LISZT AND THE WEIMAR HOFTHEATER

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ZENEAKADÉMIA
LISZT MÚZEUM

In an early work The Collector and his Circle Goethe said that "...we have, in the union of opposites, one of the three conditions of perfect art...."[1] Goethe, of course, was not thinking of Weimar when he said this, but any traveller to that ancient Thuringian town during the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries would have found it appropriate as he tried to reconcile his reasons for visiting the home of Goethe and Schiller with the uninviting sight around him. According to Madame de Stael, who visited it in the early nineteenth century, Weimar was not a small town but a large château. Indeed, when Goethe arrived in 1775, the old walls of the city were still standing and enclosed some six thousand inhabitants. And like everyone else, Goethe was forced to stop and register, at one of the four gates of the town, before he was allowed entrance. Half a century later the population had grown to fourteen thousand, but the impression that Weimar made on George Eliot when she visited the home of Liszt was even more wearisome than that of her German colleague. "How could Goethe live in this dull, lifeless village," she wrote.[2] And that things improved little as one came to know the inhabitants is suggested by one of the characters in the novel of Thomas Mann, Lotte in Weimar, who complains that "It is borné, it is a hive of court gossip, its upper classes are arrogant and its lower stupid."[3]

It is customary, especially among cultural historians, to divide the history of nineteenth century Weimar into the Classical and post-Classical periods; most of the time this division, in fact, entails a judgement of decline as well. The intellectual and spiritual significance of Weimar began in 1775, with the arrival of Goethe. In 1791 he assumed the directorship of the court theater, a post which he held and pursued for a quarter of a century. The end of Goethe's control of the theater, in 1817, marked something of the end of the most intellectually significant period in the history of

Weimar culture. Herder died in 1803, Schiller in 1805 and Wieland in 1816. By the end of the decade, in fact, the most illustrious ranks of Goethe's Weimar circle were virtually depleted. There is no lack of appreciation and reminder of this period in Weimar today. In Goethe's house, restored with care and affection, may be seen many testimonies of his astonishing activity: his library is virtually intact, his mineral collection and his drawings, for example, and many of the earliest editions of his poetic and scientific works are displayed. His summer cottage is still in the large park in the center of Weimar, which Goethe himself helped to design. And his friendship and collaboration with Schiller is memorialized by the statue of both friends embracing that occupies now the center of the Theaterplatz, in front of the descendant of the old Hoftheater where Goethe worked.

Liszt's association with Weimar began not long after the death of Goethe, in November 1841, when he gave his first concert for the ducal court. In 1842 he was appointed "conductor in extraordinary service". His contract originally required him to spend three months of each year in Weimar as court conductor, a promise which he honored in 1844 and 1846 only, but in 1848 Liszt decided to take up permanent residence in Weimar, where he remained until his resignation in 1860. In spite of the importance of Liszt's activities in Weimar and his work there on behalf of the New German School, there remains today a curious ambivalence about the significance of this association. There is surprisingly little reminder of it there today. Liszt's theater no longer exists - it was destroyed by fire in 1907, although its site is now occupied by the Deutsches Nationaltheater (German National Theater). The Altenberg, where Liszt and the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein lived, was turned into an apartment dwelling, and only a single small apartment at the back of the first floor, overlooking the garden, is said to have remained somewhat as it was in

Liszt's day. And the Hofgärtnerei, a small cottage on the outskirts of the park, the residence provided for Liszt by the grand duke Karl Alexander during the last quarter century of Liszt's life, and where he spent about a third of each year until his death, is now the Liszt Museum, but it is a pale reminder of the significance of Liszt's work in Weimar. The contributions of Liszt to the history of nineteenth century music, of course, are not forgotten; the students of the Franz Liszt Academy and the scholars who come to work in the Goethe-Schiller Archives, where Liszt's musical manuscripts are housed, remain a quiet yet intense and continuous memorial to Liszt and his music.

Liszt's decision to settle in Weimar was ambivalent as well. Indeed, for at least a full decade before 1848 Liszt confronted and wrestled with many of the questions, both public and private, that surrounded and ultimately determined his final decision to settle in Weimar. Julius Kapp, one of the most eminent Liszt scholars of the early part of this century, argued that Liszt as early as the last years of the 1830's had planned for a time to present himself as a candidate for Hummel's position as court conductor in Weimar.[4] But this plan, and perhaps others similar, were put off until the beginning of the new decade. It was during the course of these years, in fact, that Liszt became interested in a number of plans, some eventually aborted or abandonned, to write an opera, and in conducting, a new form of performance for Liszt and one that increased somewhat in scope and seriousness throughout the decade. Indeed, there is no doubt that both of these musical enterprises, new to Liszt's artistic concerns, were bound up with his growing desire to acquire a permanent post as court conductor. There is, for example, a letter from Liszt to Count Fay, that Liszt wrote from St. Petersburg in 1842, expressing a hope that a position could be found for him in ~~Budapest~~ Pest.[5] And during the second half of the decade Liszt turned his hopes toward Vienna,

and the position that was held by the ailing Donizetti, as well as toward the completion of a work for the stage, Sardanapal.[6] It seems that Liszt's heart was set on Vienna and that the work might be performed at the Kärnthnerthortheater there[7], but neither came to pass. Liszt certainly saw the composition of a successful work for the stage as the best way to gain access to an important post. And even after Liszt settled in Weimar, his plans for the performance of Sardanapal were apparently bound up with possible performances not only in Weimar, but in Paris and London as well. As late as 1850, Joachim Raff, in a letter to Frau Heinrich, wrote that Liszt intended to spend two or three years in Weimar preparing himself as a composer and then go to Paris.[8] And two months before Raff's letter, a notice appeared in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, announcing that Liszt's completed opera Sardanapal would be given its premiere in the French capital.[9]

