

glimpse into the composer's theory about the historic development of music. Liszt's letter correspondence with music theorists of his time reveal his relation to atonality. He shared the view that atonality can be a logical outcome of the historic process beginning with tonality and passing through polytonality.

Liszt' astonishingly adventurous piano compositions align with his approach to music evolution. Experimenting with unusual scales and harmonies, suspending tonality, and handling the musical forms in an often fragmental and bold manner are only few traits that link these concise gems together. Despite his contemporaries' rejection, Liszt was relentless about giving voice to his incomparable musical ideas. Also, he was utterly aware that the abstract beauty of his late compositions would reach his successors' appreciation only decades after his death. Time has proved that these masterpieces provide an infinite source of research to scholars, and they invite pianists and listeners to immerse in their deeply moving emotional content and soundscape.

Program notes by Eva Polgar

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE NEXT EVENT IN THE LISTZ MINI-FEST

The Liszt Birthday concert with the UO Symphony
October 22, 2019 in Beall Concert Hall, FREE

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Piano Works from Liszt's Late Period

Presented by
the Oregon Chapter of
the American Liszt Society

And the Piano Studio of
Alexandre Dossin

Beall Concert Hall
Sunday, Oct. 20, 2019 | 7:30 p.m.

En rêve, S. 207 (1885)

Noa Cohen

Nuage gris, S. 199 (1881)

Alysia Knapp

Elegy no. 2, S. 197 (1878)

Ting-Yu Liu

Lugubre gondola 1, S. 200/1 (1882-1883)

Jane Lim

Lugubre gondola 2, S. 200/2 (1882-1883)

Steven James

Trauervorspiel und Trauermarsch S. 206 (1885)

Grant Mack

Czardas macabre S. 224 (1881-1882)

Dylan Nguyen

INTERMISSION**Romance Oubliée, S. 527** (revised in 1881)

Jorge Briceño

Valse Oubliée, S. 215 no. 1 (1881)

Jorge Briceño

Valse Oubliée, S. 215 no. 2 (1883)

William Race

Valse Oubliée, S. 215 no. 3 (1883)

Camila Osse

Valse Oubliée, S. 215 no. 4 (1884)

Veronica Soo Jung Lee

Bagatelle without tonality (Mephisto-Waltz no. 4), S. 216a (1885)

Alessandro Andrade da Fonseca

Mephisto-Waltz no. 3, S. 216 (1883)

Marina Bengoa

The essence of Franz Liszt (1811-1886) the phenomenon lies not in his virtuosity as a pianist but in his artistry as a composer. He was a visionary who foreshadowed the music of the 20th century. While the public praised him for his brilliant piano playing, he found his purpose and musical depth in composing. After leaving the “Years of Pilgrimage” and Europe’s concert stages behind in 1847, Liszt has developed a compositional language that has raised negative judgement from many of his contemporaries, composers, critics, and audiences alike. The increasing public disapproval of his work as a composer and the growing internal discomfort in his personal life crystallized in pieces that reveal Liszt’s progressive spirit throughout his mature years.

Liszt’s piano compositions from the late 1870s and early 1880s capture inventive writing for the instrument and are divided into three main groups following Alan Walker’s categorization: music of retrospection, music of despair, and music of death. The four *Valses oubliées* and *Romance oubliée* are music of retrospection conveying consolation of the soul and “forgotten” memories. As their descriptive titles suggest, *Nuages gris* [Gray Clouds] and *Csárdás macabre* belong to music of despair. These are short testimonies of a troubled mind. Music of death encompasses pieces of elegiac quality such as memorials, funerals, and eulogies. Due to the inherent aspects of grieving process *Elegy No. 2*, *La lugubre gondola No. 1* and *No. 2*, *Trauervorspiel und Trauermarsch* are each representative of this category that Liszt himself referred to as his “mortuary pieces.”

In her book, *Liszt’s Final Decade*, Dolores Pesce elaborates on the style and nature of the composer’s late works. In her interpretation Liszt cultivated elegiac, introspective, and bacchanalian affects after 1850. The essentially bacchanalian *Mephisto-Waltz No. 3* and *Bagatelle Without Tonality* suit Pesce’s subcategory under “new works,” waltzes and marches. Lacking a tonal center, *Bagatelle Without Tonality* is one of Liszt’s most experimental and highly chromatic piano pieces through which the listener can receive a