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CONVENTIONS, GENRES, PRACTICES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF LISZT'S PIANO MUSIC

Part 2

Liszt and the style hongrois

Ian Pace

to Pi-hsien Chen

Liszt was born during a period when a new revival of Hungarian cultural activity and national consciousness had just begun to emerge. Magyar newspapers and magazines had begun to be published in the late eighteenth-century, the first Hungarian theatrical troupe was established in 1790, and the first bestseller in Magyar, András Dugonics' *Etelka*, was published in 1788, soon followed by József Gvadányi's *The journey of the village Notary to Buda* (*Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása*) in 1790¹. In the area that comprised the historic kingdom of Hungary, the Magyar nobility had held a considerable amount of power, as well as in eastern parts of the Habsburg Empire². Yet this had come under threat from the proposals and actions of Emperor Joseph II during his reign of 1780–90. Joseph wished to make German the official language of all government in the empire, provoking a shift from Latin towards Magyar in the Hungarian Diet (itself provoking hostility from the Croats in the region). As well as reforming the relationships between lords and peasants (for the purposes of increasing productivity and rendering more peasants fit for military service), welcomed by the peasants, but not the nobles, he also wanted to reduce the subordinate position of the Greek Orthodox and Uniate churches, which would threaten the status of Catholic and Protestant Magyars. Thus Magyar nationalism was born from opposition both to the imperial power above and the peasants below³, echoed in the prediction of Johann Gottfried von Herder that the Magyars 'were a doomed people, threatened by Germans from above and Slavs from below'⁴, a prophecy that was especially to haunt the prominent nineteenth-century Magyar nationalist and friend of Liszt, Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860).

Széchenyi did not reject all of the reforms, as continued by Joseph's successors, believing they could help to produce a type of transformed Magyar nobility which could thus consolidate its position, and make use of its presupposed cultural superiority to transform and absorb the non-Magyar population of the Eastern regions of the empire. To this end, he set about an attempt to develop Magyar culture and science to new heights, becoming a founder of the Hungarian Academy of Science. However, Magyar landowners resisted the land reforms, which were ultimately blocked by the chief minister of Austria, Prince Metternich, fearful of the revolutionary atmosphere of the time. In opposition, minor noble, lawyer and political journalist Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894), as editor of the journal *Pesti Hírlap* (*Gazette of Pest*), first published in January 1841, advocated more radical proposals

for land reforms, major though ill-defined economic projects (based upon an examination the experiences of liberal capitalism and industrialisation in Western Europe and America), and a greater degree of independent government for Hungary. Kossuth found some support for these proposals from the minor nobles and also from the intelligentsia of Pest and Buda. Kossuth attempted to stimulate Magyar political opposition, with a particular focus upon control of country government by the gentry, as well as promoting the use of Magyar in schools and government. But, whilst claiming to share Kossuth's basic aims, Széchenyi opposed his ideas in a book *A Kelet Népe (People of the Orient, 1841)*, in which he accused Kossuth 'of promoting revolutionary anarchy by pitting the poor against the rich, the lesser nobles against the magnates, and one nationality against the other' and that he 'might "assassinate the Magyar" and strengthen Viennese despotism'⁵.

The eruptions of early 1848 began with revolts in France in February, leading to the abdication of King Louis Philippe and resignation of Prime Minister Guizot, then the foundation of the Second Republic on 26 February, in which universal male suffrage was introduced amongst other things. This provoked uprisings in much of the rest of Europe, on the basis of a variety of grievances, including conditions of poverty and unemployment, rising prices, a multitude of resentments from different sections of the populations towards each other, fear of the threat to craftsmanship by the implementation of new machinery, censorship, and nationalistic aspirations towards self-determination in various parts of Central and Eastern Europe. After news of the events in Paris reached Vienna at the end of February, revolts broke out there on 13 March and spread to elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire. Faced by violent fighting in the streets and beset by a lack of support, Emperor Ferdinand was forced to accept the demand of the Lower Austrian Diet that Metternich be removed from his position (Metternich fled to London soon afterwards), and also to introduce a variety of reforms. On 15 March the events reached Pest, led in part by poet Sándor Petöfi and some other radical intellectuals, who together with students and some other citizens seized the university and City Hall, and demanded abolition of censorship, that political prisoners would be released (in reality there was only one such), recognition of sole authority of a Revolutionary Committee of Public Safety, and that the imperial military garrison remain neutral⁶. By 17 March, when Hungary unilaterally declared itself to be autonomous within the Habsburg Empire, the Emperor had no choice but to agree. Kossuth, who had assumed unofficial leadership of the Hungarian Diet a few weeks previously and had made a notorious speech on 3 March which some consider the inauguration of the revolution⁷, became Governor, with Lajos Batthyány as Prime Minister, and Széchenyi as Minister of Transport and Social Affairs. Sweeping reforms were introduced in the 'April Laws', which Emperor Ferdinand was again forced to accept. These involved the abolition of labour services, together with state-aided compensation, the integration of Transylvania into Hungary and the devolution of most political authority to Hungary (though control over finance, foreign policy and the armed forces remained a grey area). Freedom was granted to most religious denominations, taxation became general, privileges were removed from estates, churches, nations, and corporations, franchise extended, some freedom given to peasants, rights to trial by jury for political crimes and against arbitrary arrest and detention were granted, and both people and goods could now move freely around the country⁸.

As the imperial government began to re-consolidate its power and authority in the summer of 1848, tensions between it and the Hungarian government became increasingly exacerbated. Faced with the possibility of outright conflict, many of the Magyar nobility

distanced themselves from the nationalistic cause, whilst the remainder were divided, some wishing simply to maintain the April Laws, other radicals wanting to go further. The gentry opposed any reforms that would weaken their own position, whilst non-Magyars (including Croatians and Rumanians) were definitively opposed to the cause of Magyar nationalism. Paradoxically, the April Laws encouraged these other groups to demand their own collective rights as nationality (and the Habsburg government made some vague proposals of greater autonomy for them so as to undermine the Magyar cause), which in itself threatened Magyar nationalism.

Croatian and Austrian forces entered Hungary in September and October, and were involved in atrocities against Magyar peasants, which provoked many citizens to take up arms. Morale within the Austrian forces was further undermined by insurgency in Vienna in support of the various uprisings. Batthyány resigned and Kossuth took over (after denouncing Count Franz Philipp Lamberg, who the king had illegally appointed commander-in-chief of the Habsburg armed forces in Hungary—Lamberg was later hacked to death by a mob from Pest who spotted him⁹). After some early setbacks during fighting against the Austrian forces led by Prince Windisch-Graetz, and the abdication of Emperor Ferdinand in favour of his more determined nephew Franz Joseph I, Kossuth was by the end of 1848 able to raise a major Hungarian army. He led an evacuation of Pest beginning on New Year's Eve (replacing it with Debrecen as the seat of government), and was able to score major victories over the Austrian forces in the first few months of 1849. This led to the historic Declaration of Independence of 14 April. Ten days later, Hungarian forces recaptured Pest from the Austrians. In the face of these major setbacks, the Emperor called upon assistance from Tsar Nicholas I, who sent in Russian troops to support the Austrian army. After fierce battles for the next months, the Hungarian government was eventually overthrown on 1 October 1849. There followed brutal persecution of the leaders and the imposition of centralised control from Vienna. Batthyány was executed, Széchenyi underwent a mental collapse, whilst Kossuth escaped to a long period of exile. The losses from the events included 50,000 Hungarian soldiers and a similar number of Austrians (though only 543 Russians)¹⁰. Nonetheless, the Magyar nobility maintained its economic position, despite some of the land reforms remaining, and the whole experiment provided a spur for future attempts to re-establish Magyar political authority, culminating in the Compromise of 1867.

Whilst the self-confidence of the Magyar nobility had grown, the plight of the Roma¹¹ in Hungary had become increasingly bleak. The Roma had first entered Hungary in 1416–1417 from Transylvania. After being granted some rights of transit by King Sigismund in 1423, they came to Hungary in larger numbers, mostly settling on the outskirts of villages and towns¹². In the eighteenth-century, Empress Maria Theresa criminalized the use of the word *Cigány* (the Hungarian word for the Roma) and decreed that in the future they should be called 'new citizens', 'new peasants' or 'new Hungarians'. In 1780, 8388 Roma children were made wards of the state and placed in special schools, and another 9463 in foster homes; all ran away from these within a few years¹³. Joseph II continued many of his mother's policies, leading to the Roma population of Hungary dropping from 43,609 to 30,241 between 1780 and 1783¹⁴. There is a relative dearth of information on the Roma in Hungary in the last decade of the 18th century and the first few decades of the 19th, but some statistics suggest that the Roma population there (excluding Transylvanians) dropped from 30,000 to around 20,000 between 1809 and 1829¹⁵. The

April Laws of 1848 granted little in the way of minority rights, based upon the fear “that granting special rights to the minorities would help restore the despicable feudal system of local or corporate privilege” and the insistence by liberals that the new Hungary must be “one nation in one state”¹⁶. However, many Roma backed the revolution¹⁷.

The Roma had had performed secular Hungarian instrumental music at least as early as the sixteenth-century, being mentioned by historians as playing in festivities and assembly meetings in 1525¹⁸. But the particular type of music that most attracted the attention of a range of composers was the *verbunkos*, music for military recruitment, which first appeared around 1760, and is described by Bence Szabolcsi as follows:

The “*verbunkos*” sources, not yet completely known, include some of the traditions of the old Hungarian popular music (Heyduck dance, sin-herd dance), certain Levantine, Balkan and Slav elements, probably through the intermediation of the gipsies, and also elements of the Viennese-Italian music, coming, no doubt, from the first cultivators of the “*verbunkos*,” the urban musicians of German culture. A few early “*verbunkos*” publications and the peculiar melodic patterns found in the instrumental music of all peoples in the Danube valley, show clearly that the new style owed its unexpected appearance to some older popular tradition. The abyss of centuries was suddenly bridged over and the bourgeoisie hurriedly and with enthusiasm took over something from the lower social strata. The language of the “*verbunkos*” was full of national characteristics, that is of melodic turns accepted all over the country, and the “*verbunkos*” stood as a symbol for all this. Its support meant association with the Hungarian people.¹⁹

Many Western composers heard this music, and from it appropriated in part a style as a new alternative to the otherwise prevalent *alla turca* style, which had been employed by Gluck, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. This new style became known as the *style hongrois*, gradually superseding the *alla turca*, though there was some overlap and the two styles shared some common features²⁰. All the aforementioned composers employed *style hongrois* features, though generally adapted and absorbed within their wider idioms to assume the role of localised exotic colourations; in the nineteenth century, with the music of Weber, Schubert, Liszt and Brahms in particular (not to mention a whole host of minor composers such as Joseph Joachim, Pablo de Sarasate or David Popper), the style came to be employed in a much more prominent and uninhibited manner. The original music played by the Roma was called *hallgató* (‘to be listened to’) when slow, *cifra* (‘flashy’) when fast; Jonathan Bellman has compiled the most comprehensive taxonomy to date of the elements of this music that were employed by composers as part of the *style hongrois*, mostly based upon attributes or particular instruments or voices, which I will summarise as follows²¹:

- 1 Imitation of Roma fiddle-playing (inspired by such virtuosi as Panna Czinka and János Bihari). Characteristics include small, jangling ornaments and grace notes, extremes of register (see fig 1, which also includes cimbalom-like repeated notes), alternations between double stops and much lower single notes, pizzicato, extended cadenza-like ornamental passages, expressive ornamentation in slower music, extravagant, free rubato.
- 2 Imitation of the shawm-like *tárogató*²² on a solo clarinet or oboe. Characteristics include elaborate turning figures and runs.
- 3 Imitation of the bagpipes. Characteristics include drone fifths in the bass combined with melodies within the range of an octave.