As I have already said, the decade before Liszt assumed permanently his duties in Weimar saw his growing interest and involvement with conducting. Ernest Newman, a controversial but often perceptive biographer of Liszt, argued that Liszt was not prepared properly to take up the duties of court conductor, having had little experience as an orchestral conductor before 1848.[10] There is some truth to what Newman says, although the reasons are not always as he suggests. Liszt conducted exactly fifteen times from 11 January 1840 until his regular duties in Weimar began, although on some of these occasions he conducted only a part of one concert, usually several overtures. Only once did he conduct an opera, and this was in Breslau in 1843, where he conducted The Magic Flute, a plan that was initiated less than a week before the performance.[11] Although his conducting was not always successful, for now we should notice rather how much the music of his new repertoire coincided with his own compositional interests of the period, either in relation to his own

original scores or to his work as a transcriber and arranger for the keyboard. Most of the music that held Liszt's interests as a conductor during this period were the third, fifth and seventh symphonies of Beethoven, and the dramatic overture, for example, those to William Tell, Oberon, Coriolan, Spontini's Olympia, and the Overtures to King Lear and Waverly of Berlioz. In the case of the first group we have to remember that by 1844 Liszt had already arranged Beethoven's fifth and sixth symphonies, and part of the seventh for solo keyboard; in the case of the second, we can witness part of the long road, both aesthetic and musical, that led to his creation of the symphonic poem as a new genre.

The period 1848-1860, when Liszt was Kapellmeister at the Weimar court, were in many ways the most significant and productive years of the composer. On the musical side it is for the most part the compositinal activity of Liszt that has been given the most emphasis, and on the personal side, it is the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein as well as Berlioz and Wagner, for example, who have held center stage. This is not to say, of course, that we have little to learn and to reevaluate about these aspects of Liszt's life and musical activity during this period. But about the interpretive and technical side of Liszt's accomplishments, and especially in his role as music director of the Weimar court, much less has been written. It would be reasonable to claim, in fact, that no serious or exhaustive study has yet appeared about Liszt as Kapellmeister in Weimar.[12] Several reasons immediately suggest themeselves. Liszt's fame and importance as a keyboard virtuoso still remain so dominant in any conception of Liszt as a performer and interpreter of historical significance that it has not been easy to take as seriously his career and accomplishments as an orchestral conductor. But in duration, in repertoire and in demands of time and energy this aspect o Liszt's career as a performer

may be seen in many ways as even more significant than his earlier virtuoso years as a pianist. Liszt conducted in Weimar for the first time in 1844. Nearly thirty years later, and again in Weimar, Liszt conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to mark the one hundredth anniversary of that composer's birth. In 1876, Nikisch played under him in Vienna, and in 1883, to honor the memory of Wagner, Liszt returned to Weimar to conduct the Prelude and Good Friday Music from Parsifal. Liszt's carrer as a conductor lasted, with less activity, to be sure, during the last decade and a half, for nearly four decades. As a pianist, Liszt did not explore a great deal of music before Beethoven. In Weimar, however, Liszt not only played but frequently wrote about a good deal of earlier music, Bach and Handel, for example, as well as Gluck and others. Indeed, one has only to remember the centrality of performance to the whole of his artistic life, and this question, by the way, is hardly to be separated from his work as an arranger and transcriber, in works that often lie at the most innovative core of his compositional activity (the "Ad Nos" Fantasy, for example), to realize that there is much to lose without a serious exploration of Liszt as one of the most innovative and at the same time perplexing musicians during the years spent at Weimar.

There is another problem, of a more practical nature than lack of sufficient interest or tendentious motivation, concerning Liszt as Kapellmeister that I must mention now, and that is the nature and limitations in the evidence that has been available. The problem is complex and warrants some discussion. In the general category of secondary literature, it is useful to distinguish between official and personal documents. In the first, the factual evidence resides for the most part in those publications assembled and published under the control of the artistic direction of the principal theaters in Germany. These are works of theater statistics and concern

personnel and repertory, and in some cases include financial material and some contemporary critical accounts as well. These works are known as Tagebücher or Almanach, and are works of general reference, for example, Winkler's Tagebuch der deutschen Bühnen, published from 1815-1835, or Almanach für Freunde der Schauspielkunst, published from 1837 until 1855. The pattern of these half official catalogues was adopted during the nineteenth century in Germany by Hofrat von Küstner to the history of individual theaters, in the beginning to those of Darmstadt, Munich and Berlin, where von Kustner was Intendant, and whose work in this form culminated in his Taschen- und Handbuch der Theater-Statistik, published in Berlin in 1855. Now there is no individual work of this kind for the Hoftheater in Weimar except for the Jahrbuch des grosherzoglich weimarischen Hof-Theaters und der Hof-Kapelle, by Richard Pohl, a music critic and one of Liszt's circle who resided in Weimar and who has left us only a single volume, for the season 1854-1855.[13] In this category, then, we are left, for the most part, without even the basic official record of personnel and repertory.

I include within the category of secondary literature of a personal kind diaries, reminiscences and correspondence. Here the most interesting examples might have been the personal accounts of performance activity by the extraordinary musicians who worked under Liszt, either permanently or as guests in the Hoftheater. These included, for example, Liszt's concertmasters Joseph Joachim, Ferdinand Laub or Leopold Damrosch, and for a short time Eduard Reményi, and such performers or composers as Clara Schumann, Hans von Bülow or Hector Berlioz. There are some documents of this kind, for example the accounts of Cornelius, the memoirs of Eduard Genast, stage director for a time, or Elizabeth Sangalli, the wife of Heinrich Marr, artistic director of the theater,[14] but they are disappointingly few and usually utterly sparing of

any sound description or account of Liszt as a working musician. Their interest is too often of a personal nature, often gossipy and taken up with ordinary day to day events.

