

# The Liszt Society

Limited

## Newsletter



No. 22 - SEPTEMBER 1984 : Edited by ADRIAN WILLIAMS

### LISZT CENTENARY IN HUNGARY.

From the Budapest Daily News (slightly juggled) of 27.3.84.

There is already tremendous worldwide interest in preparations for the Liszt Centenary (1986) celebrations to be held in Hungary. Final plans will be announced shortly.

With reference to the centenary, Siegfried Palm, the noted cellist, who gave a recital in Budapest during the city's recent Spring Festival and is also President of the International Society for Contemporary Music, said:

"I am sure the whole world will come here, and I think there cannot be any better way for our International Society for Contemporary Music to commemorate Liszt than with a contest in works for solo pianoforte. The works can be either variations or fantasies on an original Liszt theme. President of the Jury will be György Cziffra. Deadline for the submission of works will be 28 February 1985, and the best will be performed on 27 March 1986 as highlights of the Liszt festivities."

### GRAND PRIX DU DISQUE LISZT. 1984 AWARDS.

In this 10th year of the awards, entries were received from ten different countries, making a total of 42 records from 25 companies (9 West Germany, 3 United States of America, 2 each from Belgium, Britain, France, Holland, Hungary and Italy, and 1 each from Brazil and the USSR. The 17-member jury, chaired again by Miklós Lukács, awarded the International Liszt Grand Prix to the following five records:

In the Pianoforte Category, to Teldec of West Germany for the recording by Cyprien Katsaris of Liszt's transcription for piano solo of Beethoven's 9th Symphony (6. 42956 AZ); Hungaroton of Hungary for Jenő Jandó's recording of the Rossini-Liszt Soirées musicales (SLPX 12361); and Decca (Britain) for Jorge Bolet's recording of Liszt's transcriptions of 12 songs by Schubert (SXDL 7569).

Orchestra Category. To the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra conducted by R. Muti for its recording of Liszt's Faust Symphony and Les Préludes. This record was submitted by both Angel (USA) and EMI (Britain) and the numbers are respectively: DSB-3928; 1C 2LP 157 1435703. Hungaroton released a recording by the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Janos Ferencsik of Les Préludes, Orpheus and Tasso, which won one of the two awards in this category. SLPO 12446 - Dig.

As is customary, the plaques sculpted by Miklós Borsos will be presented to the winners during the gala concert to be held on 22 October (the 173rd anniversary of the birth of Liszt) at the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest.

### EPTA IN EIRE.

The European Piano Teachers' Association (EPTA) recently opened a branch in Eire, and it has now been affiliated to the United Kingdom branch. Our member Christopher Dyell, who has been appointed Hon. Sec. of the Eire branch, would be glad to hear from other members of the Liszt Society who may also be members of the U.K. branch, to exchange ideas and views on piano teaching etc. Mr. Dyell teaches the piano at the College of Music, Chatham Row, Dublin 2, where correspondence should be addressed to him.

LISZT  
AND  
VIENNA.

Dezso Legány's eagerly-awaited Franz Liszt: Unbekannte Presse und Briefe aus Wien 1822-1886 is now out - and since it leaves little to be said about Liszt's visits to, concerts in and associations with the Austrian capital, it was well worth waiting for. The book's opening section (about two-fifths of the total) deals entirely with Liszt the pianist, from the time of his first concerts in the city as an 11-year-old to those, 24 years later, when he had nearly reached the end of his virtuoso career (thus, those in 1822-23; 1838; late 1839; February 1840; and 1846). A fascinating and comprehensive selection of reviews covering his every single public appearance in Vienna during these years is here presented; and they provide a wonderfully graphic picture of the great pianist at the zenith of his fame as a performer, and of his effect upon his audiences. "Liszt has the advantage over many virtuosos in his field," wrote Heinrich Adami after the concert of 2 May 1838, "in that he never imitates himself . . . . What he plays, is truly not to show his virtuosity - this becomes clear from the whole manner of his performance - but because the piece stimulates him, and of all his listeners he is himself perhaps the most enthusiastic. Just as Lessing declared that Raphael would have had to become the greatest painter, even had he come into the world without hands, so we could justly say the same of Liszt as a pianist."

