Liszt’s Sonata in B minor and a Woman Composer’s Fingerprint: The quasi Adagio theme and a Lied by Maria Pavlovna (Romanova)

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Illustration 1: The six-pointed star of Liszt’s Consolation No. 4, first edition.¹

Perhaps no other work by Ferenc Liszt (1811-1886) has elicited more debate amongst pianists, critics, theorists, and musicologists than his magnum opus for piano solo—the Sonata in B-minor, finished in 1853. Information contained in a letter written by the London-based Chopinologist Arthur Hedley (1905-1969), together with my correlated research have enabled me to prove that the Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio theme of the Sonata in B minor is traceable to a Lied composed in 1849 (or earlier) by one Maria Pavlovna.

Maria Pavlovna (Marija Pawlowna, 1786-1859) was a descendant of the Romanow-Holstein-Gottorp dynasty, the third daughter of Russian Tsar Paul I and Sophie Dorothea of Württemberg; by way of her marriage to Charles Frederick, she became Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. She was a patroness of the arts and sciences, a devout Christian dedicated to helping women and the poor, and a gifted composer of Lieder. Her great love of music inspired her to learn to sing, to play the piano, the harpsichord and the harp. She studied composition with Giuseppe Sarti (1729-1802), Johann Gottlieb Töpfer (1791-1870) and Liszt himself. It was Pavlovna who appointed Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837), and later Liszt to the position of Kapellmeister of the Weimar Court.² According to Eduard Franz Genast (1797-1866), she had not only taken piano lessons from Hummel, but could read and transpose from a full orchestral score “like a Kapellmeister.”³

The melodic design of the Pavlovna Lied constitutes a never-before identified genetic link between two works for piano solo whose publication was authorized by Liszt himself: the Consolation No. 4 in D-flat Major (second, 1850 version; S.172, R.12, bars 1-2, 6-7, 17-18, 19-20, 26-27) and the B minor Sonata published in 1854 (S.178, R.21, Andante sostenuto in F-sharp major, bars 334-338; quasi Adagio in F-sharp major, bars 397-401; and Andante sostenuto in B major, bars 711-715). An

¹ The star of the first German edition is reprinted with the kind permission of the Liszt Ferenc Múzeum, Budapest.
autograph manuscript of Liszt—“a little notebook page” so-called by its former owner, Arthur Hedley, constitutes yet another link in the four-year transformational process that connects the Pavlovna *Lied* (1849) with the two differing versions of Liszt’s *Consolation* No. 4 in D-flat major (1849 and 1850, respectively) and the *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme of the *Sonata* (1853).

The Pavlovna *Lied* – Liszt *Sonata* derivation presents an immediate challenge for Liszt research, namely, the location of and the retrieval of two important documents, their present whereabouts unknown as of this writing:

1. The aforementioned Liszt autograph manuscript formerly owned by Arthur Hedley, and described by him as “a little notebook page” dated 1849, which contains the [*quasi* *Adagio Sonata* theme and the theme of *Funérailles*; and,

2. The original manuscript of a *Lied* (1849?) by Maria Pavlovna, identified by Liszt himself as the inspiration for his *Consolation* No. 4 and, indirectly, for his B minor *Sonata*’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme.

The circumstance that led me to discover the metamorphosis of the Pavlovna *Lied* into the Liszt *Sonata*’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme is remarkable, the consequence of a dream⁴ from which I awoke with these prescient words:

“Look for a piece that begins with a Star.”

As it turned out, the first edition of the *Consolation* No. 4 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1850) is marked by a radiant six-pointed Star⁵ placed above the beginning of the authentic German edition (see Illus. 1 above). This *Consolation* is referred to as the “*Stern-Consolation*” (“Star Consolation”) in a collection of reminiscences by Liszt students titled *Liszt-Pädagogium*⁶, published in 1902 by Lina Ramann (1833-1912) who also wrote a Liszt biography⁷ authorized by the composer himself.

Liszt’s “recycling” of themes already associated with text or program: Stations along the discovery of the Pavlovna *Lied* – Liszt *Sonata* derivation

The first part of this essay presents the main stations encompassing twelve years of research, the quest of which was suddenly illumined by the aforementioned dream that unlocked a missing link—the Pavlovna theme—in the genesis of Liszt’s *Sonata*. It took another twenty-eight years before the fruits of my research became ripe enough to derive the conclusions presented in this essay.

While preparing the *Sonata* for a concert tour in 1970, I noticed that some of its themes were recycled in works with text or program. In the “abstract” sonata design, Liszt’s *Grandioso* theme functions as the second subject (*Seitensatz*, bars

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⁴ The dream occurred around 5 a.m. on June 8th, 1982.
⁵ In later editions of the *Consolation*, the six-pointed star is either missing (as in the edition of the Bureau Central de Musique, Paris, 1850) or substituted with a four-pointed star (as in later issues by the Breitkopf & Härtel Verlag).
105-110) of the Sonatenhauptsatzform⁸ (the sonata-allegro form, D major key area). About quarter of a century later, both the melody and the harmony of the Grandioso theme were recycled by Liszt in Via crucis (S.53), Station XI: Jesus is nailed to the Cross, and Station XII: Jesus dies on the Cross (see Illus. 2 below).

In its recycled form, the Grandioso appears either to “gain” a divine connotation, or to “disclose” a melodic shape intentionally patterned by its composer on the Good Friday hymn Crux fidelis,⁹ adjusted to the tonality of C-sharp¹⁰. Thus the question arose: are the Sonata’s themes genuinely “abstract newcomers”, or are they, too, merely recycled versions of themes already associated with religious connotations?

