decline and the regeneration of church music was a constant topic of discussion…although we can easily imagine strong religious ideals in an age of liturgical weakness."[46] This review of Liszt's long-held interest in reviving Catholic church music and his research in liturgical books kept in churches, libraries, and archives, as well as his awareness of the broader phenomenon of revivals of Palestrina's or Bach's music in the second half of the nineteenth century provides a stronger context for understanding Liszt's activities and his perspectives on religious music after he arrived in Rome in 1861.

The evolution of Liszt's *Variations*, S. 180, shows how Liszt, a fervent Catholic pianist-composer in the nineteenth century, understood the sacred cantata movements, the passacaglia theme and variation form, the instrumental language of keyboard instruments, and the harmonic language of J. S. Bach, who was a Lutheran organist-composer. Liszt went further with his extensive use of chromatic scales by not only transferring a quoted original theme to distant keys, but also by offering a new spiritual interpretation of the original meaning of Bach's cantata sung text, which echoed with his personal life experiences. By relating Liszt's sorrow and

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[45] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 179.
[46] Ibid., 178.

mourning to Christ's pain and suffering on the Cross and to Christ's Salvation and Eucharsit bread, Liszt transformed the meaning of death in his *Variations*, S. 180. Death became a common and collective term that Liszt applied to all humanity by evoking Christ's death, the salvation of all Christian believers. Liszt relied on both Bach cantata elements and the passacaglia form, as well as his life experiences and emotions to elevate secular piano music as equal with the sacred vocal genre.

Chapter 7: *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4

7.1: Approach to the Last Decade

7.1.1: Lifestyle and Mental State: Faith, Freedom, and Instability

In 1877, Liszt reached the last decade of his life. That year he renounced public performances, even those for charity.[1] His sojourn in Rome had been a time of private reflection, particularly when he retired to the monastery of the *Madonna del Rosario* seeking isolation, a quiet life, and focus on spiritual practice. In a letter to Princess Carolyne, Liszt's description of his reflections on the Cross and the spiritual meaning of the penitent thief revealed his longing for salvation and search for durable relief from earthly sorrows, an indication of how his faith had changed his attitude to one of increasing repentance. Liszt wrote:

> As for the good crosses—I have always regarded them as a propitious means of penitence and salvation. In that, I associate myself with the sentiment of the penitent thief, who recognized that he had deserved his punishment, and put his trust in the promise given him by Our Lord Jesus Christ! Kindly, therefore, disapprove no more of my sincere devotion to the penitent thief![2]

When Liszt resigned from worldly activities, his lifestyle became increasingly modest, and his creativity was centered in his spiritual world. Nevertheless, Liszt experienced crises in his late years as his physical and mental health declined.[3] Walker documented that in 1876, Liszt began to suffer from melancholia, suicidal thoughts, and a partial physical paralysis severe enough to make writing a short letter a four-hour event. His suicidal thoughts contradicted his fundamental Catholic beliefs, indicating the seriousness of his troubled spirit.

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[1] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 16.
[2] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 812.
[3] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 369.

7.1.2: Liszt's Late Musical Style: Main Developments

In his later years, Liszt was so used to harsh criticism that he reacted to it in this way: "I calmly persist in staying stubbornly in my corner, and just work at becoming more and more misunderstood."[4] Due to Liszt's choice of composing without promoting his late compositions to the public, he could, in fact, maximize his freedom to write anything he wanted to experiment with without compromising his personal taste for concert audiences and their preferences. He focused on a variety of writing methods, exploring uncanny harmonies consisting of homophonic writing, extreme dissonance, and the illustration of dark-hued atmospheres, or meditative and pensive moods, all which often radically extended his text-painting techniques into highly subjective, mystic personal expressions. Nearly all his late compositions are short, and many remain enigmatic to the public and are seldom performed in concerts. Most were not even published during Liszt's lifetime. The best example is *Via Crucis*, S. 53*: The 14 Stations of The Cross for Mixed Choir, Vocal Solos and Organ or Piano*, which was only premiered in 1929 and published in 1936. Other posthumous publications included *Septem Sacramenta, Responses with Organ or Harmonium Accompaniment*, S. 52, and his *Rosario*, S. 56, the latter a choral setting of the Mysteries of the Rosary, which had been standardized by Pope Pius V in the sixteenth century and grouped into three sets: the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries.

The religiously influenced piano compositions Liszt wrote in the 1870s–1880s were not intended for large audiences or the public concert stage, but rather should be understood as examples of religiously inspired private art. Liszt's excerpting of liturgical or other sacred texts is evidence of how he broke free from his earlier wish to compose for Catholic ceremonies for the Church. For example, in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* Liszt used evocative and fluid

[4] Ibid., 444.

accompaniment patterns that corresponded to the quoted biblical scripture he had placed in his manuscript, an indication of Liszt's increasing replacement of worldly ambition with private reflection on sacred texts (Illustration 7.1).[5] Just as Patrick Boenke proposed, Liszt, "in his late years, free of constricting norms and conventions,…developed a religious private art in which he radically explored the limits of musical extremes, shifting nimbly between withdrawing into silent devotion, concentrating on formal generalities, and reveling in exalting tonal experiments."[6]

In contrast to the dense textures that often characterized Liszt's earlier music, at this stage of his life, his melodies were condensed into single lines that sounded like Gregorian chant. Walker summarizes Liszt's writing style at this late age, arguing, "It is almost as if he were trying to starve his compositions of the very notes they require to achieve their identity."[7] Other characteristics include monologues with a reflective tone, consonant homophonic writing, prolonged or unresolved dissonance, extremely contrasting radiant and suffering expressions, and intervallic and motivic designs based on religious number symbolism. In his late sacred choral works, Liszt experimented with all these elements, often using a combination of solo voice or four-part chorus and a simple organ or piano accompaniment. Liszt's daring variety of tone colors as he launched his infinite search for religious meaning and personal expression to illustrate his innermost conflicts became exceptionally poignant as he became older. Liszt's own description to Lina Ramann showed his state of mind at this time: "I carry a deep sadness of the heart which must now and then break out in sound," he wrote.[8]

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[5] US-NYj, Manuscript Collection, shelf number 2 L699an A.3je, Liszt, "Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este = Wasserspiele in der Villa d'Este : IV 1877." https://juilliardmanuscriptcollection.org/annees-de-pelerinage-3e-annee-jeux-deaux-a-la-villa-deste/.

[6] Boenke, "Outside the Public Sphere," 205.

[7] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 437–438.

[8] Ibid.

Liszt's third book of *Années de pèlerinage*, S. 163, published in 1883, is one of the most representative sets among his late piano compositions. In it, he reached the final stage of his evolution as a composer in demonstrating his ability and creativity to realize the spiritual component in his programmatic composing. *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, the subject of this chapter, is listed fourth in this set of seven pieces. The illustrative titles of all seven are: (1) *Angelus! Prière aux anges gardiens*, (2) *Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este* : *Thrénodie I*, (3) *Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este : Thrénodie II*, (4) *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, (5) *Sunt lacrimae rerum, en mode hongrois*, (6) *Marche funèbre* : *en mémoire de Maximilien I, Empereur du Mexique*, and (7) *Sursum corda: Erhebet eure Herzen*. These titles reflect Liszt's faith and daily meditation within his immediate surroundings, as they evoke ringing church bells, wind caressing the cypress trees in the gardens of the Villa d'Este, and the sound of water fountains. These works are also nationalistic elegies infused with religious sentiment.

From 1877–1879, Liszt wrote a small number of sacred keyboard works ranging from arrangements of the original vocal works for piano solo, such as *Via Crucis*, S. 504a, to a few sets of miniature piano pieces, such as *Weihnachtsbaum*, S. 186 and *Alte Deutsche Geistliche Weisen*, S. 504b, where their reliance on melancholic hymns, chorales, and original liturgical ideas and concepts can be observed. *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* can serve as an example of how Liszt was very attuned to the philosophical content of a quoted biblical text, yet in these years he no longer needed to lean on exact quotation to plan his programmatic form and structure. He arrived at the simplicity of the quoted text through a contrary proportion of musical imagination—by doing more with less.

7.1.3: Liszt's Second Roman Period Distinguished from his First Roman Period

Although Liszt first published his essay on regenerating church music in France in 1835, it took him forty-three years to grow and mature into his Catholic faith. From 1861–1869, Liszt composed choral works for the Church, trying to make them correct for the liturgy and testing how he could address his "oratorio" problem.[9] Liszt was inspired by Catholic church music mirrored after Renaissance choral polyphony, for he admired greatly the beauty and simplicity of the music of Palestrina.[10] The nineteenth-century reform movement inspired by Palestrina upheld the idea that sacred music should have little or no instrumental accompaniment; the organ was one of the few instruments accepted as liturgically correct.[11] Thus, Liszt's choral works of his first Roman period incorporated church modes, Gregorian chant, the text and form of the mass ordinary, simplified instrumentation, clear imitation, text painting for word emphasis, the antiphonal style of singing *in alternatim*, the use of precise numbers of singers, the expressive use of dynamics learned from the Sistine chapel choir's singing style, and unison singing applied for special effect when emphasis needed to be given.[12]

Liszt's religiously-influenced compositions written in the 1870s–1880s preserved some characteristics of his earlier choral compositions and his study of early sacred music. The

[9] See Chapter 6, section 3.1, footnote 22.

[10] This broader nineteenth-century movement to reform church music can be traced back to the German writer and philosopher, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and his essay "Alte und Neue Kirchenmusik," which affected both Catholic and Protestant composers and influenced Liszt and Anton Bruckner (1824–1896), among others, in the second half of the nineteenth century. See E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik" in *Musikalische Novellen und Schriften,* ed. Paul Friedrich Scherber (Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1921), 118–134.

[11] The Palestrina movement greatly inspired Liszt. According to Grove Music Online, "The Palestrina church music reformed movement is based on the criteria of the music performed in chapels of Rome rather than more emotional eighteenth-century concert stage style. The Italian composer and Sistine chapel singer Giuseppe Baini served as a leading figure. Baini drew a starting point of the publication, and further to Alfieri, who continued his work after his death – many of Palestrina's works were published in the seven volumes of the *Raccolta di Musica Sacra* (Rome, 1841–1846). The *Memorie storico-critiche*, despite its many failings in historical and philological method and its inaccuracies of fact, was the first attempt to provide a full and systematic view, biographical and musicological of Palestrina." See Grove Music Online, s.v. "Baini, Giuseppe," consulted February 12, 2023.

[12] Domokos, "The Performance Practice," 389–406.

elements Liszt continued to incorporate from his first Roman period in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* included the insertion of consonant triad chords, two voices doubled in parallel sixths, an antiphonal singing style, simple imitation in the style of Palestrina, monophonic psalm recitation tones, and his frequent use of F-sharp major to represent heaven. Yet Liszt departed consciously from the stylistic ideals of large-scale church music that he had pursued emphatically a decade earlier. As Boenke describes, "He ceased composing music for liturgical use, which had constituted a sizeable share of his sacred production a decade earlier. Instead, in his later years Liszt composed primarily shorter sacred choral works as well as more religiously inspired poetic instrumental music."[13]

After 1869, Liszt left Rome to travel between Rome, Budapest, and Weimar. From 1869–1886, despite his interest in Franciscan spirituality that resurfaced in Rome in 1865, his religious practice was hidden behind a more secular lifestyle. He devoted his time to teaching lessons and masterclasses in Weimar and Budapest.[14] Moreover, from 1875 on, Liszt, who wished to provide quality musical education for his beloved homeland, Hungary, formally served as the first president of the newly established Royal Academy of Music in Budapest, and as a faculty member providing his expertise in curriculum planning and inviting guest artist-teachers. When he later returned to Rome for about a quarter of a year, he would visit and reconnect with Princess Carolyne, who was living there as a recluse. At the same time, he would spend his time recollecting all that had inspired him in this city that was the center for all Catholics.

