

11. Dates in this section from K. Hofmann and S. Keil, *Robert Schumann: Thematisches Verzeichnis seiner im Druck erschienenen musikalischen Werke mit Angabe des Jahres ihres Entstehens und Erscheinens*, 5th ed. (Hamburg: Schubert, 1982).

12. C. Becker, "A New Look at Schumann's Impromptu," *Musical Quarterly* 67 (1981): 568–586.

13. Note that Schumann also used the term *scenes* in *Kinderszenen* and *Wald-szenen* as well as in the early Variations on the "Sehnsuchts-Walzer" (Yearning Waltz) attributed to Schubert.

14. See, generally, W. Boetticher, "Zur Zitatpraxis in R. Schumanns frühen Klavierwerken," *Speculum musicae artis: Festgabe für Heinrich Husmann*, ed. H. Becker and R. Gerlach (Munich: Fink, 1970), 63–73, esp. 71.

15. F. Niecks, *Robert Schumann* (London: Dent [1825]), 200.

16. WoO (= Works without opus number) designations as given in K. Hofmann, *Die Erstdrucke der Werke von Robert Schumann*, Musikbibliographische Arbeiten 6 (Tutzing: Schneider, 1979).

17. Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, 65.

18. See L. Roesner, "Schumann's Parallel Forms," *Nineteenth Century Music* 14 (1991): 265–278.

19. The theme by Beethoven that Schumann uses here is the Allegretto of the Symphony in A major (op. 92).

20. Originally ascribed to Florestan and Eusebius.

21. The bibliographical situation of Chopin has improved of late, particularly with the thematic catalog: K. Kobylanska, *Frédéric Chopin: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis*, trans. H. Stolze (Munich: Henle, 1979), which effectively has replaced that of M. Brown; KKp stands for numbers used in her *Rekopisy Utworow Chopina* (Cracow, 1977), a catalog of Chopin's manuscripts. Scholars still differ as to when Chopin composed certain works.

22. Quoted by W. Kahl in his article "Ballade," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949–1951), 1134.

23. See J. Parakilas, *Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade* (Portland OR: Amadeus, 1992).

24. See J. Kallberg, "Chopin's Last Style," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38 (1985): 238–261.

25. Quoted by W. Murdoch, *Chopin: His Life* (London, 1933), 155–156.

26. See J. Clark, *The Dawning of American Keyboard Music* (New York: Greenwood, 1988).

27. See L. Pruett, "Napoleonic Battles in Keyboard Music of the Nineteenth Century," *Early Keyboard Journal* 6 (1988–1989): 73–89.

CHAPTER FIVE

Liszt and Brahms and Their Age

Although the large forms—the sonata, the fantasia, and variations—that had dominated the repertory of piano music in the Classic period continued to exist, they experienced a decline in importance in the Romantic. Their place was usurped by new and more typically Romantic genres of compositions, those with extramusical associations, primarily the character piece in its various guises. The two tendencies, however, were by no means mutually exclusive: composers at times mixed elements of both.

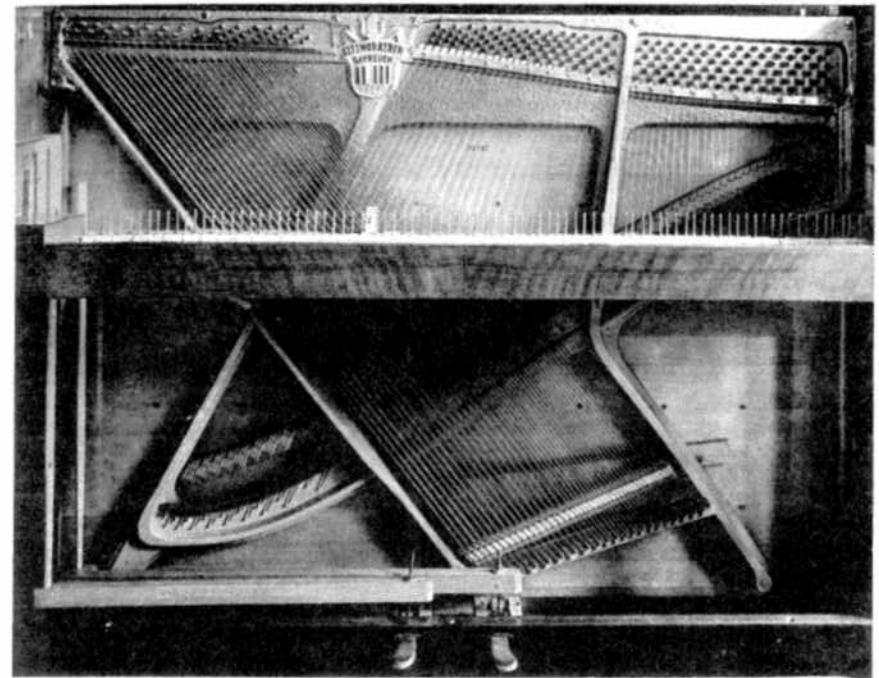
Important in the aesthetic view of the time was the conception of the art work as the unique individual expression of its author—in regard to music particularly, as the manifestation of his or her own emotions. This view affected not only the composer but also the performer. Certainly the increase in concert activity since the early eighteenth century added to the significance of the performer. In addition, this concept reflected a view of art that arose in the eighteenth century but that became prominent in the nineteenth: if artistic creation is taken as having its origin in the realm of the supersensible, if not divine, then the artist becomes a person set off from others by insights that they lack, as one in intimate contact with a higher domain of which the others know nothing. We can easily see that such a view would have special consequences when extended to the performer of music along with the composer. Often the musician united both functions: C. P. E. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Clementi, to name only a few, were regarded as among the foremost virtuoso pianists of their day; Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, and Field were also known as virtuosos of the instrument. Schubert seems to have been one of the very first composers of the first rank to compose a large body of piano music without himself being a prominent performer on the instrument.

