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FRANZ LISZT AND HIS *TROIS ODES FUNÈBRES*: A PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC, ART, AND LITERATURE

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a critical analysis of Franz Liszt's *Trois odes funèbres* in light of the composer's philosophy of programmatic music. In his essay "Berlioz und seine *Harold* Symphonie" Franz Liszt most clearly defined his philosophy of music. He advocated the subordination of formal considerations to expression of content, with the ultimate goal being the communication of philosophical ideas to the listener.

The content of the *Trois odes funèbres* is more specific, but also more universal, than simply the expression of mourning or sadness. Liszt utilized Lamennais's poem in the score of *Les morts* to direct attention to the subject of change from spiritual insecurity to spiritual salvation. He composed music that reflects that movement from fear to confidence by means of shifting musical elements, such as harmony and rhythm, from tonally ambiguous and free to stable and more strict.

In *La notte* Liszt employed the Thinker persona of his piano solo, *Il penseroso*, and then expanded the persona's thoughts about death to include thoughts at the moment of death and after death. By linking the reminiscence of homeland, which is identified in a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*, with a musical reference to Hungary, the *Magyar* cadence, Liszt identified himself as the Thinker persona, thus conjuring his own fictitious past.

For the third ode, *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, Liszt attached a passage from

Serassi's biography of Torquato Tasso, in which the attendants at Tasso's funeral finally understand the poet's genius. Liszt disregarded and displaced the traditional roles of functional tonality in the overall form of *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* to prolong the listener's realization that the tonic is not what one first thinks it is. This eventual unveiling of tonic provides the listener with an experience similar to the belated realization of Tasso's genius by his contemporaries after his death.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM, MATERIALS, AND METHODS

> The contradictions, nay even the injustice occasioned by my work, far from thwarting me, arouse me still further; and they confirm me completely in the attitude I have had since my youth: that is, in the field of Music I have something to say; and no one else can say it for me.[1]

One cannot fail to agree with the fact that Franz Liszt did indeed have something to say. He is credited with writing many articles, essays, and books on an array of topics, such as composers, his own travel experiences, the current state of music education, religious music in society, and aesthetics. This large compilation of works thrust Liszt into the foreground of the contemporary debate on cultural issues, including the issue of programmatic versus absolute music. He was considered revolutionary by both conservatives and progressives alike, as he proposed the union of abstract, philosophical ideas with musical form.

Liszt's commentary about music, society, religion, politics, and other areas, however, was not limited to the form of the written word. From Liszt's point of view, expression in musical compositions could be heightened by uniting extramusical ideas and musical material; therefore, Liszt had something to say in his compositions, as well.

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[1] Franz Liszt, *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein*, translated and edited by Howard E. Hugo (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1953), 130.

The subject of this research project is the *Trois odes funèbres*, a set of three orchestral pieces composed by Liszt. Each of the three funeral odes makes reference to, is associated with, or comments upon something extramusical. *Les morts*, composed in 1860, is based on the poem of the same title by the French philosopher Félicité Lamennais (1782-1854). *La notte* (1864), the second funeral ode, shares its extramusical inspiration with one of Liszt's piano solos, *Il penseroso*, from *Années de pèlerinage, II: Italie*. Liszt composed *Il penseroso* after a visit to Italy in the late 1830s, where he was inspired by Michelangelo's sculpture by the same name, which looks upon the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici in San Lorenzo Church in Florence. The final ode, *Le triomphe funèbre du Tasse* (1866), is subtitled "Epilogue du poème symphonique *Tasso*" and refers to Liszt's second symphonic poem not only in name but also by means of musical quotation. The work is prefaced by a description of Torquato Tasso's funeral from a biography [1785] by Abbot Pierantonio Serassi (1721-1791).

This thesis provides a critical analysis of Franz Liszt's *Trois odes funèbres* in light of the composer's philosophy regarding music and its relationships with art and literature. Very little research has been completed or proposed specifically on Liszt's orchestral versions of the *Trois odes funèbres*; that which addresses this subject consists merely of formal and thematic description. The only extensive study with the funeral odes as its specific subject is Arthur Stewart's "*La notte* and *Les morts*: Investigations into Progressive Aspects of Franz Liszt's Style,"[2] in which Stewart analyzed the piano versions

[2] Arthur Stewart, "*La notte* and *Les morts*: Investigations into Progressive Aspects of Franz Liszt's Style," *The Journal of the American Liszt Society* 18 (Dec. 1985): 67-106.

of the first two odes.

Most sources useful in researching this topic provided contextual and historical information about Franz Liszt, the circumstances leading to the composition of the *Trois odes funèbres*, and basic historical and stylistic information about Lamennais and *Les morts*, Michelangelo and *La notte*, and Franz Liszt and his own symphonic poem *Tasso*. Standard biographical sources in Liszt research, including Humphrey Searles's "Liszt" entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*[3] and Alan Walker's three-volume *Franz Liszt*[4] series, provided a foundation for further exploration of interpretive issues.

Secondary sources about the twelve symphonic poems have been quite useful in this research. Although the three funeral odes are less expansive than the twelve symphonic poems, they pose similar questions of interpretation. Both genres are single-movement orchestral works in which Liszt united musical and extramusical material. Scholars have explored Liszt's musical treatment of extramusical inspiration in orchestral programmatic works and have attempted to approach critical interpretive questions. Keith T. Johns addressed historical, analytical, extramusical, and critical issues of Liszt's symphonic poems in *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt*.[5] In another of his studies, "More on *Tasso* with Some Notes on a Little-Known Manuscript of Liszt's *Lamento e*

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[3] Humphrey Searle, "Liszt, Franz," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 11: 28-74.

[4] Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years* (New York: Random House, 1983); *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (New York: Random House, 1989); *Franz Liszt: The Final Years* (New York: Random House, 1997).

[5] Keith T. Johns, *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1997).

trionfo for Piano Duet Preserved in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, East Berlin,"[6] Johns proposed a model useful for organizing information and exploring interpretive issues of a musical work with several versions. A listing of all known versions and fragments of *Tasso* was compiled, including other information such as location, condition, and content of manuscripts. Johns used this thorough description as the basis for further investigation of how variances between the manuscripts affect interpretive issues.

The ideas in this thesis were explored through information gained through the following methods of research:

1.) *Contextualization*. The general musical, philosophical, religious, artistic, literary, historical, and biographical contexts surrounding the composition of the *Trois odes funèbres* provided information upon which to build critical arguments.

2.) *Reception History*. The reception history of Michelangelo, Tasso, and their works in the nineteenth century contributed to the contextualization of the *Trois odes funèbres*.

3.) *Compositional History*. Determining a more specific chronological order for the various versions of Franz Liszt's *Trois odes funèbres* required the use of primary source materials, such as letters, documents, and music manuscripts.[7]

4.) *Analysis of Style and Form*. An examination of the formal structure and stylistic characteristics of Liszt's *Trois odes funèbres* in relation to the form and style of the extramusical elements, including Lamennais's *Les morts*, Michelangelo's *Il penseroso*

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[6] Keith T. Johns, "More on *Tasso* with Some Notes on a Little-known Manuscript of Liszt's *Lamento e trionfo* for Piano Duet Preserved in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, East Berlin," *The Journal of the American Liszt Society* 17 (June 1985): 20-23.

[7] Manuscripts of the *Trois odes funèbres* were not obtained for this research. Further investigation of these pieces with the necessary manuscripts is, however, a possible future source study project.

and *La notte*, and the biographies of Torquato Tasso, provided clues for identifying personae suggested in the three odes.

5.) *Critical Interpretation*. The hermeneutic model proposed by Lawrence Kramer in his book *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800-1900*[8] serves as a helpful tool for critical readings of the *Trois odes funèbres*. The three types of clues or "hermeneutic windows" that Kramer identified in his model are textual inclusions, citational inclusions, and structural tropes. Each type of "window" is found in the *Trois odes funèbres* and is examined in light of historical context and Liszt's philosophy of music. A thorough reading of primary sources of Liszt's own writings provides even more information and clues with which to gain a greater understanding of these orchestral works.

In chapters 2, 3, and 4 each funeral ode is approached on an individual basis. The methods mentioned earlier are combined in each chapter to create as thorough a context as possible in which to explore interpretive issues. Chapter 5 synthesizes each chapter's conclusions to address issues concerning the study of Liszt's music in general.

[8] Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

CHAPTER 2

LES MORTS

Compositional History

Liszt composed *Les morts*, the first orchestral funeral ode of the *Trois odes funèbres*, in Weimar shortly after the sudden death of his son, Daniel, on 31 December 1859. Much of Liszt scholarship on this work focuses on this tragic event in Liszt's life as its inspiration, and only a few scholars have attempted a critical reading of the work.[1] Daniel's death and other personal experiences did indeed have a strong effect on Liszt's thoughts about life and death, which in turn influenced his decisions about his career, compositional style, and way of life. These tragic biographical events, however, tend to lead any discussion of *Les morts* toward an autobiographical reading, which is not the only aspect of *Les morts* worth noting. This orchestral funeral ode was based on the poem *Les morts* by Félicité Lamennais (1782-1854). Liszt wrote lines of the text in the score itself,

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[1] Autobiographical readings of *Les morts* are found in many Liszt biographies. This type of treatment is not uncommon or unexpected, considering the nature of biographies. See Humphrey Searle, "Liszt, Franz," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 11: 32; Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (New York: Random House, 1989), 2:479; Alan Walker, "A Boy Named Daniel," *New Hungarian Quarterly* 27/101 (1986): 204-20.
Critical readings of the work are much less common; very few scholars have chosen the *Trois odes funèbres* as a topic for research. See Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Franz Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 260-64; Arthur Stewart, "*La notte* and *Les morts*: Investigations into Progressive Aspects of Franz Liszt's Style," *The Journal of the American Liszt Society* 18 (Dec. 1985): 67-106.

thus matching specific lines of text with specific phrases of music. In 1866 he added a male chorus part, to which he set a Latin version of portions of the French text. The orchestral version of *Les morts* and its arrangements for solo piano and solo organ not only present a complex relationship between poetry, vocal music, and instrumental music; they also illuminate Liszt's ideas about the role of the listener, the conductor, and the program, as well as reveal the relationship between Liszt's orchestral works and his arrangements of them.

Lamennais

Robert Félicité Lamennais was a prominent figure in philosophy and religion during the nineteenth century and was notorious for his controversial writings. Heated discussion surrounded Lamennais's writings throughout his lifetime. The controversy stemmed largely from his support of liberal ideas within the teachings of the Catholic Church.[2] In 1828 he organized a community of liberal men interested in instigating reforms in the Catholic Church. One of the primary concerns of Lamennais and his followers was the reconciliation of authoritarianism and free will in their teachings of Catholic Liberalism. The synthesis of these seemingly divergent philosophies resulted in the metaphysical belief that society is a community in itself and in union with God. This bond links all communities, yet it also relies on the Church as a means of achieving greater spiritual unity.

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[2] John J. Oldfield, *The Problem of Tolerance and Social Existence in the Writings of Félicité Lamennais, 1809-1831*, vol. 7 of *Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, edited by Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 13.

One of Lamennais's most influential writings was *Paroles d'un croyant* (1834), a series of inspirational writings aimed at alleviating the suffering of the common citizen through the belief that Christ is the source of healing and peace. Writing at a time when he was shunned by the Pope and considered an outcast by many of his peers, Lamennais raised the concerns of the oppressed without utilizing explicitly Catholic principles. Pope Gregory XVI addressed Lamennais specifically in *Singulari nos* (Encyclical of Pope Gregory XVI on the Errors of Lamennais, 25 June 1834) written in direct response to the *Paroles*. He commented largely on Lamennais's desire to instigate riotous behavior by instructing the people to pursue "freedom of conscience":

> We were very much amazed, venerable brothers, when at first We understood the blindness of this wretched author, for in him knowledge does not come from God, but from the elements of the world....He cloaked Catholic teaching in enticing verbal artifice, in order ultimately to oppose it and overthrow it....Finally, it [*Paroles d'un croyant*] concerned that freedom of conscience which should be thoroughly condemned and the repulsive conspiracy of societies enkindling destruction of sacred and state affairs....It corrupts the people by a wicked abuse of the word of God, to dissolve the bonds of all public order and to weaken all authority.[3]

Pope Gregory XVI obviously believed that the authority of the Catholic Church, primarily the papacy, was threatened by the French philosopher. From that point Lamennais struggled between defending the teachings of the Catholic Church and following his own beliefs and dreams for a more liberal church and risking excommunication.

Paroles d'un croyant had a strong effect on Franz Liszt. After becoming acquainted with Lamennais's writings, Liszt began corresponding with him. Liszt

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[3] Pope Gregory XVI, "Singulari Nos," in *The Papal Encyclicals, Vol. I: 1740-1878*, edited by Claudia Carlen Ihm and translated by Norman Desmarais (Raleigh: McGrath Publishing, 1981), 249-50.

expressed his feelings for the priest-philosopher in a letter from early May 1834:

> ...My God! how sublime it all is!—Sublime, prophetic, divine! What brilliance! What benevolence!—From this day forward it is clear, not only to those elite souls who have long since loved and followed you, but to the whole world, it is incontrovertibly clear that *Christianity* in this nineteenth century, which is to say the entire religious and political future of mankind, lies with YOU! Your mission is awesome in its glory. Oh! and you shall not fail!—No matter how powerful the anguish and the terrors within your heart. You shall not fail![4]

Later that same year Liszt traveled to Le Chenaie and stayed with Lamennais for one month. Many of Liszt's ideas about the roles of the artist and of music in religion and society were formulated and strengthened during those weeks. Liszt identified with the progressive nature of Lamennais's writings on the state of the Catholic Church and the liberal reforms needed to make necessary changes. Liszt continued to respect Lamennais and maintained a knowledge of his writings for many more years.[5] The fact that Liszt used *Les morts* six years after Lamennais's death in 1854 revealed the composer's continued interest in the works of this priest who had a profound influence over him.

Lamennais's *Les morts*

Very little is known about the historical context of Lamennias's *Les morts*. It is included in the 1833 volume of Lamennais's *Oeuvres complètes*, published by Paul

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[4] Charles Suttoni, "Liszt's Letter: Lamennais's 'Paroles d'un croyant'," *The Journal of the American Liszt Society* 14 (Dec. 1983): 73.

[5] Liszt composed a number of works inspired by Lamennais's writings and his teachings. *Le Forgeron*, a choral piece, was written in 1845 and was based on text by Lamennais; see Merrick, 7. Liszt composed *De profundis*, an instrumental work, in memory of the time he spent at La Chenaie and dedicated the piece to Lamennais. As late as 1854 Liszt quoted a passage from *Paroles* in a letter to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein; see Franz Liszt, *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein*, translated and edited by Howard E. Hugo (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1953), 61.

Daubrée et Cailleux in Paris in 1836-1837. *Les morts* was certainly one of Lamennais's lesser-known works. He did not spark controversy with *Les morts* as he did with many of his other writings. This poem, therefore, has not received extensive documentation nor has it been the subject of detailed studies.

Les morts is a lyric poem comprising eight stanzas of varying length with no particular rhyme scheme. Each stanza concludes with the line "Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur!" (Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!). The speaker of the poem describes moments in life when one wonders what the future holds and anticipates the moment of death when all questioning ends as one's eternal existence is finally known. He identifies two everlasting states of being in the afterlife, abysmal anguish and "unbounded redemption." The content of the poem alternates between descriptions of the fear of those who have been captivated by the "grandeur, riches, voluptuousness" of earthly possessions and of the peacefulness of those who have followed "a cross in the distance." Through its repetition of the "Heureux" text this poem emphasizes faith in God as necessary for achieving peace and everlasting happiness in death.

The poem exhibits a process of change by the end of the text. The voices of the dead are presented in the poem's opening lines through the third-person point of view:

> They have passed over this earth; they have gone down the river of Time; their voices were heard on its banks, and then nothing more was heard. Where are they? Who will tell us? Happy the dead who die in the Lord![6]

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[6] Robert Félicité Lamennais, "Les morts," in *Oeuvres complètes de F. de La Mennais, Tome XI: 1833* (Paris: Paul Daubrée et Cailleux, 1836-37): 239. "Ils ont aussi passé sur cette terre, ils ont descendu le fleuve du temps; on entendit leur voix sur ses bords, et puis l'on n'entendit plus rien. Où sont-ils? qui nous le dira? *Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur!*"

The speaker, who knows the past and the present but knows nothing of the future, describes the actions of the dead. By the final stanza the dead speak in their own voices, either crying out for the Lord's forgiveness ("Du fond de l'abîme, j'ai crié vers vous, Seigneur") or praising God ("Nous vous louons, ô Dieu! nous vous bénissons").[7] Each of these passages is cited in Lamennais's *Oeuvres complètes* with a footnote containing the Latin ecclesiastical text to which the French text refers. The text of those calling from the abyss is a translation of the "De profundis," a reading from the Daily Mass for the Dead. It originated in Psalm 129, a penitential psalm in which the speaker expresses faith and hope in God's forgiveness even after death. The words of those praising God are taken from the "Te Deum," a traditional prayer of joy and thanksgiving.[8] According to the teachings of the Catholic Church one is granted indulgences when the "Te Deum" is recited either on a particular day of the church year or in a certain setting. Indulgences are granted to the living or the dead through acts of good works. The portion of the "Te Deum" to which Lamennais referred in *Les morts* ("Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur") is a vehicle for praising God. Both the "De profundis" and the "Te Deum" texts reflect the hope and thanksgiving of the dead in Lamennais's poem.