In 1877, Liszt was sixty-six. He gave up any last ambition of composing for the Church and was free to compose whatever came to his mind. Therefore, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa*

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[13] Boenke, "Outside the Public Sphere," 190.
[14] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 9.

d'Este, which was written in 1877 during his second Roman period, occupies a special place in his religiously influenced piano repertory, because although it was composed in Rome, the city was then no longer his permanent residence. Liszt's inspiration for *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* was his immediate surrounding—his temporary residence lent to him by Cardinal Gustav Adolf von Hohenlohe.[15] Located in Tivoli, the Villa d'Este was only one of the many addresses where Liszt had briefly stayed during his first Roman period in November 1868.[16] During his second Roman period, beginning in 1869, he returned to the the Villa d'Este and made it one of his residences, remaining for several months each time. The view of the landscape, the gorgeous design of its garden and magnificent fountains, and the peace and tranquility there must have elevated Liszt's spirit. *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* shows that religious significance was in every part of his life while he was there, in such small details as looking outside of his windows, taking a walk to attend mass in the cold morning beginning each day, or wandering in the garden watching the water sprinkle from the fountains.[17] In other words, in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, Liszt's inspiration was a real place, not poetry or other composers' themes or motives. When Liszt was in his late twenties, he had begun to compose his program music on such an epic scale as to confront Dante, but now, at age sixty-six, he ended his career with depictions of small

[15] By the end of 1868, Liszt had difficulty returning to Santa Francesca Romana because he needed absolute peace to keep up his work. The circumstances are described by Walker: "It was at this juncture that he received an invitation to visit Cardinal Hohenlohe at the Villa d'Este, the latter's new residence at Tivoli, about twenty kilometers from Rome [to the east]. Princess Carolyne described the villa as 'a fairyland, a dream, a most beautiful vision of Italy.'" Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 164–165.

[16] The first time Liszt visited Villa d'Este he stayed there between November to mid-December 1868. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 166.

[17] Walker describes the room Liszt stayed in at Villa d'Este: "Cardinal Hohenlohe, who occupied the ground floor of the villa, had set aside a small wing, approached by means of a small spiral staircase, for Liszt's exclusive use. There was just enough room for an upright piano. This study had but a single window, from which Liszt could see the countryside for miles around and even glimpse the dome of St. Peters…The place was sparsely furnished, and in the winter it was ice-cold. Yet it was here that Liszt got up every morning at three o'clock and walked by the light of a little tin lantern to the nearby church to celebrate early mass." Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years,* 165.

details from his real life, like the fountains at his villa. As his inspirations became less grandiose, his music became more refined, tailored, and precise.

Many stylistic features and compositional methods of his religiously influenced program music of his first Roman period return in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, such as his design of themes and melodies modeled after Gregorian chant and leaning heavily towards modal harmonies. Now he focused less on constructing a biblical story or drama, or incorporating religious figures and saints, but more on religious mystical images, and meditative, yet poetic themes. In Liszt's first Roman period he pulled the entire text of a mass from a biblical narrative, consistent with "official" liturgical music, but in his second Roman period, he only used short quotations or even abbreviations of them. For example, in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, mm. 144–157, Liszt referenced John 4:14, "sed aqua quam dabo ei fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam" […but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life] as flowing, living water with an extended meaning of God's salvation giving eternal life (Illustration 7.1).[18]

[18] "Ioannes 4:14," Biblia Sacra Vulgata, Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ioannes%204%3A14%2CJohn%204%3A14&version=VULGATE, consulted on April 28, 2023. "John 4:14" in *King James Version and Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1970), 108. This reproduction of the score of Illustration 7.1 can be seen at IMSLP https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ReverseLookup/432196 The manuscript is US-NYj, Manuscript Collection, 2L699anA.3je, "Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este = Wasserspiele in der Villa d'Este: IV" https://juilliardmanuscriptcollection.org/annees-de-pelerinage-3e-annee-jeux-deaux-a-la-villa-deste/

Illustration 7.1: Liszt's quoted Latin Biblical text in his handwriting together with his primary theme returning in D major in US-NYj, Manuscript Collection, 2L699anA.3je, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, mm. 144–152.

As one of the most significant works of Liszt's second Roman period, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* includes new evocative accompaniment patterns, which brought the expressiveness of the sound of piano playing to a different level. The water-like patterns extend the meaning of the work's title, the fountains at the villa that inspired Liszt, to the spiritual significance of water as Christian baptism bringing God's salvation and everlasting life. The flowing patterns, like running water, also served as the main connecting device to link his themes and sequential patterns, which emerge as one musical fountain. All water-like accompaniments flow and connect, representing a nonstop unity without beginning or end, as if the words from God in the mind of the meditator had dissolved without a trace in the fluid time-flow. Furthermore, by increasing the use of modal harmonies, prolonging the dominant pedal, and hence delaying the resolution back to the tonic, as well as using unconventional modulations including the enharmonic, avoiding any resolution, yet still employing functional harmonies to prolong harmonic tension, Liszt searched for the essence of music, even if more abstractly presented, reaching further to heavenly eternity.

7.2: Analysis: *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*

Liszt's intensive study of Joseph Louis d'Ortigue's dictionary of liturgical music resulted in the influence of Gregorian chant and elements of church music on him. In a letter to his daughter Blandine dated December 25, 1861, Liszt refers to this:

> Our friend d'Ortigue is also keeping me very agreeable company through his recently published volume *La Musique à l'Église* and his *Dictionnaire du Plaint-Chant*,[19] which is providing me with much help and instruction, and to which I have done the honours of a

[19] Joseph d'Ortigue advocated a reform of church music and the restoration of plainsong in various publications, including, *La Musique à l'Eglise* (1861), *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plaint-chant de l'église, au Moyen Age et dans les temps modernes* (1853, later revised), and *Traité théorique et pratique de l'accompagnement du plain-chant* (1878, co-authored with Niedermeyer).

binding in beautiful white vellum in the Roman style, a perfect match for the contents of this excellent work.[20]

In the 1860s, Liszt began to employ church modes and include melodies resembling chant as the result of that research.[21] After 1861, when he began his first Roman period, he composed sacred choral works sung mostly unaccompanied and planned for liturgical use. For example, in his *Missa Choralis* written in 1865, he used the Cross motif borrowed from the hymn *Crux fidelis*, a motif found in both of his oratorios, *Die Legende von der Heiligen Elisabeth* and *Christus* (1862–67), and in his *Te Deum laudamus* II (1867). Sulyok describes how Liszt found this motif in Gregorian chant and came to use it as a "cross motif": "This motif as evidence of Liszt's exploration of church music. Finally, it should also be noticed that the intonation *G a c* is used very often in Gregorian chant[22]; for example, in the *Magnificat G a c c c*, the hymn *Crux fidelis* D E *G a a G*, etc. The composer of this work used this named succession of pitches several times among others in the Fugue of the *Gloria* of the *Mass of Esztergom* [Gran]; in the final chorus of the *Dante Symphony*, and in the symphonic poem *The Battle of the Huns*. It forms in the obligatory composition of *The Legend of St. Elizabeth*, so to speak, the sounding symbol of the Cross, the main motif of the choir of *The Crusaders* (IIIa) and of the *Crusader's March* (IIId)."[23]

[20] Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. Williams, 567.

[21] Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 41.

[22] Here, *C* is middle C.

[23] Liszt, *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth*, ed. Sulyok, 458-462. In the *Schlußbemerkung*, p. 458, dated Rome, 1862, Liszt thanked a list of his Hungarian friends, through Erzprälaten Michael von Rimely, Anton von Augusz, Maurus Czinár, Herr Kronperger, Pater Guardian der Franziskaner in Pest, Gabriel Mátray, and Michael Monsonyi, Liszt was informed of the peculiar to the church celebration "in festo, sanctae Elisabeth," and was directed to those antiphons, graduals, hymns etc. that were kept in Breviaries and choralbooks of the 16th and 17th centuries. Similarly, Liszt thanked Eduard Reményi and Herrn Gottschalg for the delivery of two folk melodies that he has appropriated to his work. On the following pages of "Verzeichnis der Motive" (p.459), Liszt made a list of four categories, connecting these liturgical sources to his musical motives that he used in this oratorio. At the end of the list, Liszt attentively pointed to his use of intonation *G a c* as it is heavily used in Gregorian chant, giving two examples: *Magnificat* and *Crux fidelis*.

To clarify how Liszt incorporated elements of the church music of his first Roman period in *Les jeux d'eaux*, his musical language is explored, including church-music influenced stylistic elements, spiritually influenced accompaniment figures, and his original harmonizations. Liszt also simple imitation with clear voice-entry in the style of Palestrina; consonant harmonies with a succession of perfect major triads; sequences of thirds, or voice-doubling similar to fauxbourdon; and one quoted biblical verse to express his spiritual program.[24] His harmonies and melodies in his use of five different scales are explored, which are the diatonic scale, pentatonic scale, Lydian mode, and a whole-tone scale. To connect these diverse features, he eliminated all the places where cadential points could have possibly occured, avoiding sectional stops and any sense of definitive resolution in the home key area. He only established a tonic through an authentic cadence once in the entire work—in the approach to its spiritual climax, in mm. 164–181, with the prolonged dominant G sharp (V) of C-sharp major for an entire seventeen measures before the full resolution to the tonic (I).

Liszt incorporated the word "water" to evoke a series of patterns and movements that sounded playful and fluid. His unique programmatic approach was inspired by and manifested in his goal of composing uninterrupted continuity aimed at representing a flowing sensation of musical eternity with colors and water-like brush strokes. To reduce the need to expand thematic material, Liszt incorporated subtle modulation to treat the sequential patterns and to transform the returning themes. He used a reduced number of voices to achieve simplified melodies, textures, and moods. Lastly, he focused on economizing changes of character in his themes and adopted a contemplative and meditative mood in his musical language based on his spiritually influenced program.

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[24] See Chapter 7, footnote 11, for more on Palestrina.

7.2.1: Liszt's Harmonies of Consonance

7.2.1.1: The Consonant Homophonic Effect: A Succession of Major Triads

The effect of consonance is produced by the successions of tonic major triads built into Liszt's primary themes, which are first showered with F-sharp major sonorities in mm. 40–47, as well as when the primary themes return in mm. 132–135 and in mm. 144–157 (Figures 7.1–7.3). The main thematic areas go through the sonorities of: E major, A major, D major, and B-flat major. The homophonic writing stays very clear in both modulations: E major modulating to A major, and D major modulating to B-flat major. James Garratt argues that Liszt began to use chains of root-position triads due to his prior engagement with Palestrina's style of writing polyphony, a tendency which later increased and extended into Liszt's late compositions. Garratt writes,

> The compositional engagement of Liszt with the music of Palestrina began significantly earlier…It is made evident in the "Pater noster" in the use of predominantly root-position chords, dissonance being restricted, unaccented passing note…in the "Ave Maria," the use of chains of root-position chords remains important[25]…it could be argued that the use of such elements in Liszt'a later church music was solely or primarily due to his own experience of the music of the Sistine Chapel and his increasing self-identification with Palestrina…[26]

In Figure 7.1, the first theme (designated as A) appears in the top voice in mm. 40–43 and is constructed out of third intervals forming the tonic triad of F-sharp major: first the 5th (C sharp), then the 3rd (A sharp), last the root (F sharp). The same melody is repeated in the lower voice in mm. 44–47. The broken major triad is played by the pinky and the thumb of the pianist's right hand in alternation to resemble a call-and-response manner of singing, also heard as *alternatim* church singing.

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[25] James Garratt, *Palestrina and The German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 182.

[26] Ibid., 184. Merrick, *Revolution and Religion*, 184.

In Gut's *Franz Liszt: les éléments du langage muscal*, he dedicated an entire chapter "L'Harmonie Consonante" to Liszt's unique use of consonant harmonies. Gut argues that Liszt followed Renaissance masters in using successions of perfect chords, yet composed consonant harmonies for his own purposes in a unique and original way.[27]

Figure 7.1: The primary theme in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 40–47

[27] Gut, *Franz Liszt,* 146-160.

Figure 7.2: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 132–143.

Figure 7.3: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 144–157, in 2/4 time

7.2.1.2: Voice-Doubling in Thirds and Sixths in the Style of *Fauxbourdon*

Liszt's use of a succession of doubled thirds and sixths shows that he arrived at his personal style by creating his sonorities out of the consonant sound effect of the sacred music of Palestrina. The mention of "*Fauxbourdon* being the most elemental application for the harmonization of Gregorian chant" is an entry in Ortigue's *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant et de musique d'église*, which Liszt knew.[28] Liszt used the style of fauxbourdon in the sequences of his thematic group C (Figure 7.4). At m. 108, he provided a textural expansion by adding doubled sixths for the left hand, yet maintained a consonant sonority and a transparent, airy texture. Even in the passagework leading to the programmatic climax, where the stream of water first moves in opposite directions, the thirds played by the right hand join the double sixths of the left hand with the force of a collision (Figure 7.5).

[28] Dufetel argues that Liszt's free style of using church music and/or chant influenced elements in his late compositions is what Liszt's friend Ortigue described in the introduction of his *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant et de musique d'église*: "If one bases one's thoughts on what we call 'religious sentiment,' there are no more rules, no more limits." The original text in French is: "…tout admettent une musique religieuse, une musique sacrée, une musique d'église, parce-que, aux yeux de tout, religieux ou indifférents, croyants ou non croyants, ces mots expriment un de ces besoins vagues, indistincts, mais naturels et profonds, dont chacun a plus ou moins le sentiment. Mais si le sentiment est partout, la veritable notion, et, à plus forte raison, la veritable théorie n'est nulle part [col. XXVII]." Dufetel, "Les sources français du plain-chant et de la Sainte Élisabeth de Liszt," xvi. Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique*, 606.