Now it turns out that we are more fortunate in the matter of the primary material, bureaucratic and administrative as well as musical, that involves the old Hoftheater, and here may I be permitted to describe, if only briefly, what I have uncovered during the last three or four years in this category. The theater in which Liszt worked was destroyed by fire in 1907; it was then rebuilt and lasted until nearly the end of the war, when it was again destroyed and finally reopened as the Deutsches Nationaltheater. Fortunately, however, a good deal of the archives of Liszt's theater has survived, and resides now in the archives of the Staatsarchiv and the Deutsches Nationaltheater.[15] The most important material relating to Liszt in the Staatsarchiv exists primarily in three collections: Bestand Kunst und Wissenschaft (KW), Bestand Generalintendanz des Hoftheaters und der Hofkapelle (GI) and the Hausarchiv Carl Alexander (CA). In CA the most important material are the two Konceptbücher (draft books), one from the 1870's and 80's, the other from the Weimar years.[16] Taken together they include over two hundred letters, with many complete drafts. The draft book from the Weimar years contains important letters to composers whose works Liszt eventually produced or intended to produce in Weimar, for example, Heinrich Dorn and Auber. There are eleven subcategories of material in KW, including Management and Administration, Library and Manuscripts, Orchestra Personnel, Theater Personnel, Rehearsals and performance and Theater Programs, and there is a considerable correspondence between the General Directors and the singers, performers and artistic personnel of the theater.[17] Indeed, many of the files contain letters to and from Liszt that are not indicated in any way in the

description of each file. And finally, GI is devoted entirely to the history of the theater, and large portions of it deal with the Liszt years, and contains, for example, a great deal of the official records and correspondence originating from the various General Directors of the theater, as well as drafts and completed versions of the regulations under which the theater operated.

I should say a word or two now about the musical material that has survived in the archives of the German National Theater. Although many of the purely orchestral concerts that Liszt gave in Weimar took place in the Hoftheater (he gave orchestral concerts in three other places in Weimar as well), and included in many cases a number of successive versions of his own compositions, especially of the symphonic poems, little if any of this performance material, either parts or scores, seems to have been preserved. But a great number of musical materials relating to opera from the period of about 1825, to the latter part of the century, and therefore relating to the theater in which Liszt actually worked, have survived. These include orchestral parts, piano-vocal scores, souffleur scores (complete texts with vocal line that the Regisseur used to prepare the chorus and soloists) and conducting scores and contemporary printed librettos.[18] It is thus a valuable record of performance for one of the most forward-looking and important artistic centers in the south of Germany during the middle part of the nineteenth century. Here again I will refer to some of this material later in this essay.

In March 1854, when Liszt had been Kapellmeister for almost six years, he wrote an article on Weber's Euryanthe for the occasion of his first performances of Weber's opera in Weimar.[19] Many of Liszt's musical writings at the time were written to help the public to understand the musical and

artistic value of the work that he performed. In his article on Euryanthe, Liszt took the opportunity to look closely at what the Weimar theater might reasonbably attain artistically and to describe his ideals for the creation of a residential theater, describing the musical and dramatic aims that such a theater should take on. Before we consider Liszt's project it would be well to have in mind something of the awful conditions of the Hoftheater against which Liszt had to fight for the entire duration of his musical tenure. As far back as the time of Goethe, as Marvin Carlson has described, "the Weimar theater was never free from the internal strife that racked so many of the companies of the period.... Regulations were passed, fines imposed, actors censored and even arrested, but the problem never completely disappeared."[20] I will cite one example of almost freightening dimensions. There is a file in the Staatsarchiv that is marked "Denial of a role to the performer Karl Beck-1852,"[21] and is about the difficulties, charges and countercharges that the theater faced with the famous tenor who was to sing the title role in the first German performance of Berlioz' Benvenuto Cellini, for the first Berlioz week in Weimar that Liszt was preparing. The file contains eleven letters, mostly between the Intendant Beaulieu-Marconnay and Beck, but in addition a letter of over twenty pages, dictated by Liszt and corrected in his hand, to the Intendant. During the course of this document, which often reads like the minutes drawn up in a criminal court, Liszt tirelessly reviews the whole pathetic series of complaints, accusations and demands, correcting the record, taking sides now with one and then another of the participants and in the course finding it necessary to review and protest against some of the statutes and regulations which governed the artistic affairs of the Hoftheater. In the end Beck was allowed and agreed to take part in that historic performance, but still one is amazed at the inexhaustible patience and fertility of mind called

upon on the part of Liszt for such matters. Another complaint of Liszt's was the lack of sufficient musical personnel. In 1854, when Liszt had already conducted Tannhäuser, Lohengrin and Flying Dutchman of Wagner many times, there were 37 regular orchestra members and a chorus of 35.[22] And finally we should mention the lack of interest and involvement shown the musical life of the theater by the public and the press alike. As late as 1852, in the Weimarische Zeitung, there appeared a leading article emphasizing the need for a regular and informed music critic, and two years later Richard Pohl was still calling for the same thing.[23] Rarely did that newspaper or its rival Deutschland ever offer anything but the most cursory of reviews or articles about the musical life of Weimar, and these, when they did occur, were usually critical of Liszt. On one occasion Bülow had to defend Liszt openly in the press against a local critic who criticized vehemently Liszt's unorthodox style of beating time.[24]

So how shall we evaluate Liszt's achievements in Weimar and his attempts to create a theater of permanent musical and aesthetic leadership in Germany? Liszt himself gives us, in the course of his writing about Euryanthe, some of the criteria that he hoped would guide him in his efforts as Kapellmeister, and it is to these that we should turn now. The first principle of his project concerns the performance of early music, or earlier music, and it begins thus: " A more intelligent and more truthful reverence for the masterworks of earlier periods, as experience indicates. As a consequence of this reverence, one should search out every variant, every new and superior version, less common versions and more polished and skillful improvements. The performance of such works in the kind of sequence where one piece shows up to best effect the other, so that the public can arrive at an intimate understanding, as well as a comprehension of the artistic ideal,..."[25] Liszt's attitudes toward the

understanding and performance of early music, compressed as they are in the lines that I have quoted, are certainly provocative enough, and few will fail to react, for example, to the modern feeling about authenticity that they suggest. But Liszt's attitudes toward earlier repertories was varied and complex, and on the surface certainly contradictory, and a full appreciation, which, unfortunately is not possible here, is hampered from the very start by several problems. One difficulty which I have already alluded to is the scattered and haphazardly incomplete evidence that we have had about Liszt's performances of early music, his more general aesthetic and historical attitudes to the repertory and the reactions that these met with. Another, which is in the end more serious, is the automatic application of a modern code of attitudes, covering the questions of the search for authentic instruments and performance styles and a scale of judgement based on such modern concerns, to the middle of the nineteenth century where it cannot fail to confuse the search for the relevant code of aesthetic and musical communication and response.

