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Concert: Richard Wagner & Franz Liszt: Brother Souls - Alter Egos?

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The Studio of Charis Dimaras

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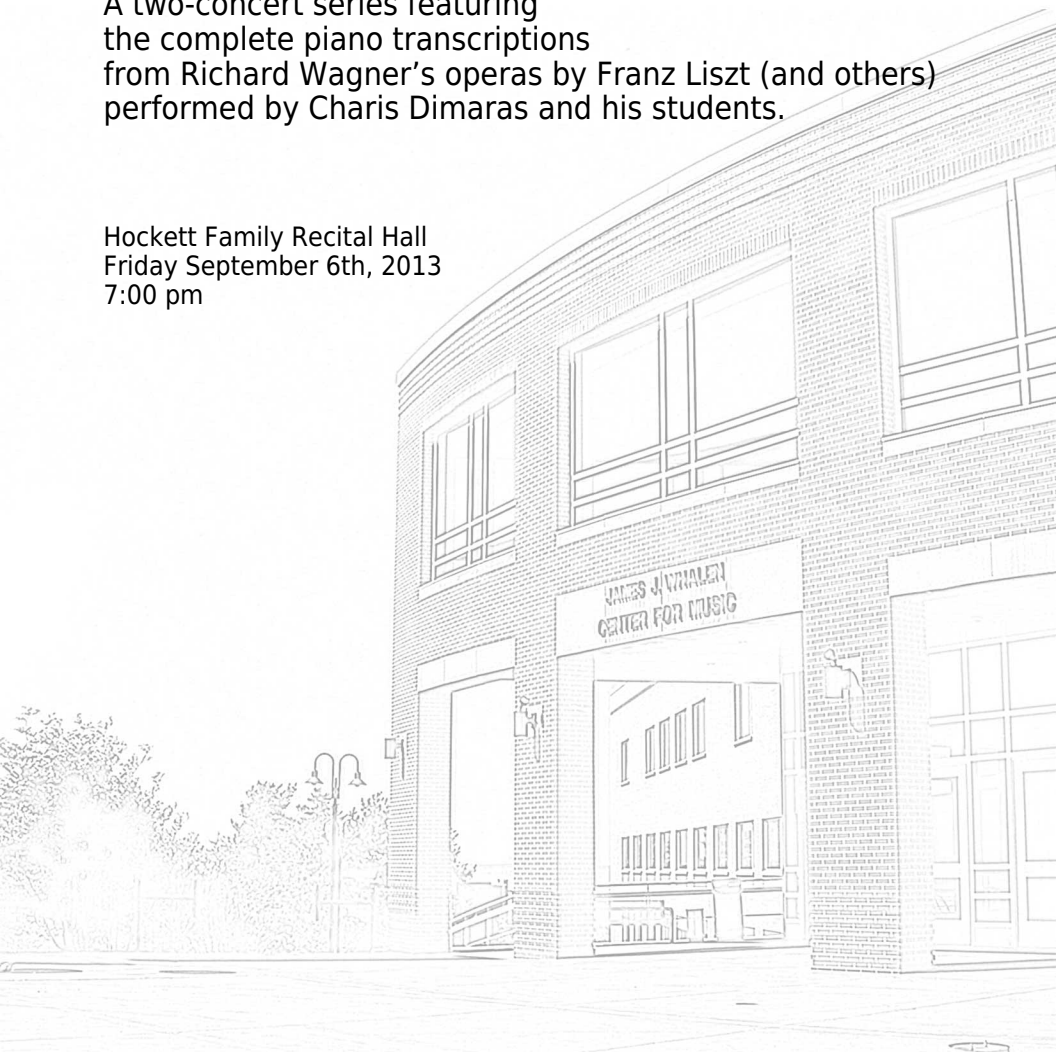
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Richard Wagner & Franz Liszt: Brother Souls – Alter Egos?

Concert I: Gods, Heroes and Mortals

A two-concert series featuring
the complete piano transcriptions
from Richard Wagner's operas by Franz Liszt (and others)
performed by Charis Dimaras and his students.

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Friday September 6th, 2013
7:00 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

<i>Valhalla</i> from Wagner's <i>Das Rheingold</i> , S449 (1876) <i>Junwen Liang, piano</i>	Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
"Am stillen Herd" (Walther von Stolzing's aria) from Wagner's <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> , S448 (1871) <i>Ni Zhang, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
"O du, mein holder Abendstern" (Wolfram's aria) from Wagner's <i>Tannhäuser</i> , S444 (1849) <i>Charis Dimaras, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
Senta's Ballad from Wagner's <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , S441 (1873) <i>Mengfei Xu, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
Intermission	
"Einsam in trüben Tagen" (Elsa's dream) from Wagner's <i>Lohengrin</i> , S446 (1854) <i>Alison Cherrington, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
Entry of the Guests from Wagner's <i>Tannhäuser</i> , S445/1 (1852) <i>Weiyang Li, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
Elsa's Bridal Procession from Wagner's <i>Lohengrin</i> , S445/2 (1852) <i>Alison Cherrington, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
Phantasy piece on motives from Wagner's <i>Rienzi</i> , S439 (1859) <i>Ming Wong, piano</i>	Franz Liszt

The second and concluding concert of this series will be next Friday,
September 13, at 7:00 pm, in Hockett Family Recital Hall.

