



Liszt
Piano Transcriptions
Indrė Petrauskaitė

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|---|-------|
| 1. Widmung, S. 566 (after Robert Schumann) | 3:45 |
| 2. Isoldes Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde, S. 447
(after Richard Wagner) | 7:32 |
| 3. Spinnerlied from Der Fliegende Holländer, S. 440
(after Richard Wagner) | 5:57 |
| 4. Der Doppelgänger, S. 560 No. 12 (after Franz Schubert) | 3:50 |
| 5. Der Müller und der Bach, S. 565 No. 2 (after Franz Schubert) | 5:43 |
| 6. Frühlingsglaube, S. 558 No. 7 (after Franz Schubert) | 3:58 |
| 7. Ständchen von Shakespeare
(Horch, horch! Die Lerch!), S. 558 No. 9 (after Franz Schubert) | 2:55 |
| 8. Soirées de Vienne, S. 427 No. 6 (after Franz Schubert) | 6:59 |
| 9. Valse de l'opéra Faust, S. 407 (after Charles Gounod) | 11:03 |

Total playing time 51:57

‘Feeling for art and my love of it’¹

This album recorded in 2007, represents music of Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner, Franz Schubert and Charles Gounod transcribed for piano by Franz Liszt. Throughout his life and through his work, Liszt shared the deepest love for the music written by other composers, arranging it for piano. Liszt is one of the greatest transcribers of the nineteenth century – and perhaps of all times. Most of these transcriptions are loved by listeners and performers in both formats – performance platform and recordings. Throughout the recording history some of those works, arguably already have ultimate or ‘iconic’ recordings/interpretations. Despite this, it is delightful to take the example from Liszt himself and continue to ‘practise’ the love for the music which was written originally not for the piano while ‘revisiting’ these famous transcriptions.

Transcription and instrumental development in history

Musical works have been transcribed/arranged in different ways—and for different reasons—throughout history, as aesthetics, notation practices, musical styles, instruments, and roles of composers and virtuoso performers, changed. Publishers were eager to exploit transcriptions, seeing commercial opportunities in them.² A significant impetus for performers to compose transcriptions has also been to extend a limited repertoire for an instrument, for example, guitar by incorporating famous works that the performers appreciate and wish to play themselves.³

Historically, transcription, instrumental development and virtuosity have been closely interlinked.⁴ Even before the rise of Romantic virtuosity, Italian opera made heavy demands of its *divas*, who possessed highly specialized

1 *Parisian Gazette musicale*, February 11, 1838, quoted in *Liszt as Transcriber* by Jonathan Kregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28.

2. Malcolm Boyd, ‘Arrangement’, *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

3. Boyd, ‘Arrangement’.

4. Boyd, ‘Arrangement’.

performance skills, and Italian violin manufacturers contributed largely to the rise of instrumental virtuoso celebrities.⁵ The great violinist Paganini's genius—his mystic and devilish virtuoso image—was undoubtedly one of the greatest inspirations for many later composers, especially the virtuoso pianist-composers, and this stretched far into the twentieth century.

At the same time, the piano became the main instrument for domestic music-making in the nineteenth-century; it was an instrument that helped people enjoy popular musical works in a private setting—a chance to play solo or duets, or to improvise on themes from famous songs, popular operas and symphonies.⁶ In the nineteenth century, there were fewer towns and cities with opera houses and orchestras at the professional level expected today.⁷ In 1822, Érard's pioneering double escapement action was the culmination of general improvements in the sound and volume of the piano.⁸ Transcriptions fulfilled the function of disseminating and popularizing composed music, largely taken over by mass-produced sound recordings since the 1920-40.⁹ Transcriptions therefore served pianists by providing a repertoire that was tailored towards the demands of the audience at the time.

No doubt the most prominent and influential transcriber was Franz Liszt (1811-1886). Liszt's creative life encompassed and reflected central nineteenth-century musical events, and in him we find a figure who had met both Beethoven and Debussy, and had attended premieres of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and

5. Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the musical work: the Transcendental studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 70.

6. Maurice Hinson, *The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements, and Paraphrases* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 78.