A more careful look at the repertories, composers and works of earlier music that concerned Liszt in one way or another should be illuminating, and will dispel, for example, the attempts to characterize him as universal in sympathy or unerring in judgement. During the years we are concerned with, either in Weimar or at the larger music festivals, usually in the south of Germany at which Liszt conducted, it is Händel, but not Bach, and Mozart but not Haydn, and, of course, Gluck and his immediate successors that earned Liszt's interests. Except for Don Giovanni and the Magic Flute, which Liszt performed often, it seems that it was only from the time of the Mozart centenary concert in Vienna, in 1856, to which Liszt was invited, amidst a storm of protest by the members of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, that

Liszt's deeper interests in Mozart's instrumental music were awakened, although the interest, curiously enough, is vital more from a scholarly than a personal angle. As for Haydn, as far as I know he never conducted a single work by that composer, and went so far as to poke fun at the opening of the Creation, whose extramusical side Liszt found quaint and literal minded. Bach's keyboard works held an important place for Liszt, of course, and he once performed the Cantata (No.) 26, but it was the more extrovert and dramatic oratorios of Händel that took possession of Liszt during this period: he performed, besides the Messiah, Samson and Judas Maccabaeus. We get an idea from this that Liszt's interests in early music favored the outward and dramatic, and not the more confined and absolute instrumental styles of Bach and Haydn, and that this direction of interest went hand in hand with his own aesthetic and programmatic sympathies, as well as anticipated his turn to the choral and oratorio genres in his own compositional activity. The same pattern is repeated, by the way, again and again in music of a later period. In the case of Mendelssohn, for example, he never performed the purely instrumental symphonies, but rather Loreley, Antigone, music to the Midsummer Night's Dream, and Athalie, as well as the Lobgesang, Die erste Walpurgisnacht and Elijah.[27]

Let us follow in a less general way one or two examples of Liszt's preoccupation with earlier music, to judge how much his project reflects his actual work in the theater. Again his interest in Mozart is suggestive and points the direction for further study. The program that he gave in Vienna at the centenary concert included the Overture and Chorus of Priests from the Magic Flute, the C Minor Concerto, parts of the Requiem, the G Minor Symphony, a concert aria with solo violin and the Act I Finale of Don Giovanni.[28] The account of the concert in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik[29], for example, is

full of praise for Liszt but sticks for the most part to the tremendous personal magnetism of Liszt and his startling effect on the public. While I do not think that such responses are in any way a cover-up, they are pretty much devoid of real content, preoccupied with Liszt's personality and effect rather than with matters of musical and interpretive substance. A much better, and tantalizing clue comes in a letter to the daughter of von Bülow by Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, who has left us a trace of the controversy that seems to have been waged by the critics about some of Liszt's interpretations: "Has Mr Hans," she says, "followed the rather lively polemics that have just taken place between the Blaetter für Musik of Zellner, and the Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitg. No. 7 about the way in which Liszt performed the Overture to the Magic Flute at the Mozart Festival? Bischoff has just made in this latter journal a formal apology, in admitting, honorably as far as his conscience is concerned, but not flatteringly for his knowledgle of the classics, that he knew nothing of the question- having been unaware of the existence of the authentic sources, that provide a brilliant justification for Liszt's interpretation - it is the Zukunftsmusiker [musicians of the future] who must teach even Vergangenheitsmusik [music of the past] to their adversaries."[30]

Now at the time of the concert the autograph of the Magic Flute was in the hands of the brothers André in Frankfurt, and I have no direct evidence that Liszt actually studied it, although his interest in Mozart autographs seems real enough, for he owned for a time the autograph of the Prague Symphony. Fortunately the critics referred to by Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein give some details of the changes that Liszt asked for and that departed from the traditional text. He removed, for example, the slurs over the long chords at the return of the adagio section of the Overture, which were still printed in all of the piano-vocal scores of the period, as well as introducing

specific details of articulation that were no longer observed.[31] We do get here a striking sense that Liszt meant what he said in the project about the search for "every variant, every new and superior version, less common versions and more polished and skillful improvements." Indeed, more evidence is now available to us about this interpretation, because the conducting score that Liszt used for his performances of the complete opera in Weimar, an old copyist's score taking up two volumes, as well as the orchestral parts, have survived, and from these we can enrich our picture of Liszt's interpretative attitude toward this work.[32] In Liszt's working score, the ties which I referred to a moment ago are struck out, with a rit. added two measures before, all in Liszt's hand. He also has added a great many careful articulation or grouping slurs and dots, often when the required articulation is not coincident with the metrical context, as well as appogiaturas. In general, his attention, to judge from the preparation of the score alone, is inevitably on matters of phrasing, articulation and dynamic detail. I should add, finally, that Liszt was thinking about Mozart at this time historically as much as he was about authenticity. On the very evening of Liszt's return from Vienna he wrote a long letter to his uncle Eduard Liszt where he outlined the need and requirements for a critical edition of the works of Mozart on the pattern of the Bach and Händel editions, the only ones, of course, that Liszt could have been familiar with.[33] He covered every aspect of the problem, from artistic criteria and financial needs to suggesting the make-up of an editorial board. It could well be adopted today in even the most empiricist musicological quarters. Nothing came of this proposal, and, when about a decade or so later plans for a Mozart edition were begun, Liszt had no part. But should we not see something of the spirit of these suggestions alive in the only other Mozart concert that Liszt ever gave, again on Mozart's

birthday, 27 Jan 1858, in Weimar? The concert was described, even in the programs, as a historical concert of Mozart's works, and these were played chronologically, the dates of each composition duly indicated in parentheses beside each piece in the program. The concert included the Overture and a duet from Il Re Pastore, the second act Finale of Idomeneo, the G Minor Symphony and parts of the Requiem.