The Sonata’s Grandioso theme is prefigured in the grandioso fragment of “Invocation” taken from the 1851 final version of Harmonies poétiques et religieuses No. 1 (S.173, R.14, LW A158), published in 1853 (see Illus. 3 below).


Illus. 2: (1.) Liszt Sonata, bars 297-301, and (2.) Via crucis (ca. 1878)

Illus. 3: Liszt, “Invocation”, grandioso, from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses

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⁸ The typical tonal design of the sonata-allegro form in minor keys.
⁹ Crux fidelis is the Gregorian chant associated with the Solemn Adoration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday.
S.306, LW N46), the early version of *Invocation* (1847), and the concert etude *Un Sospiro* (1848, S.144). I disagree with Gut, however, when he links these examples with the Sonata’s *Grandioso* theme, the latter’s fifth melodic pitch having nothing to do either with the melody or the harmony of the 1851 “*Invocation*”, since it “lands” on a different resolution that is marked *triple forte* (see Illus. 4 below).

![Crux fidelis](image1) ![Liszt Sonata, Grandioso](image2)  

Illus. 4: *Crux fidelis* (1.) and *Liszt Sonata, Grandioso*, bars 105-110 (2.)

Whereas the Cross symbol is a sequence of three pitches, the Sonata’s *Grandioso* is clearly a sequence of just two pitches—an anhemitonic melody made of three ascending major seconds separated by two ascending minor thirds (see Illus. 4 above; 3 times 2 bars = 6 bars). As such, it is not identical with the Cross Symbol; rather, it is a stylized adaptation of the Good Friday Gregorian Hymn *Crux fidelis*. Nevertheless, I do agree with Gut in that the works he lists share with the Sonata’s *Grandioso* the plagal cadence known in musical parlance as the AMEN formula.

In the “abstract” sonata design, the two motives intertwined around the tritone B - E-sharp function as the first subject (*Hauptsatz*, bars 32-35, Illus. 5 below).

![Liszt Sonata](image3)  

Illus. 5: Liszt Sonata, “le thème en deux éléments” (Lucifer=R.H.; Satan=L.H.)

By no means “abstract newcomers”, the two motives above are but recycled versions of Liszt’s own “Luciferic / Satanic essences” used already in the B minor prelude to his *Rêminiscences de Robert le Diable: Valse infernale* (1840, S. 413, LW A78). The Satanic essence of the prelude is identical with that of the Sonata’s

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13 The *Rêminiscences de Robert le diable* was performed by Liszt for the first time in a recital at the Salle Erard in Paris, on March 27th, 1841; that is, twelve years before the 1853 completion date of the *Sonata*. 

first subject, bar 33, L.H. (1853). The latter’s four marcato repeated notes on the tonic tritone E-sharp duplicate the four marcato F-sharps that open the Réminiscences of 1840, followed in the latter work by the minor seconds E-sharp, F-sharp, G-natural (in the Sonata, F-natural, at bar 2, F-sharp, at bar 5, G-natural, at bar 8) and a “Vorschlagsfigur” (upbeat thrust) that lands upon four reiterated C-natural pitches, a tritone from the opening F-sharps (see Illus. 6 below).

Illus. 6: Liszt, Réminiscences de Robert le diable (1840), ”Satanic essences”

Given the consistency of Liszt’s use of divine / diabolical symbolism from at least 1840 (Réminiscences) till 1883 (the Mephisto Polka, S.271, R. 39, LW A317), I wondered: would Liszt have deliberately “stripped” the Sonata’s first and second subjects of their “inherited” diabolical / divine connotations? Or was the “abstract” / “program” music dichotomy14 far too narrowly conceived in the 1980s?

Louis Brechemin’s characterization of Liszt’s symbolism is unsurpassed in its brevity: “Liszt...invented no new devices to express the Devil...His ‘diabolic essences’ are made up from a long line of inheritances...The principal characteristic of the Sonata in B Minor lies in ... repeated notes [Satanic essence]...[and]...the ‘leap’ [Luciferic essence]”.15 The “repeated notes” Satanic essence occurs, among others, in Liszt’s unpublished The Legend of St. Christopher (1881, S. 47), which quotes W. A. Mozart’s aria, “Don Giovanni, a cenar teco” from Act II, scene iii of the opera Don Giovanni, adapted in the same key of D minor (see Illus. 7 below, “Sanct Christoph ging zu dem Teufel” [Saint Christopher went to the Devil]):

Illus. 7: Liszt, The Legend of St. Christopher, repeated notes and tritones

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The descending seventh Luciferic essence of the Sonata’s Hauptsatz (bar 32, R.H.) is featured in the Réminiscences de Robert le Diable (see Illus. 8 below).

![Image of music notation](image1)

Illus. 8: Liszt, Réminiscences de Robert le Diable (1840), ”leap” essence, bars 37-39

In the first two bars of the Sonata we find coalesced two famous diabolical gestures of German Romanticism: 1.) the invocation of Samiel, and 2.) the ominous opening of the Wolf’s Glen Scene, both drawn from Carl Maria von Weber’s opera Der Freischütz, previously transcribed by Liszt (see Illus. 9 below).

![Image of music notation](image2)

Illus. 9: Liszt-Weber: Freischütz-Ouvertüre (S. 575); Freischütz-Fantasia (S. 451)

The rhythmic / melodic structures are merged polyphonically (see Illus. 10 below).