Another significant change occurs when the speaker diverts his attention from describing the dead to addressing the living. Throughout most of the text the speaker asks, "Où sont-ils? qui nous le dira?" In the final stanza the speaker redirects the questions by

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[7] Lamennais, "Les morts," 241.

[8] Although the exact origin of the *Te Deum* is not known, scholars have traced it back to the fifth century. It has been attributed to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine as well as to Nicetas of Remesiana. See M. Huglo, "Te Deum," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by the staff at The Catholic University of America (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 13: 954-55.

asking, "Où serons-nous? qui nous le dira?" The change in pronoun from "they" to "we" emphasizes the moral of the poem (Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!) by addressing the words first to others and then to the reader and the speaker, making the conclusion of the text more personally affective.

Liszt and Lamennais's *Les morts*

By 1860 Liszt had become an established composer of orchestral works as well as a reputable conductor. His twelve symphonic poems and "Faust" and "Dante" symphonies were completed before this date, as was his influential article "Berlioz und seine *Harold* Symphonie," published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1855.[9] With this essay Liszt declared his philosophy of programmatic music, outlining ideas already demonstrated in his Weimar orchestral compositions. Liszt's later programmatic instrumental compositions, including the *Trois odes funèbres*, are further manifestations of his philosophy of music. Other writings by Liszt, including his letters, provide even more details about his ideas on programmatic music and will be used to provide a philosophical framework within which to examine the extramusical elements of *Les morts*.

Liszt's earliest reference to *Les morts* was in a letter to Adolphe Pictet de Rochemont (1799-1875) dated September 1837. Although he neither named the poem specifically nor mentions Lamennais in this letter, Liszt's choice of words bears too strong a resemblance to the refrain of *Les morts* to be merely coincidental:

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[9] *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 43 (1855): 25-32, 37-46, 49-55, 77-84, 89-97. A standard translation was used in this research; see Franz Liszt, excerpts from "Berlioz and His *Harold* Symphony," in *Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era*, edited by Oliver Strunk (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), 107-33.

> Where am I going? What will I become? I do not know...I will become whatever God pleases, and nothing else troubles me. No matter what happens, I will rely on Providence.[10]

Liszt's use of two questions referring with concern to his unknown future is the most obvious parallel between the letter and *Les morts*.[11] A more subtle similarity exists, however, in the words following the remainder of the reference. In this letter Liszt stressed the importance of relying on one's faith in God during times of questioning, anxiety, and uncertainty, and emphasized the positive consequences of peace and confidence resulting from that faith. Liszt thus displayed his understanding of the poem by applying the sentiments of the text in this letter pertaining to his own life. Twenty-three years later he would express these same ideas in music.

Franz Liszt made two specific references to *Les morts* in his correspondence. The first was in a letter dated 4 July 1860 to Baron Augusz:

> Have I told you that I have been busy with an instrumental composition which I have been thinking about for a long time, and which will be entitled *Les morts*? Each verse concludes with some chords representing the line: "Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur!"[12]

This letter helps to establish the historical context of *Les morts*, including the approximate date of composition, the fact that Liszt had been contemplating this work for "a long time" prior to 4 July, and the fact that he composed music specifically for a certain phrase of

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[10] Franz Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique, 1835-1841*, translated by Charles Suttoni (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 40.

[11] This use of two opening questions also strongly resembles the questions from Senancour that preface "Vallée d'Obermann," a solo piano piece from *Années de pèlerinage, I: Suisse*.

[12] Franz Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt*, edited by La Mara and translated by Constance Bache (London: H. Grevel, 1894; reprint, New York: Haskell House, 1968), 5: 23.

text.

The second reference to *Les morts* was written in a will in June 1864 from Madonna del Rosario:

> In case music should be permitted at my funeral, please perform this piece [*La notte*] and perhaps one of my early funereal compositions (*Oraisons*) entitled "Les morts." If a few years in this world still remain for me to endure, [then] I will compose my requiem as well.[13]

During the six years between the composition of the original orchestral version of *Les morts* and the addition of the male chorus, Liszt moved from Weimar to Rome, where he became progressively more introspective and more involved in the Roman Catholic Church. On 25 April 1865 Liszt received the first four of seven degrees of the Franciscans, an order of the Catholic Church. Liszt had always shown concern about the state of sacred music, especially music that functioned within the liturgy, and during the 1860s he concentrated much of his compositional activity on sacred music and church music.

The addition of the chorus with sacred Latin text was certainly in keeping with this change in Liszt's musical style and compositional interests in the 1860s. Other scholars have linked the composer's renewed interest in the first funeral ode with the death of Liszt's mother, Anna, on 6 February 1866. In a letter written after his mother's death Liszt quoted a line from the Latin text of the *Les morts* chorus:

> After having received the last rites, my mother Anna Liszt died in Paris on 6 February 1866. Audivi vocem de coelo dicentem mihi: 'Beati mortui, qui in

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[13] Franz Liszt, quoted in critical notes to *Les Morts*, edited by Berthold Kellermann, in *Franz Liszts musikalische Werke* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1916; reprint, Farnborough, England: Gregg, 1966), 1, 12.

Domino morientur!' [I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me: 'Blessed are the those who die in the Lord!'].[14]

This text has its origins in scripture, Revelation 14:13. Liszt may have been referring to the epistle reading for the Daily Mass for the Departed, an appropriate association for a letter in which he expressed his feelings about his mother's death. This personal loss may have prompted Liszt to add the Latin words to *Les morts*, which already utilized a French version of the line from Revelation ("Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur!").

These references to *Les morts* in Liszt's correspondence show the significance the work held in Liszt's life. Many critical questions, however, remain unanswered by this information. How did Liszt use the music of this programmatic work, which appealed greatly to him, to express his own beliefs through Lamennais's text? What is the role of the chorus that he added six years after the composition of the orchestral work? What are the roles of the listener and the conductor in this piece, which utilizes a French poem as a program and an abridged version of that poem in the score itself plus a sung text in Latin?

To attempt answers to these questions requires consideration of the form, content, character, and function of the two versions of the poem. Synthesizing the formal and stylistic analyses of the music and the poem with an understanding of Liszt's own ideas about programmaticism will help to determine the relationship between text and music and to elucidate Liszt's perception of the role of the composer, the conductor, and the listener.

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[14] Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Franz Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 261.

Liszt's *Les morts*

The text of *Les morts* that Liszt used in the score itself is an abridged version of the complete poem prefacing the work. The shorter version consists of the first three stanzas of the original poem and most of the final stanza. This condensed version of *Les morts* reveals Liszt's understanding of Lamennais's poem. It also provides a glimpse into Liszt's compositional process for a work involving a complicated relationship between text and music.

The first three stanzas of Lamennais's *Les morts* introduce the situation of the poem: people pass through their lives and then die; while they live, they are tempted by worldly riches, which disappear at their death; a "cross" (the beliefs originating from Christ's crucifixion) can help to guide them through life; some people learn to know Christ, and others ignore his teachings. Liszt chose to skip the further descriptions of the two types of people, the believers and non-believers, and to continue with the voices of the dead themselves. The shorter version, therefore, condensed this particular poem into its essential components: a third-person description of Christ's role in the life and death of Christians and non-Christians, and their first-person statements about how believing in or not believing in Christ affected their deaths.

At first the musical gestures composed by Liszt seem simply to imitate the scenes in the text. The timpani in mm. 6-9 play a march-like funeral rhythm, which establishes the appropriate character for this funeral ode. The solo horn is matched with text containing the queries of an individual speaking on behalf of a group; that solo line is contoured in an upward direction to emphasize a questioning tone. The male chorus sings a Latin

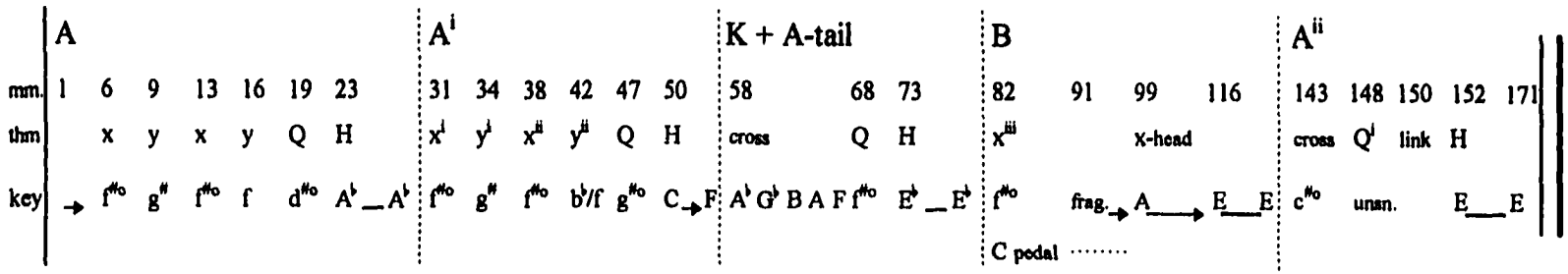
translation of the French text set in the score at the point of their entrance. The text of the third section, describing a scene where a cross appears in the distance, is set to a "cross motive"[15] in the cello line accompanied by harp. These are among the immediate, surface effects of isolated musical gestures and their relationship to specific textual descriptions. A deeper understanding, however, depends on an awareness of the process of melodic transformation in conjunction with the text.

The most important process of the poem involves the change in point of view from third-person to first-person, from observer to participant. Liszt's music emphasizes this change in point of view through the process of thematic transformation. An examination of the thematic transformation in connection with the change in point of view of the poem will uncover another process of change, a change that directly affects the listener.

Thematic transformation, a compositional technique figuring prominently in *Les morts*, is the alteration of motivic cells through the course of a composition. The changes may be intervallic, harmonic, rhythmic, or metric, and may involve alterations in scoring, texture, dynamics, and articulations. The processes of change to which the four main themes in *Les morts* are subjected offer insight into the work's musical meaning (see Form Diagram 1 on page 18).

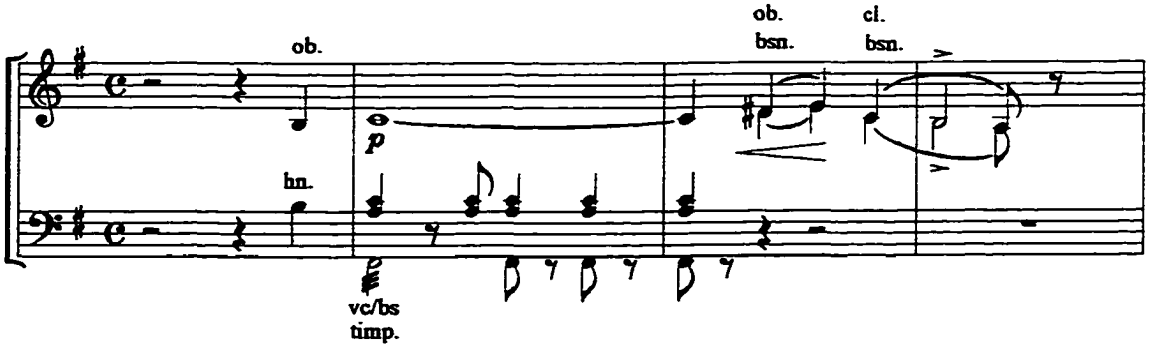
[15] The cross motive is a melodic line based on two consecutive intervals that are interlocked. In the music of J.S. Bach the cross motive was usually based on the tritone. In *Les morts* Liszt employed a perfect fourth followed by a major third.

Form Diagram 1: *Les morts*



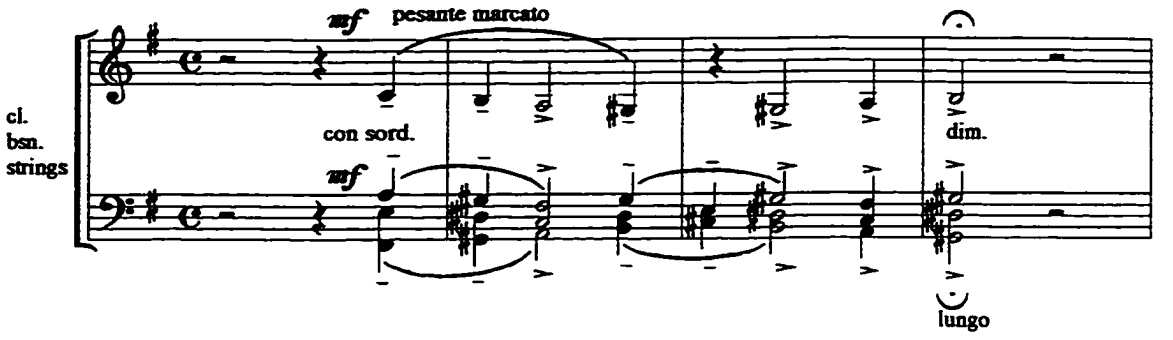
mm.= Measure numbers
thm = Themes
key = Harmonic areas
— = Stable tonal area
→ = Modulatory passage

The primary motivic cell in the funeral ode *Les morts* is the opening half-step unison in the clarinets, violas, and cellos. It develops into the first motive (X, Example 1) in mm. 6-9 as the oboe is joined by the bassoon, which in turn completes the expanded motive with the clarinet.



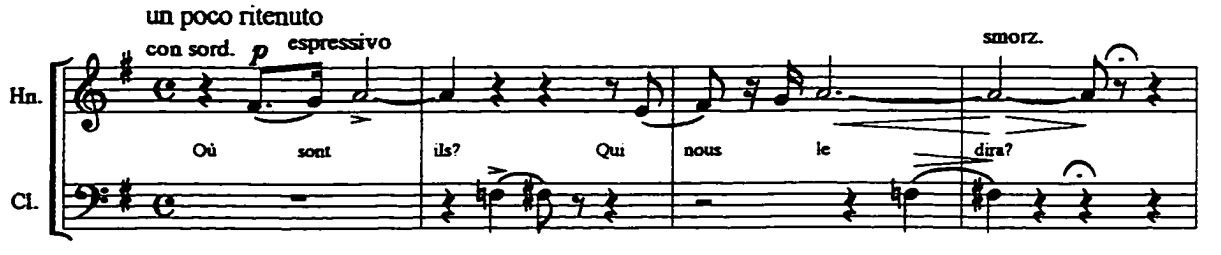
Example 1: Motive X (*Les morts*, mm. 6-9)

This expanded statement of the half step is less harmonically and metrically ambiguous than the preceding introductory measures; the F-sharp fully-diminished harmonic background and the plodding funeral-march rhythm at m. 7 provide a context for the fuller treatment of the motive. This is also the point at which Lamennais's text is first introduced in the score ("Ils ont aussi passé sur cette terre"). The X motive is repeated and developed throughout the piece, an indication of its structural importance. It is usually paired with motive Y, a phrase in a thicker, chordal texture, first heard in mm. 9-12 in the strings, which are doubled by clarinets and bassoons (Example 2).



Example 2: Theme Y (*Les morts*, mm. 9-12)

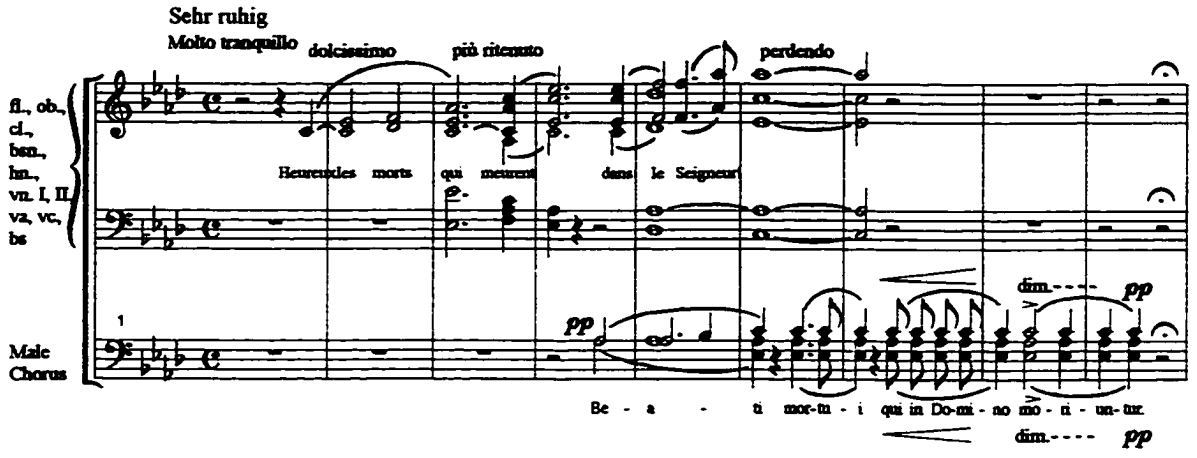
The repetition of the questions "Where are they? Who will tell us?" (mm. 19-22) is set to a third motive (Q) played by solo horn, accompanied, most importantly, by a rising half-step in the clarinet (Example 3).