Figure 7.4: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 108–127

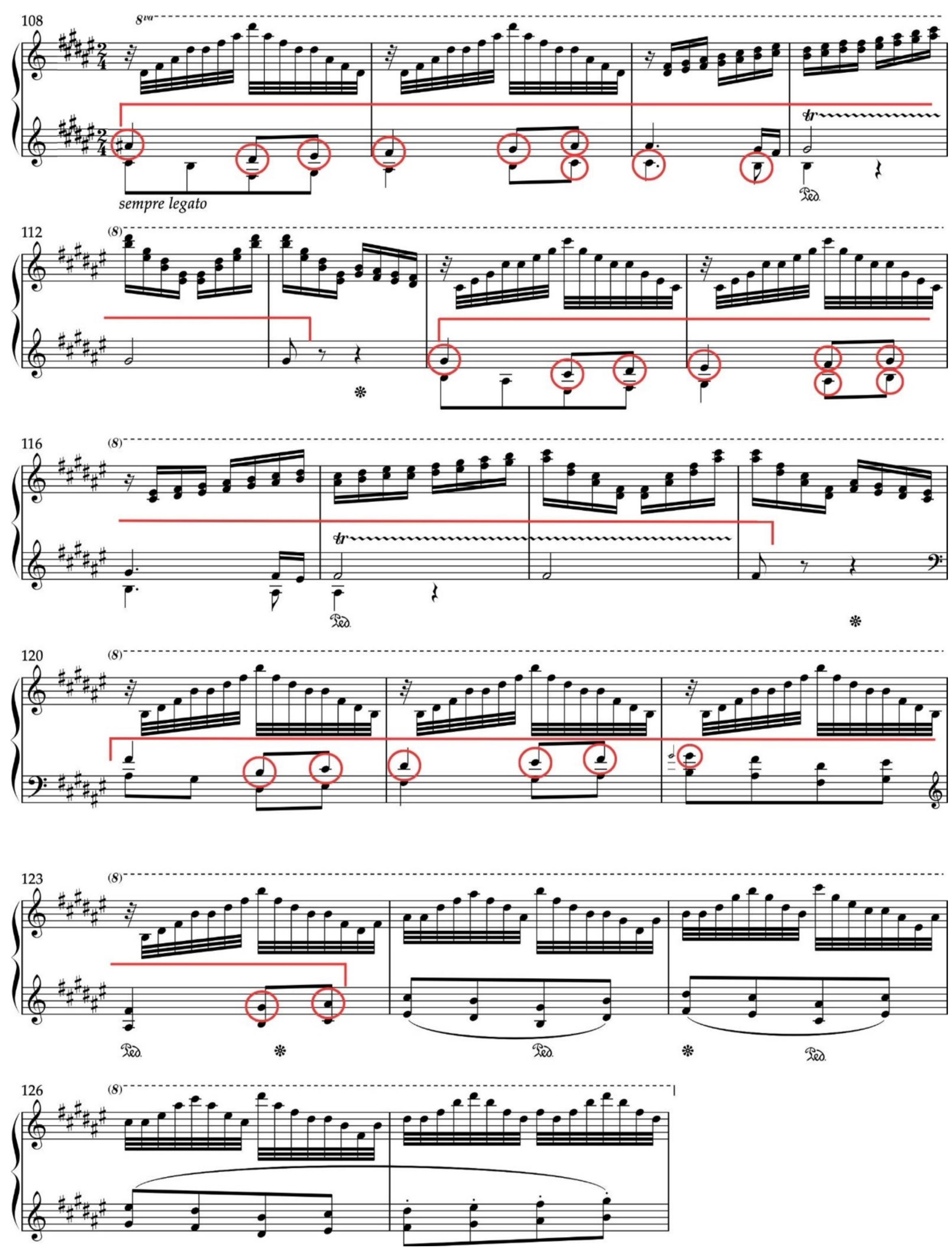
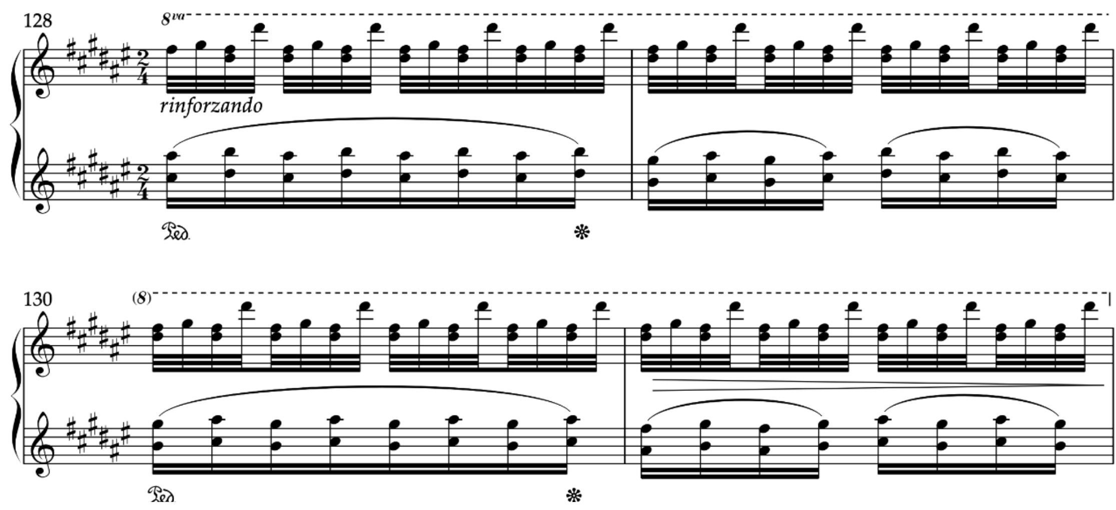


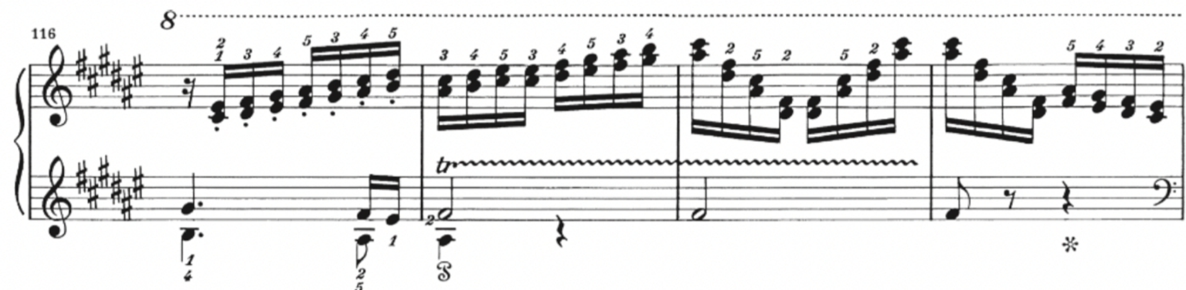
Figure 7.5: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 128–131



7.2.1.3: Liszt's Use of Double-Thirds in Successions

To create a prolonged consonant effect, Liszt also uses a succession of double-thirds in mm.116–119 in his *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* (Figure 7.6). Gut provides a list of nine compositions, including the first version of *Sonetto 47 del Petrarca*, *Concert étude No. 3 Un sospiro*, *Faust symphony*, and *Gran Mass* to show that Liszt tended to use a succession of perfect chords or leaps of thirds to produce a prolonged period of consonance.[29]

Figure 7.6: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 116–119



[29] Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 154-158.

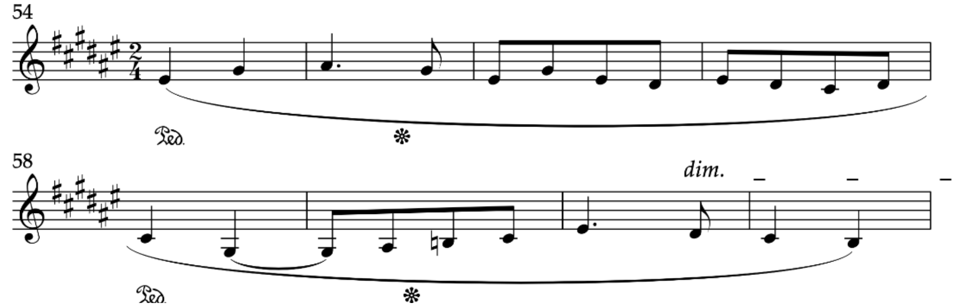
7.2.2: Liszt's Melodic Elements

7.2.2.1: Chant-influenced Melody

Liszt used the left hand to play the two melodies of the second theme group B in mm. 48–63 (Figure 7.7). The first melody B1, is mm. 48–53. The melody B2 is in mm. 54–63 (Figure 7.8), which is shaped like chant, because it moves mostly in stepwise motion and is played in the middle register of the keyboard that approximates the alto vocal range; its widest leap is only a fourth. After both second melodies B1 and B2 have appeared for the first time, Liszt chose to repeat them again in sequences, in mm. 72–77 and mm. 78–87, with some variants.

Figure 7.7: The second thematic group B representing two successive responses in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 48–63

Figure 7.8: The end of theme B2, where the rising B natural determines the melody to be modal, in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, in mm. 54–61.



7.2.2.2: The Blending of Different Scales

Liszt's melodic writing shows his kaleidoscopic use of the diatonic scale, pentatonic scale, the Lydian mode, Hungarian minor scale, and whole tone scale. His use of the Lydian mode is found in mm. 88–101, and that sequence (containing the third thematic group C) is mainly constructed in the church modes (Figure 7.9). The thematic group C played by the left hand begins in m. 88 with the melody of a four-bar phrase in the Lydian mode. The effect of modal sonority is made exceptionally clear in mm. 90–91, where the half note sustaining A sharp falls back to G sharp in the next measure, instead of B, that is, assuming A sharp as leading to the tonal key of B major.

Figure 7.9: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 88–107.

The diatonic scale in the top notes of the right hand in mm. 1–9 is above a non-functional prolonged dominant degree. The top notes D sharp, E sharp, F sharp, G sharp, A sharp, B natural, C sharp, and reaching to D sharp again keep ringing in staccato. The next example of a diatonic scale pointing to a clear tonic is in mm. 167–178, where the right hand climbs through this rising diatonic scale: C sharp, D sharp, E sharp, F sharp, G sharp, A sharp, and B sharp (Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10: Franz Liszt’s *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 162–181.

The inclusion of pitches from the Hungarian minor scale bears a significance worth emphasizing (Figure 7.11). When Liszt’s second theme B returns as a repeated sequence in mm. 72–87, Liszt varies the B2 melody to become a new melody B3, which circulates around the same tonal space with only a few notes changed (Figure 7.12). Liszt added a few chromatic pitches, such as G double-sharp and D double-sharp to suggest that a Hungarian minor scale

underlies the original sonorities. The unconventional sonority sounds foreign within the largely homophonic texture.

Figure 7.11: The Hungarian minor scale.

Figure 7.12: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 72–81, the second theme B3 as a variant of B2 (Figure 7.3) but is in the Hungarian minor scale.

The first five notes of the C-sharp major scale (C sharp, D sharp, E sharp, F sharp, G sharp) played by the left hand just after the primary theme A is found again in the melody B1 in mm. 48–53 (Figure 7.7).

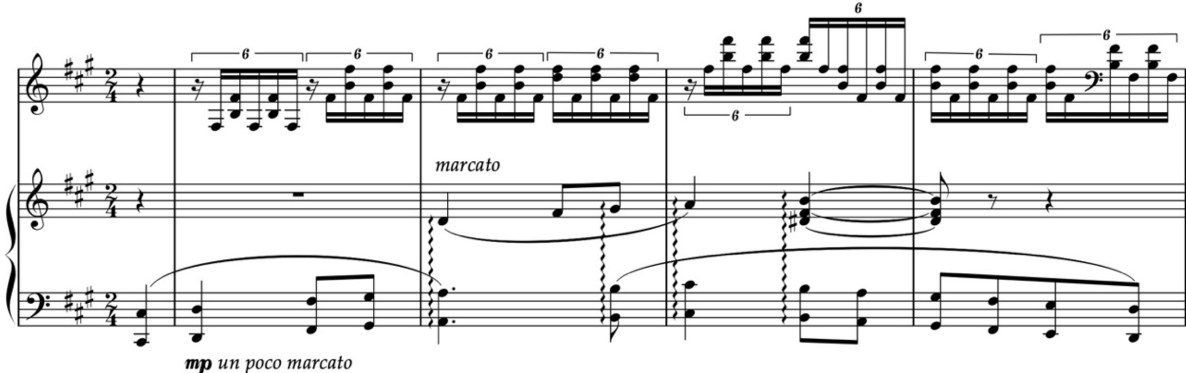
Lastly, the use of the pentatonic scale is made obvious in the work's climaxes in mm. 206–219 (Figure 7.13).

