

Endlich etwas wirklich neues...

(Ferruccio Busoni over Béla Bartóks 14 Bagatellen / 1908)

versus

Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören?

(Ferenc Liszt over zijn Csárdás macabre / 1882)

Comparative research of (r)evolutionary innovations in
the late piano works (1860-1886) of Ferenc Liszt and
the early piano works (1908-1912) of Béla Bartók

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In memoriam Denijs Dille

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	5
2. Chronicles of the early period of B. Bartók:	
2.1 Bartók's youth period 1903-1908: years of study, stylistic influences, personal and professional searches. Bartók's discovery of Liszt as a composer: " <i>I choose the Hungarian way of composer-pianist Liszt.</i> " Folk music: experience and perception. The double example of Liszt: to write new music and in Hungarian style.....	10
2.2 Stefi Geyer period 1907-1908. A turning point in Bartók's life and art. " <i>A person's works of art actually give a much more exact reflection of the most important events and the leading passions in his life, then his autobiography</i> " (Bartók).....	14
2.3 Bartók's early period - the pianistic years 1908-1912: " <i>The Bagatelles open a new keyboard style in my career as a composer that most of my later piano works - with smaller or greater modifications - consistently follow</i> " (Bartók).....	21
2.4 Busoni's influence as a mentor: Bartók's rediscovery of Liszt as "the most modernist composer of the 19th century"	33
3. 1860-1886 Rome-Weimar-Budapest. A turning point in Liszt's life and work. Chronicles of the late period: the 'death-poetry'	
3.1 End of Liszt's Weimar period. The dramatic vents and his final move to Rome.	37
3.2 Hungarian art music, gypsy music or Hungarian folk music? Reflections of Liszt and of Bartók.....	39
3.3 Stylistic evolution and musical innovations, compositional elements. The way out of tradition into consonant and dissonant expressionism.....	43
3.4 Liszt's " <i>composing-fever</i> ". Letter reports on his sources of inspiration and life circumstances. Chronicles, contexts, themes and dating of his most important compositions with a stylistic evolution from late romanticism to atonal pre-expressionism.....	46
3.5 1875. The beginning of Liszt's " <i>vie trifurquée</i> " period in Rome-Budapest-Weimar. Liszt's self-reflections on death, on his "incessant 'composing fever', " <i>...a humble opinion of a more or less famous pianist, who is both a strong Russophile and very humble with all his heart.</i> "	50
3.6 Liszt Csárdás macabre: "Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören?" " <i>Alle ordentlichen Conservatoristen mögen sich an diesem Stück den Kopf Anstossen.</i> " History of a ground-breaking composition.....	55
3.7 Chronicles of Liszt's 'evening' with his increasingly intense <i>Russophilia</i> , his visionary theory of the quarter-tone system: " <i>Der Komponist [Liszt] scheint ja nicht einmal die Anfangsgründe der Harmonielehre u. des strengen Satzes studiert zu haben. - Schon dieser Anfang zeigt ja das!</i> " Reports on his relentless stimulus to compose " <i>ohne Tonart</i> " composing and his final journey performing as a pianist.....	61

4. Bartók-Breitkopf & Härtel collaboration for the publication of the <i>Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe</i> .	
4.1 Bartók receives an extensive commission from the Franz-Liszt-Stiftung Weimar to publish Liszt's compositions related to Hungary – including the Csárdás macabre - to revise and translate the accompanying Hungarian texts for the <i>Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe</i> publication by Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig publishing house.....	69
4.2 Allegro barbaro - Csárdás macabre: context and dating. Explanation of a possible link.....	74
5. Conclusion.....	80
6. Final considerations.....	83
7. Abstract.....	85
8. Biography.....	87
9. Liszt-Bartók concert. Artistic presentation of Levente Kende's doctoral research.....	92
10. PowerPoint slides projected during Liszt-Bartók concert – artistic presentation of doctoral research.....	95

1. Introduction

Ferenc Liszt and Béla Bartók. At first sight two worlds that have nothing in common except that both are of Hungarian origin. Liszt, who represented the typical 19th century salon romance; Bartók, steeped in folk music (Hungarian, Romanian, Turkish, Slovak, Arabic etc.) and one of the founders of the 20th century music innovation.

At first sight... because with a more thorough acquaintance one discovers that Liszt - perhaps the greatest pianist of his time - with his boundless dedication was also the greatest disseminator of the music of his contemporaries (including Berlioz, Wagner, Glinka, Balakirev, Rimsky Korsakov, Borodine, Alabief, Boulgakov, Rubinstein, Erkel, Ábrányi) and grew to become the most important founder of the 19th-century music innovation. His study in Weimar, Budapest or in Rome was permanently visited not only by pianist-pupils, but also by numerous composers from France to Russia (Alkan, Albeniz, Borodin, Saint-Saëns, Rimski-Korsakoff, Smetana, Siloty, Franck, Grieg a.o.).

Liszt's interest in all 'new' influences - including gypsy music and innovations in European (art) music - was legendary. This interest in gypsy music did not stem solely from purely nationalistic, romantic or exotic ideals. He considered it (partly wrongly) as pure Hungarian folk music.

Although Liszt composed 'provocative' program music with modernist elements from the very beginning (such as *Les Morts*, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Sonata*, *Faust-Symphonie*), the most remarkable thing is that from 1860 onwards, he began to write piano pieces, e.g. *Années de Pèlerinage III*, *Nuages gris*, *Mosonyi's Grabgeleit*, which deviate from his usual mode of composition in a very peculiar way and show a stylistic mixture of late romantic, impressionist and expressionist elements. Those late pieces of 1860-1886 - expressionistic, partly atonal - were played only by Liszt and his students. Most were published only in the period 1911-1927 (Breitkopf & Härtel: *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe*), some even only in the years 1951-1980 (Liszt Society London, *Neue Liszt Ausgabe* - Editio Musica Budapest).

The climax came in 1881-1882 with '*Csárdás macabre*', the most remarkable of the very daring series of compositions, in which he plunges more and more into chromatic dissonances; a piece with prolonged, droning and fear-inducing empty fifths, moving chromatically between possible and impossible 'keys'. Liszt uses a laconic question as a subtitle: "*Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören?*"¹

As a stylistic precursor to Bartók and 20th-century music, I see in Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* a full-fledged composition that transitions from late romanticism to a consonant pre-expressionism and opens a path to the dissonant expressionism of Bartók's *Bagatelles*. In Liszt's oeuvre, and in the general stylistic evolution of the 19th century, this masterpiece for piano shows as ground-breaking an inventiveness as 26 years later Bartók's *14 Bagatelles*.

During this period of *Csárdás macabre*, Béla Bartók was born (1881). He received his training as a piano virtuoso from István Thomàn (himself one of Liszt's last pupils) at the Music Academy in Budapest founded by Liszt. From the age of 16, Bartók regularly played works by Liszt (including, *Rhapsodie Espagnole*, *Wagner-Liszt: Tannhäuser Overture*, *Sonata*, *Paganini Etude*), came into contact with gypsy music and, after 1905, with real folk music. However, in his early period as a composer, he wrote music influenced by Liszt's conventional "Hungarianism" (*Rhapsody* Op.1, *Kossuth* symphonic poem, *Scherzo* for orchestra and piano).

1 Liszt: *Csárdás macabre* (GSA 60/ V 15) with Liszt's remark on cover page with extra 48 baars introduction Göllerich: Liszt. Erinnerungen 1908, Catalog .

In 1905, after thorough studies of Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage, Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, Faust-Symphonie, Cantique d'amour, Totentanz*, Bartók declares that "*Liszt's true significance and his importance for the future of music is much greater than that of R. Wagner or R. Strauss.*" ²

Bartók composed an impressive series of piano works between 1908 and 1912: *Two Elegies, Ten Easy Keyboard Works, Sketches, Four Lamentations, Three Burlesques, Two Romanian Dances*, especially the *14 Bagatelles* and *Allegro barbaro*. With the *14 Bagatelles*, a new era and a new "modern" style began for the piano. This is the subject of Busoni's famous statement, "*Endlich etwas wirklich neues*".³

Bartók wrote in an article (New York 1950), "*the Bagatelles open a new keyboard style in my composing career that most of my later piano works - with smaller or larger modifications - consistently follow.*" ⁴

According to Denijs Dille, "*the Bagatelles open new horizons and offer an unfamiliar music, a conception of keyboard playing such as one did not find elsewhere. Here one finds the first manifestation of a clearly willed bitonality, systematic use of quarter chords*". Denijs Dille adds: "*Does this conception, compositional technique stem from the acquaintance with the late, now little-known Liszt, or did Bartók arrive at it through his own urge*"?

Perhaps the two together, since early on he shows a tendency to replace the pathetic sonorous playing of Romanticism with an a-sensual, abstraction-seeking technique."⁵

In response to Bartók's manifesto on the *14 Bagatelles*, I examine the extent to which those late works by Liszt not only represent a (r)evolutionary break with high romanticism, but also form a kind of avant-garde basis for Bartók's style and compositional technique, and by extension for 20th-century composers (Debussy, Reger, Busoni, Schoenberg, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Messiaen, Kurtág e. a.), which allowed the broadening of tonal-functional music and also new musical forms to emerge.

I also focus on the Liszt-Bartók comparison itself: what finally led both composers in a similar way from both their late romantic, eclectic idiom to realize that break to early modernity and to achieve an "avant-garde" (r)evolution in Europe and in Hungarian music both stylistically and compositionally. I also want to show what influence Liszt had on Bartók and what great connection Bartók had with the composer Liszt.

Bartók wrote in 1909, "*I used not to believe that, until I myself experienced that one's works of art are actually a much more exact reflection of the most important events and of the leading passions in one's life, than an autobiography.*" ⁶

Using this idea, I am going to explore deeply what are the guiding passions and mental factors but also the inspirational impulses in Liszt anno 1860 and in Bartók anno 1908, which would reflect their respective compositions. I quote mainly from Liszt's and Bartók's personal letters in a diary-like chronological form, literally using their own words in their very personal style, but also from authentic and historical documents, first editions, press comments in historical journals. By doing so, I try to make clearer how special life circumstances, essential and inspiring events influenced both their thoughts and emotional world and therefore their musical stylistic evolution and compositional techniques. In this way I am going to situate Liszt's late and Bartók's early compositions, date them correctly, place them in historical context and thus provide an answer to Denijs Dille's question: which of Liszt's compositions did Bartók know and influence?

My main sources of information are the personal correspondence and historical documents of Liszt and Bartók himself. In addition, the publications of D. Dille who was not only a trusted figure for Bartók, but also the protector of Bartók's legacy with his letters and family documents.

2 Bartók Béla Írásai/1 Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1967. (1921-1923)

3 Bartók Béla Családi levelek . Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981. (Wien June 27 1908)

4 Bartók Béla Írásai 1. / Zeneműkiadó 1967/26.

5 Denijs Dille: Béla Bartók Metropolis Antwerpen 1979

6 Bartók Béla Családi levelei Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981. (February 4, 1909. To Márta Ziegler.)

The Hungarian state appointed D. Dille as the first director of the Bartók Archivum Budapest, founded in 1961, this on the advice of Zoltán Kodály and Hungary's leading musicologists. Thus, as a Bartók connoisseur, Denijs Dille has become the most important Bartók archivist in the musicological world. His book *Béla Bartók* (1939) was reviewed by Bartók himself for publication.

For decades I had friendly contacts with Denijs Dille and this naturally yielded a great deal of information. First of all, he mentioned the existence of Bartók's love letters to Stefi Geyer, but I was unable to see them at the time because they were not yet accessible to the public.

Stefi Geyer's letters with facsimiles and with German translations have since been published in book form in a limited edition by the Sacher Stiftung Basel. Reading those letters made me realize the important turning point Bartók experienced in his life and the impact this short-lived love affair had on him. It is also Denijs Dille, who drew general attention to Bartók's childhood and youthful works - described in Bartók's extensive correspondence in great detail and documented - this to better frame and understand Bartók's music.

I conducted my research from my personal perspective as a musician-performer. I have delved into the deeply human, introverted nature of Liszt and Bartók and the essence of their artistic reflections. In doing so, I aim to demonstrate how Bartók consciously dealt with and was substantially influenced by Liszt's innovative spirit. In this sense, I therefore relate critically to certain (music) analytical or musicological studies that minimize or even deny Liszt's influence on Bartók.⁷

As a working method, I begin with Bartók's youth and study years, more specifically his attitude towards Liszt as a pianist and composer: how his musical style evolves from a Lisztian eclecticism or consonant expressionism to the "*Endlich etwas wirklich neues*" dissonant expressionism in 1908.

A pioneering move substantially influenced (and provoked?) by his short-lived love affair with Stefi Geyer, but also by his rediscovery of Liszt's music of the late period.

I study in detail the origins of Liszt's style, its evolution, and his struggle for European musical innovations. From his late period (from 1860 onwards), I will expose Liszt's most important compositions, which demonstrate his compositional path to musical expressionism and Hungarian musical style and influenced Bartók. Concerning Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*, I will examine the ambiguities regarding its form and its completeness (or not), and I will also seek to find out why its first publication appeared only more than 50 years after it was composed.

Finally, I address a dilemma of dating between Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* and Bartók's most iconic piano work, the *Allegro barbaro*. This is based on analyses, chronology work during the years 1911-1912 and the original correspondence between publisher Breitkopf & Härtel and Bartók.

It is within this context that Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* is linked, via the *14 Bagatelles*, with Bartók's *Allegro barbaro*.

7 Somfai László, „Bartók és a Liszt-hatás: adatok, időrendi összefüggések, hipotézisek”, *Magyar Zene* XVII/4 (1986 december), 335–351. Angol változat: “Liszt’s Influence on Bartók Reconsidered”, *The New Hungarian Quarterly* XXVII, No. 102 (Summer 1986), 210–218.

Bartók's important compositions of his youth period 1897-1907 and their first editions:

<i>Kossuth (symfonisch gedicht)</i> Sz21, DD75a, BB 31	<i>EMB 1963</i>
<i>Négy zongoradarab – Vier Klavierstücke</i> (1903) DD71, BB 27	Bárd 1904
<i>Rapszódia – Rhapsodie</i> Opus 1. (1904) Sz26, BB36a	Rózsavölgyi 1908
<i>Scherzo (Burlesque) for Piano and Orchestra</i> (1904-1905) Opus 2 DD68, BB25	Zeneműkiadó 1961
<i>Suite Nr 2</i> Opus 4. (1905-1907-1943) Sz34, BB40	Boosey&Hawkes 1921
<i>Három Csikmegyei népdal -Drei Volkslieder aus dem Komitat Csik</i> (1907) Sz35a, BB45	Rozsnyai 1908
<i>Violin Concerto No.1</i> (1907-1908) Sz36, BB48a	Boosey&Hawkes 1956
<i>Deux Portraits</i> Opus 5 (1908-1911) Sz37, BB48b	Rózsavölgyi 1912
<i>Acht ungarische Volkslieder</i> (1907-1917) Sz64, BB47	Universal Edition 1922

Important piano works of Bartók's early period 1908-1912:

<i>14 Bagatell – 14 Bagatelles</i> Opus 6 (1908) Sz38, BB50	Rozsnyai 1909
<i>Tíz könnyű zongoradarab – Zehn leichte Klavierstücke</i> (1908) Sz39, BB51	Rozsnyai 1909
<i>Két elégia – Zwei Elegien</i> Opus 8b (1908-1909) Sz41, BB49	Rozsnyai 1910
<i>Két Román tánc – Deux danses Roumaines</i> Opus 8a (1910) Sz43, BB56	Rózsavölgyi 1910
<i>Négy sirató ének – Quatre nénies</i> Opus 9a (1910) Sz45, BB58	Rózsavölgyi 1912
<i>Vázlatok – Sketches</i> Opus 9/b (1908-1910) Sz44, BB541	Rozsnyai 1912
<i>Három Burleszk – Trois Burlesques</i> Opus 8c (1908-1911-1910) Sz47, BB5	Rózsavölgyi 1912
<i>Allegro barbaro</i> (1911-1912?) Sz49, BB63	Universal Edition Vienna 1918

Important piano works of Liszt's late period with Searle catalogue number, date of composition, publisher and date of first publication:

1860-1869 Rome:

<i>Les Morts</i> 1860 (S516)	<u>Göllerich: Franz Liszt Berlin 1908</u>
<i>Zwei Episoden aus Lenaus Faust</i> (1860) S599	J.Schuberth & C° Leipzig - Breitkopf & Härtel 1913
<i>Variationen Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen</i> (1862) S179	Breitkopf & Härtel 1927
<i>Deux legends</i> (1862-1863) S175 - <i>St François d'Assise: la predication aux</i> <i>oiseaux</i> S175/1 - <i>St François de Paule: marchant sur les</i> <i>flots</i> S175/2	Heugel & Cie Paris 1865-1866, Rózsavölgyi 1865
<i>La Notte</i> (1866) S602	<u>Editio Musica 1976</u>

1869-1886 Rome-Weimar-Budapest:

<i>Fantasie und Fuge über das Thema B-A-C-H</i> (1870-1871) S180	Bärenreiter 1983
<i>Mosonyi's Grabgeleit</i> (1870) S194	Táborsky & Parsch 1871
<i>Années de Pèlerinage – Troisième Année</i> S163 - <i>Angelus!</i> (1877) - <i>Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este – Thrénodie I.</i> - <i>Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este- Thrénodie II.</i> (1877) - <i>Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este</i> (1872) - <i>Sunt lacrymae rerum – En mode Hongrois</i> (1872) - <i>Marche Funèbre (En mémoire de Maximilian I.)</i> (1877) - <i>Sursum corda</i>	B. Schott 1883
<i>Weinachtsbaum</i> (1873-1874) S186	Guntheil Moscow 1882, Fürstner Berlin 1885
<i>Elegie Nr.1</i> (1874) S196, <i>Nr.2</i> (1877) S197	C.F. Kahnt Leipzig 1877-1878
<i>Via crucis</i> (1879) S583	F.Liszt Foundation Budapest 1936
<i>2. Mephisto-Walzer</i> (1881) S515	Fürstner Berlin 1881
<i>Nuages gris – Trübe Wolken</i> (1881) S199	Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig 1927
<i>Unstern</i> (1881) S208	Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig 1927
<i>Quatre valsees oubliées</i> I.(1881) II. III.(1883), IV.(1884) S215	Bote & G. Bock Berlin I-III. 1881-1884, IV. EMB 1984
<i>Csárdás macabre</i> (1881-1882) S224	Liszt Society Publication - Schott 1951 London, Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1955
<i>La lugubre gondola – Die Trauer Gondel</i> I. (1882) II. (1883)	Fritzsh Leipzig 1886, Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig 1927
<i>Schlaflos</i> (1883) S203	Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig 1927
<i>Am Grabe Richard Wagners</i> (1883) S321	Editio Musica Budapest 1976
<i>R.W. – Venezia</i> (1883) S201	Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig 1927
<i>Mephisto-Polka</i> (1883) S217	Fürstner Berlin 1883
<i>3. Mephisto-Walzer</i> (1883) S216	Fürstner Berlin 1883
<i>2 Csardas: 1.Csárdás, 2.Csárdás obstiné</i> (1884) S225	Táborsky & Parsch 1886
<i>Historische ungarische Bildnisse</i> (1885) S205	New Music Review Budapest 1956
<i>Abschied</i> (1885) S251	Fritzsich 1885
<i>Trauervorspiel und Trauermarsch</i> (1886) S334	Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig 1887
<i>Vierter Mephisto-Walzer – Bagatelle ohne Tonart</i> (1885) S216a, S216b	Schott London 1951 - Liszt Society Publications, EMB 1956, Új zenei szemle Budapest vol.7 1957
<i>En rêve</i> (1885) S207	E. Wetzler Wien 1888
<i>Rhapsodie hongroise</i> Nrs. 16,17,18,19, (1882-1885) S244	Jozef Weinerger Wien 1884, Táborsky & Parsch 1885

2. Chronicles of the early period of B. Bartók

2.1 Bartók's youth period 1903-1908: years of study, stylistic influences, personal and professional quests. Bartók's discovery of Liszt as a composer: "I choose the Hungarian path of composer-pianist Liszt."

Bartók writes in his Autobiography (1921-1923), "*On the advice of Dohnányi I came to study at the Liszt Academy of Budapest, where I was a pupil of János Koessler for composition (a pupil of Brahms) and of István Thomán for piano (a pupil of Liszt), and full of zeal I studied the works unknown to me by R. Wagner and of Liszt... Having distanced myself from Brahms' style, even though Wagner and Liszt studies I have not found my cherished path. Like a lightning strike, a performance in Budapest of R. Strauss' "Alzo sprach Zarathustra" hit me. I suddenly saw a possible way forward (1902).*"¹

In 1903, Bartók wrote in a letter to his mother about his "socio-political statement" regarding the language problems in Hungary: "*Except for a negligible minority of the population, the Hungarian nation has a total indifference to everything Hungarian. Not in higher politics - there we can be coveted for national ideals - but in everyday life: how someone speaks our own and unique mother tongue; we ourselves speak the languages of everyone else; we tease anyone as uncultured who speaks only Hungarian -even with all the world science in their heads. ...As for me, I will serve one goal all my life: the Hungarian nation, my homeland.*"²

Bartók, as a composition student, shows an *Adagio* piano piece to his teacher Koessler and he responds as follows: "*In an Adagio there should be infatuation, but this movement holds none!*" But Koessler is satisfied with Bartók's *Tanulmány balkézre (Four piano works No.1)* in eclectic- secession style: "*Reverie filled with Nietzsche*" dedicated to I. Thomán.³ He writes a *Violin Sonata* in the Brahms-Wagner-Liszt tradition and a *Piano Quintet* in 1903: even more strongly monothematic compositions in cyclic late romantic form. His first compositions are composed in a late romantic, eclectic style.

"(...) *Wat ook essentieel was voor mijn verdere ontwikkeling: rond deze tijd ontstond er een chauvinistische politieke beweging om ook in de muziek iets specifiek Hongaars te creëren. Dit idee wekte mijn belangstelling voor het bestuderen van mijn volksmuziek.... Onder deze omstandigheden componeerde ik in 1903 het symfonisch gedicht "Kossuth" en in 1904 de "Rapsodie" Opus 1.*"⁴

Zijn eerste duidelijk Hongaarse muziek - *Kossuth*, symfonisch gedicht - was dus gecomponeerd in Hongaarse nationale stijl naar het voorbeeld van Liszt en Erkel met een uitgeschreven programma over Kossuth, de nationale held van de Hongaarse revolutie in 1848. De première van dit werk in 1904 verliep niet van een leien dakje door het protest van de trompettisten van het Filharmonisch Orkest tegen het geciteerde, verkeerd uitgesproken keizerlijke volkslied. Maar het werd een groot publiek succes voor Bartók, die in Hongaarse klederdracht zijn publiek begroette en bedankte. Kort daarna werd dit symfonisch gedicht van *Kossuth* ook in Manchester uitgevoerd onder leiding van J. Richter. Bartók speelde tijdens hetzelfde concert pianowerken van Liszt en Volkman. Maar ondanks alles werd deze symfonie tijdens Bartóks leven nooit meer uitgevoerd. Dankzij Denijs Dille werd ze in 1963 in Boedapest gedrukt en uitgegeven.⁵

1 Bartók Béla Irásai / I. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1989

2 Bartók Béla Családi levelei Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981 (No.108.)

3 Demény János: Bartók Béla tanulóévei és romantikus korszaka Akadémiai kiadó Budapest 1954

4 Bartók Béla: Önéletrajz (1921-1923) Bartók Béla Irásai /I. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1967

5 Denijs Dille: Het werk van Béla Bartók Metropolis 1974

Intussen zocht de pianist Bartók de gelegenheid om kennis te maken met bekende grote persoonlijkheden als Richard Strauss, Leopold Godowsky en Ferruccio Busoni. In 1903 schreef hij aan Etelka Freund naar aanleiding van zijn recital in Berlijn op 14 december: "*Het was toch wel bijzonder aardig van Busoni om naar mijn recital te komen, en nog aardiger dat hij zelfs naar mijn artiestenkamer kwam om zich voor te stellen en mij te feliciteren.*" ⁶

The following year 1904 became a true Liszt renaissance in Bartók's pianistic career. The programs of his piano recitals in Bratislava on November 10 1904 include such works as **Weinen, klagen varieties, Funérailles, Mephisto-Walzer, Danse macabre**. In the Pressburger Zeitung, Batka writes: "*From these results a deep substantive study of Liszt as a piano composer. Not so much of the Liszt, some of whose parade pieces are played continuously in concert halls, but of the totally unknown music poet Liszt.*" ⁷

He plays Liszt's **Spanish Rhapsody** in an arrangement for piano and orchestra by Busoni in Manchester on January 18, 1904. After Bartók's first appearance on the English stages, the critics appreciated his piano playing but the work of Liszt had commented negatively on them as "soulless," "full of fortissimo cascades" - considering Liszt one of the three "démons" together (with Wagner and Strauss) "that influenced Bartók to ruin his own compositions."

As late as 1904, Bartók proposed playing the Liszt **Sonata** in Manchester for the Ladies Concert series, but the organizers refused: "This work is rather too long!" A year later, also in Manchester, Bartók played Liszt's **Totentanz** with great success, but the English critics found the work "inadequate, tiresome, poor." ⁸

In 1904 Bartók composed another Lisztian Hungarian program music piece: the **Scherzo (Burlesque)** for piano and orchestra Opus 2 - later titled **Scherzo for Orchestra and Piano**, composed with the following program prescribed by Bartók himself:

"New ray of hope

- 1st part (in which things begin to develop in the cleanest possible way development)
- 2nd part (in which the ray of hope would bring real happiness)
- 3rd part (in which with one stroke everything is thrown upside down)." ⁹

His Scherzo was programmed in Budapest in 1905 but after insufficient preparation and rehearsals the performance was cancelled. Bartók kept the score hidden all his life and did not even speak about it. Bartók, who had been playing the **Mephisto-Walzer, Weinen, Klagen variations** and the **Funérailles** since 1904, said the following in 1905: "*I studied Liszt again, especially in his less popular works such as **Années de Pèlerinage, Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, Faust-Symphonie, Totentanz**. Getting forced through by some formations strange to me, I arrived at the essence. I have discovered the true importance of Liszt, and as far as the further development of music is concerned, I recognized in him a far greater genius than in Wagner or Strauss.*" ¹⁰

The reason for Bartók's long eclectic maturation period is the strong influence of Liszt and Strauss. As Bartók himself comments in his 1921 Autobiography, "*the magical influence of Strauss 'evaporated' in 1905.*"

6 Denijs Dille: Les relations Busoni-Bartók · (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut supérieur d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art collège Érasme, 1990), (Pag.33–49) - Bartók B. Levelei Demény BP.

7 Pressburger Zeitung, 1904. XI. 9. Batka: "Liszt by Bartók"

8 Malcolm Gillies articles: Conversations with Bartók. Musical Times Vol.128 Nr.1736 (Oct.1987)

9 Denijs Dille: Het werk van Béla Bartók, Antwerpen 1979

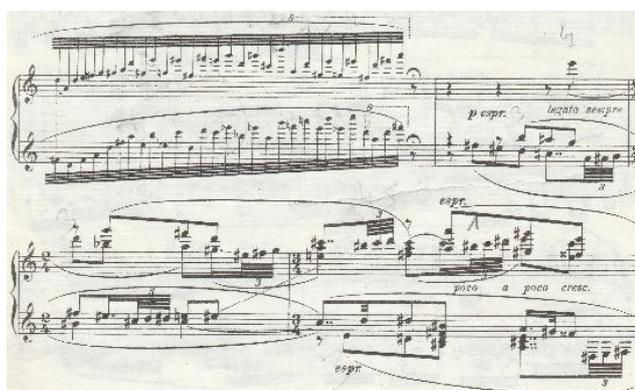
10 Bartók Béla: Önéletrajz (1921-1923) Bartók Béla Irásai / I. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1967

Bartók writes to his sister Elza: "(...) About myself only the following: my **Rhapsody** will be ready soon. It will be a long and difficult piece. But now I have a new plan: to collect the most beautiful Hungarian folk songs and to "elevate" them to the level of art songs with the best possible piano accompaniment. It would be useful for foreign countries that they can learn about Hungarian folk music based on a collection." ¹¹

While composing his **Rhapsody**, Bartók discovered Liszt as a pianist and played more and more of his works. After composing the Rhapsody, he becomes increasingly fascinated with Liszt's music. Bartók finds his main musical tradition and recognizes himself in Liszt - someone who is not only an interpreter of his own compositions, but who was also at the same crossroads between Hungary and the rest of Europe. The title **Rhapsody** opus 1 thus betrays his confession: "I choose the Hungarian path of composer-pianist Liszt." ¹²

In the program book of his concert in Zurich in 1910, Bartók emphasizes the carefully crafted thematic cohesion of this work. "The first movement - a broad "maestoso, mesto" first movement "lassú" in minor - is written in a closed sonata form, but at one point the music foreshadows the compelling and sometimes ironic basic motif of a csárdás sequence. The ensuing "friss" movement in Allegretto and Allegro vivo cites first obscured, then clearly the previous themes of the "lassú" movement."

Bartók thus created a cyclic sonata-rondo form within an original rhapsody model. The romantic form is filled with "unexpected" modernist elements.¹³



Bartók **Rapsodie** (EMB, bars 43-51)

In his letter of September 6, 1905, Bartók informs Busoni of some of his compositions: Opus 22 „Ein concertstück für Piano m. Orchester....mit dem ich leider erfolglos bei der Rubinstein-preisbewerbung teilnahm.... - ..Concertstück für Piano und Orch (Rapsodie), Scherzo.“

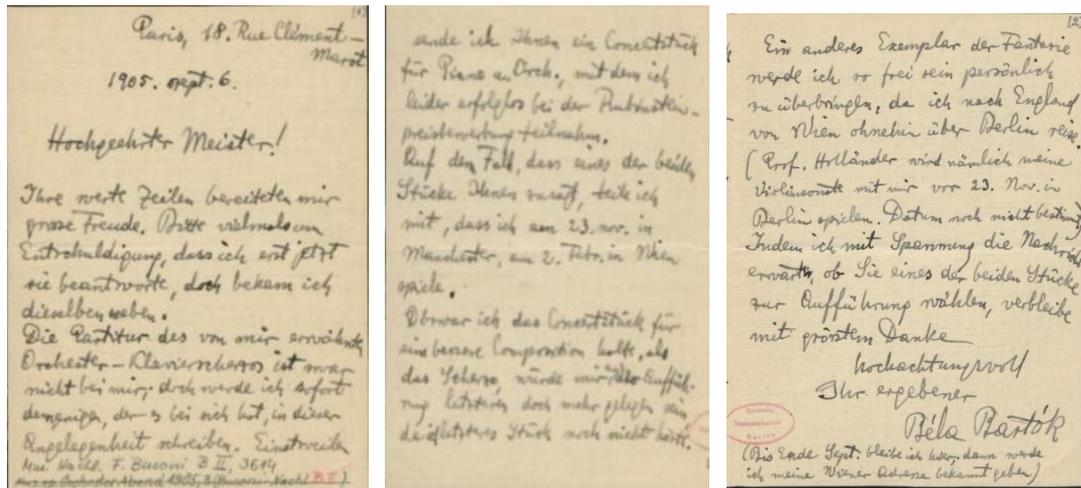
Bartók's **Rhapsody** pleased Busoni greatly - particularly its first movement " ...sehr eigenartig...". Busoni wanted to record this work for his concerts in Berlin. Ultimately, it was Ferruccio Busoni himself who turned Bartók's attention to new, unknown Liszt compositions, beginning with Liszt's

11 Bartók Béla Családi levelei Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981 (To Bartók Elza)

12 Kroó György: Bartók kalauz Editio Musica Budapest 2016

13 Tallián Tibor: Bartók Béla Rózsavölgyi és Társa 2016

Danse macabre for piano and orchestra. This work remained a much-loved and much-played Bartók repertory piece for many years.



Bartók's *Rhapsody* in succession to Liszt's *20 Hungarian Rhapsodies* was composed in Lisztian style *hongrois*. No biography mentions Bartók's *Rhapsody* (1904/1905) - piano solo and concertante version with orchestra - as a mature composition but rather as a transitional composition.

1905-1907 Folk music experience and experience. The double example of Liszt: to write a new music and Hungarian music style.

In 1905 Bartók participated in the Rubinstein competition for piano and composition and afterwards he wrote to his mother, "With regret I must tell you, that I had no success in the (Rubinstein) competitions. That I had not won a prize among the pianists is not so strange, not so hurtful. But what happened at the prize-giving ceremony for compositions, that's revolting. (Bartók had sent in his *Rhapsody*)."¹⁴

Still from Paris: "(...) In reply to your letter I must show you that Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner have written so much and so characteristic music that beyond them the French, Italian and Slavic music are but sneers. - Liszt is close to the four greats, but he rarely composed Hungarian. B.B "¹⁵

In his autobiography (1921-1923), Bartók wrote: "In 1905 I began to seek out the until then unknown Hungarian peasant music. Some of the oldest and most interesting folk melodies were in old church modes, in Greek and even more primitive pentatonic keys. This led me to my autonomous position against the prevailing uniform minor-major system."¹⁶

Péter Bartók, in his book *My Father*, writes: "His goal, chosen in his youth that stimulated him to seek out the Hungarian folk song heritage was not only a reaction to counter a certain foreign sphere of influence, but rather to preserve and strengthen the original Hungarian identity. What he wanted and wanted to see is the cultural richness and ideological independence of Hungary, the freedom of the Hungarian people."¹⁷

During his folk music collecting trips, Bartók became increasingly fascinated with rural and peasant culture. The term "nation" was replaced by "people" in his thought process. He took radical positions on the urban intelligentsia of Hungary. His alienation from urban culture was not so much politically motivated but rather essentially musical. His way of life was also stylized, far away from the ordered bourgeois attitude: "at the table, the English label reigns.... But I like dissonance." - "An anarchist," his acquaintances said.

