



The Liszt Society Newsletter

No. 21 - JUNE 1984 : Edited by ADRIAN WILLIAMS

NEXT MEETING.

For details see separate sheet enclosed with this Newsletter.

RECITAL AT NORWICH.

Members who were unable to attend the recital given by Louis Kentner on Saturday, 5 May, at the Assembly Rooms, Norwich, in the Music Room in which Liszt himself once played, will be glad to hear that the event was by all accounts a great success. One newspaper reports that after his performance of Liszt's Grand Concert Solo the pianist was given "a standing ovation by the enthusiastic audience". Our warm thanks to Mr. Kentner himself for giving this recital entirely without fee, and for so kindly donating the proceeds (after deduction of necessary expenses) to the Society's funds; and an equally grateful "thank you" to our member Kenneth Dobson, who organised and promoted this memorable event so enthusiastically and successfully.

LISZT GRAND PRIX.

The Liszt Ferenc Társaság of Budapest have provided our Secretary, Mrs. Mistarz, with detailed information about participation in their Grand Prix International du Disque Liszt, and have asked us to draw the attention of our members to the conditions of participation - which are widely advertised (annually in "The Gramophone") but about which our Secretary often receives requests for information. This Grand Prix is open to any professional musician or musicians recording a work or works by Liszt. Full details may now be obtained from Mrs. Mistarz.

NEW LISZT EDITION.

Our Secretary has been informed that Series 1 Vol 13 - Dances, Scherzos and Marches 1 - will be issued this year. Vol 14 of the series will be issued next year (Dances, Scherzos and Marches 11), as will Vol 18, the last in Series 1.

RECORDS.

Cyprien Katsaris has now recorded for Teldec Hamburg Liszt's transcription of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Teldec Hamburg LC 3706) and hopes to record Liszt's transcriptions of all the Beethoven symphonies.

A new recording by Setrak ("Chant du Monde" LDX 78742) includes Tausig's Ungarische Zigeunerweisen and the Waltz No. 28 (sic - ?!?) by Chopin, plus two of Liszt's transcriptions (of what?) and works by Scriabin, Moskowski, Balakirev (Islamey) and Liadov. This record was very well received by French reviewers, and is also highly recommended by our Secretary.

Another recording by this distinguished French pianist is of transcriptions and paraphrases by Busoni of works by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Bizet, as well as his own arrangements of Liszt's Paganini Studies. This record (Pathé-Marconi: EMI C 065-14040) was first issued in 1975, but appears to have been re-issued recently in America.

Neither Katsaris's Teldec recordings nor Setrak's appear yet to have reached the United Kingdom.

INFORMATION
WANTED.

An Australian member, Joy Wellings, writes as follows:

I am seeking information about the life and compositions of Milton Wellings, who was born in 1850 (the eldest son of Joseph Wellings, Soho Park, Staffordshire). He was a composer (his works include about 150 songs of which "Some Day" was the most popular), an author, and a professor of singing; his recreations were sketching, yachting and cycling. He died in February 1929. As my great-grandfather, George (originally from Shropshire), appears to be a contemporary of Milton Wellings, I am trying to discover if they were related. Although I am still examining the resources available in Melbourne, I would appreciate any information that fellow-Lisztians may be able to provide.

If any readers have information about Milton Wellings that they believe may be of interest to Miss Wellings, please will they write to her at:

38 Roberts Street, Essendon. 3040. Victoria, Australia.

BOOK.

Messrs. Kahn & Averill have issued a reprint of Wilhelm von Lenz's well-known The Great Pianists of Our Time, price £3.95 in soft covers. First published in German in 1872, this little book will be only too familiar to many members; it is also quoted throughout the literature. But it certainly makes agreeable and interesting reading, and can be recommended to those who have not yet read it. The errors of fact it contains are negligible, and far outweighed by the interest of the author's descriptions of his meetings/studies with Liszt, Chopin, Tausig, and Henselt. The first-mentioned is accorded the highest accolade ("cosmic, supreme"), and Lenz also writes: "Liszt, Chopin and Henselt are continents; Tausig, Rubinstein and Bülow countries."

On receiving his copy of the book in 1872, Liszt wrote to Lenz: "I owe you thanks in the 24 major and minor keys for the remembrance you keep of me, and the ardent style in which you publish it to the world. Your pamphlet draws down upon itself a capital reproach; it is that you make me out too grand and too fine What wit, what sallies and what brilliant sparks in your Quartet of Pianist Virtuosi"

JOINT MEMBERSHIP
SCHEME WITH AMERICAN
LISZT SOCIETY.