Yet it became more common, as the century wore on, to have virtuoso performers who were not particularly identified with or known for their musi-

cal compositions, whose reputations and livelihoods depended rather on their skill as performing artists playing chiefly music composed by others. Virtuosity made this possible, a virtuosity that sometimes came to be regarded as awe-inspiring if not supernatural or demonic. To the performing artist, therefore, came the advantages associated with the creative artist, the composer. Among these virtuosos in the early part of the nineteenth century were Ignaz Pleyel; Joseph Gelinek; Daniel Steibelt, a rival of Beethoven; Anton Eberl; August Eberhard Müller; Johann Baptist Cramer; Ludwig Berger, the teacher of Mendelssohn; Johann Nepomuk Hummel; August Alexander Klen- gel (1783–1853); Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838); Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785–1849); Johann Peter Pixis (1788–1874); Maria Szymanowska; Carl Czerny (1791–1857); Franz Hünten (1793–1878); Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870); Henri Bertini (1798–1876); Henri Herz (1803–1888); Louise Farrenc (1804–1875); Sigismond Thalberg (1812–1871); Théodore Döhler (1814–1856); Adolf von Henselt (1814–1889); Edouard Wolff (1816–1880); Alexander Dreyschock (1818–1869); Hans von Bülow (1830–1894); Carl Tausig (1841–1871); and, as we shall see in some detail, Franz Liszt (1811–1886).

Undergirding this emphasis on public concerts and virtuosity were developments in the design of the piano itself, developments that made the instrument far more powerful sounding than it had been. In general the changes involved the use of heavier strings and strengthening the case and frame the better to increase support against the increased tension. Although the Stodardt firm in London had used metal to brace the piano frame in the early 1780s, John Isaac Hawkins of Philadelphia began using iron frames for his upright pianos in 1800, while Alphaeus Babcock of Boston produced a full, single, cast-metal frame in 1825. Still, this type of construction came into general use only in the second half of the century, with builders in the United States leading the way.¹ In 1821 the Parisian firm of Érard also developed a double escapement that afforded much greater ease in repetition, the rapid reiteration of the same key. Another decisive improvement in the quality and power of the instrument's tone was produced by cross-stringing, introduced by Henri Pape in Paris in 1821: instead of having all the strings running parallel to each other, they are arranged in two layers, the treble strings in a fan underneath and the bass strings on top. This not only allowed more strings to be positioned over the highly resonant central portion of the sound board, but also, by bringing the treble and bass strings close together, facilitated the generation of partial tones, thus producing a far richer tone quality. The combination of cross-stringing and the full metal frame along with consistently high standards of workmanship distinguished the products of the Steinway firm, founded by Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg (1797–1871), who came to New York from Braunschweig in 1850. Thus the modern concert grand piano came to be.

Other developments to be noted: the range of the keyboard grew from five-and-a-half to six-and-a-half octaves in Beethoven's time to the modern standard of seven octaves by 1860. The range of variation in quality of tone was increased, first by the moderator (already described), operated by a pedal or knee-lever), and then by three pedals. The damper pedal lifted the



Cross-stringing.

dampers, permitting the strings to vibrate freely; the *una corda* pedal shifted the entire action sideways so that the hammer would strike but one of the strings that produced each note. Most recently, the *sostenuto* pedal was added; when the player depresses this pedal, the strings struck by the hammers are left undamped. All but the moderator have survived in the modern piano.

Hand in hand with the development of the instrument itself went a growing interest in pianistic virtuosity which showed itself in increased attention to piano methods—instruction manuals and courses of study in piano playing, some of which commence at the elementary level and continue up to the most advanced stages. Such teaching methods go back to the sixteenth century, but they became more numerous in the eighteenth century. We mention some of the best known: François Couperin's *L'art de toucher le clavecin* (1717), Jean-Philippe Rameau's statement published with the second book of his *Pièces de clavecin* (1724), Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen* (2 vols., 1753–1762), and Dussek's *Instructions on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte* (London, 1796). With the coming of the nineteenth century, the number of such publications, many by prominent virtuosos, increases. Some of the more important are: Johann Baptist

Cramer's *Grosse praktische Pianoforte-Schule* (1815); Hummel's *Ausführliche theoretisch-praktische Anweisung zum Pianofortespiel* (1828); Kalkbrenner's *Méthode pour apprendre le pianoforte à l'aide du guidemains* (1820s); and Czerny's famous *Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Pianoforteschule* (op. 500, 1839). Three important works of this kind from the middle of the century are Moscheles and Fétis' *Méthode des méthodes* (1837), Sigmund Lebert and Ludwig Stark's *Grosse theoretisch-praktische Klavierschule* (1858), and Adolf Kullak's *Ästhetik des Klavierspiels* (1861). Along with such instruction works go countless collections of teaching pieces, etudes, and the like, such as Clementi's well-known *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1817–1826) or the many by Czerny and Cramer.²

The increased emphasis on virtuosity had an impact on repertory. A new body of bravura piano music aimed to exploit these new capabilities and in particular to provide the performer with the opportunity to make a profound impression, a "hit." We have already seen this attitude to some extent in the etudes of Chopin, which are as much *bona fide* concert pieces as they are etudes for the development of piano technique. We also find the nineteenth-century equivalent of the old intabulation, transcriptions for piano of popular compositions of the time. Here opera was singled out: on the one hand there are arrangements of individual numbers from a popular opera or variations on the theme of a popular aria or duet (we have noted this in the work of Mozart and Beethoven), and, on the other hand, there are larger pieces that successively present the highlights, themes from the most popular numbers of an opera or other piece of musical theater, under the general title of potpourri, fantasia, reminiscences, paraphrase, or something similar. The emphasis was on virtuosity, the creation of a piece guaranteed to make an impression on the audience. Such works existed in abundance in the nineteenth century. Outstanding examples include Thalberg's fantasias on Rossini's *Moses* and *La donna del lago* and on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.³ On the other hand, Schumann directed his polemic, expressed through his *Davidbündler*, in some measure against this kind of music. Composers also made arrangements for piano of individual excerpts from operas.

Thus, three principal divisions emerged in the repertory of piano music of the nineteenth century: the old genres involving the large forms from the eighteenth century; the new genres associated with the character piece and often involving explicit extramusical associations; and those connected with virtuosity and the newly developed capabilities of the instrument, which placed the performer in the forefront. Naturally we find cases in which elements from one group appear in another or even instances where all three are combined. Generally, however, we can readily distinguish the three. In this realm, two great figures stood above their contemporaries, each involved with the repertory in a different way: Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms. Liszt, as will emerge, emphasized virtuosity and the new Romantic genres of composition, while Brahms for the most part returned to the ideals of the older Classical tradition.

