



University Music Class Room,

EDINBURGH.

---

FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

---

**CONCERT III.**

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1904.

**A Liszt Pianoforte Recital, illustrative of the different  
classes of the Master's Music for Pianoforte Solo.**

---

*Performer,*

MR PAUL DELLA TORRE.



## INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME.

---

THERE is nothing easier than to estimate Liszt the pianist, nothing more difficult than to estimate Liszt the composer. As to Liszt the pianist, old and young, conservatives and progressives, not excepting the keyboard specialists, are perfectly agreed that he was unique, unsurpassed and unsurpassable. As to Liszt the composer, on the other hand, opinions differ widely and multifariously—from the attribution of superlative genius to the denial of the least talent. This diversity arises from partisanship, individuality of taste, and the various conceptions formed of the nature of creative power. Those, however, who call Liszt a composer without talent, confess themselves either ignorant of his achievements or incapable of distinguishing good from bad, and of duly apportioning praise and blame. Those, on the other hand, who call Liszt a creative genius, should not omit to observe and state that his genius was qualitatively unlike the genius of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. With him the creative impulse was in the main and as a rule an intellectual impulse. With the great masters mentioned the impulse was of a general origin, all the faculties co-operating. While with them composition was always spontaneous, being, however great the travail, a birth, not a making; with Liszt it was often reflective, the solution of a problem, an experiment, a caprice, a defiance of conventional respectability, or a device for the dumb-founding and electrification of the gaping multitude. In short, Liszt was to a larger extent inventive than creative. The foregoing remarks do not pretend to be more than a suggestive attempt at explaining the inexplicable differences of creative power. That Liszt could be spontaneous and in the best sense creative, he has proved by whole compositions, and more frequently by parts of compositions. That has to be noted as well as that his love of experimenting and scorn for the familiar, not to mention the commonplace, led him often to turn his back on the beautiful and to embrace the ugly.

As a composer of pianoforte music, Liszt's merits are more generally acknowledged than as a composer of any other kind.



Here, indeed, his position is a commanding one. We should be obliged to regard him with respect, admiration, and gratitude even if his compositions were æsthetically altogether a failure. For they incorporate an original pianoforte style, a style that won new resources from the instrument, and opened new possibilities to the composer for it, and the player on it. The French revolution of 1830 aroused Liszt from a state of lethargy. A year after this political revolution, there occurred an event that brought about in him an artistic revolution. This event was the appearance of Paganini in Paris. The wonderful performances of the unique violin virtuoso revealed to him new ideas. He now began to form that pianoforte style which combined as it were the excellences of all the other instruments, individually and collectively. Liszt himself called the process "the orchestration of the pianoforte." But before the transformation could be consummated other influences had to be brought to bear on the architect. The influence of Chopin, who appeared in Paris soon after Paganini, must have been great, but was too subtle and partial to be easily gauged. It is different with Berlioz, whose influence on Liszt was palpable and general, affecting every branch of his art-practice. Thalberg has at least the merit of having by his enormous success in 1836 stimulated Liszt to put forth his whole strength.

The vast mass of Liszt's pianoforte compositions is divisible first into two classes—the entirely original compositions, and the compositions based to a more or less extent on foreign matter. The latter class consists of transcriptions of songs (Schubert, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Franz, etc.), symphonies and overtures (Berlioz, Beethoven, Rossini, Wagner, etc.), and operatic themes (from Rossini and Bellini to Wagner and Verdi), and of fifteen Hungarian rhapsodies; the former consists of studies, brilliant virtuosic pieces, musical poems, secular and sacred, picturesque, lyrical, etc. (such as *Années de Pélerinage*, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Consolations*, the legends "St François d'Assise: La Prédication aux oiseaux," and "St François de Paule marchant sur les flots," etc.), and one work in sonata form, but not the conventional sonata form. Although not unfrequently leaving something to be desired in the matter of discretion, his transcriptions of songs are justly famous masterpieces. Marvellous in the reproduction of orchestral effects are the transcriptions of symphonies and overtures. The operatic transcriptions (*Illustrations*, *Fantaisies*), into which the *geistreiche* Liszt put a great deal of his own, do not now enjoy the popularity they once enjoyed; the present age has lost some of its love for musical fireworks and the tricking-out and transmogrification by an artist of other artists'