If Liszt's responses to the works of Mozart show us something of his musical and historical attitudes toward the performance of earlier music, then we should at least set beside those examples Liszt's preoccupation with another work, Schubert's Alfonso und Estrella, an example which helps us to see other sides of his thinking. In 1854 Liszt wrote an essay on Schubert's opera, at the time of the first performance of that work in Weimar, which contains a number of insightful judgements about the musical and dramatic sides of the opera.[34] At the same time, however, he does not seem aware, judgeing from the essay, and his performance as well, as we shall see, of the influence of Gluck and some of the aesthetic ideas underlying Gluck's style that were written about in treatises in the first decades of the nineteenth century, some of which apparently had a strong influence on Schubert in the preparation of his work. In any event, Liszt seems to have changed his mind often about how to produce the work, suggesting at one point the drastic measure of substituting for its original libretto a French text, to make it a viable work for the French stage. He planned on at least four separate occasions to produce the work in Weimar between 1848 and 1854, giving up the project for a number of reasons, on the first occasion, persuaded by Eduard Genast, the Regisseur, that Schubert's opera was not dramatically viable in any form.[35] But Liszt persisted, considering it an act of hommage to enable Schubert's opera t see the light of day, if only once, and he performed it in

Weimar in June, 1854. It was not produced again until the 1880's in Vienna, in a badly mutilated version by Fuchs, and, in fact, appeared in that form in its first publication. Many have wondered how Liszt eventually solved the problem of this score, although he left only a single clue, in a letter to Breitkopf and Härtel in May, 1854, written after half a dozen rehearsals,[36] that a great many cuts were necessary. But the orchestral parts survive, and it is possible to reconstruct, at least with respect to the musical text that Liszt eventually chose, the performance that Liszt gave.[37]

I have recently done this, in fact, and I do not see how what Liszt decided to do on Schubert's behalf could have done much good for Schubert, who was fortunately no longer around to hear the result. In spite of the weaknesses of the libretto, which Liszt described in his essay, there is still an intentional dramatic and musical plan to the work, especially between Acts I and II that is essential to the unfolding of the drama. Both acts, for example, divide up the included numbers into two more or less contrasting halves, the first centering around the character Troila and emphasizing the idyllic and pastoral, with brief recitatives only, the second around the character of Mauregato and emphasizing deceit and treachery, with longer and more dramatic recitatives. And each act, for example, begins with an aria for Troila, the second of which, known as the "Song of the Cloud Maiden," has a special significance musically and dramatically. Now Liszt cut completely the second of Troila's arias; of the first six numbers of the second act, which form a large dramatic whole and are parallel to the grouping of the first six numbers of the first act, Liszt cut out three completely and shortened two others, leaving the parallel group in the first act as they were in the original. In the second act alone, the dramatic nucleus and to a large degree resolution of the opera, Liszt left only one of eleven numbers alone. And an

even more detailed analysis of the specific musical character of the changes from number to number would only add to the conclusions that are all to obvious, that Liszt mutilated the score as far as the dramatic and musical planning of the work are concerned, and often quickening its pace, for example, when the intention was to establish just the opposite. On the other hand, Liszt surely recognized the original use of only accompanied recitative and the many through-composed large sections of the work, especially in the last act, because this is one aspect of the score that he also seized on, eliminating recitative and cadential closing and opening material, for example, in order apparently to add to the musical continuity, often including newly composed transitional or bridge material for the purpose. But here again, the particular advance that Schubert achieved in these matters was thrown off balance and out of proportion when a later clearly Wagnerian aesthetic was applied to it.

We should look now, if only briefly, at the remaining principles of Liszt's project. On the one hand, he argues for "a more active, continuous and conscientious cultivation of the study of those works which enjoy the favor of the present; and therefore a systematic, unprejudiced alternation of the best works of the Italian, French and German masters, without any bias against one or another genre, without leaving out one or another school."[38] In addition, he urges "An extensive and unconfined hospitality towards unedited works for which one is inclined to credit some future; therefore, a preservation of initiative with respect to new works, a sympathetic and broad-minded taking up of younger talents and for their energetic encouragement the performance of their works under favorable circumstances."[39]

This is a bold and modern sounding project and even the most cursory view of what Liszt accomplished in the matter of general repertory would make clear

the range in which fashion, style and tradition alone transformed the theater of Hummel and Chélard, Liszt's predecessors, from a provincial German one into a theater of progress, innovation and experiment. One could trace, for example, the entire history of French serious opera, from Rossini's William Tell through its next generation, Cherubini's Wasserträger and Spontini's Fernando Cortez, to Meyerbeer's Le Prophète and Les Huguenots of his own day, as easily as the course of the Italian bel canto repertory, in which Liszt essayed Bellini's I Capuletti e i Montecchi and Norma, Donizetti's La Favorita and Belisario as well as the first operas of Verdi to be heard in the Weimar theater, Ernani, I Due Foscari and Il Trovatore.

Near the end of his life, Liszt himself was asked by Lina Ramann what had been for him the most significant performances of opera, and on one of those small slips of paper on which biographer and subject wrote question and answer, Liszt gave the following list: Martha, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, The Flying Dutchman, Berlioz' Benvenuto Cellini, Genoveva, Manfred, Komala by Sobolewski, Die Niebelungen by Heinrich Dorn, Anton Rubinstein's The Siberian Hunters, Schubert's Alfonso und Estrella and Cornelius' The Barber of Bagdad. And at the bottom of the slip he scribbled the names of Hoven and Pesque von Püttlingen, the latter an Austrian composer who took the name of J. Hoven and whose comic operas Der lustige Rat and Ein Abenteuer Carl des Zweiten Liszt performed.[40] The list is a strange one, with the works of Wagner, Schumann and Berlioz set alongside such long-forgotten names as Hoven, Sobolewski and Dorn, strange especially for the recollection of an old man who could easily have remembered and called attention only to those works where his choice and effort came to coincide with historical judgement and position. The answers on that paper portray rather the hopefulness and enthusiasm for new works and young composers of a young man who has no absolute regard for public response

and critical fashion.

I could not bring to a close this look at Liszt and the Weimar Hoftheater without considering for a moment the technical side of Liszt as a conductor. We know that as a pianist and composer of keyboard music Liszt transformed and extended the technical and expressive dimension of the keyboard in original and imaginative ways; should we not be surprised if the same search for technical and expressive means as a conductor and interpreter of orchestral and opera repertory did not reveal the same search and discovery, and, in fact, could we not not expect to find here important indications of interpretive and aesthetic views that relate in important ways to Liszt's own instrumental compositions, the symphonic poems and two large symphonies, for example?