7. Hinson, *The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements, and Paraphrases*, 78.

8. Samson, *Virtuosity and the musical work*, 71

9. Kenneth Hamilton explores the boundaries of Golden Age in piano performance, noting that both points had a great impact on piano performance—Érard's double-escapement action in the early 1820s, and editable recording technology in the late 1940s. Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 19.

Parsifal.¹⁰ Liszt's appreciative attention to his changing musical surrounding was reflected in his creations—nearly half of his *oeuvre* - are different types of arrangements of other composers' music, from strict transcriptions to freely recomposed paraphrases.¹¹ Another important feature of nineteenth-century music is the significance given to the 'programme' as a creative source, and of which Liszt was a strong proponent. 'Programme music' became an oppositional term to 'absolute music'; it differs from the latter by its narration and depiction of objects and events.¹² Liszt frequently gave the listener and performer a precise literary idea to his music. The role of the programme in nineteenth-century composition is in many ways closely related to the idea of transcription, in the attempting to 'transcribe', the extra-musical in musical terms. This corresponds with the way Liszt often found inspiration outside of himself, in both musical and non-musical sources. Jim Samson wrote that 'Liszt "transcribed" poetry, painting and even nature, just as he transcribed other music'.¹³ In many ways, this influenced future composers like Ferruccio Busoni, who conceptualized of 'the process of music-making—from inspiration through notation to performance—as a type of mediation through chains of transcriptions'.¹⁴

Liszt's arrangements fall into two distinct categories: paraphrases and transcriptions. These terms, together with that of 'Réminiscence' (a wistful poetic term for a paraphrase), were used by Liszt himself.¹⁵ A 'paraphrase' is a free composition that, while based mostly on another composer's music, diverges quite significantly from the original. Liszt's paraphrases of operas by Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, Gounod and Verdi are examples of this genre.¹⁶ In those

10. Jonathan Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

11. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 1.

12. Roger Scruton, 'Programme music', Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, www.oxfordmusiconline.com

13. Samson, *Virtuosity and the musical work*, 80.

14. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 10.

15. Alan Walker, 'Liszt, Franz', Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, www.oxfordmusiconline.com

16. Walker, 'Liszt, Franz'.

pieces, the original is ‘transformed’; Liszt’s artistic interpretation is suggested clearly, and effectively creates a ‘new work’ for piano.

Liszt’s transcriptions are more faithful to the original than his paraphrases. For example, his transcription of Wagner’s ‘Liebestod’ from *Tristan und Isolde*, or his transcriptions of Beethoven’s and Berlioz’s symphonic works, aim to remain close to the original.¹⁷ For these, the idea of ‘translation’, from one medium to another, is perhaps more easily applied. Liszt himself said that:

I am the one who first proposed a new method of transcription in my piano score of the *Symphonie fantastique*. I applied myself as scrupulously as if I were translating a sacred text to transferring, not only the symphony’s musical framework, but also its detailed effects and the multiplicity of its instrumental and rhythmic combinations to the piano. The difficulty did not faze me, as my feeling for art and my love of it gave me double courage. I do not claim to have succeeded completely, but that first attempt has at least demonstrated that the way is open...¹⁸

Although most of Liszt’s transcriptions can be categorized, some lie in between. For example, Liszt’s use of *verbunkos* (Hungarian) generic materials increased in his later music, and by employing a ‘Gypsy scale’ in his arrangement of Saint-Saën’s *Dance Macabre*: ‘Liszt was simultaneously able to delineate and blur the boundaries—stylistic, artistic, aesthetic—between him and his French colleague.’¹⁹

Liszt’s transcriptions have been called ‘the gramophone records of the nineteenth century’;²⁰ and his artistic legacy can be found in his inventiveness

17. Liszt did add a few bars to the beginning of the piece, taken from Act II, to bring into the listener’s mind Tristan’s death, and set the scene. However, throughout the rest of the piece, Liszt was clearly attempting to offer a faithful representation of the musical material of Wagner’s original *Liebestod*.

18. *Parisian Gazette musicale*, February 11, 1838, quoted in Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 28.

19. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 205–207.

