

1847: Liszt in İstanbul



Zeynep Ucbasaran • piano

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1.	GRANDE PARAPHRASE DE LA MARCHE DE GIUSEPPE DONIZETTI composée pour Sa Majesté le Sultan Abdul-Medjid Khan, S.403	8:06
2.	RÉMINISCENCES DE LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR DE DONIZETTI Andante Final, S.397	6:31
3.	AUFFORDERUNG ZUM TANZE (Invitation to the Dance) Rondo brilliant in D flat major, Op. 65 (Carl Maria von Weber)	9:15
4.	MAZURKA in B minor, Op. 33, No. 4 (Fryderyk Chopin)	6:41
5.	I PURITANI, Introduction et Polonaise de l'opéra de Bellini, S.391	5:46
6.	ERLKÖNIG (Le Roi des Aulnes / The Erlking), Schubert/Liszt, S.558	4:43
	MAGYAR DALOK (Ungarische Nationalmelodien / Mélodies hongroises) S.242	7:34
7.	<i>Lento</i>	4:09
8.	<i>Andantino</i>	1:18
9.	<i>Sehr Langsam</i>	2:07
10.	RÉMINISCENCES DE NORMA DE BELLINI Grande fantaisie, S.394	18:00
	Total playing time	66:37

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This album consists of a selection of works from the 1847 İstanbul recitals of the great pianist and composer Franz Liszt. Pianist Zeynep Ucbasaran's performance of the pieces included in this program were broadcast live by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to all of Europe, with the collaboration of the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT), on occasion of Liszt's 200th birthday in October 2011. Additionally, they were performed to great acclaim in a recital series by the pianist titled "Liszt in İstanbul," including performances in the Liszt Museum in Budapest and the Béla Bartók Hall in Miskolc in Hungary.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886), who as a piano virtuoso and composer put his seal on the Romantic era, came to İstanbul on June 7, 1847 on the Austrian steamboat *Conte Kolourat* from Galatz. He gave a number of concerts, performed twice for Sultan Abdul-Medjid in the Tcheragan Palace, and left the city on July 13.

1847 was Liszt's last year as a virtuoso pianist. From his own correspondence, we know that he had been in touch with the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşit Paşa who, through the mediation of Alphonse de Lamartine initiated Liszt's visit to İstanbul.

The residents of İstanbul (then Constantinople) read the following news in May of 1847:

"Liszt will arrive in Constantinople in the near future. The Royal chef d'orchestre Donizetti has received confirmation from the famous instrument maker, Sébastien Pierre Erard, that as soon as Liszt arrives there, Erard will have sent a beautiful piano with seven octaves addressed to Donizetti in Constantinople, so that the genius and piano virtuoso will find a fine and worthy instrument at his disposal in that capital".

Liszt used this Erard in his performances. After his departure from İstanbul, he writes to Pierre Erard from Odessa:

“I owe you the most sincere thanks, my dear Erard, for the kind attention which you showed towards me in sending one of your magnificent instruments to me in Constantinople... I was pleasantly surprised when running my fingers over the keys at Tcheragan Palace by an instrument 'of such power and such perfection,' as you happily put it in your letter to M. Donizetti...”

Liszt was hosted for some time at the house of publisher and music store owner Alexander Commendinger on Nuruziya Street. Then he most likely stayed at the house of Count Stürmer and in Büyükdere. There are some documents to the effect that he has also visited Polonezköy during his stay.

Some background material on cultural life in İstanbul and the Ottoman Court in the mid-19th century is in order. The reigning sultan Abdul-Medjid I, like his father Mahmud II, was one of the Ottoman Sultans bent on Westernizing the empire. Abdul-Medjid, who reigned from 1839 to 1861, was educated in the Western style, played the piano and spoke French. He was an avid fan of Italian opera, and was known to be generous to a fault, notwithstanding his bankrupt empire. According to a Western source from 1849,

“Seldom does an artist of celebrity visit Constantinople without receiving an invitation to perform before the Sultan, and is handsomely recompensed.”

