

SONGS FOR PIANO ALONE
A LOOK AT FRANZ LISZT'S *BUCH DER LIEDER FÜR PIANO ALLEIN*
BOOKS I AND II

BY

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Music circles have often questioned the artistic integrity of piano transcriptions: should they be on the same par as “original works” or are they merely imitations of somebody else’s work? Franz Liszt produced hundreds of piano transcriptions of works by other composers making him one of the leading piano transcriptionists of all time. While transcriptions are the results of rethinking and remolding *pre-existing* materials, how should we view the “transcriptions” of the composer’s own original work? Liszt has certainly taken much of his original non-piano works and transcribed them for solo piano. But would these really be transcriptions, or different versions? This thesis explores the question of how transcriptions of Liszt’s own works should be treated, particularly the solo piano pieces in the two books of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein*. While some pieces are clearly transcriptions of previous art songs, some pieces should really be characterized as independent piano pieces first before art songs.

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CHAPTER 1

PIANO TRANSCRIPTIONS AND THE WORKS OF FRANZ LISZT

Transcriptions and Their Place in Piano Literature

In the massive realm of piano literature, transcriptions and its related forms have frequently been treated differently from “original” works. Music circles have discounted the value of transcriptions for years and regarded the form as something that is inferior to original materials. These circles often question whether or not transcriptions should be considered as creative outputs or merely copies of someone else’s work. But there are also those who have risen to defend the genre. After all, it is a genre that has thrived for centuries. The among the first practice of transcriptions can be traced as far back as the early 14th Century¹ and it especially flourished in the nineteenth century with Franz Liszt as the leading transcriber. The upsurge of the piano as the leading instrument in both homes and concert hall in the nineteenth century gave way to the popularity of transcriptions for several reasons, bearing the following functions of the genre: 1) piano transcriptions are recordings of the time, where bigger works such as operas and symphonies are made available to a larger public through the piano 2) piano transcriptions were composed for pedagogical purposes, where transcriptions helped development of the piano student 3) piano transcriptions serve as a way to design piano technique and design, where the transcriber would find a great challenge in bringing ensemble pieces, especially the bigger works such as operas and symphonies, into the 88

¹ Malcolm Boyd, *Grove Music Online*, “Arrangement,” <http://www.grovemusic.com> (accessed August 8, 2012).

keys of the piano 4) piano transcriptions are extensions of the pianist's repertoire.² For these reasons, especially for the first two reasons, it is easy for critics to view transcriptions as something less than the product of creativity since many of these works were composed for practical purposes.

But advocates of transcriptions have a different take on the genre. Not all transcriptions are created equal, and thus should be examined case by case with a critical eye. Evelyn Howard-Jones, for example, breaks the genre into arrangements and transcriptions. Arrangements are as literal as playing a Bach Violin Sonata on a flute. Transcriptions are much more lavish translations, such as in Liszt's *Tristan Liebestod*.³ Maurice Hinson categorizes the genre into three types: transcriptions, arrangements, and paraphrases. Transcriptions and arrangements, according to Hinson, are almost always used interchangeably, where they tend to refer to the original material more literally. Paraphrases are set apart from the other two, which are much looser transformations of the original material.⁴ Glenn David Colton further divides the genre further into what he calls the "transcriptive spectrum." On one side of the spectrum are partitions, which are as literal as a simple orchestral reduction. On the other side of the spectrum are paraphrases, with pieces such as Godowsky's *Metamorphoses* and Sorabji's *Pastische*. In between the spectrum are different gradations of "literalness" such as the transcriptive works of Bach, Busoni, Glenn Gould, and Liszt.

² Glenn David Colton, "The Art of Piano Transcription as Critical Commentary" (diss., McMaster University, 1992), 11-33, in Open Access Dissertations and Theses. Paper 6483. <http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/opendissertations/6483> (accessed August 8, 2012).

³ Evelyn Howard-Jones, "Arrangements and Transcriptions," *Music and Letters* 16, no. 4 (1935): 305-11.

⁴ Maurice Hinson, *The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements, and Paraphrases* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), ix-xi.

The unifying element in all these forms of transcription is having an original material to transcribe from. The issue of originality is brought up on how similar the transcriptions and original works are. How literal are these transcriptions, and how does the composer use the borrowed material into his or her own work? This brings to mind composers' transcription of their own original materials. For some pieces, it is apparent that composers conceived the piece in one genre, and then transcribed later on for solo piano. But there are some instances where a piano version would be composed first before transcribing it to another genre. This would be true for composers who compose at the piano. An orchestral piece, for example, might be conceived at the piano first, and then re-orchestrated later. And if the same orchestral piece was "transcribed" later, would these really be transcriptions? Or perhaps they are really reductions and not meant to be independent solo piano pieces? The point is that we would have to re-think pieces where a composer would "transcribe" his or her own original work from one genre to the piano.

Franz Liszt, the leading piano transcriber of the nineteenth century, often produced transcriptions of his own works. While some pieces are clearly based on pre-existing works, there are some "transcriptions" that seem to be piano pieces first, and then re-worked into a different genre. This is especially true in some of his art songs where the piano part often outshines the voice, and the vocalist seems to be "incidental." This essay examines the two volumes of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein*, taking into account each of the individual piano pieces, with a brief look at the form, structure, melody, harmony, and how it compares to the text and the corresponding voice-piano versions. In most of these pieces, Liszt employs some of his signature compositional

techniques in piano transcriptions, making it tempting to call these pieces “transcriptions”. But studying the pieces more closely reveals that some of these seem to be piano pieces first and art songs later. Thus, instead of “transcriptions,” these pieces are really different “versions” of the same piece.

Franz Liszt the Transcriber

Franz Liszt is perhaps one of the most prolific transcribers with more than half of his piano output consisting of transcriptions of works other than his own. Leading Liszt scholars such as Alan Walker⁵ and Philip Friedheim⁶ have pointed out the problems of cataloguing these pieces as far as isolating separate pieces. It is also important to point out that this body of work is highly diverse, with pieces ranging from the literal transcriptions such as Weber’s *Oberon* or Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* to highly loose transcriptions of operatic works such as the *Paraphrase de concert sur Rigoletto* or *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. There are also pieces in between where most of the structure and form of the original work is preserved, but the texture is adjusted in order to create a piano piece that can stand alone independently. Often times, these transcriptions elevate the degree of difficulty to show off the pianist’s technical abilities. Take the example in figure 1 from Liszt’s transcription of Schubert’s *Erlkönig*. Liszt could easily set the melody in octaves, but decides to expand the right hand beyond twelfths and thirteenthths. And all of these extremely wide chords all must be played over a frantic left hand accompaniment.

⁵Alan Walker, “Liszt and the Schubert Song Transcriptions,” *The Musical Quarterly* 67:1 (1981): 50-63.

⁶ Philip Friedheim, “The Piano Transcriptions of Franz Liszt,” *Studies in Romanticism* 1, No. 2 (1962): 83-96.

Der Erlkönig
Du lie - - - bes Kind, komm
geh mit mir! gar schö - - ne Spie - - le

pp (una corda)
leggiero

Figure 1 Liszt-Schubert *Erlkönig*, mm. 57-63

Liszt is also keen on thickening the texture and adding cadenza-like figures such as in his transcription of Schubert's *Ave Maria* in figure 2.

dim. e ritenuto *molto*
non troppo presto
p dolce

Figure 2 Liszt-Schubert *Ave Maria*, closing measures

What started out to be a simple evening prayer to the Virgin Mary has now become a dramatic solo piano piece that emulates a huge orchestra.

Then there are pieces that Liszt “transcribed” to solo piano from another genre. Traditionally, the solo piano versions are considered as transcriptions of the “original” works. For example, works such as “Gretchen” from his *Faust Symphony* and the *Mephisto Waltz* are usually regarded as transcriptions of the “original” orchestral versions. Some solo piano versions are clearly transcriptions of an earlier work, where Liszt took a pre-existing original work and transcribed it into a solo piano piece. On the other hand, there are some piano “transcriptions” that seem to work better in their solo piano version rather than the “original” counterpart. Weullner, in his discussion of the third *Liebesträume*, suggests that the solo piano version works much better than its art song counterpart *O lieb*.⁷ And in fact, the piece is almost always performed nowadays in its solo piano version.

