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FRANZ LISZT

Fantaisie romantique Fantaisie symphonique

Sergio Gallo, Piano



Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

Fantaisie romantique • Fantaisie symphonique

Franz Liszt was born in Raiding (Doborján) on 22 October 1811 and died in Bayreuth on 31 July 1886.

Recognised early on as a child prodigy, Liszt was brought to Beethoven's attention by his teacher Carl Czerny in Vienna. Czerny considered Liszt's departure for Paris in 1823, and subsequent concerts there, to be premature. Liszt certainly earned a reputation as a wild and flamboyant pianist but nevertheless persevered, developing a style and persona closely based on the violinist Niccolò Paganini, who he first heard in 1831. Admiring the music of Hector Berlioz, and acquainted with artists such as Chopin, Hugo and Heine, Liszt's virtuosity as a pianist informed his compositions at that time.

Liszt commenced a liaison with the married Countess Marie d'Agoult in 1832 which scandalised Paris society and caused them to relocate to residences in Switzerland and Italy over the ensuing seven years, when three children were born to them. Liszt composed with more intellectual intensity during these years and works such as those that later formed the first two books of *Années de pèlerinage* had their genesis around this time.

Liszt returned to giving concerts full time and was estranged from Marie d'Agoult during the early 1840s. His pianistic status reached dizzying heights, playing to audiences gripped by so-called 'Lisztomania'. Under the influence of Princess Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, with whom he pursued a long-term relationship, Liszt abandoned concert touring in 1847, subsequently composing, conducting, and promoting causes such as composer Richard Wagner and new German music. Liszt's earlier orchestral symphonic poems and much of his secular choral music and songs emerged during the 1840s, forging radical pathways that attracted heavy criticism at the time.

Liszt's later years were punctuated by a period of seclusion from 1862 to 1866, during which he took minor holy orders in Rome. He re-emerged, moving each year between Budapest, Weimar and Rome and to great acclaim produced a stream of compositions, many with religious connotations. During this time a substantial number of piano pieces were reworked and re-grouped such as *Années de pèlerinage III* (1877–82).

Liszt and Marie d'Agoult lived together in Switzerland and Italy between 1835 to 1839. Liszt entered into family life, taught at the Geneva Conservatory and played concerts, visiting Paris occasionally. Importantly, his composing continued, including a number of works inspired by his surroundings. The *Fantaisie romantique sur deux mélodies suisses* is one such work.

Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia from 1839 shows a maturing of style and serious intent. At this time Liszt's relationship with Marie d'Agoult was deteriorating and a full-time return to the concert stage was beckoning.

The Roman Catholic religion was always significant in Liszt's world view and in his later years it became a dominant force in his compositions. Works presented in their initial forms on tracks 4 to 9 cover the period 1867 to 1882, and were all subsequently included in his *Années de pèlerinage III*. Religious allusions and deeply-held emotions are felt throughout.

Fantaisie romantique sur deux mélodies suisses, S157/R9 (1835–36)

Comparatively rarely played, this work was not subsequently revised. In B flat major, the introduction contains a four-note motif related to the first main theme and references to a faster *ranz de vaches* (cow-call) associated with the horn or alphorn used by alpine herdsmen. The expansive first (*Molto sostenuto*) and second (*la nostalgie – mal du pays*) Suisse themes follow in an *Adagio* section, initially in B flat major and then in G minor. A faster *Vivace* episode based on the cow-call motif provides dramatic contrast, moving through various keys, and finally there is a return to the first Suisse theme in B flat major. Liszt's adherence to traditional sonata form key structure helps to bind together the *Fantaisie's* sectional construction.

Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia, S158a ‘Fantaisie symphonique pour piano’ (1839)

This is the first of four versions, the last of which completes Liszt’s *Années de pèlerinage II (Italie)* (1846–49). While Dante’s *Divine Comedy* was a pivotal literary work of the Italian Renaissance, Liszt’s title for the fourth version, *Après une lecture du Dante ‘Fantasia quasi Sonata’* refers to Victor Hugo’s poem of that name. Nevertheless, the subject matter of all four variants – both musical and literary – centres around Dante’s great work itself, with its visions of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. In this original version the *Introduction* with its devilish tritones, the *Exposition* with its *Lamentoso* first theme in D minor and second (Chorale) theme in F sharp major, and the *Development* with its *Dolcisissimo* and descending scale themes derived from the *Exposition*, are similar to the final version. However, this original version then introduces a considerable middle episode containing related material including some contrapuntally treated passages. Liszt omits this in the final version, moving straight to the *Recapitulation* and *Coda*. These are presented similarly in both variants although there are significant differences in the final pages of this first version, which more strongly emphasise the triumphant perfect fifth over the devilish tritone fifth. Another significant difference is the greater preponderance of tremolandos and similar figures at the extremes of the piano keyboard in this first version.

Adagio in C major, S158d (1841)

The score consists of an autographed manuscript found in the effects of an unknown lady in Prague. It comprises the core material of the second (chorale) theme from *Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia, S158a*.

