

Ms. 146



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Liszt Works for 'Cello and Piano

Washington University - October 1993

It is indeed an immense privilege for me to be here, and share with you some of my research into the music of Franz Liszt. This exploration I have found quite fascinating, and the pursuit of it has continued to strengthen my conviction that there is still a significant amount of archival material to be found, including perhaps the manuscript of one of Liszt's earliest chamber works: the military air, 'The Fall of Paris' with variations, for flute and piano, composed by Liszt and by the twelve year old Antonio Minasi in 1827, or perhaps, the funeral march for piano Liszt wrote the day after the death of his father in the same year.

My involvement with Liszt's 'cello music began four years ago, in October 1989 when the Royal Academy of Music in London sent me a photocopy of Consolation No.1, arranged for 'cello and piano, with a few added bars in Liszt's own hand.

The added bars turned out to be a linking passage, and the opening two bars of Consolation No.4.

Subsequently, an exciting quest followed to find the identity of the arranger, and the location of the rest of the transcription.

All this I will tell you about later in greater detail. Suffice to say that I was successful in finding Consolation No.4, and able to assemble a new Liszt 'cello piece. The first modern performance was given the following year in a BBC Scotland broadcast, by Mark Bailey of the Edinburgh Quartet and myself.

My discovery stimulated the British Liszt Society, of which I am a Council member, to publish 'The Complete Music for Violoncello and Pianoforte' in 1992, edited by our distinguished President, Leslie Howard and the Cellist Steven Isserlis.

I received my copy in due course and began to peruse the critical notes. The final paragraph gripped my attention. It read: "All the catalogues of Liszt's works include the tantalising mention of one Wagner transcription - "O du mein

holder Abendstern" (O thou fair evening star) from Tannhäuser - for 'cello and piano which seems to have existed and to have been performed in 1852. Unfortunately there has been no confirmed sighting of a manuscript of the work, which was never published .....

My recollection at that time was that I had seen a mention of this Wagner transcription in Ernst Burger's iconography, and on checking the matter further, discovered that Burger cited the manuscript source: a facsimile of the original fragment in Julius Kapp's Franz Liszt (1911 Edition).

My first thought was that this source must have been investigated by scholars and proved incorrect.

Sharon Winklhofer in her 1985 revised catalogue of Liszt's compositions, questioned the autograph's publication.



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However, Michael Saffle in his excellent 'Guide to Research' counselled caution to users of the revised catalogue, adding: "unfortunately, Winklhofer's revisions are limited in scope and not always correct. More reliable information about certain manuscripts and collections appears in Peter Raabe's Thematic Catalogue, published in 1931, the best thematic catalogue of Liszt's compositions ever published."

Raabe indeed proved more informative and clearly listed the published reproduction of the autograph.

The pursuance of my investigation was by this point vital for peace of mind.

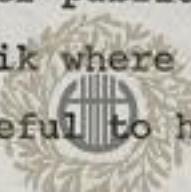
A telephone call to the British Library in London proved interesting. They had the 1911 edition of Julius Kapp's book on Liszt, but a written request was required before any examination of the volume could be undertaken. This was much too long a time for me to wait. I required an immediate answer: "was the manuscript facsimile there or not?" The assistant librarian had to make an exception in my case.

Amazingly he agreed, located the book, and informed me that within a couple of days I would have a copy of the page containing the facsimile.

This fragment (show slide) is in Liszt's hand and consists of the last 28 bars of a transcription for 'cello and piano based on the song in *Tannhäuser*. It is in the key of D major, not A<sup>b</sup> as in the piano transcription of it which Liszt made in 1849. In the opera the song is in G major.

On it in Liszt's handwriting is the name of the cello virtuoso Bernhard Cossmann and the date 10 June 1852. This is ten days after the performance at Weimar on 31 May in that year of *Tannhäuser* which Liszt conducted, with Cossmann as first 'cellist. The overture to the opera was repeated at concerts which Liszt gave on 22 and 23 June 1852, again with Cossmann in the orchestra.

