Liszt as Critic: Virtuosity, Aesthetics, and the Artist in Liszt’s Weimar Prose (1848-1861)

A Dissertation

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by

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ABSTRACT

Liszt as Critic: Virtuosity, Aesthetics, and the Artist in Liszt’s Weimar Prose (1848-1861)

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
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By Elizabeth Perten

In this dissertation, I explore Liszt’s significance as author and music critic through an analysis of four of his series of character portraits from his Weimar period (1848-1861). In these writings, Liszt not only contributes to the mid-century debate over musical aesthetics on the side of the musical progressives (the New Germans), but he also effectively continues to promote his own musical values and aesthetics to his audience, many ideas of which he had introduced in earlier prose works. Through examination of Liszt’s essays on John Field, Clara Schumann, Robert Franz, and Pauline Viardot-Garcia, I illustrate how Liszt strives to achieve the overarching goal of his prose works: to educate the musical public (both contemporary and in the future) to recognize, support, and promote “true” musical artists and artistry. By deconstructing the talents of these well-known musical figures in his character portraits, Liszt explains to his reader why this specific artist should be venerated. Liszt is seldom viewed in music history as an influential writer, nor is the content of his literary works frequently examined in scholarship. Through my analysis of Liszt’s character portraits I will demonstrate his importance as a music critic, thus acknowledging Liszt’s significance in each facet of his life, of which his role as author is of integral importance.
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A Note to Readers

All translations in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise noted. The exception lies with the Field chapter in which all translations are done by Schuberth, unless stated. In the Viardot, Schumann, and Franz chapters, paragraph numbers refer to the essay as it is was published in the 1881 Ramann edition. The edits Ramann makes are inconsequential to the content of these works, but her separation of the portrait into several (more) paragraphs helps me (and the reader as well) to more clearly refer to specific elements of the prose in my analyses. The same logic applies to the Field chapter, wherein paragraph numbers refer to the Schuberth edition.
Introduction

My dissertation examines the significance of Franz Liszt (1811-1886) as a music critic and author during his Weimar period (1848-1861). Musicological scholarship tends to approach Liszt from three perspectives: as the touring virtuoso of the 1830s and 1840s, as the creator of the symphonic poem in the 1850s, or as the contemplative composer of his later years. These studies lavish detailed attention on his music, but his criticism remains almost entirely ignored. With a literary output rivaling those of other great composer-critics such as Berlioz, Schumann, and Wagner, however, Liszt’s writings have the power to provide a first-hand perspective of nineteenth-century European cultural and musical life at the time from one of its most prominent figures.

Liszt’s own criticism, in the form of essays and articles, was published across Germany during his Weimar period in both daily newspapers and musical journals. Two-thirds of his literary output dates from this period and includes works such as his famed essay “Berlioz und Seine ‘Harold’ Symphonie,” writings on Wagner’s operas (Lohengrin and Tannhäuser), and his Chopin biography, among several other important but unfamiliar publications. In these works,
among others, Liszt offers critiques and commentaries of contemporary pieces and composers, in addition to addressing topics such as the development of musical form, the role of the artist in society, and the future of music. In light of the mid-nineteenth century debate over musical aesthetics that dominated musical activity in Germany, analysis of this body of works proves even more significant and is sorely lacking in musicological scholarship.

This project explores Liszt’s musical aesthetics and values through examination of his character portraits of contemporary musical figures. The idea of the Charakterkopf (“Character head”) began in Germany as a literary trend in the early nineteenth-century. Liszt followed suit with his series of Charakterköpfe published in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (NZfM) dating from Winter 1854 and spanning the entirety of the following year. In this collection, Liszt venerated Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann, A. B. Marx, Hector Berlioz, Robert Franz, and Eduard Sobolewski. Two more works complete the set. Liszt also published essays on recently deceased composer John Field (La France Musicale, 1851) and on contemporary opera singer Pauline Viardot-Garcia (NZfM, 1859). As a collection, these individuals represent a variety of contemporary musical figures – composers from both the musically conservative and progressive parties (R. Schumann, Berlioz, Franz) and one celebrated by both groups (Field), a conductor/composer (Sobolewski), theorist aligned with the musical conservatives (Marx), prima donna (Viardot), and a pianist/composer (C. Schumann). Because Liszt promotes his own ideas on musical aesthetics through this diverse collection of figures, his character portraits both go beyond the political disputes of the day, yet also engage directly with issues central to the discussion. In my dissertation I analyze Liszt’s portraits of Field, C. Schumann, Franz, and
Viardot.¹ I will complete my examination of this collection with chapters on Berlioz, R. Schumann, Marx, and Sobolewski in the monograph I intend to prepare in the near future.

The four musical figures I cover in my dissertation are a collection of innovative and important mid-nineteenth century composers and musicians whose ideas about music were highly influential to their contemporaries and artists of future generations. These artists primarily composed in smaller genres, such as the Lieder of Franz and Schumann or Nocturnes of Field. This similarity makes comparison between Liszt’s presentations of each artist more evocative as he discusses similar artistic elements in each prose work. That Liszt specifically chose to examine each artist represented in this group further illustrates their significance, though the contributions of these figures are scantily represented in musicological literature today. Furthermore, since these portraits stem from Liszt’s personal connection to each figure (save for John Field), it is likely that the creation of this series was probably least affected by outside assistance (see “The authorship controversy” section below).

Liszt strongly believed that “the real critic must himself be an artist.”² This statement both informs Liszt’s own approach to music criticism and provides further impetus for my analyses of his literary works. Since only an “artist” may critique the works of others, in his prose Liszt takes great pains to define the artist and examine the concepts of artistry and virtuosity. A core feature of the true artist is one who produces “art for Art’s sake.” Liszt’s goal is to educate his reader so that he or she may be able to identify and support true artistry in the present and future. These themes, among others, permeate not only Liszt’s Weimar prose, but his literary output in general.

¹ What I find very interesting (and just as alarming) is the lack of discussion of Liszt’s prose works of these major musical figures in the musicological scholarship centered around the figure itself. These artists represent some of the most important composers and musicians in nineteenth-century Europe and to have an equally as famous contemporary write about them is an important historical event that has been overlooked for far too long.
The idea of educating the audience is the driving force behind Liszt’s prose. As he highlights in the Franz and Viardot essays especially, the longevity of music and of great artistry primarily depends on the ability of the musical public to recognize and support “true” artists. This special class of “true” artists, as we learn from Liszt’s character portraits as well as his earlier literary works, comprises those artists which are inspired by Nature, and not fame or money, for example, to produce art. Through performance, these rare artists introduce their listener to the capabilities of music while simultaneously challenging the audience to accept, promote, and support those talents and ideas which stray from the norm.

As he explains in his “Situation of Artists” essay (and as I explore in the Viardot chapter), Liszt believes that the musical public has the responsibility to maintain the presence and state of art (and new art) in contemporary society. With such an obligation, though, the musical public must be taught to look beyond the fame of some artists to their true artistic core, a difficult feat for the layperson and musically elite alike. By deconstructing several “true” artists, Liszt provides his readers with a bounty of tools to aid them in their search for unique musical talent. With the hopeful longevity of his published works, Liszt’s instructions to his readers should extend far beyond his own lifetime and will still be applicable, though ideally less necessary, to audiences to come.

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In this dissertation, I illustrate how through his character portraits Liszt engages in contemporary politics and promotes his own musical values and aesthetics to his reader, while simultaneously critiquing the conservative musical ideals. He often achieves this by reframing contemporary composers, with or without their consent, as progressively-leaning and sympathetic towards Liszt’s own and the musical progressives’ point of view. This can be clearly
seen in the chapters discussing John Field and Robert Franz. Close reading of Liszt’s prose and rhetorical methods pervade each chapter. I demonstrate how Liszt wrote to educate his audience (according to his own aesthetic ideals) and specifically angled his prose based on the political atmosphere of the time.

In my examination of each character portrait I take a different methodological approach. Since no scholar has examined Liszt’s prose in depth, this study is meant to be an example for future work in the fields of not only musicology, but arts and literary criticism, and women’s and gender studies as well. It is my goal to illustrate to other scholars, by example, the strength and effectiveness found when examining Liszt’s writings from several perspectives.

While I highlight different themes in each prose work, many similarities exist between the essays as well. Structurally, the four character portraits presented here follow a parallel two-part construction (Liszt’s more general, philosophical, and musical reflections followed by a biography of the titular musical figure). As perhaps expected, Liszt’s rhetorical style – full of vivid, Nature-inspired imagery and poignant descriptions of emotions – also serves to unite his prose works. At times, I point to these similarities within the text, but I also urge my reader to make connections between these common elements on his or her own.

I structure the chapters of my dissertation chronologically. First, I examine the Field article (1851) which I argue is one of the earliest – if not the earliest – works of prose in which Liszt introduces the idea of program music and its traits to the musical public, a central issue in the aesthetics debate. My analysis in this chapter relies primarily on the study of Field’s Nocturne IV in A Major (1817) to illustrate the effects of actually applying Liszt’s prose and descriptive analysis to the score itself.
I then consider Liszt’s treatment of the conservative party through his portrait of Clara Schumann (1855). In my discussion of the Schumann portrait, I explore the relationship between music and gender in Liszt’s assessment of Clara’s value as an artist and composer. The presence of Clara’s husband Robert throughout the prose also makes for interesting discussion regarding contemporary gender roles and the Schumanns’ engagement with them. Liszt clearly genders Clara, forcing her into conventional societal gender norms in an effort to both critique her approach to music and also that of the conservative party.

An analysis of Liszt’s essay on the now lesser-known composer Robert Franz (1855) follows. Franz presents an interesting case study, as his works had been embraced by both Liszt and Schumann (representative of the progressive and conservative parties). In his character portrait, though, Liszt (re)claims Franz as a “progressive” composer. I discuss the reasons and ramifications for this declaration and how in this essay Liszt uses Schumann’s own reasoning to promote Franz as a liberally-leaning composer.

I complete my presentation of this set of musical figures with Liszt’s portrait of Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1859). Liszt’s essay on this celebrated prima donna, as the last in the series of Liszt’s character portraits from his Weimar period and the last substantial published literary work of his career, provided Liszt with the ideal opportunity to clearly and convincingly restate his thoughts on the artist and the artist’s role in society one final time. Through his focus on Viardot Liszt educates his reader about the importance of the artist and ambitiously strives to teach the musical public how to recognize and value “great” artists in the present and future. Liszt had first put forth these ideas on the artist in one of his earliest prose works, “On the Situation of Artists and on their Condition in Society” (1835). By using the “Artists” essay as a lens through which to analyze Liszt’s presentation of Viardot as an artist, I trace the presence and
development of Liszt’s philosophies on the artist and the (re-)education of the musical public over the course of almost twenty-five years.

The Viardot and Clara Schumann character portraits are of great importance as they represent the only essays Liszt wrote on women throughout his literary career. With my study of these two essays I contribute to a recurring trend in musicological scholarship wherein Liszt’s relationship with women (both his swooning fans and companions, d’Agoult and Wittgenstein) has received a great deal of attention.\(^3\)

Each chapter is grounded in primary source research undertaken in the Weimar archives.\(^4\) The Goethe-Schiller Archiv’s vast collection of Liszt’s correspondence helped me to recreate the creative atmosphere in Liszt’s Weimar home, the Altenburg, in addition to investigating Liszt’s relation to contemporary musical politics. Consultation of Liszt’s correspondence with longtime companion Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein as well as contemporary composers, business associates, and friends provided me with further insight into his literary output at this time. This collection contains several letters between Liszt and Berlioz, Marx, Clara and Robert Schumann, Viardot, and Wagner. Further, letters from those in Liszt’s artistic circle, those of Hans von Bülow, Peter Cornelius, and Joachim Raff, for example, continue to expound upon the important issues, ideas, and relationships between members of Liszt’s circle and other figures in Weimar at this time.

