

The Liszt Society Newsletter

No. 27 - SPRING 1986 : Edited by ADRIAN WILLIAMS

CHRISTIE'S EVENING CONCERTS.

The auctioneers, Christie's, started a series of short evening chamber-music recitals in the spring of 1985. This year, to commemorate the centenary of Liszt's death, they have arranged four concerts, two song- and two piano-recitals, in co-operation with the National Art-Collections Fund. On Tuesday, 20 May, Brigitte Fassbaender gives a recital of songs by Liszt. On Tuesday, 27 May, Cyprien Katsaris plays Liszt's Trauervorspiel und Trauermarsch; Héroïde - Elégiaque; Schlaflos, Frage und Antwort; Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude; Am Grabe Richard Wagners; R. W. - Venezia; Transcription of Isolde's Liebestod; and Transcriptions of Schubert's Ständchen, Ave Maria, die Forelle. On Tuesday, 3 June, Jennifer Smith, accompanied by Lawrence Skrobacs, sings songs by Wagner, Chopin and Schubert. On Tuesday, 10 June, Francesco Nicolosi plays Liszt, Thalberg, Pixis, Herz, Czerny and Chopin's Hexameron; Thalberg's Fantasy on Rossini's Moïse; and Liszt's Divertissement on the Cavatina from Pacini's Niobe, Reminiscences of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, and Concert Paraphrase of Verdi's Rigoletto.

All the recitals begin at 6.45 p.m., are followed by a reception, and take place at Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1. (It will be recalled, incidentally, that King Street, SW1, has a connexion with Liszt, who played there once or twice, e.g. on 29 June 1840 at Willis's Rooms - see various past numbers of our Newsletters and Journals.) Tickets cost £8.00. Further details may be obtained from Jonathan Price or Joyce Harrisson at Christie's. Tel: 839 9060.

The programme notes produced for the occasion contain the usual sloppy errors (some of them, rather) about Liszt - but don't let that put you off the recitals themselves, which may be excellent.

LISZT FESTIVITIES AT GENEVA.

The following is part of a letter which has been received from the Public Relations Manager of the Ramada Renaissance Hotel, 19 rue de Zurich, CH-1211, Genève 1 (Switzerland), giving details of rather an original Liszt celebration. (The English is imperfect, but also charming, and so has been left uncorrected.)

The year 1986 will be the year of the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Ramada Renaissance Hotel, Geneva. At the same time we learned that you are celebrating the centenary of the death of Franz Liszt.

The management of the hotel has decided to base all the festivities (cocktails, banquets, gala dinners, etc) which will take place at the hotel in September-October 1986 on the single theme "the life of Franz Liszt".

For example the hotel staff will be dressed in costumes of the period, we will have a classical orchestra playing F. Liszt in the lobby, the decoration of the public area will be modified, etc.

With this association of ideas we would like to have a small exhibition in the hotel lobby as manuscripts or copies of manuscripts, personal items, etc. which had belonged to Franz Liszt.

We take the liberty to ask you if you will be able to help us concerning our exhibition. Where can we find the material. If there is any F. Liszt foundation in Switzerland or if we can deal directly with you.

LISZT DISCOVERY.From the Brandeis (Massachusetts, USA) Reporter, March 1985:

To Allan R. Keiler, associate professor of music and chairman of the music department, his discovery two summers ago in Weimar, East Germany, was a scholar's dream come true. On dusty shelves, in several rooms located in a small house a few blocks from Weimar's opera house, now the German National Theatre, Keiler found what he and other scholars had suspected no longer existed - hundreds of musical scores used by Liszt when conducting at the Court Theatre in the 1840s and 50s. "It was," says Keiler, "the most amazing period of musical activity in Germany."

It was at that small opera house that Liszt conducted the world premiere of Richard Wagner's opera Lohengrin and the German premiere of Berlioz's Benvenuto Cellini was performed. The manner in which Liszt chose to interpret those musical masterpieces is revealed by the conducting scores that Keiler uncovered. Liszt's notations and directions provide valuable information about his musical attitudes and interpretations, he says.