- 4 Imitation of the cimbalom (see for example fig 1). Characteristics include tremolos and repeated notes.



- 5 Imitations of Roma vocal music and also the Roma's own instrumental imitations of the voice. Characteristics include grace notes of more than a fifth above the principal note, and heavily doubled parallel thirds and sixths.
- 6 A selection of characteristic rhythmic patterns, including the spondee (long-long), choriambus (long-short-short-long), Lombard or Scotch snap (accented short-long), anapaest (accented short-short-long), *alla zoppa* (short-long-short), and dotted rhythms. Most characteristic of all is the *bókazó* ('capering'), with a dotted rhythm onto a longer note, which is also combined with a specific melodic turn (see fig 2).



- 7 Prominent use of the interval of an augmented second, which is at the basis of the "Gypsy Scale"²³ (fig 3). An augmented fourth degree of the scale in major mode is also very prominent in the *style hongrois*, though this does not necessarily supplant the perfect fourth.

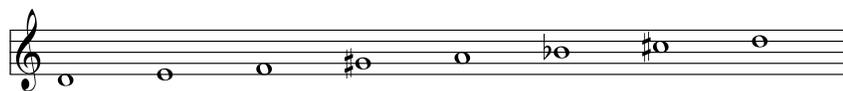


fig 3 “Gypsy Scale”.

- 8 The use of the *Kuruc*-fourth, an alternation between the fifth of the scale and the upper prime, described by Liszt to Borodin as ‘a characteristic feature of Hungarian music’²⁴.
- 9 Many sudden harmonic shifts that do not serve a functional purpose, though sometimes related to the particularities of the ‘Gypsy Scale’.

I would further add to this list:

- 10 A type of accompaniment in *style hongrois* pieces consisting of either single notes or octaves alternating with higher chords (very much like the later ‘stride’ style of jazz piano). This can be found in the piano writing of Liszt (for example in fig 4(a)), and also that of Brahms (and later on at perilously fast speeds in the improvisations and transcriptions of György Cziffra (fig 4(b)), in some ways very similar to comparable accompaniments of Art Tatum!).



fig 4(a) Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 11



fig 4 (b) György Cziffra—*Tritsch-Tratsch Polka d'après Johann Strauss*. Copyright Edition Musica Budapest

In terms of the “Gypsy Scale”, this is by no means the only such scale Liszt uses in his Hungarian works. A taxonomy of fourteen categories of scales employed by Liszt is set out in an excellent article by Lajos Bárdos²⁵. Klára Hamburger also points out that the pair of augmented seconds in the ‘Gypsy Scale’ are actually a stylistic trait which came originally from Turkey, via the Balkans²⁶.

The issues of Liszt’s status as a Hungarian ‘outsider’ to Austro-German musical traditions, his attraction to music performed by Roma musicians, his relationship to Hungarian nationalism, and the compositions that derive from such varying factors, have provoked a fair amount of writing. Some of this might be treated with a certain amount of scepticism because of tendencies on the parts of writers either to idealise the ‘other’ status of music associated either with Hungary or with the Roma (or both) relative to Austro-German traditions, or when produced by those who were writing under the political and cultural pressures existing in Communist Hungary. Bence Szabolcsi, in a work published in the repressive Hungary of 1959, only three years after the crushing of the revolution by Soviet troops, speaks of Liszt’s ‘noble gesture’ in making ‘common cause with his backward native country’²⁷, argues that ‘he was conscious of the “fatherland” only as a moral responsibility’ (so that the appropriation of the musical idiom associated with the nation was a matter of secondary importance), citing in support of his claims some of Liszt’s quoted statements that went ‘in every respect beyond the limits of the official patriotism of his time’²⁸ the statement that went up on placards to accompany Liszt’s ‘homecoming’ concert in Pest on May 1st 1823, beginning ‘I am Hungarian’ (and continuing ‘and I do not know a greater happiness than to introduce to my beloved country the first fruits of my education and studies—as the first expression of my gratitude.’²⁹). However, as Alan Walker points out, this announcement ‘had been worded by Adam and was clearly intended to appeal to the patriotism of the Hungarians and to arouse their pride in his son’s achievements’³⁰; for this reason, probably little else should be read into this statement than this.

Whilst born to German-speaking parents, and only living in Hungarian land until the age of nine, according to Walker, Liszt self-identified as ‘Hungarian’ throughout his adult life (as had his male forebears for several generations), often very openly, publicly and proudly³¹. However, there is little evidence of any particular pronouncements to this effect between 1823 and March 1838, when Liszt heard about the flood that practically destroyed the whole city of Pest where he had played upon his last visit there. This event seems to have been the trigger for a new sense of Hungarian identification on Liszt’s part leading him to write that:

[T]he surge of emotions revealed to me the meaning of the word “homeland”. I was suddenly transported back to the past, and in my heart I found the treasury of memories from my childhood intact. A magnificent landscape appeared before my eyes: it was the Danube flowing over the reefs! It was the broad plain where tame herds freely grazed! It was Hungary, the powerful, fertile land that has brought forth so many noble sons! It was my homeland. And I exclaimed in patriotic zeal that *I*, too, belonged to this old and powerful race. I, too, am a son of this original, untamed nation which will surely see the dawn of better day. . .³²

At the end of the following year, Liszt made his now notorious triumphant return trip to Hungary, where he was eulogized to a degree usually associated with royalty, met with major Hungarian nationalist politicians (including Széchenyi, who he described in a letter to Marie d’Agoult of 19 December 1839 as ‘an extremely distinguished man’³³), and in particular participated in what from today’s vantage point (and indeed, from that of others in different countries then) seems an utterly ludicrous ceremony in Pest, in which Liszt first played a recital in Hungarian national costume, then was presented with a sword, upon which he was overcome by emotion and gave a speech which today can only provoke cringes. Liszt compared the ‘blade within’ the jewelled exterior with ‘that love of humanity and of country which is our very life’ (later he was to defend his comments in a letter to the Parisian *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, saying that the sabre ‘is the special token of manhood; it is the weapon of every man who has a right to carry a weapon’), called for ‘our blood’ to be ‘shed to the last drop for freedom, king and country’, all in the context of a claim that Hungary ‘today asks the arts, literature and science, those friends of peace, for new illustriousness?’³⁴.

Is it possible to hear the bravado of the opening of Liszt’s Ninth Hungarian Rhapsody, *le Carnaval de Pesth* (fig 5), in the same way when one is cognisant of the sentiments of machismo that accompanied such events³⁵?

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Liszt's Ninth Hungarian Rhapsody, "Carnaval de Pesth". The score is in 2/4 time, marked "Moderato". It features a piano introduction with a "marcato" section. The music is in B-flat major and includes various ornaments, trills, and triplet figures. The tempo changes to "accel." (accelerando) in the final section, which features a "P." (piano) dynamic and a "3" (triple) marking.

It is very hard to square these well-documented comments with Serge Gut's claim that:

Liszt always confessed to his attachment to his Hungarian homeland, but he has never been considered to be what one is pleased to call a nationalist. He never commended the superiority of his country over another and he never encouraged the use of force or acts of violence as an affirmation of national sovereignty.³⁶

Dana Gooley also attempts to temper perceptions of Liszt's nationalistic allegiances, arguing that on one hand 'Liszt was forcefully taken up by the dominant, romantic nationalists, who were notorious for breaking into fits of xenophobia' but also that 'there existed in Pest a contingent of non-nationalistic, cosmopolitan aristocrats who celebrated Liszt in an entirely different spirit', then going on to say that:

Appropriating Liszt for the cause of Magyar nationalism was doomed from the start to appear forced and artificial. When he arrived in Hungary, his persona was so rich in French and cosmopolitan traces that it was difficult to find any sign of Hungarianness. Just after his visit to Pest a writer at the *Pesther Tageblatt* described his persona and artistic disposition as French through-and-through, even though the press had been emphasizing his Hungarianness in the preceding weeks...The Liszt presented here is the same figure observed in Vienna: the Parisian *artiste* with aristocratic manners. If he was going to be claimed as a Hungarian and a patriot, these layers of Frenchness would have to be downplayed if not ignored.³⁷

As the events of 1848 unfolded throughout Europe, Liszt commented with interest on incidents in Paris in various letters to Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, expressing amongst other things his support for the manifesto of French radical politician Alphonse de Lamartine (whose work of course soon afterwards inspired *Les Préludes*), calling it 'one of the things in my life I have gained most satisfaction from'³⁸, then wrote the following in a letter to her from Weimar on 24 March, just nine days after the uprising had broken out in Pest (and seven days after the declaration of autonomy and appointment of Batthyány as Prime Minister):

The newspapers are full of what goes on and what people say and think. What play could compete in interest and emotion with present events? What sermon better persuade us of the vicissitudes of human destiny? What professor in his chair or what salon will enthral us enough to compensate us for the interrupted reading of the most modest newspaper!?

I, who have always hated politics, admit that I can no longer justify such an attitude. My compatriots have just taken so decisive, so Hungarian and so unanimous a step that it is impossible to refuse them a tribute of legitimate sympathy. As I write these words my eyes fall on the statuette of Goethe which is on my table, and this plaster smile cuts me short.³⁹

On 6 May, Liszt addressed a group of medical students in Vienna, declaring that:

When the instruments have taken their places, it is still necessary to have a capable conductor to harmonize their diverse voices . . . The instruments are in place, but the capable conductor is missing. Hubbub and confusion produce few consequences. The right leader will have to fix bayonets!⁴⁰

Whilst not actually joining in the demonstrations (unlike Wagner in Dresden the following year), Liszt did visit the barricades, where he presented cigars and money to the workers, whilst wearing 'a cockade of the Hungarian colours in the button-hole of his jacket',

according to his companion János Dunkl⁴¹. Soon afterwards, he composed his *Arbeiterchor*, which features a revolutionary text⁴².