![Image of music notation](image3)

Illus. 10: Liszt: Sonata, Lento assai, the two-voiced polyphony of bars 1-2

By 1982, I was aware that four of the Sonata’s “five themes” were recycled motives from earlier works by Liszt in which they were consistently associated with divine / diabolical symbolism. By 1982 I was also aware that the Sonata’s themes closely resembled prominent motives from works with text or program by composers in whose music Liszt displayed a keen interest (see Illus. 11 below).
Illus. 11: a: Works that predate Liszt’s *Sonata* in B minor; b: Liszt’s *Sonata*

Liszt’s motives 1.b and 2.b above will coil around the B – E-sharp *diabolus in musica* and, by intervallic inversion and a reversed order of appearance, become the *Sonata*’s Luciferic / Satanic first subject (*Hauptsatz*, see Illus. 12 below).
Because the Sonata’s themes are polarized as contrasting pairs, the ascending intervals of the first eight bars also recur in descending variants (see Illus. 13):

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**Descending octave leaps**

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**Descending scalar motion**

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Given the case of the oratorio *St. Elisabeth* which, according to Liszt’s own admission, owes its themes to borrowed sources, I hypothesized that the Sonata’s “fifth theme” may also have been borrowed. Borrowed, but from whom? After years of committed searching, I could not identify any theme even remotely similar to the Sonata’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme either among Liszt’s own works, or among works by other composers.

Enter the aforementioned dream. “Absurd”, I first thought, for how could a piece of music begin with a Star? But the anxiety caused by the ever-approaching date of my first doctoral lecture-recital\(^\text{16}\) overturned the prejudices of my logical mind and prompted me to spend the rest of the night perusing, page after page, the complete set of Kalmus miniature score reprints of the Franz Liszt Stiftung edition, originally published by Breitkopf und Härtel.

About two hours later, I found myself staring at a piece headed by a radiant Star: the *Consolation* No. 4 for piano solo, its two opening bars exhibiting a note for note melodic match with the Sonata’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme. It took me but seconds to reconstruct the process whereby Liszt, presumably, metamorphosed the *Consolation* theme into the *Sonata* theme.

If Liszt did indeed draw on the *quasi Adagio* theme of the *Consolation* as the prototype of the Sonata’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme, then he would have had to subject his model to at least two revisions (see Illus. 14 below).

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\(^{16}\) I hold a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (1983).
1. the metric environment of the *Consolation*’s 34-bar-long *quasi Adagio* (duple-time, C time signature) would have had to be adjusted to that of the *Sonata*’s 16-bar-long *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* (triple-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature) and,

2. the *Consolation* theme in D-flat major would have had to be transposed to the tonality of the *Sonata*’s *Andante sostenuto* theme (F-sharp major).

![Illustration 14: From *Consolation* melody to the *Andante sostenuto* *Sonata* theme](image)

Upper staff: Liszt *Consolation* No. 4, *quasi Adagio*, original in D-flat Major, here transposed into F-sharp major; Lower staff: Liszt *Sonata, Andante sostenuto* (bars 336-338, 713-715); *quasi Adagio* (bars 399-401). Note: The ornamental turn in small-size notes in the upper staff of the *Sonata* recur only in the lower staff of the *Consolation* (bars 17, 19, and 26).

A comparison of the two themes shown above reveals at least five closely matched melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic congruencies:

1. Both the *quasi Adagio* theme of the *Consolation* and the *Andante sostenuto* theme of the *Sonata* form self-sufficient musical units that each conclude with an authentic cadence in their respective keys of D-flat major (*Consolation, cantabile con divozione*, bars 1-2) and F-sharp major (*Sonata, dolce*, bars 334-338).

2. The melodic design of the *Sonata’s Andante sostenuto* in F-sharp major (bars 336-338) is present in both the early and the final versions of the *Consolation* (1849, 1850). In the 1850 version of the *Consolation*, the *Sonata* theme is prefigured a total of five times: twice in the upper staff (bars 1-2 without the upbeats, and bars 6-7); and three times in the lower staff (bars 17-18, 19-20, and 26-27).

3. Both the *Consolation* (bars 1-2, without the upbeats) and the *Sonata* (bars 336-338) share the identical V – IV – III – II – VI – V – III scale-degree succession notated with large-size note heads.

4. The *quasi Adagio* theme of the *Consolation* (bars 17, 19, and 26; all in the lower staff) and the *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio Sonata* theme (*Andante sostenuto*, bar 337; *quasi Adagio*, bar 400; and *Andante sostenuto*, bar 714; all in the upper staff) share four notes printed with small-size note heads. The sequence of FOUR LARGE SIZE NOTE HEADS / four small-size note heads / FOUR LARGE SIZE NOTE HEADS, present in both the *Consolation* (1850) and the *Sonata* (1853) is matched by their identical scale degree succession: V – IV – III – II / iii – ii – #i – ii / VI – V – V – III.

5. Textual evidence, recovered by Sharon Winklhofer from pasted-over fragments of the *Sonata*’s autograph manuscript, reveals that Liszt had already used the *Consolation/melody-become-Sonata/theme* at an earlier stage in the
compositional process. Covered by a pasted piece of manuscript paper, an early rhythmic variant of the quasi Adagio Sonata theme contains the same alternation of large- and small-size notes as the 1850 Consolation (see Illus. 15 below).