14 Bartók Béla Családi levelei Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981 Nr.136

15 Demény János: Bartók Béla levelei. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1976 (Nr.100, Paris, 15 August 1905)

16 Bartók Béla: Önéletrajz (1921-1923) Bartók Béla Írásai /I. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1967

17 Bartók Péter: Apám Editio Musica Budapest 2004

2.2 Stefi Geyer period 1907-1908. A turning point in Bartók's life and art.

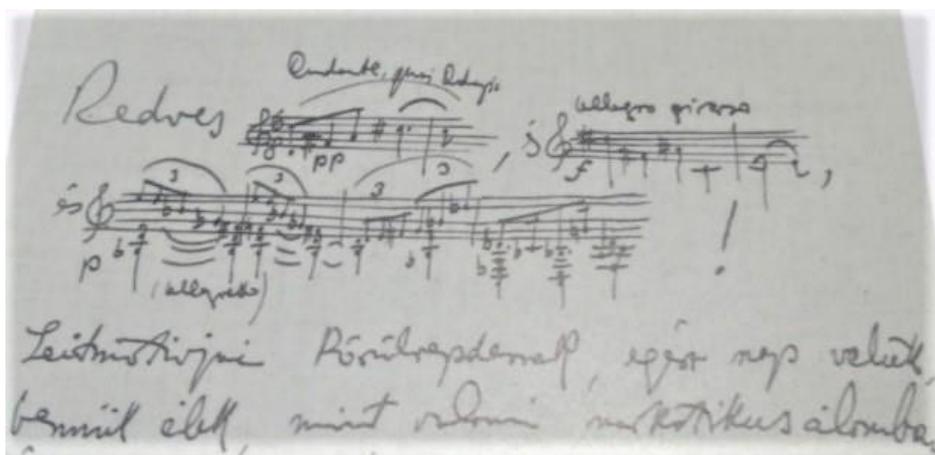
"A person's works of art actually give a much more exact reflection of the most important events and leading passions in his life, than his autobiography" (Bartók).

In 1905 September, Bartók wrote to his mother from Paris about his feeling of abandonment. *"Despite all the concerns of so many people (Thomán, Gruberné, Diel) I feel completely lonely. (...) And I predict, I know it in advance, that my soul-abandonment will become my fate. Although I search for an ideal companion, I know it is in vain. If by chance I do find someone, after a short time it would become a disappointment.... This constant searching is a silent and contrasting resignation. But I have become used to the thought that it cannot be otherwise, that it must be so. So, I recommend it to everyone: to accept such a situation, to grow above it in indifference. Sometimes this works for me, but after a fall my struggle reappears. One day it will still succeed for me to stay above."*¹

Bartók's prediction seemingly comes true three years later in 1907-1908: in 1907 Bartók comes into intense contact with Stefi Geyer - a remarkably talented violinist in Hubay's violin class. In his letters to Stefi Geyer, Bartók exposes his very complex world of thought. With her he polemicizes about everything: nature, religion, philosophy, the social role of a woman-man relationship, his deep feelings.² His letters are full of musical quotations and accounts of his folk music collecting trips as well as musical ideas from his violin concerto-in-progress - inspired by Stefi Geyer's personality.

In one of his first letters, Bartók creates a leitmotif (D-F#-A-C#) for Stefi Geyer and with this motif every letter to her now begins:

"To Stefi Geyer – Budapest, Vésztő - 6 September 1907:

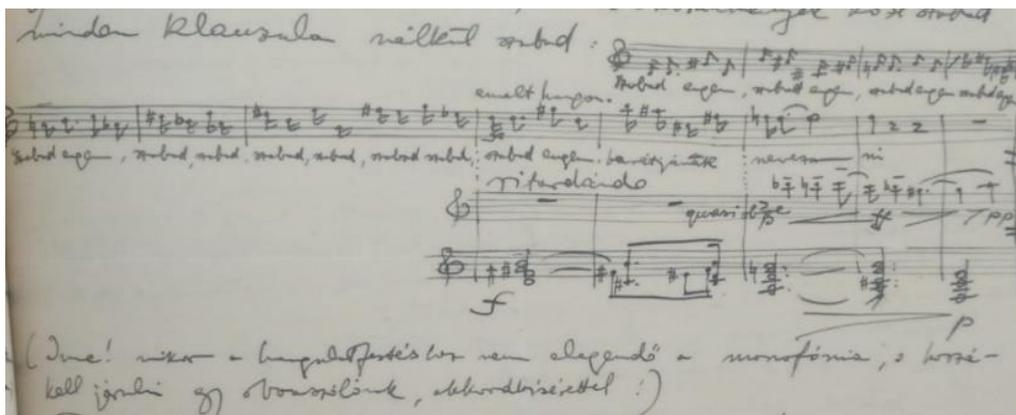


- "Dear D-F#-A-C#, I live with and in your flying leitmotifs, as in a narcotic dream..... After all life is so beautiful, with countless beauties in nature - art - and in science. That is the most beautiful thing You have written to me so far. Why the most beautiful thing? Because it corresponds to my view. The weakness of some people is that they only accept an opinion that is identical to their own. A forgivable mistake.

I am extremely grateful for your letter, precisely for this, I am in tears. An opposite opinion can be interesting to discover, but it is one of our most important joys, when we find in a companion, even a friend, our own thought on which our view of life is based - well maybe in a different formulation. From some lines it seems to me that you have not understood, or have misunderstood, my words regarding a lack of a life purpose."

1 Bartók Béla Családi levelei Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981 (Brief Nr.142)

2 Briefe an Stefi Geyer, 1907-1908 (B. Bartók) Basel Paul Sacher Stiftung 1979



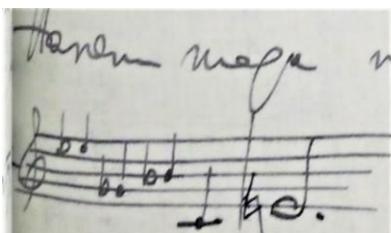
"You may call me, you may call me, you may call me a friend of yours..."



- "Apparently it works strangely this careful dodging of half steps. Egg dance!"

- November 29, 1907. "How long will you stay in Pest for Christmas Eve? I would like to harmonize the dates with my collecting excursions (with consonants! Exceptional for YOU).

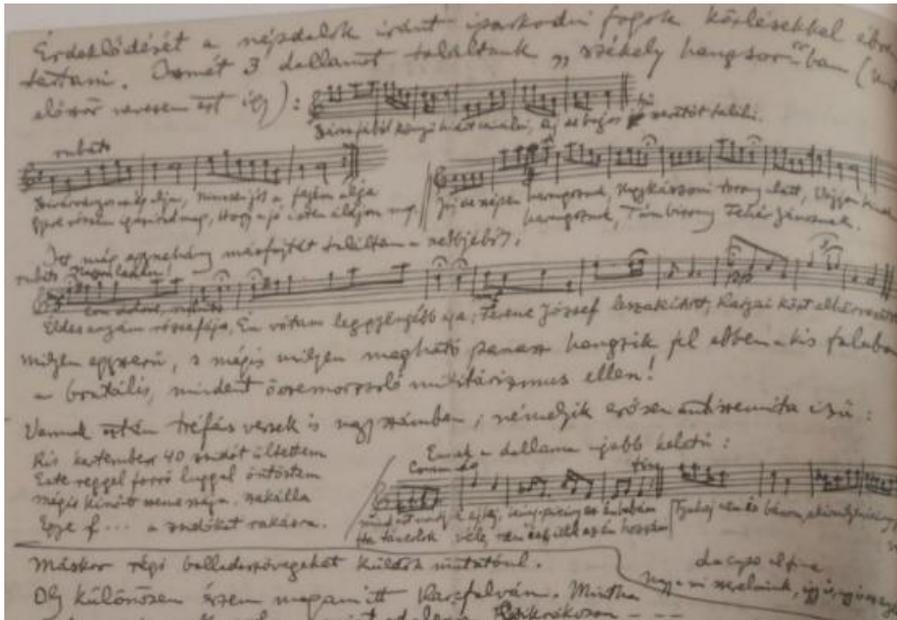
You are rather so...



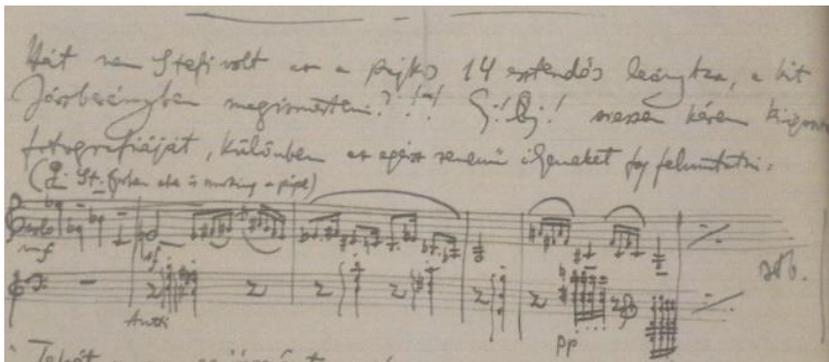
There is already a musical image of the idealized G. St. - heavenly, intimate; there is also one of the fierce G. St. - humorous, witty, amusing. Now an indifferent, cool, silent image of G. St. should be constructed. But this becomes entirely music.

All 9 muses help you (if you would still find it necessary).

P.S; How was your meeting with Reger?"



- December. "Your interest in folk songs I will support with my best information's. We have again found three folk songs in Szekler key..."

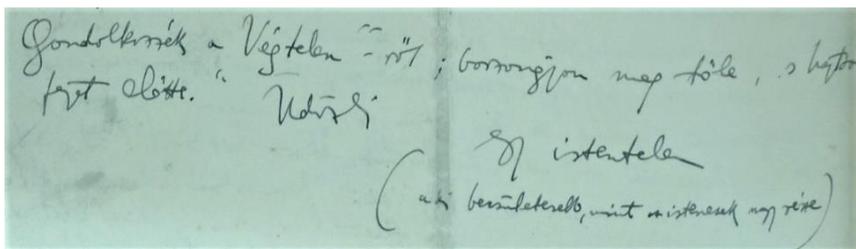


- "One more small explanation: the Eb'-Gb,-Bb'-C, - theme will, in my opinion, draw a very lovely, graceful something (or someone)", so your mouth never pulls askew when I call you 'eb-gb-bb-c'. This is the truth of Jászberény.

So, You equate a good musician with a good "gesellschaftstänzerel"?

After your letter I sat down at the piano - I have a sad suspicion that in my life I will have no other consolation than music. For some time now I have been falling from one extreme into another, from the greatest joy into tears..."

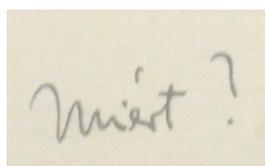
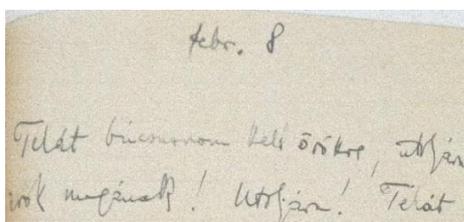
"As for the Holy trinity in your letter, I would call it this: In the name of Nature, Art and Science. Is it not enough like this? Do you also need the promised afterlife? I don't understand.



Think about the "Eternity"! Shiver from it and bow your head before it!
Greetings, - A wicked one (who is more righteous than a portion of the godly)."

Stefi Geyer descended from a conservative middle-class family. In his deep love crisis, Bartók styled his "Nietzschean attitude": he gave a grievous, confident philosophical impression, so typical of a woman-man relationship, in the times that disproportionately magnify this contradiction to the fundamental question of modern society. His experience of loneliness, which he emphasized in so many letters, made him a presumptuous and a closed-minded neurotic person - that's how it came across to those around him.³

Bartók's last letter of February 8, 1908: ⁴



"Why?"

- "So, I must say goodbye forever, for the last time I write! Last time!

*Then, on that Saturday I played the last time for You and Monday night at the subway railing I said the last word, I heard You for the last time, then I saw You the last time. Last time! Although this word fits a suicide candidate, but I am not allowed to do this - I have obligations. (...) But why did you write that letter from Dortmund? Why did you allude to vague feelings which you hardly knew? If You had not written like that then You would have saved me a lot of suffering/smartness. (...) Your letter of Dortmund was the first that raised my hopes...Even more concrete: after your Dortmund letter I thought that you loved me, that you could be my wife... I will not compose, for a time I am detached from it. Friends and girlfriends I will neither love nor write letters. ...Never again... I feel, it is my conviction, that nothing awaits me except a long solitude. I must for ever renounce inner happiness... The **violin concerto** score was finished on February 5, just on the day, when You wrote my death sentence....*

*I hid it in my drawer, not knowing whether I would destroy it or leave it there. Only after my death would they throw away that pile of written music papers - my declaration of love in **Your violin concerto**, my best work - in the trash. I am not allowed to speak about it, to show it to anyone, this sad confession does not concern the world.*

So, for the last time I salute you? Truly last time? Don't be angry with me, I wrote this partly unconscious. What have my prospects become?

Your Dortmund letter will become my protected treasure, my relic

Why?"

Bartók's unrequited love affair lasted barely six months. Having lived through this, Bartók ended up in a severe depression, in a deep trauma that remained palpable during the next fifteen years and paradoxically provided Bartók with new creative energy.

In his epilogue, L. Nyikos comments: "The discrepancy, however, that arises from the confrontation between what is required of an artist and the vital urge to be understood and loved, accompanied Bartók until the end of his life. In his then final letter to Stefi Geyer, we read the decisive sentence, "Now I also know that we are both renouncing" ("Both" Bartók mutatis mutandis underlined himself!). No, emotional pathos was not to Bartók's liking! He stood for objectivity. He criticizes towards Stefi Geyer the "garden-priest romance" he so called. His own diary, on the other hand (January 1908), is full of uncontrolled "youthful romanticism."⁵

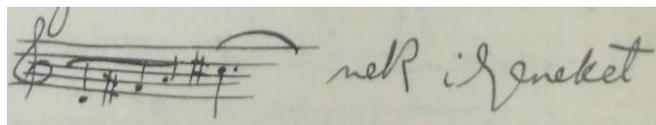
3 Tallián Tibor: Bartók .Béla. Rózsavölgyi és társa Budapest 2016 (1904-1908) / Demény J. Bartók Béla tanulóévei és romantikus korszaka

4 Briefe an Stefi Geyer, 1907-1908 Basel. Paul Sacher Stiftung, 1979

5 Briefe an Stefi Geyer, 1907-1908 Basel. Paul Sacher Stiftung, 1979

“The last look, when Stefi said goodbye to him before her departure for Vienna, the subway station (is like) a church, because that is where they say goodbye to each other. One has the impression, when he accuses her of "arboreal romance", he is in fact fighting a battle against himself, repressed to the unconscious.”⁵

Bartók's leitmotif (D-F#-A-C#) for Stefi Geyer, which he created for her in one of his first letters, is incorporated as the main theme of his (first) *Violin Concerto* and later recurs in more than half a dozen works.



It becomes, as it were, "Bartók's name card" or Bartók's love motif.



Violinist Stefi Geyer, with whom Bartók benevolently shared his highly personal thoughts, to whom he poured out his most intimate and troubling agonies about life and death, about religion, about immortality, about existence and its purpose, to whom he dedicated and immediately hid his posthumous first violin concerto, this artist so close to Bartók's soul is no longer there for him. - "*Elle est morte*" - writes Bartók as a title at the top of the manuscript of the 13th *Bagatel*.

Bartók finished his first *Violin Concerto* in two movements: slow - fast. In 1911, Bartók reworked and orchestrated the entire first movement of his original *Violin Concerto* - titled "*One Ideal*" - bundled with the last *Bagatelle* (Valse. Ma mie qui danse... Opus 6) and titled "*One Grotesque*," and under the title of *Deux portraits* Opus 5, it became an orchestral repertoire piece after publication in 1912.

Here Bartók again uses a Lisztian idea: after a slow "beautiful" first movement "*Ideal*" there follows a destructive "*Grotesque*" with atonal features. But also, the theme transformation in the different movements is a typical Lisztian feature.⁶

In a confidential conversation during Dille's 1953 visit to Stefi Geyer in Switzerland, she shared her memories of Bartók's first stay with her family in the province of Jászberény and of their relationship and gave essential clarifications about "her" violin concerto. (In 1953, the existence of Bartók's (first) *violin concerto* was still totally unknown, and it was only in 1958 that it was performed for the first time before an audience and published the following year.)

5 Briefe an Stefi Geyer, 1907-1908 Basel. Paul Sacher Stiftung, 1979

6 József Újfalussy: Über Musik und Programm in Bartóks Schaffen. Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. T. 35 Fase 1/3 Denijs Dille Nonagenario (1993-1994)

- „...*Ich glaube, Bartók hat keine Abschrift des Konzerts bewahrt. Es ist dies kein richtiges Konzert, sondern eher eine Phantasie für Violine und Orchester. Das Thema des I. Teiles scheint mich darzustellen, meinen Charakter auszudrücken. Daß er es in „Ma mie qui danse“ verwendete, scheint dies zu bestätigen und zeigt eine Reaktion nach unserem Bruch. Der Stil des I. ist ein anderer als jener des II. Teiles. Der des I. scheint mir weniger Bartók, jener des II. der wahre Bartók zu sein. Der Geist des I. Quartetts ist genau der gleiche wie dieses II. Teiles. In unserem Briefwechsel, den ich aufbewahre, hat er zwei oder drei Themen angegeben, die sich auf meine Person beziehen. Die beiden Sätze sind zwei Porträts, der erste ist das junge Mädchen, das er liebte; der zweite ist die Geigerin, die er bewunderte. Beachten Sie, bitte, daß das erste Thema des II. Teiles auch das I. Thema des Quartetts ist. Bartók selbst hat mich darauf aufmerksam gemacht; in seinem letzten Brief schrieb er mir: „Ich habe ein Quartett begonnen; das erste Thema ist das Thema des II. Satzes: es ist Mein Todesgang.“*⁷

Denijs Dille found in the archives of Budapest a concert announcement scheduled for May 3, 1908. The program first included two works by Chopin by pianist Béla Bartók and in the second half Vieuxtemps' Rondeau by violinist Stefi Geyer. It is not difficult to imagine why both artists withdrew, and the concert did not take place.⁸

Bartók's *Elegy* No. I - composed in late February-early March 1908, shortly after his breakup with Stefi Geyer - reflects his deeply dejected state of mind as he put it in his final letter to Stefi Geyer on February 8:

*"What have my perspectives become?
Your Dortmund letter becomes my protected treasure, my relic..."*

- Fugato "reveries" in increasingly dark piano registers:



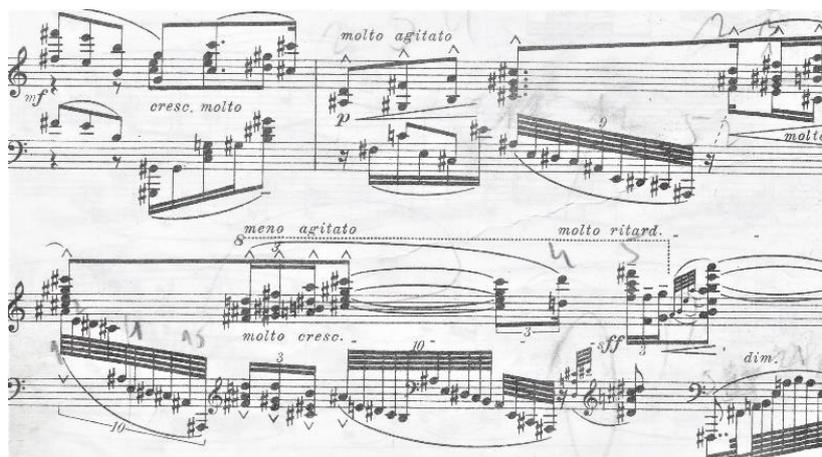
Characteristically similar fugato from Bartók's *Rhapsody* in the deeper piano registers:



⁷ Denijs Dille: "Angaben zum *Violinkonzert* 1907, den *Deux Portraits*, dem *Quartett* op.7 und den *Zwei rumänischen Tänzen*"

⁸ Documenta Bartókiana 2. Schrift 101-102.

After those hopeless reveries, suddenly comes an accentuated exclamation through an accumulation of charged Stefi motifs:



That vehement exclamation is followed by resignation and this *Elegy* ends abruptly in silence - like his last letter "Why?":



Antal Molnár wrote the following about Bartók's *Zwei Elegies* (press review 1909): - "...in both works there is a basic thematic idea which is the core of the form structure, to which no new essential elements were added later. In different ways yet always with that same repeated basic gesture, he creates in these compositions a fateful atmosphere. On a main motif-based model/construction, as during 1600-1750 the so called "one-theme-structures" method. If someone asked me what my feelings are regarding these works, I could not say much more than that I sense a deep masculine sadness and many tears held back in solitude in these works." ⁹

9 Demény János: Bartók Egyetemi Nyomda Budapest 1946

2.3 Bartók's early period - the pianistic years 1908-1912:

"Endlich etwas wirklich neues" (Busoni).

"The Bagatelles open up a new keyboard style in my compositional career that most of my later piano works - with smaller or larger modifications - consistently follow" (Bartók).

The tonal experiments are closely linked to the reformulations of Bartók's deepest, human problems concerning life and philosophy. This is the result of his year-long crisis that began in 1905 (with his negative experience at the Paris composer competition) and "ends" in 1908 through his dealings with his future first wife Martha Ziegler. Those three years are a period of unfinished desires, utter loneliness among friends and sympathizers, philosophical musings, resulting in a lifetime of closed-mindedness and depression. Bartók's crisis - since 1905 - never ceased during his lifetime but transformed into a creative "crisis art" - reflecting his inner crisis.

Barely a few months after his breakup with Stefi Geyer, Bartók wrote to his mother in his letter from Wien June 27, 1908:

- "My itinerary is changing, I am staying in Vienna until Tuesday morning.... The reason for this change is that my **"14 larger piano pieces"** (which are 25 minutes long) particularly pleased Busoni: "Endlich etwas wirklich neues" he said and he would be very happy for me to play them to his students in his class on Monday. He wrote a wonderful letter of recommendation to firm Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig - among other things: "ich rech(n)e diese Stücke zu den interessantesten u. persönlichsten der Gegenwart deren Inhalt ungewöhnlich ist und eigenartig wirkt; nich(t) so was man gemeinhin originell nennt. Dabei durchaus leicht concipirt und in der Fremdartigkeit natürlich. Ich kann es Ihnen nicht genug empfehlen und erlaub mir, es Ihnen vorzuschlagen. Es wäre eine lobenswerte und verdienstvolle Tat diese Stücke rechtzeitig herauszubringen." ¹

Bartók's letter to Etelka Freund - Budapest: Baden 28 June 1908:

- "Busoni was very pleased with the piano pieces. "'Endlich etwas wirklich neues' he said. 'I will play all 14 of them tomorrow in Busoni's piano class. He gave a very nice letter of recommendation to firm. Breitkopf & Härtel. We'll see what it's worth. Greetings, B.B.'" ²

Bartók played his **14 Bagatelles** for Busoni's master class on June 29.

Publisher Breitkopf & Härtel wrote a dismissive reply to Bartók on July 23:

- "Wir bedauern sehr, die 14 Bagatellen, die Sie uns persönlich überbracht haben, nicht in unseren Verlag aufnehmen zu können. Wir sind augenblicklich mit Arbeiten außerordentlich überhäuft, sodaß wir auf Werke verzichten müssen, die wir sonst gern verlegt hätten. Dazu kommt noch, daß Ihre Kompositionen außerordentlich schwer und sehr modern sind, daß es schwerhalten würde, dieselben beim Publikum einzuführen." ³

In the letter of 13.7.1908 Busoni writes a short report to Ludwig von Bösendorfer about his master class in Vienna: -"To Ludwig von Bösendorfer Vienna 13.7.1908: Today my unofficial 'Master-class' in Vienna comes to an end and I feel the desire to send you a brief report. A total of 25 pupils attended, together with a dozen listeners; some afternoons were devoted to performances, at which I myself played three times and Professors da Motta and Bartók once each. Lesser-known symphonic poems by Liszt (his Faust symphony) were performed in two pianos in carefully prepared interpretations." ⁴

1 Bartók Béla Családi levelek. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981

2 Bartók Béla Családi levelek Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981

3 Breitkopf & Härtel: Brief an Bartók Genf 31 Juli 1908. Breitkopf & Härtel Archiv Wiesbaden

4 Busoni Ferruccio. (1866-1924) Selected letters. Beaumont Antony Columbia University Press New York 1967 (Nr 67)

The premiere of the **14 Bagatelles** took place on 9 December 1908 by pianist Arnold Székely in the Royal [concert hall in Budapest], so not by Bartók himself. Bartók was not even present at this world premiere. The reviews of the Hungarian-speaking critics were very mixed: "ultramodern", "neo-impressionist", "bizarre", "cacophonous", "laughable", "musical blunder" "compelling", "genius". But the German-language press was even more negative: "krankhafter richtung entwickelt", "helle Wahnsinn", "frevelhafte Frivolität," "neuen After-kunst". Nevertheless, performer A. Székely had to repeat the last **Bagatel** (no.14) as a bonus number due to its great success. ⁵

On 2 January 1909 Bartók wrote to an unknown person:

- "(...) I travelled to him (Busoni, I had known him for a long time) at the beginning of this summer 1908 and played him the 14 Bagatelles, which caused a real scandal in Budapest (and which - together with some other works of mine were festively forbidden to be performed)." Bartók composed the **14 Bagatelles** with opus number 6 during the months of March-April 1908 but not in the definitive order. The first sketches are dated 20 March and Bartók considered some Bagatelles (1,8,9,11) as "experiments".

Bartók's commentary on the Bagatelles:

"It seems appropriate to me to add some explanations to some of the pieces: in the first piece there are four crosses alteration marks for the upper stave (as in c-sharp minor) and four mids (as in f-sharp minor) for the lower stave. This half-serious - half-humorous approach attempts to demonstrate the absurdity of the use of alteration marks in some contemporary compositions. By making alteration marks "ad absurdum" in my first bagatelle, I have not prescribed alteration marks in most subsequent pieces." ⁶

Noteworthy: Bartók received a copy of Liszt's Csárdás macabre in 1912 to revise for the publisher Breikopf & Härtel. On it - very curiously - Liszt himself "*scratched out*" the prescribed alteration marks - as appears from a remark Bartók made on the back cover.

Examples from **14 Bagatelles** with bitonal, pentatonic, whole-tone and atonal characteristics, with free use of the twelve chromatic notes:

No. 1: "Bitonal experimental opening piece in phrygian C- as tonality":

A folk ballad-like dialogue of the two hands, in which the right hand in c-sharp minor asks the questions in ascending order and the left hand in c-phrygian answers with a monotonous descending scale motive; after a more vital unison turning point, there follows a short coda with the final answering motive in PPP.

⁵ Demény János: Bartók újdonság Székely Arnold hangversenyén 1908. December 9. Zenevilág IX/33-34,

⁶ Bartók Béla Írásai/I. 26. Mesterművek zongorára.

No. 2: Joyful "Elf-tonreihe":

II

Allegro giocoso $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

No. 4: Pentatonic Hungarian folk song with harmonisation based on d-aeolic:

IV

Grave $\frac{3}{4}$ 69

*Mi - kor gu - lás - boj - tár vol - tam, (†) Gu - la mel - lett el - a - lud - tam. (

No. 5: Pentatonic Slovakian folk song with harmonisation based on g-doric :

V

Vivo $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$

p leggiero [simile]

p poco marc.
*Ej, popred

nás, popred nás, popred na - še dve-re, popred na - še dve - re,

No.8: Sostenuto Burlesquing "Zwölftonreihe" with arpeggiated harmonisation:

VIII

Andante sostenuto $\text{♩} = 54-60$

Nr.10: - According to Adorno: "das zehnte Stück ist schon ein rechtes *Allegro barbaro*" ⁷

X

Allegro $\text{♩} = 92$

f molto marcato

No.12: A recitative lament in twelve-tone progression:

Rubato

sosten. accel.

p molto espr.

6/8 $\text{♩} = 72$

steso ******

p

5/8 $\text{♩} = 72$

3/8

sosten. accel.

ppp

p molto espr.

⁷ Th. Adorno: Neue Blätter für Kunst und Literatur, 1922

The repeated recitative scales-glissandi (broken clusters?) are recognisable in *The Castle of Duke Bluebeard* as a "tears" element, under Judit's silent words: "*I am not afraid*":

The image shows two pages of a musical score. The left page (numbered 28) features a piano accompaniment with repeated recitative scales-glissandi, marked with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a 'stretto' marking. The right page (numbered 21) shows the vocal line for Judit, starting with 'Più mosso' and a tempo of 90. The lyrics are in German and Hungarian. The vocal line includes the words 'Nein!', 'Nem!', 'Mir bangt nicht.', and 'Nem félek.'. The piano accompaniment on the right page also features the recitative scales-glissandi.

No. 13 (*Elle est morte ...*) EMB 1963 edition mentions Bartók's printed comment: (meghalt....) [deceased...] above the quotation of the "Stefi motif". EMB 1998 edition no longer mentions it.

The image shows the beginning of a musical score for 'XIII (Elle est morte ---)'. The tempo is 'Lento funebre' with a metronome marking of 60-72. The time signature is 4/4. The score is in a minor key. The piano accompaniment starts with a 'pp' marking and a 'p molto espr.' marking. The title 'XIII (Elle est morte ---)' is prominently displayed.

This is a close-up of the musical score for 'XIII (Elle est morte ---)'. The score features a piano accompaniment with a 'p' marking and a 'dim.' marking. The title '(meghalt - - -)' is written above the staff.

For example, the title of the last *14th Bagatel* of "*Molto marcato e con amore*" - still from March - was changed to "*Valse. (Ma mie qui danse...)*" - after the end of his love affair with Stefi Geyer. In this *Bagatel*, the symbolic motif of the orphaned and dead Stefi appears directly in a grotesque dance in Presto tempo.

Similar tendencies are noticeable between Bartók's *14th Bagatel* (1908) and Liszt's *Bagatelle ohne Tonart* (1885). Bartók came early to contact with Liszt's Faust-thematic and about the *Faust Symphony* he remarked that it "*contains a mass of wonderful ideas and Liszt in the third movement Mefisto realizes a constructive development of his diabolical irony, first appearing in the fugato of his Sonata*". In this danse macabre in infernal élan by Bartók, the devilish model of Liszt's *Mephisto-Walzer-Bagatelle ohne Tonart*, haunts. No one knows why both composers make their macabre themes dance at waltz speed and call them bagatelles. But the two musical programmes are strikingly similar.⁸

⁸ J. Kecskeméti: Egy korai Liszt-Bartók találkozás mefiszto jégében Magyar Zene 1966/4.

These works show similarities not only structurally, tonally, or thematically, but also in the use of certain techniques, such as the floating of a major and a minor third in the same chord, as well as common titles (e.g. Liszt: *Bagatelle ohne Tonart*; Bartók: *Bagatelle*).

According to Adorno, this *Valse - 14th Bagatel* is the first death dance in Bartók's music, later followed by a similar diabolical-grotesque *Scherzo* in the *Four Pieces for Orchestra* (1912) and the grandiose death dance in *The Miraculous Mandarin*.⁹ Adorno writes in his Bartók article:

- „Die vierzehn Klavierstücke op. 6, kokett-bescheiden *Bagatellen*- genannt, zeigen ein ganz verändertes Gesicht. Nicht daß er Debussy rezipiert hat und die Tonalität durch Bezug auf die Ganztonleiter und gelegentlich schon auf die alten Tonarten zerfetzt, gibt ihnen ihr Gepräge. Sie sind mit erstaunlicher Konzentration zusammengeballt, die Frage nach der Notwendigkeit jedes Taktes ist getan und drängt in einen knappen heißen Rhythmus oftmals ganze Gefühlsbögen zusammen. Paris ist allerdings nicht gesparrt: >>*Elle est morte*<<, ächzt es halbironisch, und >>*Ma mie qui danse*<< scheint mit dem Hohlspiegel dem Montmartre abgefangen. Doch weht da schon ein Sturm, der zur mittelländischen Bläue von Debussys Bucht gar nicht paßt, und das zehnte Stück ist schon ein rechtes *Allegro barbaro*. Was er zu sagen hatte, ließ sich nicht auf französisch sagen, und wurde ihm hier an seiner Wende bewußt: so schied er sich denn klar von allen salonmusizierenden Slaven seiner Zeit ab und machte Ernst mit dem Nationalen, das er als rauhes und gutes Korrektiv über seine nervöse Sensibilität setzte.“¹⁰

In 'Nyugat' (magazine) on 16 January 1909, the critic G. Csáth wrote about Bartók's newly published new "music sheets", the *14 Bagatelles*: "This is the kind of music, which at first listening shocks the ears even of those who are used to the latest music. It is purely new music in form, finish and sound, but its sounds, yet its roots and basis lie in all of us.... It has within its reason, musical content, Hungarianness and future, with a total aversion to the conventional, to dominant harmonisation and to cadences. It expresses a state of soul on the border of dream and madness, subtle and daring. Bartók put his courage/soul on piano music, wrote down all his inner intentions in notes. The tempo changes betray the secrets of his psyche. The harmonic turns no longer move in tonal dimensions."¹¹

After a one-off publication of the *14 Bagatelles* by the publisher Rozsnyai in Budapest, Bartók received a request from the publisher Edward B. in America for the publication of 'Introduction to Béla Bartók Masterpieces for Piano' in 1940, which included the *14 Bagatelles*. Bartók wrote a short introduction to each piece, but the publication never materialised. The Bagatelles were published in America by Boosey & Hawkes only after Bartók's death. A further edition by Dover Publications only partly mentions Bartók's textual comments:

"In the *Bagatelles*, a new piano style appears as a reaction against the sensibility of 19th century romantic piano music, a style without all superfluous ornamental techniques, willingly applying only musical-technical means. As can be seen in the later evolutions, the *Bagatelles* mark the beginning of the new keyboard style that most of my later piano works consistently follow - with minor to major modifications. For example, in *Suite Op.14* and especially as in the *Mikrokosmos* works where in some parts the percussive character of the piano is extra emphasized."¹²

9 Th. Adorno: Irások a Magyar zenéről. Breuer J. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1984

10 Th. Adorno: Irások a Magyar zenéről. Breuer J. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1984

11 Csáth Géza: 'Éjszakai esztétizálások' 1906-1912 Published by J. Demény in *Nyugat* on 16 January 1909: "Béla Bartók's new music: *Bartók Veertien bagatellen*

12 Introduction to Béla Bartók Masterpieces for Piano New York 1950, E.B.Marks Music Corp. / Bartók B. Irásai I. / Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1989

The year 1908 was a turning point in Bartók's life and art. Influenced by Hungarian folk songs, the new works have a completely new melodic and harmonic richness of tone. The posthumous *Violin Concerto No.1, Deux portraits, 14 Bagatelles, 10 Light Klavierstücken, Zwei Elegien, Quatre Nénies, 1st String Quartet*; all these compositions bring something never heard before, which surprised and horrified many critics. As Csáth notes: "*Bartók - an active genius and a perfect artist at the piano - set off on his own path, in a different direction from Liszt. Bartók did not work with Hungarian motifs or with hunky rhythms, but his courage, his emotions, his way of thinking is Hungarian. Not the external but the essential. Rationally speaking, his music is not nationalistic, but it shows an intuitively suppressed connection with the "Hungarian culture" suppressed connection with the "land" where he was born, where he learned to go, where memories are connected...*"¹³

The *14 Bagatelles* (Opus 6) were followed by the *Zehn leichte Klavierstücken* (without opus number). Without a doubt, this is in keeping with the Bagatelles with the motto: "*Dedication*" - without serial number and without tempo indication, starting with the d-fis-a-cis Stefi motive but in a dreamy pp semplice tone, as a "counter-reaction" to the last *Bagatelle No. 14*.