As the fighting intensified later in the year, Liszt was appalled at the butchery occurring on all sides. But, as even Alan Walker points out, he made no public comment in opposition (Walker cites a letter from twelve years later, at the time of Széchenyi's death, in which Liszt makes clear his preference for the Count's approaches over those of Kossuth, who 'dragged the whole nation on a false path'⁴³). Nonetheless, Liszt's nationalistic sympathies never seem to have left him, and inspired numerous subsequent works, from the memorial work *Funérailles* (1849) and symphonic poem *Héroïde funèbre* (1849–50, rev 1854–56), through the symphonic poem *Hungaria* (1854), *Hungarian Coronation Mass* (1867) right up to the late *Hungarian Historical Portraits* (1885), portraits of Széchenyi, Franz Déak, and Josef Eötvös, all members of Batthyány's government, Mikhail Vörösmarty, Diet member in 1848, Mihály Mosonyi, who joined the Hungarian National Guard during the period, and Ladislaus Teleky and Sándor Petöfi, both of whom died during the uprising. It is difficult to reconcile all of this with the sentiments of either Gut or Gooley. Whilst his militaristic inclinations were surely tempered by the carnage of 1848–49, Liszt remained to some extent wedded to the cause of Hungarian nationalism throughout his life.

But all of this needs to be considered alongside Liszt's fascination with the music of the Roma people, which he had heard since childhood⁴⁴. He had been especially drawn to the playing of the violinist János Bihari (who he later in life described as a 'gypsy-Paganini'⁴⁵) and the band he had formed, who brought the *friska* and the *czardas* to international attention⁴⁶. Upon his 1839–40 return to Hungary he took time to seek out more Roma music⁴⁷, inspiring his *Magyar Dallok* and *Magyar Rhapsodiák*, the majority of which were written in 1839–40 and some others in the years leading up to 1848. Liszt was fired with enthusiasm for his homeland at the time, writing in a letter to Graf Leo Festetics on 21 March 1840 of how he had completed some of these pieces, and of how 'everywhere else I deal with the *public* but in Hungary I speak to the nation'⁴⁸. Some of the musical attributes to be found in these and later works do have a pre-history within Liszt's output; as Klara Hamburger points out, Liszt may have encountered scales containing augmented fourths during his time in the Swiss Alps in 1835–1836⁴⁹. These scales feature in the second of the *Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes* from *Album d'un Voyageur*, later to become 'Le mal du pays' in the Swiss volume of the *Années de Pèlerinage*.

Now most commentators on Liszt in the twentieth century, especially since the intensive study of Eastern European folk music undertaken by Bartók⁵⁰ and Kodály, have drawn attention to the composer's misapprehension regarding the origins of the Roma melodies he collected. During the 1850s, Liszt apparently wrote his book *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* (the English translation is simply called *The Gipsy in Music*)⁵¹, growing out of an original plan for a preface to be included with the published score of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*⁵². The authorship of this controversial work, which includes offensive comments about Jewish people (the other 'wandering race') in comparison to the idealised Roma, has been questioned⁵³; there is no need to re-rehearse the arguments in this respect here, suffice to say that most commentators accept that Liszt wrote at least some of the most important sections of the work. The fact that he was prepared to endorse and defend the book means that his own views cannot be entirely separated from the sentiments and ideas contained therein. The offending sections are perhaps best quietly ignored; those on music, however, are generally imagined to be Liszt's own work, and are intensely

relevant to the issues at hand here. He eulogises the Roma and their music, and writes enrapturedly about his experiences of hearing them when young. According to this book, he imagined the music he had heard to be of pure Roma origin, which the Hungarians simply took to their heart; he did not appreciate the very Hungarian roots of the melodies he heard, which were simply embellished by the Roma musicians⁵⁴, nor the commercial and political factors influencing the development and dissemination of this music.

Of course it is now well-known that the *verbunkos* melodies were Hungarian through-and-through, and bore little resemblance to actual Roma folk music (which was almost exclusively vocal, hardly ever featuring instruments other than occasionally the guitar⁵⁵); in this sense what Liszt wrote in *Des Bohémiens* was wrong. But his opinions on the matter are generally gauged in terms of his writings in this book, which dates from well over ten years after he first started collecting the melodies and composing the *Magyar Dallok*. I wish to suggest, purely as a hypothesis, Liszt's views in this respect (if indeed they are his own), may have been presented *retrospectively*, and at the time of writing the first pieces he may either have had a greater awareness of the melodies' provenance, or simply not given the question much thought. It is undoubtedly the case that *verbunkos* melodies were from the late eighteenth-century onwards indissociably associated with the Hungarian people⁵⁶, rather than exclusively with the Roma, and Liszt would surely have been aware of this. Bence Szabolcsi argues that the actual provenance of the *verbunkos* melodies was a subject few were interested in around 1830, and this question was not answered in the first musicological research into them that began around that time (according to Szabolcsi, it only began to be investigated around 1860⁵⁷, though Klára Hamburger draws attention to the fact that the Hungarian music historians Gábor Mátray and Sándor Czeke had also referred to this mistake some years before the appearance of Liszt's book⁵⁸). Did Liszt necessarily consider this question before the 1850s, when writing *Des Bohémiens*?

It is vital to bear in mind the dates of the *Magyar Dallok/Rhapsodiák*, as practically all of the most fundamental aspects of the music can be found in these earlier pieces. The better known later *Rhapsodies Hongroises*, which I will refer to simply as the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, were for the most part refinements of these previous works, carried out between 1846 and 1853. With this in mind, the music should be read in terms of Liszt's pre-1848 sympathies (with all the militarism and swaggering machismo that entails); it is not impossible that his wish to convey (erroneously) to a wider public his perception of the works' exclusive roots in the music of the *Roma*, through *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie*, might have served as a corrective to the earlier nationalistic bravado. In a letter to Marie d'Agoult of October 8th 1846, Liszt commented on the music he had collected during his visit to Hungary six years earlier, and his newly published works based upon it, saying that they 'form an almost complete cycle of this extraordinary, half-Ossianic (for these songs give one the feeling of a vanished race of heroes) and half-gypsy *epopoeia*'⁵⁹. The important term here is 'half-gypsy': whilst the concomitant 'half-Ossianic' quality might be read as an egotistical reference to Liszt himself as one of 'a vanished race of heroes', is it not equally possible that he wrote this remark cognisant of the specifically *Hungarian* qualities of the melodies⁶⁰ (in line with mythic notions of ancient races that underlay much nineteenth-century nationalism)?⁶¹

The reasons for Liszt's intense identification both with the Roma and this music has often been considered in terms of empathy with the outsider or 'other'. One of the first major biographers of Liszt, Peter Raabe, attempted to present a clear separation between Liszt's

‘Hungarian’ works and the rest of his output, seeing the former not as the product of the composer’s own personality having been deeply infused with this culture, but rather as an expression of his sense of homelessness⁶². Szabolcsi convincingly argues for the problems inherent in Raabe’s theory (and the legend of ‘the homeless Liszt, of the restlessly errant artist’⁶³): Liszt’s Hungarian style is not exclusive to the rhapsodies or even works such as *Hungaria* or the later *Hungarian Coronation Mass*, but permeates such pieces as *Tasso* or the Sonata in B minor as well⁶⁴. Also, in terms of Liszt’s inability to speak the Magyar language (often cited as a reason for doubting his Hungarian credentials), he was no different to other acclaimed Hungarian statesmen of his time, including Széchenyi, József Eötvös or Mihály Mosonyi (these individuals learned Magyar, but late in life and imperfectly—it was not a language they knew in the manner of a native speaker)⁶⁵.

It was in the 1850s that Liszt began to emphasize his own self-declared affinity with the Roma more and more, telling Princess Carolyne von Sayne-Wittgenstein in 1856 that he defined himself as “half gypsy, half Franciscan”⁶⁶. Jonathan Bellman, whilst noting the ‘condescension and contempt’⁶⁷ that comes through in the portrayal of the Roma *Des Bohémiens*, argues that:

In his years as a travelling virtuoso, he [Liszt] had lived a life as immediately sensual as that of the Gypsies was reputed to be, and his aura and conquests among female admirers are the stuff of legend. Perhaps more important, and less well understood, is the fact that as his life went on Liszt felt the burden of increasing disappointments.... Neither of the two long-term romantic relationships in Liszt’s own life ended successfully (meaning not necessarily marriage but at least an absence of bitter regret), and he lost his mother and the dearest two of his children in a relatively short period. His compositions were never as successful as his virtuosic performances had been, political considerations in Hungary (not to mention his cosmopolitan lifestyle and an inability to speak the language) made him a marginal figure there, and the peripateticism of his youth continued, growing ever paler and less desirable, into his old age. . . In sum, endless wandering was not all he felt he had in common with the Gypsies: he also identified with their demonic virtuosity, sensuality, profound griefs, and inner defiance. Liszt, like the stereotypical Gypsy of Romantic lore, was one who knew himself to be fundamentally different from other men, unappreciated by them, but in some sense inseparable from them.⁶⁸

Jonathan Bellman comes close to reiterating the rather lurid romanticised view of an artist’s life that was the stock-in-trade of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century biographers (also, the issue of Liszt’s not speaking Hungarian was mentioned earlier and should not be granted the importance assigned to it by Bellman); here and elsewhere he also veers towards a view of the Roma not so dissimilar to Liszt’s own (it is often ambiguous with respect to what he is presenting as a stereotype, what as reality). But those familiar with the work of the New Musicology (and especially the branch of musicology dedicated to studying the ‘exotic’ aspects of Western music⁶⁹) will recognise a familiar ideological strategy at play here: an attempt to construct Liszt himself as belonging to the category of the ‘other’, the seemingly endless list of marginalized figures in society (which can include women, homosexuals, non-Caucasians, Jewish people, the Roma, travelling pianists, popular musicians, non-Germans, and many others) which are themselves ‘othered’ by being presented in such a homogeneous manner. This does little justice to Liszt; nonetheless Bellman’s model contains elements which I believe to be of value in conceiving of Liszt’s post-1849 empathy with the Roma in a slightly different manner.