LISZT

While the piano stands at the center of Liszt's artistic accomplishment, he made important contributions to other branches of musical composition. Although born in Hungary (in an area that is now part of Austria), he settled in Paris, where in 1839 he launched his spectacular virtuoso career which took him all over Europe—Hungary, London, Vienna, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Russia, Moldavia, Poland, and Denmark. But in 1847 he dropped concertizing and the next year became musical director of the court of Weimar where he devoted himself to conducting, composition, writing, and teaching. After 1861 he divided his time between Weimar, Budapest, and Italy. Everywhere he was in contact with leading writers and musicians—in Paris with Chopin, Berlioz, Paganini, Rossini, Fétis, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo, as well as George Sand and the Countess Marie d'Agoult (who wrote under the pseudonym Daniel Stern and with whom he formed a liaison that lasted some ten years). Later his circle included Wagner, Bülow, for a time Nietzsche, and many others. Like Weber and Schumann, Liszt was a musician with literary aspirations: he wrote articles and books on important topics in the musical life of the time.⁴

Liszt made his reputation chiefly as a pianist. In so doing, he identified himself with the Romantic cult of virtuosity. Most important here was the development and exploitation of an amazing technique that seemed to border on sorcery. In this he followed the example of Paganini, whose bearing in concerts was such as to excite the suggestion that he was possessed of demonic powers. The use of a black costume fostered this impression, along with haughty posturing, elaborate gesturing, and other mannerisms. Liszt was also the first pianist to appear by himself, unassisted, for a whole concert. The custom had been for a pianist to appear together with other musicians, singers, and players, often with an orchestra, since the mainstay of the repertory of the public concert had been the concerto. But Liszt appeared alone and established the modern sense of the term *recital* which he borrowed from the poetic and dramatic readings popular in the Parisian salons of the time.

He also developed a totally new style of playing and writing for the instrument. Instead of working largely with scale technique, the stock-in-trade of Hummel, Czerny, and their contemporaries, Liszt exploited the capacities of the instrument in an unheard-of fashion. He employed rapid and coloristic changes of register; used dense chords and octave passages in all ranges, frequently associated with wide leaps, arpeggios over the full extent of the keyboard, scales in thirds, sixths, octaves, and even in full chords, diatonic and chromatic; created elaborate cadenzas and recitative-like passages; added vibrato figurations; and often put a melody in the middle register accompanied by difficult figuration ranging over the whole keyboard. Many reports from those who heard him perform, such as Schumann and Berlioz, testify to the enormous effect he produced on an audience.

A survey of Liszt's life reveals four broad periods: a preparatory phrase, the period of concertizing (1839–1847), the years at Weimar (1848–1861), and the period of semi-retirement. In each the activity that principally engaged him determined the kinds of musical compositions he produced. During the 1830s and 1840s his musical composition emphasized those genres most closely connected with concertizing—etudes, operatic potpourris, and other types in which bravura elements were primary; in the 1850s he turned away from this and devoted himself to the character piece and to a few essays in the large forms; in the last phase, the virtuoso impulse died down, replaced by short and simple pieces employing unusual harmonies. In general Liszt neglected the more traditional genres, such as the sonata and variations, although he made important contributions to each.⁵ In the discussion of his piano music, we will begin with the etudes and Hungarian Rhapsodies, then take up the character piece, after which we turn to his other works.

PRINCIPAL COLLECTIONS OF LISZT'S ETUDES

Études d'une exécution transcendante (12, S. 139,⁶ composed 1851, published 1852): Preludio, C major; Molto vivace, A minor; "Paysage" (Landscape), F major; "Mazeppa," D minor; "Feux-follets" (Fireflies), B-flat major; "Vision," G minor; "Eroica," E-flat major; "Wilde Jagd" (Wild Hunt), C minor; "Ricordanza," A-flat major; Allegro agitato molto, F minor; "Harmonies du soir" (Evening Harmonies), D-flat major; "Chasse-neige" (Snow Sleigh), B-flat minor

Études d'une exécution transcendante d'après Paganini (6, S. 140, first version composed 1838, published 1840; second version [S. 141], composed and published 1851)

Ab Irato: Grande étude de perfectionnement (S. 143, composed and published 1852)⁷

Études de concert (3, S. 144, composed ca. 1848, published 1849): "Il lamento," A-flat major; "La leggierezza," F minor; "Un sospiro," D-flat major

Études de concert (2, S. 145, composed 1862–1863, published 1863): "Waldesrauschen" (Forest Rustling); "Gnomenspiele" (Gnomes' Dances)⁸

In these works we encounter Liszt's virtuosity in all its extremes and varieties; the most difficult elements of his piano technique are found here. That this was deliberate on his part is suggested by the appellation "transcendental": the degree of difficulty transcended that of other etudes of the time.

Through the three versions of the *Transcendental Etudes*, the changes made by Liszt always serve to increase the degree of difficulty. We can see this, for example, in "Mazeppa." In the first version this is a study in thirds; in the later revisions the figuration grew ever more elaborate. The piece ultimately evolved into a study that presents a slow-moving melody in octaves at the extremes of the piano's range accompanied by rapid chordal figuration, up and down the whole expanse of the keyboard. (The thematic material used here reappears in Liszt's symphonic poem of the same title.) In their final versions as *Transcendental Etudes*, Liszt gave many of them descriptive titles so that they came to resemble character pieces.

In form these etudes are sectional, generally in a basic ternary plan, often with some variations. But Liszt obscures this basic ternary plan by extensive thematic transformation, so that often the midsection employs the same thematic material as the other sections. Typical is the scheme in "Wilde Jagd": of its three themes the second and third (both containing a figure derived from the first) appear first in lyric and then in heroic-dramatic guise. The large Allegro agitato molto in F minor suggests a loose sonata structure: three themes are stated, developed (a procedure that involves modulating statements of the three themes), and, after a brilliant rhetorical climax, recapitulated.

Among the more brilliant and technically demanding are "Mazeppa"; "Feux-follets," an allegretto in which harmonic color is important; "Eroica," martial with a slow, ponderous melody and dotted figures, suggestive of a funeral march; "Wilde Jagd," featuring cross-rhythms, octave passages, and scale-runs, on the whole resembling a Chopin ballade, and "Chasse-neige," with its lyrical beginning and gradual crescendo and accumulation. Other brilliant etudes that do not have descriptive titles are the Preludio in C major, which resembles Chopin's first prelude in the same key (op. 28 i); the Molto vivace in A minor; and, particularly, the impressive Allegro agitato molto in F minor (the appassionato key), which is related to Chopin's etude in the same key (op. 10 ii). But not all these etudes concentrate on the bravura: there are notable lyrical pieces that require a cantabile style from the performer. Such are "Paysage," with its siciliano-like rhythm expressing the pastoral; "Ricordanza"; and "Harmonies du soir," the latter with a grand climax (Ex. 5-1). Liszt created a ceremonial aura in "Vision" with its crashing chords, unusual harmonic progressions, and magnificent climax near the end.