Example 3: Theme Q (*Les morts*, mm. 19-22)

The rhythm of this passage closely matches the declamation of the words, resembling recitative. Motive Q is also repeated and altered through the course of the piece.

A fourth motive first appears in mm. 23-28 and is associated with the text "Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur!" as the winds and strings create a fuller texture and a presentation of a static A-flat-major harmony (H, Example 4).



Example 4: Theme H and Male Chorus (*Les morts*, mm. 22-30)

This emphasis on a single, static harmony sounds ethereal in comparison with the harmonic tension of the opening funeral dirge. This motive is followed by the male chorus, which sings the text "Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur!" primarily on a single A-flat major triad in a rhythm emphasizing the declamation of the spoken text. The chorus, in third-person point of view, concludes the intonation of the text *a cappella*.

In their initial statements all four motives are presented in succession and separated by pauses of varying length, usually in the form of a rest with a fermata. Each motive is distinct, therefore, not only in instrumentation, character, and associated text, but also in its structural presentation. The juxtaposition of these passages and the movement from chromaticism and ambiguity (mm. 1-22) to tonal closure and stability (mm. 23-30) builds tension that is relaxed at the arrival of A-flat major triads. This change in musical character expresses the changing tone within the poem's first stanza from

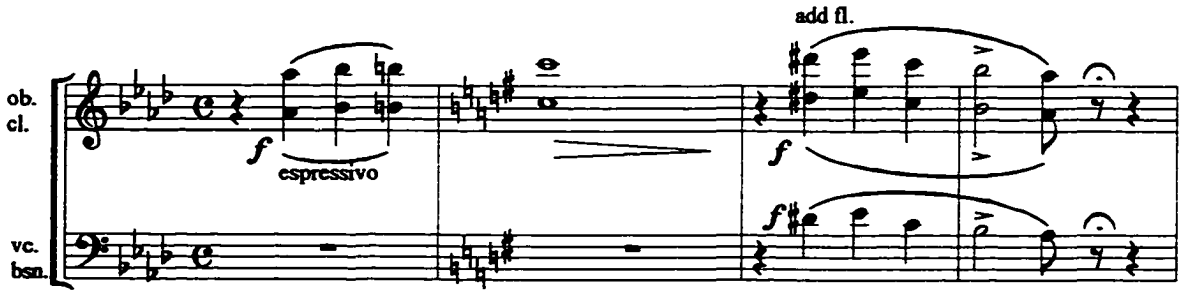
> They have also passed over this earth; they have gone down the river of Time; their voices were heard on its banks, and then nothing more was heard. Where are

they? Who will tell us?[16]

to

Happy the dead who die in the Lord!

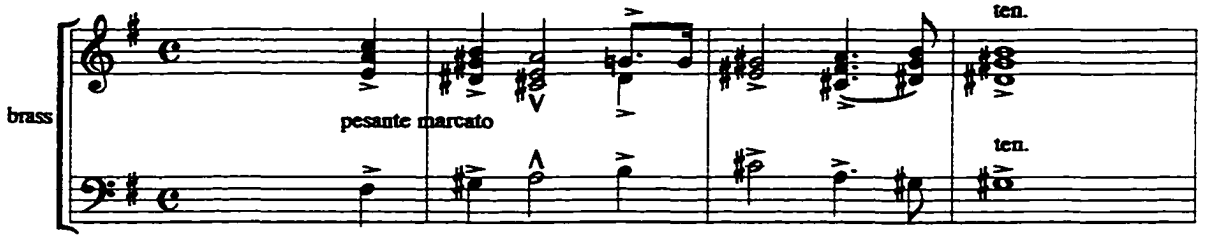
The first statement of these four musical motives and the first stanza of the poem in mm. 1-30 are followed by a developed statement of the same material with the second stanza in mm. 31-58. The musical material in this section reflects the growing tension from the repetition of the "Heureux" text and the references to "grandeur, riches, and voluptuousness." Motive X is more forceful in its altered version (mm. 31-34, Example 5): it is expanded, *forte*, and in three octaves in flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and cello.



Example 5: Theme X (*Les morts*, mm. 31-34)

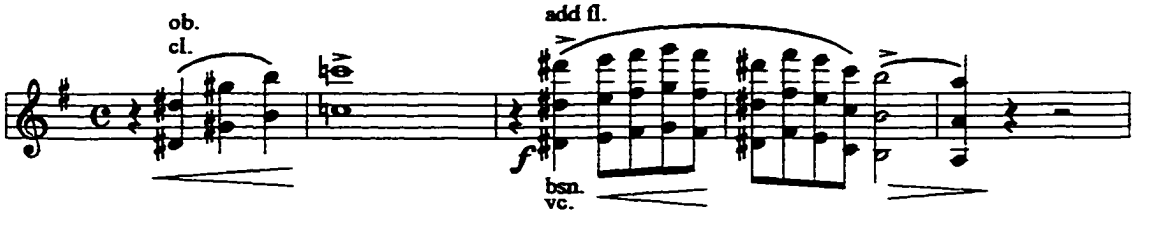
It is answered in the brass with an altered version of the Y motive (mm. 34-37, Example 6) *pesante marcato* with added accents and a new dotted rhythm.

[16] Ils ont aussi passé sur cette terre; ils ont descendu le fleuve du temps; on entendit leur voix sur ses bords, et puis l'on n'entendit plus rien. Où sont-ils? Qui nous le dira?



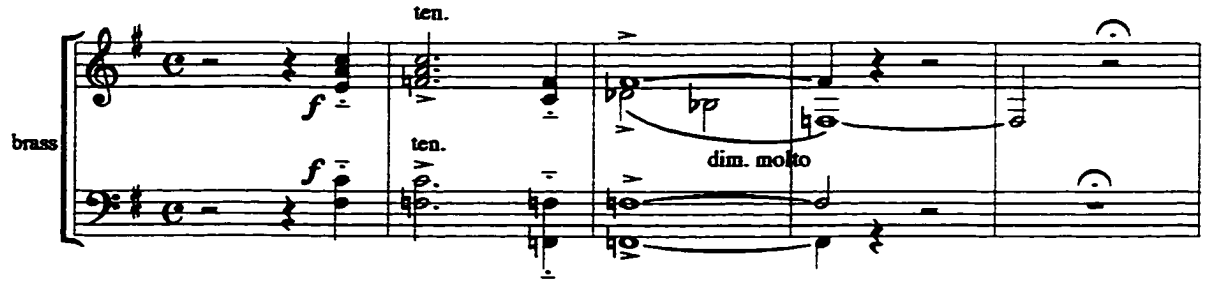
Example 6: Theme Y (*Les morts*, mm. 34-37)

The second presentation of X (mm. 38-42, Example 7) is again developed in its new expanded unison setting, closing with an eighth-note elaboration and creating even more tension.



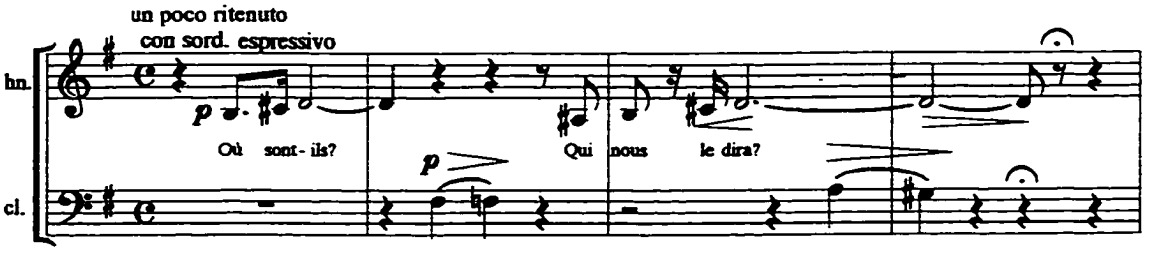
Example 7: Theme X (*Les morts*, mm. 38-42)

The Y reply (mm. 42-46, Example 8) parallels the text, "they saw it, and suddenly they only saw Eternity," by beginning strongly and then tapering (*dim. molto*) into a unison F.



Example 8: Theme Y (*Les morts*, mm. 42-46)

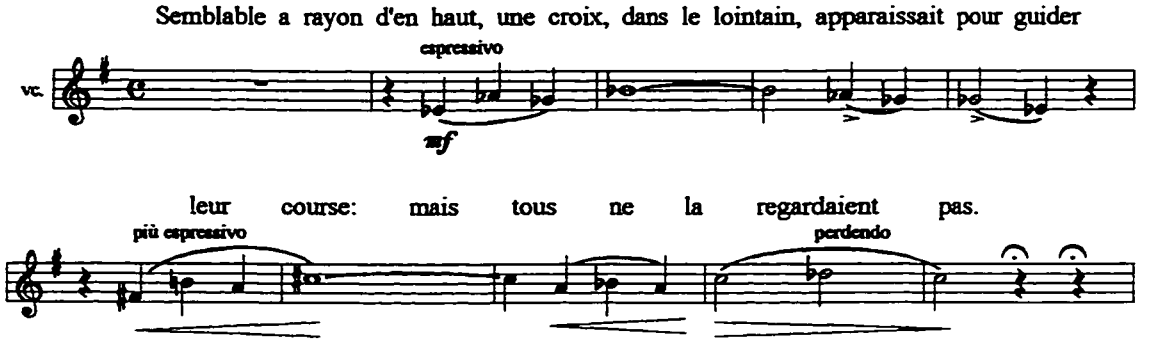
Another horn solo (mm. 47-50, Example 9) presents the questioning text "Où sont-ils?" at a pitch level one step higher than the original Motive Q and accompanied by a falling rather than rising half-step.



Example 9: Theme Q (*Les morts*, mm. 47-50)

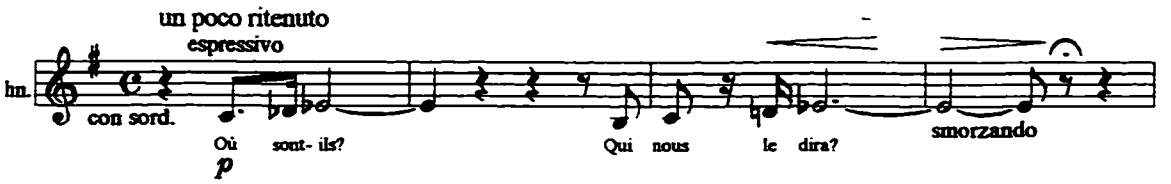
Even the motive associated with "Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur!" (mm. 50-58, Motive H), the most harmonically simple and stable musical phrase in the first section, is slightly changed from its original format. In its initial appearance Motive H presents a harmonically static section that begins and ends in A-flat major. Instead of maintaining the individuality of and separations between the four motives, however, Liszt changed the relationship between them to stress their new interaction. The second appearance of the H motive in mm. 50-58 begins in C major and moves to its subdominant, F major, creating an open-ended section, which leads into new material.

The tone of the piece changes with this new musical material in m. 58. The most notable musical elements regarding the change in character are the higher *pianissimo* register, weak downbeats, overall metric ambiguity, use of harp, a progression through a series of major harmonies, and a new melodic cello line based on a cross motive, K (Example 10), with a textual reference to Christ: "Like a light from on high a cross appeared in the distance to guide their course; but all did not behold it."



Example 10: Theme K, Cross Motive (*Les morts*, mm. 60-68)

The effect of this passage resembles that of Motive H, the previous section to which m. 58 was linked: the serene character of both passages ("Happy are the dead who die in the Lord" and the vision of the cross) contrasts sharply with the tension and questioning of the opening section based on X and Y. In fact, this new musical material replaces the combination of X and Y that began each of the two preceding sections. This process of transformation continues in mm. 69-72 (Example 11, Motive Q), as well.



Example 11: Theme Q (*Les morts*, mm. 69-72)

The solo horn plays the Q motive again and is matched with the "Heureux" text, but this time the first and last intervals are changed to half steps, accompanied by rising half-steps in the clarinet and flute. The H section, however, returns to its original function and begins and ends in E-flat major, reestablishing a tranquil character free of harmonic tension.

At m. 82 the X motive assumes the role to which it had been assigned in previous sections: it introduces a new section. This time, however, its structure is modified. From m. 82 to m. 97 the X motive begins in a low register, which matches well with the corresponding text from *Les morts*: "From the unknown places where the river loses itself two voices arise unceasingly: The one says: 'From the bottom of the abyss I have cried to Thee, Lord.'" Liszt followed Lamennais's cue in this section by setting the "De profundis"

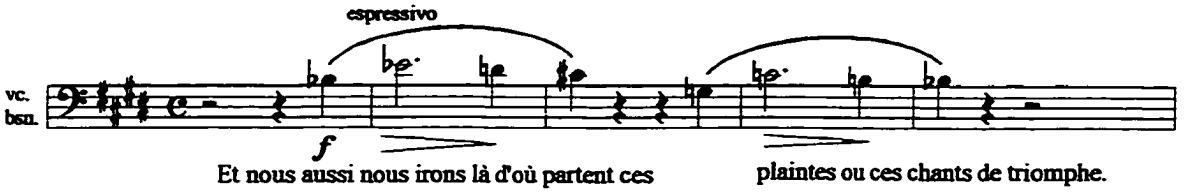
text to the male chorus part.

Aside from the opening five bars, mm. 91-99 are the only portion of *Les morts* where text is not included. In this section the X motive contracts until it condenses into a falling half-step repeated at consecutively higher pitches. The continual repetition of the half-step, combined with a *crescendo*, tremolos, and a rising pitch level, builds tension and links the voice crying from the abyss to the second voice, the voice of praise.

The triumphal section opens with what appears to be the expanded X motive from m. 31. What it becomes, however, is something quite different. A tutti texture, *fortissimo* dynamic, pulsing triplet eighth notes, prominent percussion parts, trumpet fanfares, and an active chorus part combine to create the longest tonally closed and harmonically stable section of the piece. These musical elements emphasize this passage as the climax of the first ode; the text employed here is from the crux of Lamennais's *Les morts*. The "other voice" expresses thankfulness and praise to God from somewhere other than the "bottom of the abyss." The male chorus participates with the orchestra throughout this section, playing a more active role in the texture, and voices the "Te Deum" from a first-person point of view, as indicated in Lamennais's *Les morts*.

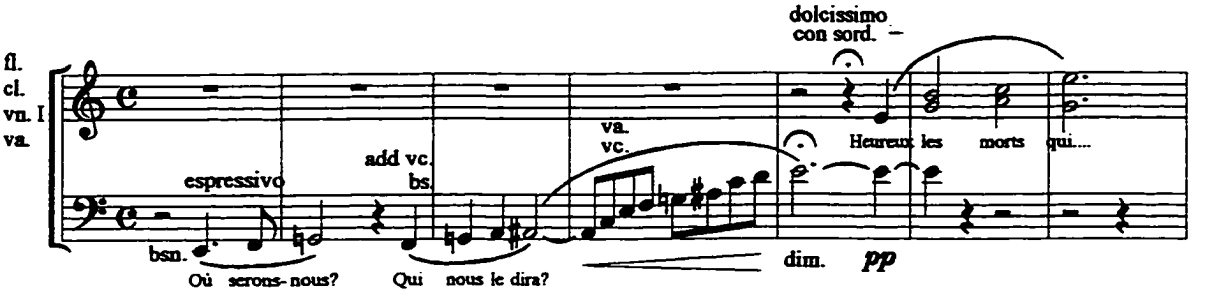
The triumphal section ends abruptly at m. 142, and a rest with a fermata separates this section from what follows. The text in the next passage consists of the final four lines of the poem, which return to the uncertainty of the poem's opening. Instead of utilizing Motives X and Y, the musical material associated with the character of the beginning of the poem, the music recalls the harmonically static section of the cross motive (K) from mm. 60-68. This motive (Example 12) is altered, however: instead of completing the

opening interval of a perfect fourth with a major third, the phrase concludes with half steps.



Example 12: *Les morts*, mm. 143-147

The combination of the two previous motives, one associated with serenity and the other with tension, reflects this passage's reference to "those wailings" and "songs of triumph" described throughout the course of the piece. Bassoon, cello, and bass provide a new presentation of Motive Q (mm. 148-151, Example 13), unison in three instruments and in expanded rhythms.



Example 13: Theme Q (*Les morts*, mm. 148-154)

The cello, which presented the cross motive, plays another important role in this passage as it bridges the Q motive and the H motive in m. 151. In this concluding portion of the piece the contrasting sections are no longer separated by long rests but are linked together, representing the eternal happiness reached through Christ for those who question their fate during life.

Persona in Liszt's *Les morts*

Liszt emphasized the content of Lamennais's poem through the music and provided a means through which the listener not only sees and hears the text, but also experiences Liszt's impression of the purpose of the text. The persona that Liszt created through the music and textual references tries to persuade the audience to repent by emphasizing the process of change from instability to stability and by repeating "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!" These characteristics suggest that the persona is a preacher, one who strives to convince his audience to repent by giving descriptive accounts of the dead's experiences, which are made more vivid through the use of chorus as the voice of the dead.

Although the character of the persona in *Les morts* does not change in the different versions of the piece, the roles of the participants in the performances varies depending on who has access to the different texts. As was stated earlier, Liszt's 1866 *Les morts* makes use of three texts in two languages. The complete French text of Lamennais's poem constitutes the attached program, a condensed version of that poem is written between the lines of the score itself, and the Latin version of portions of the French text are sung by the

male chorus. The participants in a performance of *Les morts* include the listener and conductor in the orchestral version and the listener and the performer in the solo versions. Their roles vary in their relation to the three different texts.