Illus. 15: From Consolation/melody to the quasi Adagio Sonata/theme

Discounting chance as a possible explanation for the shared quasi Adagio theme of both the Consolation and the Sonata, I showed my discovery to William Stein Newman (1912-2000) who, in mid-1983, presented me with the copy of an aerogramme which he had received in 1967 from Arthur Hedley. In it, Hedley states that he owns a little notebook page18 of the Sonata’s [quasi] Adagio theme already jotted down by Liszt in 1849—the year in which Liszt composed the early version of the piece that “begins with a Star.” Hedley wrote, “I shall look forward to your third volume.” By the way, Liszt composed the Adagio theme of his Sonata in 1849 – I have the little note-book page on which he wrote it down, at the same time as Funérailles. Yours sincerely, Arthur Hedley” (see Illus. 16 below).

Illus. 16: Arthur Hedley’s aerogramme of 1967, facsimile reprint, cut-out

Obviously, the Consolation and the Sonata theme were both composed in 1849. But what of the mysterious “Star” that led me to discover the Consolation / Sonata

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17 The dotted rhythm in the second bar of Illus. 15 became two quarter notes in bar 400 of the Sonata’s final version.
20 The full text of Arthur Hedley’s aerogramme may be downloaded at www.tiborszasz.de
theme metamorphosis? Thanks to the efforts of Dr. László Eösze and Imre Mező I found out that the Druckvorlage of the early version of the Consolation prepared by Liszt’s most important copyist, August Conradi (1821-1873)\textsuperscript{21} singles out Maria Pavlovna as author of a Lied which metamorphosed into the quasi Adagio Consolation theme (1849). The top left corner of Conradi’s copy begins with a sign reminiscent of a Benedictine cross (a four-pointed linear-shape $+$ and a four-pointed, dot-shaped $x$) that matches an identical design on the bottom of the page. This sign was used by Liszt to add explanatory interpolations in his correspondence\textsuperscript{22} and in his manuscripts, including the autograph of the Sonata (see Illus. 17 and 18 below).

Illus. 17: Liszt’s sign for interpolations:
1: Consolation; 2: Sonata\textsuperscript{23}; 3: Benedictine Cross

Illus. 18: Conradi’s copy of Consolation 4. featuring Liszt’s autograph entries “quasi Adagio” and “cantabile con divozione” (at the top of the page), and “D’après un L. D. S. A. I. M. P……...” (at the bottom of the page)
GSA 60/I 22, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv

\textsuperscript{23}Liszt uses this sign on the pasted-over part of page 5 affecting bars 161-64 of the Sonata (E minor - B-flat Major).
Liszt’s interpolated text “D’après un L. D. S. A. I. M. P……” inserted in the Conradi copy of the Consolation’s early version (see Illus. 18 above) was decoded by Peter Raabe24 (1872-1945) with the help of manuscript GSA 60/D 69, written entirely in Liszt’s hand—his own arrangement of Maria Pavlovna’s Lied “Es hat geflammt die ganze Nacht”,25 annotated at the top of the autograph manuscript with Liszt’s own inscription in Rotstift: “Lied de S. A. I. M._ P./_ ” (see Illus. 19 below).

Illus. 19: Liszt’s autograph inscription “Lied de S. A. I. M._ P./_ ”, GSA 60/D 69

With the aforementioned “Liszt code”, Raabe correctly concluded that the interpolation “D’après un L. D. S. A. I. M. P……” entered by Liszt in the Conradi copy of Consolation 4. is an abbreviation of:

D’après un Lied de Son Altesse Impériale Maria Paulowna
[Based on a Lied by her Royal Highness Maria Paulowna.]26

Financial records mentioned in Alan Walker’s three-volume biography27 prove that Pavlovna took composition lessons from Liszt in 1849, the year when her Lied inspired the quasi Adagio Consolation-become-Sonata theme.

The Consolation theme and its derivative product, the Sonata theme — both inspired by Maria Pavlovna’s Lied — were perceived already by Liszt’s contemporaries as indicative of religious devotion. In Lina Ramann “Liszt-Pädagogium”, the Consolation No. 4 is described as follows: „The basic character of the Star-Consolation … is that of a church-inspired religious mood—organ sound should be evoked in performing this piece” [my translation].28 As to the Sonata’s Andante sostenuto theme, Liszt’s student August Stradal stated29:

This movement should actually be designated Andante religioso.30

24 Peter Raabe was curator of the Weimar Liszt archives and editor of Liszt Lieder included in the Franz Liszt Stiftung project published by Breitkopf und Härtel.
25 Die Brautnacht (1827), poem by Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827), from Lyrische Reisen und epigrammatische Spaziergänge, in Frühlingskranz. Liszt’s arrangement is listed in the expanded Searle Catalogue as S. 685.
27 Walker, Alan. Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861, London : Faber, 1989. “In the royal account book, which recorded the expenditures from Maria Pavlovna’s privy purse, there appears in 1848 an entry of 1,500 thalers, “an honorarium for Kapellmeister Liszt, for helping Her Royal Highness with her advanced musical studies.” The following year [1849] the same source shows an amount of 330 thalers, “a gift for Court Kapellmeister Liszt for a composition, for instruction, and the like.” (p. 103)
28 „Der Character der Stern-Consolation ist in seiner Grundstimmung kirchlich-religiös—Orgelklang lebe in der Darstellung des Spielers.”
30 „Andante sostenuto: Dieser Satz sollte eigentlich mit Andante religioso bezeichnet sein (Stradal)“. 
Whether the six-pointed star of the *Consolation* may be indicative of symbolic implications is a topic worthy of speculation—it may well stand for the Star of Bethlehem. In any case, currently available documents indicate that Pavlovna’s *Lieder* were never of the *Lieder ohne Worte* type—to use Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdi’s title for his “Songs without Words” for piano solo—but always texted *Lieder*. Hence, Liszt’s autograph indication *con divozione* (with religious devotion), and the opening and closing AMEN of the *Consolation*’s final version, suggest that the lyrics of the Pavlovna *Lied* which inspired the *Sonata*’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme were probably of a religious nature.