The *Transcendental Etudes* display two styles typically employed by Liszt. The first, which we have already mentioned, consists of a cantabile melody that moves in slow, even notes and is accompanied by rapid virtuoso figuration. Almost all these etudes have passages of this kind of writing. For instance, "Vision" opens with such a melody in heavy chords in the bass accompanied by light arpeggio figures that begin in the treble but gradually involve the entire range of the keyboard. This cantabile style also appears in the Allegro agitato molto in F minor, especially in the midsection, and in "Harmonies du soir" and "Chasse-neige." The other prominent feature is the cadenza, a long solo line incorporating scale-runs and arpeggios, or involv-



Example 5-1. Liszt: "Harmonies du soir" from *Transcendental Etudes* (S. 139 xi)—Excerpt (mm. 97–105)

ing parallel chords moving rapidly up and down the keyboard. These occur in "Paysage," "Feux-follets," and the Allegro agitato molto in F minor. Also related are simple recitative-like passages, as in "Mazeppa" and "Ricordanza."

It is significant that Liszt based another set of etudes that he characterized as "transcendental" on compositions of Paganini. As has been pointed out, Paganini was the foremost virtuoso of his day and served as a model for Liszt in his early career as a concert artist. Like the first set of *Transcendental Etudes*, the one based on Paganini's music begins with a Preludio and con-

tinues with a series of etudes. But these etudes are based on Paganini's Caprices for unaccompanied violin (op. 1). "La Campanella" is particularly well known; the tune also served Liszt as the subject for an independent Fantasia for piano (S. 420), also in variation form. Also familiar are "La Chasse" (v) and the sixth etude which is based on Paganini's twenty-fourth Caprice. Here Liszt retains the variation structure of the original (this theme was also employed by Brahms and Rachmaninov).

The association of the etude with the character piece is prominent in the remaining etudes of Liszt. *Ab Irato* represents rage by its insistence on heavy, thick chords in rapid tempo in the extreme bass, while at the same time being a study in the rapid execution of chords. The Concert Etudes (3, S. 144), have descriptive titles only in their French edition. Of this group, "Un sospiro" in D-flat major is a study in cantabile playing, in which a short phrase in even notes is repeated with many ornamental variations. The Concert Etudes (2, S. 145), "Waldesrauschen" and "Gnomesreigen," are likewise pictorial.

Another important group of works that were composed mostly during Liszt's period of concertizing are the famous *Rhapsodies hongroises* (19, Hungarian Rhapsodies, S. 244). The first fifteen of these were published by 1853 (the first had appeared as early as 1847), while the last four are late works dating from 1882 to 1885. Here the impulse toward virtuosity is combined with what Liszt took to be Hungarian gypsy melodies, which he regarded as the authentic voice of the Hungarian people. What he actually heard and used was salon music performed in the cities. But whatever the result, the intent certainly is clear, and Liszt's motivations, here and elsewhere, are commendable.

Liszt reported on the Hungarian Rhapsodies in his book *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* (The Bohemians and Their Music in Hungary, 1859). From this it emerges that he had assembled a large collection of these "gypsy" melodies which he considered central to Hungarian culture, parts of a larger totality, parts that, in their variety of forms and types, he viewed as corresponding to components in a great gypsy epic. This conception lies behind the term *rhapsody*: the epic quality imputed to the melodies and their texts.⁹ The Hungarian Rhapsodies were preceded by earlier versions (S. 242, published in ten installments, 1839–1847) under the title *Magyar dallok* (Hungarian National Melodies). In the last six installments he introduced the term *rhapsody*, calling them *Magyar rhapsodiák* (Hungarian Rhapsodies).

Despite the origin of the materials used by Liszt, he incorporated many features of Hungarian folk music in the Hungarian Rhapsodies. Three of them have descriptive titles: "Héroïde-élégiaque" (v), "Le Carnaval à Pesth" (ix), and "Marche de Rákóczi" (xv). We frequently find the so-called "gypsy scale," using the augmented fourth, the minor sixth, and the major seventh, thus producing the augmented second between the sixth and seventh steps of the scale. In several of the Hungarian Rhapsodies, for example those in A minor and C-sharp minor (xi and xii), Liszt imitates on the piano the sound of the cimbalom, an Hungarian dulcimer-like instrument. Moreover, he made use

of a characteristic type of Hungarian melody: a phrase commences in very long, slow-moving notes; suddenly rapid ornamental figures appear, the effect being both rhapsodic and sad—as Liszt put it, “to be played in the haughty and melancholy manner of the gypsies” (vii). Frequently he used the qualifications “mesto” (sad), “con duolo” (with sadness), or “malinconico” (melancholy). The effect is pronounced in the Rhapsody in C-sharp minor (viii), which dispenses altogether with a time signature at the beginning, thus adding the rhapsodic element of free rhythm (Ex. 5-2). We find this same characteristic type of melody in the Rhapsody in D minor, and in the popular one in C-sharp minor (ii), while traces of it appear in most of them—in the many melodies using slow notes with sudden interjections in dotted rhythm, sharply accentuated chords in the accompaniment, unexpected bursts of figuration, and so on. Added to these are features more typical of Liszt—recitative-like phrases and embellished cadenzas.

Another form that appears in the Hungarian Rhapsodies may also be related to Hungarian folk music: the *czárdás*, a gypsy dance in two parts. The slow first part employs the type of melody described above while the second is rapid. These two parts and their respective styles were called *lassú* and *friss*, designations that appear in these compositions, notably the famous one in C-sharp minor (ii). Yet another trait derived from Hungarian music is the presentation of the melody in parallel thirds, as in the Rhapsody in C-sharp minor (i).