On one hand, Bellman is right to draw attention to how Liszt’s writing ‘hearkens back to Romantic and pre-Romantic notions of noble savages and the belief that civilization

represents a destructive influence that distances humanity from its idealized past⁷⁰ (such notions became much more prevalent after the failures of the pan-European revolutionary ideals of 1848). But a vital point to bear in mind is the fact that the Roma were travelling professional musicians *performing others' music*, as described by Sárosi:

In medieval Europe musical entertainers, the jongleur, the minstrel, or the Hungarian *igric*, really lived a life of wandering, as settled in one place they could not have earned their living, and they were also expected to entertain their audiences with novelties brought from foreign regions. The famous gypsy musicians from Hungary carried on this wandering way of life, in a somewhat different way, still in the early nineteenth century. János Bihari, one of the most famous band leaders, turned up in many places from Eger to Pest and from Pozsony to Vienna, getting acquainted with many types of music and complying with many tastes, obviously not so much to follow his lust for wandering as to make a living. Even today the best village gypsy musicians are invited to many places. The gypsies know the tastes and dance-music repertoire not only of one village but of whole regions, of several social strata, and possibly of several nationalities.⁷¹

Sárosi goes on to describe how the band leader ‘chooses the pieces that meet the given occasion and strings them together by heart and not from a piece of paper. He is expected to remember the favourite songs and pieces of the regular guests, and it is bad form for him to be unfamiliar with any one which belongs to the genre he is representing.’⁷² He draws attention above all to the Roma musician’s ‘professionalism’ which he says ‘is not specifically Hungarian, but rather an international phenomenon’⁷³. Indeed so, and most akin to the situation of Liszt himself during his years as a travelling virtuoso (being as he was the individual who did most to develop this type of figure after Paganini). On April 30th 1842, he wrote to Graf István Fáy, bemoaning his travelling life, with a startling passage that seems to encapsulate his conflicting sense of loyalty and self-identification:

You are probably quite right, dear Fay, when you say to me that “there is nowhere else where I could live and work so much after my heart and will as *in Hungary*,” and that is my hope—indeed my ambition. Before I can do that, however, I am afraid I will have to spend a few more years *gypsying around*, and still experience a sad day or two.⁷⁴

During this period in Liszt’s career, his transcriptions won him greater acclaim and prominence than his original works (and his success as a composer, as Bellman rightly points out, never matched the renown of these earlier performing years). If Liszt wrongly imagined the Roma to be presenting their own native music, when in reality they were simply performing arrangements of Hungarian melodies, this can probably be attributed to a fanciful yearning for a notion of ‘authentic’ music-making. In reality, Liszt himself was perhaps even closer to the Roma musicians than even he realised, and constitutes the continuation of a form of music-making previously associated with itinerant performers into the sphere of ‘art music’. It may not even be too extravagant to suggest that Liszt himself forms the bridge these earlier nomadic performers and the world of the modern travelling virtuoso soloist whose repertoire is primarily the music of others. Certainly his writings on the role of virtuosity in Roma performances (what Klára Hamburger describes as ‘virtuosity as poetics’⁷⁵; the relevant passages from Liszt’s book are given below (pages 72–73) show the extent to which he considered the notion of virtuosity as a creative act comparable to that of composition to be a feature of their work, in which context Liszt surely had himself in mind as well.

In terms of considering how to perform the works, what is most important is how Liszt’s ideas and methods were translated into specific compositions and the manner in which he desired them to be played. The question thus becomes not so much about what an

‘authentic’ approach to the music popularised by the Roma (and the manner of so doing) would be, as about how this style was envisaged in Liszt’s mind in so far as it was deemed appropriate for playing his pieces. In an essay on performing Brahms’s *style hongrois* works⁷⁶, Jonathan Bellman arrives at problems because of an insufficient inclination to acknowledge the significant difference between such categories. The correct approach to playing what Bellman idealises as the *style hongrois* in general, and the particular mediated form of such a style in Brahms’s works, are practically taken to be synonymous, leading to rather absurd passages where Brahms himself (on the basis of the one crackly recording that exists) is spoken of in mildly disparaging terms for not corresponding sufficiently to how Bellman believes music in such a style should be played! Bellman argues here that:

In the wider context, *style hongrois* performance practice is not a specifically Brahmsian issue; the same issues outlined here are relevant to performances of Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsodies, Schubert’s Hungarian-Gypsy works, and so on.⁷⁷

But I believe that as an overriding assumption, this is profoundly wrong. The *style hongrois* works of Liszt are quite different to those of Brahms, or of Schubert or anyone else. And they demand their own individuated approaches, responding not just to the style or the source materials employed, but to the precise ways in which each of these composers made them their own. To argue for a homogeneous approach can imply a de-individualisation of the *works*, a strategy which I emphatically reject. Take, for example, the following examples, each derived from the same melody:

Vivace

ff

6

82

Presto giocoso assai

sf ff sempre marcantissimo sf

8

fig 6 (b) Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 8

The configuration and harmonisation of Brahms and Liszt's pieces are quite different, not to mention differences in the renditions of the melody. Brahms uses a I-IV-I-IV-I, then I-IV-I-V⁷-I progression, all chords in root position. Liszt uses I-IVb-I-IVc-I, then I-IVb-I-V-I. Brahms has rhythmic unison between the hands, each playing chords or octaves simultaneously, whereas Liszt sets up a driving pattern of continual quavers in the left hand. Brahms's tempo is *Vivace*, while Liszt's is *Presto giocoso assai*⁷⁸. Brahms uses the grace note figuration onto the high octave alternately amongst the three-bar groups; Liszt uses it for each one. Questions of which setting is more 'idiomatic' to the style are, in my view, ultimately irrelevant (as they would have been if trying to decide the same question with reference to two different Roma musicians): both composers imbue the rather banal tune with their own personalities. And in performance, each composer's particular take on the *style hongrois* needs to be taken into account on an individual basis. Brahms's rather grandiose cadence in the second and third bars, shifting right down to a low G octave to lead to the tonic, might imply a certain slight *ritardando* to emphasise the effect, whereas the urgency of Liszt's repeated quavers could suggest if anything a certain hurrying onto the third bar. The precise rhythmic placement of the syncopated rhythm in the first and corresponding bars might be approached differently when there is or is not a rhythmic quaver ostinato—it makes more sense to shorten the first quaver significantly and lengthen the succeeding crotchet in the first case than in the second (though this statement should be nuanced by Liszt's comments about an orchestra merely following the first violin, given below). And so on and so forth. Bellman seems to think that we should develop a mode of playing the *style hongrois* that we then apply across the board; I would argue on the contrary that we should equally bear in mind that on one occasion we are playing a work of Brahms, on another one of Liszt. As Bartók put it:

[W]hatever Liszt touched, whether it was Hungarian art song, folk song, Italian aria or anything else, he so transformed and so stamped with his own individuality that it became like something of his own. What he created from these foreign elements became unmistakably Liszt's music. Still more important, however, is the fact that he mixed with these foreign elements so many more that were genuinely drawn from himself that there is no work in which we can doubt the greatness of his creative power.⁷⁹

Furthermore, that it may not even be most appropriate to assume one singular set of stylistic practices is equally appropriate for every single work by a composer in such an idiom. There is a considerable difference between the settings of Hungarian melodies in Brahms' rather potboiler-like Hungarian Dances on one hand, and in the quasi-symphonic finale of his *String Quintet in G* op 111 on the other. There is no harm in considering this in the context of performances of either work; the same is equally true of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* on one hand, and other works (including the Sonata) in which Hungarian elements are absorbed and integrated rather than being made so obviously explicit, on the other.

So, when considering performing Liszt's *style hongrois* works, one should bear in mind at least three factors (a) his own personal conception of the style, (b) the comments he made to

students about individual works, and (c) the specifics of each composition, all the elements that are unique to it. Then of course it is for the performer to digest all these factors (which can at times seem contradictory) and fuse them together with their own personality (in some ways the very fact of doing so can be argued to be integral to (a)). For investigating (a), we can find a fair amount of information in Liszt's book. I am working under the (quite substantial!) assumption here that the attributes that Liszt praised or perceived in the music of the Roma correspond to some extent those which he desired in his own works directly alluding to such music, especially the *Rhapsodies Hongroises*, notwithstanding my earlier comments.

One factor that does not seem to have impressed Liszt (if this passage was by him) is the sound of Roma female singing, which is rather ironic in light of the fact that most original Roma folk music was for voice, as mentioned earlier. Describing the voices as 'Too exposed to atmospheric changes, too accustomed to strong drinks, too soon fatigued by their extravagant dances and the cries with which they intersperse them; too exhausted by the weight of their children', Liszt claims that 'the freshness in quality of their voices disappears rapidly' and says that such voices have a 'guttural, nearly disagreeable, character'⁸⁰. Regardless of one's feelings about these sentiments, one can fairly assume that an imitation of the female voice is not a particular characteristic of this music. Indeed very few of the Rhapsodies have extended melodic lines in the higher registers, though there are a few whose tessitura would suggest a male voice; where there is such writing an instrumental model might be better to bear in mind. The aspect of *style hongrois* that Bellman specifically locates within Roma vocal traditions—the use of melodies in thirds and sixths—could equally have derived second-hand from the development of the technique in the *style hongrois* works of Schubert or Hummel, or from the abstraction of the technique in the music of Chopin.

Liszt cannot praise highly enough the instrumental virtuosity he hears from Roma musicians, however. He writes first about the role of virtuosity in general, describing how the virtuoso is not 'a passive instrument, reproducing the thoughts and feelings of others whilst adding nothing of his own' or 'a reader, more or less expert, delivering a text; without marginal notes or glossary, and requiring no interlinear commentary', but rather that:

Musical works which have been dictated by inspiration are, fundamentally, only the touching or tragic *scenario* of feeling, which it appertains to the executant to cause, by turns, to disclaim, sing, weep, sigh or adore; as also to pride himself and take pleasure in the accomplishment. The virtuoso is therefore just as much a creator as the writer; for he must virtually possess, in all their brilliancy and flagrant phosphorescence, the written passions to which he has undertaken to give life.⁸¹

In the context of the Roma (in this translation referred to as the 'Bohemians'), Liszt writes that:

It was Bohemian virtuosi who festooned Bohemian melody with their florid ornaments seeming to throw upon each, as it were, the prism of a rainbow or the scintillation of a multi-coloured sash. It was Bohemian virtuosi who brought out the various rhythms, whether sharply-cut or softly cadenced; whether lightly detached or gracefully linked together; which give to their music its profile and its attitude. . . . Hence, we may conclude that, if the shepherds have played these melodies upon their chalumeaux, or if the herdsmen have whistled them upon their pipes, or if the metisiers have sung the same motives in chorus, it is still the Bohemians who have given them their value in art, their illustration

and their renown, by their marvellous execution coupled with the sentiment which they alone have known how to infuse.⁸²

One should be left in no doubt of the value Liszt thus places upon virtuosity and individual sentiment in terms of bringing this music to life. In the absence of recorded evidence of the Roma virtuosi that Liszt heard, what form such virtuosity might take, of course, is a difficult question to answer precisely.