With this project I hope to foster productive dialogue about Liszt and his singular role as an author and music critic in nineteenth-century Germany. Liszt is seldom viewed in music history as an influential writer, nor is the content of his literary works frequently examined in

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\(^3\) For more information, see the “Liszt and Women” section of Michael Saffle’s 2013 publication, *Franz Liszt: A Research and Information Guide*. More information on this topic can be found by researching the “Lisztomania” that dominated Europe during the 1840s, as well as in articles discussing Liszt’s relationship with specific women, Agnes Street-Klindworth, for example.

\(^4\) I thank the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst) and the Klassik Stiftung Weimar for the support and financial assistance provided to me to complete this research in Weimar.
scholarship. Through my analysis of Liszt’s character portraits I demonstrate his importance as a music critic, thus acknowledging Liszt’s significance in each facet of his life, of which his role as author is of integral importance.

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Before embarking on my analysis of Liszt’s series of character portraits, it is important for the reader to have some general knowledge about the musico-political context of the time. In his chapter “The War of the Romantics,” Walker explains the precursors to the separation of the German musical community into conservative and progressive parties, as well as the events of the schism itself. Yet Walker’s description of this debate remains very much at the surface. Perhaps Taruskin’s overview of “The New German School” in Music of the Nineteenth Century from his Oxford History of Western Music provides a better introduction. Here, Taruskin not only presents the main characters with much greater detail than Walker (and others), but also discusses the deliberately constructed creation of these two groups, the interpersonal relationships between its players, and their philosophical, historical, and musical differences. He also confronts the usual scholastic vagueness that surrounds this “war.” Using Taruskin as an example I hope that this critical point in nineteenth-century German music history receives increased attention in the field in the years to come.

The main figures on the conservative side of this debate were Mendelssohn, Robert and Clara Schumann, Brahms, and later, music critic Eduard Hanslick; Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, and the New German School numbered among the most significant of their progressive

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counterparts. Liszt served as the leader and figurehead of the musical progressives. Walker lists the main points of contention between the two factions: “programme music versus absolute music, form versus content, the oneness versus the separateness of the arts, newness versus oldness, revolution versus reaction.” The future of musical form, especially sonata form, was an especially contentious idea.

Yet the divisions between the two parties were not so easily defined. Liszt remained friendly with Schumann and continued to program his works, for example, throughout the mid-nineteenth century until Schumann’s death in 1856. Robert Schumann, unlike his wife Clara, did not clearly lie on either side of the divide, but was claimed somewhat vigorously by the musical conservatives and has been strongly allied to them ever since. As we shall see in the Franz chapter, Liszt is also guilty of this offense. These sorts of artificial “claims” by one party or the other illustrate the somewhat constructed nature of this “war” in general. Furthermore, as opposed to the very real existence of the New German School, the conservative party barely existed and certainly not in the same great numbers.

The “War of the Romantics” was in fact, a war of words, with music criticism serving as the recurrent instigator in this debate. Both groups took to disparaging the other in the German musical press; Schumann and Hanslick primarily wrote on behalf of the musical conservatives, while Liszt and Richard Pohl, among other members of the New German School, contributed

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7 The New German School was a group of progressively-leaning musical figures in the mid-nineteenth century. Coined “The New German School” by Brendel in a speech before the meeting of the Tonkünstler-Versammlung held in Weimar in 1859, this group promoted “music of the future.” It included not only then-known musical figures such as Liszt, Wagner, and Brendel, but also a collection of Liszt’s disciples from Weimar, including Hans von Bülow, Joachim Raff, Felix Draeske, Richard Pohl, Peter Cornelius, and Carl Tausig, among many others. This group provided much of the music criticism and articles in support of the musical progressives published in the NZfM and elsewhere. Thomas Grey provides a succinct overview of the New German School and their significance at this time in his New Grove entry on the party. The New Germans are also the topic of an extensive project housed at the Liszt Hochschule für Musik in Weimar under the leadership of Detlef Altenburg. James Deaville, a member of the Weimar research team, has also written extensively about the New German School and their activities in the mid-nineteenth century.

8 Walker, Liszt: The Weimar Years, 338.
articles espousing the progressive perspective. The combative tone of this debate was first established by Brendel in response to the polemics of Hanslick in his 1854 book *Vom Musikalisich-Schönen* (“The Beautiful in Music”) among other writings. Two main events catapulted this debate into the public musical sphere: the change in editorship of the music journal the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (*NZfM*) from Schumann to Franz Brendel in 1844 and the publication of a “Manifesto” against the perceived progressive slant of the *NZfM* in the *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo* on 6 May 1860. This open letter was signed by renowned musical figures including Brahms, Joseph Joachim, and Ferdinand Hiller. Simply put, this mid-century debate over musical aesthetics affected all musical figures and the development of music in Germany (and perhaps even in Europe) at this time.9

The publication of Liszt’s prose works in the *NZfM* at this point in the nineteenth century is particularly important as his writings were able to reach an audience of readers that would likely not have been exposed to his music. Seeing as some musical centers, such as Leipzig, were under conservative control, Liszt’s music would not be performed there. Since his literary works put into words what his music – especially his symphonic poems – sought to achieve, Liszt’s musical values and aesthetics could reach a more distant audience. This is especially pertinent because his prose works often predated the composition and performance of his symphonic poems. The republication of some of Liszt’s prose works both abroad and in English translation,

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9 Many scholars now believe that the “War of the Romantics” was not the malicious idea of a “war” that is often associated with this period. Though holding contrasting views on a variety of issues, many participants were still friendly with their colleagues and even programmed and performed works of composers from the opposing party. Liszt is a fine example. In the Clara Schumann chapter, one can see how friendly Liszt remained with Robert Schumann at this time. He continued to have Schumann’s works performed (and premiered) in Weimar throughout the 1850s. Though this perspective on the “War of the Romantics” is not often found in print, my perspective here stems from a discussion on this matter that I have had with several scholars of nineteenth-century music.
often shortly after their initial publication, also allowed Liszt’s musical ideals to spread throughout Europe and the United States.\textsuperscript{10}

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An overview of the present state of scholarship focusing on Liszt as author and critic will illustrate the necessity for this project in another light. Given that Liszt’s authorship was so heavily questioned by past scholars, which then contributed to (or perhaps even caused) the dearth of critical work on Liszt’s writings throughout the twentieth-century, my project will fill an important gap in Liszt studies.

A. The authorship controversy

The extended discussion dominating musicological scholarship on Liszt during the mid-twentieth century questioned the authorship of his literary writings and musical orchestrations. The authenticity debate governed Liszt scholarship well into the latter half of the century, thereby limiting other avenues of Liszt research, including a close analysis of his literary work. Because many scholars were so consumed with proving that Liszt did not write his own works, seldom did anyone focus on the work’s genesis, historical significance, or content of the essays themselves. The few that did so failed to probe deeply into the importance of Liszt as a writer, choosing instead to focus on the origins of his ideas. The major thrust of this scholarship was to question Liszt’s originality, with scholars often citing Liszt’s longtime companions Marie d’Agoult or Wittgenstein as the “true” creative force behind Liszt’s literary output.

The debate proved to be mainly single-sided, with French scholar Emile Haraszti leading the reexamination of Liszt’s authorship, as evidenced by his 1944 article “Franz Liszt écrivain et penseur. Histoire d’une mystification” (translated into English by John A. Gutman as “Franz

\textsuperscript{10} This idea is explored in great detail in the chapter on John Field.
Liszt--Author despite Himself: The History of a Mystification” published in 1947). In this article, Haraszti concludes that the only writings that could truly be attributed to Liszt were his correspondence; everything else was penned by either d’Agoult or Wittgenstein. Haraszti even attributes Liszt’s supposed initial impulse to write, or rather publish, to the women, stating that because d’Agoult wanted Liszt to become a critic, for her own benefit, she assisted him in his early writing career. Wittgenstein supposedly influenced Liszt by prompting him to “give up his Germanic culture” (506), thereby leading him to laud composers and works of French (and other European) origins in publication. Haraszti concludes that d’Agoult and Wittgenstein both manipulated Liszt and benefited from his newfound position and status as an author.

Haraszti’s statements appeared to go unchallenged in scholarship until the 1970s when works by Irving Lowens and Eleanor Perényi, for example, proceeded to illustrate the gross inaccuracies of Haraszti’s claims. Now that musicologists began to question Haraszti’s seemingly outlandish statements, they needed evidence to dispel these “facts,” often turning to source and manuscript studies for evidentiary support.11

Perényi’s thoughtful Liszt biography, Franz Liszt: The Artist as Romantic Hero (1974) presents an in-depth look into Liszt’s life and career to 1865 (Liszt’s move to Rome), while also providing the reader with a critique of past scholarship supported by carefully constructed and usually compelling reevaluations, explanations and analyses. For example, Perényi illustrates the fallacies of Haraszti’s “savage and not always convincing attack” (176) through an analysis of one of Liszt’s “Letters of a Bachelor of Music” addressed to Berlioz (1839) where he includes a discussion of Italian art and literature. According to Haraszti, this work was most assuredly

11 Scholars also heavily relied on source studies to illustrate Liszt’s compositional process, especially regarding his symphonic poems where his authorship has also been questioned as a result of Liszt’s reliance upon copyists and assistants when preparing his works for performance and publication (see Mueller and Bertagnolli citations below on pp. 14-15).
written by Marie d’Agoult. Perényi illustrates the shortcomings of Haraszti’s claims by examining Liszt’s personal connections to the topics covered in the prose (e.g. his devotion to Dante), comparison of the similar writing styles found in both Liszt’s published literary output and his private correspondence, an examination of d’Agoult’s own writings on Italian art from her memoirs, and Haraszti’s uninformed claim that d’Agoult had more experience than Liszt in the study and analysis of art. Perényi interweaves comments such as these throughout The Artist as Romantic Hero though regrettably, in terms of Liszt’s writings, she primarily focuses on his earlier literary works such as his “Letters of a Bachelor of Music.” Perényi limits discussion of writings from Liszt’s Weimar period to his two full-length books, Chopin and The Gypsies and their Music in Hungary, with passing mention of Liszt’s extensive literary output during this time in the concluding “Chronology of the Book” where she states that it was realized “with Carolyne’s assistance” (420). Perényi fails to include Liszt’s increased role as author in Part Five of her book, “Weimar and the Music of the Future (1848-1858),” thereby further justifying the need for my study.

Lowens’ “Liszt as Music Critic” (1979), provides an overview of the scholarship stemming from Haraszti’s views on Liszt’s writings. The main thrust of his article discusses the question of authenticity surrounding Liszt’s literary works and the ongoing debate over their “true” authorship. Citing Perényi as “the single writer who has disputed their [Haraszti’s claims regarding Liszt’s literary achievements] accuracy” (5), Lowens agrees with Perényi that despite the nature of his collaboration with either d’Agoult or Wittgenstein, Liszt’s writings are his own and should be attributed as such. By defining the distinct nature of the literary relationship between Liszt and both d’Agoult and Wittgenstein (Lowens believes that d’Agoult was Liszt’s literary collaborator, whereas Wittgenstein served merely as Liszt’s editor, and a mediocre one at
that), Lowens concludes that his study must remain inconclusive due to the lack of information regarding Liszt’s activities as a writer. Lowens believes that we as scholars cannot accurately assess Liszt’s significance as a music critic until we can actually account for his entire literary output. Thus, Lowens calls for a new collected edition of Liszt’s writings, citing the linguistic inadequacies of Ramann’s publication (see pp. 15-16). Detlef Altenburg responded to this call ten years later with the publication of the first volume of his collected edition of Liszt’s literary canon (see p. 16).

Haraszti’s claims prove even more problematic when one considers the discussion of Liszt’s literary works in the correspondence between Liszt and d’Agoult. In these letters, Liszt clearly lays out his approach to the writing and publication of his literary works. Liszt would dictate his thoughts to d’Agoult who would write them down, creating an initial draft of the literary work, which Liszt would then edit and revise several times before the work’s publication. When he arrived in Weimar, Liszt created an atelier of sorts, surrounding himself with several students and friends in addition to Wittgenstein, all of whom cooperated on Liszt’s behalf in both his literary and musical endeavors.