Figure 7.13: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 206–219.

7.2.2.3: Clear Entries of Voices in Imitation

The clear entries of a reduced number of voices illustrate how Liszt simplified his writing of imitation by avoiding a dense, contrapuntal texture. In many of his late works, Liszt's simplification of chordal textures is evident. In *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, he imitates the simplicity of the style of Palestrina with the clear entrance of each voice in mm. 182–185, mm. 186–189, mm. 190–193, and mm. 194–197 (Figure 7.14).

Figure 7.14: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 181–185



7.2.3: Other Harmonic Characteristics

7.2.3.1: Prolonged Dominant Pedal Points

Beginning in mm. 163–171, Liszt provided a prolonged dominant pedal point on G sharp in the bass, which proceeds to its resolution nine measures later in the bass with the C sharp in m. 172, delaying the insertion of the tonic and avoiding the tonal function of returning to the home key area (Figure 7.10). For example, in the introduction, Liszt extended the dominant chords (V7, V9, V11, V13) for a full thirteen measures without approaching the tonic triad of F-sharp major.

7.2.3.2: Extensive Use of the Dominant Ninth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth

In the first six measures of the introduction, Liszt lays out an array of extensive prolonged dominant sonorities. In mm. 5–6, a dominant eleventh chord (V / 11) appears without prior preparation and does not fully resolve. Liszt only removes the C sharp of the previous dominant pedal to allow the entire sonority to glide above the second degree (II) of F-sharp major in m. 6.

7.2.3.3: Prolongation of the 6/4 Chord, Triad in Second Inversion

The prolonged 6/4 chord, a pedal effect, created a suspension without any movement to fall back to the tonic root position, thus providing a sensation of heavenly elevation, which is also seen in Liszt's primary theme returns in mm. 132–135 and mm. 149–152. To avoid the root position triad, Liszt uses the fifth, the bass note, so as a 6/4 chord. Elsewhere, Liszt used the first inversion instead of the root position. In m. 40, m. 132, m. 144, m. 149, and m. 178, the left-hand bass lands on the third or fifth of the triad, without touching the tonic F sharp.

7.2.3.4: Avoidance of a Tonal Center

Liszt used the following methods to avoid arriving at the tonic home key too soon. By avoiding the leading tone, which would inevitably reveal the key with obvious clarity, Liszt intentionally weakened the tension awaiting resolution set up by the expectation of the arrival of the tonic. Between mm. 26–29 toward the end of the introduction, Liszt attenuates the function of the leading tone E sharp by alternating between E sharp and E natural, showing no intention of deciding where the music should go (Figure 7.15). Then in Figure 7.9, in m. 99, Liszt again avoided the leading tone. Following the same sequence, the last note of each four-bar phrase should descend a half-step, thus reaching E sharp above G sharp in the bass. But to avoid making the function of the dominant apparent, Liszt chose to repeat the same F sharp three times in m. 98, m. 99, m. 100, making the E sharp merely a passing note, instead of a clear point of arrival.

Figure 7.15: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 26–33.

In Figures 7.8 and 7.9, the melodies grouped in the sequence are written largely in modes. Liszt's harmonic progressions avoided moving to the leading tone, which would have pointed to a designated tonal center. The modal harmonies of most of his phrase endings, in fact, counteract a stable tonality, as in Figure 7.16. In *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, Liszt successfully removed all periodic cadences at once to avoid the clear points of arrival expected in functional tonalities.

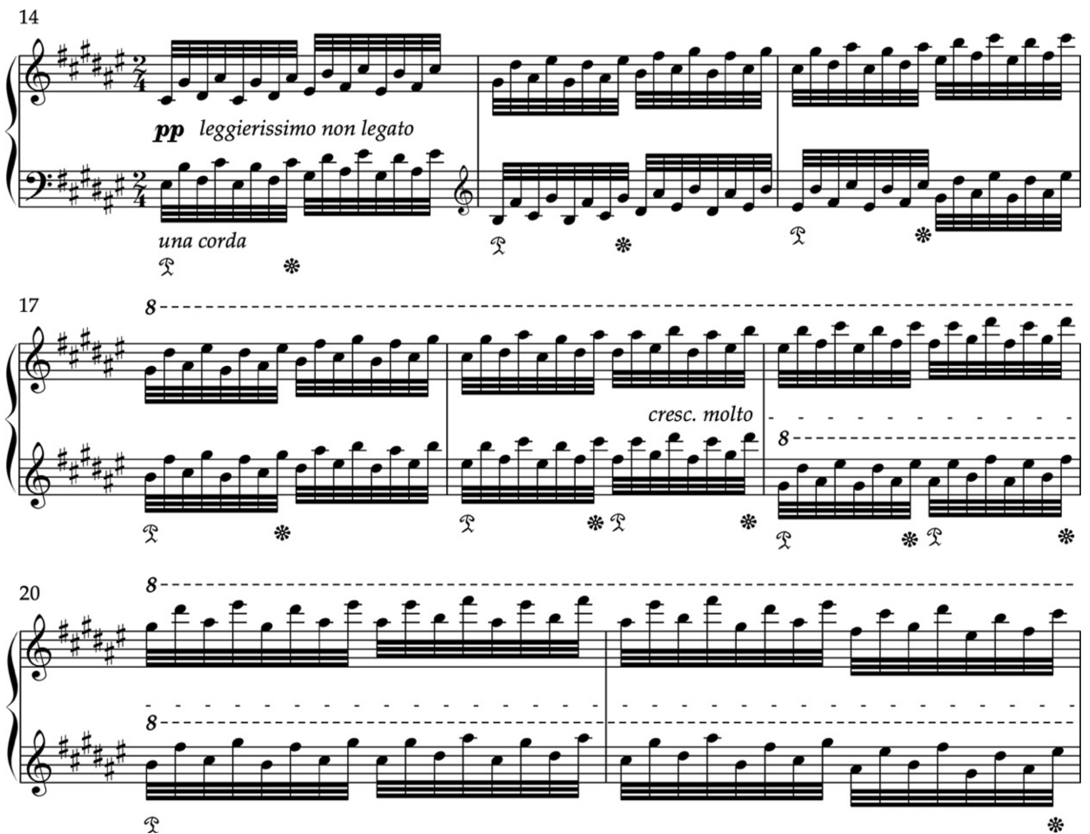
Figure 7.16: Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 48–59.

7.2.3.5: A Succession of Broken Parallel Fifths

Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este is quite famous because of Liszt's groundbreaking use of broken parallel fifths in both hands in an extended passage, mm. 14–21 (Figure 7.17). Indeed, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* is viewed as a predecessor for French Impressionism in music because it inspired the harmonic language of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel.[30]

[30] Gut, *Franz Liszt,* 113, 116.

Figure 7.17: Franz Liszt’s *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 14–21.



7.2.3.6: The Continual Preference for F-Sharp Major

The tonality of the entire *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* is in F-sharp major.

7.2.3.7. Sudden Modulations Using Enharmonic Pitches

Liszt used a variety of methods to modulate and connect different thematic melodies without using pitches suggesting fixed tonal centers. In a few places, Liszt used enharmonic notes to modulate between remote keys, which contained either all sharps or all flats. For example, continuing from E-flat major in m. 154, one would expect the next key change in measure 155 to lead eventually to E-flat minor, but Liszt chose D-sharp minor instead (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.18 shows another example of a sudden modulation using enharmonic notes in mm. 251–252 and mm. 269–271. Liszt's key changes here expanded the original color palette with more elasticity and, by blurring the sense of the original key area and the transition to the new keys, created a peaceful continuation and a sense of time prolonged forever.

7.2.3.8. Modulation Based on the Bass Line Forming a Whole-Tone Scale

Liszt's use of a whole-tone scale observed in his earlier works was mainly applied in specific harmonic progressions that contrasted to a chromatic scale. Yet, in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, Liszt used the whole-tone scale as a means of connecting and preparing a range of modulations, thereby avoiding the creation of a system of tension and resolution with a dominant moving to the tonic. Different scale systems were blended naturally without creating tension.

Figure 7.19 shows that this connecting method enabled modulation through a whole-tone scale of F sharp, E, D, C, B flat, A flat, then to G flat (equal to F sharp) in the bass played by the left hand. The whole-tone scale, which traversed the entire composition in the main bass line,

provided the most important harmonic support, and bound the above-mentioned harmonic innovations together.

Figure 7.18: Modulation through enharmonic pitches in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 243–278.

Figure 7.19: Franz Liszt’s *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este*, S. 163, No. 4, the whole-tone scale in the bass line.

7.2.4: Programmatic Approach

Liszt's extended text-painting in his accompaniment patterns with fluid or hopping movements and in his colorful, harmonic modulations portrayed the poetic quality of the quoted programmatic text with religious significance.

7.2.4.1: Unexpected Harmonic Surprises Suggesting Painting with Colors

At the heart of the work, having a total of 278 measures, Liszt quoted John 4:14 ("Sed aqua…") at the beginning of m. 144, discussed above, which signaled a major transformation with subtle color changes: the primary theme is recalled twelve measures before m. 144 at m. 132, though not in its original key of F-sharp major, but in E major instead. The harmony modulates to D major, then further to B-flat major, with the new major triad occurring just after Liszt's text quotation above m. 144, an absolutely luminous arrival, which is structurally secured by the authentic cadence in C-sharp major (Illustration 7.1).[31]

7.2.4.2: Transformation of a Thematic Block from a Triad in Root Position to its Inversions

While Liszt used fourteen measures to explore the color changes using modulations in a thematic block, mm. 149–152,[32] he also expanded the first theme from the major triad in root position to its second inversion to illustrate the moment of theological transformation at the change of textual meaning. The expanded triad also suggests openness instead of the original root position, which is stable and closed.

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[31] 144 symbolized the measurement of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Meyer and Suntrop, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, cols. 808–809.

[32] Term derived from Boenke, "Outside the Public Sphere," 192 and 195: "melodic building block," which Boenke uses to describe a short segment of a composition that is a "formulaic construction."

7.2.4.3: Program-Influenced Accompaniment Figures

Different forms of water were evoked, created, and manifested in the piano accompaniment figures. Liszt crafted all the accompaniment figures, which he blended and mixed in much improvisational passagework, with a natural quality that was not overdone. Occasionally, Liszt applied pedal points to blur these fluid movements and create a picturesque, extramusical idea as an expression of his internalized spiritual message, as in mm. 220–225, mm. 227–232, and mm. 236–241 (Figure 7.23).

The writing style of the accompaniment clearly evokes water in reflection of the quoted biblical text, but the musical form of *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* did not follow that text exactly. Here, Liszt uses the text as a stimulus for his imagination instead, making his invented coloful accompaniment patterns spring up as an internal force of life within a fluid substance, just as his religious state constantly crosses the boundary into mysticism. I speculate based on theological hidden meaning, that the water-like fluid substance, should be understood as the water of baptism, the ceremony traditionally taking place during the Easter Vigil that purifies and admits individuals to the Christian Church that ensures their eternal salvation through the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ. (Figure 7.20)

Figure 7.20: Water-like accompaniment patterns in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 1–2, 14, 40–43, 44–47 (R.H.), 44–47 (L.H.), 48–55, 56–61, 128–131, and 136–143

7.2.4.4: A Concentration of Text Quotations

Liszt used the same styles as in his other late sacred compositions. In this regard, Boeneke observes: “In addition to extraordinary simplicity, a tendency toward compactness and concentration constitutes a second major feature of Liszt’s sacred works. This aspect is particularly evident in his vocal compositions at the textual level…certain later compositions feature only drastically shortened texts.”[33]

7.2.4.5: Innovative Structural Methods: Unconventional Modulations and Thematic Recall to Enhance Unity

Liszt recalled themes to unify his work, as is evident in his coda (Figure 7.21). Liszt chose to recall the high tone resembling bellringing by having it plucked by the fifth finger of the right hand in the opening mm. 1–8 and again at the end of his work, but there thundering in *fortissimo* as gigantic church bells and chimes (Figures 7.22 and 7.23).

A two-fold programmatic form is not structured to follow the quoted verse, but instead influenced by call-and-response singing and the cyclic presentation of the themes**.** A modified, non-conventional binary form with an introduction and a coda can be found in Liszt’s plan of *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este*, S. 163, No.4 (Table 1).

Liszt’s main achievements in *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este* include programmatic influenced themes as his cornerstone and reducing the number of mood changes. Where Liszt did transform themes, he either transposed them or effectively ‘modulated’ them into other scale-types that he found in functional harmony, traditions of church music or folk music.