The scores had been pursued for a long time by Keiler, who was the first Western scholar to enter the archives. Last autumn was his second trip to Weimar, where he was able to confirm and do research on the material in the opera archives.

Both trips were underwritten by the Brandeis Mazer Fund for Faculty Research.

It was his tenacity, says Keiler, that led him to the discovery of Liszt's original scores. It was only after he had repeatedly urged the opera house librarian to lead him to where older archival material might be stored that she took him to the abandoned rooms a few blocks away.

The collection of musical scores used by Liszt was thought to have been destroyed when the opera house was razed by fire in 1905. Although the theatre had been rebuilt, destroyed in the Second World War and rebuilt for the second time, Keiler remained hopeful that the scores had been spared. His faith was rewarded: the opera house archives had survived. At some unknown date, they had been moved to the small house nearby, where they remained untouched - and unknown to scholars - until Keiler's discovery.

The hundreds of conducting scores found by Keiler, show scholars "what works Liszt performed, how he interpreted the music, and his attitudes," says Keiler.

For example, the several changes made by Liszt to Mozart's score of The Magic Flute made the Weimar performances quite different from those presented elsewhere at the time. The scores also reveal that Liszt tried to restore Handel's Messiah, which had been changed over the years, to its original version.

By studying these scores, "one can generalize and say that Liszt seemed to want to return to the original sources for his interpretation of each composition," says Keiler. And this kind of information, he claims, "helps us to understand the interpretative and aesthetic ideas of the 19th century".

Keiler, who holds a Ph. D. both in linguistics and musicology, has written numerous articles in the field of linguistics, 19th-century music and Liszt scholarship. For the past ten years, he says, he has been working on a book called "Liszt and Weimar". His discovery in Weimar will figure prominently in the book.

LISZT FESTIVAL.

Allan Keiler (see above) has gathered together a group of performers and scholars for an "International Liszt Festival", to be held at Brandeis University between 3 and 6 April.

Among those participating in the festival are the pianists Gunnar Johansen, Charles Rosen and David Deveau. Keiler will also be in the chair at a one-day symposium in which various Liszt issues will be discussed. Among those scheduled to speak are Dezső Legány, Charles Rosen, Allen Forte and Rena Mueller.

A special exhibition of Liszt material - original letters, manuscripts, books, music and photographs - will be accompanying the festival. Much of the unpublished material, which is from private collections, will be exhibited at Brandeis for the first time.

LISZT WEEKS
IN GERMANY.

Under the direction of Elmar Werner, some "Franz-Liszt-Wochen" are being held at Walsrode (Federal Republic of Germany) this year.

On 15 March, Michael von Hintzenstern (Weimar) gave a lecture: "Franz Liszt als Wegbereiter einer neuen Kirchenmusik."

On 16 March, Liszt's Via Crucis was performed, with other works, at Walsrode's Stadtkirche.

On 6 April, at the Pauluskirche, Bomlitz, Elmar Werner will give the first of three organ recitals. His programme on this occasion will be: Ouverture (1852); Elisabeth-Legende (Einleitung) (1862); and Preludium und Fuge über das Thema B-A-C-H (1855/1870), all by Liszt; and Julius Reubke's Sonate C-Moll über den 94. Psalm (1857).

On 17 April, at Walsrode's Stadthalle, the pianist Gregor Weichert will play: 3. Rhapsodie; Zwei Legenden; Sonata in h-moll.

On 20 April at his second organ recital (Stadtkirche, Walsrode), Elmar Werner will play: Liszt's Evocation à la Chapelle Sixtine (1862); Trauerode (1860); Requiem für die Orgel (1883); and Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen (1863).

The last of his recitals will take place at the Dionysiuskirche, Fallingbostal, on 7 May. He will be playing: Dante (1860); Orpheus (1860); and the Fantasie und Fuge über den Choral Ad nos, ad Salutarem Undam (1850).

The final event of the Franz-Liszt-Wochen will be a performance of Christus, at the Stadtkirche, Walsrode, on 10 June.

BOOK.