20. Walker, ‘Liszt, Franz’.

in the field of transcribing. Liszt's practice undoubtedly had a great influence on future composers and performers/transcribers, and opened up a new field of possibilities regarding what a 'musical work' was, that other composers, would take up. As Kregor wrote: 'Liszt opened up in these artistic translations an exciting range of possibilities, where the work concept, issues of style, originality, reception, and historiography are brought to bear on a uniquely nineteenth-century form of artistic expression'.²¹

'Widmung', (S. 566) [1]

Year of 1840 was called Robert Schumann's 'year of song' – as composer composed in the spring of that year song cycle *Myrthen*, Op. 25 consisting of 26 songs. This cycle was dedicated to Clara Wieck as a wedding gift. The poems used were of various writers and poets including Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine. 'Widmung' (text by Friedrich Rückert) is a very first song in this cycle. It was arranged for piano by Clara Wieck as well. Despite, that Liszt is not entering here the realm of 'paraphrase' adventure, he still enchants the second half of 'Widmung' with virtuoso passages - thus passionately sharing his admiration for Schumann's song and perhaps its circumstances the song was created.

'Isoldes Liebestod' from 'Tristan und Isolde', (S. 447) [2]

'The confrontation between the requirements of the salon and the demands of the music dramas comes to bear on all of Liszt's later transcriptions, and the decision is faced in excerpting operas for his fantasies were not unlike those that had to be made for Wagner's works. By way of mediation, Liszt's arrangements of Wagner's music progressively move away from literal quotation and toward dramatic evocation. "I rely on your artistic sympathy in all matters so fully that I know you only need to be in good spirits about my work in order to hit upon the right thing>...<and the right thing can be none other than the

21. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 40.

effect corresponding with the intention.” – Wagner wrote to Liszt in 1850.²² Intriguingly, Liszt friendship with Wagner was cooling down since. In 1867 Liszt wrote *Liebestod*, which was published a year later. This was the time when Liszt’s daughter Cosima von Bülow started an affair with Wagner, divorced her husband in 1870 and almost immediately – after couple of months, married Wagner.²³

‘Spinnerlied’ from ‘Der Fliegende Holländer’, (S. 440) [3]

‘Spinning Song’ is one of the most charming, magical and imaginary transcriptions from the virtuoso perspective – Liszt is using passages, trills and all the pianistic *décor* ‘in the same way’ as the designer would use the diamonds and lace to finish the costume. One can’t help but only wonder if Mendelssohn’s famous *Scherzo* from ‘*The Midsummer Night’s Dream*’ could have influenced Liszt while he was re-creating ‘Spinning Song’. Wagner conducted the premier of this opera in 1843. Liszt arranged this transcription in 1860. ‘While Liszt’s arrangements created propaganda for Wagner (and ammunition for his critics), they also represented a continued refinement of his ability to enact drama at the piano.’²⁴ In this album, for sure *Liebestod* [2] represents Liszt as devoted to ‘initial intention’ transcriber, who masterfully and convincingly did build on the piano one of the most powerful climaxes-dramas - spiritual Everest - written in an opera genre. While the ‘Spinning Song’ from *Flying Dutchman* [3] arguably is a genre of *reminiscence* or *paraphrase*. With flying and spinning passages Liszt’s imagination flies on keyboard further from ‘original’.

‘Der Doppelgänger’ (S. 560 No. 12), [4] - Franz Schubert’s song from the cycle ‘*Schwanengesang*’ (text by Heinrich Heine) - is the last Schubert’s work written just before his death, in 1828. Liszt transcribed entire cycle for the piano (14 songs) – and in essence remained faithful ‘translator’ of the ‘content’ as

22. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 180

23. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 184.

24. Kregor, *Liszt as Transcriber*, 185.

indeed in most transcribed songs of Schubert. 'Der Doppelgänger', hidden in the deepest shades of the B Minor key – carries the message of most somber subject matter; the protagonist looking at the house where his beloved once lived – terrified to see someone standing near the house – unexpectedly – 'himself'.