There are also cases where some solo piano versions and their “original” versions were composed in close temporal proximity with each other, if not simultaneously. If the versions are in fact composed simultaneously, then it becomes the classic case of “which came first: the chicken or the egg”? This is especially true for his art songs. For example, most scholars agree that the Petrarch Sonnets were conceived around 1838 and 1839 around the time Liszt and Marie d’Agoult were in Italy. The traditional view is that Liszt composed the voice-piano version first, then “quickly” transcribed the voice-piano version into the piano solo versions. Yet, the piano “transcription” was published first in

⁷ Guy Wuellner, “Franz Liszt’s *Liebestraum* No. 3: A Study of *O Lieb* and Its Piano Transcription,” *JALS: The Journal of the American Liszt Society* 24 (1988): 45-73.

1846 followed by the “original” voice piano version in 1847. Thus, this leads us to the two volumes of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein*.

***Buch der Lieder für Piano allein* Books I and II**

Although the two books of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein* were published after their voice-piano counterparts, they were still published shortly after the “original” voice-piano work. There is no doubt that some of these pieces in the collections were originally conceived as voice-piano pieces. But, by looking at the other pieces more closely, it is conceivable that Liszt thought of these as solo piano pieces first, then “transcribed” as art songs.

There are two books of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein* (Book of Songs for Piano alone). The first book was published in Berlin by Schlesinger in 1844. It contains six piano solo pieces based on texts by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), and Marchese Césare Boccella (fl. 1811). The second book was published in 1847 and all the texts are based on works by Victor Hugo (1802-1885). Before the publication of these books, the voice-piano versions have existed and it is easy to assume that Liszt had in fact “transcribed” the voice-piano versions into piano solo versions. After all, these books were published very shortly before their voice-piano counterparts. But it is feasible to conclude that Liszt worked on the solo piano version *and* the voice-piano versions simultaneously since some of the pieces seem to work better as solo piano pieces rather than art songs. This may not be a surprise since Franz Liszt was a piano virtuoso first rather than a singer. But it almost seems like some of these pieces are transcriptions from solo piano pieces to songs for voice-piano. In fact, many

of the later revisions of the songs are focused on highlighting the voice better and making the piano more as a supporting character rather than the main character. One could daresay that these pieces should be considered as transcriptions *for* voice and piano *from* the piano solo versions, but this would be impossible to prove empirically without the approval of Mr. Liszt himself. But one could at least entertain the viewpoint that some of these pieces may in fact be originally solo piano pieces first.

The question of whether or not these are essentially solo piano pieces relies on the compositional technique employed in each of the pieces, often based on the meaning of the text and how Liszt treats the text. Musicologist Baron Michael David summarizes effectively the characteristics of Liszt's text choices and how he treats them musically. In studying the *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein*, we are primarily concerned with Liszt's early songs. Thus, David roughly divides Liszt's early songs into three groups based on the meaning of the poems and to a lesser extent, their forms.⁸

One group, as David states, is in the spirit of the salon song as it was produced in France of the 1830s. These poems in general are simple in structure and form, and in some cases, written by amateur poets as in the case of Marchese Césaire Boccella who wrote *Angiolin dal biondo crin*. Other poems that fit into this category include *Oh! Quand je dors* and *S'il est un charmant gazon* both from the second book. Not surprisingly, Liszt treats these poems musically as salon songs as it was popular in France at the time. Salon songs are primarily rooted to the French *romance* tradition: simpler melodies with non-obtrusive accompaniment. But of course, as a master composer, Liszt takes this genre to a higher artistic level rather than just taking the poems and setting it strictly in the tradition. But it is these pieces that the piano solo versions maybe regarded

⁸ David Michael Baron, "The Songs of Franz Liszt" (diss., Ohio State University, 1993), 104.

more as “transcriptions” of a pre-existing song for voice and piano. The melodies in these pieces have been designed to be sung with a clear distinction between the accompaniment and the melody.

Liszt was also attracted to the ballad length poems, which consist of the second group. These poems are narrative and usually paint an elaborate and active story. Liszt’s musical settings of these poems maintain a close connection to with the *opera scena* usually found in French opera of the time. The *opera scena* also provides inspiration for the piano ballade genre, such as that of Chopin and Liszt. *Die Lorelei*, *Es was ein König*, *Enfant, si j’etais roi*, and *Gastibelza* are among the pieces that belong to this category. These pieces closely follow the meaning of the texts and enhance the interpretation of the poem dramatically through the musical setting. It is in these pieces where it is not always clear if they are written with the singing voice in mind. Although these pieces may be inspired by French opera, many of the French opera scenes are highly orchestral and the singers are almost just incidental in these pieces, especially since there are less *aria*-type numbers and more *recitative* sections. Some of these pieces are closer in form and structure to instrumental genres such as ballades and rhapsodies rather than an art song. Therefore, it is not clear if Liszt really conceived these pieces as art songs first then transcribed as solo piano pieces or if they are composed as piano pieces first then “transcribed” as art songs.

The last group of songs consists of settings that employ motivic development, as propelled by the composers of the previous generation such as Haydn and Beethoven. David mentions that a lot of these poems have a question-answer scheme, which apparently attracted Liszt. These are certainly poems that are well suited to musical

settings that play around with motivic development. The settings of *Comment, disaient-ils?*, *La tombe et la rose*, *Am Rhein, im schönen Strome*, *Kennst du das Land?* and *Der du von dem Himmel bist* are all included in this group. Since these settings are all based on motivic development, it's not clear here whether or not the pieces should be conceived as art songs first or instrumental pieces first. But they certainly have characteristics of instrumental and vocal elements where both parts would be important players in the motivic developments in the piece.

The bottom line is that it is not always clear whether or not we should consider the pieces of the two books of *Buch der Lieder für Piano Allein* as transcriptions of pre-existing original materials. Some pieces are clearly art songs first, then piano pieces. For other pieces, it might be hard to imagine the "transcription" as an art song first. Again, it is really impossible to address this question unless we can ask the composer what he was thinking when he wrote these pieces. Therefore, for the rest of this thesis, I refer to these solo piano pieces as *versions* rather than transcriptions of the "original" art songs as we survey through the basic elements and characteristics of each of these songs.

CHAPTER 2

A SURVEY OF THE INDIVIDUAL PIECES

Die Lorelei

The Loreley

Text: Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

<i>Ich weiß nicht, was soll's bedeuten, Daß ich so traurig bin; Ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten, Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.</i>	I don't know what it signifies, The fact that I am so sad; A legend from ancient times, That seems not out of mind.
<i>Die Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt, Und ruhig fließt der Rhein; Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt Im Abendsonnenschein.</i>	The air is cool and it darkens, And quietly flows through the Rhine; The pinnacle of the mountain hearkens In the evening sunshine.
<i>Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet Dort oben wunderbar, Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.</i>	The fairest maiden sits Above there, wonderfully, Her golden jewels are shining She combs her golden hair.
<i>Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme Und singt ein Lied dabei; Das hat eine wundersame, Gewaltige Melodei.</i>	She combs with a golden comb And sings a song; It has a wondrous Overpowering spell.
<i>Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe ergreift es mit wildem Weh, Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe, Er schaut nur hinauf in die Höh'.</i>	The sailor in the little ship is seized with a savage woe He does not see the rocky shoals, He only looks up to the mountain.
<i>Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn; Und das hat mit ihrem Singen Die Lorelei getan.</i>	I think that the waves will swallow Both the sailor and the boat; She with her singing The Loreley has done. ⁹

Book I of *Buch der Lieder für Piano Allein* opens with one of the most performed songs of Liszt: *Die Lorelei*. The voice-piano version was first composed in 1841 and published on 1843 shortly before Book I of *Buch der Lieder für Piano Allein* was published. There are at least three revisions of this piece between 1854 and 1860, but we

⁹ All poems are translated by the author.

only have the 1856 edition of the voice-piano version in addition to the later voice-orchestra version. Unfortunately, the earliest voice-piano version that corresponds with the piano solo is not available for examination. But the 1856 voice-piano version and the earlier 1843 solo piano version are still similar enough that we can deduce where the musical sections would go with the different stanzas in the poem.

The text is drawn from Heine's collection *Buch der Lieder* under the *Die Heimkehr* section published in 1827. The poem describes a female figure that resembles a Siren, a mythical creature from Greek mythology. The figure is said to sit on the cliff above the Rhine while combing her golden hair. She inadvertently distracts seamen with her beauty and voice, causing them to crash on the rocks. Heine's poem is a good-sized ballad with six stanzas, each with the same verse structure.

With the text being a long six-stanza ballad, it is only natural to take a dramatic interpretation of this poem. Thus Liszt follows the French *scena* tradition to tell text's story through music. Each of the stanzas is distinguished from each other through a different musical section, encompassed in different melodies, musical style, texture, tonality, among others. Yet the whole piece is unified structurally through the use of some kind of a loose ternary form.