Owing to the difficulties encountered by both societies in administering this scheme, we have jointly decided to discontinue it.

Now, this kind of bland "jointly decided" sort of statement is usually an ultra-euphemism for "after an almighty row, marked by accusations, counter-accusations, recriminations, ravings and resignations, several fits of apoplexy and a heart attack or two . . ." - but, happily, nothing of the sort on this occasion. Astonishingly, considering the number of years the scheme has been operated, perfectly civil letters to one another from Mrs. Mistarz and Professor Hinson - suggesting that the whole thing be given the coup de grâce, and hoping the other would not mind (!) - literally crossed in mid-Atlantic (or thereabouts). Those of us who with much sympathy have witnessed Mrs. Mistarz and Professor Hinson grappling all these years with this fine-in-theory-but-horrendous in-practice scheme, can only ejaculate a relieved "Thank God for that!"

Our joint members are being notified by a circular letter. Any members wishing to subscribe to the American Liszt Society in future will have to apply direct to their Membership Secretary, whose address may be obtained from Mrs. Mistarz.

OTHER LISZT SOCIETIES. The American Liszt Society has inaugurated a Newsletter, which will be published twice a year, April and November. The first issue contains much miscellaneous information about the American Liszt Society, the activities of other Liszt societies, etc. The Dutch Liszt Society report that they will be promoting an International Liszt Piano Competition in 1986. The South Pacific Liszt Society in September 1983 sponsored a contest in the City of Sydney Eisteddfod with great success. 22 contestants played 15 different works by Liszt. The overall standard was very high - "the best section I have ever examined in an Eisteddfod" said the adjudicator.

NEWS FROM
BUDAPEST.

Our March Newsletter mentioned a forthcoming book by Dezső Legány which will contain contemporary reviews of Liszt's concerts in Vienna as well as a considerable number of hitherto unpublished letters. Although I have no further news on that for the moment, I can mention an extremely interesting article by this same distinguished musicologist which has appeared in the latest (No. 93: Spring 1984) issue of The New Hungarian Quarterly. Its title is Liszt's Homes in Budapest, and it provides extensive information about Liszt's residences in the capital from the time, in 1869, when he began to visit his homeland for lengthy periods every year. For the first two of these annual sojourns Liszt stayed at the Inner City Presbytery in Pest; from November '71 to March '73 he had a flat in Nádor Street (the house still stands); from the autumn of '73 until the spring of '79 he lived in a flat in the Fish Market (Hal tér 4); and between January and March 1880, while a splendid suite of rooms was being prepared for him at the new Music Academy, he used three rooms reserved and paid for him by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education at the Hotel Hungária (the capital's leading hotel). On returning to Budapest in January 1881, Liszt was finally able to take up residence in the Academy, which was in Sugár-út*. Here he would spend every winter - until leaving Budapest for the last time on 12 March 1886.

Much detailed information is provided, with quotations from Liszt's letters, on the interiors of these various residences, their surroundings, their furnishings, pianos, pictures, those possessions of Liszt's which adorned them (many the gifts of admirers), and the friends, acquaintances, personages who visited Liszt at one or the other. About, for instance, the flat in Hal tér, Dr. Legány writes:

At the dinner for twenty-five he gave in honour of Delibes, a large number of guests busied themselves in the sitting room while Liszt and his closest friends played cards there. Famous musicians and other artists, writers and statesmen trooped through the apartment - Wagner, Wieniawski, Jókai, Bodenstedt, the Royal Steward, and others ranging from the Lord Mayor of Budapest to the Dutch Consul (bearing his sovereign's invitation to Liszt). For six years, to the spring of 1879, this flat was one of the intellectual centres of Budapest when Liszt was in the country.

Supporting the article come a sketch-plan of the Academy of Music in Sugár-út and Liszt's rooms therein, and a wealth of splendid illustrations (both black-and-white and colour), including Liszt's combined harpsichord and harmonium, his prayer-stool and crucifix, his desk, travelling bag, and one of his Bösendorfer grand pianos (7651).

It all makes yet another highly impressive and invaluable contribution to Lisztian knowledge.

The New Hungarian Quarterly may be obtained in the U.K. (price £2) from: The Danubia Book Company, 58 Chatsworth Road, London NW2. From two addresses in Australia, including: Globe Book and Record Shop, 694 George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. And from three addresses in the U.S.A. (price 3 dollars 60), including: Centre of Hungarian Literature, 4418 16th Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11204. (Also Canada, Holland.)