Another interesting contribution to the authorship problem in Liszt scholarship is Mária Eckhardt’s “New Documents on Liszt as Author” (1984). Eckhardt’s article presents new manuscript excerpts from four of Liszt’s essays, further proving that scholars should consider Liszt the sole author of his works. Following the trend of scholarship at the time, Eckhardt devotes a large portion of her essay to discussing the authenticity of Liszt’s prose. Through a historical analysis of these four new documents (coupled with several extended passages of translation), Eckhardt posits that “Liszt’s literary works do possess the clear value of conveying ideas on art and the role of the artist in society which remain valid to the present day” (181).
Perhaps the most recent defense of Liszt against Haraszti’s claims comes from Alan Walker. In his collection of essays *Reflections on Liszt* (2005), Walker includes a chapter entitled “Liszt the Writer: On Music and Musicians.” In this essay, Walker disputes Haraszti’s allegations by presenting a list of holographs that have resurfaced since the 1950s, while repeatedly stressing the point that despite employing “a small army of researchers, translators, and proofreaders to help him prepare his articles for the press,” Liszt himself should be held entirely responsible for the contents of his publications (218-219). Walker further justifies this belief by linking the ideas and opinions about music and art found in Liszt’s personal correspondence with those of his literary writings. Walker strongly asserts that “Liszt’s prose works with his thousands of letters leaves no doubt that with few exceptions everything came from one mind and one pen, Liszt’s own” (219). With this, one of the most direct (if not a bit extravagant) affirmations supporting Liszt’s authorship of his published literary works, Walker appears to finally have closed the authenticity debate surrounding the authorship of Liszt’s prose.

With articles and books by scholars such as Perényi, Eckhardt, Suttoni, Deaville, and Walker in the latter half of twentieth century effectively ending the authenticity debate over Liszt’s literary works (see section on “Liszt’s writings” below), the authorship controversy is no longer a viable means of approaching Liszt’s scholarly output. The general consensus among contemporary musicologists (myself included) finds in Liszt’s favor; even if Liszt did not physically pen each word of each article or essay, he closely supervised their production and revisions, approved their publication and they were indeed subsequently published under his name, works should be directly attributed to him. Furthermore, the same meticulousness that Liszt devoted to the revision and publication of his musical works, as highlighted by both Rena Charnin Mueller in “Liszt’s Tasso Sketchbook: Studies in Sources and Revisions” (Ph.D. diss.,
NYU, 1986), and Paul Bertagnolli in “Amanuensis or Author? The Liszt-Raff Collaboration Revisited” (*19th-Century Music*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer, 2002), pp. 23-51), should directly apply to Liszt’s approach to and accountability over the publication of his literary works as well. As a result of this commonly accepted belief, scholars are now beginning to show increased interest in Liszt’s writings, which will continue to grow with the ongoing publication and use of Altenburg’s new collected edition.

B. **Liszt literary editions**

The need for Altenburg’s edition, though, would not have been so great if not for complications with an earlier collected edition of Liszt’s literary works. Lina Ramann, one of the earliest Liszt biographers, compiled, edited and published the first complete edition of Liszt’s writings in 1881. Released five years before Liszt’s death, it is unknown how much influence, if any, he had over this publication, yet that Ramann partly collaborated with Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein has been posited by scholars. Several issues arise with Ramann’s effort, the most significant of which is Ramann’s decision to publish all of Liszt’s writings in German translation. Seeing as the majority of Liszt’s literary works were written in French, Ramann’s edition only provides translated and, at times, heavily edited prose. Unfortunately, several of the French originals are now lost, leaving scholars with only these edited German translations with which to conduct further study. In addition to revising the prose, Ramann also altered the order of publication of several series of articles originally printed sequentially in newspapers over several weeks. Take, for example, Liszt’s sequence of essays on the 1854 opera season being produced at the Weimar Theatre. Within this sequence, Liszt explains the development of opera from Gluck to Wagner, with the first essay “Weber’s *Euryanthe*” serving as introduction, and the last essay on Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* presenting a conclusion. Jay Rosenblatt suggests
that Liszt began this series with the Weber essay “because it set out the issues he intended to address throughout the series,” concluding the unit with the essay on Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* which “had a closing section that also appeared only in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (NZfM)* – a coda that served to sum up the entire series.” Ramann’s decision to publish these essays out of their original order makes it more difficult for the reader to follow Liszt’s trajectory of the progression of opera. Furthermore, Ramann opts to include the reworked versions of Liszt’s two books, *Chopin* and *The Gypsies and their Music in Hungary*. Both revisions proved to be controversial and deemed of lesser quality by scholars due to Wittgenstein’s marked influence over each book’s revisions. Lastly, Ramann’s collected edition proved to be incomplete, likely unbeknownst to her at the time, leaving behind an imperfect record of Liszt’s literary output.

The next critical edition of Liszt’s writings appeared over a hundred years later, a project begun in 1989 by Detlef Altenburg. Projected to be nine volumes in total, at the present four volumes are in print and readily available to scholars. With its inclusion of the texts’ original publication details, the policies of the original editors and journal in which the text first appeared, in addition to other pertinent commentary by the editor, Altenburg’s edition offers scholars access to Liszt’s literary canon and a large amount of important information in a single source. Altenburg has taken an interesting approach regarding the order of publication of his edition; each new volume will be issued upon its completion, regardless of volume number. For example, Volume 5 *Dramaturgische Blätter* was the first volume made available. Now that Liszt’s writings are more accessible to scholars, we are able to assess his importance as a music critic as well as the values and goals he attempts to instill through his prose.

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Despite the surge of interest in Liszt’s literary output over recent years, few translations of Liszt’s literary works have appeared in the twentieth century, leaving scholars to grapple with Liszt’s prose. Liszt’s rhetorical style, containing numerous examples of Romantic imagery and metaphors, often presents challenges to the modern scholar, perhaps resulting in a shying away from further study of his literary works. Akin to the majority of musicological scholarship, the translations that do exist often focus on Liszt’s earlier writings, with few translations of Liszt’s Weimar writings published to date, save Liszt’s *Chopin* which has been translated into English several times. Since I have begun this project Janita Hall-Swadley has embraced the large undertaking of crafting a complete English translation of Liszt’s literary works. To date, three volumes of her *Collected Writings of Franz Liszt* are in print. Notable contributions to musicological scholarship on Liszt’s earlier works include Suttoni’s translations of Liszt’s “Letters of a Bachelor of Music,” Locke’s recent translation of his essay “On the Artist in Society,” and Strunk’s work on Liszt’s “Berlioz und Seine ‘Harold’ Symphonie” essay.

C. Liszt’s writings

In a 1988 article “A Checklist of Publications of Liszt’s Writings. 1849-1879” published in the *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, James Deaville stated that because the controversy over the authorship of Liszt’s writings had dominated scholarly discussion for decades, “few articles exist that primarily deal with matters of aesthetics and style in his literary oeuvre. A catalog is still lacking and the first critical edition is just now in its beginning stages” (86).

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13 Scholars have raised question with Hall-Swadley’s choice to translate the Ramann collected edition. For the reasons cited above, Hall-Swadley knowingly provides readers with an inaccurate text. For example, see Anna Celenza’s review of the first two volumes of Hall-Swadley’s translation in *Music and Letters* (Volume 93.4, 2012: 611-614).

Deaville’s article seeks to call attention to the variety and quantity of Liszt’s literary output during this period. Highlighting the incompleteness of Ramann’s *Gesammelte Schriften*, Deaville claims that his “checklist” is likely incomplete as well. Despite his list’s deficiencies, Deaville still would like it to be “comprehensive” (87) and appeals to his colleagues to submit any additions or corrections to further improve the list’s integrity. Deaville also stresses the difficulties scholars face when approaching Liszt’s literary output. Altenburg’s edition, by including the texts’ original publication details, responds to Deaville’s point that, as time passes without proper documentation of Liszt’s writings, it is increasingly difficult for the scholar “to determine where Liszt’s articles originally appeared without consulting the disparate original publications themselves” (86). Deaville concludes his article with a “checklist” of Liszt’s writings during this thirty-year span (1849-1879). At the present time, Deaville’s list appears to be complete. In this article, Deaville succeeds in emphasizing the quantity and variety of Liszt’s writing during this period.

Charles Suttoni’s work on Liszt as an author has proved the most relevant and important to my work thus far. His two articles, “Liszt the Writer” (1996) and “Liszt’s Writings and Correspondence” (2002), both explore the reasons behind Liszt’s turn to writing as an artistic outlet and his overall humanistic goals in doing so. Suttoni clearly states in each essay that Liszt should be considered the sole author of his entire literary canon. In the first article, Suttoni analyzes Liszt’s writings as an integral part of his artistic vision, equal in importance to Liszt’s musical compositions. Suttoni ascribes Liszt’s “fervent belief in Art and its beneficial effects on the future of society” (64) as his initial impulse to write and publish. Describing his aversion to his past social status as a piano virtuoso, Suttoni explains Liszt’s identity as a writer as a personal means for him to rectify his life as an Artist and to add meaning to a seemingly superficial
existence and career. In addition to tracing the influence of the St. Simonian movement and Félicité Lamennais on Liszt’s prose, Suttoni divides Liszt’s literary career into two periods, the first, 1835-1841, occurring when Liszt was involved with d’Agoult and a touring virtuoso and the second period lasting from 1849-1860 when Liszt was in a relationship with Wittgenstein and served as Kapellmeister in Weimar. Presenting the reader with a “sampler” of Liszt’s writings throughout his career covering a range of topics, Suttoni highlights the underlying social commentary that pervades both periods of Liszt’s life. Suttoni cites an excerpt from Liszt’s 1838 “Lettre à Pictet” on the working conditions of the mills of Lyons as a prime example.

Suttoni’s second article, “Liszt’s Writings and Correspondence,” touches upon similar topics, mainly the ideas of “Humanistic Romanticism” and “the history and progress of musical art” (30). Here, Suttoni clearly states Liszt’s “three-fold conception of musical art,” as consisting of “an active appreciation of the classics; an ample opportunity to experience the modern; and all possible encouragement for the young and the new” (31). This statement can be seen as the justification for essentially all of Liszt’s literary activities and thoughts, especially his role as the main proponent of “music of the future” and primary supporter of Wagner in Germany. These ideas also overlap with the recurring themes found in Liszt’s writings that I examine in my dissertation. Suttoni’s discussion of Liszt’s conception of art and its effect on his literary activity provides my dissertation with a foundation of Liszt’s beliefs that I further explore and expand upon through my analysis of his writings.

Walker concludes his essay “Liszt the Writer: On Music and Musicians” (see p. 14) with a series of “Aphorisms, Maxims and Quotations” drawn from the canon of Liszt’s writings on music, composers, and performance practice. He further categorizes these excerpts under subtitles such as “On Genius and Talent,” “On Art and Artists,” “On Critics and Criticism,” and
so forth. Although the footnotes indicate the original essay from which each quote was drawn, this presentation fails to present Liszt’s writings in any sort of meaningful manner. By taking so many of Liszt’s thoughts and ideas out of context, Walker distorts their original meaning and intention. Furthermore, by drawing upon both correspondence and literary works, Walker merely presents a piecemeal misrepresentation of only a small handful of Liszt’s thoughts, thus illustrating an ineffective approach to presenting Liszt’s literary works.

Walker fares better in his chapter “The Scribe of Weimar,” taken from the second volume of his Liszt biography *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861* (1993). Prior to this chapter, Walker seldom places Liszt’s writings in historical context; he mainly highlights those of Liszt’s works that were produced in accordance with celebrations or festivals (e.g. the Goethe Foundation, “Berlioz Week,” or Mozart Centenary). Walker briefly mentions Liszt as a writer in relation to the *NZfM*, but only in reference to the *NZfM* serving as “a mouthpiece for Liszt and his disciples” during the War of the Romantics when it “began to pour forth a river of propaganda on behalf of the Weimar School” (341). By mentioning Liszt’s writings solely in connection to the “propaganda” of the Weimar School, Walker conflates Liszt’s entire literary output of his Weimar period to this one event. Furthermore, by discussing Liszt’s significance as an author and critic only fleetingly in one of the middle chapters of the book, Walker relegates Liszt’s role as author to be of secondary importance to his contributions as a musician, composer, and conductor.