During that time, cultural life in Pera (today's Beyoğlu), the Levantine district of İstanbul, was quite lively. Starting from the middle of the 19th century, Pera was a frequent destination of European virtuosi, and of Italian and French opera companies. In fact, the dilettantes there had a chance to hear *Il Trovatore* just 10 months after it's opening in Rome, and a full three years before any Parisian ever heard it.

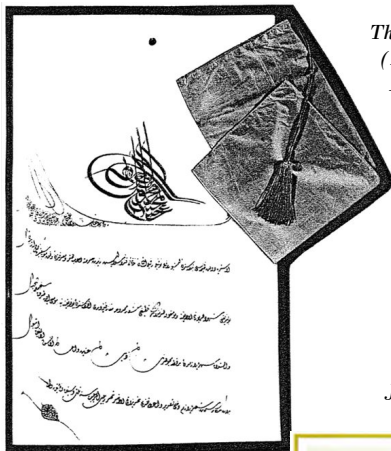
Almost all of the works that Liszt performed in İstanbul at the Royal Palace, the Russian Embassy and the Franchini Hall are known. Among these are the *Andante de Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Fantaisie sur des motifs de la Norma*, *Hexaméron*, *Melodies hongroises*, *Fantaisie sur Lucrèce Borgia*, *Variations on Old Romanian Airs*, *Fantasie sur des motifs de la Somnambule*, *Polonaise des Puritains*, *Mazurkas* by Chopin and *Invitation to the Dance* by Weber.

One of the most interesting pieces that Liszt played in İstanbul is the *Grande Paraphrase de la Marche de Donizetti pour le Sultan Abdul-Medjid Khan*. Liszt composed this brilliant paraphrase on a march by Giuseppe Donizetti, the *Royal chef d'orchestre* of the Sultan and the brother of the famous opera composer Gaetano Donizetti. He premiered this work in his second appearance before the Sultan at Tcheragan Palace. Catalogued as S.403 in his complete works, the paraphrase was published by Schlesinger in Berlin in 1848, including a simplified version for amateurs. This work was included in the repertory of virtuosi such as Paul de Conne and Ferruccio Busoni in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A handwritten copy of the manuscript is preserved in the Rare Documents section of the İstanbul University Library.

Another work of interest that Liszt worked on while staying in the Büyükdere district in İstanbul is his *Fantasy on Verdi's Ernani*.


We know that Liszt's own impressions of his reception in İstanbul were very positive. Writing to the mother of his children, Marie d'Agoult, from Galatz, where he was in quarantine on his way to Odessa after leaving İstanbul, Liszt says:

"His Majesty the Sultan was extremely gracious to me, and after having compensated me both in money... and with a gift (a charming enamel box with brilliants), he conferred on me the Order of Nişan-İftihar in diamonds. I admit that I was greatly surprised to find His Highness so well informed about my bit of celebrity that long before my arrival, he had told both the Austrian Ambassador and Donizetti that as soon as I had disembarked, they were to take me to his Palace of Tcheragan."



The certificate of the medal with diamonds (Nişan-ı İftihar) given to Liszt by Sultan Abdul-Medjid along with its custom-made bag. The original, kept in the Liszt Museum in Weimar, is dated June/July 1847 (Recep 1263).

*The playbill of Liszt's *Matinée Musicale* on June 18, 1847 given at the Franchini Hall in İstanbul.*



SALLE FRANCHINI.

VENSDREDI, 18 JUIN 1847,

MATINÉE MUSICALE PAR

F. LISZT.

PROGRAMME.

1. Andante de Lucie de Lismermoor.
2. Fantaisie sur des motifs de la Norma.
3. Mazurka de Chopin.
4. Le roi des Aulx, mélodie de Schubert.
5. Hexameron, variations sur un thème des Puritains.
6. Mélodies hongroises.

On commencera à 5 heures précises après midi.

Prix des Places: 100 Piastras.

On trouve les Billets à l'Hotel de l'Etranger; et le jour de l'exécution, à l'entré.