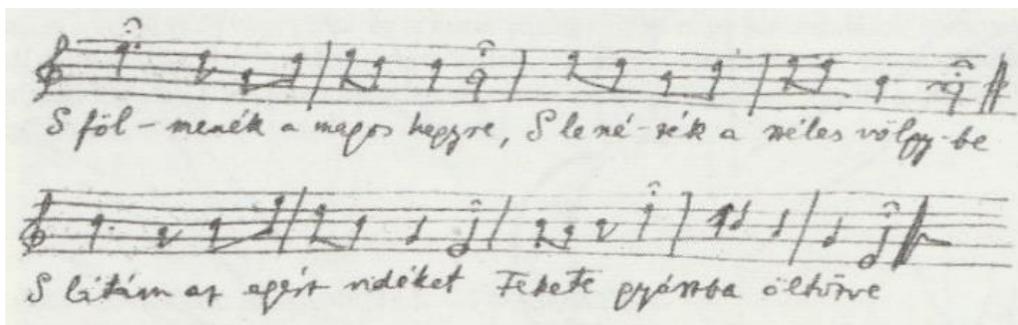
The *Zehn leichte Klavierstücke* date from the same period as the *14 Bagatelles* but are rather fantasy pieces and each piece bears a title such as the one already mentioned:

-No. 1 *Dedication*.

-No. 7 *Aurora*. A radiantly expressive piece of music of 34 bars based on thirds, playing with the intervals of the Stefi motif.

-No. 5 *An Evening at the Széklers* is Bartók's favourite encore at his recitals.

In a letter to his mother, Bartók writes his own poem in folk style under his pentatonic folk song-imitating melody:



"Standing on the high hill, I look down to the wide valleys,
There I see the whole country dressed in black mourning."

An interpretative note: on the existing archive sound recordings¹⁴ Bartók plays this melancholic pseudo-folk music piece in *parlando-rubato* style which explains his personal interpretation of note values (lengthening- shortening) and his choice of tempo. For non-Hungarian-speaking musicians, it may be a clue. An obvious explanation lies in the naturally declaimed Hungarian prosody of Bartók's enclosed poem, which perfectly matches his *parlando-rubato* interpretation of the rhythmic values. Some of Bartók's piano works (e.g., *Sketches*) are full of tempo changes - micro accelerations-delays, often within the phrases or within the measures themselves, to suggest a *parlando* style. Bartók's rhythmic imagination, as revealed in the archive recordings, becomes clear and understandable from the Hungarian language prosody, not only in the dance pieces (*Romanian Dances, Burlesques, Bears dans* etc.) but also in the phrasing of melodies/themes in compositions such as the *Nénies, Sonatine, Piano Concertos*.

13 Csáth Géza: *Éjszakai esztétizálások 1906-1912* Bp. Demény

14 Bartók speelt *Este a székelyeknél* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH81NqfLesw>

In *Bagatel nr.8* and *Burlesque nr.2*, Bartók uses a notation that, when performed, can be interpreted in the spirit of *parlando-rubato* playing. This resembles 19th century mannerism, in which the two hands play arpeggiated - bass notes before a stressed melody note. As Somfai points out, the voices (hands) not sounding simultaneously increases the dissonance effect, creates greater expressions, and makes the timbre more plastic.¹⁵

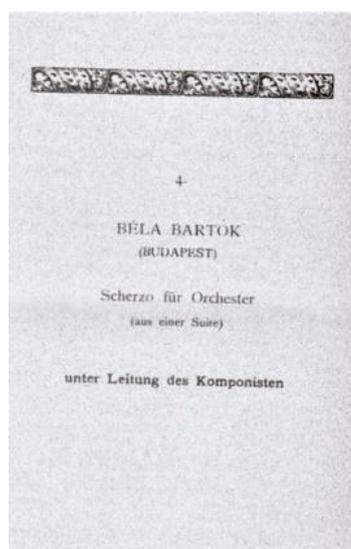
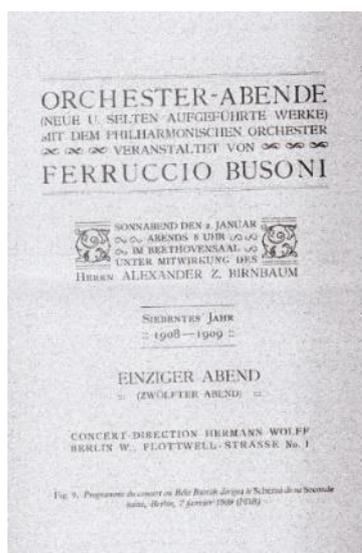


The *Sketches* are closest to the Bagatelles and are strongly influenced by Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian folk music. Bartók also continues his tonal-bitonal progression here. From the *3 Burlesques* over the *14 Bagatelles* and the closest following *Sketches* to the heart-breaking *Quatre Nénies*, Bartók created a totally new, elementary, bold, profound and complex tonal form out of the wilderness of human impulses.

The *2 Romanian Dances* are not based on Romanian folklore, nor are they imitations of Romanian themes, but they do bear the general rhythmic and melodic characteristics.¹⁶

Bartók's "early period", which includes *14 Bagatelles* and *Zehn leichte Klavierstücke*, reaches its climax in the *1st String Quartet* Opus 7. In terms of tonality, this work is composed from a *finalis*, which acts as a central tone. Above this *finalis* tonic, Bartók describes an imaginative melodic world using Lisztian pentatonic, fourth, second, third and seventh interval-keys. A renewed melodic world in a renewed harmonic world.

1909 Berlin. Bartók's only adventure as an orchestra conductor with one of his own orchestral works: at the final concert of Busoni's series of Concerts of Contemporary Orchestral Works with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on 2 January 1909, music by Franck, Mozart, Schubert, Bartók and Liszt was performed. Bartók personally conducted his *Scherzo* there.



15 Somfai László: Bartók Béla kompozíciós módszere Akkord Zenei Kiadó 2000 (Pag. 297)

16 Denijs Dille: Het werk van Béla Bartók Metropolis Antwerpen 1979 (Pag.81)

Reports from Bartók's letters:

- "I was asked 10 days before this concert whether I would do it or not. After some hesitation, I agreed. What a stroke of luck, because without a doubt I will never stand in front of an orchestra again. The performance (of **Scherzo** from **2nd Suite**) was good, certainly better than if it had been played in Budapest with their conductor. But after the concert it became a battlefield: a war between Busoni's fans (applause) and the whistling protesting rest of the audience. I had to come on stage 5 times to say thanks for that noise and that stormy reception. My **Scherzo** is not so bad after all - I think, but I have to shorten it partially; the only 'mistake' about it is, that it also contains such things, which are unknown in music by others."

To Thomán István he also writes: "It is fun to conduct when the orchestra follows my will completely! The effect was twofold: vehement protest and stormy applause.... The orchestra was great, everything sounded brilliant. Many greetings, Béla."¹⁷

Bartók writes in 1909 to his future wife Márta Ziegler:

- (...) "The successive disillusionings - which will probably last a long time (perhaps as long as my life), - the high price one has to pay for the smallest pleasure, damages every state of soul. But a thought makes life bearable: a vague suspicion that every blow is a powerful steering element for my art. Without this direct or indirect influence, my art could not grow according to the highest possible standards."

About his own attitude as a composer, he writes: - "It is my strong conviction that all true art is an expression of otherworldly impressions shaped by our experiential experience. I can imagine no other creation of art than the revelation of the unlimited motivation, bitterness, worries, anger, mocking irony, sarcasm of its creators. I used not to believe that, until I myself experienced that one's works of art are actually a much more exact reflection of the most important events and of the leading passions in one's life, than an autobiography."¹⁸

Bartók states in an interview with Denijs Dille: "...malgré le fait que j'ai conduit mes recherches harmoniques d'une façon raisonnable et raisonnée, il y entre une plus grande part d'intuition qu'on ne se figure. Je me sens forcé de déclarer que toute ma musique, et, certes, cette question d'harmonie qui nous occupe, est une question d'instinct et de sentiment ; qu'on ne me demande pas pourquoi j'écris ceci ou cela, de telle façon plutôt que de telle autre : je n'ai qu'une explication ; je le sens ainsi je l'ai noté; que la musique vous le dise, elle est assez claire pour cela et assez forte pour se défendre elle-même."¹⁹

The Hungarian painter Robert Berény, with whom Bartók spent a Christmas holiday in Paris in 1909, tried to promote Bartók's fame as a composer in Paris and wrote to him: - "Dear Mr. Bartók, because Mr. A. Delacroix never replied to my requests, I visited him personally today with your music books. Sad result: total fiasco. He doesn't like the things at all! He said something like: - "Either you are fooling the world, or this is the work of a child or a lunatic..." " - Sadly, I calmed him down and said, - "Neither."²⁰

Berény painted Bartók's portrait in 1913, which is preserved in Péter Bartók's private collection.

17 Demény János: Bartók Béla levelei Budapest. 1976 (To I. Thomán Bp. 3 January 1909)

18 Bartók Béla Családi levelei

19 Denijs Dille: Regard sur le passé. Études Bartókiennes. I. Interview de Béla Bartók par Denijs Dille (1937)

20 Berény Róbert levele Párizsból Bartók Bélának. [Feltehetően 1910. Február ZR]. Documenta Bartókiana, Heft 3. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968

In February 1911, Bartók begins his collaboration with Breitkopf & Härtel's edition of Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe. He was commissioned to revise the compositions, piano works and symphonic poems specifically related to Hungary, such as *Hungaria*, *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, *Csárdassen*, *Csárdás macabre* etc. His very extensive and intensive collaboration lasts until the end of 1913.

Referring to *The Castle of Duke Bluebeard*, Bartók writes to Delius on 27 March 1911:

- "(...) Now I have started a heavy work: a one-act play. You can imagine how at first I was disturbed from time to time by the text. But now it's going better. And I think it's a kind of music that you will like. Bartók."²¹

Bartók arrives in Paris on 11 July 1911.... Even before his departure for Paris, his greatest compositional work of this early period *The Castle of Duke Bluebeard* in its first version has been completed and is dedicated posthumously to his wife "To Márta, Rákoskeresztúr, 20 September 1911." Bartók started this composition in February, but with the conclusion of this first version he was then not satisfied. He reworked it several times, adjusted the libretto here and there, and so in 1918 it got its final form with Bluebeard's finale/conclusion: "...and it will always be night... Nightfor always night." As a final instruction, Bartók writes on the score, "In total darkness Bluebeard disappears."

Around this time Arnold Schönberg's article 'Aus meiner Harmonielehre' appeared. Among the few references to contemporaries, Bartók's name is mentioned twice. Schönberg also mentions Bartók with a fragment from his *14th Bagatelle* and states that: - „...zusammenklangbindende Fähigkeit der Dissonanzen nicht von Auflösungs-Möglichkeiten oder -Bedürfnissen abhängt. Auch der ungarische Komponist Béla Bartók steht in einigen seiner Klavierstücke diesen Klangempfindungen nahe, wie folgende Stelle beweist.“²²

Heft 17 **Der Merker.** 2. Jahr

aufgelöst werden. (332 c) Eine Addition zweier Akkorde, denen ein verminderter 7-Akkord gemeinsam ist, der durch zwei verschiedene Baßtöne zu zwei verschiedenen Nonen-Akkorden wird.

332 a) b) c)

Aber eine solche Ableitung wird nicht immer zutreffen, die Rückführung auf ältere Formen nicht immer oder nur bei sehr weiter Auffassung gelingen. Denn ein andermal schreibe ich einen solchen Akkord in viel engerer Lage. Und in einem Streich-Quartett meines Schülers Anton von Webern steht folgende Stelle:

333

Franz Schrecker in seiner Oper „Der ferne Klang“, schreibt unter vielem anderem wo allerdings viel an den Zusammenklängen auf Rechnung bewegter Stimmen zu sehen ist, aber doch auch die Ähnlichkeit mit den frühergezeigten Proben besteht, daß die zusammenklangbindende Fähigkeit der Dissonanzen nicht von Auflösungs-Möglichkeiten oder -Bedürfnissen abhängt. Auch der ungarische Komponist Béla Bartók steht in einigen seiner Klavierstücke diesen Klangempfindungen nahe, wie folgende Stelle beweist:

334 aus „Gegen“
etc.

335
etc.

Ein interessanter Fall ist auch der folgende aus einer Komposition meines Schülers Alban Berg:

336

21 Demény János Bartók Béla levelei (Bartóks Brieven) Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1976 (Nr. 234)

22 Arnold Schönberg: "Aus meiner Harmonielehre." *Der Merker*. 2. Jahr. Heft 17

Péter Bartók talks about his father: - "My father worked with music, much rather than talking about it. Once, when I told him I thought a work of his was atonal, I got a firm answer: - "If you want to know what atonality means listen to Schoenberg!" He explained to me that his music is always tonal. He had a different opinion about dissonances: (...) Beethoven was criticised in his time for using sound combinations that people were not used to, but today nobody would call them dissonances. Dissonances were sometimes used with a certain purpose, as a contrast technique to increase the subsequent sound expression." ²³

Bartók wrote in 1941-1942 about the problem of tonality or atonality: "Perfect or real atonality does not exist because of the immutable, acoustic law of semitones and overtones, through their mutual relationship to their fundamental. When we hear a certain first tone, we interpret every other tone in proportion to this first tone. The essential difference in atonality is that there is absolutely no basic tonal tone, whereas in bitonality, polytonality [and omnitonality] there are several basic tones and in polymodality there is only one basic tone - a 'tonus' or a 'finalis'. It is a curious phenomenon that in generally unison instrumental folk music we can observe a similar use of major and minor scales. For example, when two violinists play together: one playing a melody, the other a harmonic accompaniment, unusual chords, strange sounds emerge. We can call this bimodality or polymodality. This polymodality is generally characteristic of my compositions." ²⁴

On 20 October 1911, on the occasion of the Liszt Centenary, Bartók's article 'Liszt's music and the Hungarian audience' appeared in the magazine 'Zeneközlöny', in which he states the following:

- "Wherever Liszt went, he received musical impulses that made his style partly heterogeneous and showed an inventiveness and astonishing audacity in its design. This audacity was an actual fanatical pursuit of something new, something unique. His *Sonata*, renounces all external effects, except in a somewhat Italian sentimental middle section. The form of this Sonata shows an absolute perfection and a revolutionary innovation. ...In the smaller and less appreciated piano works, such as in the series *Années de Pèlerinage*, we find admirable musical thoughts - mixed with stencil-like expressiveness. What for Liszt is a perfection of form, a revolutionary innovation, is for the apostles of traditional forms an anarchism they reject." ²⁵

In 1912, almost simultaneously with Bartók's first Liszt article, Schönberg wrote in the Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung: "In these (generally speaking) so many musical initiatives which Liszt left to his successors, his influence was probably greater than that of Wagner, whose oeuvre was too complete for later composers to add anything to it."

It was during this period (1911-1912) that Bartók composed his iconic work, the *Allegro barbaro*. A quasi-bitonal, raging dance piece with a pentatonic-phrygian melody and with throbbing minor triad accompaniment, through which a diabolic dissonance friction characterises this piece. In the freer middle section, Bartók presents the main motif in a burlesque theme transformation in major harmonisation.

L. Somfai polemicalises about the origin of Bartók's *Allegro barbaro*: "The circumstances of this composition are unknown. If Bartók wrote this *Allegro barbaro* in 1910-1911, then this work does not fit into Bartók's concept of the series of thematic works for piano solo finished and agreed for publication with publishers Rozsnyai and Rózsavölgyi between June 1910 and June 1912, either because of their character (volumes 2 *Romanian Dances*, *Quatre Nénies*, 3 *Burlesques*, 2 *Elegies*) or because of their volume (e.g., *Zehn leichte Klavierstücke*, 7 *Sketches*)." ²⁶

23 Bartók Péter: Apám Editio Musica Budapest 204

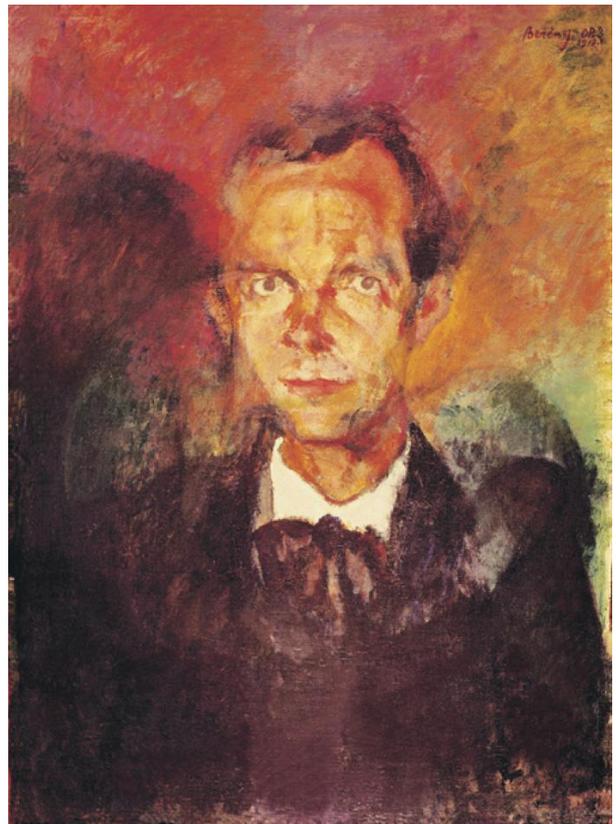
24 Bartók Béla Irásai / I. Bp. 1989. 39a Harvard lectures. Columbia University. 1941-1942

25 Zeneközlöny 20 October 1911: „Bartók: Liszt zenéje és a magyar közönség“ című cikke, a Liszt Ferenc centenárium alkalmából.

26 László Somfai: Why is a Bartók Thematic Catalog So sorely Needed? Peter Laki: Bartók and his World. Princeton University Press, BB 63 1911 (or 1910). BBCCE. Vol. 36

Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* is a kind of diabolic peasant dance. A similar diabolic characterisation appears later in the grotesque *Scherzo* movement from the *Four Works for Orchestra* (1912), in the *Miraculous Mandarin* (1918) and in the *Chase* of his *Open Air Suite* (1926). But the *Bagatelles* already have several characteristics leading to the *Allegro barbaro*. Bartók's *Bagatelle* no. 10 is already a characteristic precursor to *Allegro barbaro* - as Adorno wrote "*das zehnte Stück ist schon ein richtiges Allegro barbaro*".²⁷

On 1 January 1913, the *Nyugat* magazine published Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* as a supplement:



On 1 February 1913, The Kecskemét Singing Circle organised a "*Kuruc-estély*" in Kecskemét where Bartók played his own works: *2 Burlesques*, 10 pieces from the *14 Bagatelles*, *the Bear Dance*, *An Evening at the Szeklers*, a series of pieces from *Für Kinder* and, as the final piece, the world premiere of *Allegro barbaro*. The *Allegro barbaro* was published in 1918 by Universal Edition Wien.

Tallián calls the years 1908-1911 the "pianistic years": the *7 Sketches* - conceived like the *Bagatelles*; *Two Elegies*, *Two Romanian Dances* with earlier piano techniques. In the *4 Nénies (Lamentations)*, the *Three Burlesques* and the *Allegro barbaro*, on the other hand, Bartók brings a playful or deeply serious summary of his musical avant-garde ideas. Ancient primitiveness, primal originality and "barbarism" were "discoveries" for the time.

²⁷ Th. Adorno: *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Literatur* 1922

2.4. Busoni's influence as a mentor: Bartók's rediscovery of Liszt as "the most modernist composer of the 19th century".

From Bartók's academic speech 'The Liszt Problems' at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Budapest in 1936: "*There is one composer, who of us all has been the least untroubled by Liszt's magnetic influence. This composer is his most active and enthusiastic propagandist: Ferruccio Busoni, the greatest follower of the Liszt traditions. Busoni too, like Liszt, developed a world activity. Both paid constant attention to all new phenomena in musical life. In this Liszt-centenary it is our duty to commemorate with gratitude Busoni's specific activity. Busoni tried to bring Liszt's long neglected and misunderstood works back into the general musical consciousness.*"¹

Busoni's great stimulus - besides Bach - was Liszt. Martin Wegelius was the first to suggest to him in Helsinki in 1893 that he study Liszt's compositions in depth, compositions that Busoni had until then approached as a pianist-performer. With time, Busoni collected an important part of Liszt's works in original editions (mainly for piano) and discovered and saw which changes and versions Liszt later made of them. This concentration on Bach and Liszt led to a completely changed attitude in his piano playing. To put it bluntly, until then the focus had been on technical mastery, but from now on the study of the deeper meaning of this repertoire.²

And this is what Bartók wrote in his Autobiography (1921-1923):

- "*R. Strauss' influence had evaporated - I began to study Liszt again - but his less popular compositions such as **Années de Pèlerinage, Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, Faust-Symphonie, Danse macabre** etc. This study has led me to the essence, to Liszt's core: I discovered Liszt's true meaning and felt his importance as greater than that of Wagner and Strauss, in terms of further musical developments.*"

Bartók asks the question: "*What influence did Liszt's music have on further developments in music history? I once stated that the importance/weight of Liszt's influence is greater than that of Wagner. Also today I hold this opinion. By this I do not mean that Liszt was a greater composer than Wagner. In Wagner's music we find a greater perfection of form, a richer palette of expressiveness and a greater stylistic balance. And yet - Liszt's works had a more fruitful influence than Wagner's. Wagner's works are practically perfect in their totality and in their details, therefore one can only slavishly follow Wagner, but not develop them further. Liszt - on the other hand - has raised, created, and offered so many new possibilities in his works - without further elaboration, so that we get from him an incomparably greater urge than from Wagner.*

*(...) We discover a surprising affinity between some of Liszt's compositions such as the **Années de Pèlerinage and Harmonies poétiques et religieuses** and some of the works by the two greatest figures of the new French music - Debussy and Ravel. I am convinced that without the **Jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este** and some other similar works by Liszt, certain stylistically similar tone-expressive works by these two French composers would be unthinkable.*"³

Piano virtuoso Bartók surpasses his contemporaries as a skilful interpreter of Liszt's later and unknown piano works. It is during these years 1904-1905 that it is most strongly demonstrated that Bartók - not only in his composition but also in his career as a pianist - has been a recognised heir and direct successor to Liszt's Romantic programmes.

1 Bartók Béla: Liszt problémák Budapest 1936 Székfoglaló a Magyar Tudományos Akadémiában (némileg kibővítve). Bartók válogatott zenei írásai 1948. 73.l.

2 Ferruccio Busoni, "a Musical Ishmael" door Della Couling The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham,- Toronto-Oxford 2005 (1893) (Pag.141)

3 Bartók: 'Liszt zenéje és a mai közönség 1911'. Zenetudományi Tanulmányok Liszt Ferenc és Bartók Béla emlékére. Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest 1955

He achieved success in Bratislava, Vienna, Budapest etc.⁴ In his book⁵, Dille has also made a list of Liszt's works studied or known by Bartók. This list is further completed by J. Breuer:⁶

- 1896 *Irrlichter, I. Rhapsodie*
1897 *Spanische Rhapsodie, Sonate, Paganini Etüde no. 1, Tannhäuser-ouverture.*
1898 *Klavierkonzert in Es, Paganini Etüden 2, 3 La Campanella) 3. Konzertetüde, Preludio, Harmonie du Soir, Eroica, Wilde Jagd, Vision, 2. Konzert-Salonetüde, Chasse-neige, Mazeppa, Fantasie auf Don Juan, Spinnlied (Der fliegende Holländer), Hochzeitsmarsch (Mendelssohn), Tannhäuser-Ouvertüre, Wilhelm-Tell-Ouvertüre, Klavierkonzert in Es*
1900 *Les preludes, Sunt lacrymae rerum – En mode hongrois.*
1901 *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth, Klavierkonzert A dur, Polonaise E dur,*
1904 *Funérailles, I. Mephisto-Walzer, Feux Follets, Cantique d'amour,*
1905-1911 *Variationen über Weinen Klagen Sorgen Zagen, Pianoconcerto in Es, Totendans,*

1911-1913 Liszt composities door uitgeverij Breitkopf & Härtel naar Bartók opgestuurd tussen februari 1911 – december 1913 voor nazicht, vertaling en revisie:

- Hungaria, 20 Hungarien Rhapsodies, Isten veled (lied), Mazeppa, Heldenklage, Epithalam zu Ed. Reményi, Ungarns Gott, Heroischer Marsch, Ungarisches Königslied, Ave Maria, Via Crucis, Legende nr.2, 3 Sonetti di Petrarca, Weber's Schlummerlied, 5 Ungarischer Volkslieder, Des todten Dichters Liebe, 2 unvollständige Klavierpieces, Csárdás macabre, O du mein boldes Abendstern, Dante-Symphonie, Lied der Begeisterung, 6 Rapsodien für Orchester, Entwürfe, Ungarisch Fantasie für Klavier und Orchester, Der nächtliche Zug, Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke, Am Grabe Richard Wagners, Glocken von Strassburg, Klavierkonzert nr 1. nr. 2., Totentanz, Ungarischen Krönungsmarsches für Orchester, Les Morts/F. Lamennais, Kleinen Orchesterwerken, Klavierstück ungarischen Charakters, Rêves et Fantasies, Rákoczy - version facile.*
1928 *Années de Pèlerinage III. Book : 2. Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este, 4. Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, 5. Sunt lacrymae rerum, 7. Sursum corda,*
1930 *I. Legende*
1935-1942 *Concerto pathétique*
1936 *Rhapsodie Hongroise nr.13,*
1937 *Éclogue, Mephisto-Walzer,*

4 Demény János: Bartók Béla tanulóévei és romantikus korszaka Zenetudományi tanulmányok II.

5 Denijs Dille: Thematisches Verzeichnis der Jugendwerke Béla Bartóks 189-1904. Bärenreiter Kassel- Basel-Tours-London 1976.

6 Breuer János: Bartók, A Liszt-pianista. Magyar Zene XXXVII./4 December 1999 Liszt Society Congress

Liszt compositions sent to Bartók by the publishing house Breitkopf & Härtel between February 1911 and December 1913 for review, translation and revision :

Bartók states the following in 1905: "*I studied Liszt again and have arrived at the essence*". Like Busoni in 1893, Bartók went through the same experience in 1905: "*Studying Liszt's repertoire for the sake of his deeper meaning*".

Liszt compositions studied by Bartók:

- *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*
- *Eine Faust-Symphonie - in drei Charakterbildern*
- *Totentanz (Danse macabre)*
- *Années de Pèlerinage III.*

When Liszt in 1833 - barely 23 years old - in his letter to Marie d'Agoult first mentions his *Pensée des Morts* from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, he defines the core as "harmonie lamartiennne sans ton ni mesure". He adds, "my harmonies are unhappy, but you can feel the extraordinary thoughts and poetry in them."⁷

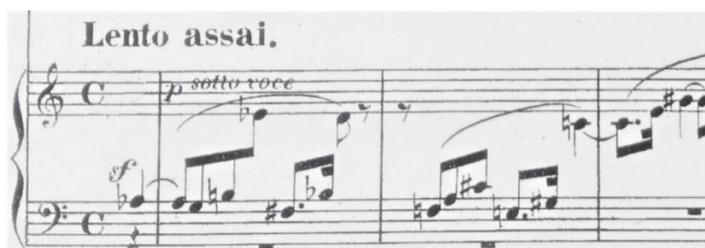
This is also true of the other pieces of those 'Harmonies...'. Already then, he presented himself as an innovator of music. Innovative techniques typified him until the end of his life. Liszt's favourite thought from Étienne Senancour's *Oberman* is: "*we admire what we see, we experience what we hear*".⁸

He had this avant-garde composition (*Pensée des Morts*) published by three different publishers.

Liszt's *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* is a series of highly original, poetic and stylistically 'avant-garde' piano pieces - improvisatory musical meditations. "*Harmonie lamartiennne*" as he describes the *Pensée des Morts*. (*Invocation; Ave Maria; Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude; Pensée des Morts; Pater Noster; Hymne de l'Enfant à son réveil; Funérailles; Miserere d'après Palestrina; Andante lagrimoso; Cantique d'amour*).

At his recitals Bartók played the *Funérailles* from 1904 onwards.

Inspired by Goethe's *Faust*, Liszt composed the *Faust-Symphonie* - in three character parts - in 1854 - the year after the completion of his *Piano Sonata*. The opening theme consists of all twelve notes of the chromatic scale in succession. It shows traces of Liszt's discussion with Fétis in connection with his theories on "pluritonality and omnitonality" in music.



Bartók's opinion on this is as follows: "*Liszt presents a perfectly new, completely different, programmatic concept in terms of content, which is realized in the Sonata and in the two corner movements of the Faust-Symphonie. This makes this Faust-Symphonie one of the most outstanding and modernist compositions of the 19th century.*"

Bartók had been engaged with Liszt's Faust-thematic since his youth, playing the *Sonata* repeatedly from the age of 16, also during his study years with I. Thoman at the Liszt Academy. In his essay 'The Music of Liszt and Today's Audience. 1911' - he writes about the Faust Symphony:

⁷ Szmodis Jenő: *Modernitás és tradíció Liszt művészetében*. Argumentum, Budapest, 2012,

⁸ L. Ramann: *Franz Liszt als Künstler und Mensch*. Breitkopf und Härtel Leipzig 1880-1894

- "It is a mass of wonderful ideas - but also the constructive development of a diabolical irony first applied in the fugato of the *Sonata*. Liszt presents a perfectly new, completely different, programmatic concept, which is realized in the two corner movements of the *Faust-Symphonie*. This makes this work one of the most outstanding and modernist compositions of the 19th century." ⁹

Liszt's *Totentanz (Danse macabre)* is inspired by the famous 14th century fresco: Trionfo della Morte in the Camposanto of Pisa and based on the Dies Irae melody. It is more of a concertante paraphrase in variation-form than a fully-fledged piano concerto. From the first sketches in 1838 (visit to Pisa), Liszt worked on this infernal composition in several stages between 1839 and 1859. To achieve an apocalyptic effect, Liszt uses unusual sound and colour combinations, not only through a highly original orchestration - deep brass, piccolos - but also by using the piano as a percussion instrument - deep cluster sounds, diabolic glissandi.

On October 20, 1911, on the Liszt centenary, Bartók's article "Liszt's music and today's audience" appears, with critical-analytical remarks on *Totentanz*: "...There are elements which do not mix easily, which even Liszt's great art could not synthesize. E.g., Gregorian music and an Italian aria. This work (*Danse macabre/Totentanz*) always makes a very enchanting impression on me. A small detail: the whole work is very bleak and austere, based on the "Dies irae". A Gregorian melody, with a series of variations, but in the middle - though for only eight bars - we find a variation coloured by quasi-Italian sentiments. Liszt apparently wanted to bring a flash of a ray of hope in the middle of so many dark, bleak passages." ¹⁰

Liszt composed the third book of *Années de Pèlerinage* between 1865-1877 at Villa d'Este. It is his most important cycle, evolving from a late romantic musical language to a descriptive expressionist-impressionist musical language by means of new sound and colour effects.

For example, in *Angelus! Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este, Thrénodies I. and II.* incorporate chiming elements, in *Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois* and in *Marche funèbre* cluster-like deep percussive timbres, in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* impressionistic colour combinations in whole-tone keys.

His "death-poetry", music from his deepest soul, takes a central place in his last period of creation.