“The Scribe of Weimar” briefly touches upon a variety of topics and issues related to Liszt’s literary output. Walker introduces the idea of Liszt as an author, stating that Liszt’s attitudes on certain musical issues such as “the nature of art, the role of the artist in society, the function of criticism, and the music of the future” (368) still remain relevant today. However,
after again affirming his support regarding the authenticity of Liszt’s writings [“Each piece of writing must be regarded as authentic unless there is evidence to dispute it.” (370)], Walker argues that Liszt used his articles to “focus the attention of the musical world on things topical (375).” Walker fails to explore this statement in greater depth, leaving much discussion and analysis to be desired. How did Liszt decide what subjects were “topical”? Did he follow some sort of hierarchy of artistic importance? Walker’s general comments about Liszt’s literary output would greatly benefit from deeper investigation. To strengthen his interpretation of Liszt’s work, Walker could have used passages from Liszt’s articles themselves as evidentiary support. After introducing the concept of Liszt as author, Walker only discusses Liszt’s Chopin and The Gypsies and their Music in Hungary books in greater detail, commenting on their historical origins, publication details, and controversial reception.

The most interesting aspect of Walker’s “The Scribe of Weimar” is his examination of Liszt’s thoughts and theories regarding genius, music, criticism, and the musician. Walker’s discussion of Liszt and music criticism pertains especially to my research. He takes a historical approach to this topic by situating Liszt’s time in Weimar with that of the burgeoning field of music criticism as a whole. Walker also discusses Liszt’s tumultuous relationship with the German press.15 He concludes that Liszt was the most targeted of the progressive composers of the time due to his high profile and to the group of disciples of the New German School who were quickly spreading around Germany (ex. von Bülow in Berlin, Tausig in Vienna, and Damrosch in Breslau). Yet, one of Walker’s most perplexing statements in this chapter is that “criticism of criticism” was a theme that ran throughout Liszt’s writings from his earliest years.

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This statement is puzzling because Walker provides no further explanation for this claim, yet it also further justifies my research. Walker implies that other scholars have perhaps considered similar topics, but have not pursued them.

Walker’s discussion of Liszt’s thoughts regarding music criticism also deserves special mention. As Liszt was the first artist to promote “peer criticism” – the main reason “why he constantly urged his pupils to take up cudgels on behalf of their own” (395) – Walker explains that Liszt believed that “The real critic must himself be an artist” (395) (see p. 2). Walker is the only scholar I found who discusses any aspect of Liszt’s approach to and views on music criticism. Liszt’s discussion of the nature of the critic’s authority as well as the criteria he or she (or even the public) uses when assessing a work of art or an artist presents another starting point and guiding inquiry for my research. My dissertation explores how this conversation and other issues regarding music criticism and music in general are manifested and potentially answered through close analysis of Liszt’s Weimar writings.

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16 Though not noted, Walker takes this phrase from the title of another one of Liszt’s Weimar writings, his article *Kritik der Kritik. Ulëischeff und Sëroff* which was published in the *NZfM* in January 1858.
This chapter presents one of the first analyses of Liszt’s essay, “Études Biographiques de John Field,” later published as “On John Field’s Nocturnes.” This character portrait of Field is one of the earliest – if not the earliest – prose works in which Liszt introduces the idea of program music and its traits to the musical public. It is also one of the only pieces of extended prose on Field written during the nineteenth century. The work was first published towards the beginning of Liszt’s Weimar period, in 1851 in La France Musicale and later served as the introductory essay to Liszt’s collected edition of Field’s Nocturnes in 1859. As the text of this work was kept essentially the same in its republication, this essay allows us to consider Liszt’s initial ideas regarding program music and explore their change in meaning and significance from two contextual vantage points within the 1850s.

In this character portrait Liszt strategically highlights those issues which were soon to become central to the mid-nineteenth century debate over musical aesthetics: the future of musical form and the dispute over absolute versus program music. Considering that the debate discussing music’s capabilities of expression spanned the decade, these two issues in particular
likely had their roots in earlier discussions. Through his discussion of Field’s innovative use of harmony, melody, and affect, Liszt effectively illustrates that the core components of program music were the foundational traits of music in general. Liszt locates Field (1782-1837) as a bridge between old and new composers and trends in compositional style, using the nostalgia audiences and contemporary composers might feel for Field to promote program music through familiar and approachable terms, composers, genres, and musical traits. I argue that by nostalgically highlighting Field’s “natural” genius and the “simplicity of sentiment” of his music, at the same time inveighing against the “modern school’s” approach to musical form and subservience to societal influence, Liszt makes clear his own views on contemporary compositional norms—and justifies his own break with formal expectations.

Through an examination of “On John Field’s Nocturnes,” I will illustrate how Liszt presented core concepts of program music, such as affect and the development of musical form, to his readers by re-presenting Field as a progressive nineteenth century composer. I provide a general overview of the essay’s structure and recurring themes, as well as Liszt’s rhetorical and political strategies that permeate the text, some suggestions more subtle than others. Lastly, I will examine the change in musico-historical context in the reception of this essay as it was read by two different audiences – French (1851) and international (1859) – at two different points in the same decade. The changes in meaning and reception of Liszt’s prose between its 1851 and 1859 publications will provide a clear illustration of the importance in examining the context behind Liszt’s prose.

“On John Field’s Nocturnes” has rarely been considered in musicological scholarship. Academic works on Field himself include a number of books and articles on his biography and music (primarily focusing on Field’s compositional style, creation of the nocturne, and his piano
“On John Field’s Nocturnes” is always included in lists of Liszt’s Weimar prose, yet only one author, Allan J. Wagenheim, has analyzed the content of the essay itself.

Unfortunately, his analysis proves problematic on several fronts. In his self-published book *John Field and the Nocturne*, Wagenheim, a pianist, states that Liszt’s goal in his essay on John Field was to “diminish the reputation of Field almost to the point of oblivion” through a “bloodless assassination” of Field in terms of his character and musical works, thus presenting Field as “naïve, artless, unconscious of self, shy, instinctive, as precious as his music.” Wagenheim believes that Liszt’s contempt for Field as illustrated through this “malicious” essay was to preserve both his own reputation and that of Chopin against Field’s (anecdotal) barbs regarding each composer’s performance style and compositions.

Without any primary sources for these allegations, or sources in general, Wagenheim’s analysis of the poor relationship between Field, Liszt and Chopin remains problematic. Further, he relies upon the 1902 Schirmer reprint of Liszt’s 1859 edition of Field’s Nocturnes. Since the Schirmer edition includes a much abbreviated version of Liszt’s original essay, Wagenheim only considers half of the essay in his analysis. Additionally, he fails to take any musical, historical, or political context into account in his remarks. The combination of these elements leaves us with a short, superficial account of Liszt’s essay on Field, one that is rife with errors and undocumented


claims. That Wagenheim’s work is the only “scholarship” on this prose work is detrimental both to the reputations of Field and Liszt and also perhaps discouraging for scholars who will carry out research on the relationship between these composers in detail in the future.

Furthermore, a perpetually reprinted error in the publication date of this essay in important reference works including *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* (now *Oxford Music Online*) and the 1881 Ramann collected edition of Liszt’s literary works further disguises its importance. These sources, among others, state that “On John Field’s Nocturnes” was first published in 1859, late in Liszt’s Weimar period. As I have discovered, by tracing Liszt’s reference to this work in a letter to Carolyne Wittgenstein (23 January 1851), it was actually first published several years earlier, in 1851, during Liszt’s earliest years in the city.\(^\text{19}\)

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, this change in publication date is crucial in exploring the significance of this essay at its time of publication. It makes this work one of Liszt’s earliest prose attempts to explain and promote the ideals of program music and the beliefs of the progressive party. This accepted error illustrates the continued need for scholars to return to the first publication of Liszt’s prose works (and the earliest primary sources in general) to be certain about their original publication details. As evidenced here and elsewhere in scholarship, Ramann cannot always be trusted to provide the most accurate information.\(^\text{20}\)

A brief introduction to program music will situate the reader within the mid-century debate, where discussions about form and the “meaning” of music were highly contentious.

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\(^\text{19}\) While most scholars merely copy Ramann’s 1859 publication date, James Deaville provides perhaps the sole exception. He lists the date for this essay as 1858 in his “Checklist,” the year when it was republished in Germany’s *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo*. Marion Bauer’s “Literary Liszt” represents a common occurrence in scholarship in which the author merely reprints the Table of Contents to Ramann’s collected edition, thus again reporting the first publication date to be 1859.

Contrary to absolute music, music with no external reference, program music is free to explore a range of emotions, moods, images, or specific idea and is not limited to certain traditional musical structures, patterns, or forms. Though program music was not new to the nineteenth century, the way in which Liszt interpreted the style in his symphonic poems certainly was. As Roger Scruton explains in his *New Grove* entry on “programme music,” Liszt “did not regard music as a direct means of describing objects; rather he thought that music could place the listener in the same frame of mind as could the objects themselves. In this way, by suggesting the emotional reality of things, music could indirectly represent them.”

The ability to alter a person’s emotional state is achieved musically through the creation of affect, a core element of program music in general, Liszt’s symphonic poems in particular, and as Liszt illustrates in this character portrait, Field’s Nocturnes as well. Though composers since the Baroque era had certainly written pieces with a specific affect in mind and the idea of a single affect was also embraced by the conservative composers in the nineteenth century, the depth of expression achieved in program music, whose core feeling was inspired by a text, resulted in a more powerful sense of affect in its listener than (as Liszt believes) had ever been experienced before. Affect, to Liszt, is a primary reason for a work’s success.

In this essay Liszt provides a complete image of Field as a composer and person, as well as focusing on both general and specific elements of Field’s Nocturnes themselves. As a disciple of Clementi, Field established his reputation as piano virtuoso through his travels around Europe in the earliest years of the nineteenth century. In addition to assisting Clementi as he attempted to sell his pianos in Paris, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, Field also gave several successful concert

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performances. As a result, Field was primarily viewed in connection to Clementi and not as an individual musician. Field’s move to Russia in 1802, where he would live for the next twenty-seven years, until 1829, contributed to Europe’s abstract impression of Field and his musical abilities, as he would not perform again in Europe until the early 1830s. Consequently, knowledge of Field’s performance style and reputation existed primarily in anecdotal form. Many musicians of the early nineteenth century had never actually heard Field perform in person. Field had been well-received by the press in his early days, thus making his years in Europe (1830-32) even more enthusiastically anticipated by the musical public.

As Field’s only biographer Patrick Piggott explains in his chapter “A Season in Paris” (1831-32), Field was welcomed with great curiosity and respect by the city’s musical community even though he could have just as easily been seen as outdated, as Paris was also inhabited by musical prodigies such as Paganini and Liszt at this time. Since Field so rarely travelled and performed outside of Russia, his concerts were eagerly attended by several prominent figures of the Parisian musical community, including Liszt and Chopin. Field gave three concerts in Paris over the course of five weeks although he remained there several months.