Subsequent to this enquiry, my good friend Dudley Newton, who is also a British Liszt Society Council member and who was responsible for some of the research on this, found a still earlier publication of the 'O Star of Eve' fragment in the May 1902 issue of *Die Musik* where it accompanied a long article on Bernhard Cossmann. I am most grateful to him for his help.



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Let me speak about Cossmann for a moment (show slide). There were three decisive influences in his development as a performing artist :

1. The solid instruction based on Romberg.
2. The influence of the Belgian 'cello virtuoso Servais.
- and 3. The influence of Liszt.

According to the article, Cossmann had heard Liszt in Paris as early as 1844, but they only became acquainted on German soil.

Cossmann had accepted the position of solo 'cellist with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for the 1847/48 season while in Paris, and also the offer to play in a quartet with Ferdinand David, Joseph Joachim and Niels Gade.

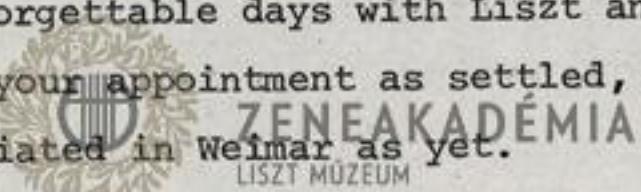
It was during this winter that he got to know Liszt who was already talking of persuading the young 'cellist to come to Weimar.

However after the season in Leipzig, during which time he had taken composition lessons with Hauptmann, he spent the following winter in Baden Baden and a month

or two later paid his first visit to England. He had committed himself to taking up his former position in Leipzig again for the last three months of 1849 and towards the end of December he set off with Joachim for Paris. It was a happy time for both of them, playing together in many trios and quartets and united, among other things, by a joint passion for Beethoven's at that time, little known final quartets.

The reason behind the young musician's departure from this dazzling city of dazzling successes, and also his refusal to let himself be tied to Leipzig - at that time the city for music in Germany if not in the whole world is revealed in a letter which Joachim wrote on his return, to his friend who had remained behind in Paris. He wrote :

"I spent a few unforgettable days with Liszt and he asked me to tell you that he considers your appointment as settled, although officially nothing has been negotiated in Weimar as yet.



In Weimar's musical circles Liszt is so omnipotent that he can do as he wishes and you can rest assured that he very much wishes to see you appointed there. He speaks of you with tremendous affection and appreciation, which will be nothing new to you, still venerated in Paris, but many people would be proud of it. I liked the place very much - it is a friendly little town, the people there are certainly easy to get on with, and above all you have Liszt there. Since I have got to know him better, my earlier hostility towards him has been transformed into an equally strong fondness ....."

It is well known that Cossmann became leading cellist of the Weimar orchestra in the summer of 1850 in time to play in the premiere of Lohengrin on 28 August 1850, and Joachim followed in his footsteps in the autumn of that year.

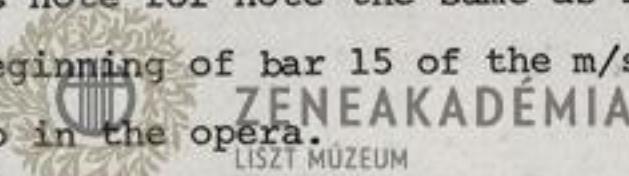
To return to Tannhäuser, as far as I am aware, this Liszt arrangement of 'O du mein holder Abendstern' (show m/s slide again) has never been performed during my lifetime, and today is a fitting occasion to give the first modern

performance of the preserved fragment incorporated into a reconstructed Romance, and shed some light on it.

The song 'O du mein holder Abendstern' comes in Act 3, Scene 2 of *Tannhäuser* and is sung by Wolfram. The tune, which does not appear in the overture, consists of 33 bars with string, bassoon and harp accompaniment.

Near the end of Wolfram's solo (bars 27 and 28) two chords on the trombones are introduced, and in the final bars (31 and 32) flutes and clarinets usher in a return of the melody (i.e. in the solo 'cellist's modified version of it).