The Hungarian Rhapsodies are also bravura display pieces. Their form is usually loose and involves contrasting sections. The beginning is often slow, melancholy, rhapsodic; contrasting sections follow, possibly a *grazioso* succeeded by an impassioned recitative, a *capriccioso*, capped off by a grand and brilliant conclusion. The technical difficulties often are great, the possibilities for showmanship abundant. Thus, in these pieces we can see a curious duality in Liszt's makeup: on the one hand, the high-minded purpose, the lofty objectives, and, on the other, the intrusion of elements aimed at popular acclaim, exploiting the grandiloquent gesture. Yet the aesthetic seems similar to that of Italian opera. For the grand scenes, for instance “mad scenes,” as in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* or Verdi's *Macbeth*, the composers employ virtuoso elements, particularly florid coloratura—bravura goes hand in hand with significant moments.

Another piece related to the Hungarian Rhapsodies is the *Rhapsodie espagnole: Folies d'Espagne et jota aragonese* (S. 254, composed ca. 1863, published 1867). Here Liszt has given two Spanish melodies a treatment similar to that in the Hungarian Rhapsodies. The first of them is the famous *La Folia* so often used as an ostinato in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The musical score is for the beginning of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody in C-sharp minor, measures 1-8. It is written for piano and features a complex, rhapsodic melody with many accidentals. The tempo is marked 'Lento a capriccio'. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f' (forte) and 'mesto' (sad). There are also performance instructions like 'lungo trillo' and 'rit.' (ritardando). The notation includes various ornaments, trills, and slurs, with some measures marked with a 'Ped' (pedal) symbol.

Example 5-2. LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsody in C-sharp minor (S. 244 viii)—Beginning (mm. 1-8)

LISZT'S CHARACTER PIECES

PRINCIPAL COLLECTIONS

Apparitions (3, S. 155, composed and published 1834)

Années de pèlerinage

Première année: Suisse (9, S. 160, composed 1835–1854, published 1855)¹⁰ “La chapelle de Guillaume Tell,” “Au lac de Wallenstadt” “Pastorale,” “Au bord d’une source,” “Orage,” “Vallée d’Obermann,” “Eclogue,” “Le mal du pays,” “Les cloches de Genève”

Deuxième année: Italie (7, S. 161, composed 1837–1849, published 1858) “Sposalizio,” “Il penseroso,” “Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa,” “Sonetto 47 del Petrarca,” “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca,” “Sonetto 123 del Petrarca,” “Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi sonata.” Supplement, *Venezia e Napoli* (3, S. 162, composed 1859, published 1861) “Gondoliera,” “Canzone,” “Tarantella”¹¹

Troisième année: (7, S. 163, composed 1867–1877, published 1883) “Angelus! Prière aux anges gardiens,” “Aux cyprès de la villa d’Este: Threnodie” (in two different versions); “Les jeux d’eaux à la villa d’Este,” “Sunt lachrymae rerum: En mode hongrois,” “Marche funèbre: En mémoire de Maximilien I, Empereur de Mexique † en 19e Juin 1867,” “Sursum corda”

Harmonies poétiques et religieuses (10, S. 173, composed 1842–1852, published 1853) “Invocation,” “Ave Maria,” “Bénédictio de Dieu dans la solitude,” “Pensée des morts,”¹² “Pater noster,” “Hymne de l’enfant à son réveil,” “Funérailles,” “Miserere (d’après Palestrina),” Andante lagrimoso; “Cantique d’amour”

Ballades: D-flat major (S. 170, composed 1845–1848, published 1849); B minor (S. 171, composed 1853, published 1854)

Consolations (6, S. 172, composed 1849–1850, published 1850)

Légendes (2, S. 175, composed 1863, published 1866) “St.

François d’Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux,” “St.

François de Paule marchant sur les flots”

Weihnachtsbaum: Arbre de Noël (12, S. 186, composed 1874–1876, published 1882) “Psallite,” “O heilige Nacht,” “Die Hirten an der Krippe,” “Adeste fideles,” Scherzoso; “Carillon,” “Schlummerlied,” “Altes provençalisches Weihnachtslied,” “Abendglocken,” “Ehemals!,” “Ungarisch,” “Polnisch”

Elegies: A-flat major (S. 196, composed 1874, published 1875);

A-flat major (S. 197, composed 1877, published 1878)¹³

Historische ungarische Bildnisse (Pictures from Hungarian

History, 7, S. 205, composed 1870–1885, published 1956)

PRINCIPAL INDIVIDUAL COMPOSITIONS

Lyon (S. 156 i, composed 1834, published 1842)¹⁴

Scherzo and March (S. 177, composed 1851, published 1854)

Berceuse (S. 174, first version composed and published 1854; second version, composed 1862, published 1865)

“Nuages gris” (S. 199, composed 1881, published 1927)

“La lugubre gondola” (S. 200, first version composed 1882, published 1916; second version [the arrangement of an earlier piece for solo string instrument and piano, S. 134], published 1886)

“R. W.—Venezia” (S. 201, composed 1883, published 1927)

“Am Grabe Richard Wagners” (S. 202, composed 1883, published 1952)

“Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort” (S. 203, composed 1883, published 1927)

“Trauervorspiel und Trauermarsch” (S. 206, composed 1885, published 1887)

“En rêve” (S. 207, composed 1885, published 1888)

“Unstern: sinistre, disastro” (S. 208, composed ca. 1886, date of publication unknown)

Bagatelle without Tonality (S. 216a, composed 1883, published 1956)

These works are of great importance for Liszt as a Romantic musician. Here we encounter an aspect of his work that frequently stands in contrast to the musical *grand seigneur*, the towering virtuoso of the piano, the idol of European concert life—his belief in a cardinal aesthetic tenet of Romanticism, the ability of music to suggest or express ideas, emotions, and impressions of different sorts—in short its capability of giving expression to extra-musical subject matter. In this it was chiefly the association between music and poetry that drew Liszt’s attention; one of his central convictions had to do, as he put it, with “the renewal of music through its inner connection with poetry.”¹⁵ Or, as he expressed in the preface to his early collection, the *Album d’un voyageur*, he was working with a rarefied art form, not for the many but for the few, in which he made the attempt to put into music the impressions nature made upon his soul, to express the “intrinsic and poetic meanings of things.”