For the most part, Field received surprisingly positive reviews of his performances in London, where he spent the season of 1831-32, and Paris. Encouraging critiques of Field’s Seventh Piano Concerto, by important critics such as Joseph d’Ortigue, further strengthened Field’s reputation in Europe. D’Ortigue even goes so far as to compare Field’s orchestration

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22 Piggott discusses Clementi’s traveling business ventures selling his pianos, as well as Field’s part in this endeavor, in a chapter of his Field biography entitled “In London with Clementi” (11-15).
23 Langley, “John Field.”
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid, 80.
skills with those of Beethoven and Paganini. Schumann, another prominent voice of the time, also favorably reviewed Field’s Concerto (\textit{NZfM}, 1837). A common theme to these reviews was the contrast of Field’s coarse temperament to the sweetness of his playing. Thus, during the preparation of this essay Liszt had recourse to both positive reviews of Field’s performances and compositions as well as details about his personality upon which to reconsider Field as a person and his works. In the character portrait itself, Liszt not only affirms Field to be not only a memorable and sensitive performer, but also justifies his prickly disposition as a result of his “natural” genius and health issues.

Through his choice of Field, a composer renowned throughout Europe who had died only fourteen years before, Liszt hopes to find favor and support of his ideas by appealing to audiences who would fondly remember Field and his career. Beginning his series of character portraits with a study of Field was a shrewd choice. Regardless of whether members of this audience attended one of Field’s concerts during his tour of Western Europe, they would nonetheless be familiar with Field’s legendary status as a musician. Further, Liszt’s reputation as a piano virtuoso gives him the undeniable authority to evaluate this set of piano works. Field’s popularity, though, had decreased in the 1840s. He was not only deceased by that time, but also considered to be quite “old-fashioned.” Liszt’s revitalization of Field draws attention to the long-lasting effects of his musical achievements, achievements which Liszt strives to emulate through the development of his symphonic poems and program music.

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27 Translation from Piggott: “It is not less distinguished for the instrumentation than for the novelty of the melody. Scoring has long been considered as a subordinate part in concertos. All attention is held by the principal instrument. However, some great symphonists, who were also celebrated virtuosi, have known how to create a very successful accompaniment part written with understanding of the various orchestral accents, and the effect of string and wind instruments cleverly managed, in the accompaniment of solos. In this respect, the concertos of Beethoven, Paganini and Field must be set together (75).”

28 Piggott, \textit{The Life and Music of John Field}, 67. Already in the 1830s Piggott explains how Field and his “old style” of performance and composition were considered passé by audiences in London (and Paris).
Unfortunately, we have limited evidence about the personal relationship between Liszt and Field. Field left behind very little correspondence and no personal diary. Furthermore, only minor information on the relationship between the two men can be found in Liszt’s writings. What we can affirm is that Liszt did indeed hear Field perform at least once in Paris during Field’s season there in 1832-1833. Field presented several of his Nocturnes on this occasion, the impression of which Liszt (re)captures in this essay written almost twenty years later.

As a result of this lack of historical documentation, the personal connection between Liszt and Field survives primarily in anecdotal form. These stories are only able to suggest the sort of relationship that might have occurred between the two. According to Glinka, Liszt remarked that he found Field’s playing to be ‘sleepy,’ ‘lacking in vitality’ and ‘languid.’ In response to attending one of Liszt’s piano recitals and witnessing Liszt’s virtuosic and dramatic performance style first-hand, Field is said to have audibly remarked to his neighbor, ‘Does he bite?’ Piggott states that this “quip…went the round of the Paris salons and greatly displeased Liszt’s numerous partisans.” If Piggott is correct, then there is no doubt that Liszt must have been informed of Field’s reaction as well. Maybe Langley in his New Grove entry on Field sums up the relationship best when he states that Field’s “relations with Chopin and Liszt were cool” as a result of the changing fashion of piano performance at the time. Yet this potential “coolness” is perhaps tempered by an analysis of Liszt’s portrait of Field, where he not only reflects on their brief meeting in Paris but also shares his favorable observations of Field as both composer and performer and asserts their common musical heritage.

30 Piggott, The Life and Music of John Field, 76, 103.
31 Ibid, 77.
32 Langley, “John Field.”
This supposed rift between Liszt and Field had no presence in the scant references to his work on Field in Liszt’s correspondence. As his essay on Field and later edition of the Nocturnes were only two small projects among many, that Liszt did not dwell on Field in his letters is not surprising. So far, I have found only two references to this essay or its publication in Liszt’s correspondence – the first in a letter from Liszt to Wittgenstein (as mentioned above on p. 4) discussing the original 1851 publication of the work, and the second in a letter to the publisher Julius Schuberth. In the first, the reference to this essay is only made in passing. Liszt merely mentioned to Wittgenstein in the middle of a paragraph that the Escudier brothers (editors of La France Musicale) had sent him the proofs for the first two installments of his Chopin biography, which were to be printed in the journal, which had just published the Field essay, later that year.33 [See Appendix I for a copy of the letter.] In his letter to Schuberth, Liszt did not mention the Field essay at all. Instead, he expressed his irritation with Schuberth for the bevy of errors Liszt had found in the proofs of the 1859 edition.34 Despite the lack of attention Liszt paid to this edition in his correspondence, he must have cared about the result. The edition not only carried his name as editor, but also had the potential to express his musical aesthetics to an extended audience through the republication of the introductory essay.35

This edition also further established Liszt as a valuable musical figure. The Nocturnes had suffered from a complex publication history, which led to great confusion during Field’s

33 “Les Escudier m’ont également fait parvenir l’épreuve des 2 premiers articles du Chopin – ainsi que la notice sur Field qu’a paru dans leur dernier numéro.”
34 “It is very rare for me to come across such a defective edition as yours of Field’s Nocturnes. I have tried to clean things up, but what use are my revisions when further mistakes are brought into it? Believe me, dear Schuberth, do not make any further bad [illegible] and prepare a decent proof in Leipzig, which puts your edition in proper order, for as it looks for the moment, you could not continue with it without causing a scandal! [22 May 1859; Weimar]” Translation from Michael Short, Liszt Letters in the Library of Congress, Letter 153, Pendragon Press, 2003, 143.
35 While in Weimar Liszt would publish three editions: Bach’s Preludes and Fugues (1852), Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas (1857) and Field’s Nocturnes (1859). After this period, Liszt would go on to edit and publish three additional editions: Schubert’s keyboard works (1871-1880), Weber’s keyboard works (1871-1883), and Chopin’s Preludes (1878) (Walker, “Liszt as Editor,” Reflections on Liszt, 175.).
lifetime over their most accurate and “authentic” version. Field contributed to this problem by labeling works in this new genre as “Romances,” “Serenades,” and “Nocturnes” in their early years of publication. Furthermore, Field’s Nocturnes, in different stages of completion, were issued by several publishers throughout the 1810s; for example, each Nocturne was printed separately in both Russia and Germany. In addition to different versions of the same Nocturnes being released at the same time in two countries, Field frequently revised these compositions, often submitting the edited works for republication in later years. By the time Liszt set out to collect, edit, and issue this collection, the Nocturnes existed in several different editions, having also been reprinted individually in numerous other collections. In issuing a collected edition of

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37 Overview of the Nocturnes’ publication history: Dalmas issued Field’s first three Nocturnes as a group in Russia in 1812. Two years later, Kühnel/Peters published the same three Nocturnes in Germany. That same year (1814), Breitkopf & Härtel published Field’s “Three Romances,” which included a revised version of the A Major Pastorale, as well as Nocturnes I and II. In this edition, Nocturne II appears in a less finished state than the Dalmas edition but also includes the same wrong notes and missing accidentals as in the Dalmas edition, leading Robin Langley to posit that Breitkopf & Härtel’s version was “possibly pirated” and not based on Field’s own manuscripts (Langley, “John Field and the Genesis of a Style,” 96). Nocturnes IV–VI were first published in Russia (year unknown) and then issued by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1817. The Russian version of Nocturnes VII–VIII was published by Dalmas in 1821 and Breitkopf & Härtel in 1822 (Langley, 96-97). Breitkopf & Härtel became Field’s primary publisher in 1815, ensuring that his works spread around Europe, including music capitals such as Paris and London (Langley, “John Field”).
38 Langley, “John Field and the Genesis of a Style,” 97. Nocturne I, for instance, which was first published in 1814 as a “Nocturne” and then printed in 1815 with the title “Romance,” was republished in a revised form in 1832 again as a “Nocturne” (Piggott, *The Life and Music of John Field*, 177n).
39 After Field’s death, his student Alexander Dubuque published a set of 88 passages of music for which Field had provided detailed fingerings (Piggott, “John Field and the Nocturne,” 60). In preparing this edition, Liszt possibly had Dubuque’s collection at his disposal, in addition to rare Russian published sources which incorporated Field’s late revisions that he acquired through his friendship with Glinka (Langley, “John Field”). As a result of the authority inherent in editing and releasing the first edition of a set of works, Liszt was also able to take several liberties with these pieces, such as including works that Field had never intended to be part of the set. In this edition, Liszt includes two works that Field did not initially designate as Nocturnes, Nocturnes VIII and IX. Nocturne VIII in A Major was originally not even composed for piano solo, but served as the “Pastorale” first movement of a Divertissement for piano and string quartet. Even when Field republished this piece in revised form in 1832, it was still titled as “Pastorale.” In 1835, Hofmeister published the earlier version of this work (which he referred to as a “Romance ou Nocturne”) alongside Field’s Romance in E-flat (first published in 1816) (Piggott, “John Field and the Nocturne,” 58-59). These Nocturnes have since been included in all later completed editions of the Nocturnes, illustrating one example of Liszt’s influence on the future of these works. This leverage over the posterity of these works falls not only in his edits of the notes themselves, but as discussed throughout this chapter, as a result of his introductory essay to the volume itself.
Field’s Nocturnes, Liszt provides his audience with a single volume in which to find what he claims to be the most authentic versions of these highly regarded piano works.40

The first publication of “On John Field’s Nocturnes” in the 19 January 1851 edition of La France Musicale falls towards the beginning of Liszt’s Weimar period.41 Prior to this essay, Liszt had only authored a pamphlet announcing the creation of the Goethe Foundation to honor the author’s birthday centennial (1850). Liszt’s “De La Fondation-Goethe à Weimar” and “Études Biographiques de John Field,” published within months of one another, address similar topics as in Liszt’s previous literary works, “On the Situation of Artists and their Status in Society” for example, such as artistic genius and the benefit of developing new forms of music.42

Paris was a strategic place for this work’s first publication as the city was Liszt’s headquarters of sorts during his touring virtuoso days of the 1830s. The Parisian audience was also by now accustomed to Liszt’s prose as he had already published his essay “On the Situation of Artists and their Status in Society” and his series of “Letters from a Bachelor of Music” in the Gazette musicale de Paris and the Gazette musicale and L’Artiste, respectively, throughout the

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40 Interestingly, Liszt’s connection with editions of Field’s Nocturnes has a confusing history within scholarship as well. The original publication of “On John Field’s Nocturnes” was written partly as publicity for an early edition of Field’s Nocturnes I-VI (see Footnote 71). Liszt then edited and published his own collected edition of the set (1859) wherein he added two new “Nocturnes” (see Footnote 39). The most perplexing element to this narrative occurs with Piggott’s reference (The Life and Music of John Field, 144) to a second Liszt edition of Field’s Nocturnes which he claims was published in 1869. I have yet to find actual publication details for this work. There are no details mentioned, neither within the Piggott itself, nor the only other book that mentions this 1869 publication, The Unknown Schubert (Barbara M. Reul and Lorraine Byrne Bodley, Ashgate Press, 2008). Since there is no evidence confirming the existence of a new 1869 edition, I believe that Piggott merely refers to a reprinted version of Liszt’s 1859 work, which has since been reissued several times (with Liszt’s introductory essay, in a variety of edited versions) by Schirmer and others. Or, it is of course also possible that this phantom 1869 edition could merely be the result of an error in typography.

41 Liszt’s portrait of John Field was subsequently republished in German in the Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo on 10 October 1858. Britain’s The Musical World published an English translation of the Echo article in two parts, on 27 November and 4 December 1858.