The first bar of the m/s is the seventh bar of this 'cello solo. Apart from bars 3 to 6 in the manuscript fragment, where the melody is transferred to the piano, the 'cello line is note for note the same as in Wagner's original full score, (i.e. up to the beginning of bar 15 of the m/s) - the final bar of Cossmann's curtailed solo in the opera.



At this point Liszt has added (bars 16 to 19) a return to the recitative, one bar's rest, and an Adagio coda of eight bars.

It is obvious then, that this 'cello arrangement is based on the opera, and has scarcely nothing to do with the piano transcription.

Liszt had been in daily contact with Cossmann during rehearsals for the 31 May Weimar performance of *Tannhäuser*, and for the performances of the overture which were given on 22 and 23 June. He must have discussed with him the 'cello and piano arrangement, for which he gave a suitable ending. It may well have been Cossmann who asked him for this. Wagner's harp part would have provided the basis of the piano accompaniment. I have reconstructed the entire Romance along these lines.

I am more and more of the view, that Liszt never wrote any more than this ending, and for the following 4 reasons :

1. Breitkopf and Härtel, who published *Die Musik* and were one of the main publishers of Liszt's music, would have printed the rest of the piece

in the Die Musik article if there had been any more. Cossmann, who provided the page of the m/s for the article on him, was still alive in 1902 and had another eight years to live.

2. Liszt has used a made up word, as Dudley Newton has observed: 'transcriblirt' instead of 'transcribirt' to indicate that this m/s is not transcribed but - (to use his words) "transcribed - a hurriedly dashed off piece of m/s - a hastily scribbled one-off job."
3. What Dudley hadn't observed was that Liszt had underlined the word twice and the letter L three times to emphasise that this wasn't a slip of the pen. That Liszt would scribble off an ending, rather than the complete song transcription, has the ring of truth for me.
4. Cossmann was a great 'cello virtuoso. It would have been a little demeaning of Liszt, and completely contrary to character, to have indicated that a full transcription of the song was just a scribble. In any case Cossmann did not need a full transcription. He was fully familiar with the orchestral score of Tannhäuser as a leading member of the orchestra in Weimar and it was not necessary for Liszt to write out the rest of the song for him.

- Performance of 'O DU MEIN HOLDER ABENOSREND' -

Of the Romantic nineteenth century 'cello literature surprisingly little good to excellent music has survived and because of this, most people assume that little was written for the instrument. The reverse is, in fact, the case. A great deal of music of widely varying quality was written - upwards of 2,500 works. Some of these are by the 'cello virtuosos: Romberg (founder of the German School of 'Cellists), Platel (founder of the Belgian School), Kummer, Lee, Klengel, Batta, de Swert, Servais, Lindley, Franchomme, Piatti, Davidoff, Fitzenhagen, Popper and Cossmann.

From more than 200 'cello concertos, only a handful remain in the repertoire :

Schumann A minor (a work which Cossmann was largely responsible for introducing)

Saint-Saëns A minor (performed in 1882 in Paris with great success by Ernest de Munck)

Dvorak B minor and Lalo D minor

To this list of works for 'cello and orchestra, we might add the Tchaikowsky Roccoco Variations (performed by Fitzenhagen at the Wiesbaden Festival in 1879 in Liszt's presence), and the Brahms Double Concerto for Violin and 'Cello.

Only a few of more than 300 sonatas for 'Cello and Piano remain: 2 by Mendelssohn, 1 by Chopin, 2 by Brahms, 1 by Grieg, 1 by Strauss, and 2 by Saint-Saëns. The ones ~~not~~ <sup>RARELY</sup> performed include those by Hummel, Fauré, Lalo, Rachmaninoff, Frederic Lamond and Conrad Ansorge, two pupils of Liszt. Both wrote a 'cello sonata which has failed to appear in the repertoire.

Six of the seven Liszt 'cello pieces which we are hearing today were arrangements of other pieces. The remaining one, *La Lugubre Gondola*, was originally written for Violin or 'Cello and Piano. It is important to note that none of these pieces was written expressly for the 'cello.