In the 1856 revision of the art song, many music commenters point out the uncanny similarities with Wagner's *Tristan* chord, as seen in figure 3.

Non strascinando (*Nicht schleppend*)

mf

parlando
p (gesprochen)

I know not what it be - to - kens That I such sad - ness, such sad - ness
Ich weiss nicht, was soll's be - deu - ten, dass ich so trau - rig, so trau - rig

Figure 3 *Die Lorelei*, 1856 version, mm. 1-12

The early solo piano version, on the other hand, does not have this opening. Instead, it opens in G major with a two-note “sighing” motive that comes back throughout the rest of the piece. The opening in general makes use of the higher range of the piano with rolled and broken chords. In the 1856 version of the art song, the opening text *Ich weiß nicht* is set in a *parlando* or *gesprochen* style. This is also true in the solo piano version where Liszt marking the section with *parlante*. The section then transitions to the next part where the atmosphere is transformed to a “water” scene, changing the time signature to 6/8 and utilizing a rising-falling arpeggio-like figure presumably to depict waves. The transition finally settles to E major, ushering in the second stanza *Die luft ist kühl*. The barcarolle ambiance is now established at this point, where Liszt also adds the marking *im Balladentone*. The section ends with a bravura cadenza in the right hand as it transitions to the next section starting in m. 58 as shown in figure 4.

The image shows a musical score for the piano solo of 'Die Lorelei' by Franz Liszt, measures 57-62. The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It features a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand starts with a melodic line marked 'espr.' and 'smorzando', ending with a 'tenuto' chord. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment marked 'amorosamente' and 'dolcissimo una corda'.

Figure 4 *Die Lorelei* (piano solo), mm. 57-62

Here the piece modulates to B-flat major and the texture becomes progressively thicker. The repeated alternating chords between the left and right hands provide the accompaniment over the melody played in the soprano range of the piano. This continues on to the next section as Liszt moves through D-flat major until the climax of the piece starting at *Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe* when the text describes the boatman crashing the boat into the rocks. This dramatic section is marked *agitato* and utilizes repeated notes accompanying the recurring two-note motif that we have heard in the introduction. The repeated notes move chromatically to express the drama leading to a series of thick arpeggios, tremolos, and a bravura cadenza passage played in both hands. The section ends with a dramatic pause in m. 106 before the opening music comes back. The music returns to G-major, which is carried through to the end of the piece. Thus, the piece ends in an atmosphere similar to the beginning of the piece, presumably to indicate that this is a story told by a narrator.

With the complexity of the text, *Die Lorelei* is certainly one of Liszt's more dramatic settings. It has a clear sense of an effective theatrical arc as the narrator in the text introduces the story and takes the listener through the events. This is certainly a

piece that demands technical agility from the pianist as Liszt takes the listener through different textures and musical styles. Since the earlier version of the art song is unavailable for examination, it is hard to imagine some of the ensemble writing between the voice and piano with all the pianistic sections of the piece leaving no room for the singer to “shine”. Thus, one could easily assume that this piece was conceived originally as a solo piano piece, perhaps a piece comparable to Liszt’s own ballades or even Chopin’s ballades.

Am Rhein, im schönen Strome

In the Rhine, in the beautiful river

Text: Heinrich Heine

<p><i>Im Rhein, im schönen Strome, Da spiegelt sich in den Well'n Mit seinem großen Dome Das große, heil'ge Köln.</i></p>	<p>In the Rhine, in the beautiful river, As it is reflected in the waves With its great cathedral That great, holy (city of) Cologne.</p>
<p><i>Im Dom da steht ein Bildnis, Auf gold'nem Leder gemalt; In meines Lebens Wildnis Hat's freundlich hineingestrahlt.</i></p>	<p>The cathedral stands an image, Painted on all golden leather; In the wilderness of my life Did it cast its friendly rays.</p>
<p><i>Es schweben Blumen und Englein Um unsre liebe Frau; Die Augen, die Lippen, die Wänglein, Die gleichen der Liebsten genau.</i></p>	<p>There flowers and cherubs float Around our beloved Lady; The eyes, the lips, the cheeks, They match my beloved's exactly.</p>

The art song version of *Am Rhein, im schönen Strome* was composed in 1840 and published in 1843 right before the solo piano version was published as the second piece of the *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein*. Like *Die Lorelei*, Liszt also re-worked the voice-piano version in 1855 which was published in 1856. The poem is from Heine’s *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, originally published 1823 and was later included in *Buch der Lieder* published in 1827. This text is among the most popular poems in the German

Romantic circles, as it furnished the text for other art German art song composers such as Robert Schumann and his *Dichterliebe*. The poem paints an archetypical German Romantic scene, with descriptions of nature, wide spaces, wilderness, old buildings, and mythical figures like cherubs.

The poem has regular meter which enables Liszt to set the musical phrases in four-measure groups. The structure of the piece is also loosely based on a strophic form with the stanzas set to the same melody. The melody is supported by a cascading series of sixteenth notes throughout the piece, which undoubtedly represents a picture of flowing water. Liszt accentuates the melody in octaves around the sixteenth note accompanying figure, almost in a Schumannesque way. This texture is for the most part consistent throughout the piece, with minor differences like when the melody is embellished with broken chords around mm. 55-69 (figure 5) and also a slight change of texture in mm. 69-71 (figure 6) with the triplet figures before the fermata leading up to the postlude.



Figure 5 *Am Rhein, im schönen Strome* (piano solo), mm. 55-57

Figure 6 *Am Rhein, im schönen Strome* (piano solo), mm. 68-75

Harmonically, Liszt does not necessarily depart too much from tradition, but he plays with the harmonic progressions in an engaging manner making use of enharmonic modulations commonly found in many of his other pieces. The piece starts in E major, moving up by thirds, to a C seventh resolving to an F major. Then the F is kept to enharmonically become the third of C-sharp major, to an f-sharp minor, to the dominant of E major, leading back to the home key closing the first stanza. The second stanza is ushered in right away and roughly set to the same music except that it stays in B major not returning to E major at the end of the section. The last section receives a new melodic line to highlight the ironic twist of the text where the poet relates his beloved to features of the Virgin Mary. This is heightened with harmonic tension until the music resolves back to E major where the postlude starts.

Comparing the matching art song version of this piece, one could consider the piano solo version as a straight transcription of the voice-piano version. Throughout the piece, there is a clear boundary between a singing melody and accompaniment. The melody in the solo piano version is reinforced with octaves, and the accompaniment stays very identical to the *ossia* version of the piano part in the art song version as seen in

figure 7. Also, the rough strophic form of the piece conforms more to a song rather than a strict piano solo piece. The piano piece does not offer many chances to show off bravura playing for the pianist, unlike in more elaborate transcriptions and paraphrases where interludes between sections are decorated with cadenza passages. Therefore, the solo piano version of this piece could be considered more so as a straightforward transcription of a pre-existing art song.

(Erste Fassung, veröffentlicht 1843.)

Singstimme.
Mezzo-Sopran oder
Tenor-Bariton.

Bewegt.

Im

Klavier.

p dolce

**Ossia
più difficile.**

dolce legato, lispelnd

Rhein, im schö - - - nen Stro - - - me, da

sempre dolce e legato

Figure 7 *Im Rhein, im schönen Strome*, 1843 version, opening measures

Mignon's Lied (Kennst du das Land)

Mignon's Song (Do you know the land)

Text: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

*Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen,
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühen,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht?
Kennst du es wohl?*

Dahin! dahin

Möcht ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn!

*Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein
Dach.
Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach,
Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich an:
Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan?
Kennst du es wohl?*

Dahin! dahin

Möcht ich mit dir, o mein Beschützer, ziehn.

*Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wolkensteg?
Das Maultier sucht im Nebel seinen Weg;
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte Brut;
Es stürzt der Fels und über ihn die Flut!
Kennst du ihn wohl?*

Dahin! dahin

Geht unser Weg! O Vater, laß uns ziehn!

Do you know the land where the lemon trees blossom,
And the golden oranges glow from the dark foliage,
A gentle breeze blows from the blue sky,
And the myrtles stand silent and the laurels high?
Do you know it well?

Tis' there, there!

I long to go with you, O my beloved!

Do you know the house? Its roof held by columns.
The hall gleams, it shimmers,
And marble statues stand and gaze at me:
What have they done to you, poor child?
Do you know it well?

Tis' there, there!