Liszt frequently drew on the work of leading writers and artists for the subject matter of his character pieces: Byron, the arch-Romantic of English

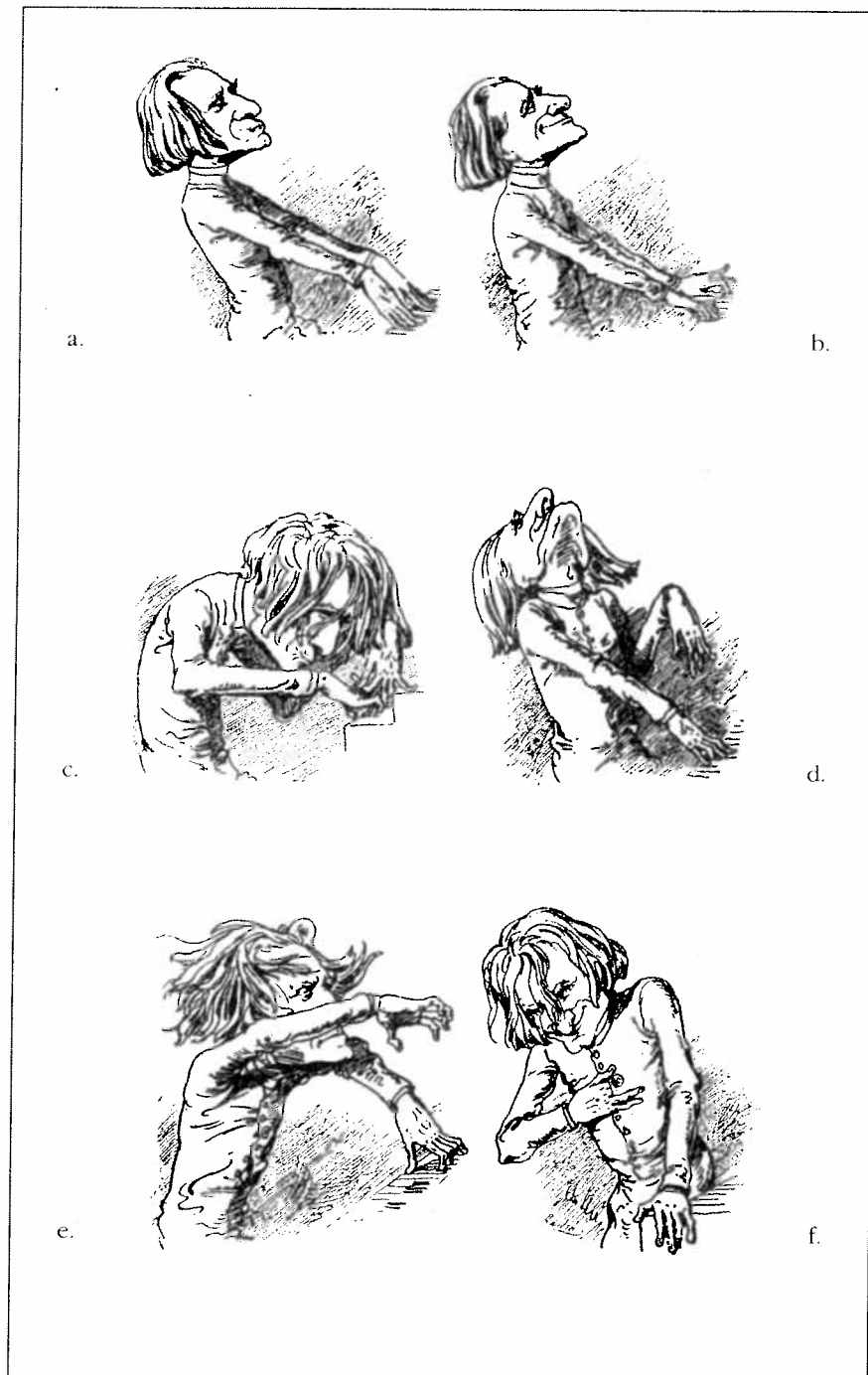
poetry, is represented by quotations from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and indeed the idea of pilgrimage was central in the *Années de pèlerinage*, Liszt's largest set of character pieces. The French Romantic poet Lamartine provided the inspiration for the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*; Victor Hugo wrote the poem that gave rise to Liszt's "Dante" Sonata ("Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi sonata") as well as the epic *Mazeppa*, a subject also essayed by Byron; *Consolations* was a collection of poems by the critic Saint-Beuve; "Vallée d'Obermann" and "Le mal du pays" are prefaced by excerpts from a popular French novel, Senancour's *Obermann*, which was written as early as 1804, but did not become influential until its reprint of 1830. A poem of Schiller inspired "Au bord d'une source." From earlier literature we find Petrarch (sonnets that Liszt had originally composed as songs) and Dante, with whom Liszt became familiar by way of Victor Hugo. From the visual arts we find Raphael ("Sposalizio"), Michelangelo ("Il pensieroso"), and Rosa, a poet as well as a painter. Stories related to two saints, Francis of Assisi and Francis of Padua, provided the background for the *Légendes*. The late nocturne "Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort," less known, comes from a poem by Toni Raabe. An unusual case is presented by the *Années de pèlerinage*, particularly the first two volumes, which relate to Liszt's years in Switzerland and Italy in the company of the Countess Marie d'Agoult, and thus are to an extent autobiographical. The later set, long thought to have been associated with Rome, has been shown to have important associations with his native Hungary.¹⁶ The early *Lyon*, on the other hand, has associations with social issues involving the silk workers of that city in the aftermath of the revolution of 1834.¹⁷

We can group the character pieces themselves generally into the established formal types even though the titles given them may be different. Chopin's influence is obvious in the ballades and scherzos. Several pieces bear the title "feuille d'album" (album leaf). But such designations are in the minority; instead of such appellations as *intermezzo*, song without words, *impromptu*, we meet descriptive or characteristic titles, which Liszt used for typical varieties of character pieces. For example, "Un soir dans les montagnes" from the early *Album d'un voyageur* and the late "Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort" are nocturnes, as is "Harmonies du soir" from the *Transcendental Etudes*. The first of these has in its midsection a thunderstorm that Liszt later developed as a separate piece in *Années de pèlerinage*; he also portrayed a storm in the legend "St. François de Paul marchant sur les flottes." The singing of birds dominates the other legend, "St. François d'Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux." Running water is depicted in "Au bord d'une source" and "Les jeux d'eau à la villa d'Este," both from *Années de pèlerinage*, the latter a brilliant allegretto with light arpeggio figures. Then there are pastoral compositions, such as "Ranz de vaches" from the earlier *Album d'un voyageur* and "Eclouge" from *Années de pèlerinage*. An unusually large number have to do with affects of mourning and lamentation, especially among the later works. From the third book of *Années de pèlerinage* come "Aux cyprès de la villa d'Este: Threnodie" (which appears in two settings), "Sunt lachrymae rerum,"