Only three were published during Liszt's lifetime: the 1st and 2nd Elegy published by Kahnt in 1875 and 1878, and Romance Oubliée published by Simon in 1881.

Of the posthumous publications, the autograph fragment, 'O du mein holder Abendstern' appeared in two publications: the May 1902 issue of *Die Musik*, and the 3rd edition of Julius Kapp's *Franz Liszt*, published in 1911.

*La Lugubre Gondola* was published for the first time in 1974 by Editio Musica Budapest, and finally, the de Swert/Liszt 'Consolation' and *Die Zelle* in Nonnenwerth were published by the British Liszt Society in 1992.

Let me now move on to the first of these most recent publications, the de Swert/Liszt 'Consolation'.

It is important at the outset to mention four 'cellists who are crucial to a proper understanding of this piece :

1. Jules de Swert, Belgian 'Cellist, who composed the arrangement of the six Consolations for 'cello and piano.

2. Karl Fitzenhagen, German 'Cellist, who played for Liszt at the Beethoven Festival in Weimar in May 1870. He appears to have performed two of de Swert's Consolation transcriptions, but with organ accompaniment.
3. Ernest de Munck, Belgian 'Cellist, who succeeded de Swert as solo 'cellist at Weimar in 1871. He played with Liszt at a series of matinée concerts at Wilhelmsthal House, the residence of the Grand Duke of Weimar, in July 1871, and performed two of de Swert's Consolations with a linking passage specially written for him by Liszt. He was appointed Professor of 'Cello at R.A.M. in London in 1893.
4. Sigmund Burger, Austrian 'Cellist, who performed 'Consolation' at a Paris matinée in Liszt's honour on 23 March 1886.

Following my recovery from obscurity of Liszt's Piano Piece in A<sup>b</sup> (S.189) in May 1986, I began collecting copies of Liszt letters held in private collections throughout the United Kingdom.

The Royal Academy of Music in London were unable to supply any letters, but sent instead a copy of a piece of music in October 1989: Liszt's Consolation No.1 arranged for 'Cello and Piano by Jules de Swert, with a passage of eleven bars in Liszt's hand pasted at the foot, linking it to Consolation No.4 (which was missing). The linking passage had a note stating that it had been made for Ernest de Munck by Liszt. The pasted page had been in the Academy Library since Professor de Munck's death in 1915.

Only the plate number remained as a guide to the publisher, and there was no mention of de Swert. As I indicated in the A.L.S. September 1990 Newsletter, I am grateful to Kenneth Souter of the British Liszt Society for his suggestion that Breitkopf and Härtel could have been the publisher, and to Charles Suttoni for referring me to a letter written to Jules de Swert by Liszt, praising his 'cello and piano arrangement of the six Consolations.

Breitkopf and Härtel's supply of the reprinted de Swert arrangement from the original plates, after my lengthy search, included the missing Consolation No.4.

Gradually I was able to trace the provenance of the piece.

In the Spring of 1870 Liszt was given a 'cello and piano arrangement of his six Consolations by Jules de Swert. They had been published the previous year by Breitkopf and Härtel. De Swert probably composed them ca. 1868 in Weimar.

The 'cello arrangement appears to have been included in a Beethoven Centenary Concert in Weimar on 28 May 1870, and later at Merseburg Cathedral on 7 June of that year, performed by Karl Fitzenhagen, with organ accompaniment. Dr. Legány in Volume One of 'Liszt and his Country', suggests that probably Nos.1 and 4 were played. (This would explain the appearance in another hand on the printed page, of pedal registration specification).

The following year, Ernest de Munck succeeded de Swert to his post at Weimar and became very friendly with Liszt. The two Consolations appear to have been performed again during a series of matinées at the Grand Duke of Weimar's Palace in July of that year, with de Munck and Liszt performing; Liszt probably added the linking passage for this occasion.

The series was reported in the September 1871 issue of the Musical Standard.