As far as dissonances are concerned, Liszt has the following to say:

The civilized musician is at first so astounded by the strangeness of the intervals employed in Bohemian music that he can find no other way of settling the matter in his own mind than that of concluding the dissonances to be accidental; that they are mere inexactitudes; or, to be quite frank, faults of execution.⁸³

I would conclude from this that, for example, the highly dissonant B and D# grace notes in the last bar of fig 7 should not, according to Liszt's standards, be downplayed in favour of the main note that follows (as might be taught in many a conservative teaching institution), but if anything accentuated⁸⁴. The same would apply to the D# and B within the second quaver beat, not to be played simply as passing notes.



fig 7 Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 13 in A minor

Liszt's following comments about the 'civilised' musician being 'equally put out by the modulations; which are habitually so abrupt as to defy his most treasured scientific musical tenets. If he could make up his mind to take them seriously at all they would horrify and scandalise him; and he would probably consider their position in musical art as about equivalent to rape, strangulation or parricide.'⁸⁵, and that 'The use of modulations which cause us gradually to quite one key before allowing us to proceed full sail into another is a system which facilitates the employment of enharmonic passages'⁸⁶ suggest clearly to me that the following passage from the same piece, with a dramatic shift from a chord on B as a dominant of E into E-flat instead (the D# of the B major enharmonically taking the role of the tonic for the new key), should not be delayed or 'placed', but played unashamedly and impulsively (fig 8)⁸⁷.



fig 8 Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 13 in A minor.

Then Liszt details what he describes as ‘the three principal points which constitute the Bohemian character, and from which all peculiarities of the art are derived’, which are ‘Intervals—not used in European harmony’, ‘Rhythm—proper to the race’ and ‘Ornamentation—luxuriant and eminently Oriental’⁸⁸, and goes on to write three sections on each of these characteristics as he sees them. I will try to summarise the attributes that Liszt describes here.

- (a) *Intervals*. The minor scale almost always incorporates the augmented fourth, diminished sixth and augmented seventh. The augmented fourth in particular impresses Liszt, giving the harmony ‘a strangely dazzling character—a brilliancy resulting only in obscurity’⁸⁹.
- (b) *Ornamentation*. Almost all of the melodies are ornamented from their original form. Most bowings end in an ornament. However, the melodies still maintain an ‘unfailing imprint of nobleness in its expression of suffering and dignity’⁹⁰ even without the ornamentation, and this comes through underneath the extravagant display. The first violinist, as one who ornaments amply, is invariably the principal person in an orchestra, the other players serving him mostly ‘to increase his sonorities, to mark his rhythms, or to shadow or colour the efflorescences of his improvisation’⁹¹. This player leads the music in all senses, and the orchestra dutifully follow. None of the other parts are remotely special in comparison. Thus the music is of an entirely different nature to ‘the polyphony of Meyerbeer, Berlioz or Wagner’⁹².
- (c) *Rhythm*. Rhythms are extremely flexible, with a seemingly infinite range of variety. Sometimes they double and divide, then double again, become superposed, break and join, ‘giving out on each occasion of change a quantity of shades of expression, from the most ferocious violence to the most despondent *morbidezza* or genial *smorzando*; from the most warlike *alla marcia* to the lightest dance measure; from the triumphant pageant to the funeral procession; or from the mad round-dances of the phantom willis on the Bohemian meadows at moonlight to the bacchanalian songs which encroach upon the morrow’. The enactment of rhythm and rhythmic combinations is used to evoke images, of ‘fire, flexibility, undulation, verve or fantastic caprice’. They cannot be codified in terms of rules, unlike the waltz or mazurka, ‘Their rule is to have no rule’⁹³. They are highly unequal and volatile in nature. ‘Each new fragment seems as if it contained another form within itself’⁹⁴. After syncopating a theme, ‘to give it a light swinging effect’, it is restored to its normal measure ‘as if preparing to lead a dance’⁹⁵.

Liszt also goes on to stress the spontaneity involved in the music, the ways that sonorities are sometimes graduated, sometimes opposed, sometimes distributed amongst various notes of a theme.

So how to apply these comments to actual pieces? The use of the augmented fourth is more of a prominent factor in the later Rhapsodies (for example n° 16) than earlier ones (though it obviously plays a vital part in n° 13, as seen above), as well as some of the *Five Hungarian Folksongs* of 1873. In most cases these are already accented in the scores; certainly Liszt would not have wanted them to be played remotely apologetically. As far as ornamentation is concerned, Liszt writes a great deal into the score, though there is no reason to believe that additional ornaments might not be embellished, especially when material is repeated verbatim. One such example might be in the Twelfth Rhapsody, as shown in fig 9.

134

sempre vivamente

p

sempre staccato

are

the decoupling of some of the thirds in the right hand, playing them as alternating demisemiquavers, adding mordents to the accented quavers or playing a *tremolando* on them, or modifying the first bar of the third line, from the second quaver beat, to a pair of higher E-flat/C then D-flat/B-flat semiquavers, then carrying on down the scale in triplet semiquavers. There are of course many possibilities, and one should consider that Liszt had in mind that virtuosi would feel free to employ such tricks as they felt fit.

How much added ornamentation is appropriate for the sparser late works is a more ambiguous question. In a spectacular recording of *Csárdás Obstiné*, taken from a live performance⁹⁶, Cyprien Katsaris embellishes the piece in numerous ways, playing bass notes an octave lower, with low grace notes to produce a ‘roar’ (a technique much associated with the pianist Josef Hofmann), doubles melodic lines in octaves, turns single crotchet beats into triplet repeated notes at breakneck speed, and adds extra pitches to harmonise bare octaves. This on top of an extraordinarily volatile approach to tempo and pulse, sometimes near-doubling the meter for a bar or two then equally quickly pulling back, to lightning effect (as one also finds in the playing of György Cziffra, clearly a major influence on Katsaris). The results are undoubtedly electrifying, but at the same time I personally wonder if Liszt wrote this piece in such an austere fashion for a quite deliberate

purpose? Are the endlessly repeated groups of four descending notes (fig 10) and their equivalents in the repeated octaves of the last section an invitation to the performer to embellish and improvise freely⁹⁷, or is their starkness an integral part of the conception? Would playing it in the manner that Katsaris does constitute a means ‘to astonish—like a charlatan’, as in the quote from Liszt given in the first part of this article (in the previous issue of this journal), or is it absolutely in keeping with his intentions? It is difficult to answer this question definitively; I suspect Liszt would have had varying views on the matter depending when he was asked, even during the two years from when he wrote the piece until his death⁹⁸.



The conception of this piece is quite different from that outlined by Liszt above, by which the melodic line (as played by a first violin), drives the music throughout, the other parts following. On the contrary, here the melody is quite static but the harmony changes. In earlier works such as the Rhapsodies, though, one can conclude that the melody should drive at most points and more ‘contrapuntal’ approaches are generally to be eschewed. This is interesting to consider in the context of passages such as fig 11, from the Fourth Rhapsody, notwithstanding the extravagance of the lower part, though this may be a case where the configuration is more important than the stylistic norm.

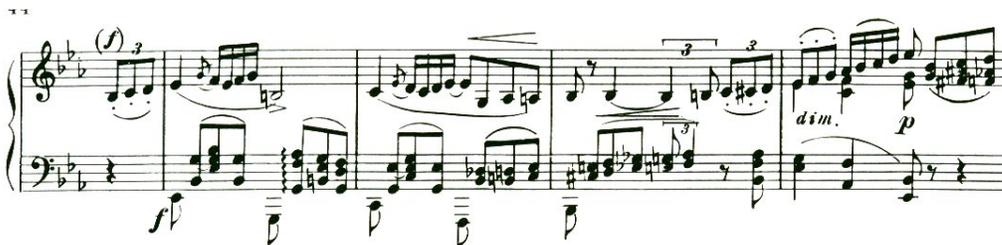


fig 11 Liszt—Hungarian Rhapsody n° 4 in E-flat

As far as rhythm is concerned, Liszt’s comments seem relatively unequivocal—rhythms are to be extremely free and flexible, though not stylised in the manner of a waltz or mazurka. In this sense, attempting to discern consistent principles might seem a flagrant contradiction

of Liszt's wishes; however, at the very least a degree of high freedom could itself be seen as a 'rule'.

But for more details on the application of principles to specific works, we can turn to the accounts of Liszt's teaching. Lachmund informs us that Liszt described the passage in fig 12, from the Ninth Rhapsody, as follows:

"Yes, that is a domestic scene; the old man would like to have her again, but she teases him and he grumbles". At each recurrence of the place Liszt growled the bass part as he mimicked the old man in facial expression; this with such comical effect, that he soon had us all laughing, and our merriment increased with each repetition, as it recurs ten times in the Finale.⁹⁹

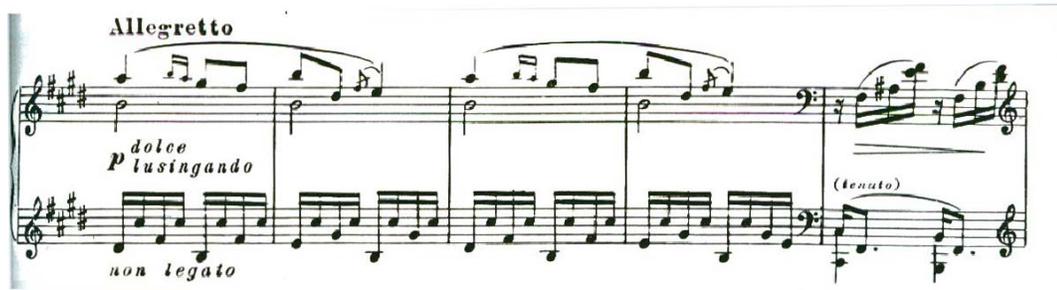


fig 12 Liszt—Hungarian Rhapsody n° 9

Here the context overrides any ideas that the upper part, as representing a first violin, should dominate at all times.

In the Rhapsody n° 4, according to Göllicher, Liszt said 'After the first few bars the public must be bowled over!'¹⁰⁰, whilst on another occasion there are more detailed comments. In fig 13, Liszt wanted the four note groups at the end of the first bar shown to be repeated several times before moving onto the next bar, then for the performer to make a good diminuendo down to *ppp* and slow down a lot in the three bars before the fermata. The *Allegretto* should not be played too rapidly, and 'should always slow down, very gypsy-like, at the end of the theme' (the middle three bars on the last system of the example here)¹⁰¹.



Then each repetition is to be played a degree faster, until finally one arrives at the *Presto*.

These comments can be applied to other pieces with parallel sections. The cadenza at the conclusion of the B-flat minor section of the Rhapsody n° 6 might be played in a similar manner, with extra repetitions of the figure at the top register, and the infamous section in staccato notes and octaves that follows (very similar in nature to the final section in the Fourth Rhapsody), could be played with each repetition slightly faster than the last (as it often is), but more importantly, with a *ritardando* at the end of each group, which Liszt describes as ‘gypsy-style’. Such *ritardando* can be applied in many places throughout the Rhapsodies.