The first opera that Liszt performed in Weimar was Flotow's Martha, on 16 Feb 1848, and we are fortunate to have preserved a revealing judgement about Liszt's performance as well as rehearsals. This review appeared first in the Theater-Chronik, and much of the content was provided by Reissiger, the court conductor at Dresden, a man of some reputation and experience as a musician, who was in Weimar during the period in which Liszt prepared the performance of Martha in order to conduct his own work Der Schiffbruch der Medusa. The review of Liszt's performance that occurred later, in the Neue Zeitschrift, had, in part, the following to say: "On the whole, the opera could have received, under anyone else's direction save that of Hofkapellmeister Liszt,a far better performance than was, in fact, the case. The recitatives particularly were very uneven and even the singers hesitated noticeably. The blame for this lies neither with the well-known capability of our orchestra....nor with the singers, but is to be sought simply in the uncertainty with which Dr. Liszt conducted. Since, in many places where

different tempi arose, he would let his beat come to rest completely, and then suddenly start up again wildly, never conducting all of the subdivisions of the bar, it is only natural that the orchestra and singers should suffer, as they have only become familiar with this new method through its inventor, Dr. Liszt."[41]

There are many clues to follow up here, from the poor showing of Liszt's performances as a conductor, caused according to some by his poor training and lack of experience as a conductor, to his search for a new and original technique and manner of interpretation. The difficulties that the musicians in Weimar faced during these performances of Martha were to plague Liszt again and again for the next decade, especially when he had to deal with musicians who had no experience with his unusual and original demands. In 1853, for example, at the Festival at Carlsruhe, where the orchestra was made up of musicians from those of Darmstadt and Mannheim as well as Carlsruhe, and who were asked to play Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for the first time, as well as music from Wagner's Tannhäuser and Lohengrin, the orchestra broke down altogether at the alla marcia section in 6/8 time in the last movement.[42]

These criticisms, however, should not prevent us from realizing that Liszt was after something new and challenging in orchestral technique, and that these views were intimately tied up with his views about the performance and interpretation of his own orchestral works. In a letter to Richard Pohl, in 1853, he had the following to say about the performance of Beethoven's late style, which, by the way, had such influence in his own compositional thinking: "These works, reckoning from those which are commonly described nowadays as belonging to Beethoven's last style- - these works, to my thinking, exact from executants and orchestras a progress which is being accomplished at this moment-- but which is far from being realized in all

places--in accentuation, in rhythm, in the manner of phrasing and declaiming certain passages---in a word progress in the style of the execution itself."[43] In the preface to his symphonic poems, Liszt takes up again the same ideas about performance technique and interpretation, this time in reference to his own music: "At the same time I will observe that the works of this kind need to be performed with more moderation, flexibility, and intelligence in the effects of color, rhythm and expression that is still not customary enough in many orchestras. It is not sufficient for a composition to be regularly beat and mechanically executed... The vital nerve of a beautiful orchestral performance lies principally in the understanding of the work that is to be reproduced, which the conductor must above all posess and communicate, in his manner of dividing up and accentuating periods, in underlining contrasts at the same time as in managing the transitions...."[44]

A careful study of all of the evidence concerning this aspect of Liszt's innovations is required, but we are already pointed in the right direction. Liszt viewed the conductor not as a mere time-beater, as an overseer in matters of accuracy and ensemble, but primarily as an individual interpretive artist who must deal above all directly with the expressive content, in all of its nuance and complexity. A primary difference in Liszt's conducting from his older colleagues centered on his approach to rhythm and metre. The repertoire that Liszt favored, including his own symphonic poems and other works, led him to concentrate on phrases and longer musical periods rather than bar lines, on principal instrumental entries rather than continuous and mechanical time beating, and from these to any gesture or expression that would make immediately clear his poetic and expressive intent. He rarely used a score and when it was open he seldom looked at it. Often he would shift his stick from right hand to left, and frequently he would put it down altogether, standing

completely motionless. On other occasions his movements would be flamboyant, even excessive, his body mimicking the changing moods of the piece. Not all of Liszt's method was without precedent.[45] Weber is reported to have conducted a Mozart opera without a score, and frequently, in Dresden with his own orchestra, he would put down his baton and leave the orchestra to itself. Mendelssohn did similar things, even within his own more conservative and classically poised style of interpretation. In the D Major fanfare of his overture "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage," he would put down his baton and give free rein to the individual musicians, and in the trumpet solo of the Beethoven Leonore Overture No. 3, he conducted without a baton, took the six-measure phrase as a whole with long fermatas on the half notes, but without any indication of bar lines. And Gade, as a guest with the Gewandhaus orchestra, attempted to conduct measures rather than phrases, provoked an argument from the soloist, one Herr Burkhardt, and finally had to give in and lay down his baton altogether. And although it is obvious that these examples were never part of a regular practice, and extended mostly to shorter solo passages, usually cadenza-like in nature, there seems to have been a tradition under Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus that formed an important link to Liszt's innovating style of performance. Indeed, there is a description of Mendelssohn's conducting by Lampadius, in his important biography of Mendelssohn, that is rather strikingly close to Liszt's style.[46]

It is customary to celebrate the achievements of Liszt In the Weimar Hoftheater by emphasizing above all his selfless and at the same time strenuous propagandistic efforts on behalf of Wagner and Berlioz, and as the standard bearer of the New German School of composition. We cannot fail to be reminded by this emphasis, however, how confined and attenuated were the successes of his own musical creations, how seldom and ephemeral was the