A few months before Liszt's death a soirée was given in his honour in Paris on 23 March 1886, and a 'cello and piano piece entitled 'Consolation' was performed by Sigmund Burger and pianist.

Was this 'Consolation' the same piece Liszt and de Munck played in July 1871 at Wilhelmsthal? Probably yes!

Sigmund Burger, who had gone to Paris in 1883 to inaugurate Chamber Concerts with Marsick and Breitner, began touring in Germany in 1874 with Carlotta Patti, the future wife of Ernest de Munck, the same year as de Munck had to abandon a similar German tour (perhaps the same one) because of an attack of paralysis of the left hand.

The following year Burger succeeded Cossmann as solo 'cellist at Baden Baden and remained there for five years.

In 1880, the year after Ernest de Munck and Carlotta Patti married, Sigmund Burger resumed touring with Carlotta's sister Adelina Patti. Burger and de Munck must have known each other well, and it is also probable that the piece was exchanged while they were both in Paris.

Ernest de Munck became Professor of 'Cello at the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1893 and remained there until 1912. After his death in 1915, Consolation No.1 with the linking passage was lodged in the Academy Library.

- Performance of 'Consolation' -

Liszt's link with the Belgian School of 'Cellists was forged years before Jules de Swert or Ernest de Munck came to Weimar.

Nicolas Platel, the founder of the school, became professor of 'cello at the newly founded Brussels Conservatoire in 1831, and passed on his artistic legacy to three outstanding pupils: Adrien Servais, Alexandre Batta, and François de Munck (father of Ernest, and Platel's successor at the Conservatoire in 1835½).

Servais was later to be a powerful influence on the development of Bernhard Cossmann, and the Belgian connection must have had some bearing on the appointment of two future Belgian 'cellists at Weimar (both pupils of Servais): Jules de Swert and Ernest de Munck.

Batta and de Munck, the Elder, won joint first prize at the Conservatoire in 1834, and from 1835, Batta was appearing in Paris and London, on the same platform as Liszt. Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata was performed by them in London on 1 June 1840. A year later Liszt and family paid their first visit to Nonnenwerth.

- Performance of Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth -

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### LISZT WORKS FOR 'CELLO AND PIANO'

The focus of this lecture recital will centre on the first two pieces printed on the programme.

New information has come to light on the 'O du mein holder Abendstern' manuscript, since the publication of the Complete Music for Violoncello and Piano of Liszt on 22 November 1992, by the British Liszt Society.

The works included in the launch of the volume excluded a publication of the 'O du mein holder Abendstern' fragment.

We are now, for the first time, able to understand why Liszt never intended to write any more than a suitable ending to the Romance.

The background to the de Swert Consolation, incorporating the second fragment, is also dealt with fully.



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The influence of the Belgian school of 'cellists is assessed and a brief survey given of the 19th Century 'cello repertoire and the major 'cellists of the period.

The five works remaining, will be performed without interruption and brief notes on each piece have been printed below.

Myra Chahin and myself will complete our recital programme with Jules de Swert's arrangement of the 5th Consolation immediately following La Lugubre Gondola - a suitable moment of stillness with which to take our leave of Liszt.

#### Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth

In the Summer of 1841 Liszt and family paid their first visit to Nonnenwerth, an island in the Rhine, and about this time he wrote the song 'Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth'. It was published in 1843. He made three versions of it for voice and piano, four or more versions for piano solo, and later a version for violin or 'cello and piano in 1880.

The 'cello and piano version of this piece was published for the first time in the 1992 British Liszt Society publication.

The piece was given its first modern performance by Leslie Howard and David Berlin at the Austrian Institute in London on 22 November 1992.

Sharon Winklhofer cites this piece as not by Liszt, but the Weimar manuscripts XI and XI' although in part in copyists' hands are also partly in Liszt's hand.