42 These themes will continue to pervade Liszt’s literary oeuvre as in, for example, his character portrait of Pauline Viardot-Garcia (discussed in Chapter Four).
1830s.\textsuperscript{43} Publishing one of his first works in this next stage of his life in a Parisian journal served to link these two locations, allowing Liszt to maintain his ties to Paris, while simultaneously beginning a burgeoning relationship with the German audience in Weimar. The Parisian audience would also be most familiar with Field as he had spent an extended period of time there in 1832-33 (see p. 28). Lastly, Paris was home to Berlioz, one of the earliest composers of program music, whose “Symphonie Fantastique” premiered there in 1830.\textsuperscript{44} As a result, the French audience might be more open-minded towards new styles of musical composition.

Liszt approaches this essay almost as a eulogy, honoring Field as a composer, but also mourning his creativity and the musical values and innovations embedded in his Nocturnes. He mainly focuses on Field’s method of musical creation. Liszt explores the genesis of these works, how Field musically achieved their effects, and Field’s overall significance as a composer. The use of recurring themes, such as Field’s “natural” genius or nostalgia for Field and his approach to music, serve to structurally unify this essay although the topics addressed are wide-ranging.

“On John Field’s Nocturnes” is almost entirely devoted to Liszt’s thoughts on Field and his compositions. He begins by presenting the publication history of the works and establishing this collection as the first complete publication of the Nocturnes as a set. Liszt also briefly introduces Field and his Nocturnes, stating that these works “are true masterpieces of their kind.” After an extended discussion of Field and his performance style, Liszt turns his thoughts to the Nocturnes in greater detail. In this section, he applies the ideas previously discussed in the essay to specific Nocturnes, describing the works’ affect through use of vivid natural imagery. Following these brief comments on the Nocturnes themselves, Liszt provides a short


biographical sketch of Field, concluding with a paragraph that serves to memorialize Field as creator of the Nocturnes. Though not in the exact same bi-partite structure as other character portraits of the series, by concluding with a brief biography of Field, Liszt (consciously or not) links this essay to those portraits he would publish a few years in the future. He leaves his reader with the thought that Field was a rare type of composer who had died before he could really develop his musical talent to its fullest capacity:

He is one of those rare types of the earlier school which are to be met with only in certain periods of art, when, just beginning to learn its own resources, but not having yet exhausted them, it has not been tempted to enlarge its domain and wander into distant and unknown regions, at the risk of shattering its bright plumes in the attempt to escape from bondage (P18).  

As a result, Field had left behind a relatively small body of works, with the Nocturnes as works of true “poetic creations.”

Liszt’s nostalgia for Field is not only illustrated through the content of this essay but his writing style as well. His prose clearly reflects his memories of Field and a personal connection with Field’s works, nostalgic feelings which Liszt has captured in vague, almost blurred, prose descriptions. This reflective approach allows Liszt to easily glide from one topic to another, from discussing Field as a person and composer to his thoughts on Field’s technical skill and musical compositions. A reader can glean certain details about Field’s personal life and Liszt’s relationship with Field, but rarely does Liszt state anything directly. For example, Liszt glosses over Field’s rapidly deteriorating health several times. He states that it was because of Field’s “perfect indifference” that Field would not stoop down to pick up his cane upon dropping it. In reality, Field moved with difficulty and with great physical pain caused by intestinal cancer.  

45 Il est un de ces types d’école primitive qu’on ne rencontre qu’à certaines périodes de l’art, alors, que commençant à connaître ses ressources, il ne les a pas encore épuisées au point de se hasarder à étendre son domaine, pour se déployer plus librement, dût-il se briser plus d’une fois les ailes, en essayant de rompre ses entraves.  
46 Nikolayev, John Field, 51.
Moreover, Liszt does not even mention why Field needed to carry a cane to begin with. By not dwelling on Field’s personal physical maladies and also maintaining a certain level of ambiguity in his prose, Liszt is further able to enhance the timeless quality of Field and his works.

Additionally, Liszt does not limit Field’s greatness as a musician or composer to a specific performance or year, although some of his comments must stem from Field’s 1832-33 Paris performance(s) and Western European tour. Rather, he promotes Field as a musical rarity, a “natural” genius, with hopes to preserve Field’s legendary musical status for years to come.

By convincing his readers that Field was indeed a “natural” genius whose works deserved to be considered anew, Liszt sets the foundation for his promotion of the expansion of musical form. In his creation of the piano nocturne, Field drew from several previously established musical genres, styles, and composers, including the vocal nocturne, opera, the work of Jan Ladislav Dussek, and contemporary piano works.  

Historically, the vocal nocturne has origins in both France and Germany. Field was more likely to be introduced to the French version of this genre since he was living and publishing his Nocturnes in St. Petersburg – a city where the upper class was French in language and culture (James Parakilas, “Nuit plus belle qu’un beau jour,” 205). There was also a great deal of overlap between French salons and opera singers. Vocal nocturnes “may have been a salon genre, but the greatest singers of the Paris operatic stage also sang at Paris salons, and the composers of vocal nocturnes were also composers of operas (Parakilas, 218).” These two vocal genres were already linked in musical history. Field intensified this linkage, illustrating their connection through his piano Nocturnes.

In his Dictionnaire de musique moderne, published in Paris in 1821, Castil-Blaze writes that the vocal nocturne is, “A graceful and sweet melody, tender and mysterious, simple phrases, harmony that is not elaborate, but full, mellow, and without triviality” (David Rowland, “The Nocturne: Development of a New Style,” 35.) To simplify even further, the Parisian vocal nocturne was a duet: voice with piano accompaniment. Vocal nocturnes were written for at least two voices – usually two sopranos or a soprano and tenor combination (Parakilas, “Poetry, Song and the Voice in the Piano Nocturne,” 205-206). This texture is clearly expressed in many of Field’s Nocturnes. The vocal nocturne had an obvious effect on Field and his writing. Field took the singing, lyrical, melodic line from vocal nocturnes and incorporated it as an integral part of his Nocturnes. The challenge that Field so successfully overcame was the transference of actual singing, now transposed to the piano, an entirely different instrument. To achieve the impression of singing on the piano, Field used legato slow-moving melodies phrased according to a singer’s breathing patterns. In his Nocturnes Field expressed “pathos and romantic sentiment unaided by the emotive power of words” (Piggott, “John Field and the Nocturne,” 56). He successfully created the illusion of singing on the piano, greatly distinguishing Field from other pianists and composers of the time.

Field was also greatly influenced by another vocal genre, opera. Scholars and critics often describe Field melodies using operatic terms, cantilena and bel canto. Both of these suggest the beautiful, slow-moving, expressive melodies Field incorporates into his Nocturnes. Maurice Brown and Kenneth Hamilton write in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians “Nocturne” article that, “the melodies of his nocturnes transferred to the keyboard the cantilena of Italian opera, to which he had been exposed in Russia in the early 1800s” (Maurice J.E. Brown and Kenneth L. Hamilton, “Nocturne.”). The Nocturne is operatic in style. Parakilas describes the Nocturne
Field’s original creation, yet he managed to find a personal synthesis that became a model for later composers.\(^{48}\)

Moreover, by highlighting the “naturalness” of Field and his approach to musical composition, Liszt further solidifies the relationship between Field’s Nocturnes and program music, both representing successful “natural” developments in musical form. Liszt built upon earlier examples of program music, such as works by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Berlioz, in codifying the (now) norms of this genre.\(^{49}\) Cyclic form and thematic transformation, the

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\(^{49}\) Beethoven works such as his “Pastoral Symphony” and “Egmont” and “Coriolan” overtures include traits associated with the symphonic poem and program music in general, such as the inclusion of specific dramatic events (narratives) or expression of specific moods and feelings. This is not a new idea in scholarship as evidenced by R. W. S. Mendl’s April 1928 article “Beethoven as a writer of programme music” in *The Musical Quarterly* (Vol. 14,
compositional methods at the center of Liszt’s symphonic poems, also had their roots in the works of earlier composers. In the creation of this one-movement form, Liszt draws upon past sonata-form conventions and compositional practices of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries to produce a new work which was reliant upon extra-musical associations and sought to inspire scenes, images, and moods in its listener. Field’s Nocturnes, according to Liszt, encourage those same effects.

In his creation of the Nocturne, Liszt explains that:

Field was the first to introduce a species which belonged to none of the established classes, and in which feeling and melody reigned alone, liberated from the fetters and encumbrances of a coercive form. He opened the way for all the productions which have since appeared under the title of songs without words, impromptus, ballad[e]s etc…and to him we may trace the origins of those pieces designed to paint individual and deep-seated emotions (P13).

This description of Field’s influence over several genres of music, which were made famous by a variety of nineteenth century composers from conservative and progressive parties alike, gives readers another way to understand Liszt’s musical developments through the use of familiar repertoires. Furthermore, the musical elements and attributes Liszt identifies in these styles could easily refer to program music as well, another genre of music “designed to paint individual and deep-seated emotions.”

Liszt began composing symphonic poems in the late 1840s with the premiere of “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne” in Weimar in February 1850. Through “On John Field’s
Nocturnes,” Liszt strives to encourage the acceptance of his symphonic poems, a new genre, so they may be included in future concert repertoire. This is important to note as the premieres of Liszt’s next four symphonic poems did not occur until several years later, in 1854. Liszt prepares his audience for the introduction of a new approach to musical composition by highlighting the common themes between program music and contemporary or earlier accepted styles of music. 53

The connection Liszt suggests between the innovative musical form of Field’s Nocturnes and his own symphonic poems continues to be reinforced in contemporary musicological scholarship. For example, Robin Langley’s description of the form in Field’s Nocturnes in his “John Field” New Grove entry can easily be applied to Liszt’s symphonic poems as well:

They (Field’s Nocturnes) dispensed with rigid formal considerations, relying on eliding variation of melody, harmony and accompaniment to achieve a unified variety in the exposition of a mood conjured without the assistance of a text or programme. Indeed, some of Field’s nocturnes are song-like structures – the ‘vocal’ verses introduced and separated by ‘accompaniment’ interludes – the whole accommodated within a single spectrum of variegated piano texture. In this, for the first time, dynamic differentiation is controlled by subtle blending of simultaneous graded finger pressures and sustaining pedal, as in Nocturne no. 1, which also illustrates the shifts in melodic emphasis common to Field’s later revisions. 54

Expression of a narrative or emotion governs the form and structure of each style – the form of the composition must follow and be subservient to an expression of the idea or feeling.

Liszt defines the “naturalness” of Field’s genius and conception of musical form in line with contemporary thoughts on creativity and naturalness itself. By applying philosophical trends to music, in this case drawing upon the concepts and terminology of organicism which permeated nineteenth-century culture, Liszt not only promotes the notion that music has similar

53 Composition years of Liszt’s twelve symphonic poems: Bergsymphonie (1848-1849, rev. 1850, 1854; also known as Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne); Les Préludes (1848, rev. 1854); Tasso: Lamento e trionfo (1849, rev. 1854); Héroïde funèbre (1849-1850, rev. 1854); Festklänge (1853); Orpheus (1853-1854); Hungaria (1854); Prometheus (1855); Mazeppa (1851, rev. 1855); Humenschlacht (1856-57); Die Ideale (1857); Hamlet (1858). Dates all taken from Sandra Fallon’s dissertation (op. cit.), p. 16. The majority of these symphonic poems had their premiere shortly after their composition.
54 My emphasis. Langley, “John Field.”
capabilities as language, but also further validates his own work as well as that of Field.\textsuperscript{55} Moreover, through this approach, Liszt also places Field in line with other “natural” geniuses such as Shakespeare, continuing to emphasize Field’s importance in history. As James Deaville states in his essay “The Controversy Surrounding Liszt’s Conception of Programme Music,” both the conservative and progressive parties relied on organicist ideas in their debate. He explains that the New Germans used organicism to “show how their works did not depart from organic historical models – they also argued that the poetic basis of New German music guaranteed an organically conceived work.”\textsuperscript{56} Though the debates Deaville describes occurred in the mid-1850s, Liszt’s use of the rhetoric of organicism in the Field essay shows its roots within earlier prose works.