More detailed information can be found in the *Pädagogium*, a whole volume of which is devoted to ‘Hungarian’ works. There are a wide variety of insights to be gained with respect to Liszt’s ideas on the Rhapsody n° 5 (which, according to Göllicher, Liszt described as ‘a military piece! Like the funeral procession of a distinguished major.’¹⁰²). He played a few passages himself very sustained and plaintively—solemnly’) are that the basic tempo is very slow (crotchet = 46), but should be later modified in line with the demands of the thematic intensification¹⁰³. The theme¹⁰⁴ (fig 14) is *not* to be played in what Liszt calls a ‘symphonic version’, with motivic accents as shown in fig 15.

fig 14 Liszt – Hungarian Rhapsody no 5 in E minor



fig 15 Liszt's instructions how *not* to play this passage.

The first two notes are to be played somewhat *tenuto*, and their singing line to be maintained. The slurs are not to be misunderstood here; they are a melodic indication concerning the demisemiquavers, to be played 'with tone—somewhat long'. The periodic framing of the four two-bar groups (the first two rising at the end, the latter two falling) are to be understood in a similar way. Each group resembles a two-line poetic strophe, arranged around the points of repose but not restrained by them. The pedal is to be retaken with each long note of the theme, and the dull, mourning march-like accompaniment follows the main notes of the theme. In a symphonic manner they would be given to the strings to play *pizzicato*. However, if this type of rendition were transferred to the piano, it would impair the epic lyric quality of the piece. The sense of weariness is to be maintained, half-suffocating the sound (*sotto voce*) with its weight. This forms the basic mood of the first strophe. A symphonic version, as if played by cellos and basses, would give a mood that would exclude easy, elegant movements of the virtuoso's hand.¹⁰⁵

A good deal of information about Liszt's preferences can be gleaned from these comments. He does *not* want the music to be played in a 'symphonic manner', but with elegance and lyricism, the latter itself having a type of epic quality. Those who would always insist that the pianist should imitate an orchestra would be contradicting Liszt in this case. Rather, his 'orchestra' is more akin to a Roma band, which follows the melody rather than dragging it down.

In the subsequent passage, with the melody in octaves, Liszt instructs that at one point the octaves are to be played with a very measured break (where the fermata lies—fig 16), and that there is a mistake in the octave passage, which he corrects, as well as offering a description of how it would be rhythmised in a 'symphonic version' (fig 17).



fig 16 Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody n° 5*

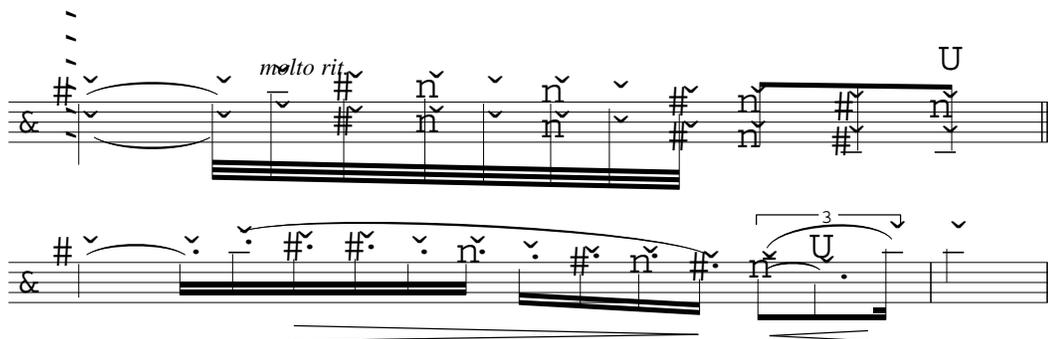


fig 17 Liszt's correction and the 'symphonic version'

It is possible to derive implications from Liszt's indicated mode of execution here for many other descending scalic passages elsewhere (generally avoiding a 'symphonic version').

The final arpeggio of the first E minor section (fig 18) is to be played in a harp-like manner, 'note around note' without *ritardando*, up to the top. Liszt also suggested one might add an extra octave to this.

The second theme—a soft, comforting memory (*ein zarttröstender Rückblick*)—is to be played in an intimate and flowing manner. The breaths within the melody distribute themselves as follows (the quavers in the second bar all 'painted *sotto voce* over the keys' with the fifth finger alone) (fig 19).

fig 19 Liszt's instructions on phrasing the second theme of the *Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 5

This phrasing makes clear the extent to which Liszt is thinking horizontally rather than vertically (or 'symphonically')—most notably because he places the end of the fourth

phrase on the dotted minim A, rather than starting a new phrase with this shift to the dominant.

Liszt's thoughts on the relationship between melody and accompaniment, as outlined in *The Gipsy in Music*, receive further corroboration here, as he describes how the 'mathematical accuracy' of the accompaniment flows 'non-mathematically into the melody'¹⁰⁶. Something akin to a Chopin-esque relationship between melody and accompaniment, whereby the melody moves freely around a steady accompaniment, seems to be what Liszt had in mind here (bearing in mind that Liszt himself drew attention to this aspect of Chopin's playing¹⁰⁷).

When we reach a mini-cadenza leading into the E major section (fig 20), Liszt gives instructions that this recitative-like passage can be played freely to evoke the sound of speech. The triplet can be played ad lib, like a *Bebung* effect upon a cymbal (fig 21).

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 5. The first system features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with accompaniment. It includes markings for 'rinforz.' (ritornello) and 'rit.' (ritardando). The second system is marked 'dolce con intimo sentimento' and shows a more lyrical melodic line with triplets and other rhythmic figures. Both systems include various performance instructions and fingering numbers.

fig 20. Liszt – *Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 5

The image shows a single system of musical notation on a grand staff. It features a spread bass chord in the left hand and a five-fingered figure in the right hand. The notation includes a treble clef and a bass clef, with various rhythmic and articulation markings.

fig 21 Liszt's suggestion for playing the last figure of the cadenza.

From the *dolce con intimo sentimento* onwards on the rhythms (first 2-bar then 1-bar) gain feeling through trembling (*gefühlsdurchbebt*) but nevertheless maintain a strophe which, not having a periodic conclusion, in modulatory increases of intensity swells out beyond itself, higher and higher, to achieve a heroic tone, according to Liszt. He indicates that the D# and B in the semiquaver accompaniment to the melody should be weighted (with intense finger pressure), the bass played like pizzicatos (with a crescendo onto the tonic arpeggio in the second bar, to articulate the rhythmic caesuras of the strophe) and the arpeggio played in demisemiquavers, so that it nearly meets the F# in the melody. From the fifth bar of this section, preparing the swelling gestures, the melody rhythms are to be accented for each bar. The modulatory arpeggios are to be accented at the top.

The spread bass chords a few bars later, adding further excitation, are to be played in a metallic manner, as if one were to grip the strings in order to tear them (*ein Griff in die*

Saiten zu reißen), with a more horizontal rather than upward-leaping motion. Liszt compares these with those in the *Consolation* n° 6 (also discussed in the *Pädagogium*).



fig 22. Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 5

In the build up to the climax, Liszt emphasises that the *sempre appassionato* is tempered by being preceded by *dolce*; thus there should be no ‘bravura expenditure of energy’. The left-hand triplet chords should crescendo onto the second and fourth beats, and mark the rhythm of the strophe as before. The spread chords are to be played firmly with each finger pressing, as if to ‘entrench’ (*einzugraben*). The triplet movement in the left hand (when the slurred figures on the second and fourth beats disappear) works together with the melody (without shortening the crotchets) to push onwards towards the climax, *con somma passione*. Liszt corrected an interpretation of the climax, saying this was ‘No Triumph! Not the strength of the victor, but heroic courage through the pain!’. The climax is to be held for two bars, then pulls itself apart through the triplet motion which appears in the melody. This subjectivisation of the melody ebbs back towards the epic tone of heroic mourning. Liszt describes how the chords at the climax is not so much to give strength to the melody, despite its concentration and the passionate nature of the hammered *martellato* chords underneath—rather the melody continues singing, just in an expansive style. The pedal point of B in the bass should not be accented in the manner of the chords.¹⁰⁸

The return of the opening theme (fig 23) is here to be played in a ‘flat monotone’ (*tonloser Monotonie*).



fig 23 Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody* n° 5

The mourning rhythms close the theme step by step with only a groan in the second bar and its repetition (Liszt indicated this should be played slurred from the C to the semiquaver B, with an *sfz* on the C, played with a heavy motion from above, before going down to *p*). The melodic caesura falls, however, on the F#. The *ff* octave on F that follows a few bars later is to be played with a heavy ‘dropping’ motion¹⁰⁹, and the following chords can fill out this sound. These tenuto octaves should be played in a very individual manner, with a raised wrist and heavy finger and particularly thumb pressure (using the whole flesh surface of its front joint). The *rit* of the third-to-last bar does not apply to the last two bars. With a very slightly forward rhythmically measured bass, the closing thirds in the right hand are to be played in a singing manner.¹¹⁰

This hugely informative lesson of Liszt tells us much about the style he desires and also much that is unique to this piece and cannot be deduced from generalised stylistic characteristics alone. He focuses upon the singing line, rather than upon an orchestral, ‘symphonic’ manner, organised as if on the form of poetic strophes, with some free idiomatic extemporisation in the cadenza. Interestingly, there are no instructions concerning the rendition of melodic semiquavers at a quicker pulse, whilst starting them more slowly, such as is often associated with a ‘Hungarian’ style, but this may of course be because it was unnecessary to communicate that information to the student.

A few more core stylistic traits can be deduced from Liszt’s lessons on the Rhapsody n° 3 in B-flat. In the second bar, Liszt tells the player neither to hold back or push forward, contrary to what is today imagined to be an idiomatic manner of playing this passage (fig 24)

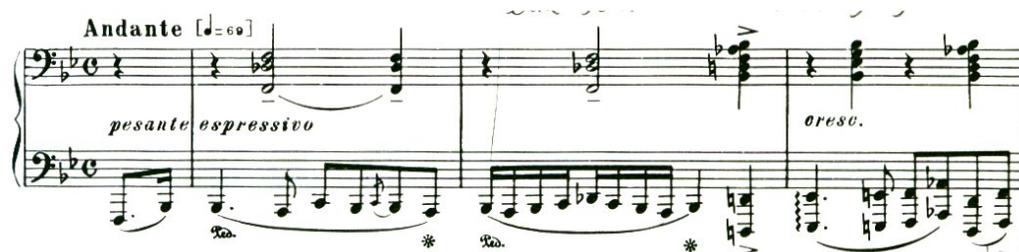


fig 24 Liszt—Hungarian Rhapsody n° 3 in B-flat.