I long to go with you, O my beloved!

Do you know the mountain and its misty path?
The mule seeks its way in the fog;
In caves live ancient families of dragons;
There crashes on the rocks and rushing flood!
Do you know it?

Tis' there, there!

Our path takes us there! O Father, let us go!

Kennst du das Land is the first of three songs that are set to the words of Goethe, another quintessential German Romantic poet. This poem, which is supposed to have been sung by Mignon from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, has been set to music by several other composers including Schubert, Schumann, and Beethoven. There are four editions of the art song version, originally composed in 1842, but only the 1856 and 1860 versions are available for examination. But there are still recognizable similarities between the 1856 version and the solo piano version. But the similarities between the 1856 voice-piano version and the 1843 solo piano version are still recognizable enough to determine what sections correspond with stanzas.

The poem employs a question-answer structure, a poetic device that Liszt seems to be attracted to considering the fact that this is used in several of the texts that he chose to set to music. The text is strophic, but Liszt uses motivic development in setting the text to music. For example, he uses the same falling tritone motif to usher in *kennst du* for every section. The word *dahin* also gets a rising motivic theme to contrast the falling motif for *kennst du*.

It should be noted at this point that Liszt's prosodic setting of the opening question offended many critics of his time by putting too much emphasis on an unstressed word.¹⁰ This can still be seen in the 1856 version of the art song as shown in figure 8, where *du* lands on the first beat of the measure giving the emphasis on the word, rather than *kennst* which should be the stressed word as German speakers would naturally accentuate in speech. This may be the result of thinking of the piece motivically rather than in terms of singability.

The image shows a musical score for the opening measures of the art song 'Kennst du das Land'. It consists of two staves: the top staff is for the voice (Mezzosoprano) and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are 'Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen, im'. The piano part starts with a piano (pp) dynamic and includes the instruction 'una corda' with a circled 'u' symbol. The music shows a falling tritone motif in the voice line on the word 'du'.

Figure 8 *Kennst du das Land*, 1856 version, opening measures

¹⁰ Peter Raabe, *Franz Liszt* (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1968), 114.

In the 1860 revision of the piece shown in figure 9, Liszt clearly took this issue to heart and changed the setting of the text. We can now see that *kennst* is emphasized rather than *du*.

Figure 9 *Kennst du das Land*, 1860 version, opening measures

This is a problem for the voice-piano setting given that language is inseparable in singing. But the problem does disappear in a solo-piano version given the fact that the instrument is not tied to the structure of words and its phonetics. This way, the beauty of the melody is highlighted without having to worry about the correct prosodic setting of the text.

As mentioned above, the opening motif comes back in every verse, but Liszt varies this repetition by playing around with the texture. The initial statement of the melody (*kennst du das Land*) is accompanied by a harp-like figure with arpeggiated chords leading up to the melodic notes. In the second stanza (*Kennst du das Haus*), the texture is altered to a tremolo figure filling up the middle in between the melody and the bass, similar to the texture we find in *Chasse Neige*, the last of the Transcendental Etudes. In the last stanza (*Kennst du den Berg*), the texture is more *grandioso* where the melody is played in octaves accompanied by repeated chords in the left hand, perhaps to depict the grandness of the mountains.

In presenting the answer to the question *kennst du...*, the word *dahin!* repeats a few times for emphasis. In the first two stanzas, the music is identical with the rising two-note figures accompanied by a Bellini-like chordal accompaniment in the alto, arpeggiated bass chords, and chords that echo the melody in the soprano range of the piano. This repetition of the whole section highlights the text even further, following Goethe's word-for-word repetition of the last line. The last statement of *Dahin!* changes to a texture where the melody is interweaved around the arpeggiated triplet chords

Whether it was Liszt's intension or not, the solo piano version of *Kennst du das Land* seems to work better than the art song version. The piece has hallmarks of the instrumental technique from working with motivic development to playing with different textures. The earlier art song version, as some critics have pointed out, has some prosodic flaws in setting the text, which can be distracting to the native German speaker. Yet, these problems disappear in an instrumental especially if we are to consider these pieces as independent solo piano pieces or version rather than transcription of the "original" art song version.

Der König von Thule

The King from Thule

Text: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

<i>Es war ein König in Thule, Gar treu bis an sein Grab, Dem sterbend seine Buhle Einen goldnen Becher gab.</i>	There was a King in Thule, Even faithful to his grave, To his dying mistress Gave a golden goblet.
<i>Es ging ihm nichts darüber, Er leert' ihn jeden Schmaus; Die Augen gingen ihm über, So oft er trank daraus.</i>	Nothing was more valuable to him: He empties it in every feast; And his eyes would overflow Whenever he drank from it.
<i>Und als er kam zu sterben, Zählt' er seine Städt' im Reich,</i>	And when he was about to die, He counted the cities in his kingdom,

<i>Gönnt' alles seinem Erben, Den Becher nicht zugleich.</i>	And gladly left everything to his heir, Except for the goblet.
<i>Er saß beim Königsmahle, Die Ritter um ihn her, Auf hohem Rittersaale, Dort auf dem Schloß am Meer.</i>	He sat at his royal feast, His knights around him, In the lofty hall of knights, There on the castle by the sea.
<i>Dort stand der alte Zecher, Trank letzte Lebensglut, Und warf den heil'gen Becher Hinunter in die Flut.</i>	There stood the old boozer, Drank his last life, And threw the holy goblet Down into the waters.
<i>Er sah ihn stürzen, trinken Und sinken tief ins Meer. Die Augen täten ihm sinken Trank nie einen Tropfen mehr.</i>	He watched it plunge, fill up, And sinking deep into the sea. His eyes then sank closed And he never drank one drop more.

Der König von Thule is the fourth piece in this volume and the second piece based on a Goethe text. The first voice-piano version was composed in 1842 and published in 1843, which is also unavailable for examination. Only the 1856 voice-piano version is known to exist today. Like the rest of the pieces in *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein*, we can only assume that the solo piano version is close to the first voice-piano version of this piece. But the 1856 version also bears enough similarities to deduce which sections in the solo piano version correspond with which stanzas.

Goethe's poem is a literary ballad written in the style of an ancient poetic language which gives the effect of making it into something that sounds like a traditional folk song. Goethe uses this poem in *Faust* as Gretchen (Margaret)'s introduction, which foreshadows Gretchen's relationship with Faust: the only love that she knows is love that is faithful but Faust's will not as it turns out later in the story. The poem tells a story about a king and his undying love for his beloved as embodied in a golden goblet presented to him. It is written in the style of an ancient folk-song, which appropriately matches a girl of her degree and education.

With the text being a ballad, Liszt again employs a musical structure similar to his piano ballades or a French opera *scena* as previously discussed in *Die Lorelei*. He also develops the piece motivically where a falling minor third motif frequently comes back in several places throughout the piece, whether it is in the melody or the accompaniment. The piece also opens with repeated notes that serve as the background, setting the dramatic and tense atmosphere necessary to tell the story. As the piece progresses, the texture of the piece becomes more and more orchestral adding more instrumental figures throughout, such as a flute-like figure that echoes the melody in mm. 36-41, a figure that could easily be compared to the beginning of Chopin's Third Ballade and a brass-like figure from mm. 46-55 before the orchestral *tutti* in m. 67 (see figure 10).

44 *poco ritard.* - *vibrato*
rinforzando assai *ff energico*

47 *quasi tromba*

50

54 *Molto animato*
ff con agitazione

Figure 10 *Der König von Thule* (piano solo), mm. 44-57

At this point, the repeated notes become repeated chords played in both hands with *fortissimo* and *appassionato* markings. The section leads to a chromatic scale going down and up in the lower register of the piano and ends up in a chorale-like texture. The chromatic scale leading to a chorale sequence repeats before closing the piece with repeated chords. All comes together with a VI₇-I chord progression to close the piece, successfully depicting the drama of Goethe's original text.

As in *Die Lorelei*, this piece again works effectively as an independent piano piece with some of the power and drama put into this piece. Although the piece starts *piano* and *dolce*, the piece builds dramatically and the writing is closer to an orchestra rather than a song for piano and voice. With the significance of instrumental writing throughout the piece, it is hard to imagine that this started out as a song for voice and piano and transcribed as a piano solo.