In Thalberg's city, naturally the usual comparisons were made, with Liszt coming out on top every time. Thus Carl Tausenau in the Allgemeiner Musikalischer Anzeiger (7 February 1839): "So far as genius stands above an unusual talent, so far as a vigorous and many-sided musical nature stands above the cleverest craft, so far as technique as representative of a richly creative artistic intellect stands above technique as representative of the happiest combinations of considered effects, so far stands Liszt above Thalberg."

At a concert spirituel on 5 December 1839, Liszt played the C minor Concerto of Beethoven, a work not known to him until then which he had to learn in one day. The result, according to one reviewer: "By his performance of the Beethoven Concerto, everything we have thus far heard from Liszt seems to have been surpassed. The Concerto has been played here by a number of great artists, but in so wonderful a fashion by none."

In this opening section of the book, there are also reports on "the virtuoso's external appearance and character", on "Liszt and French Romanticism", extracts from Liszt's own descriptions of his return to Vienna, an analysis of Liszt's "Fragment nach Dante", and one or two reports from Pressburg and Pest. Brief but helpful footnotes are everywhere supplied by Legány to make the information complete.

The remainder of the volume is devoted to letters (over 200) by Liszt now contained in certain large public collections in Vienna. They are here reproduced in the language in which Liszt wrote them, French or German as the case may be. A handful are already included in volumes of Liszt's letters published by La Mara and by Alfred Orel (Unbekannte Briefe von Franz Liszt, Vienna 1830); of these Legány offers merely the opening and close, except in one or two cases where La Mara's omissions or inaccurate reproduction of text or punctuation justify giving a letter in full.

As is to be expected, letters to Viennese friends and acquaintances make up the vast majority; above all those to Ludwig Bösendorfer (1835-1919). Head of the Viennese piano firm after the death of his father (Ignaz Bösendorfer, 1796-1859, founder of the firm), he became a leading figure in Viennese musical life and a staunch and loyal friend of Liszt's for many years. The letters also include several to Bösendorfer's wife, Céleste, a woman much esteemed by Liszt and her other acquaintances, and to J.B. Streicher, another well-known Viennese piano manufacturer.

So far as Liszt's more personal life and outlook are concerned, probably the letters reproduced here to his step-uncle Eduard are the most illuminating. Available here in fact are more than a dozen not

published before (although some fragments were given in Eduard Ritter von Liszt's Franz Liszt. Abstammung, Familie, Begebenheiten, 1937). A brief example of Liszt's happy combination of thought and expression might be this sentence from a letter to Eduard of March 1854:

"For my part I have a very high opinion of the talent of Schumann, who deals with musical style like a master and frequents the higher regions of art - however, to make you understand what I mean, I shall add that I regard him as a kind of Arius in the little Church we are trying to build."

And for his general definition of Art, one worthy of the artist-philosopher or artist-mystic, which Liszt of course was, from a letter of November 1858 to the poet Ludwig Eckhardt (1827-71):

"Art is for us none other than the mystic ladder from earth to heaven - from the finite to the infinite - from mankind to God: an everlasting aspiration and impulse towards redemption through love!"

The meticulous footnotes provided by the author, and above all his excellent commentaries on the background and circumstances of Liszt's visits to Vienna in his later life, all go to help the reader form a very full and complete picture of Liszt's relationship with the city. Alas, the impressive contributions made by the aging and aged Liszt towards the musical life of Vienna were, so often, tarnished by the vicious squawkings of his faction-obsessed foes and detractors in the capital's musical press. Thus Legány, referring to Easter 1880 and a week or more of glorious music-making in which some of the finest musicians then in Vienna had participated in Liszt's honour:

"Within a period of ten days, the artists and public of a city could not have expressed their respect for Liszt more clearly and worthily. Not so the press, which nevertheless reached a far wider audience than the immediate concert public. The concert reviews which appeared in the Wiener Zeitung, and from the pen of Eduard Hanslick in the Neue Freie Presse, were the purest slander."