The facsimile reproductions below provide an overview of the various stars:

Illus. 20: Various Star shapes printed with the *Consolation* No. 4 by Liszt
1: Breitkopf (1850); 2: Breitkopf (later issues); 3: New Liszt Edition

But the Pavlovna case is only partially solved: the *quasi Adagio* theme of the *Consolation* and the *quasi Adagio* theme of the *Sonata*, both dated 1849, are based on one and the same—but still unidentified—*Lied* by Maria Pavlovna.

To date, only a small portion of Pavlovna’s documents have been subjected to scholarly inquiry. The *Thüringische Hauptstaatsarchiv* in Weimar, repository of Pavlovna’s papers, may still house the manuscript of Pavlovna’s *Lied*. According to Dr. phil. Ulrike Müller-Harang of the *Klassik Stiftung Weimar Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv*, “Maria Pavlovna’s surviving account books and receipt books from 1805-1859 alone cover 28 meters of archival material” (from an Email exchange).

An evaluation of extant documents pertaining to Pavlovna’s studies with Liszt ought to make an excellent topic for a doctoral dissertation. Having identified the Pavlovna *Lied* as model for the *Sonata*’s *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme, the hypothesis that all thematic / symbolic ideas integrated in Liszt’s *Sonata* may be based on preexisting thematic / symbolic material is, at the very least, conceivable (see Illus. 11 above). Yet such a hypothesis is useful only if viewed within the larger framework of the inner relationships between the *Sonata* themes.

**The *Sonata*’s “il filo”:** Suggestions for a twenty-first century “*Urtext*” edition

31 “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:1-2, King James version). Thirty three years later, Christ was mocked on the Cross as Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews (I. N. R. I. = *Jesus Nazarenum Rex Judaeorum*).

“Exactitude in editions is a duty of the profession, too often neglected.”

Liszt’s words should be interpreted in the sense that exceptional orthographies such as those of bars 1-7 / 453-459 of the autograph constitute irreplaceable sources of interpretative knowledge. But what knowledge does Liszt’s orthography convey?

The Sonata’s Lento assai opening is incorrectly notated in the only two so-called “Urtext” editions published in the twentieth century: G. Henle Verlag, ed. Ernst Herttrich, autumn 1975; and Neue Liszt-Ausgabe, ed. Antal Boronkay, Editio Musica Budapest, August 1981, © 1983. Ernst Herttrich went so far as to point the finger at Liszt’s alleged “sloppy musical orthography.”

This condemnation of the composer’s orthography exposes the dangers of indiscriminate standardization found in some “Urtext” editions. In the one-and-a-half century that has elapsed since the completion of Liszt’s autograph manuscript in 1853, no edition has ever faithfully reproduced Liszt’s orthography of the opening bars. Though at odds with normal orthographic standards, Liszt’s notation is the only explicit means that can clarify both the two-voiced structure of the opening and its exact realization on the instrument.

Liszt’s never before reproduced “analytical” type orthography of the opening seven bars of the Sonata explicitly “dissects” the two-voiced polyphony of bars 1-7 (consult the facsimile edition of the G. Henle Verlag). This “dissecting” effect of Liszt’s orthography may be grasped in the “parallel fragment” of the Lento assai at bars 453-459 just prior to the fugato which, for some unknown reason, was correctly reproduced in the first Breitkopf and Härtel edition of 1854 (see Illus. 21 below).

The upward-pointing stems in the right-hand staff of Illus. 21 above feature the “top voice” of the quasi Adagio fragment which is made of a tension-creating motionless yet reiterated organ point—two F-sharp octaves prolonged by ties in bars 454-455 / 457-458, to be played by the right hand. By contrast, the downward-

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34 “die von Liszt recht oberflächlich gehandhabte musikalische Orthographie”, Vorwort, G. Henle Verlag, HN 273.
35 Reproduced from the first edition owned by the Library of the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany.
pointing stems seen in both the left- and the right-hand staff feature the “bottom voice” of the quasi Adagio fragment which is constituted of octaves in motion shared between the two hands. In other words, the bass line of bars 454-455 / 457-458 is “cloned” all’ottava sopra [Italian for “at the higher octave”].

Clearly, bars 453-458 of the quasi Adagio do not feature two descending scales, but rather two successively ascending sevenths, marked triple piano—an ascending minor-then major seventh at bars 454 and 457, respectively—followed in both cases by step-by-step scalar descents marked diminuendi. The latent energy of the expanding upward gestures finally shoots up as two ascending octave leaps marked Allegro energico, leading to the fugato, marked piano.