In this album, when things seem, cannot sink further into the abys – the next Schubert's song '**Der Müller und der Bach**' (**S. 565 No. 2**) [5] represents protagonist – hopeless 'Miller' who converses with the 'Brook' – before ending his life. The song is from another Schubert's song cycle '*Die Schöne Müllerin*' (poetry by Wilhelm Müller) written in 1823. Interesting detail – that the poet Wilhelm Müller (who's poems served also another Schubert's song cycle '*Winterreise*'), died 33 years old (in 1827) – and never heard these Schubert songs. Liszt transcribed only six songs (out of twenty) from this cycle in 1846 (several versions). On a personal note, in my very first school year at the Juozas Naujalis Art Gymnasium in Kaunas (and I was only seven years old), I remember my very first music history lesson. The music history teacher Gražina Zujienė introduced us – seven years old children – with a notion of 'genre' – and in the same lesson spoke about 'genre of song'. The song I heard that lesson was the LP recording of 'Der Müller und der Bach'. Only much later, I found out, that the recording engineer Gediminas Zujus, who recorded these transcriptions in 2007, was her son. By the way, also would like to point out that only after Lithuania declared independence in 1990, the concert halls gradually started to buy fine concert grand pianos – and this recording was done only for the reason that port city Klaipėda's Concert Hall bought a new Steinway piano – at that particular time still a very rare finding in Lithuania (at that time most concert grand pianos were very old and fragile even in the concert halls). The programming of this album, I guess, was subconsciously influenced by my very first music history lesson – as well as this recording was possible in 2007 only for the reason that a new Steinway reached Lithuania.

‘Frühlingsglaube’, (S. 558 No. 7) [6] – this Schubert’s song was written in 1820 and dedicated to Justine von Bruchmann – the mother of composer’s friend Franz von Bruchmann – as her daughter died in the same year – 1820. One can imagine, that this song was written with certain desire to sooth the soul of the suffering person after the loss. The words by Ludwig Uhland at some point express sympathy: ‘Now poor heart, forget your distress!’, otherwise it is a beautiful poem worshipping the spring and hope. Liszt transcribed this song in 1838, a touch ‘locking’ pianist in a polyphonic texture and ‘adding’ some beautiful *à la piecere* – connecting, improvisatory passages – before landing again in warm A flat – major key.

‘Ständchen von Shakespeare’ (Horch, horch! Die Lerch!), (S. 558 No. 9) [7] – one more song of Schubert in this album – serenade – occasionally called ‘morning serenade’ was composed by Schubert in 1826 July. The verses of this song is from William Shakespeare’s play ‘Cymbeline’ (tragedy, romance or by modern critics called even comedy). The song ends with the words – ‘My lady sweet, arise, arise, arise!’. Liszt created here a delightful virtuoso souvenir for pianists with most imaginative and adventures passages – light and careless in the spirit. These both songs (‘Frühlingsglaube’ and ‘Ständchen von Shakespeare’) are from the Liszt’s set – *12 lieder von Franz Schubert, S. 558*, composed/transcribed in 1837-38.

Schubert composed groups of waltzes for piano over the years. And Liszt picked up this tremendous Schubert’s waltzing ‘world’, and created his own cycle of nine works – **‘Soirées de Vienne’, S. 427**. In this album one piece (no. 6) from this Liszt’s cycle is included **[8]**. In this particular work Liszt used the material from several Schubert’s waltzes (12 Valses Nobles, D. 969). Liszt, while arranging this waltzing Schubert’s music, arguably created works of art somewhere ‘in between’ the ‘original’ and his own creative intentions, arriving at sentimental and ‘old-fashioned’ work of music – which perhaps, as such, sounded even in the times when it was arranged.