Bartók played the following pieces from *Années de Pèlerinage III.* book from 1928 onwards:

2. Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este, 4. Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, 5. Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois, 7. Sursum corda. His recording of Sursum corda in 1928 (available on YouTube) is an important witness and interpretative illustration of his ongoing involvement with Liszt's music.¹¹

9 Bartók Béla: 'Liszt zenéje és a mai közönség 1911' Zenetudományi Tanulmányok Liszt Ferenc és Bartók Béla emlékére. Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest 1955

10 Bartók Béla: 'Liszt zenéje és a mai közönség 1911' Zenetudományi Tanulmányok Liszt Ferenc és Bartók Béla emlékére. Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest 1955

11 Bartók's recording of Liszt *Sur sum corda*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooRLEPMYpbo>,

3. 1860-1886 Rome-Weimar-Budapest. A turning point in Liszt's life and work. Chronicles of the late period: death poetry.

3.1 The end of Liszt's Weimar period. The dramatic events and his final move to Rome.

In 1860 Liszt resigned as Kapellmeister in Weimar, concluding his turbulent activities there. During his Altenburg period, Weimar became a kind of cultural biotope, an important cultural meeting place between Eastern and Western European artists.

This was due to the regular visits of Russian writers and composers under the versatile support and protection of Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, (daughter of Tsar Paul I of Russia) and Grand Duke Charles Frederick, and after 1853 of Grand Duke Charles Alexander and the very active Russian aristocracy in Weimar.

Liszt's twelve years long Weimar-period (1848-1860) remains marked by his central organisational leadership of the *Zukunftsmusik-Konzerte*, - as founder of the Neue Weimar'sche Schule with advanced composers (i.e. Wagner, Berlioz) who used the motto '*Zukunftsmusik*', and with his compositional highlights such as most of the symphonic poems including *Tasso*, *Les Préludes*, *Orpheus*, *Hungaria*, *the Sonata*, the *Faust-Symphonie*, *Dante Symphony after Dante's Divina Commedia* and *Totentanz*.

In Weimar, a public discussion, a kind of historical division, arose between the progressive writers of programme music on the one hand and the conservative defenders of absolute music on the other (e.g., Joachim, Clara Schumann, Brahms, Hanslick), resulting in a long-lasting public enmity – 'the war of the romantics'. Daring remarks have been made, for instance, by Brahms on Liszt's music: insane... "ein Schwindel", or by Wolff on Brahms' music: "*In one note of Liszt there is more intelligence and sensitivity than in three symphonies of Brahms*". The *Zukunftsmusikkonzerte* were then discontinued. Public incomprehension and press attacks made it impossible for Liszt to function meaningfully in Weimar.

After the death of Maria Pavlovna - protector of artistic life in Weimar - Liszt writes in 1860 to Grand Duke Charles Alexander: "*I have decided to renounce all joys of conducting and will rest my baton as well as my piano*".

In 1860 Liszt writes his will "*Mein letzter Wille*" in which he bitterly looks back on his difficult but fruitful Weimar period, paying special attention to his loving relationship with Carolyne Wittgenstein and noting that he always found his solace in music.

(Similarly, in 1908 Bartók wrote to Stefi Geyer: "*I have a sad suspicion that I will have no other consolation in my life than music*.)

Liszt's and Carolyne Wittgenstein's wedding plans are then abandoned - despite the favourable papal decision recognising Carolyne's divorce - as the conclusion of a very lengthy and complex legal procedure. In 1861 both moved from Weimar to Rome. Liszt stayed for years at the Madonna del Rosario convent and was afterwards ordained cleric, sub-deacon – 'Abbé Liszt' as he was sometimes called. It was in this Rosario convent that Liszt composed his *Christus oratorio*.

From 1859 onwards - with the *Totentanz* - an era began in which death and dance were a regular theme and form of Liszt's works. Liszt's tragic personal situation had a substantial influence on his work: two of his children died early, his old faithful and unfaithful friends, important actors in his life dropped out, like Ingres, Berlioz, Rossini, Peter Cornelius, Marie d'Agoult, George Sand, Raff, Victor Hugo. On top of this came a deteriorating relationship with his daughter Cosima through her divorce from Hans von Bülow and marriage to Richard Wagner, - his relationship with Carolyne von Wittgenstein, which became more conflictual and compromising with the times, and his political isolation in Hungary. All these circumstances made Liszt turn in on himself and become solitude.

Liszt also lost his 'musical (in)son' Wagner, but not his hopes for the musical future. Through his pupils

and contacts with Russian composers such as Borodin, Rubinstein, Rimski-Korsakoff, Cui, Moussorgsky, Balakirev, among others, he regained hope for further musical renewal.

Lamentations, funeral music, death marches, dark mysticism and demonic infernos are the most typical compositions. Lamentations such as the *Sunt lacrymae rerum*, *Thrénodie hongroise I. II.*, *Marche Funèbre (En mémoire de Maximilian I.)*, de *Hungarian Rhapsodies 16, 17, 18*, 3 death-csárdasses: *Csárdás*, *Csárdás macabre*, *Csárdás obstiné*, *Historische ungarische Bildnisse*, *Luguber Gondola*, *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, *Nuages gris*.

Bartók also composed "death-poetry" between 1908 and 1911: titles with desolate content and loneliness expression such as *Rapsodie*, *2 Elegies*, *Quatre Nénies*, *Bagatelles no. 12* and *no. 13*, *3 Burlesques*. These works are similar or strikingly like works by Liszt, such as *Elegies*, *Rhapsodies*, *Bagatel ohne Tonart*, *Mephisto-Walz*, *Luguber Gondola*, *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*.

In December 1859 Liszt saw his son Daniel die in Berlin at Cosima's, and shortly afterwards he composed *Les Morts*, - an 'oration', based on a poem by Lamennais. He wrote of it to Carolyne Wittgenstein: "In little cultivated fields of art a struggle like - Jacob with the angel rages between ideas, style, feeling and pen."



Les Morts is the first of Liszt's *Trois Odes funèbres : Les Morts - La Nuit - Le triomphe funèbre de Tasso*. Liszt wrote on the title page of the manuscript of the *Trois Odes funèbres*: "If there should be music at my funeral, I would like to have the second *Ode: La Nuit*, après Michelangelo because of its Hungarian cadenza."¹



Les Morts was composed in memory of the death of his son Daniel, the *Variationen über Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (1862) in memory of the death of his daughter Blandine.

1 Hamburger Klára: Liszt Gondolat Budapest 1980 (Pag.309)

3.2 Hungarian art music, gypsy music or Hungarian folk music? Liszt's and Bartók's reflections.

In 1861 Liszt published his book *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie*.¹ In this important publication, based on Hungarian chroniclers, Liszt sketches a profound historical picture of the way of life of the gypsies and their remarkable talents, their musical activities in Hungary from 1219 onwards. Liszt starts from the controversial hypothesis that Gypsy art - 'their music' - is of Indian origin and found an ideal biotope in Hungary. Gypsies had no country of their own, never assimilated and preserved their individuality, their own social rules as well as their vain self-respect. They lived in nature and in total freedom. Due to their great intuitive musical talent and instrumental virtuosity, Gypsy art remained "superior" to local folk art. Their instruments: violin, cymbal, viola and double bass were also essentially different from the old peasant instruments such as pipe, flûte, "tárogató" (a kind of reed pipe).

In Liszt's song *Die drei Zigeuner*, Lenau's text describes a very striking and typical gypsy scene: "*One day I saw three gypsies resting on a meadow. One had a violin in his hand and was playing a melody with fire, surrounded by the radiant light of a sunset. Another had a pipe in his mouth, carelessly looking at the smoke in his endless bliss. The third slept deeply dreaming under his cymbal suspended from branches*".

Liszt mentions the most famous gypsy musicians who, from the 15th century until his time, were admired and appreciated in the highest circles for their musical talent - superior to that of the Hungarian folk musicians. While composing the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (sic), Liszt had originally intended to write an introductory text, which then became a book. Liszt's conviction and basic assumption was that gypsy music was in fact the "real Hungarian folk music". His theory about the non-Hungarian but Indian origin of the gypsy or folk music played in Hungary caused a real storm of indignation in Hungary. Liszt's authorship of the book on the gypsies was also discussed, disputed, and recently it was shown that Princess Carolyne Wittgenstein wrote a large part of this book.

Following Liszt's book, Anna G. Piotrowska in her study *Gypsy music in European culture*² sketches a complex but generalised picture of gypsy music. Albert Thomas Sinclair himself, in his *Gypsy and Oriental Music (1907)*, establishes a link between "gypsy" and "Arab" music. Hungarian and Spanish "Roma-music" was for him one big entity.

Bartók asked the question, "What music did the gypsies play?"

Bartók's answer was, "Hungarian art music played by gypsies!"

- "*Commonly known are the widely used Hungarian elements in the music of Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert, as well as the influence of Hungarian folk music on Liszt and Brahms. Liszt has acted - due to lack of essential scientific information - with false notions when writing about Hungarian folk music and about the so-called "gypsy music". Perhaps we can gradually convince the public that the music and songs played by the gypsy gangs were in fact the compositions of dilettantes from the urban middle class. They were hardly ever sung. From the 18th century onwards, it was the absolute monopoly of the gypsies to spread Hungarian folk and urban music. In Hungarian villages, the Gypsies may have sung "their own" songs in their own language, but that music had neither colour nor form. On the other hand, they also picked up real peasant songs in the peripheral villages and played them there just as the peasants played them! But as they performed them in more civilised and larger agglomerations, they transformed the original folk music into their own gypsy style with added exaggerated sentimental and virtuoso ornaments.*

1 Liszt: *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* Pest 1859

2 Anna G. Piotrowska: *Gypsy music in European culture: From the Late Eighteens to the Early Twentieth Centuries*. Boston. Northeastern University Press 2013

Those versions became known in the world as 'gypsy music'. I personally believe that this is a result of environmental influence rather than their gypsy ethnicity." ³

- "Three different rhythms dominate Eastern European peasant music. The first is the *parlando-rubato*, that is, a free, declamatory rhythm without any particular measures. Most comparable to a *recitativo* in Western music. The second: is a strict, regular rhythm - usually in 2/4 bars. The third rhythm: is the so-called *punctuated rhythm*, which is very commonly characteristic of a certain type of Hungarian peasant music. *i I. / I. i (ti-ta. / ta.-ti)* [as identically in Liszt's Hungarian works]." ⁴

It is common knowledge that Liszt was extremely interested in all colourful folk music, wherever he travelled (Ukraine, Poland, Switzerland, France etc.). He arranged several folk tunes there. Their cosmopolitan influence on Liszt is also perceptible in e.g., *Rhapsody no. 9, "Pester Carnival"*, in which he incorporates Italian barcarolles, Polish polonaises, Spanish habaneras through his true romantic Hungarian temperament.

Bartók writes about the Liszt *Rhapsodies* in his inaugural article 'The Liszt Problems': - (...) *To emphasize the truth, these rhapsodies - I mean mainly the Hungarian Rhapsodies - are perfect creations in their genre. The musical material that Liszt uses in them could not be processed more cleanly or with greater art. That this material is not always valuable is another matter"* ⁵

For Bartók, the folk melodies arranged by Liszt were (then) unknown. In 1907, during his folk music collection tours, Bartók noted down - and incorporated into his *44 Duos* - the same folk melody that Liszt had incorporated into his *Rhapsody No.7*.

Another folk song example Bartók mentioned to his son Péter Bartók, namely in the *2nd Rhapsody* Liszt uses the following folk melody quote: ⁶



According to the sources known so far, the *13th Rhapsody* is the only one of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* that Bartók played in a concert. Of these *Rhapsody* melodies played in 1911, Bartók discovered a version during his searches in 1912 which proves that Liszt had a connection with real peasant music. Bartók also published this folk melody in his volume 'The Hungarian Folk Song'. He commented: "*This melody is used in Liszt's 13th Rhapsody - Allegro as the first motive. Its sixteenth-figures remind me of the 18th century Western European art music passages - ornamental elements of the gypsy musicians and these have nothing to do with Hungarian peasant music.*" ⁷

In a relevant, very interestingly documented, and thorough study, Lujza Tari shows that Liszt used Hungarian music quotations in most of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (no. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14) - not only from composed popular (Hungarian) folk tunes but also from real Hungarian folk tunes (e.g., no. 5, 6, 7, 13) which still belong to Hungarian folk culture and traditions today.

Tari quotes the original folk songs with texts and local sources, where Liszt during his concert tours could listen to those songs - played or sung by rural professional musicians, singers, gypsies - on the spot and 'take them home' without written music notes. The latter is also reflected in Liszt's diary:

3 Beszélgetések Bartókkal, 1911-1945 Wilhelm A. Kijarat Kiadó Budapest 2000

4 Bartók Írásai /I. Bp. 1989 39a Harvard előadások. Columbia University.1941-1942)

5 Bartók Béla: Liszt problémák. Budapest 1936 Székhogaló a Magyar Tudományos (némileg kibővitve). Bartók válogatott zenei írásai 1948. 73.1

6 Bartók Péter: Apám. Editio Musica Budapest 2004

7 Demény János: Bartók Béla művészi kibontakozásának évei (1906-1914) Zenetudományi tanulmányok. Liszt Ferenc és Bartók Béla emlékére. Akadémiai kiadó Budapest. 1955.

'Koltói csárdás'. In this diary Liszt noted a very widespread Hungarian folk melody: "Erdő mellett nem jó lakni" ("Not nice to live next to a forest") which he incorporated in his *14th Rhapsody*. Liszt was therefore one of the very first who, by integrating these songs into his *Rhapsodies*, "recorded" that music. Tari also believes that an investigation into the authenticity of Hungarian folk music and into the distinction from gypsy music can only be done by Hungarian researchers and in situ because of the issues of authenticity, language dialect and specific musical elements. Collections of popular folk/art music and folk songs - both old and recent - are accessible only in Hungarian and in Hungary.

The sources of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* have recently been discovered and searched for by other researchers and ethnomusicologists. The connection between his compositions and the surviving folk melodies had already been clarified by Tari in 1989.⁸

In her Liszt book, Lina Ramann was the first to treat Liszt's works written in the Hungarian style systematically and clearly. It was a meritorious attempt even when we know that her knowledge of Hungarian music was very limited and incorrect, and therefore music aesthetically rather dilettante. She had, however, chosen the correct approach to the Hungarian works. According to Ramann, we should examine the Hungarian works from two aspects: what is the relationship of those works to the Hungarian musical culture and what do those works mean with their strikingly rhythmic-melodic Hungarian characteristics? Today we see it differently: the works of Liszt have a fundamental and more consistent relationship with Hungarian music. We must investigate how they were written under the influence of Hungarian music. In addition, we should consider his works as precursors of the further evolution into contemporary Hungarian music.⁹

This Hungarian idea runs like a thread from the uncertain search in the *Années de Pèlerinage* to the barely understandable exceptional late works. Throughout the Hungarian works, Liszt develops organically and if we did not know this evolution, the bizarre characteristics of the late works would remain incomprehensible.

The *Csárdás macabre* and the *Csárdás obstinée*, are part of a series of "40 pages of Hungarian music" (together with the 18th and 19th *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and the "very Hungarian" *Marche Funèbre (Maximilian I.)*).

In a letter to Baroness Olga von Meyendorff on February 26, 1885, Liszt writes that they are ready and "They are much more exciting and modern, than most of the others." They do not include "forbidden fifth parallels". They do include diminished octaves (e.g. in bars 27, 33, 41, 129, 137 - EMB), which often occur in Bartók's music. Liszt here uses a very old element of form which literally gives a dizzying effect, as its maniacal repetitions suggest "dancing to death".



Liszt *Csárdás obstinée* (bars 27-33)

The *Historische ungarische Bildnisse* were largely written in Liszt's last years of life. Liszt did not want to give objective characterizations, but rather to express musically the subjective reflexes provoked by the mentioned Hungarian social figures. The main focus is on their common characteristics: their Hungarianness, and not on their individual characteristics.

The last four *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (no.16-19) were also composed in Budapest between 1882 and 1886 - by then Bartók had already been born. They are compositions without gypsy or other mannerisms, they reach far beyond the late 19th century music compositions and have more affinity with the early, folkloristic inspired music of Bartók.

8 Lujza Tari: "Koltói csárdás", *Ferenc Liszt: Hongaarse Rapsodieën en de volksmuziek* (2013). VII.

Hungarológiai Kongresszus zenetudományi Szekciójának előadásai. Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, Kolozsvár,

9 Gárdonyi Z. Liszt Ferenc Magyar stílusa *Musicologica Hungarica* III. Széchenyi Könyvtár Budapest 1936.

The question of 'Hungarian music' or music in 'style Hongrois' or 'cadence magyarae'-is an essential aesthetic difference. Music in style Hongrois means a mannerism with Hungarian features. This is essential in 19th century Hungarian music. But it is a mistake to claim that the sources from which Liszt draws his Hungarian music lead to a dead end that excludes further evolution. This viewpoint on 19th century romantic music and the national schools is, however, widespread.¹⁰

In his late compositions Liszt positions himself against the romantic trend from a total to a detailed evolution. The *Hungaria*, *Kronenmesse*, *Cypresses*, *Sunt lacrymae rerum* are already forerunners of a basic concept where late romantic musical evolution leads to a universal musical expressionism. Liszt wrote with full conviction and knowledge of Hungarian music - not just formal appearances.

He was able to achieve this by using elements filtered from authentic Hungarian music.

In the 16th, 17th and 18th *Rhapsodies* Liszt uses his own themes and conceives a Hungarian musical world, not based on reality or on an idealised image of it, but on a highly abstract and essentially subjective own world of thought.

10 Gárdonyi Zoltán Liszt Ferenc Magyar stílusa Musicologica Hungarica III. Orsz. Széchenyi Könyvtár kiadása Budapest 1936.

3.3 Stylistic evolution and musical innovations, compositional elements.

The way out of tradition towards consonant and dissonant expressionism.

Liszt's interest in questions of tonality has its origins in Fétis' idea of *onde omnitonique*, which was to become a logical replacement of traditional tonality. A historical evolution from 'unitonic' to 'pluritonic' and further to 'omnitonique'. At the age of 70 Liszt called the "omnitonique" an "*Endziel*".¹ Liszt also composed a work entitled *Prélude omnitonique*.

The following generations have taken F.-J. Fétis as a founder of ethnomusicology and comparative musicology. But according to Liszt's biographers like Christern and Ramann, Liszt as a composer was undeniably influenced by Fétis' revolutionary harmonic theory: *Histoire de la musique published in Paris in 1832* (Paulin). Fétis' theories on unitonique, transitonique, pluritonique and omnitonique and his belief that art develops into perfection: "*to l'art véritable, art pur, idéal, complet, existant par lui-même, et indépendant de toute relation extérieure.*"

In his theoretical conclusions, Fétis goes so far as to consider the idea of a twelve-tone system. For him, "omnitonique" was a system to increase the possibilities of expression. But Liszt's music in the 1930s is not a direct consequence but rather a processed theoretical impulse to renew it. His pursuit of atonality in the late works is a complex result of Fétis' impulses and will to move further and further away from the conventions of the time, towards a rediscovered modality in music.²

Liszt writes to Fétis in 1859: „*Sie wird herausfinden lassen, daß ich nicht verfehlt habe, von Ihrem Unterricht zu profitieren und daß insbesondere Ihre bemerkenswerten Lektionen über die Omnitonie und die Omnirhythmik (...) einen offenkundigen Einfluß aus die von mir eingeschlagene Richtung ausgeübt haben.*“³

Herman Sabbe writes about modernity and tradition with Liszt:

- "*It is since Liszt that the idea has progressed that one should compose with the past, in the sense of 'composing': using and synthesizing the building blocks of the past and succeeding in reaching an agreement with the past: as I put it, the 'tradition' is an exchange (contract), a trade, a give and take. This art of transformation, which consists of melodic modifications of a rhythm, rhythmic modifications of a melody, etc.: a whole system of parametric intermodulation that constitutes one of the sources and foundations of twentieth-century musical modernism, Liszt also applies it to his own themes. His **piano sonata** is without doubt the most perfect illustration. ... The new type, critical, of historical consciousness that emerges in Liszt seems to me to be linked to the concept of avant-garde. The Saint-Simonists transported this term from military strategy, around 1830 as a metaphor, into the realm of art. The concept of "avant-garde", after all, presupposes a thoughtful link with the past - a distance in relation to most of the group -, an awareness, therefore, of an underpinning historicity. Liszt is the first who, within the European tonal music culture, was able to open himself to a real "alteration". (...) Liszt opened up the system: more specifically, he received different modal collections in terms of range, penta-, hexa- and heptatonic, the scale of whole tones, the scale with alternation of second and third minor tones (to which one gives a name oneself: Liszt scale) and also the tritone relationships; he introduced the principle of alternation between harmonic zones dominated by certain intervals and those of asymmetrical chords (the diminished seventh, the augmented fifteenth, for instance) which function as centres, spindles of harmonic action; and he established the possible*

1 Liszt Klavierwerke Harmonies poétiques et religieuses (Frühfassung) EMB Előszó: 1.

A zongoraciklus előtörténete (1833-1840) Kaczmarczyk Adrienne Budapest

2 L. Ramann: Franz Liszt als Künstler und Mensch. Breitkopf und Häertel Leipzig 1880-1894 / Moricz Klára The Ambivalent Connection between Theory and Practice in the Relationship of F. Liszt & F.-JJ. Fétis Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. T.35 Fasc.(1993-1994)

3 Franz Liszt in seinen Briefen. Eine Auswahl, hrsg. H.R.Jung Berlin 1987 / To Fétis, 17 September 1859

complementarity of the chromatic and diatonic principles; all elements which contributed to the destabilisation of the system; and which opened the Western musical world to new contributions from outside.

In Liszt's view, the tonal system, with its only two heptatonic scales, would no longer suffice for musical expression. He also (often) created alternative harmonic colours, which came to enrich the range of expressive possibilities of European music.⁴

Liszt's interest in unusual keys and modes increased in his late period. This was due to his greater involvement in his search for identity in Hungarian music and its origins. This expressive exploration of specific Hungarian modes also substantially influenced Bartók. Polytonality or the "lack of tonality", combined with harmonies based on extended intervals, chords on whole-tone scales, which do not express a specific tonality: Liszt was the first to use these techniques radically, for instance in his 1860 melodrama *Der traurige Mönch*, which is based almost entirely on a whole-tone scale. As for the texture, his late works show a different approach: long passages with some semitones and whole tones; or sometimes two lines, one for each hand, where dissonances collide, as in *La Lugubre Gondola*. How similar this is to the style and feelings in one of Bartók's experimental works, *Barcarolle*, from his piano suite *Im Freien*.

Liszt also experimented with harmonies other than those based on thirds, and with the combination of major and minor chords, as in *Csárdás Obstinée*. Schoenberg only started to play quarter-tone chords more than 30 years after Liszt. Enlarged thirds and tritones, as in the *Faust-Symphonie* (1856), were also used by Liszt in *Unstern* (1885).

Liszt narrows his music down to its ascetic essence, to melodyless parlanti, to formless aphoristic works. Most of the works are based on a single thought, they are no longer 'lyrical episodes', they have no dramatic development. As in his Sonata, a kind of monothematism linked to a technique of variation dominates: the same motif or theme in different characters, in different keys, enlarged or reduced, used in unison forms. In addition, there is an ostinato technique, which is used to preserve the unity of form. Expressionism in *Stabat mater dolorosa*, - the most dramatic movement in Liszt's *Christus oratorio* (1862-1866) - is already abundant, even impressionism which is still in an experimental stage in painting. Liszt shows in his work that cultural evolution is only possible if the connection with tradition is not broken. Nietzsche greatly appreciated Liszt's genius in the orchestral works: the *symphonic poems* are soul descriptions, real psychological masterpieces. They show that the modern psychology of the 20th century was already present in 19th century music.⁵

Liszt's fascination with the ringing of bells was a constant source of inspiration from his youth, which became a compositional sound element in many of his works. In piano works such as *Cloches du soir*, *Funérailles*, *La campanella*, *Carillon*, *Abendglocken*, *La Cloche sonne*, *Les Cloches de Genève*, *Ungarisch*, *Ladislaus Teleky*, *Michael Mosonyi*, *La Notte*, *In festo transfigurationis Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, *Angelus!*, *Les Cyprès I.*, *Marche Funèbre (Maximilian)*, *Trauer Vorspiel und Trauermarch*, *Excelsior*.

In Liszt's piano works the bell imitations commemorate or announce special events: *Les Cloches de Genève* was composed on the occasion of the birth of his first daughter Blandine in Geneva, and imitates distant bell echoes over the Swiss Alpine valleys.

The introductory heavy, ostinato chime of the *Funérailles* from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* immediately creates a tragic atmosphere for the subsequent funeral procession of the executed from the 1848 revolution in Hungary, - graves Teleky and Batthányi, good friends of Liszt.

4 Herman Sabbe: Qu'est-ce qui constitue une "tradition" ? Liszt-Ligeti: Une lignée? *Studia Musicologica Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35/I-3 1993-94 pp.221-227 Akadémia Kiadó

5 Hankiss János: Liszt Ferenc válogatott irásai Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1959

Also *Angelus!*, opening piece of *Années de Pèlerinage III*. begins and ends with imitations of the fine chimes of the Rosario convent, calling for evening prayers. Liszt told his students and illustrated on the piano that he wanted to immortalise the irregularly ringing evening bells of Rome.

Les Cyprès de Villa d'Este - Thrénodie no. I, a lament, a "wistful conversation with the Cypresses" - as Liszt wrote it in a letter, begins with heavily dramatic bells and tritone harmonies. We also find this in the first nine bars of *Michael Mosonyi* from the *Historische ungarische Bildnisse*, where in the second bar Liszt writes: "wie Glocken, ineinander schwirrend".

The *Cypresses* and *Sunt lacrymae rerum* are already harbingers of a basic concept whereby late romantic music evolves into a universal musical expressionism. Liszt wrote with full conviction and knowledge of Hungarian music in mind - not just from formal appearances. Liszt was able to achieve this by using elements filtered from authentic Hungarian music.

The pre-impressionist piano piece *Carillon* from the *Christmas Tree* cycle refers directly to Debussy through its structure based on timbre rather than melodic elements, mixed with mixtures and pentatonic.

The modes, late-romantic chromaticism, deep percussive sounds, sharp dissonances, pentatonic, imitations of bells and the ubiquitous Hungarian and gypsy sonorities clearly express suffering and torment; everything is related and interwoven in Liszt's musical language. Compositional techniques we also find in Bartók.

3.4 Liszt's 'composing fever'. Letters about his sources of inspiration and life circumstances. Chronicles, contexts, themes and dates of his most important compositions with a stylistic evolution from late romanticism to atonal pre-expressionism.

In Liszt's extensive correspondence (c. 3000 letters) with a.o. Baroness Olga von Meyendorff, Princess Carolyne von Wittgenstein, Sophie Menter, La Mara and with numerous, mostly Russian composers, we can find detailed background information on his very personal moral and mental state, reflections on life and death, but also reports on new compositions. Baroness Olga von Meyendorff was the wife of Felix von Meyendorff, Russian ambassador to Weimar. She was a "phenomenon" in Weimar society life, a good amateur pianist, had a very critical eye for Liszt's environment and an intense friendship with him until the end of his life. The collected *Meyendorff letters* are owned by and published in English translation by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Harvard University (without attaching the original letters written in French).¹

- 1872. Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "(...) *I am settled down again in solitude at the Villa d'Este. This spot pleases me above others... Music, the most communicative of arts, is also the most lonely for those who plumb its depths. Beethoven tells us this sublimely in his last years.*"

Liszt composed the *Années de Pèlerinage III.* between 1867-1877 in Villa d'Este, Tivoli:

Années de Pèlerinage – Troisième Année :

1. *Angelus! Prière aux anges gardiens* (1877)
2. *Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este - Thrénodie (I.)* (1877)
3. *Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este - Thrénodie (II.)* (1877)
4. *Les jeux à la Villa d'Este* (1872)
5. *Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois* (1877),
6. *Marche Funèbre - En mémoire de Maximilian I.* (1867)
7. *Sursum corda - Erhebet eure Herzen* (1877)

It is his most important cycle that evolves from a late romantic to a descriptive expressionist-impressionist musical language by means of new sound and colour effects. Thus, in *Angelus!* and in *Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este, Thrénodies I.* and *II.* there are ringing bells, in *Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois* and in *Marche funèbre* cluster-like deep percussive sound elements, in *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* impressionistic colour combinations in whole-tone keys.

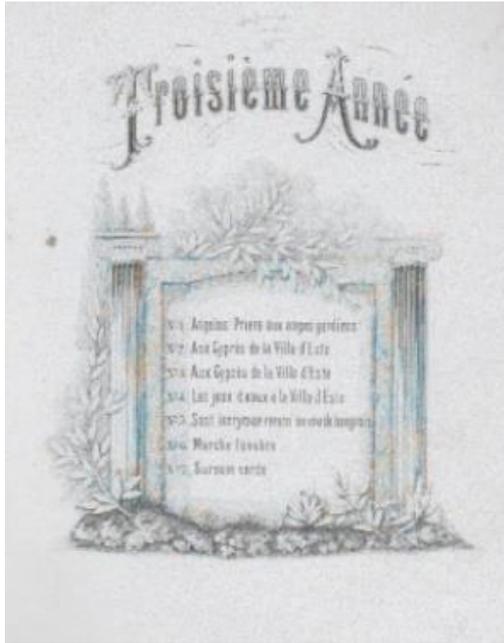
His "death poetry", music from his deepest soul, takes a central place in his last period of creation.

- Rome. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "(...) *Though I have not yet gone back to work, I have just written a hundred or so measures for the piano. It is fairly gloomy and disconsolate elegy; illumined towards the end by a beam of patient resignation. If I publish it, the title will be Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este.*"

Liszt originally thought that the ancient cypress trees had been planted by Michelangelo himself at Villa d'Este. (Cypress trees are considered in Italy to be symbols of death and eternity).

- Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "(...) *For the last two weeks I've been absorbed in cypresses.... Thus, I have composed two groups of cypresses, each of more than two hundred bars, plus a Postludium (Nachspiel) to the cypresses of the Villa d'Este. These sad pieces won't have much success and can do without it. I shall call them Thrénodies, as the word elegy strikes me as too tender, and almost worldly.*"

1 The letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff 1871-1886 In the Mildred Bliss Collection at Dumbarton Oaks. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Harvard University. Columbia



Cover page first edition *Années de Pèlerinage III*. Schott 1883



Angelus! Cover page with Liszt's three granddaughter pictured as angels.

-Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "(...) *My cypresses have grown taller; I've been working on them without interruption for about ten days. Then, in early October, there was the feast of the Holy Angels. I wrote a hundred or so measures for them (for piano or harmonium) and wish I could better express my intimate devotion to the divine messengers. Having once started blackening music paper, I wrote four more pages which have as their epigraph: **Sursum Corda**. These pieces are not entertaining, nor even dreamily pleasing. When I publish them, I'll warn the publisher that he risks selling only a few copies.*"

- Rome. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - "*I am desperately sad and completely incapable of finding a single ray of happiness. I'm in a kind of mental depression accompanied by physical indisposition. Nevertheless, I pursue my labours while trying not to become too much discouraged in my musical work, which I have resolved not to give up short or either total infirmity or death. A few more leaves have been added to the cypresses - no less boring and redundant than the previous ones! To tell the truth I sense in myself a terrible lack of talent compared with what I would like to express; the notes I write are pitiful. A strange sense of the infinite makes me impersonal and uncommunicative.*"

- To Professor Dr. Ludwig Nohl. - "*Honoured and dear Friend,to arrange the entire of the many pictures of the remarkable group of cypresses in the Villa d'Este your brother's beautiful poetical drawing is my favourite. For the present of this and the inscription on it I thank you most heartily.*

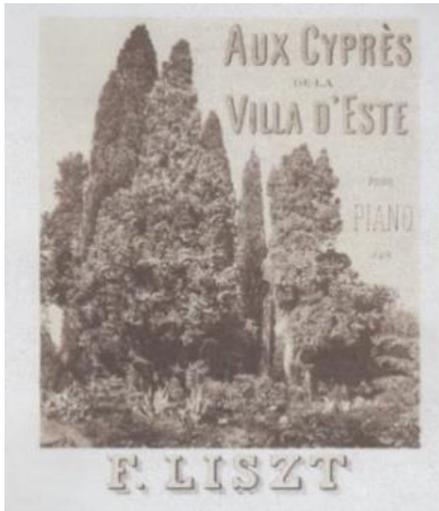
*I attempted (last October) to put down on music paper the conversation which I frequently hold with these same cypresses. Ah ! how dry and unsatisfactory on the piano, and even in the orchestra, - Beethoven and Wagner excepted-sounds the woe and the sighing of almighty nature!"*²

Liszt used that drawing of Villa d'Este cypress trees by Nohl for the first edition by Schott in 1883.

Cosima wrote in her diary on April 10, 1878: "*My father plays Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este, the Angelus! the Cypresses, and Richard [Wagner] says: There is a melancholic and dreamy world of*

2 La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt, I. II. III. New York 1894. Vol. II. From Rome to the End.

your father in *Villa d'Este* which pleases me and sings of the fountains, the **Cypresses** and the bells of *Angelus*'.³



The second and third pieces - *Les Cypresses de la Villa d'Este I.* and *II.* - Liszt called them "*Thrénodien*" because he found the expression elegy too soft. Here Liszt goes even further with his tonality innovations.