Der du von dem Himmel bist

You who are from heaven

Text: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

<i>Der du von dem Himmel bist,</i>	You who are from heaven,
<i>Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest,</i>	You quiet all sorrow and pain;
<i>Den, der doppelt elend ist,</i>	And the one who is doubly wretched
<i>Doppelt mit Erquickung füllest,</i>	You fill twice with refreshment.
<i>Ach! ich bin des Treibens müde!</i>	Ah! I am tired of being driven!
<i>Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?</i>	What is all this pain and joy?
<i>Süßer Friede,</i>	Sweet peace,
<i>Komm, ach komm in meine Brust!</i>	Come, oh, come into my heart!

Der du von dem Himmel bist is the last out of the three pieces in this book based on a Goethe poem. The first version for voice-piano was composed in 1842 and has gone through at least 3 other revisions of this version: 1849, 1860, and 1870. The poem, also entitled *Wanderers Nachtlied*, is one of the most influential and popular poems of the time set by numerous composers. Along with the rest of the poems discussed earlier,

this also embodies the current thinking in German Romanticism of the time. It evokes images of heaven, suffering, joy, and finally rest and peace. Other composers usually take this poem and interpret it as a simple evening prayer. Schubert's setting, for example, is only 12 measures long with an accessible stepwise melody and relatively simple accompaniment. Liszt, on the other hand, goes beyond the simple evening prayer to a more dramatic and orchestral setting.

The first voice-piano version and the piano solo version are very similar in texture. The introduction brings in a stepwise two-note motivic figure in both the left and right hand, which surfaces throughout different sections of the piece. In fact, this figure continues through the introduction in the dominant of E-major until the main melody enters. The right hand ushers in the main melody with a descending figure using the two-note motif that was introduced in the opening. When we arrive at the main melody, we hear it played in octaves in the right hand while left hand octaves and tenths provide the bass foundation. This texture continues until the pace starts to pick up when Liszt marks *un poco meno lento* in m. 21 as the texture thickens gradually. Liszt marks m. 33 with an *accelerando molto* signaling a cadenza figure in fourths and sixths that is played until m. 36 (see figure 11).

21 *Un poco meno lento*
accentuato assai
agitato

25
cresc. e più agitato *molto cresc.* *rinforz. espressivo assai*
pesante

29 *rall. a piacere*
rinforz.

33 *accel. molto* *riten.* *a tempo*
pp dolciss.

Figure 11 *Der du von dem Himmel bist* (piano solo), mm 21-37

This leads to a pause in the music with a restatement of the opening motif and a transition to the dominant of E-major. As the E-major tonality is re-established, the music once again builds texture and the opening motif keeps resurfacing. The motif finally persists in a cascading motion on the left hand under a big chorale melody in the right hand similar to what Liszt did in the transcription of the Wagner's *Pilgrim's Chorus* as shown in figure 12. This provides a dramatic climax of the piece before resolving to a peaceful E-major chord.

Figure 12 Liszt-Wagner *Pilgerchor aus Tannhäuser*, S.443, mm. 38-41

The piece starts with music that is relatively simple, but it builds to something that is grand and orchestral with a big chorus. The result is an over-dramatic interpretation of what is usually a simple prayer in both the piano version and the art song version. This may work very well as an independent piano piece, but it turns out that as a voice-piano version, it is over the top especially with the balance problems between the voice and the thick chords of the piano. It seems that Liszt was conscious of the over-dramatization of the text in this piece. In the later version of the art song version, we can clearly see the changes that he made, particularly in the simplification of the texture and also the melodic contour as shown in figure 13. It is also much more compact cutting off the long introduction before the main melody comes in. This way, this later setting is much more simple and prayer-like conforming to the settings of other composers. It is in this piece that we certainly should look at the earlier version as an independent piano

piece whereas the later art song version captures the intimacy and peacefulness depicted in the poem.

Figure 13 *Der du von dem Himmel bist*, 1860 version, opening measures

Angiolin dal biondo crin

Fair angel with golden hair

Text: Marchese Césare Boccella (fl. 1811)

*Angiolin dal biondo crin,
Che due verni ai visti appena,
Sia tua vita ognor seren,
Angiolin dal biondo crin,
Bella imagine d'un fior.*

Fair angel with golden hair,
Just two springs have smiled upon you,
May your life's way be serene,
Fair angel with golden hair,
Beautiful image of a flower.

*Che del sol t'indori un raggio,
Che benign'aura del Cielo
Ti carrezzi in sullo stel,
Angiolin dal biondo crin,
Bella imagine d'un fior.*

May soft breezes gently fan you,
While the sun's bright rays caress you;
May the stars shed rare radiance,
Fair angel with golden hair,
Beautiful image of a flower.

*Quando dormi il tuo respiro
È qual soffio dell'amor
Che ignorar poss'il dolore,
Angiolin dal biondo crin,
Bella imagine d'un fior.*

When you sleep your peaceful breathing
With sweetness scents the air;
May you never suffer from love's despair!
Fair angel with golden hair,
You are beautiful as a flower.

<p><i>Che felice ognor ti bei Di tua madre al dolce riso, Tu l'annunzi il paradiso, Angiolin dal biondo crin, Bella imagine d'un fior.</i></p>	<p>Happy dreams to you be given, From your mother's smiles of love In your eyes she finds her heaven. Fair angel with golden hair, Beautiful image of a flower.</p>
--	---

<p><i>Tu da lei crescendo impara Quant'han bell'arte e natura, Non impara la sventura, Angiolin dal biondo crin, Bella imagine d'un fior.</i></p>	<p>Learn from her the magic power All art and nature indwelling; Never a thought of sadness telling. Fair angel with golden hair, Beautiful image of a flower.</p>
---	--

<p><i>E s'avvien che il nome mio Nell'udir ti rest'in mente Deh! il ridici a lei sovente. Angiolin dal biondo crin, Bella imagine d'un fior.</i></p>	<p>Should my name ever meet your ear, Sweetly lisp it to your mother, That her heart may hold it dear. Angel fair with golden hair, You are beautiful as a flower.</p>
--	--

Angiolin dal biondo crin, was composed in 1839, which Liszt reported to be his one of his very first songs.¹¹ Marchese Césare Boccella, a friend of Liszt from Lucca, Tuscany wrote the poem in honor of his wife. This beautiful song is said to have been originally composed for Liszt's and Marie d'Agoult's three-year-old daughter Blandine-Rachel. The first voice-piano version was published in 1843, but only third version, published in 1860, is available today.

The poem is a lovely lullaby using florid language addressing a child. Liszt's setting of the poem matches the general atmosphere of the text, composing the music in the general style of the salon song. The melody is mostly in stepwise motion, making it simple, accessible, and graceful without being dull and uninteresting. This lovely melody is supported by a lilting accompaniment figure in 12/8 meter. The harmonic structure is also within the frame of tradition, which occasionally goes to something unexpected such as the motion to C-sharp major from A major in m. 10 shown in figure 14. But the rest of the section still leads to the tonic as it transitions to the next stanza.

¹¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 502.

8 poco riten. [- -]

II poco riten. [- - - -]

smorz.

la melodia egualmente ben marcato

l'accompagnamento sempre dolce con grazia una corda

Figure 14 *Angiolin dal biondo crin* (piano solo), mm. 8-13

As the song goes through each stanza, Liszt keeps the melodic structure and for the most part the range of the melody, but alters the accompaniment by adding something different to the texture. From m. 22 (figure 15), the melody is still in the alto range embedded within broken chords in the left and the right hand, in the spirit of what some call the Thalbergian “three-hand” effect.

(22) un poco agitato

sempre legato

tre corde

Figure 15 *Angiolin dal biondo crin* (piano solo), mm. 22-23

In m. 31 as shown in figure 16, the texture changes again to the melody being played in octaves, with arpeggios in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

Figure 16 *Angiolin dal biondo crin* (piano solo), mm. 30-33

This leads to a steady crescendo to the climax in m. 44, shown in figure 17, where the melody reaches for the octave F-sharp and resolves to a descending figure in octaves.

Figure 17 *Angiolin dal biondo crin* (piano solo), mm. 43-45

The rest of the piece leads back to the texture and atmosphere similar to what we heard at the beginning. The piece ends with a *dolce armonioso* section until the long arpeggiated A-major chord to signal the angelic atmosphere of the piece.

With the accessibility and simplicity of the song, one could definitely consider this piece as an art song first transcribed into a piano piece. It has the hallmarks of a salon song with its grace and intimacy appropriate for the smaller audience. With that said, this is a piece that can still stand independently as a solo piano piece. It is a charming little vignette piece with the variety in textures with a nice dramatic arc that includes a well-paced climax and a resolution.