Den Schutzengeln (Angelus), S162a/i (1877) (earlier version)

Den Schutzengeln (Angelus), S162a/i (1877) (later version)

These are the first and second versions of this work. The final (sixth) version (*Années de pèlerinage III – I. Angelus! Prière aux anges gardiens*) from 1882 contains further material, doubling the music’s length. The attractive main melody is repeated three times with associated material in between the repeats. The principal difference between the first and second versions is an added coda in the second version, reminiscing on the work’s opening mood and character.

Den Zypressen der Villa d’Este, Thrénodie [II], S162b (1872)

The second version of this work, *Aux cyprès de la Villa d’Este – Thrénodie II, S163/3 (Années de pèlerinage III)* from 1877, follows this first version quite closely in overall structural terms, but Liszt’s harmonic and melodic felicities differ in detail between the two versions. The opening *Andante* section, with its heartfelt dropping fifth interval materials in E minor, is followed by more alert rising fifth material in B flat major. An expansive and warmly thoughtful arpeggiated section follows. The initial *Andante* materials then return and a final section combining elements from this and the arpeggiated section form a quiet close.

Sunt lacrymae rerum, in ungarischen Weise, S162c/ii (1877)

This is the intermediate version of *Sunt lacrymae rerum, en mode hongrois, S163/5 (Années de pèlerinage III)* from 1877. Controversy has surrounded Liszt’s use of Hungarian musical idioms such as the verbunkos minor scale and dance forms. Nevertheless, Liszt imbues this work with a real feeling of pathos through these devices, and vividly portrays *Sunt lacrimae rerum* from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas contemplates the destruction of war. In this work Liszt honours the memory of the 1848 Hungarian revolution. The opening bars announce the main motif from which a second warmer motif is drawn. Both motifs are subsequently repeated.

En mémoire de Maximilien I, Empereur du Mexique, Marche funèbre, S162d (1867)

Moved by the tragic execution of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico in 1867, Liszt gives the opening of this funeral march a

darkly dissonant atmosphere. The main melody, hinting at *Szózat*, a patriotic Hungarian song, evocatively ascends into the piano's treble register as the work progresses towards a conclusion in the major. This is an earlier version of the *Marche funebre*, S163/6 (*Années de pèlerinage III*) and differs particularly in a more uncertain, less forcefully triumphant ending than in the later version.

Postludium, S162e 'Sursum corda!' (1877)

Following its initial statement the main theme is developed and then restated with added fervour and more extended figuration. This is an earlier version of *Sursum corda (Erhebet eure Herzen)*, S163/7 (*Années de pèlerinage III*) from 1877. A significant difference in this earlier version is its less extensive and emphatic ending.

Rodney Smith



Sergio Gallo

A Steinway Artist, Sergio Gallo specialises in the repertoire of the Romantic period. He has also championed the work of composers from Brazil, the nation of his birth. Gallo has recorded several acclaimed albums for the Eroica, Naxos, Grand Piano and Quartz labels, with recent releases critically acclaimed by *BBC Music Magazine*, *Gramophone* and *American Record Guide*. In 2011 he won the Global Music Award of Excellence for his album, *Mostly Villa-Lobos: 20th Century Piano Music from the Americas*. Gallo has performed with orchestras worldwide, and his work has been regularly played on international classical music radio outlets. Gallo is the winner of concerto competitions of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and of the University Symphony in Santa Barbara. He was the recipient of a grant from the Henry Cowell Incentive Funds at the American Music Center in New York to record works by that composer, with the subsequent recording featuring on *The Piano Matters* with David Dubal on WWFM. Gallo twice toured North Dakota with a Challenge America Fast-Track Grant award from the National Endowment for the Arts. He holds the Diplôme d'Excellence from the Conservatoire Européen de Musique de Paris, a Postgraduate Certificate from the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, a Master of Music and Artist Diploma from the University of Cincinnati, and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Gallo resides in the US where he is professor of piano performance at Georgia State University in Atlanta, and is on the affiliated artist staff of the Rocky Ridge Music Academy in Estes Park, Colorado.

www.priceattractions.com/sergio-gallo-piano

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Franz
LISZT
(1811–1886)

Complete Piano Music • 64

Fantaisie romantique • Fantasia symphonique

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|----------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Fantaisie romantique sur deux mélodies suisses, S157/R9
(1835–36) | 19:04 |
| 2 | Paralipomènes à la Divina Commedia, S158a ‘Fantaisie
symphonique pour piano’ (1839) | 19:03 |
| 3 | Adagio in C major, S158d (1841)
Années de pèlerinage, Troisième année | 0:45 |
| 4 | Den Schutzengeln (Angelus), S162a/i (1877) (earlier version) | 3:14 |
| 5 | Den Schutzengeln (Angelus), S162a/i (1877) (later version) | 3:37 |
| 6 | Den Zypressen der Villa d’Este, Threnodie [II], S162b (1872)
(first version) | 9:03 |
| 7 | Sunt lacrymae rerum, in ungarischen Weise, S162c/ii (1877)
(intermediate version) | 6:31 |
| 8 | En mémoire de Maximilien I, Empereur du Mexique,
Marche funèbre, S162d (1867) (early version) | 4:51 |
| 9 | Postludium, S162e ‘Sursum corda!’ (1877) (early version) | 2:37 |

Sergio Gallo, Piano

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