The Role of the Listener and the Performer in *Les morts*

Orchestral Version

The listeners of the 1860 orchestral version of *Les morts* were given access to the full text by means of the printed program but had no direct awareness of the abridged text that Liszt used in the score itself. Consequently, their means of dealing with the program were to summarize it, to encapsulate the events, descriptions, and feelings of the poem as well as the series of changes that take place throughout the course of the poem. They listened to the music with only this general idea of the program and could not necessarily associate particular episodes in the music with definite moments in the text. The listeners, therefore, experienced the poem through the music.

The male chorus, added in 1866, changed the musical experience of the listener: the Latin text sung by the chorus prompted the listener to associate the voices of the male chorus and those passages in the music with the voices of the dead. The Latin text that Liszt chose did not add a new spiritual dimension to Lamennais's poem: it is a Latin translation of Lamennais's own words, which have their origins in scripture and the liturgy. Why, then, did Liszt restore the text to Latin? On a fairly basic level, the chorus does act as the listener's guide, articulating specific passages in the text. By substituting Latin for the original French text from Lamennais's poem, Liszt employed ecclesiastical

language, which elevated the ritualistic character of the text and linked *Les morts* with passages from the Catholic Mass of the Dead, with which the nineteenth-century listener would have been familiar.

The one figure involved in the performance of the orchestral version of *Les morts* who is aware of all the texts and their position in the score is the conductor. The conductor thus possesses exclusive knowledge of Liszt's condensed version of Lamennais's poem, which reveals Liszt's own impressions of the relationship between the text and the music. Liszt attempted to guarantee that this particular programmatic piece would be conducted as he himself understood it. In *Les morts* the conductor acts as mediator by using this detailed knowledge of the text and its interaction with the music to help the listener gain clearer insight into Liszt's impression of the poem. This, therefore, identifies the composer himself as the preacher persona of the piece via the role of the conductor.

Liszt's idea of the role of the conductor as a mediator between the composer and the audience is much like his opinion about the artist's role in society. Liszt envisioned the artist as mediator between God and people, which bears strong similarities with the priest's function in relation to God and people:

> These elite men [artists] who appear to be chosen by God Himself to bear witness to the greatest emotions of humanity—these predestined, thunderstruck, enthralled men who have carried off the sacred flame from heaven, who have given life to matter, form to ideas, and by attaining the Ideal raise us by an invincible bond of understanding to excitement and celestial vision—these priests of an ineffable, mystical, and eternal religion which takes root and grows incessantly in all our hearts.[17]

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[17] Liszt, "Zur Stellung der Künstler," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, translated by Lina Ramann (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1881, reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1978), II: 5.

Liszt believed that the role of the artist in society was comparable to the role of the priest in the congregation: both were mediators between God and people, who taught and persuaded the people to better the state of society by uniting as a community. He wrote of music's role in communal cohesiveness by making reference to a Biblical passage:

> In music, as in everything else, associating with others is the only principle that produces great results. It is only "there, where several are gathered together," that the spirit manifests itself. One person is not really effective unless he can gather other individuals around him and communicate his feelings and thought to them.[18]

That "one person" (the artist) who "gathers other individuals around him" and conveys ideas to them resembles the preacher persona of *Les morts*. Therefore, *Les morts* can be understood as a model for the role of the artist in the nineteenth century, according to Liszt.

Solo Piano Version

The identification of the roles played by the listener and the conductor may be explored further in an investigation of the same relationship in Liszt's arrangement of *Les morts* for solo piano. This solo instrumental work appears to be based on the 1860 version of *Les morts*: it includes no evidence of the male chorus sections, neither the sustained harmony on the "Heureux" text nor the melodic line in the triumphal "Sanctus" section. For this version Liszt included a subtitle, "Oraison." While this word is often translated as "Oration," it also means "a formal prayer," suggesting a liturgical rather than a personal prayer.

[18] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, 168.

In the *Neue Liszt-Ausgabe* edition of *Les morts* for solo piano the complete Lamennais poem prefaces the work. Liszt's abridged version of the text, however, does not appear in the score. Only one line is set in the score itself; "Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur" is located in mm. 21-26 (the H motive in the orchestral version). This text does not appear, however, in any of the later repetitions of the same music.

The editors of the *Neue Liszt-Ausgabe* were very thorough and provided detailed reasons for the decisions they made regarding notes, expression markings, articulations, and other concerns with notation. Their treatment of Liszt's directions on the title page of the manuscript, however, is not explained at all. Liszt included a note on the title page requesting a specific presentation of the text: "NB: Das Gedicht von Lamennais muß wie in der Partitur mitgedruckt werden" ("NB: The poem by Lamennais must be printed along with it [the music] as in the [orchestral] score"). The editors must have understood Liszt's words to mean that the complete Lamennais poem should be attached as a program to the solo piano version, as it was in the orchestral version. Liszt could also have meant, however, that his own shortened version of Lamennais's *Les morts* be printed in the body of the score, as it was in the orchestral version. This decision has consequences that affect the role of the pianist.

If the condensed version of Lamennais's poem were inserted in the score of the solo piano version, then the role of the pianist would be the same as the role of the conductor. The pianist would embody the persona of the nineteenth-century artist. The editors of the *Neue Liszt-Ausgabe*, however, chose not to include Liszt's abridged version

of *Les morts* throughout the score. Unlike the conductor, who has access to the exact placement of the lines of text in the score, therefore, the pianist is aware of the complete program and only the first occurrence of the "Heureux" text in the score. Despite having knowledge of one text insertion in the score, the pianist understands the relationship between the text and the music more like the listener than like the conductor in the orchestral version.

Although the pianist performs the piece and in this way is distinct from the listener, the solo pianist experiences the work in much the same way as the listener. The soloist understands the general content of the complete poem as it is presented on the title page of the score and through the work's musical processes. The chorus part is absent from this version, also, thus placing even more emphasis on those processes rather than on specific text.

In the piano version of *Les morts*, the solo performer, like the conductor, is identified with the preacher persona. The pianist, however, persuades largely through experience and a general knowledge of specific text. This preaching does not rely on the authority of the specific text, but rather on the power of personal experience combined with the awareness of text. The persona preaches within the context of specific text, but aside from the "Heureux" reference, does not explicitly attach any particular passage of the music with that text.

This philosophy of preaching closely resembles the philosophy of Catholic Liberalism espoused by Lamennais. He followed the major tenets of the Catholic Church, an institution focused around an established body of detailed knowledge. Through his

writings, however, he expressed his belief in the freedom of conscience, the right for people to make their own decisions instead of blindly following authority. These were the teachings to which Liszt was exposed and attracted in his visit to Le Chenaie in 1834.

Franz Liszt was greatly affected by his immediate environment. His interpretations of programs and the ideas he chose to express in his music reflects his impressions of those surroundings. Liszt strove to communicate his philosophy with his audience through gradually unveiled processes, which provided the listener with an experience similar to the experience of the dead, who, through their faith in the Lord, were awarded eternal happiness.

CHAPTER 3

LA NOTTE

Historical Background

In 1862, only three years after the surprising death of his son, Daniel, Liszt experienced another devastating personal loss with the death of his daughter, Blandine.[1] Liszt responded to this tragedy with his second funeral ode, *La notte*, which he completed in 1864. Liszt based this second ode on his own composition *Il penseroso* from *Années de pèlerinage, II: Italie* (1837-49). That short piano solo, inspired by Michelangelo Buonarroti's sculpture *Il penseroso* in the Medici Tomb at San Lorenzo Chapel in Florence, comprises the first section of the orchestral work *La notte*. The title page of *Il penseroso* bears an inscription based on a quatrain by Michelangelo, in which he personified *Notte*, another of his sculptures in the Medici Chapel. He wrote the quatrain in response to an epigram by Giovanni Strozzi, a Florentine academician, who commented on the *Notte* sculpture:

> The Night that you see sleeping in such a
> graceful attitude, was sculpted by an Angel

[1] Liszt wrote of his grief to Carl Gille on 27 January 1864: "To return to Germany I should first have to step over a grave—beyond which a further grave awaits me. This, my dear friend, is no figurative way of speaking, for you know what I have lost with Blandine and Daniel!" Quoted in Ernst Burger, *Franz Liszt: A Chronicle of His Life in Pictures and Documents* (Princeton: Princeton: University Press, 1989), 229.

in this stone, and since she sleeps, she must have life;
wake her; if you don't believe it, and she'll speak to you.[2]

Notte is an older woman who lies in a contorted position in restless sleep. Her torso is twisted and her right arm is pinned behind her. The words that Strozzi used to describe her ("graceful attitude") do not reflect an unrest equal to that of the figure itself. In his response to Strozzi, Michelangelo expressed a more serious tone, which is presented as if spoken by the figure herself:

Sleep is welcome to me, and being of stone is more welcome,
as long as injury and shame endure;
not to see or hear is a great boon to me;
therefore, do not wake me—pray, speak softly.[3]

Although the personified *Notte* is pleased with the presence of rest and speaks thankfully of the opportunity to isolate herself from her immediate surroundings, her body language shows great difficulty in the simple act of sleep. The rest that she "welcomes" appears to be anything but pleasant. If the restless sleep *Notte* endures is welcome to her, then all the "injury and shame" that envelop her must be truly unbearable.

Liszt inscribed the same altered version of the quatrain by Michelangelo from *Il penseroso* on the title page of *La notte*. He arranged the solo piano piece as the opening section of *La notte*, added a new middle section, and composed a conclusion based on the

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[2] "La Notte, che tu vedi in si dolci attj / Dormir, fu da un Angelo scolpita / In questo sasso, et perche dorme, ha vita. / Destala, se nol credi et parlerattj." See Michelangleo Buonarroti, *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, edited and translated by James M. Saslow (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 419.

[3] "Grato m'è 'l sonno, e più l'esser di sasso. / Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura, / Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura. / Però non mi destar, deh'—parla basso!." Quoted in *Il penseroso*, from *Années de pèlerinage, II: Italie*, edited by Imre Sulyok and Imre Mező, in *Neue Liszt-Ausgabe* (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1974), 1, 7: 8-9. Liszt's adaptation of the poem is different from Michelangelo's quatrain: the original poem began with the word "Caro." See Saslow, 419.

opening material. He also placed a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid* at the first bars of the newly-composed middle section. These textual citations, their placement in the score, and their relationship with the musical processes of *La notte* provide clues for a critical reading of the piece. By utilizing *Il penseroso* as the first section of *La notte*, Liszt recalled not only the music and the text of the solo work but its persona, as well. Through an investigation of Michelangelo reception history in the nineteenth century and Liszt's own perception of it, together with an understanding of persona in *Il penseroso*, one can explore Liszt's ideas about persona in *La notte*.

Michelangelo Reception History in the Nineteenth Century

The renowned Florentine artist Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) was commissioned by Florence's ruling Medici family to design and create figures for the Medici Tomb in the San Lorenzo Chapel (1520-34). The process of creating the tomb was long and exhausting for the sculptor. Political uprisings upset the plans for the tomb's construction. The Medici were overthrown in 1527 during the Sack of Rome. This change in power affected Michelangelo's employment status, since his initial patrons were no longer in power. When the Medici were once again the ruling family in 1530, they demanded that Michelangelo complete his original contract. These changing conditions forced Michelangelo to renege on other obligations and commissions that he had accepted before being reinstated. Because he had to alter his original ideas to appease his patrons, Michelangelo was never fully satisfied with the work he was forced to continue. He left Florence in 1534, refusing to complete this project, which had consumed fourteen years of

his life.

Even though Michelangelo is most known for his sculpture, he was also quite an accomplished poet. In fact, many of his poems are connected with his sculptures, either as inspirations or as commentary on his creations. Michelangelo wrote about the interconnectedness of visual art and poetry in a sonnet to Tommaso Cavalieri:

> In the same way that pen and ink embrace
> The high and the low style and the middle,
> ...rich pictures or crude are in the marble,
> Whichever our wits are able to express.[4]

Michelangelo obviously saw art and poetry as two compatible forms of expression.

The nineteenth century was quite interested in the life and works of Michelangelo. The general Romantic fascination with historicism, coupled with a nineteenth-century understanding of genius, figured prominently in the positive Michelangelo reception history generated during the early nineteenth century.[5] At that time Michelangelo biographies teemed with tales of the unappreciated artist who created exquisite artworks for patrons and was forced to overlook his own creative impulses for the sake of his benefactors.[6] These portrayals of the Italian artist were quite appealing during this time.

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[4] "Si come nella penna e nell'inchiostro / è l'alto e 'l basso e 'l mediocre stile, / ...e ne' marmi l'immagin ricca e vile, / secondo che y sa trar l'ingegno nostro." Quoted in Albert C. Labriola, "Sculptural Poetry: The Visual Imagination of Michelangelo, Keats, and Shelley," *Comparative Literature Studies* 24/4 (1987): 327.

[5] William Young Ottley, *The Italian School of Design* (London: Taylor & Hessey, 1823; reprint, New York: Garland, 1980), 24. In his biography of Michelangelo, Ottley portrays Michelangelo as the greatest artist of the modern era and a creative genius at the peak of artistic evolution.

[6] Martin Weinberger, *Michelangelo, the Sculptor* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 333. According to Weinberger, historians at the beginning of the nineteenth century interpreted the Michelangelo quatrain associated with *Notte* as an analogy to Michelangelo's disgust with the Medici government, and, therefore, it was considered a political statement.

The interaction between poetry and art, which Michelangelo espoused, was another aspect of the artist's works common to certain nineteenth-century practices.

The English artist and art critic Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) has been credited as the main force behind the rising interest in Michelangelo's works in the late eighteenth century.[7] Reynolds gave public lectures on artistic topics and theories at the Royal Academy of London beginning in 1769. These fourteen lectures were later published as a series of articles titled *Discourses*. In the fifth and fourteenth *Discourses* Reynolds used Michelangelo as a model of Romantic aesthetics for art students.[8] Emphasizing individuality and personal expression, Reynolds focused on the sublimity of Michelangelo's ideas:

> Michelangelo has more of the poetical inspiration; his ideas are vast and sublime; his people are more superior order of beings; there is nothing about them, nothing in the air of their actions of their attitudes, or the style and cast of their limbs or features, that reminds us of their belonging to our own species.[9]

The growing interest in Michelangelo created a need for reliable biographical sources and critical editions of his works. The main source for Michelangelo's poetry in nineteenth-century scholarship was based on manuscripts and copies from the poet's own unpublished collection (1542-46).[10] Michelangelo Buonarroti copied the Strozzi *Notte* epigram and his quatrain reply together in this compilation of his own poems. The entire

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[7] Michael H. Duffy, "Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56/2 (1995): 219.

[8] Duffy, 217.

[9] Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, edited by Stephen O. Mitchell (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1797; reprint, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 63.

[10] Saslow, 53.

unpublished collection was printed in 1623 by Michelangelo the Younger, the artist's grandnephew. The two poems were quite likely printed in later publications based on this original volume.

Liszt's Impressions of Michelangelo

Liszt was quite familiar with the Italian art of Florence, including the work of Michelangelo. He spent most of the winter of 1838 in Florence with Marie d'Agoult.[11] His activities in Florence and other Italian cities during the years 1835-1841 were fairly well-documented in a series of articles he wrote titled *Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique*, which were published in the Parisian newspaper, *Gazette musicale*.[12]

During his travels Liszt became acquainted with the artist and critic Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), whose own opinions about art strengthened Liszt's ideas about the close relationship between music, art, and poetry. In a letter to Hector Berlioz dated 2 October 1839, Liszt wrote about this relationship in reference to Michelangelo:

> Day by day my feelings and thoughts gave me better insight into the hidden relationship that unites all works of genius. Raphael and Michelangelo increased my understanding of Mozart and Beethoven....Dante has found his pictorial expression in Orcagna and Michelangelo, and someday perhaps he will find his

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[11] Walker, 1: 265.

[12] Maurice Schlesinger (1797-1871) founded the *Gazette musicale* in 1834, bought the *Revue musicale* in 1835, and merged the two to form *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*. As the editor of this journal, Schlesinger allowed and encouraged writers to combine discussions of music and literature. This was an effective arena in which Liszt could voice his opinion about such matters. See Katherine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1, 52.

musical expression in the Beethoven of the future.[13]

He followed this description of Michelangelo and the unity of arts with an account of his first meeting with Ingres:

> One of the luckiest encounters of my life also helped in no small way to strengthen both my intimate feelings about these matters and my fervent desire to increase my understanding and knowledge of art. A man of genius, abetted by exquisite taste and virile energy, has produced the finest examples of contemporary painting, Ingres extended his friendship to me so warmly in Rome that I still recall it with pride.[14]

Liszt recalled another time while they were walking through the Vatican together:

> Ingres spoke as he walked...His glowing words gave new life to all those masterpieces...A mystery of poetry stood before us fully revealed: it was the genius of modern times evoking the genius of antiquity. That evening when we returned, after having discussed these marvels heart to heart at length...I took the initiative and led Ingres toward the open piano, gently chiding him: "Come now, master," I said, "we cannot forget our beloved music."...Oh, if only you could have heard him! What purity of style! What integrity of feeling![15]

Liszt was surely taken by Ingres's ideas about music, art, and poetry, which resonated quite strongly with Liszt own. Although Liszt did not describe the content of his conversations with Ingres in any more detail in this letter, his acquaintance with such a knowledgeable and distinguished artist must have given Liszt an opportunity to learn about Italian art, including Michelangelo's.