[33] Boenke, “Outside the Public Sphere,” 192.

Figure 7.21: The coda with a series of recalled themes in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, mm. 243–278: first the theme B1 in mm. 244–251, the theme A in mm. 252–269, then the final bell-ringing motif resolved in F-sharp major through the weak second degree back to the tonic (II-I).

Figure 7.22: The right-hand 5th finger 'rings' the small bell, following D sharp, E sharp, F sharp, G sharp, A sharp, B natural, C sharp, then back to D sharp, in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, S. 163*, No. 4, mm. 1–8.

Figure 7.23: The sound of big church bells restating the opening motif in three consecutive repeated notes, in Franz Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4, mm. 220–239.

Table 1: The two-part form of *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, S. 163, No. 4.

SECTION	INTRO: Presents the bell-ringing motive and accompaniment patterns mm. 1–39	PART A: Presents Themes A, B, and C mm. 40			PART B: Recalls Themes A, B, and C, in transformation and modulation mm. 132–243			CLIMAX: CODA
Item Classifi-cation	Arpeggios, parallel 5ths, tremolos, trills, staccatos, illustrating the movement of water	Primary Theme A; Second Theme B1 + B2	Repeat Primary Theme A; varied Second Theme B1+ B3	Third Theme C; varied Theme C in doubling the 6ths, resolution in mode	Returned and transformed Primary Theme A'; quoted biblical text	Varied Second Theme B1' and B2'; resolution in authentic cadence (V–I)	Transformed Theme C' in imitations and sequences; resolution in pentatonic scale	Climax: Opening "bell" motif + motif of B2 Coda: B1, A, modulation through enharmonic notes; cadence ends in gigantic bell ring in F sharp
Measure Number	mm.1–13 mm.14–21 mm.22–39	mm.40–47 // mm.48–53 mm.54–63	mm.64–71 // mm.72–77 mm.78–87	mm.88–91, 92–95, 96–100, 100–107 // mm.108–113, 114–119, 120–131	mm.132-143 (modulating E-A) // mm.144-157 (modulating D–B flat)	mm.158–163 // mm.164–181	mm.182–185 mm.186–189 mm.190–193 mm.194–197 // mm.198–201 mm.202–205 mm.206–209 mm.210–213 // mm.214–219	mm.220–226, 227–233, 234–243 // mm.244–251 // mm.252–255, 256–259, 260–263,264–271 // mm.272–278
Specific Musical Traits	1) Prolonged pedal of V 2) Use of diatonic scale in the opening motive 3) Tonal and modal ambiguity, particularly in mm.26–39 4) Avoidance of providing strong tonal emphasis, ex.: avoidance of using leading tone E sharp	One melody for effect of calling Two melodic responses: B1 is played by L.H., set in the first five notes of the C-sharp major scale, B2 is in pentatonic scale with modal resolution	Repeat of call and response Variant in the 2nd melodic response of a Hungarian minor scale in B3	Melody set for building the imitation blocks 1) The first set of theme C appears three times in sequences, resolved in modes 2) The repeated theme C is doubled in sixths and resolved tonally	Return of the primary theme A 1) First return of the primary theme A in E major then modulating to its IV– fourth degree, thus A major 2) Second theme B return in D major then modulating to B-flat major	Return of response melodies 1) The second theme B1, given to R.H., doubling in octaves 2) The second theme B2 set in tonic major scale receiving full 7 notes before its arrival to C-sharp major (V of F-sharp major)	1) Recall the sequential materials, set in simple imitation with clear voice entries 2) Pentatonic scale for the climax	1) Recalls the opening bell-ring motif 2) Reduction and abbreviation of the second theme B 3) Recalls primary theme A in modulations E flat major, G major, C major, and A flat major

7.3: Conclusion

Between 1861 and 1868, Liszt wanted to compose in a "new style within the old," and he made every attempt to incorporate his methods of reworking earlier styles of sacred music into his compositions, including chant quotations and polyphony in the style of Palestrina.[34] Even after 1868, during his second Roman period, Liszt continued to seek new ways to represent non-musical ideas in music with borrowed or reworked musical features. Through a balanced mix of new and old elements and compositional skills, Liszt revealed his reconciliation with his faith in his spiritual program music without a strictly programmatic framework. Liszt's musical language at this time was a blend of old elements of sacred music and his musical inventions, including his striking harmonic language. It is remarkable that his first Roman religious period not only "harmonized with all his antecedents of youth," but, as he added "to me, it is the one object [the Oratorio problem] in art…to which I must sacrifice everything else."[35] After 1868, he began to divide his time equally between Weimar, Budapest, and Rome, while still composing liturgical works as well as instrumental works with religious titles, spiritual texts, and even mystic sonorities until the end of his life.

In Liszt's first Roman period, disappointing results were revealed as the parallels between his personal life and his composing, especially his failure to marry Princess Carolyne paralleling his disappointment at not having any of his masses or other sacred works performed in the main churches in Rome when they were first composed, and he abandoned the dedication of his masses to the Holy Father as he had initially intended, even though they closely observed

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[34] The phrase was created in opposition to, "New wine demands new bottles," which Liszt's pupil Auguste Stradal used to describe what Liszt had done in his Weimar years: his departure from the conventional use of sonata-allegro form, with its three- or four-movement structures rolled into one, by his metamorphoses of themes. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 308–309.

[35] The letter was addressed to his friend Franz Brendel on November 8, 1862. See Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt,* vol. 2: *From Rome to the End*, ed. La Mara [pseud.] and trans. Bache, 31–33.

the style of Palestrina.[36] Later, nearly all of his late piano works turned away from the earlier bravura to a more meditative, somber mood. The melodies became more angular than in his earlier lyrical, singing style, which was planned for and suited to the concert stages. The melody or voice-leading turned inwards rather than toward the extravagant, and often his pieces and melodies ended with a single note, giving a feeling of incompleteness, as in his four *Valses Oubliées, Angelus,* and *Aux Cyprès II. Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* is listener-friendly, radiant in its colors, and although at times meditative, there is no sense of a depressed mood or an idea of death.

Much like the complexity of his personality, many of Liszt's late works mentioned in 7.1.2 received a mixed critical reception because of their dark-hued harmonies and intricate modulations. Liszt's diligent application of old musical features that he had learned from his study of old church music and by copying by hand the voice-leading and idioms of Palestrina's style influenced his compositional style. In Liszt's old age, he was often unusually economical in applying melodic embellishment, changes of rhythm, or thematic characters; it was as if he worked with barely enough notes to ensure their existence. In *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, Liszt did not write any transitional passages or periodic cadences. Without preparing his audiences for different thematic melodies, he modified the conventional concept of binary form and diffused any sense of harmonic direction.

While Liszt's late sacred compositions certainly deliver some beautiful moments, the weight of their too many experiments with the awkward and strange harmonies in too condensed a musical space tended to interrupt and break them.[37] This could explain Liszt's lack of success

[36] Ibid., 624.

[37] A perfect example can be seen in the opening "Kyrie" of Liszt's *Missa Choralis*. In just six and a half minutes, Liszt used a motive from Gregorian chant, imitated voices in thirds and sixths, and used antiphonal and responsorial textures with three voices singing in *fauxbourdon*. On the next page, he sustained the bass organ point

in his first Roman period and in composing liturgical choral music. He had retreated from his audiences by becoming too "self-aware." What he was creating was too ambitious to be sublime. These works had too many meanings but lacked enough notes to express them all naturally. In an earlier study of Liszt's compositional methods incorporating many stylistic elements, I concluded:

> Liszt's lifelong obsession with Christianity may have put too much weight, or pressure, on his liturgical music writing. In this attempt of solving his "oratorio" problem, he may have tried too hard to create something too "sublime" for listeners, who could not live up to his own high expectations and ideals. The "sublime" is strongly aligned with the raw power of nature, which itself is associated especially in the nineteenth century with the power of nature and the power of God. Liszt's excessively exercised his will to search for his sublimated liturgical music, which may be seen as overdoing and causing the opposite listening perception, explaining why many of his late compositions remain unpopular even today. Icarus-like, he attempted to fly too close to the heavens and to the power of nature and God, which cannot be controlled or harnessed by any human.[38]

On the other hand, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este,* composed in the last decade of Liszt's life, is still often performed and has significance today. It can be seen as one of his the most representative, religiously influenced, and programmatic piano works. Since it was published, it has even been considered as part of Liszt's "successful group" of late compositions[39] for the ways in which he included his imagined Palestrina style in it. His kaleidoscopic use of five scale types—a diatonic scale, pentatonic scale, the Lydian mode,

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to shift from a "Kyrie" section in Dorian mode to a "Christe" section in the Lydian mode, changed triple meter to duple meter, repeated the head-motive again in a somehow interrupted antiphonal and responsorial way, then ascended from F to F-sharp (leading note of G minor) and shifted through G minor, E-flat major, B-flat major, C minor and to come back to Kyrie, but now sung in unison, battling between modality and tonality. Finally, four voices settled briefly on an A major triad, which is the dominant of D minor, and he again used the antiphonal and responsorial textures to flip the bass and the three voices between the D minor tonic and dominant triads. And the phrase ended surprisingly with a diminished seventh chord followed by a fermata set as a question mark. After the fermata, the entire coda section was set and ended with D major cadences. Tzu-Yi Chen, "Liszt's Missa Choralis" (unpublished pre-candidacy seminar paper for MUSC 448G, University of Maryland, College Park, Spring 2019), 24-25.

[38] Chen, "Liszt's Missa Choralis," 24-25.

[39] Gut, *Franz Liszt*, 277.

Hungarian minor scale, and whole-tone scale—speaks directly to Liszt's lifelong nomadic existence and represents his geographical relocations, as well as his lifelong spiritual search.

Even while Liszt successfully included "his" imagined Palestrina style in this piano work, he did not simply want to imitate the music of Palestrina. In *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, his modulation in the bass accomplished by using a whole-tone scale and a variety of other scale types, thus mixing the homophonic consonant harmonies with church-influenced modal harmonies. They not only constantly blur tonality and modality but also mix the elements of the reborn musical language of his late years that reflect his nomadic lifestyle, bring a focus on his harmonies fusing those of different origins, and add a unique, programmatic, text-painted tonality to his repertory of compositions for the medium of the piano, thereby creating one of the landmarks of his second Roman period between 1869 and the end of his life.

The most significant element of his composition is his blending of early church modes, Gregorian chant, and other types of scales by constructing his melodies in simple imitation, sequences, and repetitions. The beauty of this music is in its kaleidoscope of scales. The entrances of each imitating voice are clear, and where the melody needed to be doubled, he built it up mainly with thirds or sixths. When Liszt wanted to illustrate special singing effects, he reduced the numbers of singers as instrumental parts to allow the moving melody to sing, so that the audience could hear the color changes more easily. In *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este,* where Liszt silenced the embellished, decorative accompaniment patterns, the melody is often left alone, as a simple solo voice like the chant of a single cantor in a religious service.

The construction of the primary theme and voice doubling remain consistently consonant. The melody moves mostly in stepwise motion, imitating chant. There is no complicated, dense chromaticism. Liszt only applied his virtuosic piano techniques in his figurations that evoked

water. Finally, in the coda of *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, Liszt reinserted the primary thematic blocks[40] of perfect triads, recalling the responding melodies, and reminded the audience of the sound of bells ringing from the work's opening, unifying the entire work. A similar cyclic connection of thematic ideas was observed in his earlier piano compositions, as well as in his sacred choral works written in his first Roman period. For example, Liszt recycled the musical theme and melody from the opening *Kyrie* at the end of the *Agnus Dei* in his *Missa Choralis* and used the same method in his symphonic poems. This helps listeners remember the already heard themes, which are not lost in the variety of key changes and mixed tonal and modal systems.

All roads lead to Rome! The city of Rome gave the composer a spiritually glorified moment, but also hit him harshly in his emotional life. Liszt embraced and reconciled his sorrowful destiny with the musical language found during both of his Roman periods. In his *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, he used water to reimagine a new, improved approach to spiritual music, which echoed what Liszt had written forty-two years ago in his essay published in Paris about the regeneration of religious music: "Come, the day when an artist will see his inspiration gush forth like an inexhaustible life-giving spring. Come, oh come, hour of deliverance, when the poet and the musician will no longer speak of the public, but of THE PEOPLE and GOD."[41]

The answer to Liszt's lifelong artistic mission is provided in his *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* in his *divine* calling as seen in the primary antiphonal theme and heard in his responsorial melodies that were offered with two harmonic solutions: the modal scale *and in the Hungarian minor scale*. Therefore, the concept of longing for a spiritual homeland is particularly strong in this composition, as is Liszt's longing to be returned to both his spiritual and musical homelands.

[40] See footnote 34 above.
[41] See Chapter 1, footnote 3.