Liszt’s “analytical-type” orthography of bars 453-460 (quasi Adagio – Allegro energico) reveals the two-voiced polyphony of the identically structured bars 1-8 (Lento assai – Allegro energico), which I have “translated” below into a “structural” type orthography, assigning a separate staff to each one of the opening’s two constitutive voices configured as octaves (see Illus. 22 below):

Illus. 22: Liszt: Sonata, bars 1-8, “repetition” (R.H.) and “leap” (L.H.) motives

Because the notation seen in Illus. 22 above does not provide a practical solution for the distribution of the notes between the two hands, Liszt invented, in bars 453-455 of the autograph manuscript, his own singular and signature orthography, which explicitly clarifies both the polyphonic structure and the distribution of the notes between the hands. José Vianna da Motta, a Portuguese pianist-composer and pupil of Liszt, had realized that Liszt’s perfect orthography of bar 454 is the ideal notation not only for that particular bar but also for the parallel structures of bars 1-7 (Lento assai) and bars 454-459 (quasi Adagio). Compare José Vianna da Motta’s printed version of bar 454 (Illus. 23 below, left, note my editorial arrow) with the identical fragment from the autograph manuscript (Illus. 23 below, right—note my editorial circle):

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36 In the Henle “Urtext” edition prepared by Ernst Herttrich, Liszt’s autograph diminuendi are incorrectly reproduced.
37 The octave configuration of the left hand staff in Illus. 22 above is preserved in the original, later crossed-out version of the Lento on page 1, top part of the autograph manuscript.
Illus. 23: Liszt *Sonata*, da Motta’s edition next to the autograph\textsuperscript{39}, bars 453-455

I propose that José Vianna da Motta’s intelligently rendered orthography of bars 1-7 and 453-459, right-hand staff, should become the model of all future editions of the Liszt *Sonata*.

Alas, da Motta’s truthfulness to both the spirit and the letter of Liszt’s orthography was corrupted beyond recognition in the process of publication: the notes in the left-hand staff of bars 1-7 were engraved with inversely pointed stems, and the \textit{crescendo} - \textit{diminuendo} of bars 1-6 ended up replicating the corrupt \textit{crescendo} and \textit{diminuendo} markings of the 1854 Breitkopf & Härtel first edition.

The bass line was already consistently notated with downward-pointing stems in a *Sonata* sketch dated “Eilsen, 2\textsuperscript{de} semaine de Janvier 1851” (see Illus. 24 below).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{illus24.png}
\caption{Liszt, *Sonata*, 1851 sketch, upward stems (R.H) / downward stems (L.H.)}
\end{figure}

The downward-pointing stems of Liszt invalidate the “descending scales” interpretation of the *Sonata*’s opening bars expressed by Alfred Cortot; “The somber melodic movement of the two hands descending in unison against a harmonic organ point.”\textsuperscript{40} This gross misinterpretation of the *Sonata*’s text, which has been perpetrated by nearly every recording and scholarly article to date, may be

\textsuperscript{39} Reprinted with the kind permission of the G. Henle Verlag.
overcome by viewing the correct melodic outline featured in the recently published arrangement for two pianos by Camille Saint-Saëns (see Illus. 25 below).  

Illus. 25: Liszt–Saint-Saëns, *Sonata*, reduction, two-piano arrangement, bars 1-6

In the *Preface* to his widely distributed study of the Liszt *Sonata*, Kenneth Hamilton states that “[Paul] Egert is the source of the view that the Sonata is based on one single theme (the initial descending scale) that we find reiterated by Claudio Arrau in ‘Some Final Thoughts’ in the Henle edition of the manuscript facsimile.” Hamilton’s statement is an outright falsification of Egert’s analysis. Egert’s very first musical example is highlighted by editorial arrows and explanatory notes which stress unequivocally that the *Sonata* begins with an initial ascending seventh leap in bar 2 (eин “auf-steigender Septimensprung”), which is metamorphosed into a descending seventh leap in bar 9 (ein “ab-steigender Septimensprung” according to Egert). To set the record straight, I shall list the positive aspects of Egert’s analysis while acknowledging its political bias and shortcomings (see Illus. 26 below).

Illus. 26: Liszt-Egert: ascending (bars 2, 5) and descending seventh intervals (bar 9)

Paul Egert’s essay was published in Adolf Hitler’s Germany. The ideological bias of his essay notwithstanding—Egert quotes Richard Wagner’s flatteringly praise of the *Sonata*, and then analyzes it in terms of “Leitmotives” and “Barform”—the essay’s main aim is to “demonstrate that the 764 (sic!) bar-long

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piece grows out of one single motive encompassing three bars of music.”

Regrettably, Egert’s attempt to demonstrate that the opening gestures in statu nascendi [in the process of being born] become thematic pillars of the Sonata is inconsistent, and thus Egert’s analytical edifice collapses due to its own structural weaknesses. Nevertheless, his analysis of the Sonata’s opening six bars (3 bars times 2) is the “key” that unlocks the single genetic filo of the Sonata.

The Sonata’s opening gestures are perceived by Egert not only as phenomena in statu nascendi but also as a materialization of the il filo principle that links the ascending seventh leap (bar 2) with the descending seventh leap (bar 9). The illustration below summarizes the essence of Egert’s concept (see Illus. 27).

![Illustration 27: Liszt-Egert: Sonata, bars 1-3, 4-6 in statu nascendi (chromatic expansion)]

Analysts often label the Sonata’s opening as descending “Frigian” / “Gypsy” scales. No, retorts Egert; the “ascending-then-descending gene” (bars 1-3) is simply recast as its own chromatically expanded alter ego (bars 4-6, see Illus. 27 above).

After this perfect start, Egert postulates the existence of an Übergangsform [Illus. 26 above, staff two, “transition form”] meant to bridge the notes on the first staff with those on the third one. But the Übergangsform is a bizarre invention of Egert which yields no common denominator between bars 1-3 and 8-13.

How, then, do the Sonata’s opening gestures really relate to one another?