This album has a 'coda' – another '**Valse**' from **Charles Gounod** opera '**Faust**', **S. 407 [9]**. As historian Orlando Figes writes: 'The 'canonic' operas – *Don Giovanni*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Robert le diable*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Norma*, *Rigoletto*, *Traviata*, *Faust* – were an institution in themselves...'.²⁵

And so, a renaissance figure of Faust ²⁶ – later in the nineteenth century was one of the most often explored characters (for sure 'an institution in itself') – and an inspiration for many artists. 'Faustomania' was at its height in the early 1830s. There had been numerous productions of Goethe's story in the boulevard theatres...²⁷. Faustian themes occupy the whole 'department' of Liszt's *oeuvre*. From symphonic poem to diabolic piano works and this famous piano transcription. Gounod's opera *Faust* (composed in 1856 - 59) was loosely based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragedy. Liszt's 'Valse' – loosely based on Gounod music – is a 'paraphrase' in its nature. This paraphrase loved by performers for excitement and furor – the 'diabolic' sections are often 'enhanced' by many performers even further from Liszt – perhaps most of the performers 'quote' or have a 'discussion' with legendary György Cziffra interpretation. Though, seems my interpretative decisions in 2007 were determined by the idea or fantasy of Faust as a character who is perhaps most civilized and intelligent, though carefully hiding the evil spirit. The gentle scene of Faust and Marguarite (central and substantial part of this particular work) Liszt presented with great thoughtfulness and affection. The closing central Faust and Marguarite lyrical scene is evaporating in a transcendental and esoteric trills – taking a listener to an atmosphere of 'divine', before all goes back into the waltzing 'coda' section.

25. Orlando Figes. *The Europeans* (Penguin Books: 2020), 441.

26. Johann Georg Faust (1466 or 1480 – 1541) – alchemist, astrologer, magician – a figure of the German Renaissance.

27. Figes. *The Europeans*, 89. (This was the time when one of the most successful stage works of nineteenth century, Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le diable* ('Faustian' subject matter) occupied everyone's minds and souls as well).

Indrė Petrauskaitė

Indrė Petrauskaitė started to study piano at a very early age with her mother piano teacher Lilija Petrauskienė. Indrė later studied at Kaunas (Lithuania) J. Naujalis high school (Art Gymnasium) with Birutė Kumpikienė. While still at school, she gave solo and chamber music recitals and performed with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, and in 1993, she won third prize at the Stasys Vainiūnas International Piano Competition (Lithuania). In 1994, Indrė together with the violinist, won first prize in the national chamber music competition. In 1995, Indrė entered the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre where she studied with Prof. Veronika Vitaitė. During her studies she participated in many international piano competitions with success, including second prize in Senigalia International Piano Competition (Italy), third prize in Liudmila-Knezkova Hussey International Piano Competition (Canada), Grand Prix at 'Alternativa' (Latvia), and third prize at the International M.K.Čiurlionis Piano and Organ Competition (Lithuania).

Indrė finished her graduate and postgraduate studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and obtained her BMus and Mmus degrees. In 2000, she entered the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied with Prof. Christopher Elton, Petras Geniušas and Alexander Satz. Indrė completed her Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Music degree with a DipRAM. During her studies the pianist participated in master classes of such musicians as Esther Yellin, Igor Lazko, Barbara Hesse-Bukowska, Aleksandra Žvirblytė, Peter Frankl,

Michael Roll, John O'Connor, Ferenc Rados, Robert Levin, Boris Berman, Emanuel Krasovsky, Leif Ove Andsnes and Paul Lewis.

Indrė has performed with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, Lithuanian State Symphony, Lithuanian Chamber orchestra, Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart Academy Youth Orchestra, London Soloists Orchestra, Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of conductors including Juozas Domarkas, Saulius Sondeckis, Gintaras Rinkevičius, Modestas Pitrenas, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Helmuth Rilling, Pier Carlo Orizio and others. She has given many solo and chamber music recitals. Indrė has also performed in the Santander Festival (Spain), the Oxford Lieder Festival (UK) and the Pažaislis Festival (Lithuania). Some of her performances in Vilnius were broadcast on Lithuanian Radio. Since 2000 she has collaborated regularly with Vilnius String Quartet and Kaunas String Quartet. In 2018, *Toccata Classics* published Indrė's recording of Ravel's solo piano music, with the emphasis on something new; a 40-minute concert suite for solo piano of ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* arranged by pianist herself, while carefully observing Ravel's original textures. This CD represents some core Ravel's piano repertoire too. In 2021, AVIE records published pianist's recording of Mozart's solo piano works written in the minor keys. Indrė is now based in London, where she combines teaching with performing.

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