I should not forget to mention the fine selection of illustrations. These include several portraits of Liszt himself, photographs of Ludwig and Céleste Bössendorfer, of Antonia Raab, Hellmesberger (the elder), Randhartinger and Eduard Liszt. Reproductions of concert posters, of one of Liszt's letters, views of Vienna and Pest, and pictures of the Schottenhof (Eduard Liszt's home, where Liszt often stayed) and the Augarten (home of Marie Hohenlohe).

This splendid book, which so admirably and thoroughly fills in the details of one more important corner of Liszt's life, should be added to the bookshelf of all German-reading Lisztians. (That it is indispensable for Liszt scholars and researchers goes without saying.) It can probably best be obtained in the U.K. by ordering through some such specialist as the Danubia Book Company, 58 Chatsworth Road, London NW2, or Collets (or Boosey & Hawkes). W. Heffer & Sons Ltd. of 20 Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 3NG are also worth trying. Otherwise, order direct from the Book Department of Kultura Company in Budapest, Fő ú. 30-32, H-1011, at a price of 270 forints. The Budapest publishing-house is Corvina, and the book is being published simultaneously in Vienna by Böhlau Verlag. (But the latter house is authorised to sell copies only in Austria, West Germany and Switzerland.)

INFORMATION WANTED. Liszt Society member P.D. Roberts writes as follows:

I am engaged in a programme of research into avant garde composers of Russian origin who were active between 1910 and 1930, and I should be grateful if anyone who has information on the whereabouts of scores by any of the following composers would kindly get in touch with me:

Nikolai Nabokov    Arthur Lourié    Nikolay Obukov    Lazare Saminsky

Alexander Mossolov    Joseph Schillinger    Nikolai Roslavets    Effim Golychev

Nikolay Lopatnikoff    Philip Hershovits

and the Sonata No. 1 of 1924 by Alexander Tcherepnin.

Mr. Roberts' address is: Hergest Croft, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3EG.  
Tel: Kington (0544) 230900. (Also: Henley-on-Thames 574580)

NEWS  
FROM  
FRANCE.

I understand that the correspondence between Emile Ollivier (1825-1913: the second of Liszt's three sons-in-law) and Princess Carolyne Sayn Wittgenstein (1819-87: long-standing friend of Liszt's) has just been published, in the original French. Unfortunately I have at present information neither about the publishing-house, nor the size of the book, nor the interest of its contents. However, the cost, I am assured, is 400 francs - which is steep!

A book on Liszt as Freemason is to be published in France in October: Liszt et la Franc-Maçonnerie. It is being brought out privately by the author, M. Philippe Autexier, Les Rataudes, 28 rue de Vouneuil, 86000 Poitiers, France, from whom it must be ordered direct.

The author tells us: "Mon travail contient environ 140 documents sur Liszt Franc-maçon, la plupart bien sûr tout à fait inconnus. Les documents sont publiés en langue originale avec notes critiques en allemand. Le tout est présenté et résumé en allemand et en français (avec traduction des textes les plus importants). Si j'ai au moins 100 souscriptions anglaises et américaines, je ferai aussi une version anglaise de cette introduction avec traductions. Mais il faut assez d'amateurs pour en justifier l'existence!"

The book also contains a section on Mozart and Freemasonry - the result of many years of research on the part of the author. The principal topic covered in the pages on Mozart is the Masonic Funeral Music (Master Music), whose history and meaning are discussed in detail.

The section on Liszt is more expanded. Liszt's connexions with Freemasonry are little known (but see a reference to the Liszt Saeculum elsewhere in this Newsletter). He joined the Freemasons in 1841, became an honorary member of a number of lodges, and attended their meetings to the end of his life, even after having received minor orders in Rome.