Program Notes

On September 22nd, 1869, the German composer, Richard Wagner, premiered his opera **Das Rheingold** at the National Theatre in Munich/Germany. This work is the first part of his famous operatic tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The “Valhalla” theme appears both in the opening of Scene 2 and at the end of Scene 4. In 1875, the Hungarian composer, Franz Liszt, created this free paraphrase (which carries the catalogue number S449) based on that same “Valhalla” theme. The piece starts with a great sense of hushed mystery, before progressively picking up momentum towards a powerful conclusion.

“Am stillen Herd” is Walther von Stolzing’s aria from Act I of Wagner’s three-act opera **Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg** (1867). In it, young Walther attempts to present himself as a worthy contestant for the upcoming, annual singing contest of the city, in the hope of being allowed to compete and perhaps win the prize (and with it, the hand of his beloved Eva). The music of this opera which praises love and humanism is mostly of happy mood and uses mainly major and diatonic scales. Franz Liszt published his piano transcription of this selection in 1871 in Berlin.

“O du mein holder Abendstern” (Song to the evening star) is Wolfram’s aria from Act III of Wagner’s **Tannhäuser** (1845). As night descends, the noble minnesinger, Wolfram von Eschenbach, exorcises all evil by singing an ode to the evening star. Liszt’s pianistic transcription of this selection is pretty literal and originates from 1849. 3 years later, he also made a transcription of this excerpt for cello and piano.

Der fliegende Holländer (1842) is a 3-act romantic opera of Wagner based of Heinrich Heine’s work *Aus den Memoiren des Herrn von Schnabelewopski*: The insolent Vanderdecken, the Flying Dutchman, is condemned by the powers of darkness to strive the seas forever, unless he meets a woman willing to die to save him. Senta, the young daughter of Daland, promises to be faithful to him unto death and, upon casting herself into the sea, releases him from his curse. Liszt’s arrangement of Senta’s Ballade from Act II stems from 1872. In it, the original musical material of the Ballade is interwoven with motifs associated with the Dutchman that recur throughout the opera, mainly the minor second “Seufzer” (sigh) motif and the fourth/fifth “curse” motif.

Lohengrin, first performed in 1850 under the direction of Franz Liszt, was inspired by the German medieval epic of Lohengrin and Parsifal. The story, set in 10th century Antwerp, begins with Count Telramund accusing Elsa of Brabant of murdering her brother, the child-Duke Gottfried. When asked to settle the dispute, King Henry calls for an

ordeal by combat. When Elsa is asked to choose a champion to fight for her innocence, she describes a heroic figure that she has only seen in her dreams. This aria, "Einsam in trüben Tagen" provides the material for Liszt's transcription "Elsa's Dream". She transfixedly recalls his pure virtue, shining sword, and gentle words, and soon a mysterious knight appears at the bank of the river, in shining armor and a boat drawn by swans

The material for this transcription also originates from Wagner's opera **Tannhäuser** (1845). The full title of the work is Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg (Tannhäuser and the singing contest in Wartburg). It's an opera in three acts with both music and text by Wagner, based on the two German legends of Thannhouse and the song contest at Wartburg. The Entry of the Guests excerpt which Liszt transcribed is part of the Choir of Act II: Everyone enters the great hall of the Wartburg to watch/take part in the upcoming song contest.

After **Lohengrin** fights and wins the battle against Telramund, he declares Elsa innocent and asks for her hand in marriage. The one condition: she must never ask his name or where he came from. As the ceremony approaches, Telramund and his wife Ortrud plot to sabotage Elsa's promise, and on multiple occasions pressure her to ask her groom of his origins. She refuses and goes through with the wedding. "Elsa's Bridal Procession" is transcribed from the instrumental interlude which accompanies Elsa's long and slow walk down the aisle. In the opera, this interlude ends on a happy note, with an expected cadence immediately after the climax. Liszt's version uses a more prolonged and tragic ending, perhaps to give us a sense of what happens later in the opera: Elsa does eventually ask her groom for his name and, after revealing his identity as Lohengrin, a knight of the Holy Grail, he is forced to return to his homeland, thereby cutting their happy future tragically short.

Rienzi, *the Last of the Tribunes* is an early opera by Richard Wagner, with the libretto written by the composer after Bulwer-Lytton's novel of the same name. It is set in Rome and is based on the heroic life of Cola di Rienzi, a very generous and forgiving late medieval Italian popular leader who, due to the degrading rule of the aristocracy and his brother's death, led a revolt of the people against the aristocracy in the mid-1300s, raised the power of the people and restored the city's former greatness by outwitting and defeating the nobles.

(above Program Notes contributed by tonight's performers)