Oh! Quand je dors

Oh! When I sleep

Text: Victor Hugo

*Oh! quand je dors, viens auprès de ma couche,
Comme à Pétrarque apparaissait Laura,
Et qu'en passant ton haleine me touche...
Soudain ma bouche s'entr'ouvrira!*

Oh! When I sleep, come to my bed,
As Laura appeared to Petrarch,
And in passing, your breath touches me...
Suddenly my mouth will open up!

*Sur mon front morne où peut-être s'achève
Un songe noir qui trop longtemps dura,
Que ton regard comme un astre se lève...
Soudain mon rêve rayonnera!*

On my sorrowful brow, where perhaps ends
A dark dream that lasted too long,
Let your gaze like a star be lifted...
Suddenly my dream shines!

*Puis sur ma lèvre où voltige une flamme,
Éclair d'amour que Dieu même épura,
Pose un baiser, et d'ange deviens femme...
Soudain mon âme s'éveillera!*

Then on my lips where a flame flutters,
Flash of love that God himself purified,
Place your kiss, and angel becomes a woman...
Suddenly my soul will awaken!

Oh viens! Comme à Pétrarque apparaissait Laura! Oh come on! As Laura appeared to Petrarch!

Opening the second book of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein* is *Oh! Quand je dors* based on the poetry of Victor Hugo. The voice-piano version was first composed in 1842 and published in Berlin two years later. Liszt re-worked this version years later and it became part of his song collection that he published in 1859. This re-worked version is now his best known French song, which is more often performed than the 1842 version.

The poem is drawn from Victor Hugo's extremely personal collection of lyric verses *Les rayons et les ombres* published in 1840. It is number 27 in the collection and the text is written from the point of view of the poet where he invites his lover to bed, referencing to the fourteenth century Italian poet Petrarch and his lover Laura. Mentioning Petrarch and Laura is most likely a reference to Hugo's relationship with his lover Juliette Drouet, and Liszt adapted this text to reflect his own relationship with

Marie d'Agoult.¹² In this poem, Hugo shows his skill in handling the language with originality and metrical freedom without having to startle his audience.¹³

There is no doubt that Hugo is a revolutionary figure in French literature where he addressed political, social, and religious issues.¹⁴ However, it is not evident in this poem, where it is more suited in a more informal and intimate setting such as in a salon. And it is in this context where Liszt followed the tradition of the French salon song in setting this poem to music. The voice-piano version is in the general salon song style, closer to the traditions of the new French *melodie* that grew out of the traditional old *romance*: simple lyrical pieces.¹⁵ Liszt definitely highlights the voice more in this version with one of his most beautiful melodies while the piano part for the most part provides exquisite supporting harmonies.

The piano solo version is closely related to the voice-piano version. The opening of both versions is identical, introducing the main melody that dominates the piece. When the melody starts, Liszt again employs the Thalbergian “three-hand” effect where the melody is embedded in the middle range of the piano, except for a few places where the melody migrates to the soprano range. The accompaniment figures are also very close to the voice-piano version with a few minor rhythmic and textural differences. The most noticeable difference between the two versions is the interlude before the second and last verses of the poems. In the voice-piano version, the piano is much less virtuosic with a simpler ascending eighth note figure before moving on to the last verse. The piano

¹² Graham Johnson and Richard Stokes, *A French Song Companion* (New York: Oxford Press, 2000), 289.

¹³ Geoffrey Brereton, *An Introduction to the French Poets: Villon to the Present Day* (London: Methuen, 1973).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ David Michael Baron, *The Songs of Franz Liszt*, 104

solo version, on the other hand, employs a flashy *cadenza* with a cascading five-note pattern that comes out of a trill in the right hand, obviously to highlight the pianist's technique.

As in his most revisions of his songs, the second version of *Oh! Quand je dors* is a shorter and more simplified version of the first. Liszt particularly worked to thin out the texture of the piano accompaniment especially in the last stanza. This way, the beauty of the voice and its melody is featured much more effectively. It is no doubt that this later version works better as a voice-piano version, whereas the first version works better as a piano solo.

Comment, disaient-ils

How, the men said

Text: Victor Hugo

<i>Comment, disaient-ils,</i>	How, the men said,
<i>Avec nos nacelles,</i>	With our boats,
<i>Fuir les alguazils?</i>	To flee from the police?
<i>Ramez! Ramez! disaient-elles.</i>	Row! Row! the women said.
<i>Comment, disaient-ils,</i>	How, the men said,
<i>Oublier querelles,</i>	To forget quarrels,
<i>Misère et périls?</i>	Misery, and peril?
<i>Dormez! Dormez! disaient-elles.</i>	Sleep! Sleep! the women said.
<i>Comment, disaient-ils,</i>	How, the men said,
<i>Enchanter les belles</i>	To enchant the beautiful women
<i>Sans philtres subtils?</i>	Without subtle potions?
<i>Aimez! Aimez! disaient-elles.</i>	Love! Love! the women said.
<i>Ramez! Dormez! Aimez! disaient-elles.</i>	Row! Sleep! Love! the women said.

The voice-piano version of *Comment, disaient-ils* was also first composed on 1842, published in Berlin within two years, and later re-worked for his 1859 song collection. The poem is also drawn from *Les rayons et les ombres*, number 23 in the collection originally titled *Autre guitar*. Here, we see more of the political and social

subjects, which is more typical in Hugo's work. It refers to a Spanish subject with a question-answer interaction between men and women about the police, misery, danger, and love.

The structure and the subject of the poem yield itself naturally to music. With the reference to Spain and guitar, Liszt instinctively resorted to a guitar-like texture in the accompaniment. Each of the 3 stanzas open with young men asking a question and Liszt assigns these questions with a broken, declamatory, and almost angular melody in the tonic key in order to depict a more "masculine" voice. The women's answers *ramez* (row), *dormez* (sleep), *aimez* (love) are slower, more lyrical and graceful melodies to depict a more "feminine" voice. But each statement is presented in a different key: B major, F major and A-flat major consecutively. The result is a miniature rondo form where the men's question establish the tonic key as the women's answers are departures from the A sections.

The voice-piano version and the piano solo version are also very similar as in *Oh! Quand je dors*. Most of the accompaniment and melodies are almost identical between versions with minor differences. Since the voice-piano version is intended to be sung by a single singer, the difference between the men and women's voice has to be depicted through the melodic styles rather than range. The solo pianist, however, can easily play around with range on the keyboard. Liszt does exactly that, where the men's questions are played in the lower range of the piano and the melody transfers over to the soprano range when the women give their answers. Additionally, Liszt tinkers with texture in the piano solo version such as adding hands crossing in the women's answers section. To make it clear that the solo piano version is not a literal transcription of the voice-piano

version, Liszt again uses pianistic cadenzas and interludes that are not written in the piano accompaniment of the art song version. For example, the singer holds a high A-flat while the pianist crescendos through a dominant seventh chord as seen in figure 18.

Figure 18 *Comment disaient-ils*, mm. 61-71

The piano solo version goes into chromatic parallel thirds before going into the last section. The voice cadenza at the end of the voice-piano version is also replaced by a pianistic cadenza with cascading chords to A-flat major.

As mentioned earlier, Liszt also re-worked this piece for his 1859 song collection. This version is again the more popular version out of the two voice-piano versions. Although the guitar texture is preserved, the accompaniment is less dense than the first version. The difference between the men and women's sections are also defined more

clearly where a fermata separates the two sections. The women's melodies are also significantly different, replacing the graceful melodies with long held out notes hovering over the accompaniment showcasing the beauty of the "floating" voice. This second voice-piano version again works better as a French *melodie*, justifying the fact that it is more popular than the first version.

Enfant, si j'étais rois

Child, if I were king

Text: Victor Hugo

*Enfant, si j'étais roi, je donnerais l'empire,
Et mon char, et mon sceptre, et mon peuple à
genoux,
Et ma couronne d'or, et mes bains de
porphyre,
Et mes flottes à qui la mer ne peut suffire,
Pour un regard de vous!*

Child, if I were king, I would give the empire,
And my chariot and my scepter and my people
kneeling,
And my golden crown, and my bath of
porphyry,
And my fleets that the sea cannot contain,
For one look of you!

*Si j'étais Dieu, la terre et l'air avec les ondes,
Les anges, les démons courbés devant ma loi,
Et le profond chaos aux entrailles fécondes,
L'éternité, l'espace et les cieus et les mondes
Pour un baiser de toi!*

If I were God, the earth and the air with waves,
Angels, demons bowed to my law,
And the chaos of the fruitful deep,
Eternity, space, and the heavens and the worlds
For one kiss of you!