Cost of the book is 230 francs, which must be sent with order.

CONCERT.

In the Queen Elisabeth Hall on 7 October, beginning at 7.15 pm, the Vivaldi Concertante - an ensemble of 18 professional musicians, formed a year ago - will be giving a concert in which one of the works to be performed is Liszt's Malediction Concerto for Piano and Strings. The Italian pianist, Francesco Nicolosi, will be coming to the UK to make his London debut with this performance.

RECORD.

Schubert-Liszt always proves a fascinating meeting and mingling of two great musical minds. But Liszt's art in these wonderful arrangements is the art that conceals art, and we are always really in Schubert's magical world alone - as expressed in superlative keyboard terms. Given an interpreter who can merge himself with the musical and lyrical thought of the great Lieder composer on the one hand, and who is a master of the piano in all its aspects (and more than just the technical requirements, essential though these be) on the other, then the Lisztian transcriptions offer the incomparable combination of both great creators. Not all pianists can rise to the twofold challenge, but the Italian pianist Riccardo Risaliti does so with notable success in his recording of the dozen pieces Liszt selected and transcribed from Die Winterreise. It is the first time the group has been recorded as a whole, although certain of the pieces comprising it have been recorded several times.

Risaliti's limpidly beautiful, sensitive and intelligent playing is warmly recommended to you in this recording. It is issued by Dischi Ricordi S.p.a. (Orizzonte), the number being OCL 16249; and the pianist himself provides the uncommonly interesting and knowledgeable sleeve note. The pieces, transcribed by Liszt in 1839 and first published in Vienna twelve years after Schubert's death in that city, are: Gute Nacht; Die Nebensonnen; Mut; Die Post; Erstarrung; Wasserflut; Der Lindenbaum; Der Leiermann; Täuschung; Das Wirtshaus; Der stürmische Morgen; Im Dorfe.

PUBLICATIONS  
OF OTHER  
LISZT SOCIETIES.

Hitherto we have given a round-up of these in the Journal once every two or three years. For several reasons, however, that is rather an unsatisfactory approach, and we shall henceforth consider them in our Newsletters as they come out. Unfortunately I have still not received a copy of the latest (June 1984) Journal of the American Liszt Society; and so I here give a summary, with one or two comments, of the last two ILC Liszt Saecula.

Number 32 (Volume 11, 1983) is a good and substantial one of 106 pages. It opens with a valuable and useful article by Michael Saffle, Unpublished Liszt Works at Weimar, with accompanying catalogue. (Reprinted, with permission, from the American LS Journal of June 1983.) This is followed by a major article (including the reproduction of numerous documents) by Lennart Rabes: Franz Liszt, the Freemason. As one whose instinctive reaction — which my more tolerant and reasonable self hastens to condemn! — to freemasonry is to regard it as a lot of absurd mumbo-jumbo, linked with regret that the young Liszt should have allowed himself to be ensnared (he was excluded in later life because "he never wrote to the Lodge"), I must admit to having found the article of great interest. It contains a few factual errors (eg he did not travel in Asia, did not settle at Weimar in 1843, Caroline St Crieg was not his "only" love, he did charge for lessons early in his career, Daniel Liszt was perfectly aware he was dying), and some remarks — about, for instance, Marie d'Agoult — seem a little naive. And perhaps it is over-simplistic, or even wrong, to say that the marriage between Liszt and Princess Wittgenstein did not take place because "Liszt changed his mind at the last minute"? But passing remarks of this nature are far outweighed by the general value of the article. I liked the emphasis placed, rightly, on Liszt's broadmindedness, religious tolerance and mystical outlook, as on his "Europeanness". And the answers he gave in his written examination (before being initiated into Freemasonry) are of absorbing interest.

But one could inveigh against the "foreign" English in which the article is written. I make this comment not from any xenophobia — but simply because, had the language been checked and corrected, the author's interesting information would have been conveyed to his readers so much more readily. As it is, many sentences have to be read several times before their meaning can be grasped.