understanding shown his own artistic and aesthetic doctrines. And still it would be wrong, of course, to draw attention away from his efforts on behalf of others so as to cast a stronger light on his own musical achievements, especially as we see now the progress and growing understanding shown to Liszt's work. I would argue rather that the emphasis on Liszt's propagandistic efforts while in Weimar are, in fact, but a small part of a much larger achievement, whose effects, both public and private, we should notice here and eventually come to understand better. What Liszt created in Weimar, and from his position as court conductor, of unusual significance was, if only for the better part of a decade, a kind of Institute or Academy of Music, in which teaching and education went hand in hand with performance, in which the empathic bringing up and development of the gifted musician and composer was fostered alongside the encouragement of experiment and new direction in composition. Liszt did not simply foster the performance of Wagner's works, for example. It is abundantly clear from the long and detailed correspondence between the two, from April until September 1850, when Liszt was preparing for the first performance of Lohengrin, how anxious Liszt was to assimilate the new demands of Wagner's style and to teach them to a generation of performers who knew nothing of Wagner's music.[47] We know that Liszt gave up the livelihood of public performance as a pianist in the late 1840's, but at Weimar he instituted a series of matinee recitals, from 11 to 2 on Sunday afternoons, where he performed, often as a chamber player with Weimar musicians, difficult works, for example the late Beethoven sonatas, as well as works of younger composers still not well-known, for example Anton Rubinstein and Niels Gade. And, to take one last example, musicians, for example Hans von Bülow or Joachim Raff, were not simply advised if they sought help from Liszt in Weimar, nor taught in the more customary ways, but came to

Weimar to live alongside Liszt, to watch him work as a musician and to have his guidance in their own development as musicians.

It is difficult to know how strong or mature was Liszt's pedagogical instinct before he came to Weimar, but there it developed and flourished. Indeed, it became the dominant impulse of his character, enabling him to negotiate the difficult conflicts of his own work and more private struggles, and surely helped him to achieve a measure of contentment and satisfaction. His great achievments in Weimar, so abundant on behalf of others, went hand in hand with an important stage in the development and self-understanding of his own character.

NOTES

1. The original text, Der Sammler und die Seinigen, appeared first in vol. 2 of Propyläen, 3 vols. (Tübingen, 1798-1800); see also Goethes Werke, Weimar edition, 143 vols. (Weimar, 1890), vol. 47, pp. 119-207. There is an English version in Goethe on Art, trans. John Gage (University of California Press, 1980), pp. 31-72. See Gage, p. 71.

2. See Gordon Haight, George Eliot: A Biography (Oxford, 1968), p. 153.

3. The words are Dr. Riemer's, Goethe's amanuensis, spoken in Chapter 3 of the novel.

4. Julius Kapp, Franz Liszt (Berlin and Leipzig, 1909), p. 116. See also Gyula Hollitzer, "Liszt Ferenc és a weimari irodalmi élet," [Franz Liszt and the Weimar literary life], Német Philologiai Dolgozatok 6 (Budapest, 1913), p. 12.

5. Liszt to Count Fáy, 30 April 1842, in Franz Liszt. Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen (1835-1886), ed. Margit Prahács (Budapest, 1966), p. 51.

6. In the course of less than a year, Liszt discussed in letters to Marie d'Agoult on four occasions his interest in Donizetti's position in Vienna and each time as well his plans for the completion of his Sardanapal: 14 April 1846, 8 Oct 1846, 3 Jan 1847 and 10 Feb 1847. See Daniel Ollivier, Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse d'Agoult (1840-1864) (Paris, 1934), pp. 354 ff. Many Liszt scholars have stayed away from this evidence, no doubt uncomfortable about the lack of sincerity and scrupulousness in Liszt's character that it suggested. Liszt was, after all, during the period in which he was interested in Donizetti's post, also committed to the ducal position at Weimar. Ernest Newman, in his The Man Liszt (New York, 1935), pp. 106 ff., seized on these facts with a vengeance; but, more recently, Sharon Winklhofer, in her The Genesis and Evolution of Liszt's Sonata in B Minor: Studies in

Autograph Sources and Documents (Ph. D. Diss., University of Californnia Los Angeles, 1978), pp. 30 ff., has discussed some of this evidence with more restraint.

7. Liszt himself wrote that the work would be performed there, first in a letter to Raff, 17 April 1846, and then to Carl Alexander, 6 Oct 1846. For the first, see Helene Raff, "Franz Liszt und Joachim Raff: Im Spiegel ihrer Briefe," Die Musik 1 (1901), pp. 43-44; for the second, see Briefwechsel zwischen Franz Liszt und Carl Alexander, ed. La Mara (Leipzig, 1909), p. 9.

8. Raff to Frau Heinrich, 5 Jan 1850. See Helene Raff, op. cit., 1, p. 389.

9. Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, 7 Nov 1849: "Liszt wird seine nun vollendete Oper: 'Sardanapal' in Paris zuerst zur Aufführung bringen."

10. See Ernest Newman, The Life of Richard Wagner, 4 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 194-196.

11. See the letter to Marie d'Agoult, 8 Feb 1843, in Ollivier, op. cit., p. 256.

12. One recent exception is Wolfram Huschke, Musik im klassischen und nachklassischen Weimar (Weimar, 1982). Although the author concentrates more on the period before Liszt, nevertheless he makes use of the important archival material in the Weimar Staatsarchiv, material of real significance that has yet not been studied thoroughly.

13. Pohl's volume was published (Weimar, 1855). See pp. 5-10 for a discussion of the German statistical theater surveys, a guide which I follow above.

14. See, for example, Peter Cornelius: Ausgewählte Schriften und Briefe, ed. Paul Egert (Berlin, 1938); Eduard Genast, Aus dem Tagebuche eines alten Schauspielers, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1862-66), especially vol. 4, chapters 3-6, and Elisabeth Marr, Ein Erinnerungsblatt an das musikalische Kunstgetriebe der

fünfziger Jahre in Weimar unter Franz Liszt (Munich, 1884). There have been, of course, a large number of reminiscences and memoirs by musicians and other artistic figures about Liszt and Weimar, written for a variety of purposes, but a full listing is not possible here.

15. I wish to thank the staff of the Weimar Staatsarchiv and the Deutsches Nationaltheater for their kindness and helpfulness in making available to me, during my visits in the Summer 1982 and Fall 1984, the archival material that plays such a significant role in my work on Liszt and the Weimar Hoftheater.

16. Weimar Staatsarchiv CA 1622, 1623.

17. The eleven categories in which theater material is found make up 4: Hoftheater und 'Kapelle'.

18. The only regular catalogue of this material that I know of is in the hands of the Deutsches Nationaltheater, and consists of a handwritten alphabetical and numbered list of operas for which material is supposed (or not supposed) to exist. It is these numbers that I will refer to in describing specific material. For my book Liszt and Weimar, I am preparing a catalogue of this archival performance material, as much as this remains possible.