To hand, but not yet read, is: Die Musik war sein Leben. Subtitled "Gedenkbuch für Franz Liszt", it has been compiled by Clara von Koronghy, a member of the Hennig branch of the Liszt family.

The book looks good, and there are many interesting and unusual illustrations, including: the Liszt bust on Margaret Island, Budapest; the plaque which since 1924 has been adorning the birthplace of Anna Liszt at Krems; Liszt's friend Baron Augusz; the interior of the Sultan's Palace at Istanbul; the page from the visitors' book of the Monastery of St Gallen showing the signatures (24 November 56) of Liszt, Wagner, Herwegh and Semper; Géza Zichy's house in Buda; the Castle of Loo in Holland; the Liszt monument at Eisenstadt; and photographs of some recent Liszt scholars, including Margit Prahács (editress of the superb Franz Liszt: Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen, 1835-1886) hard at work in her study, numerous portraits of Liszt eyeing her from the wall.

A chapter is devoted to relatives of Liszt's on his father's side (the Hennigs, Vetzkos, Eduard Ritter von Liszt, and others).

The contents of the final chapter are explained by its title: "Franz Liszt in der Bildenden Kunst - Erinnerungsgegenstände."

The volume is prefaced by these words:

Dieses Gedenkbuch ist den Menschen gewidmet,
die sich für ein romantisches Künstlerleben auch noch
in der Atomepoche interessieren.

Es wird ein Künstlerleben vorgestellt, im Ringen und
Schaffen, gefeiert und zurückgezogen,
jedoch in jeder Lebensphase im edelsten Sinn
des Wortes:

ein Mensch, der für das Gute kämpft.

Costing 198 Austrian schillings, it may be obtained from:

Offsetdruck Horvath, A-7000 Eisenstadt, Hauptstrasse 18. Austria.

BOOK.

What can one say about Ronald Taylor's Franz Liszt: The Man and the Musician (Grafton, £15.00)? If only he had restricted himself to a discussion of the "man" and "musician", and not attempted to recount the details of Liszt's life, he would very likely have produced an interesting and worthwhile contribution, for many of his insights and aperçus are ingenious, imaginative and thought-provoking; and the book is also eminently readable. But, alas, it is not so much marred, as hideously scarred, by a vast avalanche, torrent, ocean of error and inaccuracy in the narrative. It cannot be supposed for a moment that Professor Taylor lacks the ability to assemble the relevant facts and to get them down on paper accurately; one's conclusion therefore is that his research and writing were done hastily and sloppily enough to enable him to bring out an "anniversary" offering (this is always the trouble with centenaries and jubilees) despite, perhaps, little real interest in his subject. With the exception of one of several Hebbel quotations, and some references to Lina Schmalhausen's unpublished diary (held at Weimar), I found nothing new in the sources: well-known material for the most part, with some important omissions.

It is impossible to list and discuss all the errors: to do so would take up the rest of this Newsletter and several other pages as well. Here are just a few remarks about Taylor's coverage of the two British tours undertaken by Liszt between August 1840 and January 1841. Many of the book's readers will doubtless assume that what a British writer has to say about Liszt in Britain will be at once accurate and definitive. Unhappily, the reverse is the case. Once again the canard is trotted out about Liszt's "failure" on these tours. Failure? What failure? The financial result, it is true, left much to be desired, mainly because of the small audiences in such provincial centres as Mansfield, Market Harborough, Chelmsford and Bridgwater. But numerous press reports and reviews reveal, as do the diaries of John Orlando Parry (reproduced in toto in Volumes 6 and 7 of our Journal), that Liszt and his playing were received virtually everywhere with rapture (to use a word dear to the hearts of the reviewers); in short, his artistic success was extremely great. Again and again we read in Parry such remarks as: "Liszt encored," "Liszt encored in every piece," "Liszt tremendously encored." And the newspapers? "Rapturous applause." "Electrified and delighted his audience." "Most enthusiastically applauded and the audience appeared intensely interested." "Rapturously encored." "Liszt is in our opinion the greatest pianoforte player we ever had the happiness to hear." "At the close of each separate triumph of his performance, a burst of astonished acclamation rang from every part of the house, and repeated encores were demanded - and most kindly and smilingly complied with." "We never remember a concert which was marked by so much enthusiasm, or so many rapturous encores." "We pass the highest eulogium we have to offer, viz. that his like we never before heard, and perhaps never shall again." "To judge of his greatness, he must be heard; language would fail in the description. He is, indeed, 'greater on his instrument than was Paganini on the violin'." And many, many more such "eulogia".