The voice-piano version of *Enfant, si j'étais rois* (Child, if I were king) was composed in 1844, a little later than the first two in the set, and published the same year. It was also later re-worked to be included in Liszt's 1859 song collection.

The poem is drawn from the 22nd poem of Hugo's *Les feuilles d'automne*. Originally entitled *À une femme*, it is a poem in the style of a ballad directed to the poet's love interest. It exemplifies the Romantic thought of the era with references to wide spaces such as empire, seas, eternity, the skies, and the universe, very similar to what we have seen in *Am Rhein, im schönen Strome*. And Liszt have definitely taken

these themes and musically portrayed them effectively with compositional devices such as texture, motivic development, and harmony, among others.

In both voice-piano and piano solo versions, Liszt opens the piece with a triplet figure. This figure foreshadows what comes later when the vocalist sings the words *pour un regard* and *pour un baiser* at the end of each stanzas. To depict the royalty theme, Liszt assigns the accompaniment with repeated eighth notes and dotted sixteenth/eighth note figures in the bass. The melody follows a rising motif to a long note that soars over the accompaniment figures, perhaps to represent the king figure looking over his kingdom. As the song progresses, the texture in the accompaniment becomes increasingly thicker utilizing tremolos and octaves, fully using the full range of the keyboard. This is easily a very problematic section for the performers with the thick textures of the piano overpowering the singer. In a solo piano version, this problem would simply disappear. This is illustrated in figure 19.

mo - - - - - nen, in Staub, in Staub gebeugt vor
MONS - - - - - cour - - - - - bés, cour - - - - - bés devant ma

mir,
loi,

näch - - ti - gen
et le pro.

f marcato assai

arpeggiando

ff tumultuoso

Figure 19 *Enfant, si j'étais roi*, 1844 version, mm. 46-51

The voice stays around the middle C range while the piano part has octaves in the left hand and thick chords in the right hand. This obviously works better as a piano solo given that balance everything within one instrument is much easier than balancing between the voice and piano.

Not surprisingly, Liszt's re-working of the art song version solves this problem in the second revision of the voice-piano version. He also made several other editorial changes in order to make the piece a bit more "singer-friendly." The newer version has a much shorter introduction, leaving only 2 measures of piano before the voice comes in. The meter has also been changed from 3/4 to 4/4, perhaps to highlight the march-like character of the piece. The texture is considerably thinner eliminating some of the octave figures in the left hand of the piano and thinning out the repeated notes in the

accompaniment. Even the range where the voice resides is altered so that it has a chance in being highlighted above the piano part.

While the more recent version works much better as an art song, the original piano solo version again works much better as an independent piano piece keeping all the original interpretation Liszt had on the Hugo text. The solo piano version preserves all his initial instincts about the Hugo text without having to worry about ensemble writing between two musicians. The solo piano version is therefore an independent piece that stands strongly by itself. The first art song version, on the other hand, seems to have been conceived as an instrumental piece with the voice being incidental. It seems that Liszt was aware of the problems in the ensemble writing, and he did in fact later revise the art song, as if he “transcribed” the piece from an instrumental form to an art song form.

S'il est un charmant gazon

If there is a lovely lawn

Text: Victor Hugo

<i>S'il est un charmant gazon</i>	If there is a lovely lawn
<i>Que le ciel arrose,</i>	That the sky waters,
<i>Où brille en toute saison</i>	Which shines in every season
<i>Quelque fleur éclore,</i>	Some flower blooms,
<i>Où l'on cueille à pleine main</i>	Where one gathers in full hands
<i>Lys, chèvre-feuille et jasmin,</i>	Lily, honeysuckle, and jasmine,
<i>J'en veux faire le chemin</i>	I want to make it the path
<i>Où ton pied se pose!</i>	Where your feet lands!

<i>S'il est un rêve d'amour,</i>	If there is a dream of love,
<i>Parfumé de rose,</i>	Scented with roses,
<i>Où l'on trouve chaque jour</i>	Where one finds every day
<i>Quelque douce chose,</i>	Some sweet thing,
<i>Un rêve que Dieu bénit,</i>	A dream that God blesses,
<i>Où l'âme à l'âme s'unit,</i>	Where soul to soul unites,
<i>Oh! J'en veux faire le nid</i>	Oh! I want to nest
<i>Où ton coeur se pose!</i>	Where you place your heart!

The fourth song *S'il est un charmant gazon* is from Hugo's poetry volume *Les chants du crépuscule* published in 1836 and originally entitled *Nouvelle chanson sur un vieil air*. The voice-piano version was also first composed in 1844, the same year as it was published. Like the previous pieces, Liszt also reworked the art song version for his 1859 collection of revised songs.

The poem itself is a love song conjuring up images of beautiful sceneries with the grassy meadow, sky, water, and different kinds of flowers all for the poet's beloved. With the subject matter in mind, the voice-piano version is in the style of a salon song such as the French *melodie*. The poem is also a famous set of text set by various composers such as Fauré, C. Franck, C. Saint-Saens, among others. The original poem has three stanzas but Liszt's setting uses only the first and last verses omitting the second verse. In the spirit of salon songs, the first art song version assigns the main melody to the voice while the piano acts as an accompaniment, with broken chords in both hands. At the same time, the melody notes that the singer sings are also embedded in the accompaniment, providing a nice reinforcement to the melody. Liszt also takes the liberty to play around with the rhythm, where the sixteenth notes in the piano are arranged as if it was in 3/4 while the voice part stays in 6/8 creating a hemiola effect. Harmonically, he exploits unexpected chords within the context of the traditional harmonic progressions. For example, he leads the piece to a D-minor tonality from A-flat major before the last verse of the song by going through enharmonic modulations. This only happens briefly, however, as we go back to A-flat major in the next verse.

As one compares the two versions, the voice-piano and piano versions are very similar. In fact, it is one of the most similar versions among the other songs in the second

book. For one thing, Liszt has already embedded the melody in the piano part of the voice-piano version, making the accompaniment in the art song version and the piano solo version to be very similar. The interludes from the art song version are also identical to the piano solo version, unlike some other pieces where piano interludes are translated into cadenzas in the piano solo versions.

But one problem that performers might run into in the first voice-piano version is again the activeness of the piano part under the voice. Although for the most part the piano serves as an accompaniment, the sixteenth note texture in both hands can be too much. The conflicting meter and hemiolas between the piano and the voice might also lead into confusion. In the later revision of the voice-piano version, Liszt addresses these potential problems and simplifies the piece. The texture is thinned out where only the right hand plays the sixteenth notes and the top and bottom parts sing out a smooth melody. The hemiolas are also eliminated where both the voice and piano are in 6/8 at the same time as shown in figure 20.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'S'il est un charmant gazon' (1859 version), measures 5-8. It consists of two staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in French and German. The piano accompaniment features a complex sixteenth-note texture in both hands, with hemiolas indicated by asterisks and circled '2' symbols.

Vocal line lyrics:
 feucht von perlendem Re . . gen, wo Blumen, die nimmer verblühen,
 que le ciel ar . ro . . se, ois brille en tou . te sai . son

Figure 20 *S'il est un charmant gazon*, 1859 version, mm. 5-8

Liszt also altered some of the melody lines, changing some of the harder intervals to more accessible and singable ones. Liszt also adds more places for the piano accompaniment to drop out in order to feature the voice more often and to freely sing *a*

capella. These revisions all contribute to the integrity of the piece as an art song. But the solo piano version, although it almost mirrors the original voice-piano version, works well as an independent piano piece without having to worry about the problems of a voice-piano ensemble.

La tombe et la rose

The tomb and the rose

Text: Victor Hugo

<i>La tombe dit à la rose:</i>	The tomb says to the rose:
<i>Des pleurs don't l'aube t'arrose</i>	With the tears that the dawn waters you with
<i>Que fais-tu, fleur des amours?</i>	What do you make, flower of love?
<i>La rose dit à la tombe:</i>	The rose says to the tomb:
<i>Que fais-tu de ce qui tombe</i>	What do you make with one who falls
<i>Dans ton gouffre ouvert toujours?</i>	In your ever opened abyss?
<i>La rose dit: Tombeau sombre,</i>	The rose says: dark tomb,
<i>De ces pleurs je fais dans l'ombre</i>	With these tears, I make in the shadows
<i>Un parfum d'ambre et de miel.</i>	A scent of amber and of honey.
<i>La tombe dit: Fleur plaintive,</i>	The tomb says: wailing flower,
<i>De chaque âme qui m'arrive</i>	With every soul that arrives in me
<i>Je fais un ange du ciel.</i>	I make an angel of heaven.