The Music

1. GRANDE PARAPHRASE DE LA MARCHE DE GIUSEPPE DONIZETTI

composée pour Sa Majesté le Sultan Abdul-Medjid Khan, S.403

Liszt finished this *Paraphrase* based on the march composed by Giuseppe Donizetti for Sultan Abdul-Medjid in İstanbul in mid June of 1847. He performed it in his second appearance at the Tcheragan Palace and then in his recital at the Russian Embassy at the end of the month. A short while later in 1848, the work was published by Schlesinger in Berlin. Schlesinger soon after also published a simplified version. The autograph score is in the Goethe und Schiller Archiv in Weimar. A handwritten copy of the work is in the Rare Documents section of the İstanbul University Library. It consists of a green binding with an embossed crescent and star, two pages of title and dedication, and twenty pages of music, catalogued as item No: 781/124 (107).

2. LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

(Réminiscences de Lucia Di Lammermoor de Donizetti)

Andante Final, S.397

One of the favorites of Liszt among Gaetano Donizetti's operas was *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which saw its premiere in Naples in 1835 to great critical and public acclaim. Liszt first composed a two-movement fantasy on themes from *Lucia. Réminiscences*, which is the first movement of this fantasy, is based on the famous sextet from the second act of the opera. In this scene, deceived by her family and about to be married to a man she does not love, Lucia also hears cruel accusations of Edgar, the man she actually loves. This dramatic scene and Donizetti's gorgeous melody finds a superbly rich expression in Liszt's treatment. *Réminiscences de Lucia Di Lammermoor* was first published by Ricordi in 1840.

3. AUFFORDERUNG ZUM TANZE (Invitation to the Dance)

Rondo brilliant in D flat major, Op. 65 (Carl Maria von Weber)

Aufforderung zum Tanz (Invitation to the Dance), is the first work in the Waltz form that was meant to be played concertante, rather than as accompaniment to dancers. As attested by its popularity to this day, it remains as one of the most successful waltzes ever composed. The work is programmatic and written in *Rondo* form. It recounts aspects of the meeting, dance, and finally the farewell of a young couple at a ball. The piece is more popularly known in Hector Berlioz's orchestrated version, though it was composed by Weber in 1819 for solo piano while he was working on *Der Freischütz*. It later became part of Franz Liszt's repertoire.

4. MAZURKA

Op. 33, No. 4 in B minor (Fryderyk Chopin)

Even though we know that Liszt played a Chopin mazurka in his İstanbul recitals, we do not know which one he chose out of the close to seventy mazurkas composed by Chopin during 1825-49. Evidently this cannot be one of Chopin's late mazurkas composed during the last few years of the composer's life. Liszt performed Chopin mazurkas before and after İstanbul in his performances of his 1846-47 tour, but like the Hungarian melodies, it is not possible to ascertain the Opus and the number of the work he chose to play. It is likely that he played a mazurka from his extensive repertoire, possibly one he selected the day of the performance. The mazurka Opus 33, No. 4 in B minor is the last one of a group of four that Chopin composed in 1838.

5. I PURITANI

Introduction et Polonaise de l'opéra de Bellini, S.391

Liszt had composed fantasies for solo piano based on themes from Bellini's *La Somnambula*, *Norma*, and *I Puritani*. The three-act opera *I Puritani* had established Bellini, one of Liszt's favorite opera composers, as one of the top names in the field following the success of its Paris premiere in 1835.

A short while later in 1837, Liszt published his fantasy *Réminiscences des Puritains* based on themes from the opera. He also performed the *Polonaise* section at the end as an encore many times. Finally in 1841, he composed an introduction to the *Polonaise* and published it as a separate work titled *Introduction et Polonaise. I Puritani* has been one of the staples of Liszt's repertoire. In Liszt's recreation, it is impossible not to hear Elvira's joy after she obtains her father's consent to marry Arturo, the man she loves.

6. ERLKÖNIG

(Le Roi des Aulnes / The Erlking) Schubert / Liszt, S.558

Liszt was a great admirer of Schubert and played his *Lieder*, both as an accompanist and as a soloist, in those that he adapted for the piano. One of the most famous of his adaptations is *Erlkönig*, which he kept in his repertoire in his virtuoso years and played everywhere to great effect. Schubert had composed this work from a poem by Goethe. Only a virtuoso like Liszt could have brought forth the inherent tensions... the father's encouraging words as he tried to protect his child from the Erlkönig, the Erlkönig's deception and threats, and the little child's suffering... in such a wonderful fashion. Liszt masterfully adds the melody to the accompaniment, which apparently Schubert himself had some difficulty playing. By blending the accompaniment and the melody so skillfully, Liszt stunned the audiences of his time by his virtuosity and musicality. This work was played for the first time in Vienna on May 18, 1838 as an encore. It shows the musical heights the solo piano is capable of reaching.