and "Marche funèbre," and from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* come the elaborate "Pensée des mortes" and "Funérailles," the latter with its military-heroic midsection that is indebted to Chopin's Polonaise in A-flat major (op. 53). "Eroica" from the *Transcendental Etudes* can also be included here. One more important group consists of pieces based on religious subjects; we find these in the early part of *Années de pèlerinage*, as "La chapelle de Guillaume Tell" and "Les cloches de Genève" and in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*. Indeed, in this set we find such works as the "Ave Maria" and "Pater noster," in which Liszt underlays the texts of Latin prayers, and the "Bénédictio de Dieu dans la solitude" and the "Miserere (d'après Palestrina)." By means of simple chords, diatonicism, and the absence of time signatures, the latter suggests the archaic but "pure" style of the sixteenth-century composer. In "Pensée des mortes" Liszt employed Psalm 129, "De profundis," and again underlaid the Latin words, the constantly repeated chords suggesting the recitation of *falso bordone*.¹⁸ Religious subjects prevail in the two *Légendes* and in the third part of *Années de pèlerinage* ("Angelus! Prière aux anges gardiens," "Sursum corda," and several others). Christmas songs form the basis for much of the little-known collection *Weihnachtsbaum*.

Virtuosity, so important in the études and Hungarian Rhapsodies, is less so in the character pieces. The most demanding among them appear in the earlier sets of *Années de pèlerinage*: "La chapelle de Guillaume Tell," "Orage," and "Vallée d'Obermann" from *Suisse* and the large "Dante" Sonata from *Italie*. The later sets lack virtuoso elements, the *Consolations* being especially simple. Less known are the pieces composed by Liszt in his old age; for example, "Nuages gris," "La lugubre gondola," "Schlaflos!," and "Unstern," which are short and simple in technique, emphasizing sparse textures, but which seem experimental by virtue of the chromatic, dissonant harmony that gives prominence to the tritone; the title "La lugubre gondola," of course, suggests Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*.

Each of the first two books of *Années de pèlerinage* features one piece that is significantly larger and of much greater weight than the rest. In *Suisse* this is "Vallée d'Obermann," related to Senancour's novel. The piece is important in Liszt's development as a composer since it is among the first to show basic aspects of his art: the literary background, the use of a single theme that appears in varied forms throughout, and virtuosity. The other, the concluding number in *Italie*, is even bigger: "Après une lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi sonata," the latter designation precisely the reverse of Beethoven's *sonata quasi una fantasia*. This is a large virtuoso piece in sections that follow one another in uninterrupted succession, all of them related by the consistent use of four themes and their variants. There is the slow introduction, Andante maestoso, in full octaves descending by tritones (the interval known in the Middle Ages as "diabolus in musica" [the devil in music], vividly depicting "Inferno"), followed by a Presto agitato assai (also designated "lamentoso"), with rapidly moving broken octaves in sextuplets and a chromatic stepwise line. Later, at the Andante quasi improvisato, the Presto theme is presented in varied form, as it is again in the Adagio. Toward the end Liszt restates it in



something like its original form. Thus, we have a large sectional work in cyclic form that in size and scope corresponds to a sonata or multimovement fantasia. Further, it contains passages as difficult as those of the *Transcendental Etudes*. Both these large character pieces, in fact, seem like symphonic poems for piano.

The other large-scale works for solo piano are, externally at least, divorced from the character piece.

LISZT'S OTHER LARGE WORKS FOR SOLO PIANO

Grosses Konzert-Solo (S. 176, composed presumably 1849–1851, published 1851)¹⁹

Sonata, B minor (S. 178, composed 1852–1853, published 1854)

Variationen über das Motiv von Bach: Basso continuo des ersten Satzes seiner Kantate *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* und des *Crucifixus* der H-moll Messe (S. 180, composed 1862, published 1864)²⁰

The Concert-Solo and the Sonata in B minor have much in common with the “Dante” Sonata. Both are sectional, use cyclic form, and afford opportunity for virtuoso display. But the sonata—the only work to which Liszt gave this designation—is far and away the more important. It is cast in a single long, continuous movement with many clearly definable sections. Liszt uses four basic themes that he transforms extensively during the course of the work (see Ex. 5-3): (A) In the opening Lento assai, the theme is made up of staccato and separated chords over a descending bass in dotted rhythm, similar to the motive for Wotan’s anger in Wagner’s *Ring of the Nibelung*. (B) What we might call the principal theme appears in the next section, Allegro energico, in two motives, one employing wide leaps and dotted rhythms and the other with strongly marked repeated notes preceded by an upbeat triplet figure. Liszt uses these two motives singly and together, subjecting them to

Opposie: Franz Liszt, the Sun King of the Piano, in concert. a. He closes his eyes and seems to be playing only to himself. b. Pianissimo: St. Francis preaches to the birds; his face becomes transfigured. c. Hamlet’s broodings; torments of Faust. The keys tremble with sobs. d. Reminiscences: Chopin, Sand, O the joys of youth, perfumes, moonbeams, love. e. Dante: Inferno. The damned and the piano groan. Orcan shakes the gates of Hell. f. He wanted nothing more than to play for us, to express himself in music. Applause, shouts, and bravos.

Drawings by Jankó.

variations. The first of them appears in recitative style over an arpeggiated accompaniment and later as *Dolce con grazia*, while the second appears in a lyrical version, the upbeat eliminated and the note values augmented, “cantando espressivo” and “dolcissimo.” The two remaining themes are of lesser import: (C) the third, the grandioso theme, slow over ponderous, thick, repeated chords and (D) the fourth, the *Andante sostenuto*, lyrical, used in combination with the cantabile version of the second motive of the principal theme.

In its overall organization this work differs radically from traditional sonatas. It has many sections contrasting in character, some of which recur. There are two principal ways of interpreting the structure of the work. The first views it as a single, long, complex movement in sonata form, with many episodes and other aspects that obscure its relation to the model. According to the other, the sonata is a four-movement work in which the movements are connected and in which the same themes are used throughout.²¹ This formal ambiguity is typical of Romanticism; indeed Liszt may have been influenced by Schubert's *Wanderer* Fantasia and Schumann's Symphony in D minor (op. 120). As in the large pieces in the *Années de pèlerinage* discussed earlier, the principles are the same as those Liszt used in his symphonic poems, except for the absence of a program or descriptive title.