Appendix A

A Summary of Scholarly Editions of the Versions of *Après une Lecture de Dante – Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7

To orient readers with essential background for reading Chapter 3, I provide a summary of scholarly editions and of different scholarly views on the history of the different versions of *Dante*.[1] Three scholars have edited versions of what would be published as S. 161, No. 7: Mario Angiolelli, an unpublished edition based only on the sources of versions 2 and 3; Leslie Howard, a 2019 edition (discussed in correspondence with the author in 2021); and Adrienne Kaczmarczyk, a 2010 edition. These three scholars, and David Trippett, in a 2008 article, each proposed different interpretations of Liszt's processes of composing and revising to arrive at four extant versions: (1) *Dante Fragment* (incomplete), (2) *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia: Fantaisie Symphonique pour piano*, (3) *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia*, and (4) *Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*, S. 161, No. 7.[2] Most importantly, they had different opinions about the timing of Liszt's revisions, the number of manuscripts, and the purpose of each manuscript. Nevertheless, they agree thatd Liszt's first draft of the work existed by 1838–1839 and that Liszt premiered it in 1839 with the German title, *Fragment nach Dante* for German-speaking audiences. Liszt also gave his work the French title *Fragment Dantesque* in some of his letters, but there is no surviving manuscript titled *Fragment nach Dante* or *Fragment*

[1] I thank Barbara Haggh-Huglo for her assistance in finding the manuscript images online and with this text.

[2] Discussed in Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 56–59, 92, and Plates 1–2. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. L, has mention of a letter of Liszt of October 1840 in which he was considering publication but later decided against it. This Album leaf, S163f/1, was published in facsimile in Alexander Buchner, *Franz Liszt in Bohemia*, trans. Roberta Finlayson Samsour (London: Peter Nevill, 1962), according to Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021. It has another similar piece with the correct harmonic progression for mm. 262–263 of Dante which is not to an augmented triad but an E-flat major chord (ibid.). Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. LII, note 202, and transcribed on 172. She incorrectly dates this leaf as March 13, 1840.

Dantesque. In addition to the editions, correspondence, and secondary literature, I studied the earliest manuscript pages available to me that are found in D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–18, 60/ I–76,[3] and 60/ I–17, and Liszt's latest published version 60/I–13 (S. 161, No. 7).[4] Angiolelli's editions proved to be completely different from their editions by Kaczmarczyk in the Hungarian *Neue Liszt Ausgabe*, where they are catalogued with a unique set of numbers, as follows: *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia*, S. 158a; *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia*, S. 158b[5]; and *Après une lecture de Dante*, S. 158c: "*Fantasia quasi Sonata*."

Adrian Williams and Ernst Burger claimed that Liszt's earliest version dates from 1837, when he was staying at Lake Como and reading and discussing Dante and a statue of Dante that he saw with Countess d'Agoult.[6] Those letters do not mention a "Fragment dantesque" however, so there is no concrete evidence of a written draft, but on September 26, 1839, the Countess d'Agoult wrote to Henri Lehmann, "…*Le bravo suonatore* began this morning a *Fragment dantesque* which is sending him to the very Devil. He is so consumed by it that he won't go to Naples, so as to complete this work…"[7] In the same letter, she wrote that the *Fragment dantesque* of Liszt was "destined to remain in his sketch portfolio."[8] Angiolelli thought *Dante* was begun in any case in or after February 1839, but most likely in September 1839 at San

[3] Franz Liszt, "Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia," D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/ I–76.

[4] I thank Leslie Howard for making these unpublished editions made by his collaborator Mario Angiolelli available to me in emails dated April 21 and May 8, 2021.

[5] Leslie Howard described Liszt's change of the first word of the title to "Prolégomènes," because Liszt wanted to say that his composition provided preliminary observations about Dante. Ibid.

[6] See Liszt, *Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Williams, 68, and Burger, *Eine Lebenschronik*, 89. According to Angiolelli, that idea goes back to Lina Ramann, who thought Dante was begun in 1837 in Bellagio. Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021.

[7] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 275.

[8] Ibid., 275. According to Liszt, this is evidence that a form of the composition existed on 26 September. Also mentioned by this editor is a letter of Liszt of October 2, 1839, that mentions it. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. XLIX.

Rossore near Pisa, because of Marie's just-mentioned letter and another written by Liszt on September 20, 1840.[9]

In 1839, Liszt premiered in Vienna a composition listed as *Fragment nach Dante* in the concert program of that first documented performance, which was on October 25, 1839, according to Dezső Legány, and/or in private in the Hôtel de l'Europe on that day, as Trippett adds, and in public between November 15 and December 14, according to Angiolelli, and/or on December 5, 1839 in the Musikvereinsaal in Vienna, according to Trippett and Kaczmarczyk.[10] The manuscript from which Liszt performed does not survive, but the earliest fragment and the earliest complete copy of the work to survive have been considered as witnesses to what Liszt performed.

The two earliest fragments, in Liszt's handwriting, "can be dated within a few months of his first documented performance of *Dante*."[11] Of these, the earliest extant fragment, the autograph D–WRgs, Liszt Noten 60/1–18, Blatt 1, was published in 2003 as *Dante Fragment,* S. 701e (Figure 3.4), but only the publication survives; the fragment itself is lost. Trippett argues that this was the sketch described in the Countess d'Agoult's letter.[12] The fragment should be dated 1839, the date of the earliest reference to a titled work, since any earlier evidence is circumstantial.[13] This fragment is important, because the tritones in the opening octaves that are

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[9] Leslie Howard, email to author of April 21, 2021, with text and edition by Angiolelli.

[10] Ibid. Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszt: unbekannte Presse und Briefe aus Wien 1822–1886*, ed. Dezső Legány (Budapest: Occidental Press, 1984), 69–71. Trippett writes that it was the fourth morning concert December 5, 1839, and that the state of any music used for Liszt's performances is unknown, while Kaczmarczyk states that this concert took place as early as December 5, 1839, in the Musikvereinssaal in Vienna. Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 92, and cf. figure 1 on p. 58 for a chronology of the copying, though his entries for 1839 and ca.1840 are disputed by other scholars. Also see Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. XLIX.

[11] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 55.

[12] Ibid., 92.

[13] Franz Liszt, "Dante," D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60 /I–18, Blatt 1. See Illustration 1 in chapter 3. Notice the beginning tritones on the manuscript page reproduced as Illustration 1: "Skizzen zur Dante-Sonate," first published as Liszt [ed. Liszt Society], "Dante Fragment S701e," *The Liszt Society Journal* 28 (2003): 34.

in the 1858 publication are already present in it. These tritones were certainly in the score at Liszt's première of the work in Vienna in 1839.

The harmonic progression of the second theme of *Dante* is first traceable in two somewhat later fragments, a dated holograph sketch Liszt made in Prague on March 11, 1840, CZ–Pk, MS 1C.51 (Figure 3.9), with a chord progression in C, which Trippett gives as evidence that Liszt performed the work, still in an unknown state, in Bohemia[14], and a dated holograph album leaf written in Düsseldorf on November 3, 1841, now without a shelf number at D–DÜhh (Figure 3.10).[15] This latter "Preludio" (S. 163 f/2), has a harmonic progression corresponding to mm. 250–273 of the final version, but is used in all four versions of the composition.[16]

Four other fragments survive. One is from this approximate time, a holograph album leaf dated August 30, 1840, that Liszt wrote in Exeter. It is described in a Sotheby's catalogue of May 17, 1990, but its current location is unknown.[17] While in England, Liszt thought of publishing his version according to a letter to the Countess d'Agoult dated September 22, 1840.[18] Trippett notes that in this letter Liszt writes "that he had been revising several sections of Belloni's manuscript" [now D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, I-76] and suggests that the results of those revisions are in graphite pencil.[19] Another fragment is an autograph album leaf Liszt wrote in Berlin and dated February 21, 1842, which is described in a Sotheby's catalogue dated May 21, 1998, but is now at an unknown location.[20] There is also a holograph album leaf dated August

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[14] See Chapter 3, footnote 32.

[15] The surviving incomplete manuscript plates, including the 1839 manuscript, 1840 Prague sketches, and other album leaves, show revisions that led to three different scholarly opinions. See Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 52–93. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, XXVII–XXXI, 170–171, 184–190. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard, pp. IV-V.

[16] See the transcriptions in Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. LII, note 204, facsimile 170 and transcription 171. Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021.

[17] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. LII, note 198, and transcribed 172.

[18] Angiolelli text made available by Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021.

[19] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 92.

[20] Cited in Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, transcribed 173.

14, 1842 titled “Preludio” and in CDN–Lu.[21] Finally, there is an undated Liszt’s autograph, D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–18, Blatt 3 (Figure 3.10). The earlier fragments among these record Liszt’s juxtaposed, conflicting, and tension-bridging harmonies and scales, which were still in a raw form by comparison with the surviving later versions.

The relationship of these dated fragments to Liszt’s 1839 concert and to the earliest surviving complete version, D–WRgs, Liszt Noten 60/I–76, is debated. That complete version of *Dante* is the copy made by Gaetano Belloni and entitled, by Liszt in his own hand, *Paralipomènes à la Divina Comedia—Fantaisie Symphonique pour piano*.[22] In 2019, Leslie Howard proposed that even though Liszt made many subsequent holograph corrections to it, Belloni’s copy was possibly the version Liszt had performed in 1839, but in 2021, Howard offered a new suggestion that Belloni’s copy had been altered from an earlier lost source that was possibly the version Liszt performed in concert in 1839.[23] Howard dates the holograph revisions to I-76 later than that concert—to Liszt’s international tours in the 1840s. He claims that by 1841, Belloni had made another fair copy and that two layers of revisions followed, which led to the second title *Paralipomènes* in Liszt’s hand on the title page of I-76 [p. 3], written by Liszt over “Fantasia quasi Sonata (the latter written by the copyist Adolph Stahr)”.

By contrast, Trippett, quoting Alan Walker, claimed that the kind of paper on which the fragments from 1839 and 1840 were written did not correspond to Belloni’s extant manuscript, I-76, therefore Trippett speculated that *Fragment nach Dante* was solely conceived as an improvisation: “[…] the earliest pieces, the 1839 fragment and 1840 sketches, served at the time

[21] Ibid. Fragment transcribed in Liszt, “Dante Fragment S701e,” *The Liszt Society Journal* 28 (2003), 9.
[22] Trippett, “Après une Lecture de Liszt,” 56–59.
[23] Leslie Howard, email to author, May 8, 2021.

as Liszt's stage *aide-memoire*."[24] Trippett also wrote that Liszt's performances of 1839–1840 "must have resulted in the written exemplar of a complete piece (now lost) that was copied by Belloni as the original portion of I-76.[25]

As explained above, after Liszt's initial concert in 1839 at which he performed an early version of *Dante* during his years touring Europe (1840–1847), he made corrections and changes as he prepared to publish this work.[26] Trippett placed Liszt's revisions in at least three main stages: 1839–1840, 1849–1853, and ca.1854–1858 (listed in his table 1). Liszt's first copyist after the concert was Belloni. Liszt likely had his own copy with his own revisions made before 1847, but no such copy survives.

Kaczmarczyk proposed that the Belloni copy was made between 1845–1848, that Liszt continued to revise it, and that some of the pages copied by Belloni that were revised by Liszt went astray. Kaczmarczyk wrote that one such revised page was I-18, no. 3, which Trippett claimed was in Belloni's handwriting and thought it "likely to be the very first notated conclusion to the *Fragment dantesque*, if we accept that the Prague fragment … also a concluding fragment—was not Liszt's own manuscript."[27] In 1845, Liszt thought of making a ninety–minute work for soloists, choir, and orchestra, and from the end of April through the beginning of May he met with a librettist and improvised for an hour on the organ in Marseilles Cathedral.[28]

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[24] The fragment was published without commentary as Liszt, "Dante Fragment S701e" [ed. Liszt Society], *The Liszt Society Journal* 28 (2003), 34, and should be dated to 1839 in my opinion which follows Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 275. However, Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 55–56, thinks the concert of 1839–1840 resulted in a complete copy of the work, now lost. Trippett claims the now lost copy was at one point reproduced by Belloni, and that the Belloni version is the complete copy that is I–76. See Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 58 for Trippett's speculative chronology. Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021.

[25] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 92.

[26] Ibid., 59.

[27] Ibid., 92.

[28] Ibid.