Another interesting publication of Dezső Legány's is the text of a talk on Kodály and the Three Choirs Festival (published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) given by him at the Royal Academy of Music, London, on 10 December 1982. It contains much information about the famous festivals and about musical contacts between Britain and Hungary: Kodály above all, of course, especially his friendships with the Atkins family and Vaughan Williams; and also references to musicians such as Liszt, Reményi, Richter, Dohnányi, et al. Dr. Legány concludes:

What might we wish the three English cities [Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester] ? That they should continue to sing together and be compassionate. May they preserve their heritage and find new great creators for new times. Our wish for them is that this vital source of music with which their festivals nourish both England and distant countries, should never run dry.

*The Sugár-út is today's Népköztársaság útja, People's Republic Street. (Tempting, by the way, though it be to assume that Sugár-út means "Sugar Street" - it doesn't! It's more on the lines of "Ray Street", "Radius Street", "Radial Street" - or simply Avenue.)

AGM. The Liszt Society's Annual General Meeting and Reception for Members will be held on 20 July. Formal Notices will be sent out later this month. (Together with, if delivered in time, this year's Journal.)

ILC. The International Liszt Centre for 19th Century Music is shortly moving to Sweden. Enquiries about the Centre should in future be sent to: Lennart Rabes, Falkvägen 5A, S-125 34 Älvsjö, Sweden.

TALK IN BOURNEMOUTH. The Secretary of the Bournemouth Gramophone Society, who is arranging the programme for their September 1984 to May 1985 season, would like to hear from any of our members who is willing to present a talk (illustrated with records) to their members. The Society meets in Bournemouth on alternate Monday evenings, and have a membership of around 70. Anyone interested should contact: Mr. P.R.Giddens, 34 Alexandra Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth B116 51A. Tel: (0202) 424023.

AUSTRALIAN RADIO. We learn from Australian member Joy Wellings (v. supra) that the Australian FM Radio station is presenting a series of six lectures (from 6 May): "Musical Masterpieces with Leslie Howard." The six composers whose works he will be discussing and playing are: Glazunov, Bartók, Rubinstein, Rachmaninov, Shostakovich, Liszt.

RECITAL. The young American pianist, Carter Larsen, will give a recital at the Purcell Room on 26 June, beginning at 7.30 pm. It will include these works by Liszt: Dante Sonata, Sancta Dorothea, the 3 Liebesträume, and Petrarch Sonnet 123.

On the one hand it's good to know that music by Liszt can be heard simultaneously in two different halls in London; on the other it's a pity that this particular recital will clash with one in the series being given in the Wigmore Hall by the acclaimed Korean pianist Kun Woo Paik. (For details see our March Newsletter.)

SUBS. WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU THAT THE NEW SUBSCRIPTION YEAR BEGINS ON THE 1ST OF JULY, AND OUR SECRETARY WILL BE GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE YOUR 1984/85 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION BY THAT DATE.

With no news items left, here, to fill up the page, is an extract from Kellermann:

Liszt's transcendent knowledge in every subject was all the more astounding since neither as a child nor subsequently had he gone to school. But he more than made up later for what he had to miss in early youth. His whole life long he worked at the broadening and deepening of his education — something which to be sure was very easy for one of his phenomenal ability. He was not only a musical genius but could probably have reached the heights in another profession. When a diplomat at the Berlin court once asked him: "What would become of you if you suddenly lost your hands?" Liszt replied composedly: "I could still be the world's greatest diplomat."

He had a special predilection for the sciences, and was particularly appreciative that it was in this field that I was knowledgeable. How great was his love for all the wonders of nature is shown by the many infinitely sensitive descriptions of nature in his works. At the Hofgärtnererei he grew his own roses, of which he was very fond. Cut flowers on the other hand he did not like to see, as he felt sorry for them. All the more, therefore, did I cherish a rose he once presented to me, one which then kept its colour for many years. Along with roses he loved lily of the valley in particular. To this day when I smell lily of the valley, Liszt comes to life before my eyes.

French he spoke brilliantly, as a result of his long sojourn in Paris. He could not bear it, however, when people whose command of French was bad, to say the least, addressed him in that language, to flatter him. On one such occasion he turned to me and said "Fromaaaschsch!" which sounded quite dreadful.