Liszt also defines the specifically ‘Hungarian’ aspects of this piece as stemming from the mixture of major and minor, the weighting of the chords on the offbeats and the types of endings and fiorituras¹¹¹. He makes emphatically clear that he does not wish for the two note slurs to be separated¹¹² and tells the performer to let their conception of the *Allegretto* section adhere to the model of a violin and cymbal (fig 25). The evocation of a cymbal through tremolo-like figures does of course occur elsewhere in the Rhapsodies (for example, nos 10, 11 and 14), with the marking ‘quasi zimbalo’¹¹³; here it is equally important even if not explicitly indicated as such in the score.



fig 25 Liszt—*Hungarian Rhapsody n° 3* in B-flat.

But perhaps some of the clearest information as to a ‘Hungarian’ inflection can be gained from Liszt’s comments about the passage in fig 26. He says that the first three melodic notes after the fermato should be played *portamento* and sung casually, whereas the succeeding notes are to be played pointedly and without nuance, like in the preceding passage, but with a little *rubato*¹¹⁴.



Melodic figurations of this type recur throughout the Rhapsodies. One could apply a similar principle to the first entrance of the G major theme in the Rhapsody n° 7, or at the beginning of the F# major section in the Rhapsody n° 8. Though once again this should be combined with awareness of the context and structural role of the passages in question. The slightly tentative-sounding quality of fig 26, if played in the manner described by Liszt, can equally betoken a hesitancy about a first entrance as it can an intrinsic quality of the style in general. As always, genre and individuated mediation should be considered with equal importance.

There is much more information contained in the *Pädagogium* and the various other reminiscences or reviews of Liszt’s teaching and playing. This, in combination with a close reading of Liszt’s writings and other wider information on the development of the various styles and genres in the period, can provide the strongest clues as to the various idioms that Liszt envisaged, within which one can develop a very personalised approach.

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NOTES

- ¹ See George Barany—‘The Age of Royal Absolutism, 1790–1848’ in Peter F Sugar, Péter Hanák, Tibor Frank (eds), *A History of Hungary* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp 179–180, for more on these novels and the xenophobic attitudes towards foreigners contained therein. For more on the growth of nationalistic Magyar culture, especially through language and literature, see pp 181–186.
- ² For an excellent overview of the growth of Magyar nationalism, see John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), pp 92–99, some of which I present in summary form here.
- ³ Eric Hobsbawm draws attention to the origins of forms of political nationalism whereby the ‘nation-people’ are taken to comprise only the privileged elite, the nobility and gentry, thus describing Magyar (and Polish) nationalism as a descendant of the nationalism of the French nobles in the late eleventh century, saying that ‘the idea of a nation of Magyars and Poles could accommodate, without the slightest difficulty, the fact that a large part of the inhabitants of the lands under the crown of St Stephen or of the Polish Commonwealth enclosure of the were not Magyars or Poles by any modern national definition. For these plebeians counted no more than the plebeians who happened to be Magyars and Poles They were by definition outside the ‘political nation’. And in any case that ‘nation’ must not be confused with modern nationality.’ See Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp 73–74.
- ⁴ *ibid* p 94.
- ⁵ George Barany, ‘The Age of Royal Absolutism’, p 200.
- ⁶ See István Deák, ‘The Revolution and the War of Independence, 1848–1849’, in Sugar et al (eds), *A History of Hungary*, p 213.

- ⁷ *ibid* p 212. István Deák does argue, however, that the significance of the events of 15 March were ‘mainly symbolic: the people had taken matters into their own hands’ (*ibid*)
- ⁸ *ibid* pp 214–215, for more details of the reforms.
- ⁹ *ibid* pp 223–224.
- ¹⁰ *ibid* p 234.
- ¹¹ For the purposes of this article, I will simply use the term ‘Roma’ in place of the now sometimes offensive term ‘gypsy’, to refer to the Romany people. This category should be taken also to include the Sinti.
- ¹² See David Crowe, ‘The Gypsies in Hungary’, in Crowe and John Kolsti (eds), *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, with an introduction by Ian Hancock (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), p 117. This chapter gives a good overview of the plight of the Roma in Hungary, with more detail in Crowe’s other book mentioned below.
- ¹³ *ibid*.
- ¹⁴ *ibid* pp 117–118.
- ¹⁵ David M Crowe, *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia* (London & New York; I B Tauris, 1995), p 78.
- ¹⁶ *ibid* p 80.
- ¹⁷ *ibid* p 81.
- ¹⁸ See Julius Kaldy, *A History of Hungarian Music* (London: William Reeves, 1902), p 17.
- ¹⁹ Bence Szabolcsi, *A Concise History of Hungarian Music*, translated Sára Karig, revised Florence Knepler (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1964), p 54.
- ²⁰ See Jonathan Bellman, ‘Magyars, Turks, Vienna & Turkish Style’, in *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), pp 25–68, for more details about the emergence of the new style and the period of overlap.
- ²¹ See Jonathan Bellman, ‘A Lexicon for the *Style Hongrois*’, in *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe*, pp 93–130, for a more detailed exposition of this style, with numerous musical examples.
- ²² Jonathan Bellman points out that there is, however, no record of a role for this instrument in early Roma bands (*ibid* p 104).
- ²³ Moriz Rosenthal spoke disparagingly of how ‘Lina Ramann, the authoritative biographer of Franz Liszt, states, with all the aplomb and assurance born from utter want of knowledge, that Liszt invented the Hungarian Scale, characterized by the augmented fourth. But Chopin’s *Mazurka-Intermezzo* shows this scale about twenty years earlier than Liszt. Bizet’s *Carmen* also shows traces of this weird theme of Chopin’s.’ (Rosenthal in *Etude*, February 1940, cited in Mark Mitchell and Allan Evans (eds), *Moriz Rosenthal in Word and Music: A Legacy of the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), p 3).
- ²⁴ Alfred Habets, *Borodin and Liszt*, trans Rosa Newmarch (London: Digby & Long, 1896), p 170, cited in Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp 131–132.
- ²⁵ Lajos Bárdos, ‘Die volksmusikalischen tonleitern bei Liszt’, translated into German by Imre Ormay and Franz Winkler, in Klara Hamburger (ed), *Franz Liszt: Beiträge von ungarischen Autoren* (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1978), pp 168–196.
- ²⁶ Klára Hamburger, ‘Franz Liszt und die “Zigeunermusik”’ in Gerhard J Winkler (ed), *Musik der Roma in Burgenland* (Eisenstadt: Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland, 2003), p 89.
- ²⁷ Bence Szabolcsi, *The Twilight of Ferenc Liszt*, translated András Deák (Budapest: Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1959), p 16.
- ²⁸ *ibid* p 17.
- ²⁹ Quoted in full in Alan Walker, *The Virtuoso Years*, p 87.
- ³⁰ *ibid*.

- ³¹ See Alan Walker, *The Virtuoso Years*, p 48–49. Serge Gut points out that ‘Franz was born in Raiding in 1811, within the borders of Austria and Hungary, in a region of Western Hungary which comprised primarily a German population. His father, as well as his mother—a pure Austrian who came from Krems in lower Austria—used German for his daily converse, which language was also to become the mother tongue of our composer. Thus, this young Hungarian grew up in what was essentially a German environment. He also had occasion to see and to hear the gypsies who frequented the area around his birthplace and may also have known some ethnic Croatian minorities scattered throughout the region. As one can see, Liszt came face-to-face with multinational ambits, which would reinforce his latent universality from his earliest years’ (Serge Gut—‘Nationalism and Supranationalism in Liszt’, *Liszt Society Journal* vol 19 (1994), p 28). However, none of this contradicts Liszt’s self-identification as a Hungarian.
- ³² Lina Ramann (ed), *Franz Liszts Gesammelte Schriften, 2: Essays und Reisebriefe eines Baccaulaurens der Tonkunst* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1880-83), pp. 223–224, translated and cited in Walker, *The Virtuoso Years*, pp 254–255.
- ³³ See Adrian Williams (ed), *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p 120.
- ³⁴ Alan Walker, *The Virtuoso Years*, pp 325–328. See the whole chapter ‘A Prodigal Returns to Hungary, 1839–1840’, pp 319–342 for full details of Liszt’s Hungarian trip. For the full letter to the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, see La Mara (ed), *Letters of Franz Liszt*, translated Constance Bache (London: H Grevel & Co, 1894), vol 1: *From Paris to Rome: Years of Travel as Virtuoso*, pp 48–50.
- ³⁵ That said, it should be pointed out that the earlier version of this piece, composed between 1846 and 1848, is somewhat milder in character at the opening, with the theme presented only in single notes in the first three phrases. In this context, it is worth bearing in mind that the concept of a ‘carnival in Pest’ would have had very different resonances to both Liszt (and his audiences) after the events of 1848, compared to beforehand.
- ³⁶ Serge Gut, ‘Nationalism and Supranationalism in Liszt’, *Liszt Society Journal* vol 19 (1994), p 28.
- ³⁷ Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp 131–132. See also Michael Saffle, ‘Liszt’s “Unknown” German Tours’, *Liszt Society Journal*, Vol. 19 (1994), pp 4–27, for more on this subject.
- ³⁸ See Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, p 30.
- ³⁹ Adrian Williams (ed), *Selected Letters*, p 265.
- ⁴⁰ Lina Ramann, *Franz Liszt als Künstler und Mensch*, vol 3, p 4, translated and cited in Walker, *The Weimar Years*, p 68.
- ⁴¹ Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, pp 28–29.
- ⁴² This work may possibly have been written earlier, according to Merrick, as Liszt referred to it in a letter to Haslinger of June 1848. See Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, p 31. See pp 26–35 for a compelling overview of Liszt’s revolutionary sympathies.
- ⁴³ Alan Walker, *The Weimar Years*, p 70 note 26.
- ⁴⁴ See Alan Walker, *The Virtuoso Years*, pp 62-64 for more on this.
- ⁴⁵ In a letter to Karl Kertbeny, 14 April 1854, in Margit Prahács (ed), *Franz Liszt. Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen 1835–1886* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), p 78.
- ⁴⁶ Alan Walker, *The Virtuoso Years*, p 63.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid* pp 334–335. Serge Gut argues that ‘Liszt had no Hungarian ancestry and that, furthermore, the impressions of the gypsies which he received in his childhood were much less strong than has been believed until now.’ (‘Nationalism and Supranationalism in Liszt’, p 33). The first point is not particularly relevant, and whilst the second may be true, it does not affect Liszt’s clear desire to identify with and inhabit the music of the Roma.
- ⁴⁸ ‘[P]artout ailleurs j’ai affaire avec le public mais en Hongrie je parle à la nation’, Prahács (ed), *Franz Liszt. Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen*, p 49.
- ⁴⁹ Klára Hamburger, ‘Hungarian idiom in Liszt’s Sacred Works’, in Michael Saffle and James Deaville (eds), *New Light on Liszt and his Music: Essays in Honor of Alan Walker’s 65th Birthday* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1997), p 242.