Scholars agree that Liszt again focused on revising *Dante* following his arrival in Weimar in 1847. He worked with different Weimar copyists, Adolph Stahr and Eduard Henschke, not Belloni, on a new round of heavy revisions during 1848 and 1849, when he combined the sections of his work into a single movement, restructured the rhythm and other musical elements, reshaped the textures, and changed the title to *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia*. These changes can be observed in the second part of the manuscript D–WRgs, Liszt Noten 60/I–76.[29] Kaczmarczyk considered this part of I-76 an engraving copy (*Stichvorlage*).[30] Trippett dated Liszt's second title to 1848–1849. That version was in two parts with small additions and a coda.[31]

This may be seen in Liszt's handwritten list of his works in 1847–1848, which is D–SRgs 60/Z-17a. The last work under the heading "Under publication" is "Fragment nach Dante's Hölle." Kaczmarczyk thought that since Liszt had given his reworkings of 1848–1849 to the engraver under the title *Paralipomènes* that this fragment referred to *Paralipomènes*. D–WRgs 60/I–17, 23b, is a sketch that preceded the planned publication of *Paralipomènes*, which according to Liszt's letter of December 5, 1848, he wanted Kistner in Leipzig to publish with that title in 1849.[32] Trippett explains that Liszt contracted Eduard Henschke to prepare a fair copy for that purpose, and that Henschke did add to I-76 before transcribing the work into I-17, the latter which Winklhofer dates prior to August 1, 1849.[33] Trippett notes that this is because on that date Liszt wrote to his copyist Joachim Raff that the score was completely finished. Liszt also added the idea of "Sonata quasi fantasia" from Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, then calling

[29] Ibid., 55, 92.

[30] Ibid., 92–93. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, 185–188.

[31] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard. Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 93 notes that the first bifolium of I-76 is of a different paper-type and written by Adolph Stahr, who worked for Liszt 1848–1851.

[32] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. L.

[33] Reported in Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 93.

the work *Fantasie quasi sonata Proligomènes [sic*[34]*] zu Dante's Göttliche Comödie*. The result was I-17 on paper that Trippett dated between January and August 1849.[35]

Angiolelli prepared an edition of the two works, the 1839 *Paralipomènes* and the ca. 1840–1844 *Prolégomènes*, in the composite manuscript I-76. He noticed that *Prolégomènes* is dated "Weimar" and probably "6 October 1844," possibly when Liszt changed the title to *Prolégomènes*. After the copy of *Paralipomènes* was made, Liszt worked on a fair copy to arrive at a work with its third title, *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia*,[36] as attested by a letter he wrote on August 1, 1849 to Joachim Raff in which Liszt stated that the score was finished and called it *Fantasia quasi Sonate: Prolégomènes zu Dante Göttlicher Comödie*.[37] Angiolelli thought this *Fantasia* of ca. 1849 followed *Après une Lecture de Dante-Fantasia quasi Sonata*. To Angiolelli, the process of composition between the *Fantasia* and *Après* and the definitive version, which he called "*Après II*," was gradual, spanning over twenty years. Liszt revised thematic and structural material omitting some earlier variants to achieve a final version.[38]

Howard wrote that the fair copy with the title *Prolégomènes à la Divina Commedia* represented a first layer of revision to the second part of I–76.[39] Pasteovers and inserted pages were made to the fair copy. Liszt later crossed out the old title, *Prolégomènes*, and wrote a new title at the bottom of the title page: *Après une Lecture de Dante – Fantasia quasi Sonata*. The extensive second layer of revisions included some replacement sheets, as well as that final title, and Liszt's reworking of the two-part sonata form into one condensed and uninterrupted

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[34] Annotation by Trippett.

[35] Ibid., 93.rsase

[36] D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I-17, Blatt 1: "Après une Lecture du Dante : Fantasia quasi Sonata." Liszt crossed out the title "Paralipomenes a la 'Divina Commedia' Fantaisie Symphonique," and then added a new title, "Prolégomènes," on the top of the same page.

[37] Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021.

[38] Ibid., transmitting Angiolelli's PDF.

[39] Ibid.

movement. This was the version that Liszt performed under the title *Fantasia – göttlicher Comödie*, according to Howard and Angiolelli.[40] The final title in 1849, according to Angiolelli, was *Après une Lecture du Dante – Fantasia quasi Sonata*.[41]

The earliest full manuscript, D-WRgs, Liszt-Noten, 60/I-17, is a revision based on I-76. Trippett explained that Liszt revised I-17 using different methods. The results were stitched together to conceal what had been removed, possibly as a *Stichvorlage*, but the stitching was undone so modern scholars could study it. Liszt's final title previously mentioned was written in graphite pencil on the title page.[42] Kaczmarczyk credited 1–17, to Eduard Henschke ca. 1849, but it has newly copied and altered pages in Liszt's hand.[43] That version was the basis for a fourth version, D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/ I–18, copied by Raff, which has Liszt's revised ending to the second version.[44]

Howard claimed that I-17, a revision based on I-76, was transferred to Joachim Raff and recopied by Raff as a fair copy between 1849 and 1854. That fair copy is D-WRgs, Liszt-Noten, 60/I-13. From June 1853 on, it had a title borrowed from Victor Hugo, that of no. XVII in *Les Voix intérieures*, a collection published in 1836, which became the final title *Après une Lecture de Dante, Fantasia quasi sonata* and is also in a letter Liszt wrote on June 27 to Schott, probably in 1853, given the date of that title.[45]

Angiolelli wrote that a letter of Liszt to Eduard Reményi dated June 1853 calls it la *Fantaisie d'après Dante*, which is its title in the collection *Les Voix intérieures* of 1837, and that

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[40] Leslie Howard, email to author, May 8, 2021.

[41] See Chapter 1, footnote 23.

[42] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 93.

[43] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. LII. She suggested that the final title was already given ca. 1852. See p. XLVII, note 149. Liszt, "Paralipomènes à la 'Divina Commedia' Fantaisie Symphonique," S. 158a, in Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, 96–129. Liszt, "Prolégomènes à la 'Divina Commedia' après une Lecture du Dante Fantasia quasi Sonata, S. 158b, in Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, 130–158.

[44] Angiolelli.

[45] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. LI.; Howard, email to author, May 8, 2021.

Liszt may have come back to that latter text of *Les Voix* between September 1851 and June 1853. Angiolelli claimed that Liszt knew it when he composed the song "La Tombe et la Rose."

Then, ca. 1854 according to Angiolelli, Joachim Raff copied D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–13, which was corrected by Liszt. Kaczmarczyk thought that copy was used by Schott for the 1858 edition.[46] Yet Trippett thought the fair copy made for the printer ca. 1857 does not survive.[47] Trippett dated I-18 ca. 1853–1854, and I-13 ca. 1857–1858.[48] The latter included Liszt's last small edits and the final title *Après une Lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata,* S. 161, No. 7*,* which would be published within the collection of seven works in 1858, *Années de pèlerinage, Deuxième année: Italie,* S. 161, as the concluding work.[49] Scholars agree that the idea to publish *Dante* as part of the Italian year of the pilgrimage dates only from 1850 onwards.[50] Trippett described D–WRgs, Liszt Noten, 60/I–18, no. 2, of ca. 1853 as a correction leaf written by Liszt with his reworking of the transition into the *Presto agitato* near the end of the sonata, which was copied into the final source, I-13, but is not in I-17, so must date from ca. 1853–1854. Howard suggested that Liszt intended to publish the entire collection by the end of 1854, according to Liszt's letter to Hans von Bülow.[51] The final version of Dante in I-13 was published and edited in the Neue Liszt Ausgabe (NLA) in 2010. It is the version performed today and that which the author performed in her final DMA recital.[52]

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[46] Ibid., pp. LII–LIII and description 188–190.

[47] See Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," especially 59, his table of these sources, with foliation, existing watermarks, and scribes.

[48] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 93. Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard. *Liszt, Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk. Leslie Howard, email to author, April 21, 2021.

[49] Scholars agree on this chronology. See Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage* ed. Howard. Leslie Howard, email to author, May 8, 2021.

[50] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Kaczmarczyk, p. L.

[51] Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage*, ed. Howard, p. V.

[52] Trippett, "Après une Lecture de Liszt," 93.

Appendix B

Nikolaus Lenau, *Faust: Ein Gedicht*, 6. *Der Tanz*: English Translation, Original German.

Faust: A Poem

Nikolaus Lenau
(1802-1850)

6. The Dance

Village Inn
A marriage. Music and dancing

Mephistopheles dressed as a hunter
(looking through the window)
1 It's going merrily inside;
2 We must join in. Haha
(entering with Faust)
3 Such a lass burning with passion
4 Tastes better than a folio.

Faust
5 I do not know what is happening to me,
6 What moves my every sense.
7 Never has my blood so burned so much,
8 Giving me such strange courage.

Mephistopheles
9 Your blazing eyes reveal it clearly:
10 It is the wild host of desire
11 Which locked away in your conceit of freedom
12 Now breaks loose from every corner.
13 Take one to dance,
14 And plunge boldly into the throng!

Faust
15 That one over there with the black eyes
16 Makes my entire soul ache.
17 Her glance with alluring power
18 Shines over the precipice of endless bliss.
19 How those rosy cheeks flush,
20 With the sparkle of a whole fresh life!
21 It must be a measureless sweet joy
22 To close those lips
23 That swell with yearning, the awareness
24 Of two tender, sensual cushions of death.
25 How those breasts struggle longingly
26 In blissful, flowing desire!
27 I would be enraptured to entwine myself
28 Around that body, slender and voluptuous.
29 Ha! How the long black tresses
30 Vanquish the compulsion with impatience
31 And swing around the neck, whilst fly around
32 The rapid storm bells of lust!

Faust: Ein Gedicht

Nikolaus Lenau
(1802-1850)

6. Der Tanz

Dorfschenke
Hochzeit. Musik und Tanz

Mephistopheles als Jäger
(zum Fenster herein)
1 Da drinnen geht es lustig zu;
2 Da sing wir auch dabei, Juchhu!
(Mit Faust eintretend)
3 So eine Dime lustentbrannt
4 Schmeckt besser als ein Foliant.

Faust
5 Ich weiß nicht wie mir da geschieht,
6 Wie mich's an allen Sinnen zieht.
7 So kochte niemals noch mein Blut,
8 Mir ist ganz wunderlich zumut.

Mephistopheles
9 Dein heißes Auge blitzt es klar:
10 Es ist dur Lüste tolle Schar,
11 Die eingesperrt dein Narrendünkel,
12 Sie brechen los aus jedem Winkel.
13 Fang eine dir zum Tanz heraus,
14 Und stürze keck dich ins Gebraus!

Faust
15 Die mit den schwarzen Augen dort
16 Reißt mir die ganze Seele fort.
17 Ihr Aug' mit lockender Gewalt
18 Ein Abgrund tiefer Wonne strahlt.
19 Wie diese roten Wangen glühn,
20 Ein volles, frisches Leben sprühn!
21 's muß unermeßlich süße Lust sein,
22 An diese Lippen sich zu schließen,
23 Die schmachtend schwellen, dem Bewußtsein
24 Zwei wollustweiche Sterbekissen.
25 Wie diese Brüste ringend bangen
26 In selig flutendem Verlangen!
27 Um diesen Leib, den üppig schlanken,
28 Möcht' ich entzückt herum mich ranken.
29 Ha! wie die langen schwarzen Locken
30 Voll Ungeduld den Zwang besiegen
31 Und um den Hals geschwungen fliegen,
32 Der Wollust rasche Sturmesglocken!

33 I shall go crazy, I shall die
34 If I look at the wench any longer;
35 And yet I lack the resolve
36 To approach her with my greetings.

Mephistopheles
37 A wondrous sex, forsooth,
38 The brood of the first pair of sinners!
39 He who was diced with hell
40 Is now shy of a little woman,
41 A real flower of womankind,
42 And ten times more of desire
(addressing the players)
43 You dear people, your bows
44 Are yet too drowsily drawn!
45 To your waltzes should spin
46 Ailing pleasure to lame feet,
47 But youth not full of blood and fire.
48 Hand me a fiddle
49 And another sound will come directly
50 And give a different life to the inn!

51 The player handed over the fiddle to the hunter,
52 The hunter bowed the fiddle mightily.
53 Soon the playful tones surged and dwindled
54 Like blessed dying moans of pleasure,
55 Like sweet nothings, so secret and secure,
56 Amorous sniggering in sultry nights.
57 Soon a further rise and fall and swell;
58 Thus nestled lecherous bathing waves
59 Around blossoming naked girlish forms.
60 Now a shrill cry rang out from the murmurs:
61 The girl, frightened, called for help,
62 The lad, the fiery one, leapt from the reeds.
63 Then the tones are detestable, grasping powerfully,
64 And struggled entwined in the crazed crowed.
65 The bathing virgin, who wrestled long,
66 Was finally forced into an embrace by the man.
67 There pleaded a lover, the woman had compassion,
68 They were heard from the heat of their kisses.
69 Now sounded the joyful strings in triple stops,
70 As when two knaves quarrel over a lass;
71 One, vanquished, gradually falls silent,
72 The amorous couple embraced blissfully,
73 In redoubled tones the blended voices
74 Ascended frantically the ladder of pleasure.
75 And ever more fierily, thunderously, stormily,
76 Like male exultation, virginal whimpering.
77 The violins sounded temptingly,
78 And all entwined in a orgiastic circle.
79 How crazily the village players acted!
80 As one, they threw their fiddles to the ground.