In his interview published in *The Musical Times* in 1929, Bartók defended Liszt as a composer:

- *"Not only from the Hungarian, but from the general point of view, there is one thing that shocks me, namely, that in England so many people speak so disparagingly of Liszt's compositions. - Even about the best works. His masterpieces not only have a great influence on me (as on countless other composers of the last 80 years), but even more: the longer I study them, the deeper I realize their beauty, their meanings. Recently, I went through the 3rd book of *Années de Pélerinage* and realised again what a musical wealth this is. Believe me, there is still much to learn from Liszt!"*⁴

1872. Liszt writes to Baroness Olga von Meyendorff:

- *" (...) A Hungarian painter, M. Munkácsi (forgive me if I have maimed the spelling of his name), now settled in Weimar, has painted a strange picture of a man under sentence of death at the moment of the last earthly pleasures being granted to him....I have written (exceptionally, alas!) a few pages of music these last few days... a new, very sad, **Hungarian Rhapsody.**"*



Munkácsy: Death cell (1872)

3 Cosima Liszt: *Napló 1869-1883 Gondolat* – Budapest 1983 / Columbia – 1979

4 Malcolm Gillies: *A Conversation with Bartók* 1929. *The Musical Times*. Vol. 128. No.1736

Munkácsy's painting sketches a psychological situation of a death row inmate in his cell: a freedom fighter or highwayman, looking away and repelled, in the company of onlookers during the terrible last hour before his execution. Loneliness, drama, fear, and hopelessness in very dark colours. As also sketched by Liszt in funeral music - a "new very sad **Hungarian Rhapsody**".

If we look at Liszt's compositions from 1872, besides the songs and smaller pieces there is only one piano piece, namely **Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois**, which in his letter bears the characteristic: "very sad, **Hungarian Rhapsody**" and thus certainly allows identification with Munkácsy's painting.

Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois is essentially a characteristic Hungarian rhapsody, without mentioning it in the title. Originally Liszt also called this work a *thrénody*, like the second and third piece from **Années de Pèlerinage: Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este, Thrénodies I. and II.**

But for publication he omitted this subtitle.

This is a key composition in Liszt's oeuvre: here, for the first time, Liszt writes emphatically in the title - **En mode hongrois**. The work is composed in a Hungarian scale that has been identified with Liszt since his **Sonata**. He incorporates here not only that Lisztian-Hungarian scale but also the typical Hungarian 'verbunkos' rhythms.



- Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - " (...) In the last ten days or so I have been working at a rather strange composition, whose text you will find at the head of the volume of poetry by Longfellow, **The Golden Legend (Les Cloches de la cathédrale de Strassbourg)**, with Lucifer and his cohorts mounting an attack on the cathedral and trying to destroy it). My composition is for chorus, solo for bass voice (Lucifer), and orchestra; there is a prelude of some thirty bars, entitled **Excelsior**."

- "(...) Yesterday I finished the instrumentation of the *Cloches*: you will find Longfellow's poem in the volume of his *Légende dorée (The Golden Legend)*.....**Excelsior** is synonymous with **Sursum Corda**; we repeat it daily at mass, and the faithful reply: *Habemus ad Dominum!*"

3.5 1875. The beginning of Liszt's "*vie trifurquée*" period in Rome-Budapest- Weimar.

Liszt's self-reflections on death, on his "incessant composing-fever".

"...a humble opinion of a more or less famous pianist.

who is both a strong Russophile and very humble with all his heart...".

1875 Budapest. Liszt is appointed president of the newly founded Liszt Academy in Budapest.

"He brought life to our capital city - in its typical apathetic monotony. He gave us his best traits, his talent, his heart, his charity. But the plan, that Liszt himself could suddenly and alone lift the rather provincial musical culture of Hungary to a higher level remained a dream, a utopia." ¹

Liszt himself very aptly described this musical culture as "*muddy*" in a letter to Marie Wittgenstein on February 2, 1881. During his first year in Budapest, this plan remained hopeful, but was gradually thwarted by local apathy.

"As long as Liszt arrived as a guest for a short stay, he was celebrated, surrounded..... Then they got used to seeing him here, that he was at home, and then...done..." This great indifference, 'this stinking, sad puddle of death' - as the poet Ady described it - this was perhaps the old Liszt's greatest disappointment and a possible explanation for his bitterness, for his dark tone, for his resignation." ²

"In the concert life in Budapest there is nothing Hungarian, and so we cannot hope that this musical life will ever serve Hungarian musical culture. The music lovers in the Vigadó (Budapest's largest concert hall) find Hungarian music peasantish" writes reviewer György Aladár in *Hon.*

After the publication of Liszt's *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* (translated into Hungarian), Liszt received even more insulting and scathing reviews from his numerous enemies and the press led by Hanslinck.

Embittered, Liszt writes to Mihajlovics: *"All the world is against me. The Catholics because my music is too profane, the Protestants because my music is too Catholic, for the Freemasons my music is too clerical, for the conservatives I am revolutionary, for the progressives old-fashioned. For Germans my music is too French, for Frenchmen too German, for Austrians my music is gypsy, for Hungarians strange, and the Jews hate me for no particular reason."* ³

But in his letter to Olga von Meyendorff, Liszt writes his firm position:

- "My sincere Catholicism does not prescribe that I should seek the absolution of people who dislike my music, such as it is. Opinions and sensations are free, and I make no claim whatever to imposing mine on anyone. To go on working is enough for me."

Liszt continues to compose "feverishly", to correct proofs, to correspond with publishers, to organize (or participate in, as for instance, a grand Wagner concert in Budapest) concerts, to attend student concerts where his symphonic compositions in four- or eight-handed arrangements are played. Above all, his main occupation was teaching his numerous faithful pupils, who came from all over the world and travelled to Weimar and Rome as well.

We find a similar tone in Bartók's letter to Stefi Geyer in 1908 after receiving her last letter:

- "So I must say goodbye forever, for the last time I write! Last time! Although this word fits a suicide candidate, I may not do this - I have obligations." ⁴

1 Dezső Legány: Liszt in Hongarije II. Zeneműkiadó 1976 (Janka Wohl, 25.1.)

2 Hamburger Klára: Liszt. Javitott, bővített kiadás Gondolat – Budapest 1980

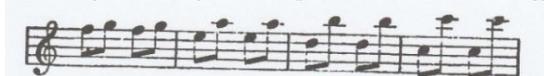
3 Pléiade Encyclopedia of Music History. II. Paris. 1963; A. Walker: Liszt Ferenc 3. Az utolsó évek 1861-1886. EMB 1989.

4 Briefe an Stefi Geyer, 1907-1908 Basel. Paul Sacher Stiftung, 1979

1878 Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "(...) *For want of something better I continue to write my **Via Crucis**. ...I have hardly opened a magnificent **Erard** piano installed in my sitting room. I am absorbed in the **Via Crucis** and in order not to spill its composition I refrain from playing it until the manuscript is completed.*"

- Rome. "(...) *These last two weeks I have been completely absorbed in my **Via Crucis**. It is at last complete.... And I still feel quite shaken by it. Day after tomorrow I will go back to writing letters, a task impossible for me to undertake so long as music torments my brain. In music as in moral matters one rarely does the good one would wish, but often the evil which one would not wish.*"

1879. - "To Alexander Borodin, Caesar Cui, Anatole Liadoff and Nicolas Rimsky-Korsakoff in St.Petersburg: *Very Honoured Gentlemen, You [co-authored] have done a work of serious value under the form of a jest. Your "**Paraphrases**" charm me: nothing can be more ingenious than these 24 Variations and the 16 little pieces upon the favourite and obligato subject [of Liszt]:*



*In short, here we have an admirable compendium of the science of harmony, of counterpoint, of rhythms, of figuration, and of what in German is called "The Theory of Forms" (Formlehre)! I shall gladly suggest to the teachers of composition at all the Conservatories in Europe and America to adopt your **Paraphrases** as a practical guide in their teaching. (...) My most lively, my highest and most sympathising esteem has for many years been assured to you; pray accept also the expression of my sincere devotion. F. Liszt"⁵*

A similar subject - in atonal version - was used by Bartók in his **Bagatelle No.2** (left hand theme):



In the following years, Liszt made several transcriptions of orchestral compositions by Alyabyev, Wielhorsky Borodin, Boulgakov, Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein, Dargomizhsky and others. Glinka. The Russian piano transcriptions have been published by EMB in the volumes Freie Bearbeitungen II.6, II.8, II.14, II.15.

30 October 1880. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - "*The simple faith of the charcoal-burner and of the "poor in spirit" suffices for my prayers and musical work in which I persevere despite the fatigue of age. Last Friday I entered my seventieth year. It might be time to end things well....all the more since I have never wished to live long. In my early youth I often and went to sleep hoping not to awake again here below.*

5 La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt, I. II. III. New York 1894. Vol. II. From Rome to the End.

I'm writing a little poor music, but in a state of extreme despondency because of my permanent conflict, for some fifteen years, with the only person who is the cause of my annual trip to Rome where I will scarcely spend any time any longer.”⁶

(This quote is direct evidence of Liszt's depression, caused by his increasing conflicts with Carolyne von Wittgenstein.)

1881. To Camille Saint-Saëns: - *“No one more than myself feels the disproportion in my compositions between the good-will and the effective result. Yet I go on writing – not without fatigue – from inner necessity and old habit. We are not forbidden to aspire towards higher things: it is the attainment of our end which remains the note of interrogation, being in this something like the end to the Mephistopheles Waltz on B, f, – ”*

our end which remains the note of interrogation, being in this something like the end to the Mephistopheles Waltz on b, f—



intervals which are indicated in the first bars of the piece.

Like Prokofiev's *Sarcasmes*:

САРКАЗМЫ. SARCASMES.

ungerecht vorbehalten. I. СЕРГЕЙ ПРОКОФЬЕВ. Op 17.
SERGE PROKOFIEV. 1912.

Tempetoso.



His contacts with Russian composers, writers and artists became more intense with time. All his life Liszt thought of his early acquaintance with talented young Russian composers as his greatest discovery. *"A guard of promising artists, composers without complexes and without Western academic barriers, filled with energy and creativity"*. He notes that he discovers in Russian folk music such melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic richness that he cannot find in Western folk music in a comparable way. From the eighties onwards, Liszt confronts vital Russian music with Western music, which has become energy- and idea-less.⁷

Liszt - as a composer, as a pianist, as a tutor of young musical talents - is given true recognition everywhere in Russia. He is always received with respect and enthusiasm. For him, this is a true consolation in the hostile atmosphere of the 'war of the romantics'.

- Rome. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - *“(…) My affectionate relations with several of your compatriots and my very marked sympathy for the group of new Russian composers: Rimsky-Korsakov, Cui, Borodin, etc., prove, it seems to me, that I am hardly afflicted by Russophobia. Moreover, I owe a debt of gratitude to the public of Saint Petersburg and of Moscow, which received favourable several of my works either ignored or flayed elsewhere…”*

6 The letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff 1871-1886 In the Mildred Bliss Collection at Dumbarton Oaks. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Harvard University

7 La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt, I. II. III. New York 1894. Vol. II. From Rome to the End.

-Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - "(...) *Did I tell you my brilliant version, for piano with two hands, of the ravishing Tarantelle by Dargomisky (Dargomizhsky), with basso continuo? I have also transcribed (very freely) the Polonaise from Tchaikovsky's opera. It is pompous and will serve as a companion piece to that from Lassen's Faust.*"

- To César Cui: - "*My honoured Friend, it is well known in various countries in what high esteem I hold your works. As I am convinced that the "Suite" of which you speak will prove itself worthy of your preceding compositions, I feel that I am honoured by the dedication and thank You for it with gratitude.*"

- "*To the Composer Mili Balakireff, Conductor of the Imperial Court Choir in St. Petersburg: Very Honoured, Dear Confrère, My admiring sympathy for your works is well known. When my disciples want to please me, they play me your compositions and those of your valiant friends. In this intrepid Russian musical phalanx, I welcome from my heart masters endowed with a rare vital energy; they suffer in no wise from poverty of ideas – a malady which is widespread in many countries. More and more will their merits be recognised and their names renowned. I accept with gratitude the honour of the dedication (to me) of your Symphonic Poem "Thamar", which I hope to hear next summer with a large orchestra.*"⁸

- Rome. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "*(...) I have written to Riedel to say that I particularly want one or two orchestral works by the new Russian composers – Rimsky Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Cui, Borodin - to figure on the program of Musikfest at Altenburg next May. Should they fail to please at the first hearing, we will play them again - until people understand and applaud them.*"

- Villa d'Este. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "*...While I was composing his ballad, **Der blinde Sänger**, our friend [Aleksiej] Tolstoy was breathing his last.*"

One of Liszt's most remarkable piano pieces is the impressionist-expressionist *Nuages gris - Trübe Wolken* composed in the summer of 1881. A tranquil transcendental meditation on spiritual hopelessness composed in quarter intervals and tritones - only published in 1927 by Breitkopf und Härtel (*Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe*). It is a representative example of the consciously planned late Liszt style of composition, using all twelve tones of the chromatic system - though not yet like Schoenberg's "Reihe". Music analysts regard this piece as a direct step towards atonality in the 20th century.

Liszt's Russophilia concerns not only Russian composers and writers, but also young artists and painters such as sculptor M. Antokolsky (a close friend of Munkácsy) and painter V. Vereschagin. To Olga von Meyendorff Liszt asks: "*Do you know Vereschagin's paintings? He depicts India and the Russo-Turkish war [in] strikingly original colour and poetic realism, quite in keeping with the mode and trends of our fin de siècle. Paintings, which I admire.*"

In 1883 Liszt sent several reproductions and photographs of Vereschagin's paintings to Carolyne Wittgenstein and wrote: - "*Vereschagin's paintings astonish me by their originality, their innovative ideas, their poetic realism, which strives for a more intense poetry than the current fashionable classicist but outdated poetry.*"⁹

At a meeting in 1882 with Vereschagin's brother (as he later did in his letter), Liszt explained to him how he appreciated Vereschagin's main achievements: "*his new, realistic and unsurpassably expressive manner of air-light-sky painting which offers marvellous perspectives.*"¹⁰

8 Dolores Pesce: Liszt's Final Decade University of Rochester Press 2014

9 Jakov Milstein: Liszt. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1965 / J. Wohl: F. Liszt, Souvenirs d'une compatriote.

10 Jakov Milstein: Liszt. Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1965. A. Vereschagin U bolgar i za granjitsej. Vospominania i raskazi 1881-1893. / La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt, New York 1894. Vol. II. (To Colonel Alexander Vereschagin. Budapest 1882)

Liszt's favourite and on reproduction/photo preserved paintings by Vereschchagin were: The Forgotten Soldier - which he called "a perfect poetry, a terrible symphony of falcons and crows" and the Requiem, with that particular "unbeatable expression air-light-sky poetry." Looking at Liszt's admiring description and the dates, these works most likely inspired Liszt's piano piece *Nuages gris-Trübe Wolken*.



The Forgotten Soldier



Requiem (1881)

Liszt's late piano works are examples of a general meditative epigraphic and innovative extended tonality technique without romanticising character. The same compositional tendency can be found in Bartók's early piano works. In both composers one finds the often pronounced melody/accompaniment texture, in which the melody-leading voice is very emphatically unison, as well as the use of anti-metrical figures: triplets by Liszt, quartols by Bartók. The systematic use of the augmented triad belonging to the whole tone scale, the clear focus on colour, the extended tonal technique, the directness of expression and the conciseness of the forms of the late Liszt works already refer to 20th century expressionism.



Liszt: *Nuages gris - Trübe Wolken*



Bartók: *Bagatelle Nr. 13*

3.6 Liszt *Csárdás macabre*: "Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören?"
"Alle ordentlichen Conservatoristen mögen sich an diesem Stück den Kopf Anstoßen."
History of a ground-breaking composition.

1881. Budapest. Liszt writes to Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "FL is much at fault. Stupidly he's been doing nothing these last two weeks but blackening music sheets. I've been tempted by Petöfi's *The God of the Magyars*. I boldly composed it, (*Ungarns Gott*) then arranged it for the left hand only for my friend Géza Zichy, and for both hands for normal pianists. For good measure I have also written *Csárdás Macabre* which I shall dedicate to Saint-Saëns. His *Danse Macabre* is worth more and is better, but I want to offer him my *Csárdás* because of its Hungarian character. In mid-April I'll bring both pieces in print to Weimar for you. In your honour I'll arrange the *Csárdás* for 4 hands. Your little bonnet from Budapest will not be in the least out of place." ¹

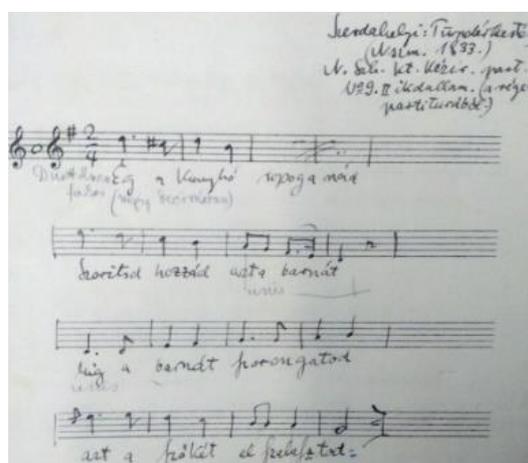
Ábrányi wrote in his music newspaper *Zenészeti Közlöny* of March 10, 1882: "Ferenc Liszt has written a musical poem for piano (two-handed and four-handed versions) under the title of '*Csárdás macabre*', and the work will soon be published by Tábornszky and Parsch. The last spiritual product of the great master is full of the most daring ideas and harmonic garlands. We are convinced that many professors will make a cross-eyed expression when they glance at these musical notes". ²

Liszt was fully aware of the compositional audacity of the *Csárdás macabre*. The dubious remark in Göllerich's text: "Alle ordentlichen Conservatoristen mögen sich an diesem Stück den Kopf Anstoßen" is by Liszt himself.

The highlight of Liszt's stay in Budapest was not his activity as a piano virtuoso in smaller or larger circles, or as a conductor, or as a piano teacher, nor the new rhapsodies, but the *Csárdás macabre*, begun in 1881 and completed in 1882, which then remained unknown for a very long time. ³

In the *Csárdás macabre*, Liszt quotes and reworks an old, well-known Hungarian csárdás-verbunkos (recruiting) folk song: "Ég a kunyhó, ropog a nád..." ("My hut on fire, the reeds in crackle...").

This csárdás melody is mentioned in the 'F. Toldy: Handbuch der ungarischen Poesie' of 1828 and in the Szerdahelyi collection *Tündérkert* 1833: ⁴



The Lisztian 'double' theme transformation in the *Csárdás macabre*: "Ég a kunyhó, ropog a nád" csárdás melody mixed with the *Dies irae* motive turns the work into a demonic vision, a death-dance.

1 The letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff 1871-1886 Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Harvard University Columbia 1979

2 *Zenészeti Közlöny* (Muziek Krant) 10 maart 1882

3 Gárdonyi: Liszt kiadatlan Magyar zongorakompozíciói. Különlenyomat A Zene 1932. Évi 8. számából.

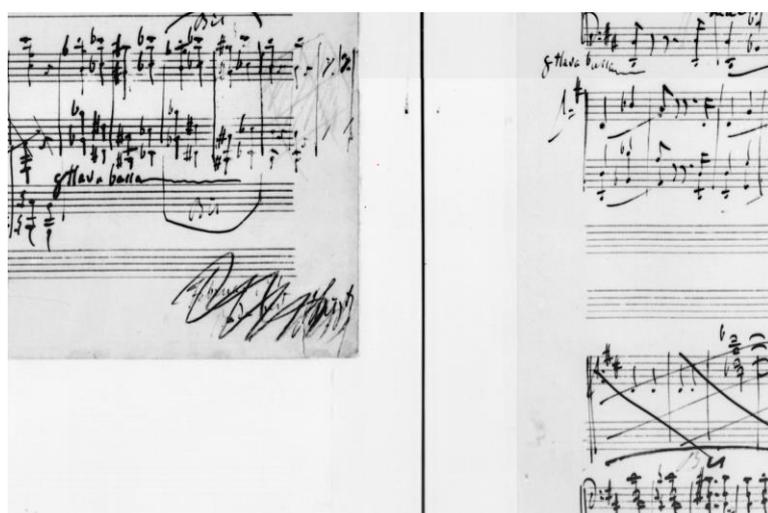
4 Szerdahelyi: 'Feeën-boek' 1833. Budapest / F. Toldy: *Handbuch der ungarischen Poesie* 1828.

A copy of this "finished" 1881 version (358 measures) with a double title page *Csárdás macabre 1881* (manuscript by A. Göllerich) is preserved in the Weimar Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv under catalogue number GSA 60/I 90.

Shortly afterwards in 1881, J. Végő (vice-president Liszt Academy) made an eight-hand version of the *Csárdás macabre*. But in this arrangement *Csárdás macabre* has become a "lively salon piece" because of "adjustments" to character, length (shortened), harmonisation, and dynamics! The Lisztian daring and modernist elements have been left out, all with an eye to the taste of the modal audience. Probably J. Végő, like the press, was so shocked by the diabolic character, the shocking empty fifths, the atonal harmonic inventions that he reworked this piece into a traditional csárdás in an Allegro vivace character. J. Végő never published this eight-handed version of the *Csárdás macabre*, probably in order not to damage Liszt's reputation, and so it is preserved in manuscript form in the library of the Liszt Academy Budapest.



In the British Museum London is the only but incomplete original manuscript (14 pages, c. 379 measures) in Liszt's handwriting. It was acquired by Lina Schmalhausen in 1890. On page 12, under bar 319 (a first coda) of the piece, there is a crossed-out and hardly legible date "*February 1881 Budapest Liszt*". Thereafter, some 60 measures are added (later), as an alternative ending to the composition.⁵



5 British Museum London Manuscripts E.G.2735

Liszt made a longer, more elaborate version of it in 1882 (39 pages, 647-655 measures) and sent this completed version of *Csárdás macabre* to the publisher Táborszky Budapest. In March 1882 (in Weimar) Liszt received a copy (version) back from his copyist Allaga. Liszt himself added other comments and colour corrections. For instance, on the first page the title '*Csárdás macabre*' and in the first 3 staves the alteration marks have been erased. This revised copy version is then dated and signed on the last page: "*Liszt Avril '82 Budapest*". This corrected copy version is in the same Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv.⁶

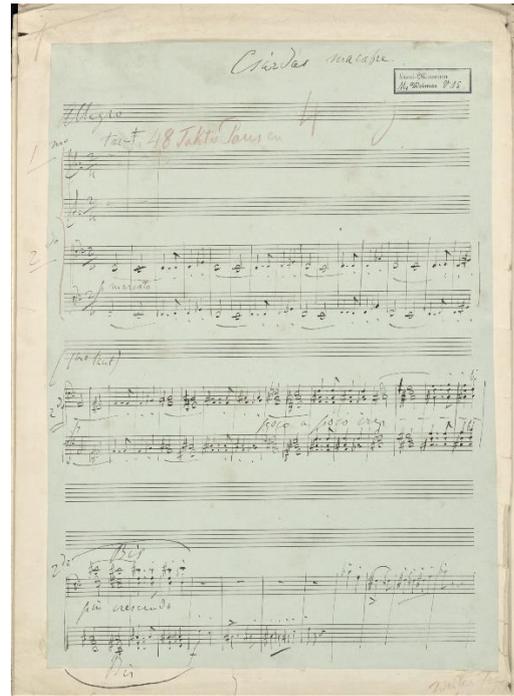
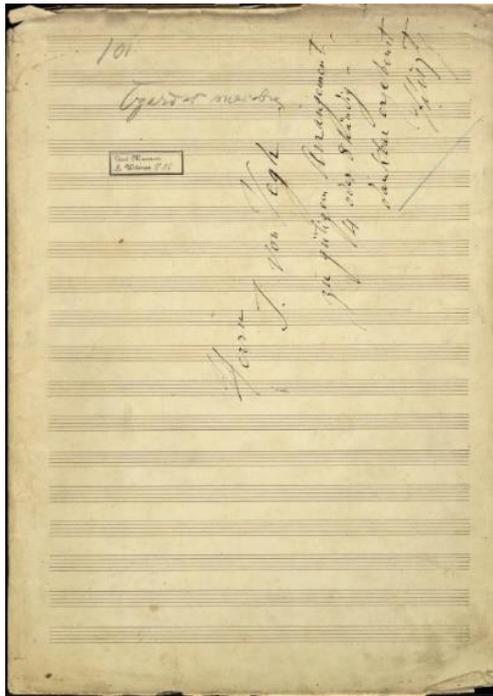


Because of the lack of a title (*Csárdás macabre*) and the partly erased alteration marks, the Liszt Stiftung Weimar Commission, and the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel thought it was an unfinished composition by Liszt, and it was not included in the *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe* (1911-1927). (In 1912 Bartók received this copy version from Breitkopf & Härtel for revision. About the revision of Liszt's compositions: see chapter 4.1 Bartók's revision of Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*).

Still in 1882 J. Végh in Budapest made a new four-hand version (12 pages) and sent it to Liszt. Liszt found this version excellent and added an introduction of 1-48 bars to the *Piano2* part. Above the *Piano1* part Liszt's handwriting reads "48 Takten pauses". This page is glued to the four-hand score as an additional front or title page, and the title *Csárdás macabre* was written down by Liszt himself. At the bottom of the page with the added 1-48 bars is written "weiter" (to continuation of full four-hand version) as an introduction.

This added sheet with 48 bars of introduction caused serious confusion in Weimar. Before publication, the Liszt Stiftung and the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel in Weimar did not know who the arranger of this four-hand version *Csárdás macabre* was. Busoni and his committee members at first thought it was an original Liszt arrangement because of his own handwritten thanks and signature on the title page. But due to further disputes, the Revisionskommission of the Franz-Liszt-Stiftung did not include it in the edition of Liszt Complete Works by Breitkopf. This completed four-hand version by J. Végh has also been preserved in the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv Weimar since 1882 but has never been published there either.⁷

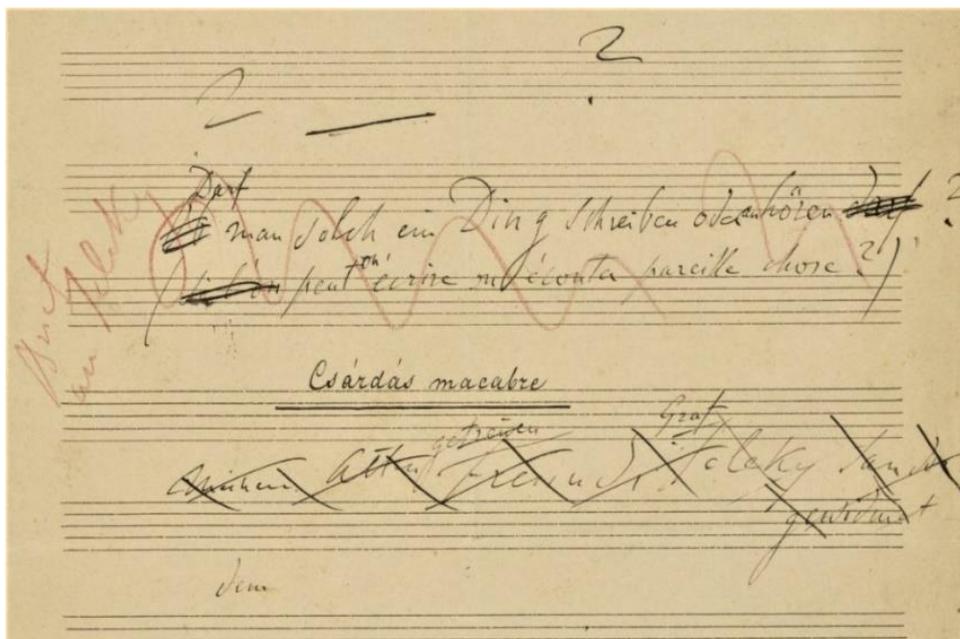
6 Archivdatenbank des Goethe- und Schillerarchiv Weimar GSA 60/I 11
7 Archivdatenbank des Goethe- und Schillerarchiv Weimar GSA 60/V 15



There are two copies of the introductory sheet (with bars 1-48) in the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv in Weimar, which are essentially different. One of them - written on a separate sheet - is attached to the four-hand version by J. Végh. The other with the same 48 opening bars for the *Csárdás macabre*, is a solo piano version - with the title *Csárdás macabre*, Allegro at the top and "weiter" written in red by Liszt himself at the bottom.

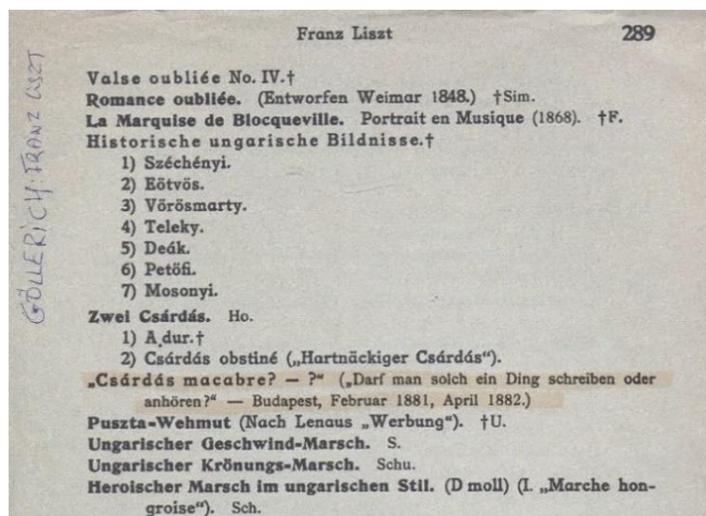
The musical notes are written by the same copyist. On the reverse side - new title page (?) - of this sheet of music, there is a thought/comment crossed out by Liszt in red handwriting: - "*Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören - peut on écrire ou écouter pareille chose?*", - below this *Csárdás macabre*, some question marks and a crossed-out dedication/letter (?) to Count Teleky.

According to E. Liepsch, this sheet -together with the 1881- version was only acquired from private property in 1967 and has been catalogued by the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv⁸



⁸ Archivsdatenbank des Goethe- und Schillerarchiv Weimar GSA 60/I 89

Göllerich's catalogue list of Liszt's works, included in his Liszt book, reads: "Csárdás macabre? -? ("Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören," - Budapest, Februar 1881, April 1882)" listed as an unpublished piano work. On his list he mentions Liszt's original note, as on the music sheet with the 1-48 bars as introduction to the *Csárdás macabre*.⁹



Liszt's curious question-remark is not mentioned anywhere else and proves that Göllerich was in possession of this introductory music page. On Göllerich's catalogue list of Liszt's orchestral works *Csárdás macabre* is also mentioned - without any further remark. About the existence of this orchestral version, I could not find any reference or information.

According to L. Ramann, Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* was published by publisher TH. Barth Berlin, but this edition has remained unknown until today.

In 1941, Cramer London published Jack Werner's Edition of the *Csárdás macabre* (1881), based on the manuscript of the British Museum London (E.G.,2735; 379 bars).¹⁰

In 1951, the publishing house Schott and Co. Ltd. London published the *Csárdás macabre* 'April 1882' version in Liszt Society Publications, Volume I. "Late piano works", but without the disputed 48-measure introduction. In this edition some very virtuoso places have been "simplified" for piano, probably by the publisher H. Searle.

In 1954, I. Szelényi studied the different versions and copies of *Csárdás macabre* in the Weimar Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv and made a compilation of the "1882 version" for Editio Musica Budapest, together with the 48-bar introduction - which had also been added to the four-hand version by J. Véggh.

Szelényi retouched the original title page so that he eliminated the red crossed-out line on Liszt's notation ("Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören - peut on écrire ou écouter pareille chose?"). Thus, Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* got a "proper" title page. His conclusion is that this sheet was intended by Liszt as the title page for the 1882 solo version.

9 A. Göllerich: Erinnerungen 1908, Catalog

10 The Musical Times, Vol. 122 No.1660 Jun. 1981 p. 366 "Letters to the Editor"

The *Csárdás macabre* was published in his compiled form (with the added introduction of 48 bars) by Editio Musica Budapest in 1954.¹¹



Still in 1882 Liszt wrote to publisher Ferdinand Táborzsky (Budapest): "*The Munkácsy Rhapsody corrections are excellent. Before the Allegro con brio, I have added four bars in the four-hand version. In the solo version this may be omitted, so as not to cause the printer too much trouble. After the Munkácsy-Rhapsody in Táborzsky's edition, the Csárdás macabre publication would follow.*"

On October 8, 1882, Liszt wrote from Weimar to Olga von Meyendorff: - "*I just cannot get through my papers and corrections of music. This week too will be given up to it.*"

Does this announcement mean that Liszt has sent his corrected and dated "1882" copy - without the 48-bars introduction of *Csárdás macabre* - back to Budapest for publication? Does Liszt's letter to publisher Táborzsky suggest that possibly also for this *Csárdás macabre* four-hand version the "appended" extra 48 bars - "in the solo version this may be omitted" - as in the *Munkácsy-Rhapsody*? In the recently discovered personal estate of publisher Ferdinand Táborzsky, there was no trace of a Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*.

During my searches in 2017, the publication of a historical reissue of Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* appeared on the internet at IMSLP Petrucci Music Library: "*Original first publication (around 1900) by the publisher Jozef Weinberger Wien*". It seemed to me an extremely important discovery. Also, the Liszt specialists in Hungary considered it a 'reliable' publication due to the fact that the publisher Jozef Weinberger Wien had published several other late Liszt works in the years 1881-1885, such as *Rhapsodies* nrs. 18 and 19, *Bilder aus Ungarn*, *5 Hungarian Folk Songs*, *Pusztá-Wehmut*, *Des todtén Dichters Liebe*. In a letter to Breitkopf in 1911 Bartók had asked for *Csárdás macabre* from the Weinberger Wien publisher. For years I have been in contact with the present offices and branches of the publisher Jozef Weinberger in Wien, in London and in Frankfurt, asking to look after an original copy or some documentation of their first edition. As with music libraries all over the world, we - from the Royal Antwerp Conservatory Library - made an appeal to find a possible copy. All without result. After a thorough study and comparison of this IMSLP Petrucci "*authentic edition*" with the Liszt manuscript and the various *Csárdás macabre* versions (1881, 1882, 1951), it became clear that this "historic" Petrucci edition was a simple reprint of the 1951 Schott London - Liszt Society Publication. IMSLP Petrucci Music Library was then informed about their 'fake' edition and IMSLP removed it from its publicity list.