The most explicit reference to Liszt's awareness of Michelangelo's artwork, most particularly the sculptures found in the Medici Chapel, is Liszt's request to Kretschmer for

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[13] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique, 1835-1841*, translated by Charles Suttoni (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 186. A "musical expression" of Dante was indeed composed by Liszt himself in his *Dante* Symphony (1855-56).

[14] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, 187.

[15] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, 187-88.

drawings of Michelangelo's *Il penseroso* and Raphael's *Sposalizio* for the inner title page of each respective work.[16] He obviously wanted the music to be associated with its source of inspiration, the visual art.

The Michelangelo quatrain that Liszt employed on the title page of *Il penseroso* was neither posted nor engraved at the Medici Tomb. Liszt's knowledge of the text, therefore, may have been a result of being acquainted with someone who was familiar with Michelangelo's poetry, such as Ingres, and very likely Liszt read Michelangelo's poetry himself. Such a speculation is not completely unfounded. The contents of Liszt's library in Weimar amounted to approximately 1300 books, and although most of the items in this particular collection were published after 1861, the subject matter of the books gives insight into Liszt's interests.[17] He had obtained books about a variety of topics, including music, religion, fiction, poetry, history, politics, economics, philosophy, art history, aesthetics, and medicine, as well as reference books and manuals. Based on the early letters of Liszt, particularly those chronicling the events between Liszt and Marie d'Agoult and their journeys through Italy, this interest in knowledge and books was not a post-1860 phenomenon in Liszt's life.

Liszt made reference to Michelangelo in a letter to his mother, Anna, shortly after the death of Blandine, the event that inspired the composition of *La notte*:

> Michelangelo said that it was wrong to rejoice at the birth of a child, and that, on the contrary, we ought to weep to see one more being about to participate in mankind's sufferings, and to reserve our cries of joy exclusively for those who,

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[16] Walker, 1: 274.

[17] Maria Parkai Eckhardt, "Liszt's Weimar Library: The Hungarica," *New Hungarian Quarterly* 32/122 (1991): 156-64.

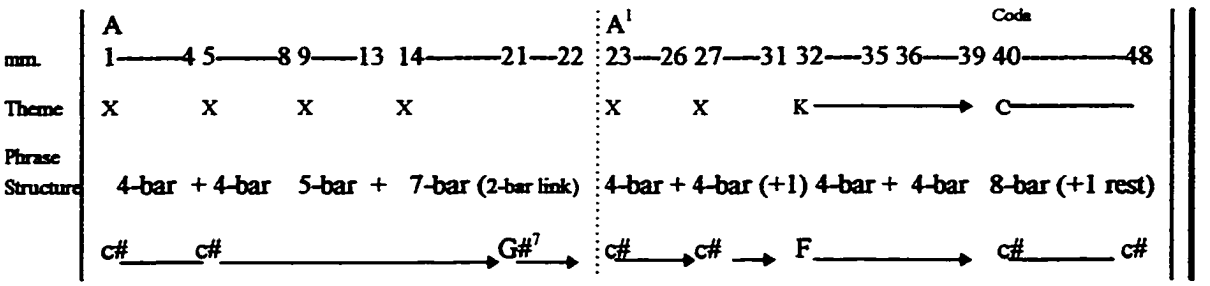
after a noble life, die in the Lord.[18]

Liszt was not only familiar with Michelangelo's own writings, thus summarizing the artist's words; he also respected the artist's ideas enough to include them in a personal letter. This reference to Michelangelo regarding Blandine's death suggests a motive behind the choice of *Il penseroso* as the opening material for *La notte*.

Analysis

The piano piece *Il penseroso* ("The Pensive One") was composed in two parts (see Form Diagram 2), both based on the same repetitive dotted-rhythm motive resembling a march.

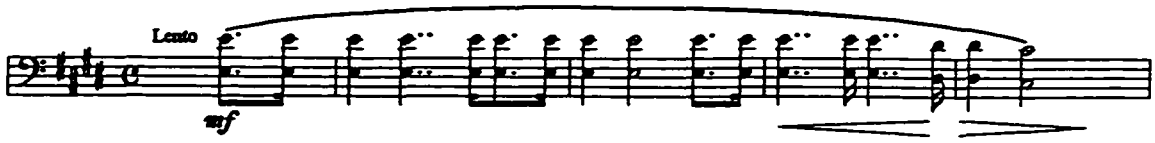
Form Diagram 2: *Il penseroso*



X = Funeral rhythm motive
K = Sequence of suspensions, closing material
____ = Stable tonal area
____→ = Modulatory passage

[18] Quoted in Adrian Williams, *Portrait of Liszt: By Himself and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 386.

The "melody" is as repetitive as the rhythm; the first four phrases of the piece (mm. 1-4, 5-8, 9-13, 14-18) consist of a single pitch, which wavers only at cadences (Example 14).

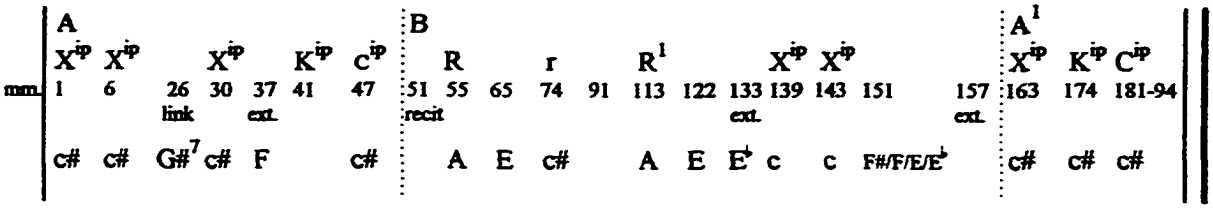


Example 14: Theme X (*Il penseroso*, mm. 1-5)

Although Liszt employed extensive chromaticism and dissonance in *Il penseroso*, the harmony of the entire piece is firmly centered around C-sharp minor. Liszt avoided intricate development techniques and elaborate formal processes in this work, thus revealing his interest in establishing a particular character or mood rather than a process or plot. The introspective character of *Il penseroso* embodies the pensive persona of this piece identified by the title. The quatrain based on Michelangelo's poem lends further evidence for a Thinker persona who ponders death and wishes to be left alone.

The direct and complete musical citation of *Il penseroso*, including the textual quotation of the Michelangelo quatrain, as the opening material in *La notte* introduces the pensive persona of the solo piano work in the orchestral ode (see Form Diagram 3).

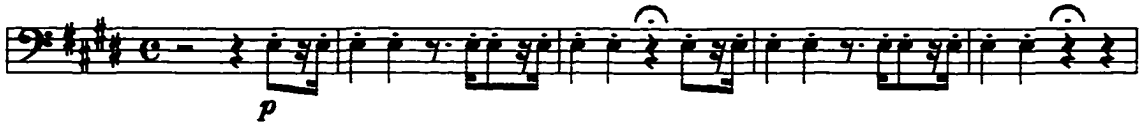
Form Diagram 3: *La notte*



X^{ip} = Funeral rhythm from *Il penseroso*
K^{ip} = Sequence of suspensions, closing theme from *Il penseroso*
C^{ip} = Coda from *Il penseroso*
R = Reminiscence theme

The role of the persona in *La notte*, however, is much different from its model in *Il penseroso*. Liszt distinguished the *La notte* persona from its counterpart by placing it in a more specific temporal context ("The Night"), by subjecting it to new musical material that is accompanied by a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and by allowing developmental techniques to affect change.

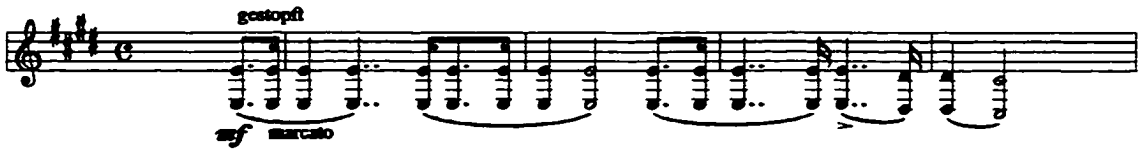
The second orchestral ode begins with a funeral march introduced by solo timpani (Example 15).



Example 15: Funeral Rhythm (*La notte*: Timpani, mm. 1-5)

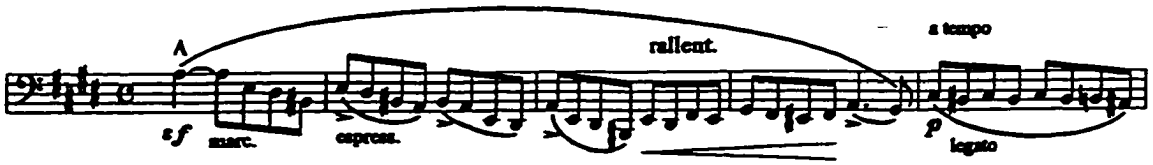
The persistent use of dotted rhythms, minor mode, dark timbres, low range, and

dissonances emphasizes the funereal character of this piece. As is the case with any typical march, this opening is set in square, four-bar phrase structure and has a repetitive rhythmic pattern. The muted horns repeat the rhythmic pattern introduced by the timpani and maintain a monotonous "melody" comprised of a single persistent intonation pitch that descends through a minor third at each cadence (Example 16, mm. 6-13).



Example 16: Theme X (*La notte*: Horn, mm. 5-9)

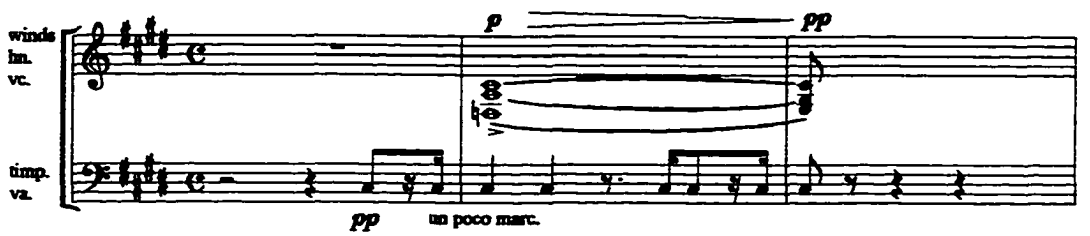
This seemingly predictable phrase structure is altered in a repetition of the horn passage, as the phrase expands to five bars (mm. 14-18) and then seven bars (mm. 19-25). This breaks down the typical expectation of the march, which then fades into a rhythmically freer unison line played by cello and bassoon (Example 17, mm. 26-30).



Example 17: Cello and Bass Link (*La notte*, mm. 26-30)

The bassoon and cello link elides with the following section, which presents a return of the opening march. In this section, however, the bassoons and cellos proceed

with the continuous eighth-note pattern of the recitative section, forming an ostinato based on a sequence of descending half steps, while the violins and violas perform the timpani's opening march rhythm on a single pitch, as the horns did in mm. 6-13. The regular phrase structure returns to close the section with an emphasized clashing dissonance, an added D-natural, which is stressed for the duration of a whole note, while its resolution to E comprises an eighth note (Example 18).

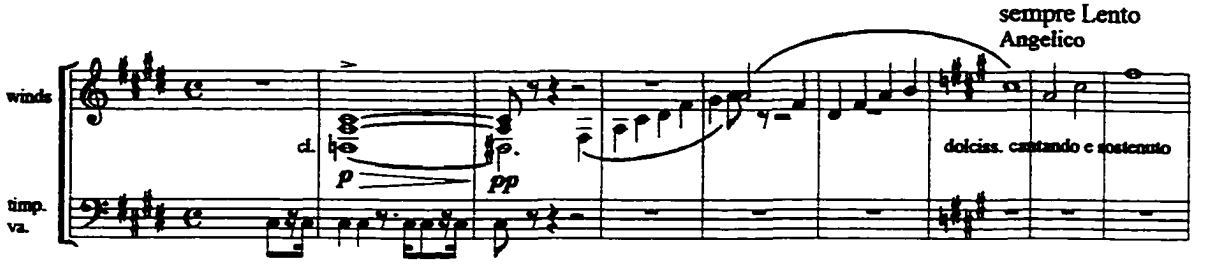


Example 18: Resolution in C-sharp minor (*La notte*, mm. 47-49)

In spite of the chromaticism and breakdown of symmetrical phrase structure in the initial 51 bars of the piece, the entire opening section hovers around C-sharp minor. The listener experiences no sense of progression: the funereal character is emphasized through the use of persistent rhythms. The function of the music in this *Il penseroso* section is to embody *Notte*'s text, which also lacks change or progression.

The second section of *La notte* comments upon the quatrain and its music by introducing new musical material and text. The unwavering character of *Il penseroso* is interrupted by these factors. The expectation of a closing cadence in C-sharp minor (m. 51) is averted as the clarinet resolves its D-natural to D-sharp instead of the anticipated E,

and proceeds with another link, which leads directly into a new section (Example 19).



Example 19: Clarinet Link (*La notte*, mm. 49-57)

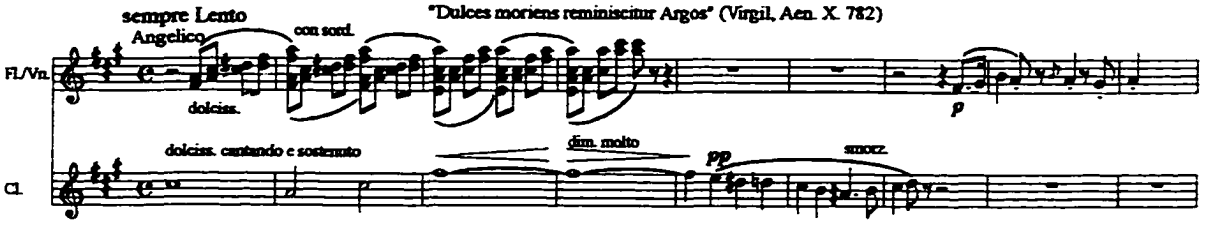
The expression marking immediately following the disrupted cadence and the recitative passage is "Angelico," which indicates a definite change from the funeral march of the opening *Il penseroso* passage to an "angelic" topic.

Liszt inscribed a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid* (X: 782) in the score at the beginning of this section: "Dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos" (Dying, he calls to mind his gentle Argos).[19] The passage to which the quotation refers is a battle between Aeneas and Mezentius. When Mezentius hurled his spear at Aeneas, the spear was deflected off the shield of his rival and penetrated the side of Mezentius's ally, Antores. As Antores lay suffering a fatal wound he was not meant to receive, he recalled his sweet homeland, Argos, the place from which he had moved to settle in Italy.

The music at the outset of the new section suggests an "angelic" or mystical topic by means of a move to the major mode, a thin texture created by divisi flutes and first

[19] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Allen Mandelbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 279. Liszt changed the first word of the citation from "Dulcis" to "Dulces."

violins, the absence of an insistent rhythmic pulse, and the long, lyrical melodic line in the clarinet (Example 20).



Example 20: Reminiscence Theme (*La notte*, mm. 55-63)

The citation for Virgil refers to a moment of reminiscence, which suggests that the mystical character of this passage is better described as nostalgia. The "Magyar" cadence, introduced in this "reminiscence section" (mm. 62-63), functions as a reference to a specific past, a Hungarian's past.[20] Liszt identified this cadence as the reason for requesting that the second ode be performed at his own funeral: "If at my funeral one were to have music, I wish that one would select the second of these [odes] by Michelangelo, because of the motif from the Magyar cadence pages 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the score."[21] This inscription on the title page of Liszt's manuscript suggests that the reference to a

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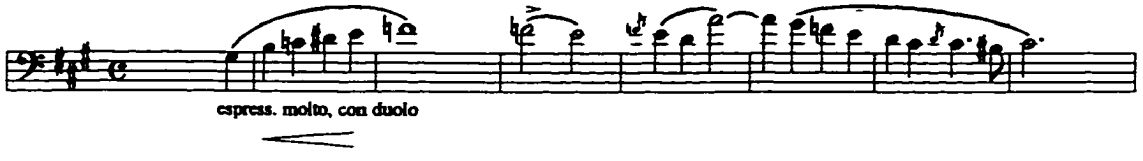
[20] Liszt utilized the cadential figure in Example 20 in his Hungarian Rhapsodies, thus associating that use of the grace note, of rests, and of the lower and upper neighbor tones of a final cadence tone with "Hungarian" music, or "Gipsy" music, as Liszt himself referred to it. He wrote his impressions of this music in his book *The Gipsy in Music* (, 1859).

[21] "Si à mes obsèques on avait à faire de la musique, j'aimerais qu'on choisit la 2ème de ces Michel angelo cause du motif à cadence magyare, pages 3, 4, 5, et 6, de la partition." From the title page of the *La notte* manuscript, dated Rome, November 1866. See Klára Hamburger, "Program and Hungarian Idiom in the Sacred Music of Liszt," in *New Light on Liszt and His Music. Franz Liszt Studies Series 6*, edited by Michael Saffle and James Deaville (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1997), 243.