19. Liszt conducted the opera for the first time on 19 March 1854. The essay is in vol. 3 of Liszt's Gesammelte Schriften, 6 vols., ed. Lina Ramann (Leipzig, 1880-83).

20. See the author's Goethe and the Weimar Theater, (Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 304.

21. Weimar Staatsarchiv KW A9631.

22. For the season 1854-1855 the most detailed information about orchestra and chorus personnel for the Weimar theater is Pohl's Jahrbuch, op. cit..

23. See Pohl, op. cit., pp. 13 ff.

24. The controversy surrounded Liszt's performances of Verdi's Ernani. Bülow responded to the critic of the Weimarische Zeitung, whose review appeared 18

Sept 1852, in Deutschland (Weimar), 26 Sept 1852.

25. See Lina Ramann, op. cit., p. 26. Translations, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

26. Liszt conducted Cantata 7, to which he added the final chorus from Cantata 21, on 1 June 1857, at the start of the second concert of the 35th Lower Rhine Music Festival, at Aachen. The longest account we have of Liszt's performance of that work is by Ferdinand Hiller, in his "Das 35, niederrheinische Musikfest," in the Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung, 20, 27 June, 4 July 1857.

27. It is, unfortunately, no longer possible to know with absolute exactness what works Liszt performed in Weimar as Kapellmeister. There is the work of Adolf Bartels, Chronik des weimarischen Hoftheaters 1817-1907 (Weimar, 1908), but there are omissions and errors, and although singers are given for each work, the conductor rarely is. This is the result, for the most part, of the fact that the regular theater programs of the Hoftheater, of which several fairly complete series exist in Weimar, rarely carried the name of the conductor. Richard Pohl, in his series of articles "Liszt in Weimar, als Dirigent und Komponist," that appeared first in 1855 and then reprinted together in the author's Franz Liszt: Studien und Erinnerungen (Leipzig, 1883), was the first to give a survey of Liszt's opera and orchestral repertory in Weimar (until 1855), and although Pohl himself indicated that the survey was not complete, that list became the basis of all future work, even for Lina Ramann, who did augment it from theater programs in Weimar. But again there are mistakes and omissions in both. My own discussions of Liszt's repertory follow these sources, but I have examined, in addition, contemporary newspaper accounts and reviews, especially from the Weimar newspapers Weimarische Zeitung and Deutschland, as well as relevant correspondence, programs in the Goethe-Schiller Archives and the Staatsarchiv,

and many other sources that I will discuss more thoroughly in my Liszt and Weimar. I should add here only that the problem is acute as far as the orchestral concerts that Liszt conducted are concerned, not only in the Hoftheater, but in other places in Weimar as well. The original programs for these were different from opera programs and no complete series exists anywhere. Indeed, of these concerts, only a very small number of programs have apparently survived.

28. See, for example, Hans Sittner, "Liszt und Mozart," Oesterreichische Musikzeitschrift 27:267-275 (1963).

29. Nr 44 (1856) pp. 76-77.

30. Hans von Bülow: Briefe und Schriften, 4 vols., ed. Marie von Bülow (Leipzig, 1898), vol. 4, p. 43. Zellner's article referred to above, "Die Mozart-Säcularfeier in Wien," appeared in the Blätter für Musik, Theater und Kunst, 29 Jan 1856.

31. See the Blätter fur Musik, loc. cit.

32. Nationaltheater, Weimar Magic Flute, (No.) 47.

33. Liszt to Eduard Liszt, 9 Feb 1856, in Franz Liszts Briefe, 8 vols., ed. La Mara (Leipzig, 1893-1904), vol. 1, pp. 213 ff.

34. Liszt's Gesammelte Schriften, vol.3, pp.68-78.

35. Liszt presumably planned first to perform Schubert's opera on 16 Feb 1849, for the occasion of the birthday of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlowna. See Eduard Genast, op. cit., p. 316. Liszt next planned to perform the work during the first part of April 1850; see the letter from Liszt to Breitkopf and Härtel, 14 Jan 1850 in Franz Liszts Briefe, 1, p. 82. During the rest of 1850 and the first half of 1851 Liszt was still preoccupied with Schubert's opera, and perhaps still intended to attempt yet another performance during this period. In a letter to Escudier, 21 Jan 1854 (Franz Liszts Briefe, 1, p.

426), Liszt discussed substituting a new libretto for Alfonso und Estrella. Nothing of these plans came to pass, and the opera was performed with the original text.

36. See the letter to Breitkopf and Härtel, 27 May 1854 in Oskar von Hase, Breitkopf und Härtel: Gedenkschrift und Arbeitsbericht, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1917-1919), vol. 2, p. 123.

37. Nationaltheater, Weimar Alfonso und Estrella, No.) 183.

38. Liszts Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 3, p. 26.

39. Liszts Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 3, p. 27.

40. Goethe-Schiller Archives 363, U9 No.) 12.

41. Some of Reissiger's comments from the Allgemeine Theater-Chronik (Leipzig) were quoted in the review that appeared in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, 11 March 1848, from which I have quoted above.

42. Richard Pohl discussed Liszt's participation at the festival, in some detail, in a series of six articles published originally in 1853, in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. These were later reprinted in his Franz Liszt: Studien und Erinnerungen (Leipzig, 1883), pp. 5-46.

43. See Letters of Franz Liszt, ed. La Mara , trans. ~~by~~ Constance Bache, 2 vols. (London, 1894) vol. 1, pp. 173-177.

44. I follow the preface to the symphonic poems as it appears in the original, Breitkopf and Härtel edition of Liszt's works.

45. I follow here Pohl's series of articles, "Die Manie des Dirigierens," Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, 1, 6, 13, 20 Jan 1854. Give exact dates?

46. See W. A. Lampadius, Felix Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 188), pp. 372 ff. Lampadius' description is quoted and discussed by G. Schünemann, Geschichte des Dirigierens (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 288 ff.

47. See Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt, trans. Francis Hueffer, 2 vols.

(London, 1889), vol. 1, pp. 63 ff.