### Première Élegie

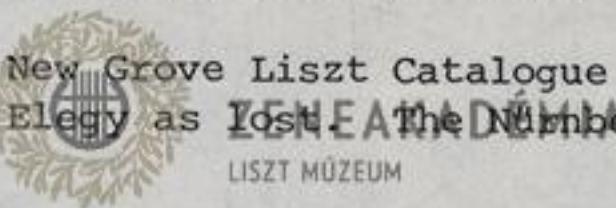
The first Elegy or "Slumber Song in the Grave" was dedicated to the memory of Marie Moukhanoff (formerly Kalergis, born Countess Nesselrode) who had been a pupil of Liszt and Chopin, and a champion of Wagner.

It was composed in July 1874 at the Villa d'Este. Two versions of it were made concurrently by Liszt, one for piano alone and the other for violoncello, piano, harp, and harmonium. When it was published by Kahnt in 1875 it appeared in five versions :

1. Violoncello, Piano, Harp, and Harmonium
2. Violoncello and Piano
3. Piano, 2 hands
4. Piano, 4 hands
5. Violin and Piano

The versions for Violoncello and Piano, Piano 4 hands, and Violin and Piano may have been made by Kahnt rather than by Liszt.

Here again the 1985 New Grove Liszt Catalogue is in error, by citing all the Chamber MSS of the First Elegy as ~~lost~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Neath~~ <sup>Neath</sup> ~~Düne~~ <sup>Düne</sup>. The Nuremberg MSS Hs. 107023 I Nos. 5 and 6 disprove this claim.



### Zweite Elegie

The second Elegy, again published by Kahnt, was composed for Lina Ramaan after reading her article on his first Elegy in the February/March 1877 issue of Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. In a letter to her Liszt adds: "I will compose a volume of Elegies for you - according to your directions - religioso at the close."

The second Elegy was completed in October 1877 at the Villa d'Este. It was written in two versions, the first for piano alone, and the second for violin or violoncello with piano accompaniment.

### Romance Oubliée

The first performance of the 'Ring' cycle was presented at the opening of the new Wagner Theatre in Bayreuth from 13 to 17 August 1876. Wagner was in charge of all the performances. Hans Richter conducted, Hermann Ritter led the violas, playing his new Viola Alta, and Jules de Swert led the 'cellos (de Swert had also undertaken the formation of the orchestra at Wagner's request). Ritter's appearance at Bayreuth was highly profitable, and Liszt being very impressed with the new instrument, later composed Romance Oubliée for viola and piano. He also wrote versions for violin or 'cello and piano, and piano solo. All these were published in 1881 by the Hanover publisher, Arnold Simon.

The previous year, Liszt had been sent a copy of his Romance in E minor by this publisher, with a request for its reprint. Instead, Liszt transformed the piece into the new composition, Romance Oubliée.

La Lugubre Gondola

La Lugubre Gondola, actually the third Elegy, was written for Lina Ramaan. It was composed in Venice, in December 1882. In a letter to her, written on 8 February 1883, he says: "There (in Venice) I wrote various things, among them a third Elegy, dedicated to Lina Ramaan. The title shouldn't startle you. As you know, I carry a deep sorrow in my heart: it must break out into musical notation here and there". He wrote the piece as a presentiment of Wagner's death which occurred on 13 February 1883.

The version for violin or 'cello and piano is the original (i.e. December 1882) version.

A second version for violin or 'cello and piano (a corrected copy with an additional seventeen bars in Liszt's hand (which we will play) was written ca.1885 with a piano solo version. The piano solo version was published in 1886, but the second version for violin or 'cello and piano was first published posthumously in 1974, by Editio Musica Budapest.

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An arrangement of Liszt's sixth Soirées de Vienne for 'cello and Piano is mentioned in Pazdirek. It was transcribed by Ferdinand von Liliencron (b.1852?) from Liszt's transcription ca.1875, and published by Cranz of Hamburg. I have been unable to trace a copy of this work, and would welcome any information about the piece or the composer.

Lastly, Liszt wrote four Valses Oubliées between 1881 and 1885. The first of these was transcribed for 'cello and piano by Feruccio Busoni. It was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1917 and is currently available. Busoni's chamber works are rare, and this waltz transcription is one of only two that he wrote for 'cello and piano.

William G.C. Wright  
5th September, 1993.