In this character portrait, Liszt repeatedly relies upon natural imagery to describe both Field’s life and his works, thus leaving the reader with the feeling that Field and his Nocturnes are inextricably linked and can be thought of as a single entity. This complements the sentiment that comes across in the essay that Field, as a “natural” composer, creates from within his unconscious.\textsuperscript{57} Several phrases that Liszt uses to describe Field’s Nocturnes can accurately be applied to the composer as well; perhaps Liszt intended his readers to make this connection. For example, Liszt affirms that, “This form of musical writing [the Nocturne] will never grow old, for it is perfectly adapted to its impressions, which do not belong to the commoner order of

\textsuperscript{55} Liszt’s interest in philosophy is often discussed in musicological scholarship. One interesting project about this topic (and relevant to my own project at hand) is Sandra Fallon’s 2010 dissertation, “Religious, philosophical, and social significance in the symphonic poems of Franz Liszt.”

\textsuperscript{56} Deaville, “The Controversy Surrounding Liszt’s Conception of Programme Music,” 103.

\textsuperscript{57} Liszt takes this sentiment even further by stating that Field performed from his unconscious as well. As Field was always lost in a dreamworld when performing (“he entirely abandoned himself to his inspiration”). Liszt affirms that Field unknowingly “charmed” his audience, lulling listeners into his private utopia through musical effects that “are only to be found when they are not sought (P6).” (On ne saurait donc même songer à se modeler sur cet admirable modèle, parce que sans une aspiration toute particulière, on ne peut arriver à ces effets qu’on ne trouve qu’alors qu’on ne les cherche point.) This lack of agency strips Field of any intellectual work that may have gone into the creation of his compositions, leaving him as an ideal vessel for “natural” inspiration.
sentiments, such as are transient, bred under the influence of the society in which the artist finds himself (P5).”

With this statement he implies that through the continued appreciation of his works, Field too, who also does not adhere to the “common order of (social) sentiments,” will never grow old. Field also fails to age because he chose not to participate in the “transient” society Liszt describes. Liszt even goes so far as to compare Field’s life to a “long Nocturne, with no furious tempest, no flashing lightening, no volcanic eruption to break the calm of its peaceful course,” further relating the two (the composer and his work). The drawback to this comparison is that Liszt simultaneously conflates Field’s entire life and musical output to this one type of work, when Field had also composed an assortment of chamber music and piano concertos in addition to his collection of single-movement character pieces for the piano.

Liszt actually mentions Field’s concertos and other chamber works in his essay, stating that they were “unhappily too few, his concertos in particular, contain pages of striking originality, and of an incontestable harmonic merit (P11).” Though he was clearly familiar with the variety of Field’s compositional output, Liszt likely saw the intimacy and innovation of the Nocturnes as more suited to his needs in expressing the simplicity and “naturalness” of Field’s style of composition.

Liszt first refers to Field’s “natural” genius at the beginning of this essay when discussing the publication history of these works. He asserts that Field paid no attention to fame or to his Nocturnes when they were first printed, as evidenced by their lack of publication as a set during

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58 Sa forme ne vieillira pas, car elle est parfaitement adaptée à ses impressions, lesquelles n’appartiennent point à un ordre de sentiments passagers, transitoires, éclos sous l’influence du milieu dans lequel il s’est trouvé.

59 Liszt emphasizes the connection between Field, his Nocturnes and Nature throughout this essay. Overall, Liszt fits the entire set of Nocturnes into a pastoral framework, stating that these pieces “inspire men to write or read idylls and eclogues (P15).” (Toutes les émotions qui ont fait écrire et lire les Idylles et les Églogues, se trouvent ici avec leurs plus charmants attrats.) Both idylls and eclogues are short poems written on pastoral subjects. By linking Field’s Nocturnes to the pastoral, Liszt strengthens the connection between Field and Nature; not only is Field a “natural” genius, but the affect of his Nocturnes arouses a connection to the pastoral in his listeners as well.

60 Liszt’s musical output, see Langley, “John Field: Works List.”

61 Plusieurs de ses ouvrages, malheureusement trop peu nombreux, ses concertos en particulier, contiennent des pages d’une originalité, et d’un mérite harmonique incontestable.
Field’s lifetime. This statement also perhaps serves to emphasize Liszt’s contribution to music with the undertaking of this edition. He would have been familiar with Field’s meticulous editing and revision process when preparing his works for publication, far from the “inattention” that Liszt attributes to Field in his essay when it came to publishing. Liszt seems to draw attention to his own effort at Field’s expense. By rectifying this “carelessness,” he not only rights the wrongs of the composer himself, but also those of nineteenth-century society that failed to recognize or understand Field’s “natural” genius and the significance of his musical contributions to their fullest extent while Field was still alive.

Liszt defends Field’s supposed carelessness in publication later in the essay stating that when composing, Field “gratified only his own fancy, creating without effort, conceiving without labour, perfecting without pains, and publishing with entire unconcern (P11),” also remarking that “for him [Field] art consisted in the delight of devoting himself wholly to it (P10).” He values Field for composing music solely for his own pleasure while showing a “genuine” disregard for the public. Liszt juxtaposes this approach with those of contemporary composers: “What a contrast this recollection presents to the manners of the present day (P11)! He soon returns to this idea, firmly advocating for change in the compositional practices of the “modern school”:

The attraction which leads back to this pure and simple expressions…is now made doubly strong by the need of respite, engendered by the forced and violent expression of the more energetic and complex passions which are perpetually reproduced by a large part of the modern school (P14).

Here, he emphasizes the almost “unnatural” trends of contemporary practice: composers

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62 …il satisfaisait seulement à sa fantaisie: créant sans effort, imaginant sans travail, perfectionnant sans peine, et publiant avec indifférence.
63 Pour lui l’art consistait dans la satisfaction qu’il trouvait à s’y livrer.
64 Quel contraste ce souvenir ne forme-t-il pas avec les mœurs du jour!
65 L’attrait, qui ramène vers ces pures et simples impressions, les âmes qui conservent toujours quelques instincts juvéniles, est double maintenant par le besoin de répit que nous font éprouver les expressions forcées et tourmentées, des passions plus énergiques et plus complexes, que reproduit une notable partie de l’école moderne.
subservient to the public’s demands as well as relying too heavily on complex melody and harmony and old forms in their works. Liszt’s aversion to “modern” (or conservative) compositional practices illustrates his feelings on the transient nature of contemporary composers due to their technically overwrought works. This focus on “naturalism” not only links Field to contemporary discourse on organicism and genius, but also reaffirms that the success of the “natural” approach Field took to composition in the Nocturne extends to the “natural” development of program music as well.

Liszt believes it is exactly the combination of Field’s “natural” approach to melody and harmony in his Nocturnes that results in their great depth of affect and their timeless quality. One element of Field’s musical language that Liszt highlights is Field’s ability to weave his melodies into the embellished framework of the Nocturne during its repetition (Nocturnes are typically in ABA’ form). Of Field’s melodies he remarks: “With what an inexhaustible wealth did he not vary the attire of the thought on its repetition! With what a rare success did he turn and twist it (without injuring it), and envelop it in a network of Arabesques.” Since the nineteenth-century Arabesque consisted of rapidly changing harmonies that served to ornament a

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66 By contrast, the conservative composers emphasized the development of harmony and melody over the development of form. These composers structured their works using the musical forms and compositional techniques of the Baroque and Classical eras. Liszt, too, advocated the progression of harmony and melody. However, Liszt differs from the conservatives in the application, function, and meaning of these developments. Liszt viewed melody, harmony, and form as contributing to the creation of an overall ethos which made program music effective.

67 Liszt affirms that Field’s Nocturnes distinguish themselves by “so much melody and by so delicate a harmony” (P15) (Le charme que j’ai toujours trouvé dans ces morceaux, renfermant tant de mélodie, et une si fine harmonie, remonte aux premières années de ma jeunesse.).

68 As in both his previous (and future) writings on music, Liszt includes no musical excerpts in this essay, solely relying on prose descriptions of the music and composer to promote his ideas.

69 Avec quelle inépuisable richesse ne variait-il pas les atours de sa pensée! Avec quel rare bonheur il entrelaçait autour d’elle, sans l’étouffer, les plus ingénieux treillages d’arabesques! Schuberth’s translation in this case could be more accurate. I would revise it as follows: “With what an inexhaustible wealth did he not vary the finery of his thoughts! With what rare success did he intertwine around it, without choking it, the most ingenious trellis of arabesques!”
work while delaying further musical development, by mentioning the “Arabesque” Liszt implicitly highlights Field’s harmonic development as well as its decorative function.  

Emphasis on Field’s use of “simple” elements is further illustrated by Liszt’s comments on specific Nocturnes. In these descriptions, he is careful to mention the affect of each piece, though often leaving his brief comments at that. For example, Liszt believes that Nocturnes I and V suggest “unmingled happiness” and an “expansion of a felicity without labour,” whereas Nocturne II is tinged with a “painful feeling of absence (P16).” Nocturnes III and VI he simply states “are of a more pastoral character.” Liszt takes an alternate approach when describing “Le Midi” (1810), one of Field’s best-known works. Here Liszt paints a biographical image of Field, imagining Field as he composed this work:

Is not that the dreams of one who lies half awake in a summer night without darkness, such as Field often saw in Russia? – a night whose veil is so pellucid as scarcely to obscure any objects, a shadow thin and transparent like a curtain of silver gauze! a secret spiritual agency removes the apparent discrepancy between the nocturnal gloom and the glistening radiance, nor are we surprised that they should blend, – for the dreamy

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71 Since the 1859 introduction is a mere reprint of the 1851 essay, Liszt does not comment upon each Nocturne within the collected edition. The original essay served both to call attention to the publication of this early edition of Field’s first six Nocturnes as well as an entr’acte of sorts to Liszt’s Chopin biography, the first installments of which could be found two editions later in the same journal.
72 Le premier et le cinquième Nocturne de ce recueil sont empreints d’un bonheur radieux, on dirait l’épanouissement d’une félicité, obtenue sans peine, goûtée avec délices. Dans le second, les teintes sont plus foncées, comme celles de la lumière dans une allée ombreuse. On pourrait croire que dans ce chant on sent une absence, si comme on l’a dit, l’absence est un monde sans soleil. “D’un bonheur radieux” could be better translated as “a radiant blissfulness,” and “on dirait l’épanouissement d’une félicité, obtenue sans peine” as “what looks like the development of a felicity, obtained without pain.”
73 Field often revised this popular work and it was reprinted several times with different titles (Piggott, “John Field and the Nocturne,” 64). The inclusion of this work in Liszt’s 1859 edition of Field’s Nocturnes as Nocturne VII marks one small change Schubert made in the republication of this essay – in its 1851 version Liszt clearly states that “Le midi” was not included in his current edition (“qu’on n’a pu reproduire ici”), yet Schubert’s 1859 translation affirms that Field “gave the name of Noon to one of the Nightpieces printed in this edition (my italics).” Liszt reclassifies “Le Midi” as a Nocturne to further justify the merit of Field’s works, as the piece was already popular, and also perhaps with financial goals in mind (Piggott, “John Field and the Nocturne,” 64). Liszt’s reference to “Le Midi” in the original 1851 essay foreshadows the work’s inclusion in his collected edition of the works.
vagueness of the musical picture makes us feel that it was so painted only in the composer’s imagination, not in accordance with any existing reality (P16).\textsuperscript{74}

Liszt’s use of imagery in this situation is to emphasize the intertwined relationship between Field and Nature to communicate the mood invoked by this work.\textsuperscript{75} It is almost as if Liszt is providing programs for Field’s Nocturnes through these visual depictions of each work thus concretely uniting the two genres!

Liszt deliberately keeps his description of each piece vague, as was characteristic of his prose. Yet how well this ambiguous explanation applies to the actual score of one of Field’s Nocturnes should be explored. When examining one of the works in greater depth, it is evident that the affect Liszt suggests is still comprised of Field’s innovative treatment of melody and harmony. A brief consideration of Nocturne IV in A Major (1817) will further illustrate the implications of Liszt’s prose. [See Appendix II for the full score.]