The work begins solemnly with the *Lento assai*, which returns at the end; the forceful *Allegro energico*, which presents the principal thematic material, comes next, and not only is repeated in similar form near the close but also reappears during the course of the sonata as a three-voice fugue. Toward the end of the first *Allegro energico* there are rapid changes of tempo and character with much fast octave work, which leads to a culmination that introduces the *Grandioso*. We encounter passages of great technical difficulty and climaxes of considerable proportions along with rhetorical passages, partic-



Example 5-3. LISZT: Sonata in B minor (S. 178)—Excerpts

- A. *Lento assai* (mm. 1–3)
- B. *Allegro energico* (mm. 8–15)
- C. *Grandioso* (mm. 105–113)
- D. *Andante sostenuto* (mm. 331–338)

ularly those in recitative style. In short, the Sonata in B minor is Liszt's largest composition for piano solo, one of the few important works in its genre after Beethoven and Schubert.

Another large work by Liszt goes back to Bach. It is based on the chromatic ostinato first used by Bach in the first movement of the cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (BWV 12), a movement which with some revisions appears as the “Crucifixus” of the Mass in B minor. Following Bach, Liszt has organized the piece in variation form, each variation corresponding to a statement of Bach's melody. The variations are preceded by an introductory *Andante* and followed by a recitative-like passage. They end with a coda in which the hymn “Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan” appears, with text underlaid to make the point explicit. This hymn also figures in Bach's cantata. Thus, Liszt has set the darkness and lamentation of the ostinato against the affirma-

B.

Allegro energico

continued

LISZT'S PIANO TRANSCRIPTIONS FROM OPERA— EXAMPLES

- MOZART: *Don Giovanni* (S. 418, composed 1841, published 1843);
Le nozze di Figaro (S. 697, 1842, unfinished, completed by
 Busoni, published 1912)
- MEYERBEER: *Les Huguenots* (S. 412, composed 1836, published
 1837); *Robert le diable* (S. 413, composed and published
 1841); *Le Prophète* (S. 414, composed and published
 presumably 1849–1850)
- BELLINI: *I puritani* (S. 390, composed 1836, published 1837); *La
 sonnambula* (S. 393, composed 1839–1841, published 1842);
Norma (S. 394, composed 1841, published 1844)
- VERDI: *Ernani* (S. 432, composed ca. 1849, published 1860);
Rigoletto (S. 434, composed 1859 and published with the
 “Miserere” scene from *Il trovatore* [S. 433, also composed
 1859] in 1860)
- WAGNER (excerpts from the music dramas): “Liebestod” from
Tristan und Isolde (S. 447, composed 1867, published 1868);
 various parts of *Die Meistersinger*, *Rheingold*, and *Parsifal*,
 among others

In addition to transcriptions from operas, there are arrangements of instrumental works and songs. Prominent among the former are the *partitions de piano* of Beethoven's symphonies (S. 464), six of Bach's preludes and fugues for organ (S. 462), and Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* (S. 470), as well as Liszt's own *Totentanz* (S. 188). Among the songs arranged by Liszt are some fifty by Schubert, notably sets of twelve each from *Winterreise* (S. 561) and *Schwanengesang* (S. 560), along with songs of Mendelssohn, Franz, and Chopin (*Chants polonais*). Liszt also arranged a number of his own songs, among them the Petrarch sonnets that found their way into *Italie*, the second book of *Années de pèlerinage*; in the case of the *Liebesträume*, the piano arrangements have become better known than the songs from which they were transcribed, especially the *Liebestraum* in A-flat (S. 541 iii), the arrangement of his setting of Freiligrath's poem “O lieb' so lang du lieben kannst” (S. 298). The late “San Francisco” (S. 499, composed 1881) is also an arrangement. In general these transcriptions, usually overlooked, could form welcome additions to the repertory. Liszt was also active as an editor: he published his own editions of Beethoven's piano works, selected works of Weber and Schubert, organ music of Bach, etudes of Chopin, and exercises of Clementi.

Liszt composed a small body of music for piano duet and two pianos. Here original compositions are in the minority and arrangements in the clear majority. The original pieces are, for piano duet, a polonaise and a set of variations on *Chopsticks* (S. 256); for two pianos, a large *Konzertstück* on themes from Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* (S. 257). Arrangements include Liszt's own symphonic poems (for piano duet as well as for two pianos), Field's nocturnes (piano duet), Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (S. 657), Schubert's *Wanderer* Fantasia (S. 653), and his own two symphonies, *Faust* and *Dante* (both for two pianos, S. 647 and 648 respectively), to name only some.

The piano stood at the center of Liszt's life and work. By his technical mastery of the instrument, he became the most prominent musician in Europe; by the music he wrote for it, aside from the purely bravura pieces, he allied himself with the progressive tendencies in musical composition of the time.

BRAHMS

The principal counterpart to Liszt was Johannes Brahms (1833–1897).²² The differences are striking. Brahms had little of the international quality of Liszt, at least not until he had become a fully mature musician, and although a pianist and conductor by profession, he was not much in public view. Indeed he characteristically made his Viennese debut as a pianist with chamber music—piano quartets. After 1875 he found it possible to give up regular conducting and to support himself by composing, teaching, and giving occasional concerts.

In spite of his tendency toward withdrawal, Brahms came to be regarded as the head of the group of musicians opposed to the music of Liszt and Wagner, known as the Neo-German school, with its emphasis on the expression of extramusical subject matter and novel musical forms and types. In 1853 Schumann, with whose family Brahms became closely associated, had hailed Brahms as “a new power in music . . . called to give expression to his time in ideal fashion.”²³ In 1860 Brahms' name appeared among the signers of a manifesto directed against the Neo-German school, thus making him prominent in the opposition to this kind of music. Other musicians with whom he was closely connected included the critic and aesthete Eduard Hanslick, the violinist Joseph Joachim, and the pianist, conductor, and editor Hans von Bülow, who had also been allied with Wagner.

We can discern Brahms' essentially conservative attitude in most of his music for piano. He commenced, as had Schumann before him, with the old large forms, the sonata and variations, which he then abandoned for the various types of character pieces. If we take his piano music by types—beginning with the sonatas, moving to the variations, and then coming to the character pieces—we also, generally speaking, follow his emphases chronologi-