So much for Taylor's "unappreciative and philistine provincials"!

Equally unfortunate is his choice of Manchester and Glasgow as representative of those places in which Liszt "failed". When we turn to the sources (Parry and the press), we find that in the former city the concert was so enormous a success (Liszt being encored three times) that a second had to be arranged; and that in the latter, according to the Glasgow Courier (23 January 1841), Liszt was "cheered to the echo and encored with raptures".

So much for "the flaccid interest shown by audiences in Manchester and Glasgow"!!

One does not willingly speak disparagingly of a volume which may have taken a couple of years of a writer's life, however slipshod the result; and yet it must be said: If you read Taylor at all, treat him with the utmost caution. If you know the Liszt literature (the great musician's own writings and correspondence, the basic biographies and studies, the memoirs, essays, specialised articles, etc.) really thoroughly, you will be irritated and exasperated by all the mistakes, and in any case will learn little that is new. If you haven't this grasp of the literature, you will be in far greater peril, for with virtually every page that you turn you will simply be imbibing misinformation.

Poor Liszt, that he should be subjected to this slapdash treatment - and in his Centenary Year of all years!

LISZT PIANO
COMPETITION
AT PARMA.

The 3rd Mario Zanfi Piano Competition, to be entirely devoted to Liszt, will be held from 25 September to 3 October this year. It is open to young pianists of every nationality from the ages of 16 to 32.

The 1st Prize will be ten million lire; the 2nd Prize six million lire; and the 3rd Prize four million lire.

The Competition will contain three phases:

- (1) An eliminatory test behind closed doors in which every contestant will have to play the Dante Sonata.
- (2) A public test consisting of a recital programme (to be chosen from specified pieces which include one compulsory work, the B minor Sonata).
- (3) A final public test with orchestra (playing the 1st or 2nd Concerto or the Totentanz or the Hungarian Fantasy).

Entrance applications must be sent by 30 April 1986 to:

Segreteria del Concorso Liszt - Premio Zanfi - Conservatorio di Music "A. Boito" - 43100 Parma - Italy.

Further details may be obtained from Mrs. Mistarz, or from the Segreteria del Concorso Liszt at the address given.

SCOTTISH PIANO
COMPETITION.

A triennial Scottish Piano Competition has been launched and will begin in September this year. It is to be named after Frederick Lamond, the

Scottish pianist and pupil of Liszt. He was born at Glasgow in 1868 and died at Stirling in 1948.

The aim is to encourage young Scottish pianists embarking on careers as soloists. Entrants to the Competition must have either Scots parents or grandparents or have trained at the RSAMD. Information may be obtained from: Mrs. E. Jacobs, 25 Newark Drive, Glasgow, G41 4QA. Tel: 041-423 7765.

CONCERT.

In a concert beginning at 7.30 p.m., and held at St Philip's Church, Earl's Court, on 7 June, the Australian pianist Mary Leonard will play Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat major. The Kensington Sinfonia Orchestra will be conducted by Roy Budden. Brahms' Tragic Overture and the Enigma Variations of Elgar will also be performed.

Tickets may be obtained at the door.

LISZT
CELEBRATIONS
IN AMERICA.

Liszt's Centenary is being commemorated at Washington, D. C., in the United States of America this year, with a celebration to be held from 22 to 29 June.

According to the publicity sheet, "the week-long celebration will include a series of master classes, lectures, lecture-recitals, and concerts, presented by internationally acclaimed artists and scholars".