11 Szelényi István: Liszt Ferenc "Csárdás macabre"-ja. Új zenei szemle IV/10

3.7 Chronicles of Liszt's 'evening' and his increasingly intense Russophilia, his visionary theory of the quarter-tone system: "Der Komponist [Liszt] scheint ja nicht einmal die Anfangsgründe der Harmonielehre u. des strengen Satzes studiert zu haben. - Schon dieser Anfang zeigt ja das!" Reports on his relentless stimulus to compose "ohne Tonart" and his last journey performing as a pianist.

1882. In Budapest, Liszt attended the public performance of Munkácsy's monumental painting Christ before Pilate, made in 1881:



He wrote to Carolyn Wittgenstein: - "*it is a creation of masterly art, more than a success, a sensation for every man, a magnificent masterpiece surpassing all other contemporary paintings.*"¹

- Budapest. "*Here Munkácsy has been gloriously feted this whole week. Hungary is proud of him, and his perfect modesty does not forbid him to feel the legitimate pride of a great artist. (...) I have spent several days writing a **Hungarian Rhapsody (Nr. 16)**, to be published for Munkácsy.*"

A few days later in Budapest, Liszt played his new **Munkácsy Rhapsody** at a closed Munkácsy-celebration by leading Hungarian figures.

In mid-April 1882, a day before his departure, *Zenészeti Közlöny* reports that Liszt's **Munkácsy-Rhapsody** - written for the Munkácsy festivities - was published by Táborzky and Parsch with the following anonymous comment: - "*The elderly maestro completely deviates - as far as his elaboration method is concerned - from his earlier rhapsodies. It is a new march direction by the composer, traces of which can already be found in Mosonyi's **Trauerklänge** and the **Petőfi**, and in which probably few will find pleasure.*"

Liszt's **Hungarian Rhapsody No. 16** has often been called "death-rhapsody" because of its characteristic syncopated opening motive in Hungarian or Lisztian key - so associated with Munkácsy's depiction of a dramatic moment just before a historical decision: death sentence?

This **Rhapsody** ends in a festive mood befitting that Munkácsy celebration.

1 La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt I. II. III. New York 189

A week later, Liszt praises publisher Ferdinand Tábornszky for the excellent proofs of the two- and four-handed versions of the *Munkácsy Rhapsody*.

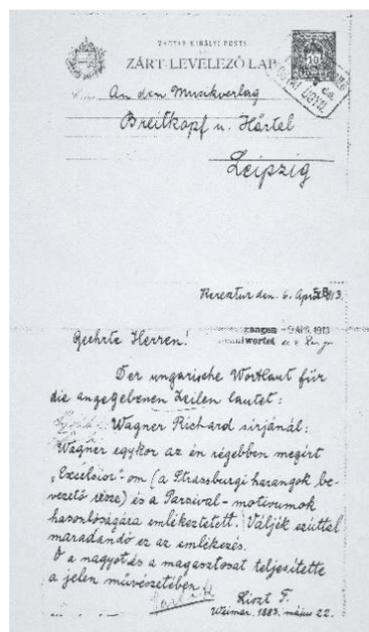
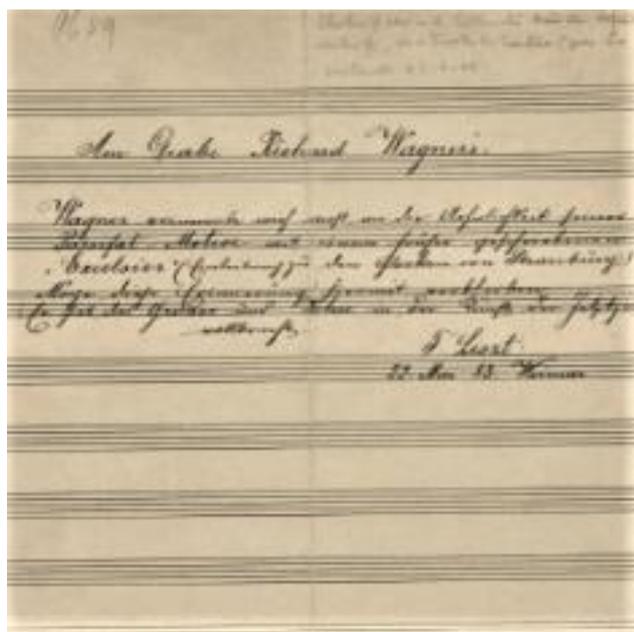
1883. Venice. To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: – "(...) Forgive and forgive, very dear one, and guess, which won't be very hard, that in the last couple of weeks I've been doing nothing but write music. The oars of a **Gondole Lugubre** beat on my brain. I have tried to write them and had to rewrite them twice, whereupon other lugubrious things came back to mind and, my scrawls on music sheets continued to the exclusion of all else....The title is "**La lugubre Gondola**" (**the funeral gondola**). As though it were a presentiment, I wrote this *élégie* in Venice six weeks before Wagner's death."

Together with his daughter Cosima and Richard Wagner, Liszt was staying in the Palazzo Vedramin in Venice when, in an anxious premonition, Liszt wrote this illustrative weeping piece, and where Richard Wagner died a few months later 13 February 1883.

Am Grabe Richard Wagners - a quietly moving homage to Richard Wagner - was composed after Wagner's death on his 70th birthday (22 May). In soft third and sixth parallels, this work dies out with the ringing of bells from Wagner's Parsifal.

On this homage Liszt wrote to the publisher Breitkopf on May 22, 1883:

- „Wagner erinnerte mich eins an die Ähnlichkeit seines Parsifal-motivs mit einem früher geschriebenen *Excelsior* (Einleitung zu den *Glocken von Straßburg*). Möge diese Erinnerung hiermit verbleiben. Er hat das Große und Hehre in der Kunst der Jetztzeit vollbracht. F. Liszt, 22ten Mai, 83. Weimar [here with Bartók's letter: *Béla Bartók*]



At the request of Breitkopf & Härtel in 1912, Bartók translated Liszt's accompaniment text to *Am Grabe Richard Wagners* for the edition of the *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe* into Hungarian as well. - Therefore, this copy of Liszt's letter also bears Bartók's signature. In the Neue Liszt Ausgabe, EMB (I/12) edition this text is printed under the title *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*.

1884. Vienna. Liszt writes to Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - "I spent a day and a half with L. Ramann discussing music: methods of theory, aesthetics." Here are some quotes from this extremely interesting theoretical-aesthetic discussion of Ramann with Liszt on Liszt's thoughts on Gypsy music versus Hungarian scale, gamelan music anno 1884, and on a conceivable musical evolution to 'quarter-tone system': ²

2 Lina Ramann: Lisztiana. Erinnerungen an Franz Liszt in Tagebuchblättern, Briefen und Documenten aus den Jaren 1873-1886/87. Schott 1983 (Pag. 203, 221, 328)

- „Verehrteste Freundin,

Seit meinen Jugend Jahren halte ich das Sterben für viel einfacher als das Leben. Wenn auch öfters furchtbare, langwierige Schmerzen den Tod vorangehen, bleibt er immerhin die Erlösung unseres unfreiwilligen Joch' der Existenz. Die Religion mildert dieses Joch, doch blutet darunter beständig unser Herz! – „*Sursum corda!*“

(...) „In meinem „*Requiem*“ (für Männerstimmen) versuchte ich der milden, erlösenden Stimmung des Todes, Ausdruck zu verleihen. Sie zeigt sich selbst im „*Dies irae*“ wo die Schreckens Herrschaft nicht zu vermeiden war: auf der dreizeiligen Strophe

Qui Maria absolvisti

Et latronem exaudisti

Mihi autem spem dedisti “

-2 Februar 1884 (...) Endlich wurde er ruhig und sein Gesichtsausdruck lebendiger. Ich erzählte ihm, was ihn allmählich von sich und den trüben Geschichten abzog.

Als ich ihm von den musikalischen Merkwürdigkeiten erzählte, von den singende Steinen“, die ein Franzose ausgestellt hatte und die in Bewegung gesetzt d.i. in Schwingung – gleich den volltönigen Militärpfeifen, rein und rund im Klang, die ein Franzose ausgestellt hatte und die in Bewegung gesetzt d.i. in harmonisch gestimmt, Volksmelodien mehrstimmig sangen, - von dem merkwürdigen „Gamalan der Javanen“ und meine Beobachtungen bezüglich ihrer Rhythmik und Harmonie, ward er ganz Spannung; noch mehr so, als ich erwähnte, letztere hätten mich mehrfach an die uns von ihm erschlossene zigeunersche Musik erinnert - : einfache gerade Rhythmen, Naturharmonien, und im Vortrag häufig ein Beben, dem Cimbalm ähnlich, das oft ergreifend, ja mächtig anschwell.

„Tanzlieder?“ Warf er ein.

„Mehr Tanz-Dramen“, entgegnete ich und beschrieb, was ich bereits in einem Essay für Lessmann zu beschreiben versucht.

Er sprach nun von den Tonsystemen indischer Stämme und warf hin, daß das europäische Tonsystem heutiger Zeit in seiner Weiterentwicklung bei dem Vierteltonsystem ankommen werde. Als ich ihn zweifelnd ansah und seiner Hypothese entgegenhielt, daß mich die Javanern-Musik, deren Tonleiter sich auf dem Vierteltonschritt da zu bauen scheine, als nackter, ohrenzerreißender Lärm berührt habe, aus dem ich erst allmählich eine Art Ordnung und Gesetz herausgehört, und es mir nicht denkbar sei, daß eine zum höchsten Gefühlsausdruck entwickelte Kunst, wie -unsere heutige Musik, sich zu solchen Klängen hinwenden könne, erwiderte er bestimmten Tones:

„Warum nicht? Das beruht auf physische(r) und psychische(r) Entwicklung – sie steht nicht still, sie schreitet mit dem Fortschritt der Dinge: was kann nach der Chromatik und Enharmonik anderes kommen als der Viertelton? Das Wie wird die Zeit lösen“.

-24 Mai 1884 „Sie haben komponiert gesetzt.“ – hatte ich ihm entgegengerufen

- „Ja - einige Dissonanzen mehr in die Welt gesetzt.“ (...) Der persönliche Einfluß, den auch jetzt der 73jährige Mann ausübt, ist ein Phänomen. Als Dirigent zeigt er sich noch ebenso souverän beherrschend wie anno 1859 – und doch so ganz anders, so wie ein 129. Psalm und seine „Kruzifix“-Lieder zum 23. Psalm und zur Graner Messe sich verhalten. Jetzt alles so einfach, so innerlich und ruhig - früher alles feuerflammender Siegesmuth.... Höchste Verinnerlichung, die zugleich eine Vereinfachung der Mittel heißt.

-27. Oktober (...) Nun plauderten wir über Harmoniesysteme. Liszt wiederholte mir seine schon Früher ausgesprochene Ansicht: daß ein neues Tonsystem sich gestalten müsse, denn die occidentalen Systeme, nebst der Diatonik und Enharmonik seien erschöpft: das neue würde ein Viertelton-System sein. Ich brachte die ungarische Tonleiter: a, h, c, d#, e, f, g#, a, aufs Tapet, ebenso die Kurzsichtig zu lassen, da – wie seine Werke bewiesen – ihr für die Praxis ein weites, noch keineswegs erschöpftes Gebiet angehöre. Ich nahm Papier und Bleistift und zog in der Kürze eine Fülle harmonischer Konsequenzen, welche – nur um das eine zu erwähnen – der Verworrenheit in der Erklärung der übermäßige Sextakkord ein Ende macht; denn den Dreiklängen der ungarischen Skala sind sie

naturgemäß eingebildet a-c-e, usw. Weitere Folgen ergeben sich aus den Septimen- und Nonen-Akkorden.

„Sie ist harmonisch der vollberechtigte Gegensatz zu den Konsonanzen des Durgeschlechtes“, sagte ich – „desgleichen ästhetisch, indem sie Seelenzustände zum Ausdruck bringt, welche dem Dur und dem Moll nicht innenwohnen -: ein Dissonanzgeschlecht Echterster Rasse.“

„Sie fassen in Worte, was ich musikalisch erbrachte - entgegnete der Meister.

(...) Wir sprachen wieder einmal von der ungarischen Tonleiter. Ich teilte ihm Tappert's mir brieflich ausgesprochene Ansicht mit, daß sie nicht indischen Ursprungs sei, indem die indische Tonleiter aus zwei gleich gebildeten Hälften bestehe: z.b. C-indische – C-Db-E-F / G-Ab-H-c. Liszt ward zornig.

„Wo steht das geschrieben?“ donnerte er, ganz der Löwe von ehemals.

„Steht bei den Herren von der Theorie der archäologische Staub immer höher als das wirkliche Leben? Werden die nie klug? Lasse man sie doch aus der Praxis nachweisen! Sie können nicht- können nicht. Die ungarische Tonleiter ist indischen Ursprungs.“

„Übrigens“ – fuhr er ruhiger fort – „lassen wir die ungarische- auch sie wird bald erschöpft sein. Mit den abendländischen Systemen ist nicht mehr zu rechnen. Ich bin überzeugt, daß der Viertelton an die Reihe kommt- ein Vierteltonsystem – verlassen Sie si darauf!“ (...) Nachdem die Masse entlassen, forderte Liszt seine Schüler Göllicher und Stradal auf, uns einige „Totenkammerstücke“, die „**Variationen über Weinen, Klagen**“, desgl. die „Funeralien“ zu spielen. (...) „Beide, Göllicher und Stradal, haben eine Vorliebe für diese Marterstücke“, wandte sich der Meister wieder an mich – „weiß nicht, was sie daran haben, Glück werden sie nicht damit machen.“

Liszt's Russophilia, his admiration for the new Russian music and art, became even more intense in his very last years 1884-1886. His fascination for Russian art and especially that of young composers started with Glinka in 1842. Turgenev and A. Tolstoy regularly stayed with Liszt in Weimar, Liszt composing a ballad *The Blind Singer* on A. Tolstoy's poem in 1875. With maximum sympathy and dedication Liszt followed and defended the works of Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Glazunov, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky. Composers who, in his opinion, "possessed rare energies, masters who certainly do not suffer from idea-poverty like so many in the Western music world." Borodin quotes Liszt's memorable words at their meeting in Magdeburg in 1881: - "No, we need you Russians; I myself need you, I cannot live without you - vous autres Russes! With you there is a vital and flowing life with a future, but here around me there is decay, a funeral.....Without quoting Voltaire's famous poem "From the North comes the Light", I conclude that Russia has very respectable composers today." ³

In 1885 Liszt made a free transcription, a paraphrase of Cui's Tarantelle ⁴, and in the 'added' compositional fantasies there are several recognizable fragments: motivic turns, chromatic empty-fourths and octave passages from his *Csárdás macabre*. Liszt mentions it to Cui:

- "To César Cui: The very gracious propagandist, the Countess of Mercy-Argenteau, has already received a transcription of your brilliant Tarentelle. I will send a second copy of it to Bessel (Petersburg), and shall ask him to give it to you, trusting that you will not disapprove of the few liberties and amplifications that I have ventured to make in order to adapt this piece to the programmes of virtuosi pianista. Sincere feelings of esteem and attachment."

- To Countess Mercy-Argenteau: "Dear admirable propagandist, (...) Before receiving your last I had sent you from Weimar my transcription of Cui's Tarentelle. (...) I am sure you will be so kind as to send my note to Cui, who, I hope, will not be vexed with the varying readings and amplifications I have ventured to make, with a view of bringing the pianist still more forward. In this kind of transcription some sort of distinction is wanted. F. Liszt "

3 Borogyin Pizma A.P. Borogyina III.163; La Mara: Franz Liszts Briefe, Leipzig VIII.379. / László Zsigmond: Liszt Ferenc és az orosz zene. Magyar-Szovjet Társaság 1955

4 Editio Musica Budapest Neue Liszt Ausgabe II./15.

- Weimar. To the Composer Mily Balakirev, Conductor of the Imperial Court Choir in St. Petersburg: - "*Dear, dear fellow, My admiring sympathy for your work is known. If my young disciples wish to please me, they will play a work by you or by one of your considerable friends. In my fearless musical phalanx, I greet with all my heart masters, equipped with such rare vital energy: they do not suffer from shabby ideas - a very widespread disease in many countries. More and more their recognition will increase, and their names will become known. I accept with gratitude the honour of your dedicating your Symphonic Poem to me...*"
- To Countess Louise de Mercy-Argenteau: - "*Rarely does success hasten to follow the 'soul'.*", *In contrast to their remarkable talent and ability, the new Russian composers have so far had very limited success. The higher-ups at the St. Petersburg Court wait with their applause until they first achieve success elsewhere.*"

346. TO THE MUSIC PUBLISHER RAHTER IN HAMBURG.

DEAR HERR RAHTER,

Best thanks for kindly sending me the Russian *Fantasia* by Naprawnik—a brilliantly successful concert-piece—and the Slumber Songs by Rimsky-Korsakoff, which I prize extremely; his works are among the rare, the uncommon, the exquisite.—The piano edition of his Opera *Die Mainacht* [The May Night] has either not reached me or else has got lost.—Send it me to Weimar together with a second copy of Naprawnik's Russian *Fantasia*, which is necessary for performance.

Many of my young pianists will be glad to make this *Fantasia* known in drawing-rooms and concerts.—

With friendly thanks,

F. LISZT.

MUNICH, August 28th, 1884.

5

- To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: " (...) *The author (Lo) precisely dates his sympathy for Russian music to the 1842s. The vitality and charm of Glinka's operas attracted me even then. I saw Glinka regularly at my home, although he rarely went out in company. I arranged his Marche Tcherkesse and played it..., also in another arrangement by Ruslan. For this performance - which was not very successful - I used a recently invented piano with two keyboards, the second of which imitated a kind of string instrument sound.*"

- To Countess Mercy-Argenteau,(1885) "*During the last 6-7 years, at the Great Annual Concerts of the Music Association of which I am president, I have programmed the orchestral works of Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin. Their success is making a crescendo, notwithstanding a kind of basic stubbornness against Russian music. It is not my desire to stand out with those [Russian] works that compels me to distribute them, but a simple sense of rightness, based on my conviction of their real value and my high kinship with them.*"

Liszt's *Abschied* - composed in 1885 - is a free arrangement of an old Russian folk song, using harmonic and melodic turns typical of the Russian composers Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Mussorgsky.

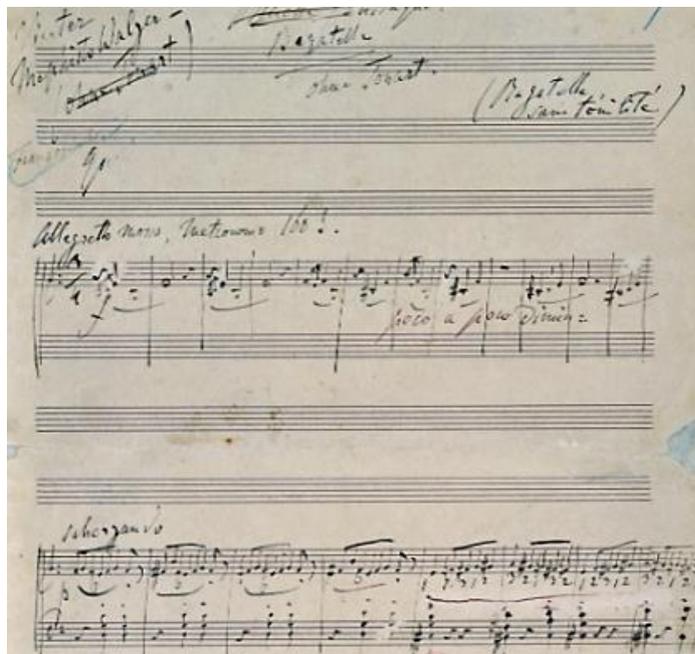
Liszt's remarkable *Quatre valse oubliées* were composed between 1881-1884. To Göllerich he said: "*I only have forgotten works*". They are a kind of musical souvenirs - poetic, sparkling, quasi-unfinished gems in impressionist-expressionist style with here and there typically late-Liszt elegiac episodes. In terms of character, they are the opposites of the four diabolical *Mephisto-Waltzers*. The *Deuxième* and *Troisième Valse oubliée* are dedicated to Baroness Olga von Meyendorff.

5 La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt, I. II. III. New York 1894. (To Music Publisher Rahter, Hamburg 1884)

Liszt remained inspired and composed new piano works on the Mephisto theme, such as 2nd, 3rd and 4th *Mephisto-Walzers* and a *Mephisto polka*. Liszt's 1st *Mephisto-Walzer* was composed between 1851 and 1861. Of the four *Mephisto-Walzers*, only the 3rd was published during his lifetime. Göllicher has recorded the following comment by Liszt in his diary in the context of a piano lesson to his pupil Clothilde Jensch on 22 June 1884: „Ich werde Ihnen die Kritik sagen, die Sie bekommen werden, wenn Sie das in Concerten spielen. Da wird heißen „Sehr talentierte junge Dame, viel Technik! – Nur schade, daß sie sich mit solchen schlechten Sachen abgibt. Der Komponist scheint ja nicht einmal die Anfangsgründe der Harmonielehre u. des strengen Satzes studiert zu haben. - Schon dieser Anfang zeigt ja das!“⁶

It is clear from this comment that Liszt was fully aware of his compositional attitude towards his critics.

The manuscript of Liszt's *Bagatelle ohne Tonart* composed in 1885 bears the original title *Vierter Mephisto-Walzer - (ohne Tonart)*. 'Bagatelle' was added later and only published in 1951 by the Liszt Society Publications, Schott London. This title refers to the pub scene from Lenau's Faust. Liszt never finished his first idea in its original form; the andante middle section remained in sketches. For a long time this 4. *Mephisto-Walzer* was considered an unfinished work by Liszt, and without that middle section (andante sketch) was published only in 1956 by I. Szelényi in an EMB edition.



This work is a diabolical death waltz of the old Liszt who abandons the romantic musical style and uses already 20th century techniques. No one before Liszt has written such an indication. Another novelty is the monothematic structure. The basic tonality is not perceptible due to the constant chromatic turns: a clear example of the new omnitonic traits, to get away from the traditional classical principles of tonality, metric, and symmetry. Here also, for the first time, a key with whole-tones is applied.

The circumstances of Liszt's two completely different *Mephisto-Walzers* are unknown, just as we do not know why both works bear (partly) the same title.

Liszt's *Unstern* is a modernist, quasi-atonal, sinister piano work in whole-, thirds- and tritone-keys ending in a Bartókian final note E. It is a vision of the Last Judgement in constantly rubbing musical tension through unresolved dissonances - without Liszt's previously usual transfiguration finale.

This work was composed in 1885 and published in 1927 by Breitkopf und Härtel.

⁶ A. Göllicher: The piano master classes of Franz Liszt, 1884-1886; Diary Notes of August Göllicher

- To Carolyne Wittgenstein: "(...) *You are swimming in Buddhism, I am immersed in musical 'Hungarisms' through six or seven historical portraits: István Széchenyi, Deák, László Teleki, Eötvös, Vörösmarty, Petöfi's statue and my friend Mosonyi's funeral procession - all ending in a trombone apotheosis.*" ⁷

The *Historische ungarische Bildnisse* were largely written in Liszt's last years of life (- according to L. Ramann 1884-1886, - according to Stradal during the spring of 1885 ⁸). During the year 1885 Liszt corresponded with the publisher Táborszky about their publication in June, mentioning the individual titles. Liszt's programme music has a lyrical-expressive expression of specific spiritual and emotional undertones rather than a descriptive, illustrative musical expression. The absence of a detailed descriptive musical programme is evident from the homogeneous style and the homogeneous musical ideas present in all parts. Liszt was also one of the first composers to experiment with bitonality. His *László Teleky* from the *Historische ungarische Bildnisse* - written in Lisztian gypsy scale, has two tonalities: f-sharp and c minor.

The last four *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (no.16-19) - including the previously mentioned *Munkácsy Rhapsody* - were also composed in Budapest between 1882 and 1886. Bartók was already born at that time and with their 'death rhapsodic' character they have a symbolic meaning. These are compositions without gypsy or other mannerisms, they reach far beyond the late 19th century music compositions and have more in common with Bartók's early, not folklorically inspired music.

Liszt's last messages and his last journey with a performance as a pianist in Colpach, staying with his friend Munkácsy.

1885 Budapest - To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: "*I am again suffering from the fever of writing music. Is this senility? Let others decide. - I am guilty of being late, and for the same or rather for the same fault as formerly. This fault is writing music, a task which tires me greatly and which I only carry out unhappily, finding my talent very inadequate for the lively expression of my thoughts. Everything seems to me listless and colourless.*"

- To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - "*In this month February I have written some forty pages of Hungarian music: A) a **Rhapsody (18.)** for the album of the Exhibition which is to open on May 1. It will be entirely national, so that there will be only Hungarian works and objects in great quantity, and some of them of great value. Munkácsy is sending a painting.....B) Modestly, let me mention another **Rhapsody (19.)** written for my old friend Ábrányi - plus a **Csárdás Obstiné** and a very **Magyar Funeral March.**"*

- To Baroness Olga von Meyendorff: - "*Well, I confess to being guilty and almost a criminal because of my delays in writing. Need I repeat that it is once again my silly music which has, this whole month, kept me from writing letters.*"

Until his last months in 1886, Liszt still makes plans to go to Saint-Petersburg.

- To Sophie Menter, Petersburg: "*Dear and respected Diplomatist, Eight days before the 19th April (Russian style) I will be in Petersburg. (...)*"

- To Carolyne Wittgenstein, from Paris: - "*A telegram from St. Petersburg informs me that the Russian court will be in the Crimea at the end of April - will my trip to Petersburg be postponed.*" ⁹

1886 After a long and tiring journey from Budapest via Vienna, Cologne, Liege (Liszt Festival), Antwerp, Paris, London (guest of honour with Queen Victoria and Prince of Wales), Antwerp, and Aarlon, Liszt and his pupil Stavenhagen arrived at Munkácsy's castle at Colpach on July 5. In Colpach Munkácsy made the very last drawing and painting of Liszt.

7 La Mara: Letters of Franz Liszt, I. II. III. New York 1894.

8 A. Stradal: : Erinnerungen an Franz Liszt, Bern, 1929. 60.I.

9 Liszt Ferenc Válogatott írásai II. (Hankiss J.) Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1959



Liszt Ferenc, Munkácsy Mihály festménye 1886

At the final concert of the Société de Musique he played, according to press reports (although his name is not mentioned on the programme), his *Liebstraum* (Nocturne I.), the *Chant Polonaise* from *Glances de Woronince* and the sixth *Soirées de Vienne*.¹⁰

- 6 July. Colpach Munkácsy Castle. To Agnes Street-Klindworth: "*As for my physical condition, pleasant enough though it is, since the last five days an aggressive cough has come up, a day-and-night struggle. From this neither medicines, nor infusions, nor mustard plasters, nor footbaths deliver me. Stavenhagen is accompanying me to Bayreuth.*"¹¹

Having fulfilled his promise to Cosima to attend the performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Tristan*, Liszt died on July 31, 1886, in Bayreuth of pneumonia and cardiac arrest.

Liszt's last act in connection with Hungary was the establishment of the Liszt Society Foundation Fund as part of the Liszt Society. His aim was to help poor music teachers in Budapest.¹²

10 Penning Jim: 'Liszt in Luxembourg' *Liszt Society Journal* 1984 (Pag.45-53)

11 Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth: - A correspondance, 1854-1886 *Franz Liszt Studies series no.8* Pendragon Press, Hillsdale NY Pag. 297.

12 Legány, Dezső: *Ferenc Liszt and his Country 1874-1886*. Budapest 1983,1992

4. 1911-1913 Bartók - Breitkopf & Härtel collaboration for the *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe*.

4.1 Bartók receives an extensive assignment from the Franz-Liszt-Stiftung Weimar to revise Liszt compositions which are related to Hungary - o.a.b.. the *Csárdás macabre* - and to translate the accompanying Hungarian texts. All this for the publication of the *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe* by the publishing house Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig (1911-1927).

In 1907 Busoni became counsellor in Weimar of the Liszt-Foundation commission, charged with the search and collection of all Liszt piano works, manuscripts, and earlier editions, in order to realize a complete edition by Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig between 1911-1927. He had been collecting Liszt editions since the early 1890s, and Liszt's works formed an ever-growing part of his repertoire. He himself published several transcriptions and other versions of Liszt's works. Busoni's reputation as a Liszt expert was established by the fact that he had carefully and thoroughly examined Liszt's manuscripts and versions for authenticity.¹

„Es wurde eine Revisionskommission der Franz-Liszt-Stiftung gebildet, unter dem Vorsitz von Dr. Aloys Obrist, Kustode des Liszt-Museums in Weimar. Als Mitglieder gehörten ihr an: der Musikdirektor August Göllerich Liszt-Schüler und Verehrer: Eugen d'Albert und Ferruccio Busoni, August Stradal. Außer diesen für die Herausgabe direkt verantwortlichen Persönlichkeiten beteiligten sich an seiner Revidierung und Vorbereitung mehrere weitere Persönlichkeiten, zum Beispiel Arthur Friedheim, Emil Sauer, Maria Lipsius (La Mara) und Lina Ramann. Angesichts des „ungarischen“ Charakters mehrerer Werke Liszts wurden Fachleute aus Budapest um eine konkrete Mitarbeit ersucht.

Schon 1908 traten die ersten Probleme mit der Ausgabe der „ungarischen Werke“ auf. Mit der Revision der Klavierwerke im Rahmen des ganzen Verlagsprojekts war Ferruccio Busoni betraut worden, der schon einen Teil der Klavierwerke revidiert

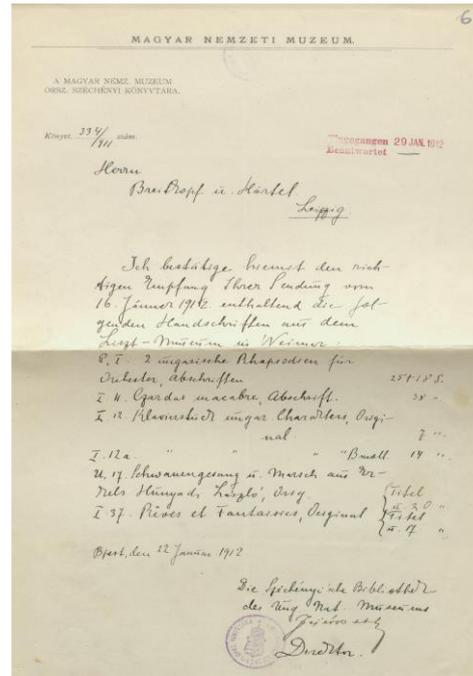
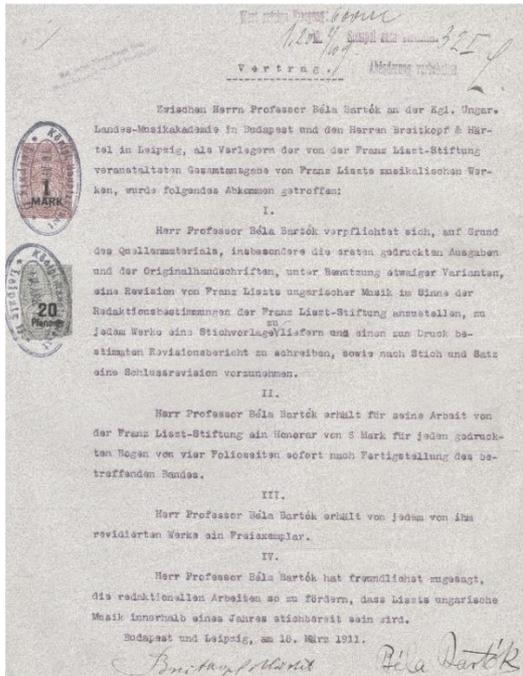
hatte, und mit der neuen und selbständigen Revision der *ungarischen Rhapsodien* durch Árpád Szendy nicht sehr einverstanden war.

Nach Szendys Ablehnung, die Revision vorzunehmen, wandte sich der Verlag Anfang 1911 an den Minister für Schulwesen und Religion J. N. Zichy, der in dieser Sache den Professor der Musikakademie, Béla Bartók, ansprach. Bartók versprach bereitwillig, im Laufe eines Jahres die Revision der ihm anvertrauten Werke zu verwirklichen.“²

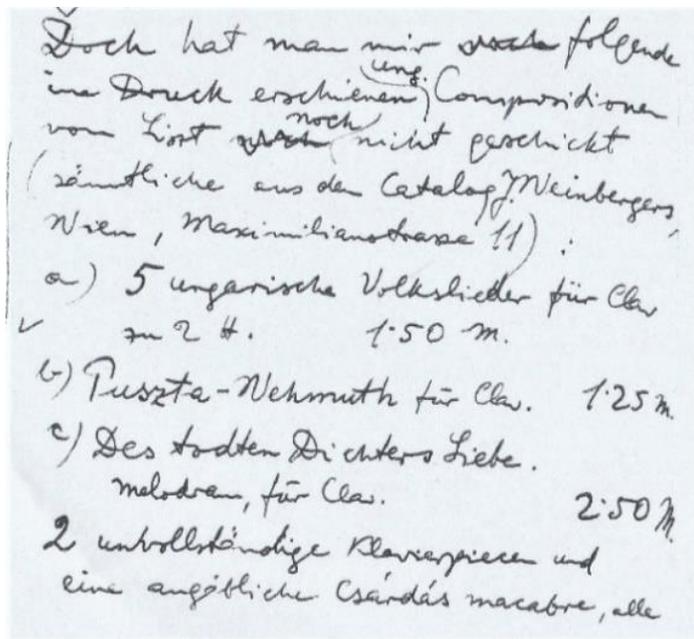
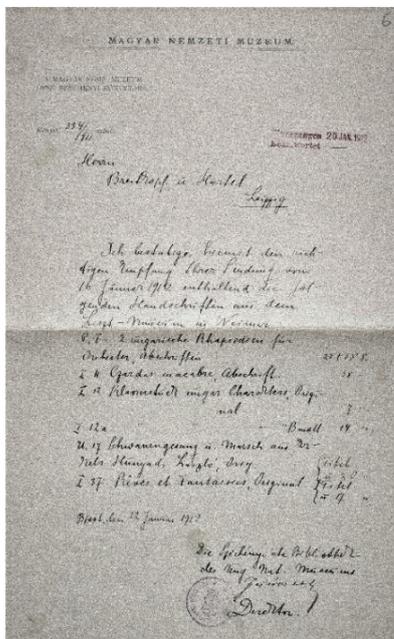
Thus, Bartók again came into contact with Busoni through the publisher Breitkopf in order to review, revise and translate the specifically Hungarian compositions.