Some extracts from Walter Damrosch's My Musical Life are followed by the texts (and facsimile reproductions) of certain material from private collections, including letters by Henry Wood, Rosa Newmarch, Constance Bache and Arthur Nikisch (writing to Peter Raabe). Then comes an instalment of Rellstab's reviews (from their publication in book form) of Liszt's Berlin recitals of 1842.

As usual, the Saeculum has much interesting miscellaneous information to offer, including book reviews and smaller items. But I am amused to find Lennart Rabes, in reviewing the 3rd volume of the recent publication of Beethoven's Conversation Books, declaring that the only two real mentions of Liszt's concert at Vienna in April 1823 (now that recent research has discovered and ejected Schindler's forgeries) in those books "surely" show that Beethoven was not present. A moment's thought show that they do nothing of the sort. One is merely a casual remark by Beethoven's nephew about the number of people attending the concert — and which of us at one time or another, after a concert, has not exchanged a few words about audience size with our companion? — and the other shows Johann van Beethoven telling his brother that the theme on which Liszt had improvised had been a Hungarian one. But of course Beethoven would need to be told this after the concert! The poor great man was virtually stone deaf by this time, and could not possibly have known otherwise, whereas he would have known what Liszt's other pieces were by being able to read them on the printed programme.

Liszt was absolutely consistent throughout his life in saying that Beethoven came to the concert and kissed him on the forehead: we find him saying so to his earliest biographers, to acquaintances throughout the course of his life, and, just a few weeks before his death, to his pupil G llerich, who made an immediate note of the conversation. "Beethoven turned up, for Czerny's sake, and kissed me on the forehead. I never played at his home ...." Nor did he, Liszt,

correct that version when it was given in the biography of him by his "official" biographer (based on information provided to her by Liszt himself), Lina Ramann, even though he corrected errors in the book of far slighter significance. It is really astonishing how all this evidence from Liszt himself, and from those who knew him extremely well, can be disregarded in favour of an obviously erroneous version by a Hungarian woman, Ilka Horowitz-Barnay, who did not know Liszt very well (although she has him saying: "I tell this only to good friends!") or for very long, and who had lifted her account straight out of the pages of a newspaper. (Yes, then as now celebrities were considered fair game so far as the insertion of inaccurate stories about them in the newspapers was concerned.) There are more permutations on this topic, but for the moment - 'nuff said!

Liszt Saeculum 33 (Volume 1, 1984) is another full and fine one. It contains inter alia the text of a talk given (with slides) by Albi Rosenthal on The Composer and Publisher in the 19th Century; the continuation of Liszt the Freemason; some reprints from the Musical Times (1882 and 1886); further unpublished material from private collections; a list of the performances of Liszt's choral and orchestral works in Scandinavia between 1875 and 1915, including, interestingly, Christus and St Elisabeth, and of the major artists who played there (although this seems not to be complete); and a further instalment of Rellstab's reviews. The interesting miscellaneous items include a commemorative article, from the Nordbayerischer Kurier (31 January 1984), about "Richard Wagner's humblest assistant" (Joseph Rubinstein), and a delightful item, Peculiarities in Musical Life, by C. Augustinus.

The Liszt Saeculum is a scholarly and valuable publication, and its Editor, Lennart Rabes, can be particularly commended for the lesser- and little-known material he hunts out for each number. Inquiries about the magazine, and about the International Liszt Centre in general, should be addressed to him at: Falkvägen 5A, S - 125 34 Älvsjö, Sweden.