The artists appearing at these celebrations include Jorge Bolet, John Douglas, Victoria Livengood, Douglas Major, Peter Marshall, Christopher O'Riley, William Parker, Aaron Rosand, Jerome Rose, Russell Sherman, and Valerie Tryon; plus the Cathedral Choral Society and the Masterworks Chorus.

The lecturers include Jacques Barzun, Paul Hume, Harold C. Schonberg, Tibor Szasz, and Alan Walker.

A more detailed schedule of events and further information may be obtained from: The Festival Director, c/o Smithsonian Institution, Resident Associate Programme, A & I 1235, Washington, D. C., 20560, United States of America.

AT THE BUDAPEST SPRING FESTIVAL. The Editor writes:

Those who may on some future occasion visit the Budapest Spring Festival, whose high reputation is so well deserved, will find a beautiful and historic city awaiting them, as well as great quality, interest and variety in the musical and other events offered for their enjoyment. This year, as is fitting in his Centenary, the overwhelming genius and universality of Liszt presided over the Festival, held from 14 to 23 March; but his gifted contemporary Ferenc Erkel (the greatest 19th-century Hungarian composer of opera) was not forgotten, nor the splendid talents of Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók.

As a guest of the Spring Festival, I must express warm thanks for the exceptional courtesy and kindness with which I was welcomed to the capital, and for the generous hospitality shown me. From the moment of my arrival I was under the wing of the friendly, chatty and informative Dr. Gyorgia Kalbert*, to whom I am indebted for many pleasant hours of companionship and expert guidance. Nor shall I easily forget the exquisite charm and courtesy of Dr. Júlia Berkes of the Festival's Press Centre. Ultra-comfortable accommodation was provided for me at the Forum, a superb 5-star hotel standing near the Chain Bridge and overlooking the Danube.

The day of my arrival, Thursday, 13 March, was taken up with the flight from London, friendly welcome at Budapest Airport, installation at the Forum, sight-seeing stroll with Gyorgia, and delicious fish supper (to the strains of a gypsy band).

Friday morning was devoted to the National Museum, where I wished to see the famous jewel-incrusted sword of honour presented to Liszt at the Hungarian National Theatre after his concert of 4 January 1840; the Broadwood piano, once the possession of Beethoven, given to Liszt by Baron Spina; and the well-known portrait of Liszt by Miklós Barabás. There was also time for a brief survey of a temporary Liszt exhibition mounted elsewhere in the Museum. A quick visit to the Petőfi Literary Museum was followed by lunch with Júlia Berkes and some of the other guests of the Festival.

The afternoon began with a drive over the river to Buda, where at the Musicological Institute another Liszt exhibition was about to be opened. After one or two short speeches, and a masterly rendering of the 1Xth Hungarian Rhapsody by Jenő Jandó, one of Hungary's leading pianists, the assembled throng were free to inspect the exhibits. It was here that, for the first time during my stay, I had the pleasure of meeting a dear friend: the distinguished musicologist and Liszt scholar Maria Párkai-Eckhardt, who then introduced me to Zsófia Zachár, music editor of The New Hungarian Quarterly.

Later that afternoon the formal opening of the Spring Festival took place, at the National Gallery (likewise in Buda). It was followed by a reception and buffet.

The day was rounded off with a visit to the Zeneakadémia (Music Academy), in whose attractive hall the fine Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra gave a concert under the direction of András Kórodi. Erkel's Festival Overture opened the programme, after which Jenő Jandó was the brilliant soloist in two rarely-performed Liszt transcriptions for piano and orchestra: those of Weber's Polonaise brillante and Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy. After the interval came Kodály's Dances of Galánta, and an enjoyable evening was brought to an end by a stirring account of Les Préludes.