1 Ferruccio Busoni: “a Musical Ishmael” door Della Couling The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland -Toronto-Oxford 2005 (1907)

2 Briefe des Musikverlags Breitkopf & Härtel in der Musiksammlung von Johann Nepomuk (János) Batka. 22 März 1917 Breitkopf & Härtel Archiv Wiesbaden, „Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, herausgegeben von der Franz-Liszt-Stiftung“.



1911. 7 March Bartók's letter to Breitkopf & Härtel: "...I would also like to know exactly what I should do about this copy of **Hungaria**? B.B.
 - 23 March "...I have received that shipment etc. and will try to have that **Hungaria** in 10-12 days. B.B.
 - 2 June "...Enclosed I also send the proofs of the 1st and 2nd Rhapsody. B.B."³
1912. On 22 January Budapest Bartók confirms receipt of **2 ungarische Rhapsodien für Orchester, Czardas macabre (sic), Klavierstück ungar. Charakters 12, 12a original**, etc.⁴



3 Briefe des Musikverlags Breitkopf & Härtel in der Musiksammlung Breitkopf & Härtel Archiv Wiesbaden, Breikopf & Härtel -Bartók corespondance 1921-25
 4 Breitkopf & Härtel -Bartók correspondance: 1921-32,33 Briefe des Musikverlags Breitkopf & Härtel in der Musiksammlung Breitkopf & Härtel Archiv Wiesbaden,

1912 28 February: - "Yet you have not sent the Hungarian compositions by Liszt that have appeared in print (many from the catalogue of J. Weinberger, Wien, Maximilianstrasse 11):

a) **5 Ungarischer Volkslieder** for piano 2 hands 1.50 M

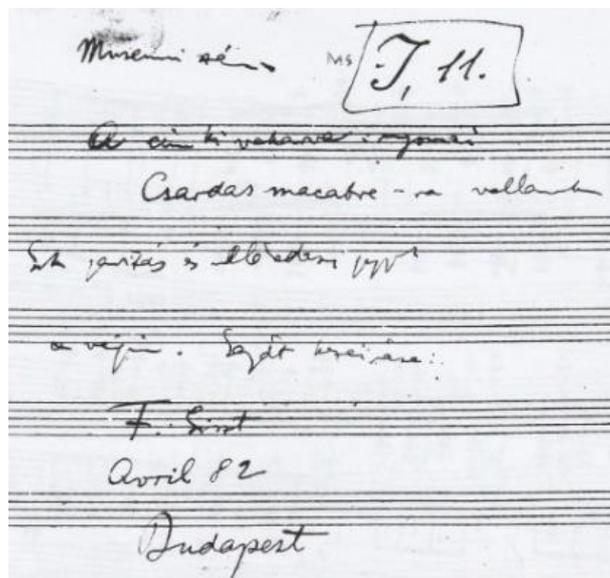
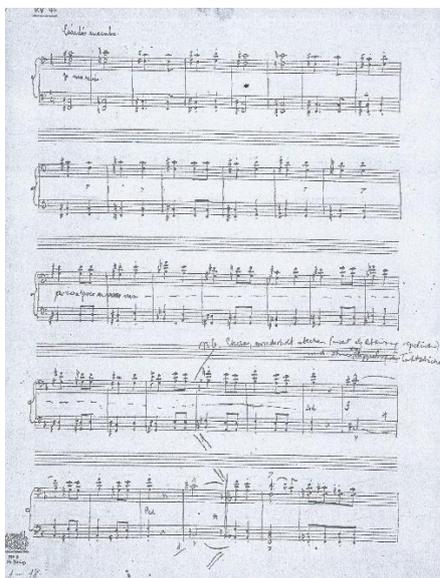
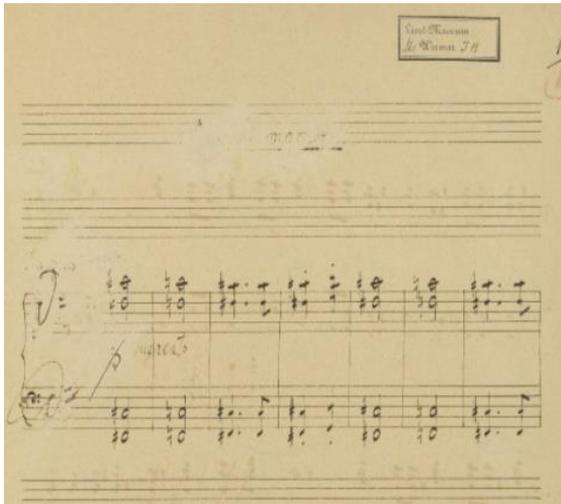
b) **Puszta-Wehmut** for piano 1.25 M

c) **Des todten Dichters Liebe**. Melodrama for piano 2.50 M

- 2 incomplete piano pieces and an alleged **Csárdás macabre**, all three by Liszt himself (recently sent from the Weimar Museum to Budapest), I have I had them copied by copyists." ⁵

1912. 5 March. - "Herrn Professor Béla Bartók, Budapest: "Hereby we notice that Mr Victor Mat(t)asovitch himself charges 25 kroner and 80 Heller for copying 2 **Hungarian character pieces** and for "**Csárdás macabre**" which we sent to him by postal transfer ...Breitkopf & Härtel. "

In the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv Weimar there is another copy of the **Csárdás macabre** but without title! (GSA 60/I 83) revised by Bartók at the request of Breitkopf & Härtel

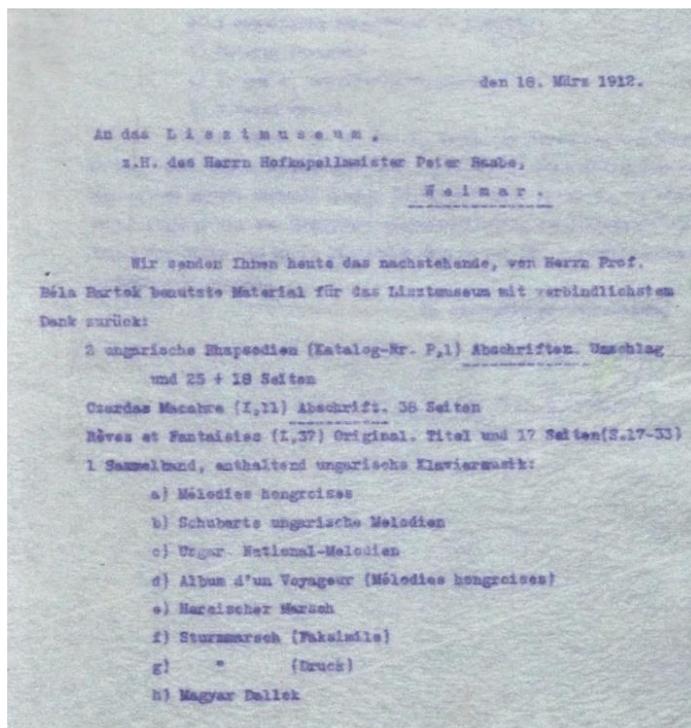


On the back of the last sheet Bartók wrote with his own hand: "Verso of Ms I.83:

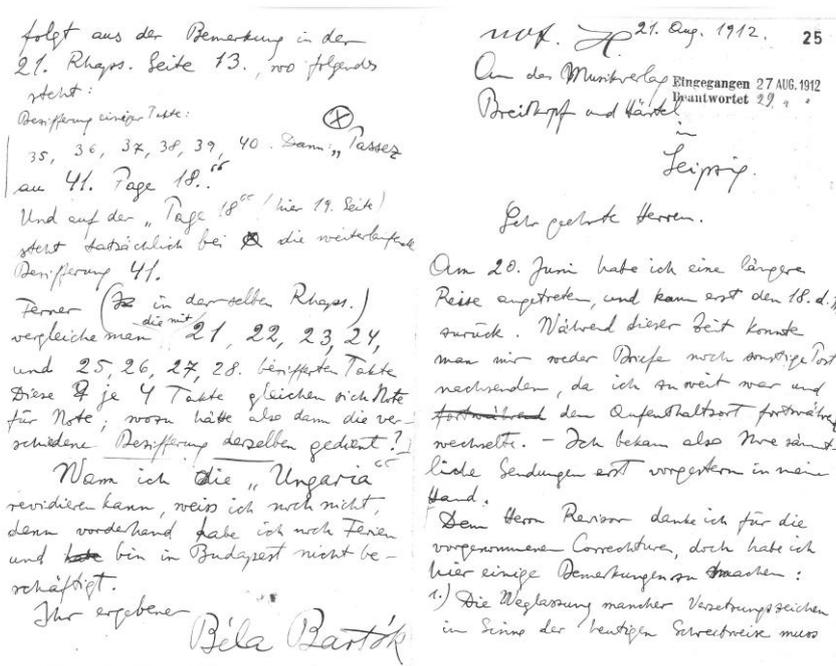
last sheet Museum number I,11". " The title is scratched away, the traces point to **Csárdás macabre**. Many corrections and instructions at the end. Own signature "F. Liszt Avril 82 Budapest." ⁶ (Bartók's manuscript has been identified by specialists).

6 Breitkopf & Härtel – Bartók correspondance 1921 1-103 -10,11 Briefe des Musikverlags Breitkopf & Härtel in der Musiksammlung Breitkopf & Härtel Archiv Wiesbaden

Other Breitkopf's letter with titles for revision by Bartók:



Bartók's letter to Breitkopf regarding revision of *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and *Hungaria*:⁷



⁷ Breitkopf & Härtel – Bartók correspondence 1921 1-103-10,11 Briefe des Musikverlags Breitkopf & Härtel in der Musiksammlung Breitkopf & Härtel Archiv Wiesbaden

Further order letters from the publisher Breitkopf to Bartók:

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor,

Als wir die Stichvorlagen von Liszts Ungarischen Rhapsodien Herrn Generalmusikdirektor Professor Dr. Wolfrum, als Obmann der Revisionskommission unterbreiteten, war gerade Herr Professor Ferruccio Busoni in Heidelberg, mit dem Herr Wolfrum über diese Kompositionen ausführlich gesprochen hat, Herr Busoni, dem anfänglich alle Lisztschen Klavierwerke zur Revision anvertraut waren, und der dann später, als das Abkommen mit dem Königl. ungar. Kultusministerium in Budapest getroffen wurde, die ungarischen Werke bereitwilligst abgetreten hat, bekundet für diese Kompositionen zu unserer Freude lebendiges Interesse und hat nicht unterlassen, seine Wünsche in dem beiliegenden für Sie bestimmten Briefe auszusprechen. Nach seinem Dafürhalten wäre die chronologische Reihenfolge der Rhapsodien folgende:

- 1.) Magyar Dallok, 4 Hefte
- 2.) Magyar Rhapsodik, 6 Hefte
- 3.) Ungarische Nationalweisen
- 4.) Rhapsodien Hongrieuses No. 1-19
- 5.) Ungedruckte Rhapsodie (20)

6.) Entwürfe
7.) Ungarische Fantasia für Klavier und Orchester.

Herr Busoni geht hiernach über den früheren Plan, nur die Kompositionen letzterer Fassung in der Gesamtausgabe zu bieten, hinaus und hat auch schon in den von ihm selbst herausgegebenen drei Bänden der Hefen durch Aufnahme der ursprünglichen, dann von Meister verworfenen Kompositionen, die Entwicklungsfolge veranschaulicht. Herr Wolfrum ist anscheinend nicht dagegen, wenn in gleicher Weise bei den Rhapsodien verfahren wird. Wir bitten Sie nun freundlichst, im Anschluss an unseren Brief vom 29. Dezember 1911, in dem diese Angelegenheit schon ausführlicher behandelt wurde, sich zu den neuen Vorschlägen des Herrn Busoni äußern zu wollen, damit dann endgültig festgesetzt werden kann, wie es mit den Vorarbeiten und Nacharbeiten der ungarischen Rhapsodien zu halten sein wird.

Ihrer werthen Antwort entsprechend, zeichnen wir

In vorzüglicher Hochachtung

Breitkopf & Härtel

Herrn Professor Béla Bartók,
B u d a p e s t.

den 20. Mai 1913.

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor,

Wir empfangen gestern Ihr Paket, enthaltend die dem Lisztmuseum gehörenden Vorlagen von Liszt:

Klavierspiel ungarischen Charakters
5 voll Original
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Ferner empfangen wir Ihre ungarische Uebersetzung zu dem kleinen Orchesterwerke, wofür wir Ihnen bestens danken.

Ihren Wünsche gemäß werden wir von Abschriften noch besorgen lassen:

1 Réves et Fantasies (Weimar I. 37)

Dieses unvollendete Werk hatten wir Ihnen schon im vorigen Jahre vorgelegt und es auch bereits am 18. März 1912 an das Lisztmuseum zurückgegeben.

2. I. ungar. Rhapsodie. Ältere Fassung (Weimar J.7)
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5. Aus demselben Sammelband J 10¹⁰ und zwar nur von der 8. Seite, 2 letzte Zeilen angefangen. (Variante der 12. Rhapsodie)
6. Fr. J 10¹¹ (Variante der 8. Rhapsodie)
7. Fr. J 10¹³ (Variante der 14. Rhapsodie)

Wir werden diese mit der 14. Rhapsodie vergleichen und nur die abweichenden Teile abschreiben lassen.

Es wird dann allerdings nötig sein, dass wir Ihnen die Originale aus dem Lisztmuseum nebst den Abschriften nochmals senden. Vielleicht ließe sich die doppelte Sendung vermeiden, falls Sie dort einen geeigneten Notenschreiber zur Hand haben, der Ihnen bei der Abschrift behilflich sein kann. In Leipzig ist eine Anzahl Orchestermitglieder mit solchen Nebenarbeiten beschäftigt.

Jedenfalls bitten wir Sie, die 2 Versionen der 15. Rhapsodie in Budapest abschreiben zu lassen und sich dazu die Vorlagen aus der Gesellschafts Bibliothek Nr. 22 direkt zu erbitten.

Wir haben Vermerk genommen, dass der Heroische Marsch aus dem Sammelband der ungar. Musik (J 10⁵) in die Reihe der kleineren Klavierkompositionen ungar. Stiles aufzunehmen ist.

Wir dürfen das Material aus dem Lisztmuseum in der Regel nicht

Between February 1911 and December 1913, Bartók received the following Liszt compositions, among others: *Hungaria*, *20 Hungarian Rhapsodies*, *Isten veled (lied)*, *Mazeppa*, *Heldenklage*, *Epithalam zu Ed. Reményi*, *Ungarns Gott*, *Heroischer Marsch*, *Ungarisches Königslied*, *Ave Maria*, *Via Crucis*, *Legende nr.2*, *3 Sonetti di Petrarca*, *Weber's Schlummerlied*, *5 ungarischer Volkslieder*, *Des todten Dichters Liebe*, *2 unvollständige Klavierpieces*, *Csárdás macabre*, *O du mein boldes Abendstern*, *Dante-Symphonie*, *Lied der Begeisterung*, *6 Rapsodien für Orchester*, *Entwürfe*, *Ungarisch Fantasia für Klavier und Orchester*, *Der nächtliche Zug*, *Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke*, *Am Grabe Richard Wagner*, *2 Csardas*, *Glocken von Strassburg*, *Klavierkonzert nr 1. nr. 2.*, *Totentanz*, *Ungarischen Krönungsmarsches für Orchester*, *Les Morts/F. Lamennais*, *Kleinen Orchesterwerken*, *Klavierstück ungarischen Charakters*, *Rêves et Fantasies*, *Rákoczy - version facile*.

4.2 Allegro barbaro - Csárdás macabre, dates and explanation of a possible connection.

Detailed chronology of Bartók's activities in 1911-1913:

1911:

- On 22 March Bartók writes to Delius: "*Since the piano works, I have become so more "harmonious" that I don't need an accumulation of bad contradictory sounds (dissonances). This is probably since I allow myself to be influenced more and more by folk music. Béla Bartók.*"¹
- Between 1910 and 1912 Bartók negotiated with publishers Rozsnyai and Rózsavölgyi about the publications of his piano works composed between 1908-1911, of which the *Quatre Nénies* Op.9a (1910) and the *3 Burlesques* (1908/1911/1910) by Rózsavölgyi & Társa Budapest and the *7 Skizzen* by Rozsnyai were published in 1912.
- In February Bartók receives a very extensive commission from the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel to revise Liszt's compositions, symphonic works, and piano works.
- Between March and September Bartók works intensively on his masterpiece *The Castle of Duke Bluebeard*, as he reported to Delius (about his "*laborious work*") in his letter of 27 March 1911 and in July he left for Paris "*empty-handed*" - as Bartók informs Delius in his July letter. "*Because I had too much work, I did not complete the previously started compositions.*"²
- Bartók and Kodály founded UMZE BUDAPEST to propagate contemporary compositions.
- On 18 May, Bartók will perform the *Quatre Nénies* and *3 Burlesques* in world premiere.
- In June he finishes his *Deux portraits* Op.5.
- During the summer months Bartók spends a long time in Switzerland (Zermatt).
- In October Bartók publishes his analytical Liszt article: 'The Music of Liszt and the Hungarian audience' on the Liszt Centenary.
- In November Bartók performs as a soloist in Beethoven's *5th Piano concerto* and plays also his own works: *An Evening with the Széklers*, *Romance* and 19 pieces from *Für Children*.
- At the first UMZE concert (27 November) Bartók played works by Scarlatti, Rameau and Beethoven, and some folk music arrangements by Kodály and by himself. Shortly afterwards, on 12 December, Bartók plays piano works by Debussy and Weiner.
- UMZE became a failure due to the lack of public interest or the negative reception and was disbanded.
- During the Christmas period Bartók left for Romania to collect folk music.

1912:

- In January, Bartók tells Busitia that he feels "*like a king*" himself in Transylvania (that time Hungarian territory). He gives a summary of places where he travelled and what folk music he collected there (in Transylvania) during the Christmas period 1911 and the first weeks of January 1912.
- On 22 January in Budapest, Bartók confirmed the receipt of "*2 Ungarische Rhapsodien für Orchester, Czardas macabre (sic)*" and other Liszt works to Breitkopf as part of the *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe* collaboration.
- In March Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* has already been revised and returned to Leipzig.

1 Bartók Breviárium Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1980 (Nr.151)

2 Bartók Béla Levelei, Demény Zeneműkiadó 1976 (Nr.24)

- Bartók continues to work on and prepare *The Castle of Duke Bluebeard* for the 'Erkel Prize-giving ceremony'.
- Rozsnyai Budapest publishes Bartók's *7 Sketches/Skizzen*.
- In March-April Bartók made a folk music tour in Transylvania and gives a recital in Marosvásárhely with piano works by Scarlatti, Beethoven, Bartók and Debussy.
- In 1912 Bartók composed the *Four Pieces for Orchestra*, of which the second movement *Scherzo* is a diabolical 'chase music', a vision with rapture, suspense, barbaric energy and inner torment... as later also in *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Also, the first movement of Bartók's only *Piano Sonata* (1926) undeniably betrays the composer of the *Allegro barbaro* with its ascending trichords, with its maniacal tone repetitions, with his 'primitive' tonal melodies and with his specific rattling monorhythms³
- On 3 October Bartók wrote to Etelka Freund: "A *totally uninteresting general rehearsal for the concert in honour of our little father...*". (Commemorative concert for Liszt's 101st birthday).
- In October and later in December, Bartók goes again to Transylvania and Romania.

1913.

- On 1 January 1913 the *Nyugat* publishes Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* as an appendix.
- On 1 February, the Kecskemét Singing Circle organises a "Kurutz" evening in Kecskemét during which Bartók played his own works: *2 Burlesques*, 10 pieces from the *14 Bagatelles*, the *Bear Dance*, *An evening at the széklers*, a series of pieces from *Für Kinder* and, as the final piece, the world premiere of *Allegro barbaro*.⁴ (The *Allegro barbaro* was published later in 1918/1919 by Universal Edition Wien.
- From 20 April onwards Bartók refused to perform as a pianist for four and a half years, with the exception of a concert in October 1915.

The first recorded date of the *Allegro barbaro* referring to Bartók is "1910", printed in a concert programme of 1917. On another programme of 1921 was "1911" printed. The circumstances of this composition are unknown. If Bartók wrote the *Allegro barbaro* in 1910-1911, this work does not fit into Bartók's concept of the series of thematic works for piano solo, as agreed with publishers Rozsnyai and Rózsavölgyi, for publication between June 1910 and June 1911; because of their characters (collections of *Romanien Dances*, *Quatre Nénies*, *Burlesques*, *Elegies*) or because of their volume (e.g. *7 Sketches*).

The sketch (manuscript) is untitled. "(Allegro barbaro)" is in brackets. The first publication appears as an appendix in a pre-edition of the magazine 'Nyugat' on 1 January 1913.

(First edition: UE 5904 1918 published in 1919). Corrected edition in 1927 UE, Boosey & Hawkes in 1939. Neuausgabe UE 1992 with Peter Bartók's revision).

Basic sources are Bartók's sketch without original page numbers, title added later: '*Allegro barbaro*' (Bartók's handwriting in pencil, not at the time of composing): "*Zeneszerző kézírata 1925*" ["*The composer's handwriting 1925*"] (in blue pencil, unknown handwriting). No date, no title on the first page, no signature, no metronome marks."⁵

After conversations with Bartók's first wife Márta and with Kodály, Denijs Dille wrote the following about *Allegro barbaro*: "*In 1910, a Hungarian festival took place in Paris where music by young Hungarian composers was performed, including Bartók's Bagatelles and No.1 from the 2 Romanian Dances.*"⁶

3 Tallián Tibor: Bartók Béla Rózsavölgyi és Társa Budapest 2016

4 Bartók.Béla Családi levelek Zeneműkiadó Budapest 1981

5 László Somfai: Why is a Bartók Thematic Catalog Sorely Needed? Peter Laki: Bartók and his World. Princeton University Press, BB 63 *Allegro barbaro* for piano 1911 (or 1910). BBCCE. Vol. 36

6 Denijs Dille: L'Allegro barbaro de Bartók. Akadémia Kiadó Budapest 1970

On that occasion, a music critic, on a literary whim, spoke of 'young Hungarian barbarians':
- "Dans quel compartiment de l'esthétique pouvait-on faire entrer cette sorte de barbarie subtile, cette spontanéité et ce raffinement?"⁷

The following year [1911 or 1912 ?] Bartók wrote an allegro for keyboard. The addition of *barbaro* to the original title *Allegro*, may possibly be meant sarcastically because of Ravel's Scarbo-quotation of the main motive. - Perhaps as a reminder of the critic's eloquent clause, Bartók titled his work: *Allegro barbaro*. This may have been a mistake, as it took on the proportions of a mystification. Many pianists, and the public no less, have seen this piece as an expression of primitive violence... This **Allegro** is by no means barbaric, except in its title; as regards play, sound and form, it is a definitive result of the evolution which started with the **Bagatelles**. ...One must point out that the vital and compelling rhythm here originates in folk music, and Bartók already knows how to integrate it into his modern technique, so much so that one soon wants to indicate this rhythm as a characteristic."

Adorno wrote in his Bartók article, "...Die **vierzehn Klavierstücke** op.6, (...) das zehnte Stück ist schon ein rechtes **Allegro barbaro**."⁸

In February 1911 - Liszt's 100th birthday - Bartók received from the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig a very extensive order to revise Liszt's compositions related to Hungary and to translate the accompanying texts. As a result of this commission, Bartók received a considerable quantity of Liszt compositions - symphonic poems, piano works, songs, monodramas - as mentioned in the chapter **2. Chronicles of the early period of Bartók**. In February 1912, Bartók also received Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*, which he confirms in his letter: "an alleged *Csárdás macabre*, all three by Liszt's own hand (recently sent to Budapest from the Weimar Museum)".

In his article Liszt Ferenc: '*Csárdás macabre*', Szelényi István writes: "This work is an extremely important fact in the evolutionary history of Hungarian music. As a missing link, Bartók connects his work with Liszt's art. Some of Liszt's late piano works - e.g., *Historische ungarische Bildnisse* - reflect a certain zeitgeist, another part leads to Debussy and Skrjabin. But the *Csárdás macabre* represents an undeniable link to the young Bartók - especially to the **Allegro barbaro**. What makes it even more interesting: this work by Liszt does not lead to the starting point from which Bartók departed, but directly to his "second" early period. We could say that it was a "necessary" evolution for a Hungarian composer, basing himself on authentic Hungarian folk music, to arrive at a result like Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* and Bartók's **Allegro barbaro**. Liszt's treatment of this "Ég a kunyhó" folk melody recalls Bartók's later folk song arrangements. We see the evolution of Hungarian music much more organically thanks to the prominence of this work (*Csárdás macabre*) and other data on a possible Liszt-Bartók connection".⁹

Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* is composed in a characteristic Lisztian quasi-sonata form (bridge form?). The intervals used here - shortening and widening - are a general stylistic feature of the late Liszt. His typically improvisatory nature as an inspiring and constructive element lives on but is now much more concentrated and thus achieves an exceptional intensity. The monothematic, the development of variations, an ostinato technique, intervals diminishing and augmenting, and an improvisatory characterisation are stylistic features which occur in the music of Liszt as well as Bartók, and thus these stylistic features have a direct or indirect influence on the musical language of the 20th century. The beginning unisono fifths of the *Csárdás macabre* are precursors of Bartók's **Romanian Dance I, Piano Concerto No. 2** and **No. 3, Sonata 2nd movement**.

8 Th. Adorno: *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Literatur* 1922

9 Szelényi I. : Liszt Ferenc *Csárdás macabre*-je. A „*Csárdás macabre*“ hiteles szövege. *Új zenei szemle* 1953/10. IV.évfolyam 10

According to Z. Gárdonyi: "*Liszt's Csárdás macabre, written in 1882, is a novel synthesis of Hungarian musical elements which we only find in Bartók's music after Liszt. Without presuming a direct influence of the Csárdás macabre on Bartók's art, I must conclude that Liszt's creativity in terms of primary rhythmicity, inventiveness and specific harmonic connections are already noticeable a lifetime before Bartók's similar stylistic features.*"¹⁰

For my request to Luc Van Hove and Wim Hendrickx - two prominent Belgian composers of international renown - to examine Liszt's *Csárdás macabre versus Bartók's Allegro barbaro* from their 21st-century perspective, they responded with the following findings:

Luc Van Hove writes: "*Liszt's Csárdás macabre is a daring, original piece of work. To ears at the time, almost everything in it must have sounded new and strange, to an extent that we can hardly imagine now. Striking features throughout the composition are numerous.*

The whole comes across as diabolical, obsessive, wild and explicitly expressive. In that sense, the piece pushes back frontiers. The originally old Hungarian mating dance undergoes a metamorphosis. The dark beginning with the cold open fifths in a chromatic circulation (F# - F - F# - G - F# /G#), the obstinate rhythm, the monodic texture, the accents on the counterpoints, the strange harmonic world, chromatic and without clear tonic, immediately sets the tone for what follows. Yet this opening music is organically and logically constructed. These contrasts, displacements and transformations intensify an experience, but also speak of a well-thought-out construction.

The music wants to be exclusively expressive in painting contrasts. Liszt composes an idiosyncratic harmonic route, which carries an intrinsic logic. Traditional in the composition as a whole is the metric, which evolves predominantly in a four-bar pattern.

Would Béla Bartók have been impressed when he got to know this score? This question is related to the question of what can inspire a composer.

My experience as a composer has taught me that the music of other composers can be the strongest source of inspiration for my own music. Obviously beyond any kind of banal imitation, inspired music can set in motion a process that results in its own kind of "answer".

The original drive of the Csárdás Macabre, with full presence of everything that makes a pure composition speak, can easily set such a process in motion. Add to that the human factor: the speaking authority of the older Hungarian master Liszt, recognised and praised by the younger Hungarian master Bartók.

Bartók's Allegro Barbaro is also unique in its direct expressive power, written without detours and once again with ultimate efficiency. There are of course the similarities on the surface of the music. The key of F# is the most obvious. The repeated tones, both in the accompaniment and in the main melody, also weigh through. Who knows, there may even be an intentional similarity in the initial circulatory of both opening themes: F#-F#-G-F# in Liszt, and A-G-A-Bb-A in Bartók. Moreover, the Allegro Barbaro is also mainly written in a traditional metrical framework per 4 bars.

Yet I would situate the "main resemblance" more on the meta-level: an expression of a certain inescapability in the music, an obsessive force, a directness, an inventiveness. In short, to an inspiration, which, as in Liszt's score, transcends all syntax and form into an iconic work of art.

There are also obvious differences between the two scores. Ultimately, they come down to differences between the Liszt and Bartók styles themselves. Liszt considerably and impressively expands the tonal language of his time, pointing to the future, while Bartók already expresses himself in his own (neo)modality.

Liszt's style remains late-romantic but becomes extremely expressive, while in Bartók's style expressionism already takes full shape."

10 Gárdonyi Zoltán: Liszt Ferenc Magyar stílusa Bp. 1936 IV. A késői művek.

Wim Hendrickx compares Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* with Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* as follows:

"In the introduction to the *Csárdás macabre*, without really establishing a tonality with unison open fifth chords, Liszt makes his way chromatically, eventually ending up in F major. We can put it this way that Liszt wants to abandon the idea of starting and ending a piece in one tonality: from F# to F to end in D. Also, the use of harmonies based on open fifths is not self-evident in this period. If we add to this the chromatic lines (see introduction), we can certainly imagine that the young Bartók was clearly inspired by these. We can certainly say that because of the chromatic writing, the use of the tonality F#, the rhythmic drive as well as the rhythmic identities of the main themes, Bartók must have been inspired by Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*. I find it self-evident that Bartók gave his own interpretation of this. For me, this *Allegro barbaro* already contains very clear characteristics of Bartók's later work."

My personal impressions: the *Csárdás macabre* by Liszt and the *Allegro barbaro* by Bartók mean a truly *toxic* playing experience for my attitude as a pianist - personally and interpretatively: both focusing on the same "quasi-barbaric" theme, both equally hectic and impulsive, both equally hellish, dancing in a csárdás 2/4 time, both starting from a f-sharp tone, - *Csárdás macabre*: with empty fifths with omnitonal tendencies, *Allegro barbaro*: with bitonal tendencies.

Thereby: Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* uses an old Hungarian *verbunkos* male dance song - a brusque male dance to recruit young soldiers, Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* imitates a pseudo ancient peasant couple-dance. Essentially similar ideas worked out in an idiom that is typically their own! Stylistically and compositionally both unmistakable highlights, iconic works of late Lisztian consonant expressionism and early Bartókian dissonant expressionism.

A quasi-anecdotal document in Humphrey Searle's memoirs: - "(...) I had been given an introduction to Bartók by Louis Kentner. Bartók's music was still not much appreciated, but I was a great admirer and wanted to meet him without wasting his time, if possible. I had the privilege of visiting Bartók in Budapest in 1937, and of showing him the MS (1881) of Liszt's "*Csárdás Macabre*" (British Museum London), which was then unpublished. He played this over on the piano and showed great interest in the work. (He was an excellent pianist with a very individual style, as may be heard from his records). He was a very quiet, shy man with enormous black eyes - the largest I have ever seen. He spoke excellent English - he refused to speak German - and he lived in a small house up the hill in the old part of Buda. Later on he was shamefully treated both in Hungary and America. I shall always be glad that I met him."¹¹

A most curious event with rather uncanny suspicions that something is not right! Although H. Searle has studied all manuscripts and historical copies of Liszt's works in the Goethe- und Schiller Archiv at Weimar, he apparently did not notice the version of Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* catalogued and revised by Bartók. The manuscript from the British Museum London that he showed to Bartók was from the first unfinished version of 1881. Did Bartók consciously make no effort to point this out to H. Searle, and explain his own active contribution to the Liszt Stiftung Weimar with the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel Leipzig concerning the *Csárdás macabre*? This bizarre event also shows that Bartók revealed nothing about a possible link between his *Allegro barbaro* and Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*.

Knowing Bartók's exceptional musical memory, it remains highly unlikely that he would have remembered anything about the revision he made of Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* with his own handwritten comments on Liszt's score, nor about his extensive correspondence concerning the Breitkopf-Busoni-Liszt Stiftungs' *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe*.