The Sonata’s single filo (bars 1-3) and its chromatically expanded alter ego (bars 4-6; note the accidentals placed within parentheses in Illus. 27 above) have a subliminal effect on listeners “schooled” in traditional triadic structures. The momentum of the three singled-out pitches responsible for the “chromatic upward slide” effect of Illus. 27 above, bars 2-3 and 5-6, propel the expanding gestures towards an inevitable resolution on the G minor triad (see Illus. 28 below):

![Illustration 28: A tonal decoy (G minor, bars 1-8) and its B minor “re-orientation” (bar 9)]

44 „Die nachfolgende Untersuchung der Motivik wird zeigen, daß das 764 Takte umfassende Werk tatsächlich aus einem Motiv von der Länge dreier Takte herausgewachsen ist.“

45 Egert’s remaining “transition forms” are irrelevant for my essay and will not be dealt with here.

46 A chromatic rise opens Chopin’s Sonata op. 35 (bars 2-5, G-sharp, A-natural, B-flat) and Liszt’s Malédiction Concerto (S. 121, bars 1, 3, 5) / Prometheus (S. 99i, bars 1, 7, 13, the latter two with F-natural, F-sharp, G-natural.)
A G minor triad is indeed present in Liszt’s 1851 sketch (Illus. 29 below, bars 3-6):

The opening five pitches of Liszt’s 1851 sketch (G minor, bars 1-6) is reminiscent of the opening five notes of W. A. Mozart’s Fantaisie in C minor, K.475: C-natural, E-flat, F-sharp, G-natural, A-flat.
In light of the aforementioned *il filo* type analysis, the “checklist” concept of “five themes” is a poor analytical paradigm since it equates musical gestures *in statu nascendi* with full-fledged themes. Only the *Hauptsatz-Seitensatz* duality of the *Sonatenhauptsatzform* is compatible with the full-fledged B minor *Hauptthema* (*tempus imperfectum*, the “First Adam”, bars 32-35) and the full-fledged D major *Seitenthema* (*tempus perfectum*, the “Second Adam”, i.e., the Christ, bars 105-110). The *Hauptsatz-Seitensatz* duality of Liszt’s *Sonata* in B minor finds a symbolic match in John Milton’s “*Le paradis perdu*” (*Paradise Lost*), a “*Halbfranzband*” bilingual edition presented to Liszt by the Princess Carolyn Sayn-Wittgenstein in 1847, which is referred to intermittently in his correspondence with her.⁴⁸

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Of Man’s First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heav’nly Muse...

The true “third theme” of the Sonata—the Pavlovna Lied—is first heard after the “Crucifixion” scene (see Illus. 2 above); hence it probably symbolizes the “substance of Love” that flowed forth from the wounds of the Crucified One.

The Pawlowa Lied was incompatible with the Sonata’s genealogical il filo (Illus. 30 above); hence Liszt had to alter it along these lines (see Illus. 31 below).

And now, a summary of the Sonata’s “tonal intrigue”. Both the Sonata’s initial gesture and its chromatically expanded alter ego (bars 1-3, 4-6, respectively) are “impostors” plotting in a surreptitious sotto voce to enthrone G minor as the Sonata’s tonality. Following the third leap (bar 8, Allegro energico, crescendo), the repeated pitch G-natural is “unmasked” as the sixth scale degree of B minor (bar 9, forte), thereby revealing the true identity of the “fake” pitch B-flat: an A-sharp, i.e.,

figuré seulement, mais de l’amour réel et substantiel, contrairement aux théologiens pédants, auxquels Milton n’accorde aucunement voix au chapitre. ... Satan grandi dans des proportions infinies ne peut être que le Doute, la Douleur muette, le Silence béant. Il projette bien — comme Soleil — Esprit des Ténèbres, des rayons de Négation et de Mort — mais lui-même dans son essence, n'en est pas atteint. Il ne nie pas, il ne meurt pas — il souffre et doute. A la vérité un Satan fait de ce bois, ne se laisse pas aisément rimer en poème épique — mais à tort ou à raison, il me semble que la conception en serait plus dans notre sentiment poétique d’aujourd’hui. » [in Lettres / de Franz Liszt / à la / princesse Carolyne Säyn-Wittgenstein / éditées / par / La Mara / avec deux portraits / Paris / Librarie Fischbacher / Leipzig / Imprimerie et Librairie Breitkopf & Härtel 1900., p. 15 - 16].

21
the leading note of the Sonata’s “true” B minor tonality (bar 9). Thereupon the ascending leaps are “expelled” by being “hurled down” along a zigzagged path made of three descending leaps that “land” on pitch A-sharp in bar 13. A vi-V-i cadence at bars 31-32 finally “anchors” the Sonata in its true B minor tonality.

The VI – V – I cadence is the signature “il filo” of both Ludwig van Beethoven’s “programmatic” Sonata op. 81a, Das Lebewohl (The Farewell), Die Abwesenheit (The Separation), and Das Wiedersehen (The Reunion), and of Liszt’s Paradise Lost / Paradise Regained type symbolic concept of the B minor Sonata.

The “energetic expulsion” from high to low register (see bars 7-10, Illus. 29 above) is the same “intrigue of cosmic proportions” on the “deceptive” 6th scale degree “G-natural” which animates the Scherzo in B minor, op. 20 by Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849). The Scherzo is titled in the original English edition as “Le Banquet Infernal” (London: Wessel, 1835). The diabolical element is symbolized in both the Scherzo and the Sonata through a descending seventh leap, symbol of Lucifer, and of Adam and Eve’s Expulsion from Paradise (see Illus. 32 below).

Illus. 32: The “Fall from Paradise” as symbolized by Chopin (1.) and Liszt (2.)