ideas. The Hungarian Rhapsodies, on the other hand, which are still more fantasias on the adopted matter than the operatic transcriptions, continue to be favourites of the virtuosi and the public. As to the original compositions, they are very unequal in artistic value. Many of them, however, are undoubtedly of the greatest beauty, and stand whatever test may be applied to them. No one would think of numbering with these exquisite perfect things the imposing Sonata. It cannot be placed by the side of the sonatas of Beethoven, whose ideal and formative power Liszt lacked. Nevertheless it is impossible for the unprejudiced not to recognise in it a noble effort of a highly gifted and ardently striving mind. Nothing could characterise the inequality of Liszt's compositions better than the fact that it is possible to draw up a programme of them wholly irreproachable, admirable, and delightful, and equally possible to draw up one wholly objectionable, abhorrent, and distressful. All in all, Liszt is a most remarkable and interesting and at the same time an epoch-making personality, one that will remain for long yet a living force in music, and for ever a striking figure in the history of the art.



# Programme.

FRANZ LISZT (born at Raiding, in Hungary, on October 22, 1811; died at Baireuth, in Bavaria, on July 31, 1886):

(1) Sonata in B minor.

Lento assai, Allegro energico, Recitativo,—Andante sostenuto, Quasi Adagio, | Allegro energico, Andante sostenuto, Allegro moderato, and Lento assai.

Instead of three or four self-contained separate movements, we have here a long uninterrupted series of continuous movements, in which, however, we can distinguish three complexes corresponding to the three movements of the orthodox sonata. The *Andante sostenuto* and *Quasi Adagio* form the simpler middle complex. Although some of the features of the orthodox sonata structure are discernible in Liszt's work, most of them are absent from it or irrecognisably veiled. The most novel and characteristic features are the unity and the evolution by metamorphosis of the thematic material—that is to say, the motives of the first complex reappear in the following ones, and are metamorphosed not only in the later but also in the first.

(2) "Au Lac de Wallenstadt," No. 2 of the first year of the "Années de Pèlerinage."

(3) Quasi Adagio and Andantino, Nos. 4 and 5, of the "Consolations."

(4) Transcriptions of Schubert's "Frühlingsglaube" and "Wohin."

(5) "St François d'Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux." Légende.

(6) Ave Maria, in E major.

(7) Transcription from Verdi's Opera "Aïda."

(8) Valse Impromptu.

(9) Etude de Concert in D flat major.

(10) Liebestraum, No. 3.

(11) Rhapsodie hongroise, No. 12.

## DATES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

*November 18, 1903.*—A Recital of Original Pianoforte Duets, interspersed with Songs by Adolf Jensen. Performers: Mr ARTHUR DACE, Mr FRANCIS GIBSON, and Miss MARION RICHARDSON.

*December 16, 1903.*—A Concert of Wind-Instrument Music. Performers: The Queen's Hall (London) Wind-Instrument Quintet—Messrs A. FRANSELLA (flute), D. LALANDE (oboe), M. GOMEZ (clarinet), E. F. JAMES (bassoon), and A. BORSODORF (horn).

*January 20, 1904.*—A Liszt Pianoforte Recital, illustrative of the different classes of the Master's Music for Pianoforte Solo. Performer: Mr PAUL DELLA TORRE.

**February 3, 1904.**—The Waltz from the 18th to the 20th century (from Mozart to Johann Strauss, the Younger), and two Overtures by Auber. Performers: An Orchestra of about Forty Players from THE SCOTTISH ORCHESTRA, conducted by Professor NIECKS.

FREDERICK NIECKS,

*Reid Professor of Music.*