11 H. Searle: *Quadrille with a Raven. Memoirs* By Humphrey Searle London 1982 Chapter 5. London and Vienna/Budapest. / H. Searle: *Liszt and 20th Century*, Music Studia musicologica Akadémia kiadó, Budapest 1963 Tomus V. bld.277-281

Searle mentions another remarkable event in Budapest: "“I was trying to trace the MSS of the unpublished **Hungarian Historical Portraits** by Liszt for Dr. Kálmán d’Isoz, Liszt scholar, but he was unable to help me. I tried to get the **Csárdás macabre** published by a leading Hungarian publisher, but he said: “This is neither a csárdás, nor macabre”. So it was left to the English Liszt Society to publish this remarkable work in London in 1950 (sic).”¹²

Based on the foregoing descriptions and analyses and on the basis of Bartók's quasi-incessant work as there are:

- the completion of **The Castle of Duke Bluebeard** in 1911-1912-1918,
 - his very active contribution to the Liszt Centenary in 1911
 - his further work on the **Deux portraits** Op. 5 in 1911
 - his very extensive revision of Liszt's compositions related to Hungary for the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel between February 19 - December 1913
 - the completion of the **Four works for orchestra** 1912 (with diabolic-grotesque **Scherzo**)
 - the dates of the first publications and his public appearances with his own newest piano works in 1911-1912 (- **Allegro barbaro** is missing...),
 - his very regular folk music collection trips to Transylvania,
 - the stylistic deviations and characteristic comparison of Bartók's piano works composed during the years 1910-1912
 - Bartók's "guesses" ("in 1911? - in 1910?") in later programme books (1918) about the dating of his **Allegro barbaro**,
- and as the Hungarian Bartók connoisseur L. Somfai - already mentioned earlier in my thesis, doubts that Bartók composed his **Allegro barbaro** in 1910 or in 1911 we have to add the following considerations: late 1911, in December, Bartók had played Ravel's **Scarbo** at his recital. The main motive of **Scarbo**: **d#-d#-d#-c#-d#** and of Bartók's **Allegro barbaro** theme: **a-a-a-g-a** are unmistakably "associate or identical." Bartók was at the same time working on the proofs of Liszt's **Csárdás macabre** for the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel. He also knew Alkan's **Étude alla barbaro**. The concurrent impulses of, on the one hand, the typically "sophisticated" French piano works such as Ravel's demonic **Scarbo** and Alkan's **Étude alla barbaro**, with, on the other hand, that daringly demonic ("barbaric") **Csárdás macabre** of Liszt, would have evoked in Bartók wry memories of his Parisian "etiquette" of 1910 as a "young barbarian composer" and thus that added title **Allegro barbaro** could be a really sarcastic reference to it;
- and considering all different comments I conclude to re-date Bartók's **Allegro barbaro** with certainty: this iconic piano work has been composed somewhere between 28 February 1912 (Bartók received an "alleged **Liszt Csárdás macabre**" from Breitkopf) and 1 January 1913 (first publication of **Allegro barbaro** in *Nyugat*).
- Moreover, it seems highly probable that Bartók's **Allegro barbaro** found its inspiration in Liszt's **Csárdás macabre**.

12 Memoirs by Humphrey Searle. *Quadrille with a Raven*. Chapter 5. 1982 London

5. Conclusion

The tonal experiments of Liszt and Bartók are closely connected with the reformulations of their deepest human problems concerning life and philosophy.

In Liszt's case, we see a pronounced artistic human turning point around 1860, when after twelve years of very fruitful work as a composer, conductor, pianist and promoter of new music in Weimar, he resigned: "I have decided to renounce all the joys of conducting and will rest my baton as well as my piano". But he did not say goodbye to his composing fever, which only intensified in his late period. In the Weimar - Altenburg period, Liszt's compositions like the Dante and Faust Symphonies and the Sonata are composed in a renewed High Romantic programming style.

This causes fierce opposition, growing public attacks and systematic insults organised by the conservative press and the 'traditionally faithful' composers. In a short time, Liszt experiences a multitude of empathic-dramatic events: two of his children die, his wedding plans with Princess Carolyne von Wittgenstein are abandoned, the most important actors of his life drop out, such as Ingres, Berlioz, Rossini, Peter Cornelius, Marie d'Agoult, George Sand, Raff, Wagner, Victor Hugo. In 1860 Liszt writes his will "Mein letzter Wille" and composes *Trois Odes funèbres: Les Morts-La Notte-Le triomphe funèbre de Tasso*, music for his own funeral. He leaves Weimar and moves to Rome, where after a few years of meditation in the Madonna del Rosario monastery he is ordained a sub-deacon - "Abbé Liszt" as he was later called.

Thus begins, around 1860, an era in which death and dance form a regular theme in his works - his death poetry. His "composing fever" was stimulated by his intensive contacts with a "guard of promising artists, composers without complexes or Western academic barriers, filled with energy and creativity" such as Borodin, Balakirev, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky.

One cannot view the stylistic evolution of Liszt's oeuvre in isolation from his turbulent emotional background: that was the real cause of his constant pursuit of musical innovation. His isolation from 1860 onwards led to a complete introversion during the 1880s. Liszt said: "*In my heart I carry a deep mourning, and this must sometimes burst forth in musical notes.*" Liszt battled every day with desolation, with despair and with death demons and did not compose his music for the sake of public appreciation.

In these late - written after 1859 - compositions, Liszt's style becomes more homogeneous, devoid of sentiment and outward effects but filled with the most intense dramatic and human expressiveness. Most of these works by Liszt were not published until very late published very late in Bartók's life. Bartók knew and played the most important late piano works by Liszt, such as *Sunt lacrymae rerum – En mode hongrois, Via Crucis, Am Grabe Richard Wagners, Totentanz, Les Morts, Mephisto-Walzer, Weinen, Klagen Variaties, Glocken von Strassburg, Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este, Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este, Sursum corda*.

Liszt's musical innovations were "accepted" with incomprehension in the 19th century, but in the 20th century Bartók repeatedly stressed their importance. The true significance of these innovations is that Liszt created a quasi-scientific experiment which he consciously sublimated from his personal world view. He was not elated, not "demented" (dixit Wagner), not reified, but a realist in his way of life and in his outlook on life until his last day. He experienced historical events as a forward-looking thinker.

These innovations manifest themselves in compositional elements such as the use of various tone series: modal, Hungarian, Gypsy and intervals series and combinations thereof; a-tonal tendencies, timbre effects, folk music elements; new forms such as bridging through theme transformation - which were already present in their respective preceding periods: in Liszt's high-romanticism, in Bartók's eclectic consonant-expressionism. All this was intensified in Liszt's late period - and in Bartók's early period - and used in a quasi-revolutionary way to essentially renew the early nineteenth-century romantic and nationalistic tendencies.

On this special relation between the late Liszt and the early Bartók, I like to quote Denijs Dille: *"It is not surprising that Bartók to some extent follows in Liszt's footsteps. On the one hand, there is his nationalist political conviction that orientates him towards Liszt because he believes he can see Hungarian music in certain aspects of his music. On the other hand, it is his activity as a keyboard virtuoso that also leads him to this great predecessor, for Liszt will always be the educator of virtuosos and the undisputed master of the great keyboard game. It is in Liszt's school, one may say, that Bartók acquired his mastery, and then, in 1908, he went his own way, which is to some extent in Liszt's footsteps, but to the lesser known of the last years of his life. In 1921 he stressed in his autobiography how one can discover in Liszt more perspectives for the evolution of music than in Wagner or in Strauss. And this he again emphatically confirmed in his 1936 academic speech, adding that the new French composers (here he was thinking of Debussy and Ravel, for others he did not know) owed a lot to Liszt. Bartók could have added that the entire Russian school, from St. Petersburg to Moscow, is indebted to Liszt and that Stravinsky, up to Petrushka, owes him a great deal."*¹

Bartók's compositional-stylistic turning point in 1908 is the result of his year-long crisis that started in 1905 - with his negative experience at the composers' competition in Paris. Those three years are a period of complete solitude amidst his friends and sympathisers, philosophical musings, empathic illusions, unfinished desires.

His love breaks with Stefi Geyer in 1908 resulted in an introverted attitude to life, a latent depression that never ceased during his life, but transformed this artistic-human crisis into a stylistically completely renewed creative compositional style - reflecting his inner conflicts. The evolution of his compositions over the years is remarkable, and in fact this loneliness is the only real constant. It is a sorrow that is underpinned by an almost childish naivety. In certain works, however, we do get the impression of "cheerfulness" but that is only an illusion. The well-known Hungarian writer Imre Kertész (2002 Nobel Prize winner for literature) speaks of the "pseudo-optimism" in Bartók's music. An illusion arising from the naivety of the "simple" folk culture.

We can compare Bartók's feeling of inner loneliness, his traumatic experience through his disillusionment in 1908, his evolution towards hermetic introspection with the situation of Liszt. His deep human crisis leads to a renewed artistic creativity and new compositional techniques.

Bartók's titles with desolate content and expressions of loneliness: ***Rapsodie, Deux Elegien, 4 Nénies, Bagatellen*** nr 12 and 13 (his funeral pieces), ***3 Burlesques*** are similar or strikingly like Liszt's: ***Elegien, Rapsodies, Bagatel ohne Tonart, Mephisto-Walzer, Luguber Gondola, Am Grabe Richard Wagners.***

From a 20th century perspective, we could consider Liszt's late, impressionistic, and expressionistic compositions as a revolutionary source and call him the "father of modernism" if we look purely at the harmonic innovations. He had - in Bartók's words - "a 'revolutionary' spirit. Liszt's audacity was an actual fanatical pursuit of something new, something unique."

In a 1927 interview in New York, Bartók expressed his views on musical innovations: *"There are composers, who out of conviction do not keep up with the times. They think that every step forward leads to chaos. I have an opposite opinion. In my opinion, 'stepping forward' would be fatal. Some think that European art is in decadence. As far as music is concerned, I do not share this opinion. I am moving forward. Even more, I evolve autonomously."*²

Also in his Harvard lectures, Bartók polemicises on evolution or revolution in music: *"Many call a composer, who writes a new kind of music revolutionary. But revolution would mean a total break with the ancient musical traditions and a new departure from nothing - which is completely out of the*

1 Denijs Dille: Béla Bartók N.V. Standaard 1939

2 Wilhelm A.: Beszélgetések Bartókkal New York. Christian Science Monitor Boston. 31 December 1927

*question in the various arts. Evolution - without that letter r, means a natural and step-by-step renewal of mutual contexts of content."*³

Still later, in 1941, Bartók repeated his conviction: "*Universally speaking, we cannot consider that period after 1910 as revolutionary. In art such a thing is inconceivable. In art there is only a slow or a fast development, an essential evolution but not a revolution.*"⁴

Bartók wrote in 1909: "*I used not to believe that, until I myself experienced that a person's works of art are actually a much more exact reflection of the most important events and leading passions in his life, than his autobiography*".

Thus, this study is a story of isolation and total introspection with music as a solace and sole means of communication, and a chronicle of Liszt's and Bartók's autonomous search for new means of expression. The research shows their 'avant-garde' path from late-romanticism via early impressionism, consonant-expressionism, and eclecticism to the basis of 20th century dissonant a-tonal expressionism.

3 "Beszélgetések Bartókkal" 1911-1945 (Wilhelm A. Kijárat 2000) 'The Language of the Composer.' The Etude. February 1941)

4 "Beszélgetések Bartókkal" 1911-1945, (Wilhelm A. Kijárat 2000) 'The Language of the Composer.' The Etude. February 1941)

6. Final considerations.

During my research I have not only gathered a lot of interesting and enlightening information about Liszt and Bartók but I have also discovered many piano works by both composers that were unknown to me until then. During my years of study at the Bartók Conservatory and the Liszt Academy in Budapest, I traditionally played the best-known piano works by Liszt and Bartók that form the 'standard repertoire'. By Liszt I played, among others, the *Mephisto-Walzer*, *Weinen*, *Klagen variations*, *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, *Funérailles*, *Paganini Etüdes*, *Klavierkonzert in E-flat*, *Sonata. Années de Pèlerinage I. II*. One can rightly speak of 'tradition' here: Bartók studied practically the same piano repertoire during his college years. By Bartók I learned the *Mikrocosmos*, *the Romanian Dances*, *Improvisations*, *Sonata*, *3 Burlesques and Allegro barbaro*. His other early compositions such as *Rapsodie*, *14 Bagatelles*, *Quatre Nénies* were unknown and were never performed in concerts. It was only in the 1990s that I discovered Liszt's late piano works, partly at the behest of concert organiser deSingel in Antwerp. Later, and again because of a deSingel's request for an integral performance of Bartók's complete piano works, I discovered the particularly intriguing early piano pieces including the *14 Bagatelles*.

Through my research I then had the same experience as Bartók in 1905: "I [Bartók] studied Liszt again, especially in his less popular works such as *Années de Pèlerinage*, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Faust-Symphonie*, *Totentanz*."

I discovered Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage book III*. - as Liszt's most original, complex, and dramatic cycle, - the *Historische ungarische Bildnisse* - with its psychologizing characterizations, - the enigmatic and diabolical *Mephisto Polka* and - especially the *Mephisto Walzer - Bagatelle ohne Tonart*.

In studying the various versions and manuscripts of Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*, as well as I. Szelényi's reservations about the 48-bar introduction, I have concluded that I should respect Liszt's "legacy". Liszt himself added and "pasted" the introductory 48 bars to the arrangement for two pianos by J. Végh, but not to his original and complete 1882 version. - As Liszt reported to the publisher Táborszky concerning his Munkácsy Rhapsody - "*In the solo version this [added extra measures] may be omitted, so as not to cause undue difficulty for the printer.*"

I am convinced that this particularly remarkable piece by Liszt loses its direct demonic power (unisono empty fifths at the beginning) and its crystal-clear, tight structure when a performer starts with the introductory 48 bars added later. Therefore, I do not follow the Neue Liszt Ausgabe EMB edition (with 48-bars introduction) and opt for the 1882 version first published in 1951 by the Liszt Society Publications, Schott (without those 'introducing' 48 bars).

This historical dilemma caused the hesitation in Weimar to have Liszt's *Cárdás macabre* published in Breitkopf & Härtel's edition of the *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe*.

It was also an artistic enrichment to find the sources of inspiration for Liszt's *Trübe Wolken* and *Sunt lacrymae rerum - En mode hongrois*. - Two of the most important early-expressionistic piano works which, without these concrete contexts, I used to have trouble understanding.

By searching for circumstances and background information about Bartók's early period, I ended up with Bartók's correspondence with Stefi Geyer; a correspondence that was undoubtedly life-defining for Bartók. This fascinating correspondence was long protected and not accessible to the public. Since its publication by the Sacher Stiftung Basel, however, it has become the most important source of information about Bartók's personality in those decisive years of 1907-1908: years that form a turning point in his life and work. As a result, my interpretations of his early works - works characterised by imagination and "death poetry" - but also the later closed and charged masterpieces have become more "logical". Thus, my intuitive performance of the highly imaginative *14 Bagatelles* with their - unique imagination, - their a-tonal expressiveness, - their "total story" has become a conscious adventure with "*etwas wirklich neues*".

My other "rediscovery" is Bartók's *Elegie I*. A flamboyant Straussian fantasy piece, I used to think - until I consulted Bartók's letters to Stefi Geyer, discovered the historical reviews, and saw that this *Elegie I* was composed a few days after his love break-up. Only then did I fully understand the description of his loneliness, recognise the extremely capricious quotations of the characteristically varied *Stefi-motif*. Also, the abrupt ending became clear, as well as how Bartók "converted" his last (written) word to Stefi Geyer "*Why...?*" into Lisztian expressions.

Thus, it seemed obvious to make the more concrete substantive parallel between the early works of Bartók and the late works of Liszt. My intuitive perception evolved into a conscious conviction. When I personally discussed this concept with György Kurtág (my chamber music teacher at the Liszt Academy Budapest) during his visits to Belgium, he was initially surprised but then very enthusiastically agreed with my view.

7. Abstract

Although Liszt composed 'provocative' programme music with modernist elements from the very beginning - such as *Les Morts*, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Sonata*, *Faust-Symphonie* - it is particularly remarkable that after 1860, he suddenly composed piano pieces - such as *Trois Odes funèbres: Les Morts - La Nuit - Le triomphe funèbre de Tasso*, *Années de Pèlerinage III.*, *Nuages gris*, *Mosonyi's Grabgeleit* - composes pieces that completely and remarkably deviate from his usual composition style. These works show a stylistic mixture of late-romantic, impressionistic and expressionistic elements. Around 1860, an era began in which 'death and dance' was a regularly recurring theme in Liszt's works: his death poetry written in 'a compositional fever'.

These late pieces (1860-1886) are expressionist, partly a-tonal, and were only played by Liszt and his pupils. The climax came in 1881-1882 with '*Csárdás macabre*', the most remarkable of the very daring series of compositions, in which he increasingly threw himself into chromatic dissonances; a piece with protracted, droning and frightening unisono empty fifths, chromatically moving between 'possible and impossible keys'. Liszt used a laconic question as a subtitle: "*Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder hören?*".

As a stylistic predecessor of Bartók and 20th-century music, *Liszt's Csárdás macabre* is a fully-fledged composition that evolves from late-romanticism to a polytonal pre-expressionism and opens a path to the atonal expressionism of Bartók's *14 Bagatelles*. - In Liszt's oeuvre, and in the general stylistic evolution of the 19th century, this masterpiece for piano shows just as ground-breaking inventiveness as 26 years later Bartók's *14 Bagatelles*.

Between 1908-1912 Bartók composed an impressive series of piano works including the *14 Bagatelles* and *Allegro barbaro*. With the *14 Bagatelles*, a new era and a new "modern" style has dawned for the piano. - About this is the famous statement of Busoni: "*Endlich etwas wirklich neues*".

Bartók wrote "*The Bagatelles open up a new keyboard style in my career as a composer which most of my later piano works - with smaller or larger adaptations - consistently follow*".

During this study is also examined to what extent Liszt's late works not only form a (r)evolutionary break with high romanticism but are also an avant-garde basis for Bartók's style and compositional technique, and by extension for 20th century composers such as Debussy, Reger, Busoni, Schoenberg, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Messiaen, Kurtág and others, through which the expansion of tonal-functional music and new musical forms could arise. The focus is on the Liszt-Bartók equation: what in the end led both composers in a similar way to realize this break with early modernity from their both late-Romantic, eclectic idiom.

A deeper investigation analyses which leading passions and mental factors inspired Liszt in 1860 and Bartók in 1908 and how this is reflected in their respective compositions. This research tries to find an answer to the question why Liszt from 1860 onwards and Bartók from 1908 onwards essentially deviate from their composing techniques used for this purpose and realize an "avant-garde" (r)evolution in Europe and in Hungarian music both in the stylistic and compositional field.

Essential quotations are mainly from Liszt's and Bartók's personal letters in a diary-like chronological form. But also, from authentic and historical documents, first editions, press comments in historical journals. This makes it clearer how special living conditions and essential events have influenced both their thoughts and emotional world and therefore their musical stylistic evolution, their compositional techniques. In this way, Liszt's late and Bartók's early compositions are situated, correctly dated, inspiration models investigated, placed in historical context with the aim of answering the question "which late Liszt compositions were known to Bartók and have (substantially) influenced him".

Bartók's collaboration with Breitkopf & Härtel (1911-1913) for the publication of *Franz Liszt Gesamtausgabe* - Bartók's introduction to Liszt's Hungarian related compositions - is discussed in detail. Special attention is paid to Bartók's revision of Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*. The guesses concerning the right date of composing Bartók's most iconic work, *Allegro barbaro*, are now better situated so that this work now gets a correct re-dating. This is based on an extremely complete chronology of his work in 1910-19013. It is also highly probable that Liszt's *Csárdás macabre* was the model for Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*.

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A. Walker: Liszt Ferenc 3. Az utolsó évek 1861-1886 EMB 1989

R. Wangermée: Fétis, Liszt et l'ordre omnitonique en musique. 2002

Wilhelm A. : Beszélgetések Bartókkal Interview. New York. 28 December 1927.

Christian Science Monitor Boston. 31 December 1927 Bronnenmaterial:

Zenetudományi Tanulmányok Liszt Ferenc és Bartók Béla emlékére Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest 1955

Zenészet Közlöny Budapest 10 March 1882 Első évfolyam 7. szám

9. LISZT - BARTÓK CONCERT

Sunday 13 June 2021 at 15.30h - Blue Hall deSingel, Antwerp
Artistic presentation of the doctoral research of Levente Kende

The programme of this Liszt-Bartók doctoral concert features piano works and piano arrangements that reflect the complete stylistic evolution from High Romanticism - with Liszt's Faust Symphony - to Bartók's late expressionism - with his Suite for two pianos, reworked in 1941.

This programme also includes the early expressionist Hungarian Folk Songs - Hungarian peasant music arranged by Bartók in 1905 - and a movement from his Violin Concerto No. 1 from 1907-1908. He composed this work during his intense but brief love affair with Stefi Geyer, the break-up of which caused Bartók a deep and lifelong trauma. This stylistic (r)evolution is further demonstrated by the early expressionist piano works by Liszt and Bartók, which form an organic line to Bartók's absolute pioneering work: the 14 Bagatelles, towards 20th century "atonal" expressionism. This programme also gives a detailed reflection of the (r)evolutionary innovations in the late piano works (1860-1886) by Ferenc Liszt and the early piano works (1908-1912) by Béla Bartók.

For the performance of my programme, I have, for several reasons, chosen a Bechstein piano built in Berlin around 1920 after a model typical of the Bechstein pianos of the late 19th century.

Firstly, because this instrument has a wonderful sound and, in my opinion, comes closest to the ideal and historical sound of Liszt and Bartók. Liszt was perhaps a pioneer of performances on period instruments: he bought Beethoven's Broadwood Flügel and Mozart's Spinnet in order to perform their keyboard works in his recitals. But at his concerts he also used the latest models by Erard, Bösendorfer, Steinway and Chickering, among others. His letters reveal that during the last seventeen years of his life in Weimar (Hofgärtnerei) Liszt played a new Bechstein model every year. His last Bechstein concert grand piano of 1886 is now in the Liszt Museum in Weimar.

But also, Bartók chose Bechstein pianos. As Péter Bartók mentions in his book *My Father*: "In our house there were three pianos, two of which belonged to my father. The third piano - which was also permanently with us - was a Bechstein piano owned by the Bechstein firm. This was to take into account Bartók's preference to always have a Bechstein at his recitals".

The text in the programme book of the doctoral Liszt-Bartók concert is based on my research into the man and the composer Liszt and Bartók - who, in their mutual quest for ultimate knowledge and ideal love, are unadulterated '*Faust figures*'. I also try to demonstrate this during the concert: the music expresses the ingenious complexity of their striking innovations in that magical-demonic world.

Referring to this, I conclude this final review with Bartók's prophetic moral as told by the narrator of *The Castle of Duke Bluebeard*:

"Will we see what will happen on the stage when the curtain rises, or will we look into each other's minds? In a way, we are all "Bluebeard". Our life rainbow comes from nothing and disappears into nothingness. What remains is a fortress, our life's creation, thanks to other people's help, paid for with treasures and immeasurable suffering. We are all 'Judith', trying to bring light and a ray of sunshine into other people's lives, trying to build a fortress, to water gardens, and in return we get both reward and suffering." (Péter Bartók: *My Father*).

Programma

Liszt: Eine Faust-Symphonie in drei Charakterbildern (nach Goethe)
- I. Faust (Transcription for two-pianos by Liszt) (1854-1857) S108
Nikolaas Kende and Levente Kende, two-pianos

Liszt: from **Années de Pèlerinage – Troisième Année** (1867-1877) S163
- Aux Cyprès de la Villa d'Este - Thrénodie I. (1877)
- Les Jeux d'Eau à la Villa d'Este (1872)
- Sunt lacrymae rerum – En mode hongrois (1877)

Liszt: Trübe Wolken - Nuages gris (1881) S199

Bartók: from **Quatre Nénies** (1910) Sz45, BB 58
- Nr. I. - Adagio

Liszt: Die Trauer-Gondel - La lugubre gondola Nr. I (1882) S200

Bartók: Elegie Nr. I. Op. 8b (1908) Sz41, BB 49

Levente Kende, piano,

Bartók: from **Acht ungarische Volkslieder** (1907-19017) Sz64, BB 47
V. Wollte ich in die blauen Berge
VI. Wege schüttet man im Walde
VII. Meines Lebens Arbeit
VIII. Winter scheidet

Charlotte Wajnberg, soprano and **Aaron Wajnberg**, piano

-----Pauze-----

Bartók: from **Violin Concerto Nr.1** (1908) Sz36, BB 48a /
Two Portraits (1908-1911) Opus 5 Sz37, BB48b
- I. "One Ideal"

Jolente De Maeyer, violin en **Nikolaas Kende**, piano

Bartók: from **14 Bagatellen Op.6** (1908) Sz38, BB 50
I. Molto sostenuto
II. Allegro giocoso
VIII. Andante sostenuto
X. Allegro
XII. Rubato
XIII. Lento funebre (Elle est morte...)
XIV. Presto Valse. (Ma mie qui dans...)

Liszt: 4. Mephisto-Walzer - Bagatelle ohne Tonart (1885) S216

Bartók: from **Trois Burlesques** Op. 8c, (1908) Sz47, BB 5
- Nr. 1 (*querelle*)

Liszt: Csárdás macabre (1882) S224

Bartók: Allegro barbaro (1912) Sz49, BB 63

Levente Kende, piano

Bartók: from **The Castle of Duke Bluebeard** (1911) Op. 11 Sz48, BB 62
- 7th Door (Closing scene)

Charlotte Wajnberg soprano, **Leander Carlier** baryton, **Aaron Wajnberg** piano

Bartók: uit **Suite for two piano's** (1905-1941) Op. 4b Sz115

- IV. Per finire

Nikolaas Kende and **Levente Kende**, two-pianos

10. PowerPoint slides projected during the Liszt-Bartók concert:



„Endlich etwas wirklich neues“ (Ferruccio Busoni over Béla Bartók's 14 Bagatellen / 1908)

versus

„Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören?“ (Ferenc Liszt over his Csárdás macabre / 1882)

Comparative research of (r)evolutionary innovations in the late piano works (1886-1895) of Ferenc Liszt and the early piano works (1908-12) by Béla Bartók

Liszt: Eine Faust-Symphonie in drei Charakterbildern (nach Goethe)
- I. Faust, (Transcription for two-pianos by Liszt (1854 -1857) S108

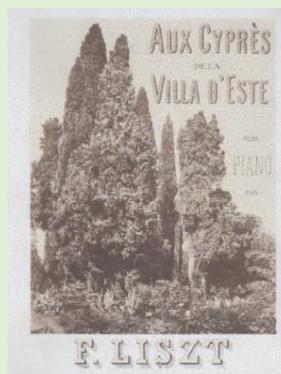


Delacroix: illustration for Goethe's Faust (1928)

Liszt: Aux Cypres de la Villa d'Este -Thrénodie nr 1 (1877)

“I attempted to put down
on music paper
the conversation which
I frequently hold with these same
cypresses.
Ah ! how dry and
unsatisfactory on the piano,
and even in the orchestra
- Beethoven and Wagner excepted -
sounds the woe and the sighing
of almighty nature!”

“I shall call them Thrénodies
as the word elegy strikes me as
too tender, and almost worldly.”



Liszt: Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este (1872)

Cosima Liszt: "My father plays Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, the Cypresses, and Richard [Wagner] says: 'There is a melancholy and dreamy world of your father in Villa d'Este which pleases me and sings of the fountains, the Cypresses and the bells of Angelus!'. "



Liszt: Sunt lacrymae rerum – En mode Hongrois (1877)

"A Hungarian painter, Munkácsy, now settled in Weimar, has painted a strange picture of a man under sentence of death at the moment of the last earthly pleasures being granted to him. I have written... a new, very sad, Hungarian Rhapsody" (Liszt)



Munkácsy: The Last Day of a Condemned Man (1870)

Liszt: Trübe Wolken – Nuages gris (1881)

"Vereschchagin's Requiem is an unbeatable *air-light-sky* poetry" (Liszt)



Vereschchagin: Requiem



Trübe wolken – Nuages Gris

"Vereschchagin's paintings amaze me by their originality, their innovative ideas, their poetic realism that strives for a more intense poetry than today's fashionable classicist but outdated poetry."

Bartók: Quatre Nénies (1910)
I. - Adagio

“I feel, it is my conviction, ”
that nothing awaits me
but a long loneliness.
I must forever renounce
from inner happiness...” (Liszt)
(Bartók)



a deep mourning and
this must sometimes
erupt in musical notes.”

Quatre Nénies (1911)

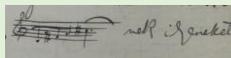
Liszt: La lugubre Gondola (1882)

- “The oars of a Gondole Lugubre beat on my brain.
I have tried to write them and had to rewrite them twice,
whereupon other lugubrious things came back to mind...” (Liszt, Venice)



“ The title is La lugubre Gondola. As though it were a presentiment,
I wrote this elegy in Venice six weeks before Wagner’s death .”

Bartók: Elegie Nr. I. Op. 8b (1908)



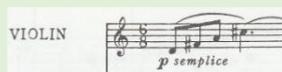
“Stefi-motief“ with which every letter by Bartók begins



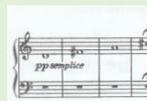
Elegie: Stefi-motief exclamation



“Why...?”



Violin Concerto nr.1 (first bar)



Zehn leichte Klavierstücken : I. Dedication

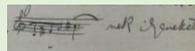
Bartók: - Acht ungarische volksliederen (1907-1917)

“In 1905 I began to seek out the until then unknown Hungarian peasant music. Some of the oldest and most interesting folk melodies were in old church modes, in Greek and even more primitive pentatonic keys. This led me to my autonomous position against the prevailing uniform minor-major system”



Bartók in Darázs (Kroatien 1907)

Bartók: “One Ideal” - Violin Concerto / Two Portraits (1907-1911)



“Stefi-motif”



**“The Violin Concerto score was finished on February 5, just on the day, when You wrote my death sentence.....
I hid it in my drawer, not knowing whether I would destroy it or leave it there.
Only after my death would they throw away that pile of written music papers – my declaration of love in Your violin concerto, my best work- in the trash..
I am not allowed to speak about it, to show it to anyone,
this sad confession doesnot concern the world.”**

**Bartók: 14 Bagatellen (1908)
Nr. 1 – Molto sostenuto**

„Endlich etwas wirklich neues“ (Busoni)

**„Ich rechne diese Stücke zu den interessantesten u. persönlichsten der Gegenwart deren Inhalt ungewöhnlich ist und eigenartig wirkt; nicht so was man gemeinhin originell nennt
Dabei durchaus leicht concipirt und in der Fremdartigkeit natürlich .“ (Busoni)**



**“In the first piece there are four sharps alteration marks for the upper stave (as in C-sharp minor) and four flats (as in F - minor) for the lower stave.
This half-serious - half-humorous approach attempts to demonstrate the absurdity of the use of alteration marks in some contemporary compositions.
By making alteration marks "ad absurdum" in my first bagatelle,
I have not prescribed alteration marks in most subsequent pieces (Bartók)**

Bagatelle Nr. 2 - Allegro giocoso



Joyful "Elf-tonreihe"

Bagatelle Nr. 8 - Andante sostenuto



"Zwölftonreihe" with arpeggiated harmonisation

"In the Bagatelles, a new piano style appears as a reaction against the sensibility of 19th century romantic piano music, a style without all superfluous ornamental techniques, willingly applying only musical-technical means." (Bartók)

Bagatelle Nr. 10 - Allegro



„das zehnte Stück ist schon ein rechtes Allegrobarbaro“ (Adorno)

Bagatelle Nr.12 - Rubato



Reciting lamentation in 'twelve-tone' progression

Bagatelle Nr. 13 (Elle est morte.....) - Lento funèbre



Bartók marks 'meghalt' ('deceased') above the last Stefi -motief



Bagatelle Nr. 14 - Valse. (Ma mie qui danse) - Presto



The title of the last *14th Bagatelle*
"*Molto marcato e con amore*"
- still from March - was changed to
"*Valse. (Ma mie qui danse...)*"
- after the end of his love affair
with Stefi Geyer ...

Liszt: Bagatelle, ohne Tonart - 4^{de} Mephisto-Waltz (1885)



Delacroix: illustration of Goethe's Faust (1928)

„Der Komponist [Liszt] scheint ja nicht einmal die
Anfangsgründe der Harmonielehre u.
des strengen Satzes studiert zu haben.
- Schon dieser Anfang zeigt ja das!“ (Liszt)

Bartók: - Burlesque Nr. 1 (querelle) (1910)



“The successive disillusion
- which will probably last a long
time (perhaps as long as my
life), - the high price one has to
pay for the smallest pleasure,
damages every state of soul.
But a thought makes life bearable:
a vague suspicion that every blow
is a powerful steering element
for my art.”



First edition 1910

Liszt: Csárdás macabre (1882)



„Darf man solch ein Ding schreiben oder anhören?“ (Liszt 1882)

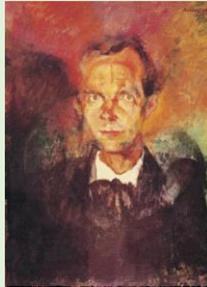
“The last spiritual product of the great master is full of the most daring ideas and harmonic garlands. We are convinced that many professors will make a cross-eyed expression when they glance at these musical notes. Press)

Bartók: Allegro barbaro (1912)

“Dear Mr. Bartók, A. Delacroix doesn't like [your] things at all! He said “either you are fooling the world, or this is the work of a child or a lunatic...” (R. Berény)



Allegro barbaro (1st print)



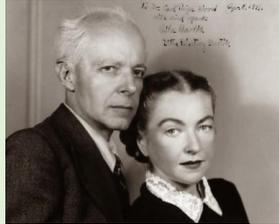
Berény: Bartók Béla (1913)

Bartók: uit Het Kasteel van Hertog Blauwbaard (1911)
7^{de} Poort (slotscène)



“Will we see what will happen on the stage when the curtain rises, or will we look into each other's minds? In a way, we are all "Bluebeard". Our life rainbow comes from nothing and disappears into nothingness. What remains is a fortress, our life's creation, thanks to other people's help, paid for with treasures and immeasurable suffering. We are all 'Judith', trying to bring light and a ray of sunshine into other people's lives, trying to build a fortress, to water gardens, and in return we get both reward and suffering.” (Bartók)

**Bartók: uit Suite for two piano's (1905-1941)
- IV. Per finire**



**“...And I predict,
I know it in advance,
that my soul-abandonment
will become my fate”
(Bartók 1905 Parijs)**

**“ Maybe I am a pessimist,
I have lost all faith in people,
in countries, in everything
in alles.”
(Bartók 1942 New York)**

**“The human suffering suppressed by everyday life and its transfiguration
is possible only through love...” (Bartók)**