33 Ich werde rasend, ich verschmachte,
34 Wenn länger ich das Weib betrachte;
35 Und doch versagt mir der Entschluß,
36 Sie anzugehn mit mein Gruß.

Mephistopheles
37 Ein wunderlich Geschlecht fürwahr,
38 Die Brut vom ersten Sünderpaar!
39 Der mit der Höll; es hat gewagt,
40 Vor einem Weiblein jetzt verzagt,
41 Das viel zwar hat an Leibeszierden,
42 Doch zehnmal mehr noch an Begierden.
(Zu den Spielleuten)
43 Ihr lieben Leutchen, euer Bogen
44 Ist viel zu schläfrig noch gezogen!
45 Nach eurem Walzer mag sich drehen
46 Die sieche Lust auf lahmen Zehen,
47 Doch Jugend nicht voll Blut und Brand.
48 Reicht eine Geige mir zur Hand,
49 's wird geben gleich ein andres Klingen,
50 Und in der Schenk; ein andres Springen!

51 Der Spielmann dem Jäger die Fiedel reciht,
52 Der Jäger die Fiedel gewaltig streicht.
53 Bald wogen und schwinden die scherzenden Töne
54 Wie selig hinsterbendes Lustgestöhne,
55 Wie soßes Geplauder, so heimlich und sicher,
56 In schwülen Nächten verliebtes Gekicher.
57 Bald wieder ein Steigen und Fallen und Schwellen;
58 So schmiegen sich lüsterne Badeswellen
59 Um blühende nackte Mädchengestalt.
60 Jetzt gellend ein Schrei ins Gemurmel schallt:
61 Das Mädchen erschrickt, sie ruft nach Hilfe,
62 Der Bursche, der feurige, springt aus dem Schilfe.
63 Da hassen sich, fassen sich mächtig die Klänge,
64 Und kämpfen verschlungen im wirren Gedränge.
65 Die badende Jungfrau, die lange gerungen,
66 Wird endlich vom Mann zur Umarmung gezwungen.
67 Dort fleht ein Buhle, das Weib hat Erbarmen,
68 Man hört sie von seinen Küssen erwarmen.
69 Jetzt klingen im Dreigriff die lustigen Saiten,
70 Wie wenn um ein Mädel zwei Buben sich streiten;
71 Der eine, besiegte, verstummt allmählich,
72 Die liebenden beiden umklammern sich selig,
73 Im Doppelgetön die verschmolzenen Stimmen
74 Auf rasend die Leiter der Lust erklimmen.
75 Und feuriger, brausender, stürmischer immer,
76 Wie Männergejauchze, Junferngewimmer,
77 Erschellen der Geige verführende Weisen,
78 Und alle verschlingt ein bacchantisches Kreisen.
79 Wie närrisch die Geiger des Dorfs sich gebärden!
80 Sie werfen ja sämtlich die Fiedel zur Erden.

81 The enchanted whirl moved,
82 With anything living within the inn.
83 The echoing walls, with pale-faced envy,
84 Rued that they could not dance along.
85 Above all, though, the blessed Faust
86 Rushed to the dance with his brunette;
87 He took her by the hand, stammered vows
88 And danced her through the open doorway.
89 They dance through meads and garden paths,
90 Whilst behind them chased the viol sounds;
91 They dance giddily out to the woods,
92 And the violins faded gradually away.
93 The lingering tones rustled through the trees,
94 Like lecherous, flattering dreams of love.
95 There raised the warbling sounds of joy
96 From the nightingale in the fragrant bushes,
97 That swelled more hotly the pleasure of the drinkers,
98 As though the singer were summoned by the devil.
99 Then the power of yearning drew them down
100 And noisily they were engulfed in the sea of bliss.

81 Der zauberergriffene Wirbel bewegt,
82 Was irgend die Schenke Lebendiges hegt.
83 Mit bleichem Neide die dröhenden Mauern
84 Daß sie nicht mittanzen können bedauern.
85 Vor allen aber der selige Faust
86 Mit seiner Brünette den Tan hinbraust;
87 Er drückt ihr die Händchen, er stammelt Schwüre,
88 Und tanzt sie hinaus durch die offene Türe.
89 Sie tanzen durch Flur und Gartengänge,
90 Und hinterher jagen die Geigenklänge;
91 Sie tanzen taumelnd hinaus zum Wald,
92 Und leiser und leiser die Geige verhallt.
93 Die schwindenden Töne durchsäuseln die Bäume,
94 Wie lüsterne, schmeichelnde Lieberstäume.
95 Da hebt den flötenden Wonneschall
96 Aus duftigen Büschen die Nachtigall,
97 Die heißer die Lust der Trunkenen schwellt,
98 Als wäre der Sänger vom Teufel bestellt.
99 Da zieht sie nieder die Sehnsucht schwer,
100 Und brausend verschlingt sie das Wonnemeer.

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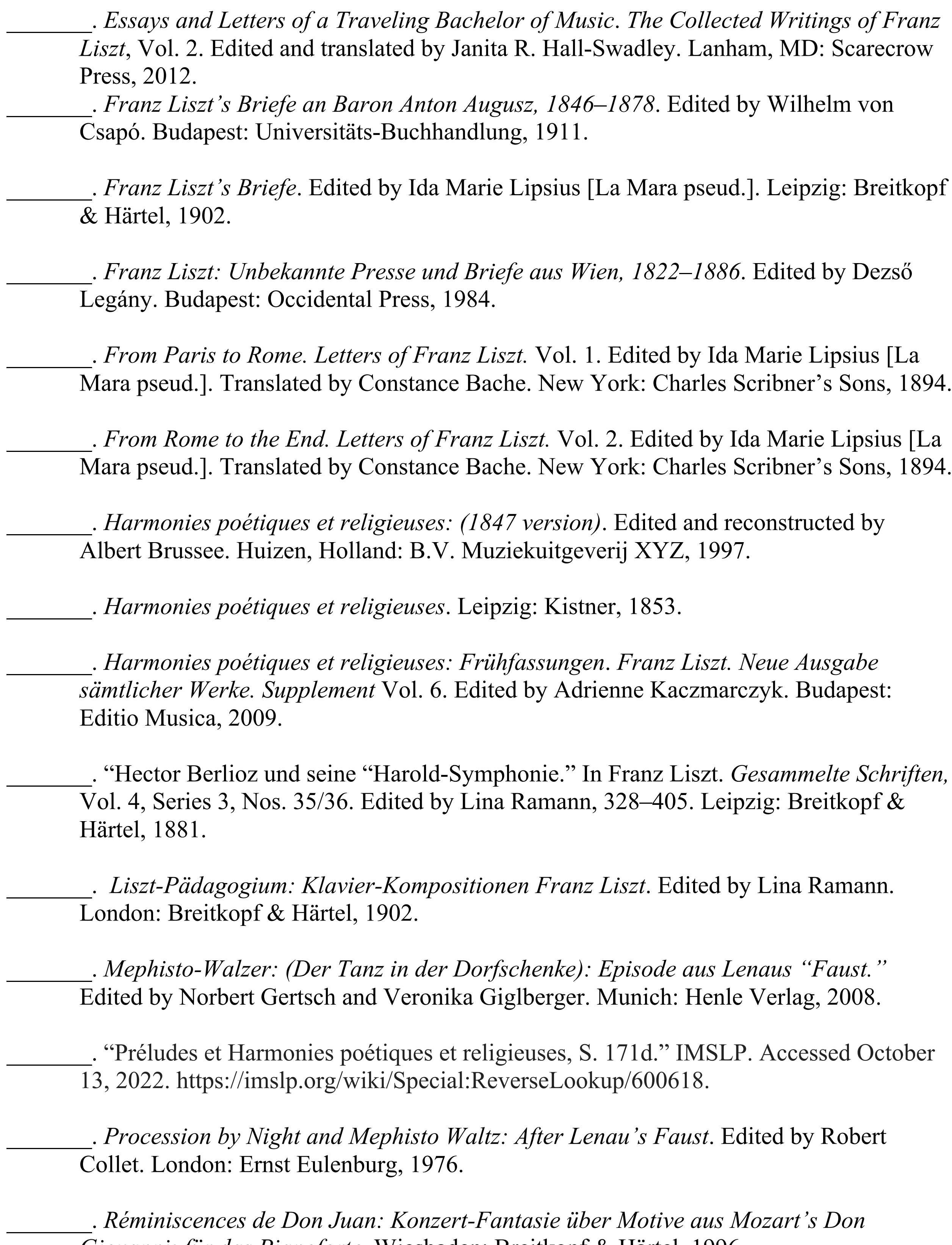

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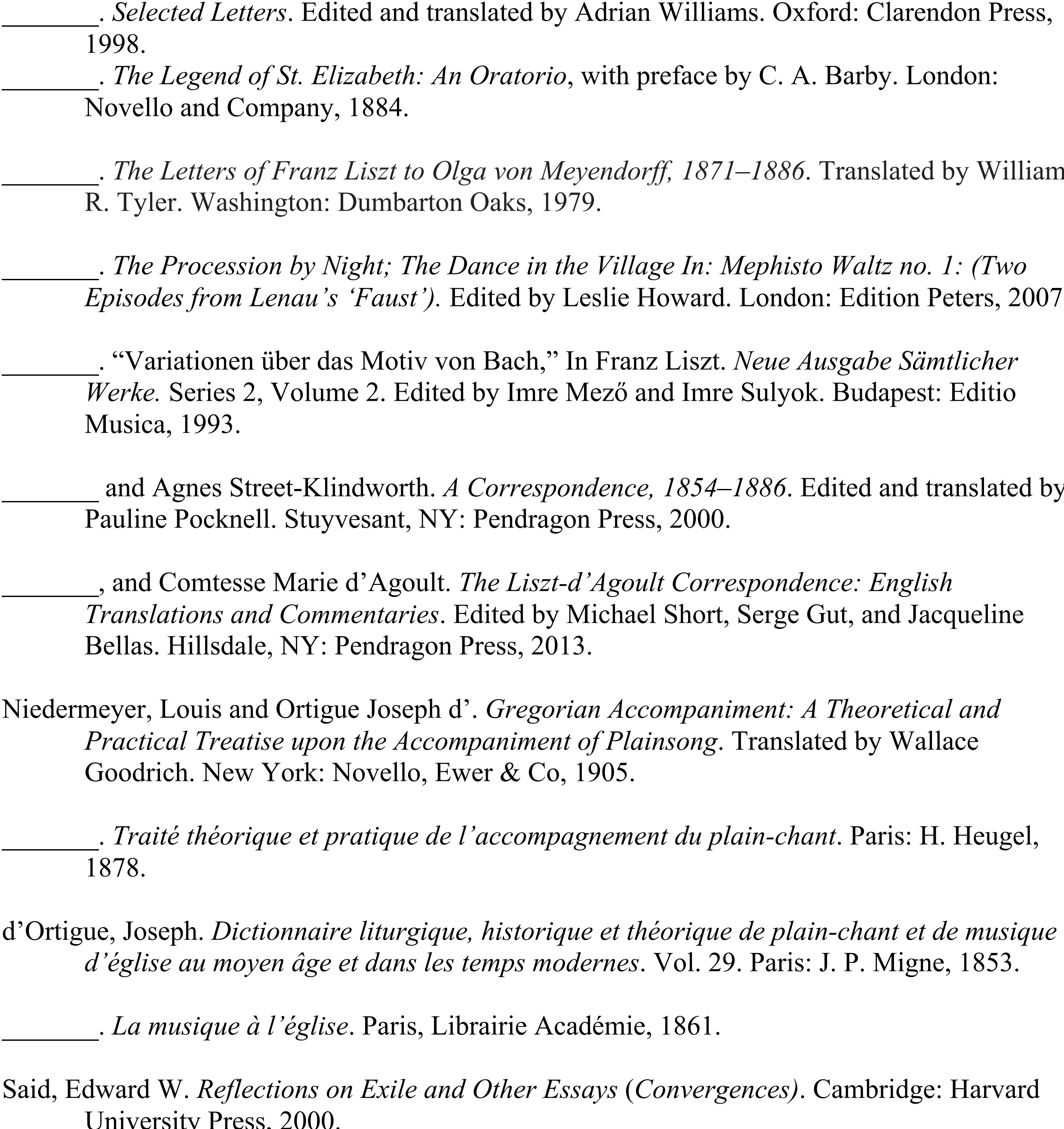

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