Hungarian's past is a reference to Liszt's youth.

Two phrases, each outlined by solo clarinet and ending with the Magyar cadence, occur in E major and A major. The nostalgia of this section is emphasized by the major mode and a lilting grace note in the cadential figure. Evidence of change is presented, however, in m. 74 in the cello line, where its melodic contour is modified as C-sharp minor with an additional grace note in measure 77 (Example 21).



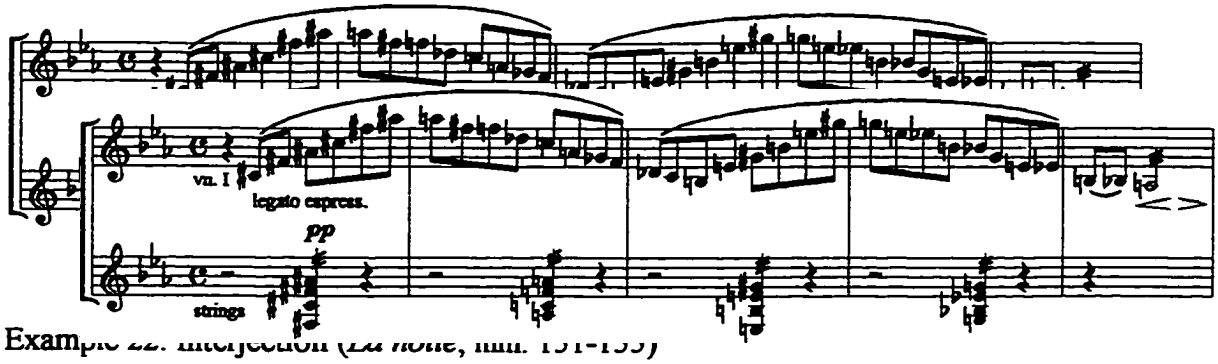
Example 21: Cello Reminiscence Theme (*La notte*, mm. 73-80)

The grace note that characterized only the cadence in the opening phrase of this section is now a distinct aspect of the melody. What began as a simple reminiscence of home has turned into a more pleading, insistent, and agitated character. This middle section builds tension with the return of a continuous rhythmic pulse, the repetition of two-bar sequences of a descending Hungarian scale in dotted rhythms, and denser scoring.

In m. 113 the reminiscence section returns to the melodic and harmonic material from the opening clarinet solo, but this is now scored for *pianissimo* tutti ensemble in which the winds' and first violins' melody is accompanied by string tremolos and pulsing eighth notes in the brass. This passage comprises two phrases of clarinet solo, one in A

major, the other in E major. The shimmering effect of the string tremolo restores the more "angelic" quality of the beginning of this section. Tension builds with a compression of the Magyar cadence into one-measure repetitions and a turn to E-flat major. The reminiscence section concludes with a rhythmic expansion of the cadence, which fades away to an octave B-flat in the extreme upper register of the violin.

The opening melodic and rhythmic material from *Il penseroso* returns at m. 139. These motives are not matched, however, with a return of the tonic, C-sharp minor. The timpani introduces the return of its material in C minor, a modulation prepared by the turn to E-flat major at the conclusion of the reminiscence section. Unmuted horns, in a five-bar and a three-bar phrase, continue with dotted rhythms punctuated by string tremolos. The instability caused by the return in the wrong key and by an immediate use of asymmetrical phrase groupings is accented even more by an interjection of parallel major modes at m. 151 (Example 22).



Example 22: Interjection (*La notte*, mm. 151-155)

The funeral march rhythm is silent for four measures, as two ascending arpeggios outlining major harmonies (F-sharp and E) alternate with descending major arpeggios with

chromatic inflections (F and E-flat). This sequence of descending major harmonies diminishes any feeling of harmonic progression, and its general character resembles that of the reminiscence section.

The texture thins as a cello and bassoon link of wandering eighth notes becomes a chromatic ostinato pattern in dotted rhythms leading to the return of C-sharp minor. The intonation and funeral rhythm passage returns in a square phrase structure of two four-bar phrases. The emphasis on the clashing dissonance of the D-natural, the hint of B-flat major followed by a first-inversion tonic triad, and the avoidance of the pitch C-sharp prolongs the ultimate resolution of the piece until the final three measures.

The opening section of Liszt's *La notte* involved no sense of progression or change. When this material returns in C minor instead of C-sharp minor in the final section of the piece, however, it is forced to change for the required resolution to the tonic. That resolution does not occur, however, until after the four-bar interjection of parallel major modes in m. 151, which seem out of place in the return of the funeral topic. It recalls the focus of the major mode in the opening of the reminiscence section and suggests a remembrance of that material.

La notte and Persona

The opening section of *La notte* is an orchestral version of *Il penseroso*: therefore, the Thinker persona of *Il penseroso* is the persona of the opening section of *La notte*. The consistent topic of the funeral march, the repetitive use of the dotted rhythm, and the stable harmonic focus of C-sharp minor all contribute to the pensive character of the first section of the second funeral ode. The presentation of new material in the reminiscence

section, however, suggests a change in the Thinker persona. A recitative-like line in the clarinets links the *Il penseroso* section with the *Angelico* passage, leading the Thinker persona out of thoughts of death to the process of dying. The *Aeneid* citation is in the present tense, indicating that it is the person recalling the past who is dying. The Thinker persona's thoughts about death are followed by death itself. As represented by the citation from *The Aeneid*, the dying persona reflects on the past, specifically on the home of his youth. Through the music, particularly the Magyar cadence, that home is identified as Hungary. The persona of the central section, therefore, is revealed as a dying person reminiscing about Hungary, his homeland.

When the opening section returns after the reminiscence section, it is in the key of C minor, which suggests that the return does not merely function as a symmetrical counterpart to the opening material. The persona in the opening reflected on the words of Michelangelo's *Notte*. The dying persona's thoughts in the reminiscence section conclude in E-flat major. The "return" of the opening material is in the relative minor of E-flat major, C minor. The material following the dying persona's memories, therefore, is specifically connected to the process of dying not only by its temporal placement (following the dying persona's thoughts) but also by its tonal relationship (major/relative minor).

The return of C-sharp minor in m. 163 concludes the living thoughts and dying thoughts with the funeral march. The *Il penseroso* material is again in square, four-bar phrase structure, accompanied by a dotted-rhythm ostinato bass pattern, which emphasizes a processional, march-like rhythm. The persona experiences the various stages of death,

from thoughts about it, to dying, and finally, to the funeral.

Conclusions

As has already been noted, Liszt requested that this ode be performed at his own funeral because of its use of Magyar cadences. He believed that this melodic and rhythmic gesture linked his identity with a past that he created in the second funeral ode. Franz Liszt was Hungarian, but his childhood there was interrupted by performance tours he gave across the continent. Like many Romantics, Liszt did not envision his actual biography, with his limited relationship to Hungary, but rather he was more interested in a fictional homeland for which he longed and in allowing that created past to unfold through the music.

The reference to the Hungarian idiom is not the only reference that Liszt makes to himself in this work. By utilizing the piano solo *Il penseroso*, Liszt recalled thoughts from his own travels in Italy. Uniting the past with the present in the musical form of this work reflects Liszt's perceived union of his fictional past and present in his own life. The use of the piano solo in an orchestral work composed approximately thirty years later brings the composer's thoughts full circle. This ode is an autobiographical reflection by the composer, a type of self-eulogy that shows the progression from thoughts in life to death.

CHAPTER 4

LE TRIOMPHE FUNÈBRE DU TASSE

Compositional History

Liszt completed *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, the third ode of the *Trois odes funèbres*, in 1866. Unlike *Les morts* and *La notte*, the third ode has no known direct connection with any tragic event or personal loss in Liszt's life. Liszt described the third ode as an "epilogue to the symphonic poem *Tasso*" and included the full title of that symphonic poem, *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo*, on the title page of *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*.

This orchestral work was also prefaced by a program, which was printed for the first time for the 1877 premiere performance of the ode by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Damrosch (1832-1885).[1] The text was a description of Tasso's funeral from a biography of Tasso by Pierantonio Serassi. In his account of the event Serassi emphasized not only the great sadness felt by Tasso's friends and admirers and the remorse of those who did not realize the poet's greatness until after his death, but also the joy and celebration of Tasso's long-awaited recognition:

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[1] Damrosch was the conductor of the Breslau Philharmonic Society from 1858 to 1860. While working there he performed works by Wagner, Berlioz, and Liszt. He conducted the New York Philharmonic for only one season (1876-77), during which he performed *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*. H. E. Krehbiel, Richard Aldrich, and H.C. Colles, "Damrosch, Leopold," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980): 5: 174-75.

> Above all, there was Cardinal Cintio, who was deeply moved, and who grieved beyond measure at having been too late to honor such a genius with the merited crown. He would not, however, withhold this distinction from Tasso after his death. So after having draped the body in a costly toga, he ordered the poet's brow to be crowned with the well-deserved laurel, rejoicing at being able to bestow upon the deceased at least on the day of this funeral that outward sign of poetical glory.[2]

According to Serassi, Tasso's funeral was a bittersweet ceremony, an event honoring the writer and triumphing in his accomplishments in retrospect.

Although Liszt did not attach the excerpt from Serassi's book to *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* until more than ten years after completing the third ode, he obviously found the text useful for helping his listeners appreciate the musical work.[3] To understand the relationship between the third ode and its program, one must first realize how the life and works of Torquato Tasso were perceived generally by writers, poets, musicians, and artists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. More specifically, one must realize Liszt's own impressions of Tasso. This information will be united with a detailed musical analysis exploring the relationship between extramusical topics and formal processes to provide a thorough examination of this programmatic work.

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[2] Pierantonio Serassi, *La Vita di Torquato Tasso, III* p. 325. "Sopra tutti il cardinal Cintio non se ne poteva dar pace, spiacendogli oltre modo di non essere stato in tempo ad onorar tanta virtù della debita corona: il qual onore tuttavia non volle che mancasse a *Torquato* almen dopo la morte. Perciocchè fatto vestire il cadavero d'una nobile toga, ordinò che gli fosse cinta la chioma del meritato alloro, godendo ch'ei comparisse con un si dovuto ornamento almeno nella pompa funebre, giacchè più non gli era permesso nella trionfale, a lui tanto meritamente destinata."

[3] Humphrey Searle, "Liszt, Franz," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 11: 45. Liszt requested that the Serassi excerpt be included in the program of the premiere performance of *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* in New York and also in the published score.

Tasso Reception History in the Nineteenth Century

Torquato Tasso's works and his persona were eagerly received in the nineteenth century. At that time Tasso was understood as a Romantic genius and, whose creativity was never fully appreciated during his lifetime and who revealed his inner feelings through his literature. His fictional writings were considered autobiographical by nineteenth-century artists; the characters he discussed, the situations in which they were placed, and the adversities to which they were subjected were understood in the nineteenth century as parallels to Tasso's own life. Giovanni Battista Manso (1561-1645) was perhaps the most influential Tasso biographer, largely because of his personal acquaintance with Tasso.[4] In his book *Vita di Torquato Tasso* (1621) Manso perpetuated myths about the life of Tasso, fabricating many supposed biographical events from Tasso's own fictional works. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries authors and poets alike accepted the fictional tales about Tasso, his alleged love affair with Leonora d'Este, his imprisonment, and his subsequent insanity as truths and saw reflections of themselves in the tortured and misunderstood figure of Tasso.

Two very successful late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century literary sources perpetuating these myths were *Torquato Tasso* (1780-89), a play written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe[5] and the *Lament of Tasso* (1817) by Lord Byron.[6] Goethe based his

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[4] For a thorough, critical evaluation of Tasso reception history from 1750 to 1850, see "The Legend of Tasso's Life," in Charles Peter Brand, *Torquato Tasso, A Study of the Poet and of His Contribution to English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 205-25.

[5] Brand, 210.

[6] Brand, 218.

character Tasso mostly on his own impressions from a German translation of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, which included an introduction by Manso. Goethe's fictional Tasso is the epitome of the Romantic artist: he exhibits extraordinary creativity but is at odds with those in his social environment. Byron was inspired by his visit to the cell in St. Anna where Tasso was banished after an alleged affair with Leonora d'Este. Byron's Tasso suffered from unrequited love, which inevitably pushed him to insanity. These representations of the figure Tasso were prominent reasons for the continuation of legends about the Italian writer in the nineteenth century.

Coinciding with this perpetuation of the Tasso myths, writers and scholars researched the biography of Tasso through critical readings of primary source material, including Tasso's letters. The most reliable biographical source on Torquato Tasso in the late eighteenth century was *Vita di Torquato Tasso* [1785] by Pierantonio Serassi.[7] Based on documentary evidence, this biography was considered one of the most thorough and well-researched writings on the life of Tasso at that time. In 1810 John Black subjected Serassi's research to further critical reading, attempting an even more objective approach to Tasso biography.[8]

Franz Liszt was certainly familiar with both the fictional and the historical representations of Tasso. He composed the symphonic poem *Tasso* as an overture to Goethe's play for an 1849 production in Weimar, based the program for the published version of the symphonic poem (1854) on his impressions of Lord Byron's Tasso, and, as

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[7] Brand, 212.

[8] John Black, *Life of Torquato Tasso*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne, 1810).

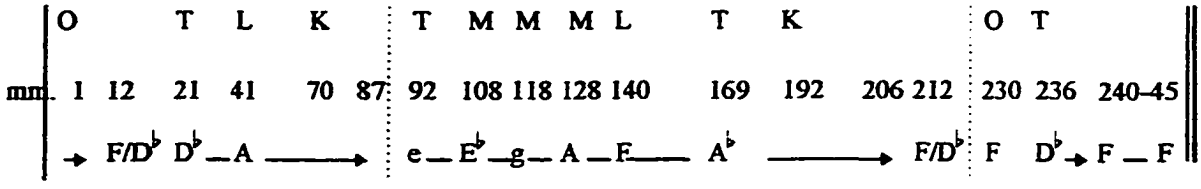
already mentioned, printed a portion of Serassi's Tasso biography as a program for the premiere performance of *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*.

Liszt's awareness and use of these works, which are examples of both the fictional and the historical treatment of the Tasso biography, reflect his own interest in Tasso as a Romantic figure. Liszt's own impressions of Tasso are manifested in the symphonic poem *Tasso* and the third funeral ode, *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*. A thorough investigation of the symphonic poem is beyond the scope of this research; identification of musical citations from *Tasso* and of their functions in the third ode, however, is necessary in providing a critical interpretation of the "epilogue to *Tasso*." A detailed analysis of the work and its relationship with its program, combined with an identification of these quotations, will reveal Liszt's impressions of Tasso in the third ode of the *Trois odes funèbres*.

Analysis

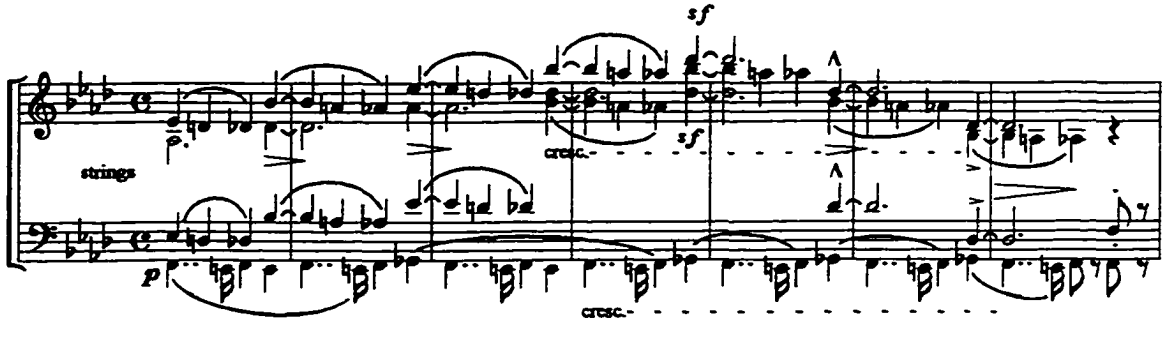
Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse begins in ambiguity: neither a clear tonal center nor a definite meter is established in the opening eleven bars (see Form Diagram 4).

Form Diagram 4: *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*



O = Introductory material
T = Triumph theme
L = Lament theme
K = Descending chromatic closing passage
M = Based on *Tasso*, mm. 165-68
— = Stable tonal area
→ = Modulatory passage

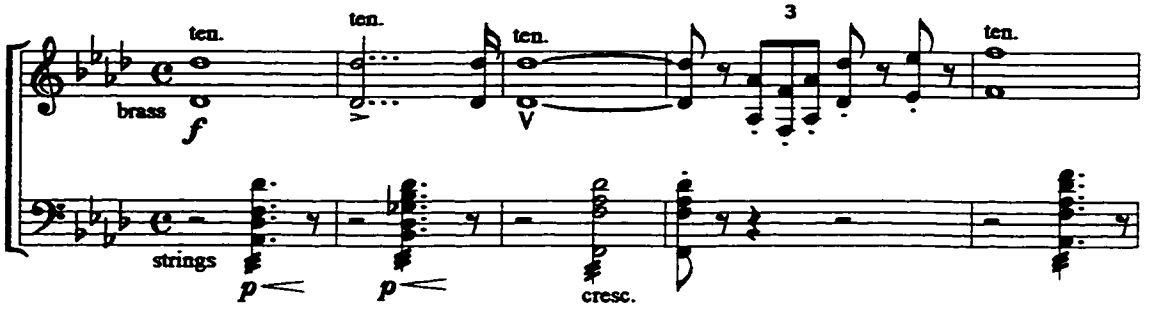
The opening phrase consists of "sigh" motives, descending half steps, immediately suggesting sadness. At m. 13 the cello and bass lines introduce a pulse with a rhythmic ostinato bass pattern revolving in half steps around the pitch F (Example 23).