An International Meeting of Liszt Societies was being held at Budapest during these days, and on the Saturday I joined the gathering for an excursion to Raiding, the village, now in Austria's Burgenland, where Liszt was born, and Sopron, the nearby town in which he gave his first public concert at the age of 9 (and visited several times in later years). The journey was long, but it was my great good fortune to have the stimulating and delightful company of Maria Eckhardt, who seems to be acquainted with every Liszt scholar of note on the face of the earth; and the hours passed rapidly enough as she chatted about her own recent research and forthcoming publication, and gave me some fascinating details about the International Liszt Symposium to be held at Budapest in October, the

*To whom I offer apologies if I have spelt her name incorrectly.

specialists invited to participate, and the papers they will be contributing. (In passing, perhaps I may mention that, because of other commitments, I was unable to accept Maria's invitation to represent the United Kingdom. Happily, however, the gap will be more than adequately filled by a colleague on the Liszt Society Council, Dr. Paul Merrick.)

The first event at Sopron was a visit to the town's Liszt Exhibition, which proved of uncommon interest. One of the items on display, described as a szivardoboz (cigar box) and made of silver, bore the inscription in English: "Presented to F. Liszt by his obliged friend M. S. S. 14th May 1841."*

There then followed a jolly lunch with Maria, the gregarious Professor László Schleicher (Vice-President of the Liszt Ferenc Klub in Bratislava) and his companion, and the witty Ria Plum (founder and Geschäftsführerin of the Franz Liszt Gesellschaft at Eschweiler); after which the last-named and I rejoined the cavalcade (a coach and two mini-buses) for the short journey, via the Austro-Hungarian border, to Raiding. It was interesting to see Liszt's birthplace again, but, with several dozen people milling around, I could only congratulate myself on having already visited the house some years ago and been able to view everything undisturbed and at leisure.

Among the Lisztians whom I had the pleasure of meeting during this outing were Christo Lelie and Koos Groen, representatives of the Dutch Liszt Kring; Professor Lemoine and his pretty daughter from the United States of America; and Dr. Ottmar Jantzen from Germany.

After dinner at Sopron came one of the musical highlights of the holiday: the recital given in the packed Evangelical Church by the pianist György Cziffra at the invitation of the Franz Liszt Cultural Centre. Some wonderful playing of Chopin (4 waltzes, the Barcarolle and the B flat minor Sonata) and Liszt (Ricordanza, Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este, the Transcendental Study in F minor, and the Polonaise in E) was rewarded by a tremendous ovation; and the encore was, fittingly enough, one of the Chopin-Liszt Chants polonais. Very late in the night we returned, fairly exhausted, to Budapest.

Eschewing the trip to Szentendre which had been arranged for the Sunday, I spent the morning in a pleasant sight-seeing stroll with Gyorgia Kalbert, who took me to see, among other things, the Inner City Presbytery, where a plaque records its link with Liszt. Here a hovering elderly gentleman was eager to inform us that (1) his grandmother had sung in the church to Liszt's accompaniment on the organ; (2) at Budapest in 1936 he had made the acquaintance of the German Liszt scholar Peter Raabe.

The main event of the afternoon was a wide-ranging and informative lecture given at the Musicological Institute in Buda by Dr. Dezső Legány, Hungary's foremost authority on Liszt. He spoke in English and his theme was the present state of Liszt studies and the contributions thereto made by the world's Liszt societies.

The evening was likewise of exceptional interest, for Ria Plum and I were the dinner guests of Maria Párkai-Eckhardt and her family. Spending several hours in their home, enjoying a delicious meal and listening to their sparkling and erudite conversation, was a great pleasure and privilege for us. (Before leaving London I had tossed into my hand luggage, to while away any tedious moments on the aeroplane, a copy of Daniel Stern's Liszt-inspired Nélida [Brussels, 1846], which I was having to re-read. It was a fortunate inspiration, for the book is apparently not stocked by any of Budapest's libraries, and as a very small return for all her kindnesses I was able to lend it to Maria for photocopying.)

Monday started with a briefing in which speeches were delivered, in French, by various prominent personages, including the Minister of Tourism. The longest was also the profoundest and most eloquent. Then came a visit to an interesting

*The initials, it seems to me, must stand for the singer Mary Steele, at whose London concert of that very date, 14 May, Liszt contributed his services. Readers of the Parry diaries, published in Volumes 6 and 7 of our Journal, will recall that Miss Steele was a colleague of Liszt's during the previous winter's tour of England, Scotland and Ireland.

travel exhibition, with attendant reception and buffet, after which an hour was devoted to a guided tour of the imposing Houses of Parliament, situated on the Pest bank of the Danube. Shortly afterwards I bade farewell to Júlia Berkes and Gyorgia Kalbert, two delightful persons to whom I remain most indebted.