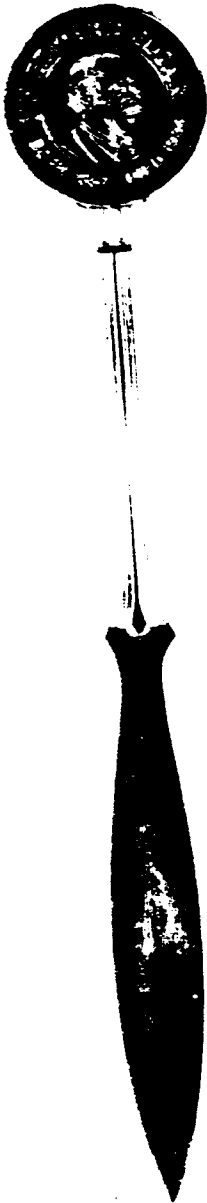
SUBS. A reminder that membership subscriptions would be due for renewal on the 1st of July was inserted in the June Newsletter, and many members have now accordingly sent their subs for 1984/85 to the Secretary: but others have not done so. If you are one of the latter, and wish to continue to support the Society, please will you send your sub without further delay. The membership subscription remains at £10 p.a. (£5.50 for full-time students.) Membership cards are enclosed for those who have paid their subscriptions, with our grateful thanks for their continued support. If any of those who have not renewed their subscription feel unable for any reason to continue to support the Society, please let the Secretary know.

With no "news" left, here is a brief description of Liszt at Bad Eilsen in 1851:

The morning after our arrival Mother and I were engrossed in household chores of one kind or another, when, looking out of the open window, I caught sight of a passer-by who held our attention irresistibly, just as he would have yours. Indeed, it is because of you that he was of such special interest to us. You will have guessed already that it is the great and celebrated Liszt of whom I am speaking. Just imagine! - he is staying right opposite, so that whenever he plays the music comes floating over to us. Yesterday morning, too, while I was writing, I heard the bewitching sounds once again. They made Mother and me abandon all thought and desire of doing our toilet: we just dropped everything, grabbed our hats and veils and hurried towards the enticing music.

When we got there, a young gentleman was already standing beneath the open first-floor window where Liszt was playing. We joined him. Very soon the little group of listeners had increased in number, everyone listening with breathless attention. Liszt seemed to be practising or composing something very difficult. Every now and then he would come to a stop and repeat a passage - and occasionally would sing a few notes in between. Oh, it is altogether too interesting to listen to this famous master; especially for us, who have heard such splendid things about him from you! At this very moment he is playing again, and .....

MEMO FROM  
THE  
SECRETARY



NOTA BENE

If you wish to place a firm order for either of these items, please complete the tear-off slip below and mail it to:-

The Secretary,

THE LISZT SOCIETY  
32 "CHIVELSTON"  
78 WIMBLEDON PARK SIDE  
WIMBLEDON  
LONDON SW19 5LH  
ENGLAND

as soon as possible, so that an order may be placed with the supplier if 100 or more members place an order with me for at least one spoon / letterknife. If the total demand for either item should be less than 100, the cost per spoon/letterknife would be uneconomical, and I would not place an order with the manufacturer.

*Eunice Mistrars*  
Mrs. Eunice Mistrars  
Secretary

LISZT CENTENARY COMMEMORATIVE SPOON / LETTER-KNIFE

I have been approached by "Heritage Spoons", the firm who manufactured the items photocopied above, commemorating the 100-centenary of Gustav Holst and Edward Elgar respectively, with an offer to produce similar items to commemorate Liszt's centenary in 1986.

The spoon and the letter-knife are of pleasing design, silver-plated, and would have the Society's logo of Liszt's head in the cameo on the finial reproduced in gilt on a black background.

The cost per item to members would be £2.50, each supplied in a gift box, to which postage cost would have to be added.

These samples were circulated for inspection at our recent AGM, and several members expressed interest, two members actually placing orders for six spoons. But I should have to place an initial order for 100 of either or both items in order for them to be supplied at the above price, and the order must be placed before September 1985. If you are interested in purchasing either of these items, will you please complete and return to me the tear-off slip below so that I may assess the general interest, and whether the number ordered of each item reaches 100 or more.

NAME & ADDRESS .....  
(Block capitals, please) I should like to place an order for ..... spoons and  
..... letter-knives commemorating Liszt's centenary.

Signed: .....  
Date: .....