But whereas Chopin begins his Scherzo with the scene of the Fall, Liszt begins his Sonata with the event that leads to the Fall: the Serpent’s Temptation.

Below is a list of the “flashcard” type symbolism that dominates the Scherzo:

Illus. 33: Tritone hemiola as the Lucifer-Sathan\(^49\) duality in Chopin’s Scherzo op. 20

\(^{49}\) The graphic illustration is a cut-out from Eloy d’Amerval’s Le Livre de la Deablerie, Paris: Michel le Noir, 1508.
The divine element is constituted of the Polish Christmas Carol *Lulajże, Jezuniu, moja perelko* [Sleep, little Jesus, my little pearl] (see Illus. 36 below).

Neither Chopin’s *Scherzo* nor Liszt’s *Sonata* lend themselves to a “line-by-line” account of *Paradise Lost* / *Paradise Regained*. A chronological interpretation of bars 297-306 of the Liszt *Sonata* would yield two crucifixions of Christ; it is sheer nonsense. Nevertheless, when we take into account that the hammered *Grandioso* theme is a *unicum* in the *Sonata*, the feeling of a single event predominates. It is as though Liszt, unencumbered by a timely sequence of events, meditates repeatedly on the tragic contrast between the mob (*turba*) and the soliloquy of the Crucified One (*vox Christi*).

I conclude this essay by stating that the Chopin *Scherzo* op. 20 and the Liszt *Sonata* are symbolic works, whereas Liszt’s *Via crucis* is programmatic; both the symbolic and the programmatic works use one and the same musical sign-language.

Through the structural conciseness of its single “*filo*”, Liszt’s *Sonata* takes its place alongside the greatest compositions of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven.

**In memoriam** William Stein Newman (1912-2000) who mentioned my research on symbolism in Liszt and basso continuo in Beethoven in his own publications.

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50 I gratefully acknowledge the help of Mikko Huotari and Michael Leonard in editing this essay.
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Editorial

In this year's Journal, four new contributors discuss Franz Liszt from a variety of aspects: as a composer, a biographer, a literary eclectic and an unwitting inspiration for excessive analysis of piano-technique in one of his pupils.

Liszt's Piano Sonata continues to inspire discoveries and in his article *Liszt's Sonata in b minor and a Woman Composer's Fingerprint*, Prof. Szász finds a new and persuasive argument regarding the origin of the *Andante sostenuto / quasi Adagio* theme. Prof. Szász is a distinguished pianist of international repute. He studied with the Romanian pianist Eliza Ciuian, a former pupil of Alfred Cortot and in 1967 he, together with Radu Lupu, became Laureate of the George Enescu International Piano Competition. Continuing his studies in the United States with Leon Fleisher and Theodore Lettvin, he won first prize at three international competitions. Since then he has given Piano Recitals regularly throughout Europe, the United States, Canada and Taiwan.

Liszt the biographer is examined in the next article, *Perspectives on Liszt's Chopin* by Dr. Meirion Hughes. Liszt embarked on his biography of Chopin very soon (some consider too soon) after the composer's death. Dr. Hughes discusses the political background and the sometimes stormy relationship between these two very different personalities. Dr. Hughes is a lecturer, writer, broadcaster (Radio 3) and a teacher in the History Department of the University of Wales. He was Artistic Director for a revival of Thomas Attwood's Ballad-Opera *St David's Day* in 1992. As well as contributing chapters to a number of publications, Dr. Hughes has published two books on the English Musical Renaissance and his latest book, *Liszt's Chopin: A New Edition* will be published in November 2010.

The pianist and musicologist Prof. Bertrand Ott is a graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur in Paris where he received first prize in Piano and Musical Aesthetics. His article *Marie Jaëll, an Independent Pianist and Pedagogue or a Disciple of Liszt?*, demonstrates how she attempted to explain Liszt's magical playing in physiological and scientific terms. Prof. Ott was Professor of Piano at the Conservatoire de Région Angers for thirty years, retiring in 1994 in order to spend more time on solo recitals and lecture-tours throughout Europe and the United States. He is currently vice-president of European Piano Teachers Association in France and has written articles for a number of international journals as well as a book on Liszt entitled *Liszttian Keyboard Energy/Liszt et la Pédagogue du Piano*. Prof. Ott has dedicated this article on Marie Jaëll, which was originally in French, to the memory of Pauline Pockneil, who translated it.
Pauline Pocknell died in August 2006; she was a French Language expert who became Alan Walker's chief research assistant at McMaster University, Ontario. Having become interested in Liszt, she published several seminal articles about him, including a translation of the extensive correspondence between Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth. She is greatly missed, not only for her scholarship but also for her ebullient personality.

*Performance and the Literary Imagination: Liszt's years of Pilgrimage* by Paul Roberts is taken from an illustrated lecture he gave on March 15, 2010 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he is Professor of Piano and Honorary Fellow. Prof. Roberts discusses the emergence of Romanticism in the 19th century and the phenomenon of music inspired by its literature, with particular reference to *Liszt's Années de Pèlerinage*. Prof. Roberts also teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music and is Director of the Piano Summer School in France *Music at Ambialet*. As a pianist, writer and lecturer, Prof. Roberts' performing career takes him round the world, especially to the United States. He is a leading authority on the music of Debussy and author of a seminal book *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy*, a combined study of music, poetry and painting. Currently he is undertaking a research project at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, on the piano music of Liszt and its relation to literature.

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http://www.tiborszasz.de/en/content/start

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAxpNChqPoc

END