7-9. MAGYAR DALOK

(Ungarische Nationalmelodien / Mélodies hongroises), S.242

Liszt composed the first eleven works in his solo piano adaptations of Hungarian folk tunes *Magyar Dalok* during 1839-40. They were published as the first volume of *Magyar Dalok* by Haslinger in Vienna in 1840. We know that Liszt has performed selections from Hungarian folk tunes during his tour of 1846-7 before coming to

İstanbul. Nevertheless, like the Chopin mazurkas that he included in his repertoire and frequently performed, it seems virtually impossible to find out the details of which of them he selected to perform in any particular program. The selections that appear in this recording are three representative works from the first volume of *Magyar Dalok*: C minor *Lento* (S.242/1), C major *Andantino* (S.242/2) and D flat major *Sehr Langsam* (S.242/3).

10. NORMA

Réminiscences de Norma de Bellini, Grande Fantaisie, S.394

The two-act opera *Norma* of Bellini was staged in Paris in 1835. Liszt finished the composition of his fantasy on the opera in the summer of 1841 and later made some changes. The work is dedicated to pianist Marie Camille Pleyel, and accordingly encompasses a large number of virtuosic elements. The work was first published in Paris in 1844. According to Liszt's correspondence, like most of his paraphrases from the beginning of 1840s, *Norma* is superior in character and structure to his previous output in this genre. In the fantasy, Liszt uses themes from three different scenes from the opera. First the uprising of the people under Norma's leadership against the Romans; the admission that she bore children of the enemy general, and her condemnation to death; and the war march from the end of the second act of the opera.

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Recorded June 21-22, 2012 in Nilento Studio, Källered, Sweden

Recording engineer, Michael Dahlvid

(Neumann & DPA Microphones, recorded at 24-bit, 96KH resolution)

Mixed and mastered by Lars Nilsson

Piano: Steinway & Sons Model D (Hamburg) prepared by Bengt Eriksson

Program Notes by Ömer Eğecioğlu

Photos of Zeynep Ucbasaran by Ömer Eğecioğlu

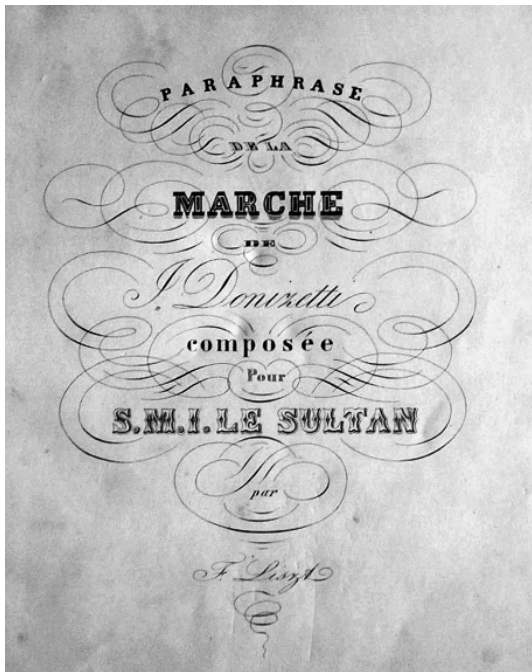
Front Cover Image: The old Tcheregan Palace in Beşiktaş, Constantinople, in the first half of 19th century

(colorized): original engraving by Rouargue Brothers

Back Cover Image: Late 19th century tinted postcard: Grande Rue de Pera, Constantinople

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*The dedication page of Franz Liszt's paraphrase titled
Grande Paraphrase de la Marche de Donizetti pour le Sultan Abdul-Medjid Khan,
after Giuseppe Donizetti's march for the Sultan.
(Rare Documents section of the Istanbul University Library)*



Zeynep Uchasaran

The Pianist

Pianist **Zeynep Ucbasaran** began her music studies at the age of four at the İstanbul Conservatory. She received a Concert Artist Diploma from the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, and after advanced studies at the Hochschule für Musik, in Freiburg, Germany. She earned her MA and DMA degrees in Piano Performance from the University of Southern California.