Example 23: *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 13-19

Sequences of two descending half steps and the half-step ostinato pattern weaken any sense of tonic. In mm. 13-15 the second violin part alternates long notes on the pitches A-flat and D-flat, which, with the repeated F in the bass, suggest F minor and D-flat major harmonies. This oscillation between two harmonies diminishes the sense of tonal stability even further.

The alternation of F minor and D-flat major harmonies ends with the presentation of a theme representing triumph (T) in D-flat in mm. 21-40 (Example 24), the first tonally closed section of the piece.



Example 24: Theme T (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 21-25)

It is presented in a majestic tutti setting with a range of forte dynamics, repeated use of D-flat major, square phrase structure, and trumpet fanfare. The topic of this theme is a triumphant march; it has no funereal characteristics. The absence thus far of any reference to a funeral in a funeral ode seems surprising. The presentation of the T theme at the beginning of a piece is the first appearance of a harmonically stable section. This suggests that D-flat major is the tonic.

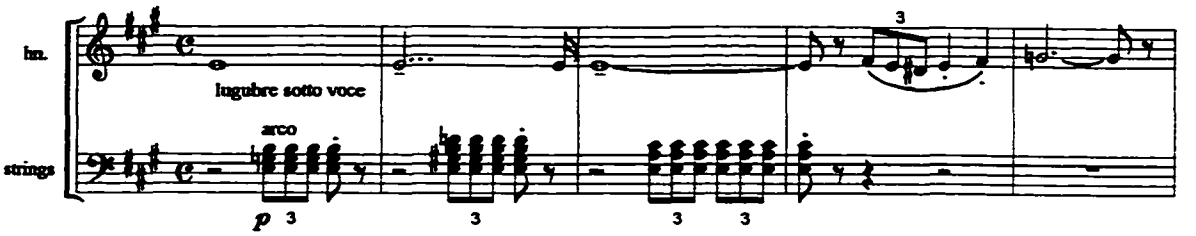
The harmonic stability and strong rhythmic force of the T theme is juxtaposed with a modulatory section highlighted by a *dolce espressivo* lyrical theme representing lamentation (L) comprised of long phrases that begin in A major and become increasingly chromatic (Example 25).

Example 25: Theme L (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 41-47)

Liszt created more intensity in this section by sequencing the theme at consecutively higher pitch levels, fragmenting that sequence, adding *agitato* eighth notes in the inner voices, shifting between major and minor modes, and avoiding resolution by eliding cadences and thinning the texture to two clarinets. The fragmentation of L changes the topic of expression from the general, *dolce espressivo* (expressive), to the more specific, *dolce lagrimoso* (mournful) in m. 53. The texture thins at m. 70 as fragments of L are reduced to a single descending chromatic line marked *rinforzando e dolente assai*. This falling gesture based on half steps, the expression markings associated with it, and the fragmentation of the theme are characteristic of a topic more profound than sadness, a topic better identified as lament.

The harmonic tension created by the developmental treatment of L, however, is not resolved by the thinning texture of the chromatic line. A prolongation of resolution is extended through three beats of rest from m. 86 to m. 87 until the presentation of another

variant of T in E minor at m. 92 (Example 26).



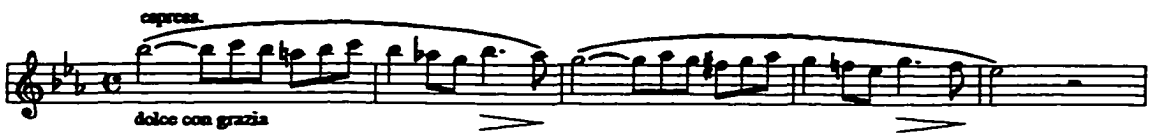
Example 26: Theme T (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 92-96)

The new section, with a clear harmonic motion in E minor, functions as a resolution for the developmental material in the preceding section (L). The character of the T material is drastically different in this section, however; it more closely resembles L and shares the topic of sadness or lamentation than triumph. In fact, it can best be described as funereal. It is marked *lugubre sotte voce* (m. 92) and *mesto* (m. 96), with a triplet eighth-note rhythm resembling the beat of a funeral march. The funereal quality is further emphasized by the minor key, dark timbres, *piano* dynamic, and thinner texture.

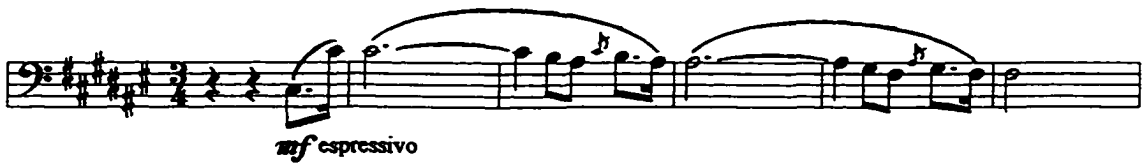
This funeral section elides with a new section (mm. 108-140), which utilizes a theme from the symphonic poem *Tasso*. Liszt based the melodic material in this section (M, Example 27a) on the first four bars of the cello solo from the *quasi Menuetto* section at m. 165 in *Tasso*, a passage often associated with Tasso at the Court of Ferrara.[9] This new theme (Example 27b) is marked *dolce con grazia*, indicating a topic quite different from the triumphant T or the lamenting L.

[9] Keith T. Johns, *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1997).

from the triumphant T or the lamenting L.



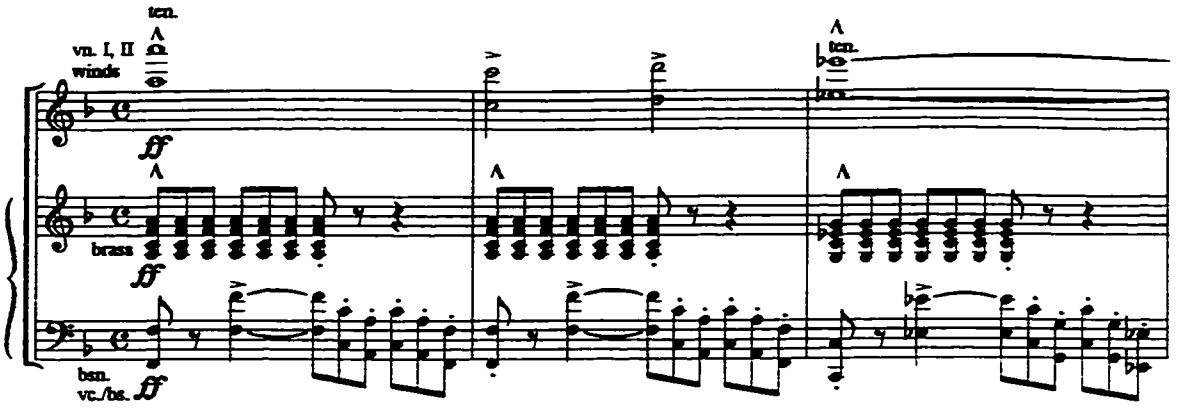
Example 27a: Theme M (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 108-112)



Example 27b: *Tasso*, mm. 165-168

The graceful M theme in *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* is first introduced in E-flat major and then repeated twice in two different tonal areas, G minor and A major. Each repetition, however, occurs at a higher pitch level, with crescendos and *rinforzandi*, more active chromaticism, and greater intensity. In the final statement of M, Liszt utilized an *appassionata* marking to indicate the emotional intensification in this passage.

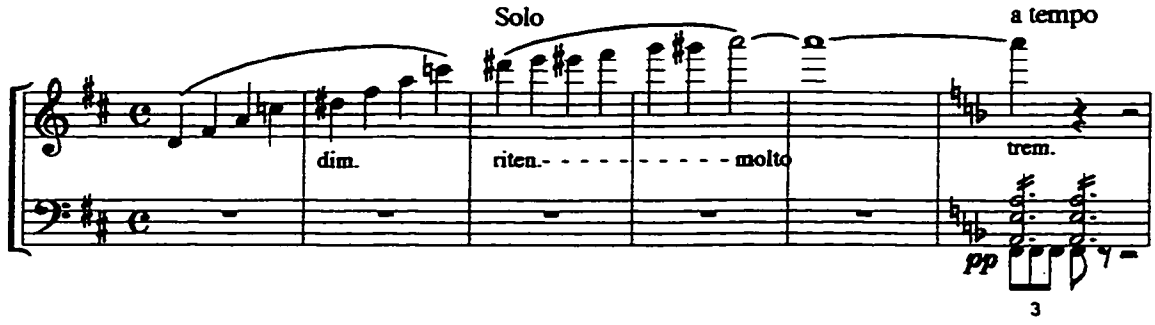
Tension builds through the M section and climaxes at m. 140 in a *fortissimo* presentation of L (Example 28), which now more closely resembles the opening T section than its initial lyrical statement.



Example 28: Theme L (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 140-142)

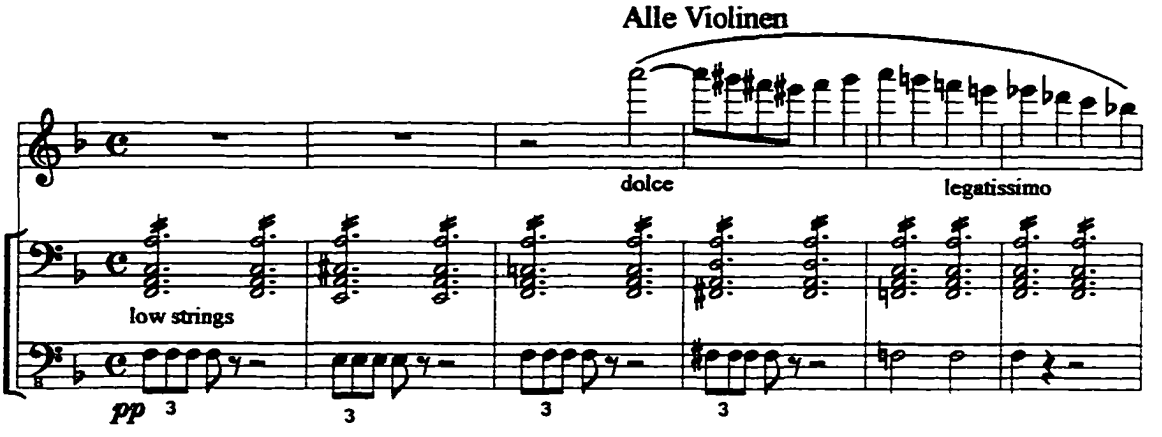
In fact, Liszt employed several expression markings which emphasize L's triumphal character (*rinforzando* in m. 148, *grandioso* in m. 153). This change in character is also matched with a clear statement of another stable harmonic area, F major. The majesty of L in mm. 140-170 carries over into the next statement of T at m. 170. T returns to its original character, now in A-flat major and triple *forte*, accompanied by string tremolo.

After a modulation to B major at m. 181 and a cadence confirming that modulation at m. 189, all driving motion and triumph comes to an abrupt halt with tutti chords. The descending chromatic line marked *dolente* and *piangendo* returns, and the texture thins to a solo violin. This single voice ascends to an elision with a return to F major at m. 212 (Example 29).



Example 29: Violin Solo (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 207-212)

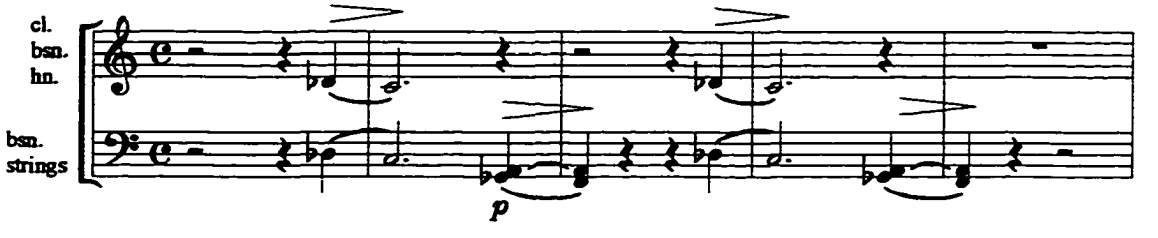
Liszt utilized striking orchestral color in this section, combining the shimmer of string tremolo and tam-tam as an accompaniment for an octave violin line in a high register. The character of this passage is mysterious, even mystical. F major does return at m. 212, but because no particular melody was associated with its brief introduction at m. 13, its actual arrival is de-emphasized with an unfamiliar descending melodic gesture outlining a combination of pitches from both F major and D-flat major. The triplet bass pattern at m. 212 revolves around F, resembling the bass line at m. 12 not only in appearance but also in function, as it suppresses a strong cadence in F. The violins descend three octaves, as the bass line, which was oscillating around the pitch F, settles on an F pedal point at m. 220 (Example 30).



Example 30: *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 216-221

This attempt at arrival is de-emphasized by a continuous harmonic shift between F major and D-flat diminished, much like the opening alternation between F minor and D-flat major. The texture thins, again deferring a strong cadence.

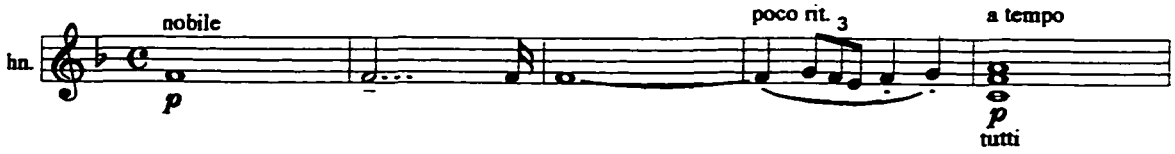
The ambiguous introductory material of this piece returns at m. 229; this time, however, F major is clearly emphasized by a half-step resolution on the downbeats of m. 231 and m. 233 (Example 31).



Example 31: *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 229-233

The final resolution to F major is still delayed, however, as the texture now thins to two clarinets and a single bassoon (mm. 234-35). A solo horn, marked *nobile*, recalls the T

theme in its original harmony (D-flat major) at m. 236 (Example 32); this statement of T leads directly to a stable F major harmony, which comprises the final six measures of the piece, and finally reveals the tonic.



Example 32: Theme T (*Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, mm. 236-240)

Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse and Persona

Several formal and musical aspects of this ode provide clues for identifying the persona of *Le Triomphe funèbre*. One clue is the subtitle of the piece, "An epilogue to *Tasso*." An epilogue concludes a work and provides commentary about that work. The listener should be aware of the relationship between the third funeral ode and the second symphonic poem because of the similarity in their musical themes. The themes in *Le Triomphe funèbre*, however, are not direct citations from *Tasso*, which implies that the persona is presenting a commentary, an opinion of *Tasso*. This provides further evidence of the epilogue-like character of this work and of the persona expressing impressions of *Tasso*.

Another aspect of *Le Triomphe funèbre* that contributes to an understanding of its persona is the context of certain themes. The first presentation of the T theme appears in

D-flat major, the first stable harmonic area of the piece. F major is stated clearly and for an extended time only in the middle of the piece (m. 140 with the L theme in a majestic context) and at the final six measures of the piece. The first and last statements of the T theme occur at the beginning and the end of the ode and are in D-flat major. Their appearance at these points in the piece and the avoidance of a clear tonic statement until the middle of the piece give the false impression that tonic is D-flat major.

Because a clear presentation of F is postponed until relatively late in the funeral ode, one experiences a rearrangement of time. The opening material, which seems misplaced because it is introduced in a tonal area other than tonic, suggests that it belongs somewhere else or is a reference to another time. When the funeral march enters with the T theme stated in E minor, the funereal aspect of the ode is emphasized. The triumphant presentation of both the L and the T theme after the reference to the funeral suggests the triumph and lament described in Serassi's account of Tasso's funeral. When F returns with new instrumental color and melodic material, the impression is mystical or other-worldly. Finally, the reference back to the T theme at the conclusion of the piece is like a memory of the beginning. Because it recalled a part of the piece before the funeral section, the T theme seems to refer to Tasso's life.

The persona, therefore, has the freedom to arrange ideas in an order that best supports individual impressions of *Tasso*. This freedom to compile events that have already occurred is a characteristic of one who has temporal distance from those events. A person commenting on something from the past has the freedom to choose specific information that best suits the situation and the impression that person is trying to relate to

others.

One impression related by the persona in the third ode is of the "triumphant" element of Tasso's funeral, as indicated by the ode's title. The triumphant character associated with the T theme (mm. 21-40, mm. 170-187) and the L theme (mm. 140-170) is one portrayal of triumph exhibited in the third ode. These are explicitly triumphant moments most readily identifiable in the dense texture, loud dynamics, use of timpani and brass, march rhythms, and clear functional tonality.