The early evening again brought a great privilege: a tête-à-tête conversation with Dr. Dezső Legány over tea and cakes at the celebrated Café Gerbeaud (dating from 1858) in Vörösmarty tér, followed by a stroll in which Dr. Legány showed me, among other things, the Franciscan Church to which Liszt used to go every morning to pray (the seat regularly used by him now being marked with a tablet), and the site of the old Hal tér (where Liszt lived from the autumn of '73 until the spring of '79) and former Music Academy. Dr. Legány had also most kindly invited Ria Plum, Christo Lelie and me to join him on an outing to Esztergom (Gran) and its great cathedral later in the week. With the utmost reluctance I had to decline, for the hours now remaining to me in Hungary were very few.....

An enjoyable concert at the Vigadó (the beautiful concert hall linking Vörösmarty tér with the embankment), in which the Young Gypsy Orchestra of the Central Youth Ensemble played music by Bihari, Csermák, Hubay, Reményi, Erkel and others, ending with arrangements of two of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, was followed by a reception for Liszt society representatives at the Duna Intercontinental, another superb riverside hotel. Here, however, there was rather a "strange happening", in the words of someone who was present. Were the gifted and engaging Ria Plum (Geschäftsführerin of the Liszt Gesellschaft at Eschweiler) and myself (neither gifted nor engaging, but, even so, sole representative of the United Kingdom and of our own Liszt Society, and possibly the only person in the room to have been awarded the Liszt Medal of the Liszt Ferenc Társaság of Budapest) in error to find it a little surprising - definitely rather odd, in fact - that we should be excluded from a group photograph on the ground that neither of us was actually "a president of a Liszt society"; and that later, and for the same reason, we should be passed over when some "farewell gifts" were being distributed? (The only two persons in the room to be so singled out, even though the majority were no more "presidents" than we were.) No matter: we enjoyed ourselves.

What was of real regret to me was that I could not get to many more of the enterprising and imaginative concerts and events mounted for the Spring Festival than I did. Had time and engagements permitted, I would have chosen to attend: the Vigadó concert in which the North Hungarian Symphony Orchestra (under László Kovács) played Berlioz and Liszt (the Totentanz, with Attila Némethy); a Liszt choral concert at the beautiful Matthias Church; an evening of chamber music by Liszt; a performance, at the Matthias Church, of Liszt's Coronation Mass and Kodály's Te Deum; a Liszt organ recital (the three great works) by Gábor Lehotka; Liszt's Via Crucis and Requiem at the Castle Theatre; Erkel's Bánk bán; and Wagner's Meistersinger. A new ballet, Jesus, Son of Man, to music from Christus, would, I believe, also have proved a memorable experience. Numerous other interesting events - piano and organ recitals, orchestral, chamber and choral concerts, opera, ballet and theatre performances - were due to be held during the remaining days of the Festival.

Although, as always during such a wide-ranging and well-organised series of events, there will have been many people working behind the scenes whom one did not meet, and to whom one cannot therefore offer personal thanks, at least I can here express my gratitude to the following, whom I greet and thank for having in different ways contributed very much to the enjoyment of my brief visit to Hungary:

Júlia Berkes and Gyorgia Kalbert; Maria Párkai-Eckhardt and Dezső Legány; Ria Plum.

With my bottle of Egri Bikavér ("Eger Bull's Blood"), the gift of Júlia Berkes, facsimile edition of the XIth Hungarian Rhapsody, the gift of Maria Eckhardt (whose Commentary adorns the edition, published with the financial support of the Spring Festival), and a host of pleasant memories, I returned to London. Readers should by now have understood that, to the question whether a visit to the Budapest Spring Festival can be recommended, the answer is a resounding yes. As Laurence Sterne might have said, "they order these matters so well in Hungary".