Ucbasaran has won professional awards such as the American Liszt Society Award, and she was a prize-winner in the 1996 and 2000 Los Angeles Liszt Competitions. She was designated a “woman of distinction in the year 2003” by the Daughters of Atatürk organization in the United States.

Ucbasaran has given recitals and concerts in many countries, making her Wigmore Hall debut in November 2004. She has given master classes and lecture recitals throughout the United States, and in Brazil, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. In addition to concertizing as a solo performer, she has toured with international musicians in various chamber music configurations. In 2019, as a part of the 47th İstanbul International Music Festival, Ucbasaran performed a four-piano recital with George Lazaridis, Cyprien Katsaris and Janis Vakarelis as the “Four Musketeers of the Piano.” Her chamber music collaborations with various artists will continue into the future.

Her previous recordings include the scherzos and polonaises of Chopin, the complete piano sonatas of Mozart, music by Liszt, Schubert, Scarlatti and Beethoven; and twentieth-century composers including Leonard Bernstein and Robert Muczynski.

Ucbasaran’s recording of the piano music of Ahmet Adnan Saygun is found on the Naxos label. Her recordings have been received with acclaim: Gramophone magazine remarked that “An agreeable elegance pervades pianist Zeynep Ucbasaran’s playing.”

As a part of the “3 Piano Project” she has performed and recorded music for three pianos with her colleagues Sergio Gallo and Miguel Ángel Ortega Chavalas. The 3 Piano Project, which includes the premiere recording of Saygun’s Poem, Op. 73 for three pianos, was released in 2020 by Divine Art Recording Group. 2020 also saw the release of an album of music for piano four-hands with Sergio Gallo titled “Liszt to Milhaud: A Journey with Piano Four Hands.”

She has recently completed her solo project of recording the complete set of Mozart’s variations for piano. The All Music Guide raved, “As a Mozart player, Ucbasaran touches the sublime.”

Ucbasaran’s performance of the works that Franz Liszt performed in İstanbul when he visited the city in 1847 was broadcast by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to all of Europe as part of the celebration of Liszt’s 200th birthday in October 2011. For more information, please see her website: www.zupiano.com



More recordings with
Zeynep Ucbasaran



DDA 25107

The 3 Piano Project

<https://divineartrecords.com/?p=15669>

DDA 25108

Liszt to Milhaud

<https://divineartrecords.com/?p=15677>



LUNDI, 28-16 JUIN 1847.
MATINÉE MUSICALE
AU PROFIT DES PAUVRES

PAR

M. LISZT.

PROGRAMME.

1. Overture de *Guillaume Tell*.
2. Fantaisie sur des motifs de la *Sonata* de *Chopin*.
3. Mazurka de *Chopin*.
4. Polonaise des *Puritains*.
5. Marche de S. M. I. le Sultan.
6. Galop chromatique.

Le Concert aura lieu à 2 h. 1/2 précises après midi, dans les salons du Palais de Russie, à Péra, que M. d'Oustinnoff a bien voulu mettre à la disposition de M. Liszt.

Prix des Places : 50 Piastres.

On trouve les Billets à la Bourse, à Galata ; chez M. Anderlich, près du Téké ; chez M. E. Ottoni, en face du Palais de Russie.

NB. Toute personne qui prendra 5 billets, aura droit à une remise de 50 piastres.

*The program of Franz Liszt's benefit
recital for the poor given at the
Russian Embassy in Istanbul on
June 28, 1847, as it appeared in the
paper two days before the event.*



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LUNDI, 28-16 JUN 1847.
MATINÉE MUSICALE
AU PROFIT DES PAUVRES

PAR

M. LISZT.

VENDREDI, 18 JUN 1847,

MATINÉE MUSICALE PAR

F. LISZT.