The fifth song *La tombe et la rose* was also composed in 1844, but unlike the other songs, Liszt has not re-worked this song later on in his life. The poem is the 31st piece from Hugo's bigger collection called *Les voix intérieures*. The text explores the conflicted side of Hugo, with the interaction between a rose, which symbolizes love and life, and a tomb, which symbolizes death and sorrow. It is also another poem that employs a question-answer technique, a technique for which Liszt has an affinity.

The piece opens with *portato* triplet chords in the low register providing a haunting funeral march atmosphere. In the poem, there are three voices: the narrator, the rose, and the tomb. And Liszt makes a distinction between these three voices through timbre and melody. The narrator is assigned its own motif: an ascending perfect fourth

that goes into a declamatory melody. In the solo piano version, rather than assigning the different melodies, Liszt plays around with the rose and tomb character through the range of the piano. The rose's melody is written in the soprano range while the tomb's melody is in the lower range. Liszt also tinkers with the harmony going from A-flat major in the tomb's opening melody, going to D minor for the narrator, leading to a distant B-flat major for the rose. Texture is also important in the drama of this piece as it intensifies with the use of tremolos and bigger chords as the rose asks the tomb about falling into the abyss. However, the music resolves to a G major with the texture thinned out as the tomb answers the rose *je fais un ange du ciel* "I make an angel of heaven."

The piano solo and the art song versions of this piece are identical, except that Liszt is freer with texture in the piano solo version. The piece itself uses motivic development and texture to create drama, making this piece a small *scena* from French opera with orchestral moments or a piano ballade.

Gastibelza

Gastibelza

Text: Victor Hugo

<i>Gastibelza, l'homme à la carabine,</i>	Gastibelza, the man with the rifle,
<i>Chantait ainsi:</i>	Who sang:
<i>Quelqu'un a-t-il connu Doña Sabine?</i>	Did anybody know Lady Sabine?
<i>Quelqu'un d'ici?</i>	Anyone here?
<i>Dansez, chantez, villageois! La nuit gagne</i>	Dance, sing, villagers! Night is overtaking
<i>Le mont Falou.</i>	Mount Falou.
<i>Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne</i>	The wind that goes across the mountain
<i>Me rendra fou!</i>	Will drive me crazy!
<i>Quelqu'un de vous a-t-il connu Sabine,</i>	Did any of you know Sabine,
<i>Ma señora?</i>	My dear lady?
<i>Sa mère était la vieille Maugrabine</i>	Her mother was the old Maugrabine
<i>D'Antequera,</i>	From Antequerra,
<i>Qui chaque nuit criait dans la Tour Magne</i>	Who each night cried in the tower Magne
<i>Comme un hibou.</i>	Like an owl.
<i>Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne</i>	The wind that goes across the mountain
<i>Me rendra fou!</i>	Will drive me crazy!

*Dancez! chantez! Des biens que l'heure envoie
Il faut user.
Elle était jeune et son oeil plein de joie
Faisait penser.
À ce vieillard qu'un enfant accompagne
Jetez un sou.
Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou!*

Dance! Sing! The good things that time sends
Should be used.
She was young and her eye, full of joy,
Made one think.
To this old man that a child accompanies
Throws a penny.
The wind that goes across the mountain
Will drive me crazy!

*Dancez, chantez, villageois! La nuit gagne
Le mont Falou.
Sabine, un jour,
A tout vendu, sa beauté de colombe,
Et son amour!
Pour l'anneau d'or du comte de Saldagne,
Pour un bijou.
Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou!*

Dance, sing, villagers! Night is overtaking
Mount Falou.
Sabine, one day,
Sold everything, her dove-like beauty,
And her love!
For the ring of gold of the Count of Saldagne,
For a jewel.
The wind that goes across the mountain
Will drive me crazy!

*Sur ce vieux banc souffrez que je m'appuie,
Car je suis las!
Avec ce comte elle s'est donc enfuie,
Enfuie, hélas!
Par le chemin qui va à travers la Serdagne,
Je ne sais où.
Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou!*

On this old bench allow me to rest,
Because I am tired!
With this Count she fled away then,
Fled away, alas!
By the path that goes through the Serdagne,
I don't know where.
The wind that goes across the mountain
Will drive me crazy!

*Je la voyais passer de ma demeure,
Et c'était tout.
Mais à présent je m'ennuie à toute heure,
Plein de dégoût.
Rêveur oisif, l'âme dans la campagne,
La dague au clou.
Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou!*

I saw her pass by my house,
And that was all.
But now I am bored all the time,
Full of disgust.
Idle dreamer, his soul in the countryside,
His dagger sharpened.
The wind that goes across the mountain
Will drive me crazy!

The book closes with *Gastibelza*, perhaps the most pianistic and technically demanding piece of this set. Like *La tombe et la rose*, *Gastibelza* was composed and published in 1844. There was also no re-working of this piece, unlike the other four songs.

This last poem is from the 22nd poem of *Les rayons et les ombres*, the same collection as *Oh! Quand je dors* and *Comment, disaient-ils*. The original poem is entitled *Guitare* and it is a ballad about a man named Gastibelza who tells a long story to a group of villagers. It consists of eleven stanzas, but Liszt chose to set six out of the eleven: the first three and the last three stanzas. In Hugo's collection, the original poem *Guitare* and *Autre Guitare (Comment, disaient-ils)* are paired up, where both texts conjures Spain and its culture. In this setting, Liszt also has Spain in mind by putting "Bolero" as its subtitle and uses a bolero rhythm throughout the piece.

Looking at the solo piano version of this piece as a whole, it would be hard to imagine that this as an art song. The style is closer to a rhapsody for solo piano rather than a piece for the voice and piano. It has all the hallmarks of rhapsodic playing that we find in pieces such as the Hungarian Rhapsodies or Spanish Rhapsody. It has elements of instrumental writing such as the open fifths in the beginning, the bolero rhythm as mentioned above, chromatic scales, octaves, thick chords, among others. Although this is essentially a vocal technique, Liszt evokes the Spanish *cante jondo* style in mm. 15-20 shown in figure 21, a technique that is often used in several rhapsodic pieces.

Figure 21 *Gastibelza* (piano solo), mm. 14-25

With all these elements that showcase the piano, it is hard to imagine what the voice-piano version would sound like if one was only looking at the solo piano version. What happens is that there are several sections in the voice-piano version where the voice doubles the piano. One perfect example of this is in figure 22 where the voice essentially doubles the piano in a chromatic scale, something that works much better on an instrument rather than on the voice.

Figure 22 *Gastibelza*, mm. 214-217

There are very few places in the piece where the piano texture is thin enough to showcase the voice. Range is also a problem in the voice-piano version. The singer has to compete often with thick textures of the piano, especially when it is doubling some line in the piano. On top of these problems, there is a lot of text in the poem where the singer has to basically “spit out” the words over an already thick texture of the piano.

Out of all the songs in both sets, this piece is undoubtedly the most pianistic. In an already big piano part, it would be difficult to perform the voice-piano version with some of the potential problems in the ensemble writing between the singer and the pianist. Therefore, this would be a piece that is truly a piano piece first, rather than a transcription or arrangement of the voice-piano version.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

Franz Liszt is unquestionably one of the greatest pianists of all time. He is also equally great as a composer, but some have questioned some of his output with a huge repertoire of transcriptions of pieces of other composers. Are these pieces merely copies of the works of others, or should these pieces be considered as independent piano works that deserve their own merit? When it comes to “transcriptions” of his own works, how should these pieces be treated? In the case of his art songs, the original art songs and the piano “transcriptions” are composed right after each other, if not simultaneously. Therefore, it is questionable whether or not the piano solo versions are “transcription” of the art song version.

Both books of the *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein* were in fact published very soon after the art song versions, making it possible that Liszt may have composed the art song version and the piano solo versions simultaneously. As one looks closer at some of these pieces, some of the piano solo pieces may in fact be transcriptions, conceived after the art song versions have been fully composed. But some pieces such as *Gastibelza* may cause one to cast doubts whether or not this piece is in fact a transcription of the art song, especially since this piece resembles so much the style of his rhapsodies. In fact, all of the pieces in these books work well independently as solo piano pieces rather than a “copy” of their corresponding art song versions. Since the term “transcription” strongly suggests that there must be an “original” version following the “transcribed” version, all of the pieces in both books of *Buch der Lieder für Piano allein* should really be called as different “versions” of the piece.

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