Another more implicit impression of triumph occurs through formal processes over the course of the piece. The opening passage of descending unison half steps, which occurs outside any clear tonal area, and the T theme return at the end of the piece in m. 230 and m. 236, respectively. The unison half steps return in the tonic, however, which now provides a stable harmonic context, instead of tonal ambiguity as in the introductory phrase. Theme T also returns (m. 236, *nobile*) in the bittersweet union of the D-flat major harmony of its triumphant original statement at m. 12 and with the melodic contour of its funereal statement in m. 92. It modulates to F major and elides with the final six-measure phrase of the piece. Even though F major returns at m. 212, it is deferred continually through weak cadences and turns to other harmonies. Therefore, the final resolution to F major is certainly an achievement, a triumph. The nature of this victory is characterized, however, by a combination of both triumph and lament.

The persona of *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, therefore, is distant from the events which are described. Its temporal distance from its subject matter allows it to focus on particular ideas and place them in chronological order, apparently the order most

beneficial in relating its own impressions of the life and death of Torquato Tasso. In fact, several sections of this funeral ode are juxtaposed against one another in a way that suggests identification of facts, a presentation of information. For example, the first statement of the themes T and L are set quite distinctly adjacent to each other with very little attempt to integrate the two. As the piece unfolds, however, more integration occurs, and the effect is one of interpretation. Therefore, the persona is one who emphasizes the aspects of Tasso's life and death but also gives personal impressions of those events and of the subject in general. The persona allows those personal, artistic interpretations of the information to become the focus of the work rather than to emphasize a mere factual "programmatic" description of events from the subject's life. More specifically, the persona acts as a Romantic poet-biographer, in much the same way as Goethe and Byron who, as representatives of their time period, reinterpreted the historical events of Tasso's life in a way that was appealing to their nineteenth-century audience. Goethe, for example, utilized Serassi's Tasso biography, considered one of the most reliable and scholarly writings about Tasso in the late eighteenth century, as a source for his largely fictive interpretation of events in the Italian writer's life.

The persona of *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* also utilized the Serassi biography as a source upon which to comment. The result is far from a straightforward portrayal of actual historical events. The curious order in which musical material is presented, the unexpected ways in which the various themes interact or do not interact with one another, and the use of striking orchestration suggest a persona who is more interested in an artistic retelling of the excerpt from the Serassi biography rather than a strict representation of the

events described in it. For example, in *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, F major is revealed as the tonic in the final six measures of the piece. Throughout the entire work the listener assumes that the first harmonically stable section in D-flat major emphasizes the tonic. The gradual process of revealing F as the tonic resembles the final realization of Tasso's greatness only after his death.

Liszt wrote *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* as an epilogue to his second symphonic poem *Tasso*, which was composed during his employment in Weimar. Liszt experienced the sense of community in this artistic environment, a unity that was established during the years when Goethe and Schiller worked in that same city. Liszt had the utmost respect for Goethe and saw himself as a worthy successor to the poet in the cultural center of Weimar. By adopting the poet-biographer persona in *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse*, Liszt revealed his affinity with Goethe and his works. Liszt gave his impressions of how the artistic genius of the musical poet-biographer can, like his literary model, relate historical information of Tasso's funeral through an exploration of the bittersweet aspect of the event.

CHAPTER 5

PERSPECTIVES AND SYNOPSIS

New German School Aesthetics and Twentieth-Century Critical Interpretation

The *Trois odes funèbres* are often described in scholarly literature as autobiographical pieces composed by Liszt after the deaths of particular members of his immediate family, his son and daughter. Of the few authors who have chosen to write about the *Trois odes funèbres*, most seem satisfied to rely upon these biographical connections with these works as ample evidence for further interpretation. Analysis of these pieces in relation to Liszt's philosophy of programmatic music is also often neglected in favor of studying the twelve symphonic poems, which are usually considered the musical embodiment of Liszt's aesthetics. Although the *Trois odes funèbres* are on a smaller scale than the symphonic poems, their significance in the understanding of the New German School philosophy of music should not be overlooked. Each of the three odes exemplifies the New German philosophy, thus providing the scholar musical manifestations of Liszt's ideas.

The primary model for the critical analysis applied in this thesis has been one

proposed by Lawrence Kramer in *Music as Cultural Practice*.[1] The musical processes viewed through the hermeneutic windows in the *Trois odes funèbres* have been explored in the preceding chapters to gain further insight into Liszt's aesthetics. The combined analysis of form and content and their relationship to each other has been discussed at length.

While Kramer's model has been utilized as an aid in locating windows of interpretation in the *Trois odes funèbres*, Liszt's own critical approach to music and his philosophy of the composite genre identified the focus required to interpret the music. In his writings Liszt described the union in music between content and form. In his own analytical method Kramer explored a similar union by identifying windows that act as signposts for the listener. These windows are then contextualized with a thorough knowledge of the composer's contemporary environment. In the detailed explanation of his methodology, Kramer suggested steps for combining form and content to formulate an interpretation, which echoes Franz Liszt's own ideas about the relationship between these two components.

Liszt's Aesthetics

Liszt's own philosophy of interpretation is best explored in his writings, primarily those addressing the issues of programmatic music, including the relationship between form and content and uses for music. Liszt's aesthetics are most clearly defined in his

[1] Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). See especially pp. 9-10 and 13-14.

essay "Berlioz und seine *Harold* Symphonie," published in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1855. In this essay he described the close relationship between form and content, the use of programs, and the interrelatedness of music and other art forms or modes of communication. According to Liszt these main points in the New German School aesthetics should be united in each piece, because they outline the very essence of Romantic music and its expressive capabilities.

"The artist may pursue the beautiful outside the rules of the school without fear that, as a result of this, it will elude him."[2] With this statement from his manifesto on programmatic music Franz Liszt paved the way for an informed reception of his compositions. For Liszt's contemporaries one of the most revolutionary ideas in this essay was that programmatic content could over-ride conventional assumptions to determine the form of the composition. Liszt identified Berlioz as an exemplary composer who abandoned conventional forms as a tool for communicating expression. This disregard for classical forms was one of the main grievances against the New German School. Liszt did not advocate abandoning form completely but rather subordinating formal considerations to expression of content. Liszt made this matter quite clear:

> To enrich the form, to enlarge it and make it serviceable, is granted, then, precisely to those who make use of it only as one of the means of expression, as one of the languages which they employ in accordance with the dictates of the ideas to be expressed.[3]

Liszt expected music to express something and form to facilitate and enhance that content.

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[2] Franz Liszt, excerpts from "Berlioz and His *Harold* Symphony," in *Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era*, edited by Oliver Strunk (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), 107.

[3] Liszt, "Berlioz," 123.

The program is inextricably linked with form and content to constitute a composition, according to Liszt. It is as much a part of the piece and its expression as are the tones themselves. Liszt stated that the program does not define the music nor the music explicitly represent the program. In his *Harold* article Liszt explained the program/music relationship as follows:

> The program asks only acknowledgment for the possibility of precise definition of the psychological moment which prompts the composer to create his work and of the thought to which he gives outward form.[4]

He described more clearly the "psychological moment" later in the essay when he wrote,

> With the help of the program, however, [the composer] indicates the direction of his ideas, the point of view from which he grasps a given subject.[5]

With this statement Liszt identified the composer's interpretive role, in which the composer presents ideas about a subject from his chosen point of view, i.e., persona. According to Liszt's philosophy the composer as interpreter must, therefore, communicate that point of view intelligibly to his audience:

> The tone-poet...reproduces his impressions and the adventures of his soul in order to communicate them.[6]

Liszt's Philosophy and the *Trois odes funèbres*

One cannot ignore the personal torment suffered by Liszt after the deaths of Daniel and Blandine. The emotions he must have felt in these events are relevant to a study of

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[4] Liszt, 123.

[5] Liszt, 127.

[6] Liszt, 121.

these works, but they are essentially biographical and not the primary focus of this critical analysis of the *Trois odes funèbres*. These tragic events spurred particular emotions in Liszt and apparently his need to express them. The content of the works, however, is much more specific, but also more universal, than simply the expression of mourning or sadness. By means of programmatic elements Liszt guides the listener towards his philosophical ideas. In this thesis a critical analysis of the odes and an exploration of the persona of each has revealed three different impressions of death, from three distinct points of view.

Les morts was composed after the death of Liszt's son Daniel and was dedicated to Cosima, one of Liszt's surviving daughters. In this piece the preacher persona attempts to convince the listener that through faith and hope conversion to Christianity brings ultimate salvation after death. The ambiguity of the opening half-step motive, the absence of a stable tonal center, the use of diminished-seventh harmonies, and the presence of wandering, recitative-like rhythms establishes an atmosphere of instability. After the introduction of the cross motive, a stable harmonic language is incorporated, focusing on a bombastic A major of *fortissimo* brass, march-like rhythmic patterns, and a heraldic choir of the dead praising the Lord. This section is the most harmonically stable part of *Les morts*, and it overwhelms the ambiguous aspects of the opening musical material and textual questions about the afterlife. The knowledge of potential salvation, attested to by the dead who were saved, relieves fear by unveiling the unknown and ensuring the believer an eternity of blissful union with the Lord and with departed souls. Liszt's use of Lamennais's poem in the score directs attention to the subject of change from spiritual

insecurity to spiritual salvation. He composed music that reflects that movement from fear to confidence by means of shifting musical elements, such as harmony and rhythm from tonally ambiguous and free to stable and more strict.

La notte was composed in 1864, the year Liszt drafted his Last Will and Testament, specifically requesting that the first two odes be performed at his own funeral. During this time he was still overcome with grief of the deaths of Daniel and of his daughter, Blandine. His preoccupation with his own death at this time is manifested in the fictional Liszt-persona's somber contemplation of death, his childhood in Hungary, his dying, and inevitably his funeral.

At the opening of *La notte* Liszt focused on his own personal attitudes and emotions accompanying his thoughts of death by utilizing *Il penseroso*, a piano solo inspired by a sculpture of the same name by Michelangelo. Liszt employed textual and musical elements extraneous to the piano solo, *Il penseroso*, to elaborate on his own prior interpretation of the Michelangelo sculpture. He conjured a fictitious representation of himself by creating the appearance of a close, personal connection with his "homeland." He incorporated a musical reference to Hungary, the "Magyar" cadence, and a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*, thus linking the cadence with the dying man's homeland. Although Liszt, the composer, was born in Hungary, he lived there for only ten years, spending much of that time touring as a pianist. He then spent extended periods of time away from Hungary in Paris, Weimar, and other places. His largely fictitious reminiscence of a Hungarian past is developed musically and, with the move to the minor mode, is transformed into a memory more tragic than nostalgic. His overt Hungarian nationalism

was stirred primarily by wars, natural disasters, and poor economic and social conditions in Hungary. The suffering of the Hungarians became his suffering, as he identified himself with this image of the Hungarian nation.[7] This created memory is apparent in *La notte*, as is his fictional death and funeral. The formal processes of the music suggest a temporal passage from the persona's contemplation of death to his dying, completed by his funeral procession. During the time in which Liszt composed *La notte*, he felt the inevitability of his own death and subsequently reflected on his own identity, which he constructed from his perceptions of his past, and created a fictional funeral at which *La notte* was imagined to be performed.

Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse was composed in 1866 and emphasized the Romantic poet-biographer persona's interpretation of Tasso's death. Liszt described this type of persona in his *Harold* article:

> The romantic epos, as we would like to call it, reaches only for the exceptional figures, depicts its figures far larger than life size and in extraordinary situations, so that only these beings recognize themselves therein, beings made of finer stuff, into whom glowing breath was breathed, those who their more sensitive souls lead a mightier, more pulsing life than many others. Nonetheless those Romantic figures often exert an irresistible magic on all, because to the everyday human they idealize certain tendencies that he too feels and understands, albeit more dimly, unclearly, and not as spiritually.[8]

This persona's Romantic interpretation of the historical figure Torquato Tasso exemplifies this type of interpretation advocated by Liszt and the New German School. As in the other

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[7] Liszt associated the Hungarian idiom (*style hongroise*) with the suffering of Gipsies. "Of all the languages which it has been given to man to understand and make use of, music is the only one which the Gipsy has loved; and of all the sentiments which the Gipsy has sought to express in it *pain* and *pride* are the most remarkable." Franz Liszt, *The Gipsy in Music*, translated by Edwin Evans (Paris: Librarie Nouvelle, 1859; reprint, London: William Reeves, 1960), 107.

[8] Liszt, 126.

of the *Trois odes funèbres*, in *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* Liszt disregarded traditional forms to achieve an expression of the programmatic content. He juxtaposed musical sections of differing character, lamentation and triumph, which were emphasized in the attached program from Serassi's biography of Tasso. The juxtaposition produces a disjointed feeling in the piece, which makes it unlike the other two odes, in which Liszt relied on gradual transformation of melodic contour to establish a process in the piece. In the third ode Liszt utilized abrupt changes in harmony, melody, and orchestration to emphasize a struggle and triumph similar to the bittersweet triumph of Tasso, who was appreciated only after his death. The listener is involved in that process of realization as harmonies other than tonic are emphasized at major structural points in the piece, thereby prolonging the tonic (F) until the final measures of the piece.

Final Word

The *Trois odes funèbres* are three of Franz Liszt's lesser-known works. Their significance in Liszt's *oeuvre* has been limited, as authors overlook them in favor of writing about the symphonic poems. An interpretation of each ode based on the ideas espoused by the New German School has been explored in this thesis. In his prose writings Franz Liszt explored complex issues, such as text/music and performer/listener relationships as well as new uses for previously composed music. The ways in which he dealt with these intriguing topics in programmatic music reveal even more about his method of composition and how that highlights his interpretation of philosophical, social, and religious issues.

Like many of Liszt's compositions, the *Trois odes funèbres* reveal how Liszt utilized harmonic and melodic processes to communicate particular ideas. When Liszt emphasized musically certain characters that were suggested by a program, the music assumed a descriptive role. It acted as an adjective. While Liszt's music often seems to depict a scene or mood, one can gain a greater understanding of the work by probing beyond a surface description of orchestration, melodic character, or mode to reveal ideas that Liszt was communicating through his compositions. Harmonic and melodic processes change the function of music from that of an adjective to that of a verb and involve the listener in the process. An appreciative audience of Liszt's works is an active audience, one that engages in the musical processes. Only by experiencing Liszt's music in an active way can one understand Liszt's interpretation of a program.

Another aspect of Liszt's compositional activity in general that is highlighted by the *Trois odes funèbres* is his tendency to make arrangements of his works and use his own compositions in new contexts. This was very common to Liszt, as anyone who has paged through Liszt's work list in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* can attest. One interesting aspect of the three odes, however, is the way in which meaning changed from one composition to an arrangement or extrapolation of it. In *Les morts* the addition of the male chorus brought text to the audience to allow the listener to hear the voices of the dead as they praise the Lord in heaven. In *La notte* the complete piano solo *Il penseroso* was utilized, but additional music provided a new process to experience, and Liszt gave a new interpretation of the Thinker persona in light of his own personal tragedies. Finally, in *Le Triomphe funèbre du Tasse* Liszt borrowed a theme from his own

symphonic poem but provided a new interpretation of Tasso based on the quotation from the biography by Serassi.

Understanding how these quotations and arrangements were utilized in new ways to provide new interpretations in the *Trois odes funèbres* may apply to other works in Liszt's *oeuvre*, as well. His tendency to arrange and rearrange his own compositions and those of other composers is a well-known fact of his compositional process. Assuming that compositions based on earlier works are merely versions of their originals may leave further understandings of Liszt's music buried beneath preconceived notions. Liszt continually reevaluated not only his music but his beliefs and ideals as well. For Liszt, music was a means of communicating his philosophy, and his changing ideas were embodied in his music.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jennifer Hund-King was born in Minnesota, living the majority of her early years in La Crescent, a small town on the Mississippi River. After graduating with high honors from La Crescent High School, she moved to Bloomington, Illinois, where she attended Illinois Wesleyan University. While a student at IWU, Jennifer was named Outstanding Senior in Music, was awarded the Knight Music Scholarship, and was inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda. She earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy in 1995, graduating *magna cum laude*. Her final research project, "Contemplating and Interpreting Metaphysics: Hegel's *Aesthetics*, Schopenahuer's *The World as Will and Representation*, and Wagner," was directed by J. Michael Cooper. Before beginning her graduate studies, Jennifer was employed as the head secretary for the School of Music at IWU, assistant to musicologist J. Michael Cooper, staff accompanist for the university, and studio piano teacher in the IWU Piano Preparatory Department.

In the fall of 1996, Jennifer began her masters studies in musicology at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. She was a graduate teaching assistant for both Charles E. Brewer and Jeffery Kite-Powell. At the 1997 AMS Southern Chapter meeting in Oxford, Mississippi, Jennifer presented her paper "For Love or Money? Mozart and His Burgtheater Concert Program, 23 March 1783." She continued to accompany at FSU and

taught at the McArthur and Musical Associates piano studio in Tallahassee. Her masters thesis, "Franz Liszt and His *Trois odes funèbres*: A Philosophy of Music, Art, and Literature" was directed by Douglass Seaton. She graduated in the fall of 1998.

Jennifer is currently living in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is the choral accompanist at one of the state's largest high schools and the organist and pianist at a local church.