- ⁵⁰ Béla Bartók of course wrote about the subject of Liszt's 'Hungarian' works in his essays 'Gipsy Music or Hungarian Music?' and 'Liszt Problems', in Benjamin Suchoff (ed), *Béla Bartók Essays* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), pp. 206–223, 501–510.
- ⁵¹ Ferenc Liszt, *Des Bohémiens et leur Musique en Hongrie* (Paris: A Bourdilliat, 1859) The version I refer to for the purposes of this article is Franz Liszt—*The Gipsy in Music*, translated Edwin Evans (London: William Reeves, 1881), two volumes.
- ⁵² Liszt had originally asked Marie d'Agoult in a letter of 17 July 1847 to write the preface on the basis of notes and instructions of his own (see Adrian Williams —*Selected Letters*, pp 255–256), but in a letter of the 10 or 22 of December of the same year, he merely tells her that the publication of the works 'will be finished in the course of the winter' (ibid p 260). Only one other letter from Liszt to d'Agoult is known of between these dates (see Daniel Ollivier (ed), *Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse D'Agoult 1840–1864* (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1934)). Alan Walker points out that she did not reply, in light of the fact that their rupture was already three years old (*The Weimar Years*, p 381).
- ⁵³ See Alan Walker, *The Weimar Years*, pp 380–390 and *The Final Years*, pp 405–409, and Jonathan Bellman, *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe*, pp 180–184.
- ⁵⁴ See Jonathan Bellman, 'Liszt' in *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), pp 175–199 for a thorough discussion of these issues, and of course the two essays of Bartók.
- ⁵⁵ See Bálint Sárosi, *Folk Music*, pp 151–152.
- ⁵⁶ See Bence Szabolcsi, *A Concise History of Hungarian Music*, p 53.
- ⁵⁷ *ibid* pp 62–64.
- ⁵⁸ See Klára Hamburger, 'Franz Liszt und die "Zigeunermusik"', p 88.
- ⁵⁹ In Adrian Williams, *Selected Letters*, p 239.
- ⁶⁰ To add one qualifier to this hypothesis, Liszt's letter to Festetics of 5 April 1846, in which he talked about how, after completing various books of the *Magyar Dallok/Rhapsodiák*, he could lay claim, by 'divine right' to the title of 'First Gypsy of the Kingdom of Hungary' ('je... attendu que j'ai bel et bien la prétention d'être de part Droit divin le 1^{er} Zigeuner du royaume de Hongrie', in Prahács (ed), *Franz Liszt. Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen*, p 57), a comment which could possibly be read as to imply already a conception of the Roma as at the very heart of Hungarian culture, at least in a musical sense.
- ⁶¹ Klára Hamburger draws attention to a letter from Liszt to Mátray from 8 October 1852, in which Liszt referred to Roma bands playing "ungarischen Melodien" which he had heard in Hungary and Transylvania. See Hamburger, 'Franz Liszt und die "Zigeunermusik"', p 88. She also points out how Liszt's portrayal of Hungarian national music as emanating from the most despised group in that society brought about a bombardment of hostile letters and articles from Hungarian nationalists, but Liszt never reneged on his claim throughout his life (*ibid* pp 88–89). For more details on this, see Alan Walker, *The Weimar Years*, pp 385–388.
- ⁶² Peter Raabe, *Franz Liszt: I. Liszts Leben* (Stuttgart-Berlin 1931), pp. 73–74, as summarised in Bence Szabolcsi, *The Twilight of Ferenc Liszt*, translated András Deák (Budapest: Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1959), pp 12–13.
- ⁶³ Bence Szabolcsi, *The Twilight of Ferenc Liszt*, p 12.
- ⁶⁴ *ibid* p 14. However, Liszt himself wrote in July 1879 to Armand Gouzien, the Parisian 'inspecteur des beaux arts', delineating his 'Hungarian' works as a particular group. The works he referred to here were the first fifteen *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, the *Hungarian Coronation Mass*, the symphonic poem *Hungaria*. See Hamburger, 'Hungarian idiom in Liszt's Sacred Works', p 242.
- ⁶⁵ Bence Szabolsci, *The Twilight of Ferenc Liszt*, p 15.
- ⁶⁶ Cited in Serge Gut, 'Nationalism and Supranationalism in Liszt', *Liszt Society Journal* vol 19 (1994), p 33.
- ⁶⁷ Jonathan Bellman, *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe*, p 195.
- ⁶⁸ *ibid* pp 194–195.
- ⁶⁹ The most prominent work dealing with these matters over a reasonably wide historical range is Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

- ⁷⁰ Jonathan Bellman, *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe*, pp 185–186.
- ⁷¹ Bálint Sárosi, *Folk Music*, p 146.
- ⁷² *ibid* p 150.
- ⁷³ *ibid* p 145.
- ⁷⁴ ‘[W]enn du mir sagst, dass “ich nirgends so nach meinem Willen und meinem Herzen leben und wirken könnte als *in Ungarn*” und dieses ist auch meine Hoffnung, ich möchte sagen meine Ambition. Vorher ist es aber leider notwendig dass ich noch ein paar Jahre *herum zigeunere* und manche traurige Tage verleve’ (Liszt’s emphasis), in Prahács (ed), *Franz Liszt. Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen*, p 51. It is not known by this author whether *herum zigeunere* was a common phrase at the time, or whether Liszt intended a specific allusion to the Roma (my thanks to Wieland Hoban for checking and correcting my translation of this passage).
- ⁷⁵ Klára Hamburger, ‘Franz Liszt und die “Zigeunermusik”’, p 86.
- ⁷⁶ Jonathan Bellman, ‘Performing Brahms in the *style hongrois*’, in Musgrave and Sherman (eds)—*Performing Brahms*, pp 327–348.
- ⁷⁷ *ibid* hp 341.
- ⁷⁸ However, according to Göllerich, Liszt said of this section ‘that the tempo should not be taken too fast, or everything will be blurred and sound like an etude’. See Zimdars (ed), *Piano Masterclasses*, p 56.
- ⁷⁹ Béla Bartók, ‘Liszt Problems’, p 502.
- ⁸⁰ Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, p 149.
- ⁸¹ *ibid* pp 265–266.
- ⁸² *ibid* p 270.
- ⁸³ *ibid* p 299.
- ⁸⁴ This melody of course uses the ‘gypsy scale’, and is cited as an example of the ‘Melodisches “Ungarisch”’ by Bárdos (‘Die volksmusicalischen Tonleitern bei Liszt’, pp 176–178).
- ⁸⁵ Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, p 299.
- ⁸⁶ *ibid* p. 300.
- ⁸⁷ It is worth noting, however, that this progression does not occur in *Magyar Rapszdiák* no 17, the earlier version of this piece.
- ⁸⁸ *ibid*.
- ⁸⁹ *ibid* p 301.
- ⁹⁰ *ibid*.
- ⁹¹ *ibid* p 303.
- ⁹² *ibid*.
- ⁹³ *ibid* p 304.
- ⁹⁴ *ibid* p 305.
- ⁹⁵ *ibid* p 307.
- ⁹⁶ On *Katsaris Live*, Teldec 242850–2.
- ⁹⁷ Liszt apparently was very keen that performers should at least phrase a theme differently on each appearance. See Elyse Mach, ‘Liszt the Teacher’, *Liszt Society Journal*, vol 8 (Spring 1983), p 12.
- ⁹⁸ Concerning the composition of the later Rhapsodies, August Stradal has fascinating recollections of visiting Liszt whilst he was in the process of composing them. Liszt played the Nineteenth Rhapsody to Stradal immediately after he had just completed it, in a way that Stradal describes as follows: ‘What a singing and resounding in the *Lassan!* It was of all life’s sorrows, of memories of blissful times that were past, that he sang. And then came the *Friska*. It was as though a whole army of gypsies on fiery steeds were raging over the *puszta*’ and goes on to say that ‘The piano had lost everything material; from the strings there cried out a voice of yearning; it was the artistic outpouring of a great and lonely

- soul, of the singe of sorrow who is taking leave of life and, after all its bitter experiences, seeking to glide gently into realms of eternal rest and heavenly peace' (Adrian Williams—*Portrait of Liszt*, p 647).
- ⁹⁹ Alan Walker (ed), *Living with Liszt from the Diary of Carl Lachmund, an American pupil of Liszt, 1882–84* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995) p 137.
- ¹⁰⁰ Richard Zimdars (ed and trans), *The Piano Masterclasses of Franz Liszt, 1884–6: Diary Notes of August Göllerich*. Edited by Wilhelm Jerger (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p 56.
- ¹⁰¹ *ibid* pp 132–133.
- ¹⁰² *ibid* p 51. There are a number of different sources for Liszt's thoughts on this work. Borodin recalled Liszt saying that 'This must be as solemn as a triumphal march' (Adrian Williams, *Portrait of Liszt: By Himself and his Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p 543), whereas Lachmund describes how 'At its opening he gave the last eighth a peculiar touch, by breaking the octave in a hesitating way. It was another of his "I merely mention it" suggestions' (Alan Walker, *Living with Liszt*, p 147).
- ¹⁰³ Lina Ramann, second edition, edited Alfred Brendel (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), vol 3, p 6. The descriptions here are a free paraphrase of my translation of Liszt's reported comments.
- ¹⁰⁴ For the origins of this theme in a late eighteenth-century Hungarian Dance for piano by József Kossovits, and the progressive transformations of the latter, see Hamburger, 'Franz Liszt und die "Zigeunermusik"', pp 93–5
- ¹⁰⁵ Lina Ramann, *Liszt Pädagogium* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901) vol 3, p 6
- ¹⁰⁶ *ibid* p 7 'aus Die "mathematische Genauigkeit ihrer Begleitung fliesse unmathematisch in die Melodie."'
- ¹⁰⁷ '[T]he wind plays in the laves, stirs up life among them, the tree remains the same, that is *Chopinesque rubato*', cited in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as seen by his Pupils*, translated Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p 51
- ¹⁰⁸ Lina Ramann, *Liszt Pädagogium* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901) vol 3, p 7.
- ¹⁰⁹ Which would seem to resemble the 'Free fall' technique described in György Sándor, *On Piano Playing* (New York: Schirmer, 1981), pp 37–51.
- ¹¹⁰ Lina Ramann, *Pädagogium*, vol 3, pp 7–8.
- ¹¹¹ *ibid* p 9.
- ¹¹² *ibid*
- ¹¹³ As pointed out in Klára Hamburger, 'Franz Liszt und die "Zigeunermusik"', p 91.
- ¹¹⁴ Lina Ramann, *Liszt Pädagogium* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901) vol 3, p 10.