In addition to being the first Nocturne Liszt mentions, his description of this work is also the longest and most complex of those included in this essay. Perhaps this is because Nocturne IV is also the longest and most musically complex of the set. Field had experimented separately with melody, harmony, and affect in other Nocturnes, but rarely does he combine these elements to this extent within a single work. Liszt believes that the extremes to which Field pushed these musical elements in this Nocturne resulted in greater depth of affect on its listener. This is also the only prose description in which Liszt highlights more than one musical element, which further emphasizes its uniqueness amongst the set. I selected this Nocturne to analyze in this chapter not only because of the importance Liszt places on it in the essay, but also because of the

\textsuperscript{74} Ne sont-ce pas des rêves à demi-éveillés, dans une nuit sans ténèbres, comme celles des étés de St. Pétersbourg, qu’il vit si souvent revenir! Nuits drapées de voiles blancs, qui ne dérobent rien à l’œil, et ne recouvrent les objets que d’une brume semblable au mat d’un crêpe argenté. Une secrète harmonie détruit l’apparente disparité entre de nocturnes ombres et de rayonnantes clartés, et l’on n’en est point étonné, tant le vague des tableaux nous fait sentir, qu’ils ne se dessinent que dans la songeuse imagination du poète, non dans une vivace réalité.

\textsuperscript{75} Simultaneously, the vivid imagery of Liszt’s prose, especially when discussing specific elements of the Nocturnes, allows him to gloss over nuanced explanations of musical traits he mentions.
length of its description. Readers and pianists would theoretically have more details and information to use in the practical application of Liszt’s prose to their understanding and possible performance of this piece. The complexity of this work, though, perhaps belies my judgment.

Whereas the other five Nocturnes Liszt comments on more readily fit the “Nocturne style” framework which we now expect of these works, Nocturne IV expands upon these musical elements in various ways. Though structured by typical ABA’ form (A lasts from mm. 1-15, B from mm. 26-50, and A’ from mm. 51-65), this work strays from the norm through its greater harmonic modulation and more complex key relationships, abnormal climax (or anti-climax as it seems in this work), and little melodic ornamentation, among other traits. Still, Liszt finds this Nocturne to be the most beautiful of the collection. Perhaps he highlights Nocturne IV to show that even the most challenging of Field’s Nocturnes is still constructed from the simplest of musical elements.

Within his concise comments on this work, Liszt presents the interconnectedness of the three main elements of this piece – melody, harmony and affect:

Beauty of style is here united to grace of feeling, and there reigns such a delicacy in the ornamentation, so nice a choice in the modulation of the thought, that it should seem as if the author, in writing down these pure ideas, found nothing noble, exquisite, and faultless enough for his purpose (P15).  

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76 “Nocturne style” is typified by a melodic line in the bel canto style supported by broken chordal accompaniment, use of the sustaining pedal, reliance upon melodic and harmonic ornamentation instead of development, little modulation, and extremely simple (often ABA’) form.  
77 A bridge section (mm. 16-25) connects the A and B sections and a coda (mm. 66-72) concludes the work.  
78 La distinction du style y égale le grâce du sentiment, et il y règne une si rare délicatesse d’ornementation, un art si exquis dans la modulation de la pensée, qu’on eût dit, que rien ne semblait à l’auteur assez noble, assez irréprochable, lorsqu’il écrivait ces lignes si pures. This description is preceded by Liszt’s recollection of his personal connection to the fourth Nocturne and its dedicatee, Madame Rosenkampf:

How often my thoughts and my eyes rested on the name of that Mad. Rosenkampf, to whom the longest and most beautiful of these Nightpieces, the fourth Nocturno, is dedicated! what confused yet beautiful ideas connected themselves in my mind with that name “the fight of the roses”, which gave rise to such a deeply felt, tender melancholy and yet happy invention!

With this introduction, Liszt continues to unify this essay through repeated examples of his nostalgia for (musical practices of) the past.
Liszt first draws attention to the “delicacy” of Field’s ornamentation, highlighting Field’s approach to the melody and its decoration throughout this work. Field employs ornamentation in Nocturne IV to embellish thematic material, but also to slow down the pace of the music by luring the ear to eagerly await the return to the main theme or harmonic resolution of a chord.

Liszt’s comments regarding ornamentation are most telling when applied to the return of the A section towards the end of the piece (m. 51). Where one would traditionally expect the greatest amount of embellishment of a work in “Nocturne style,” Field provides only minimal decoration, successfully “veiling” the melody in its repetition. For example, instead of the repetitive figure of m. 6, Field jumps almost an octave between the second and third sets of thirty-second notes, further extending the scalar descent and emphasizing the arrival on the tonic of m. 56.

Furthermore, each ornamental passage is very lightly textured, consisting of a right-hand flourish supported by minimal bass movement (mm. 6, 19, 56), parallel scalar runs in both right- and left-hand parts (mm. 14 and 64-65), or solo right-hand ornamental runs (mm. 45-50). Field’s use of the upper register in these passages coupled with Liszt’s clear crescendo and dynamic markings requires the pianist to use a “delicate” touch to perform these ornaments effectively. Quicker note values, scalar motion, and the repetition of material are the most basic and expected means in which to ornament music. Although embellishments in these examples may seem slight, it is this deliberate lack of decoration that Liszt calls attention to, illustrating the effectiveness of Field’s approach to composition.

By emphasizing melody and ornamentation, Liszt also underscores Field’s treatment of harmony in this work, as these elements are closely linked. Further, with his mention of Field’s “modulation of the thought” Liszt highlights how Field establishes, maintains, and seamlessly
modulates between keys. The key relationships in this piece are considerably more complex than in other Nocturnes in this edition, especially those in more characteristic “Nocturne style.” As expected, the two A sections both firmly establish and maintain the tonic key (A Major). Yet even within these sections, for example, Field briefly tonicizes the supertonic, B minor (mm. 9-11 and mm. 59-61, respectively).

Field continues to explore harmonic relationships in the B section. It is harmonically structured through a series of strong, regularly recurring root-position tonic downbeats, examining the third relationship between A and C in great depth. Starting with a shift of the A Major chord to A minor (m. 26), this passage proceeds to move through C Major, C minor, A Major, and C# Major, before returning to A Major in m. 49. This recurring presence of a tonic chord on the downbeat propels the music forward and eases the aural transitions between these sonorities, allowing Field to move between several tonal areas in a short period of time.

Furthermore, the B section not only begins in the parallel minor, but also presents the first phrase of the opening theme in that key – A minor – before modulating to an entirely new theme in C Major. Although this Nocturne comprises several key areas, which might appear to go against the overarching theme of simplicity that Liszt advocates in Field’s works, it is the means by which Field modulates between keys that continues to support the “pure ideas” which he puts forth in this work. New key areas are prepared for and often contribute towards an overarching harmonic goal, the exploration of the third relationship between A and C, for example. Liszt draws attention to the ease with which Field approaches harmonic development as an important element to this work and Field’s compositional style in general.

In his description of Nocturne IV, Liszt continues to explore this idea of simplicity through his emphasis on the affect of the work. He highlights its sentimental qualities such as its
“grace of feeling,” and easy musical concepts like ornamentation, ideas that a reader/listener of any musical background could identify and find meaningful. Through his explanation of this Nocturne, Liszt is able to successfully communicate his ideas on the work’s most salient features, yet, with his own emotional connection to this piece as an example, he still leaves the idea of “interpretation” – or the experience of affect – to the personal listening experience. Liszt empowers his reader to experience these musical sentiments personally, though still under his guidance. He believes that it is this emotional connection that listeners’ share with Field’s Nocturnes and program music alike that contributes to the timeless nature and longevity of both styles of music.

Affect is neither tangible nor quantifiable. The way in which Liszt communicates the emotional sentiment of Field’s Nocturnes to his readers is through his own personal experience. Often, Liszt also places himself on the same plane as his reader, using pronouns such as “we” or “us” (“Where else could we meet with such a perfect and incomparable simplicity?”) (P2). Furthermore, if Liszt successfully educates his readers to evaluate music according to their emotional response, then the move from single-movement piano character pieces, such as the piano nocturne, to single-movement symphonic (or other programmatic) works feels less challenging. By focusing on a single element, affect, in which to consider this set of works, an element that is personal and cannot be considered “right” or “wrong,” Liszt begins to teach his

79 Readers with a stronger musical background could apply Liszt’s descriptions of the Nocturnes to the scores themselves either by playing through the pieces or analyzing the notes on the page (pianists of moderate skill can likely play through at least the first six Nocturnes). Further, these musically adept readers would also probably have a greater knowledge of Chopin’s Nocturnes and could place Field’s works within a musical frame of reference. Regardless, even those readers who had no musical skill or knowledge, still lived in a society in which attending concerts and opera were a part of middle- and upper-class (J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, Chapter 27: “Romantic Opera and Musical Theater to Midcentury,” W. W. Norton & Company, 8th edition, 2009). Liszt’s knowledge of mid-nineteenth century Parisian culture made his decision to present these program music ideals through the use of familiar composers, repertoires, and musical elements even more effective.

80 Où rencontrions-nous ailleurs une telle perfection d’incomparable naïveté? “Naïveté” is better translated as “innocence” or “naturalness.”
readers how to approach listening and understanding musical works according to his aesthetic ideals. Through this shared connection with his audience, Liszt fulfills one of his main goals in the (re)creation of program music, to educate his audience and increase their ability and knowledge of how to listen to music.

Another approach Liszt takes to emphasize to his reader the importance of Field and his aesthetics is by relating Field to other nineteenth-century composers. Historical lineage played an important role in the mid-nineteenth century debate between the conservative and progressive parties. The conservatives denied the progressive composers lineage to Beethoven (one of their most revered forefathers), while the progressives traced program music, with this essay as an example, all the way back to the sixteenth century (as Liszt does in the Berlioz essay).\(^{81}\) Deaville explains that “the historical line of development was crucial. Thus, ironically, the conservatives used every opportunity to establish the newness of New German music, while the progressive apologists attempted to prove their indebtedness to the Classical models.”\(^{82}\) Through Field, Liszt connects contemporary nineteenth century composers (Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Liszt, Chopin) with those of the “older generation” such as Clementi.

As Field’s first nine Nocturnes were published between 1812-1821, Liszt suggests the influence Field had on composers such as Mendelssohn, whose *Lieder ohne Worte* were originally published in London in 1832,\(^{83}\) as well as Brahms and Schumann, who both owned copies of select pieces.\(^{84}\) In his comprehensive monograph *Schumann as Critic* Leon Plantinga affirms this connection, stating that

\(^{82}\) Ibid, 102-103.
\(^{83}\) Field’s Nocturnes had already spread to London by this time as a result of his season there in 1831-32, Western European tour of 1832-1833 and publications with Breitkopf & Härtel throughout the 1810s (R. Larry Todd, “Felix Mendelssohn.” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, [Accessed 20 June 2011]).
\(^{84}\) Langley, “John Field.”
Schumann considered Field’s music important as a forerunner, not only of Chopin’s style, but of romantic piano style in general. Field’s brand of ornamentation, and, more particularly, his pedaling effects, were in Schumann’s opinion enduring contributions, and Field’s name often figures prominently in Schumann’s explanations of the origins of romantic music.  

Schumann had also written favorable reviews of Field’s Nocturnes and Piano Concertos in the *NZfM* in 1835 and 1836 (see p. 29). With this context in mind, we can see that in “On John Field’s Nocturnes” Liszt’s attempt to link contemporary conservative and progressive composers not only to Field, but also to one another, participates in a much larger debate, an element likely not lost on Liszt’s musical contemporaries.

Furthermore, by highlighting Field in direct opposition to the “modern school” of composition, Liszt also effectively shifts to his brief discussion of Chopin as one of the few innovative composers who followed in Field’s path. Throughout the 1830s Chopin proceeded to further develop the Nocturne’s form while also achieving even higher levels of emotion and affect. Liszt’s smooth transitions between topics within this essay make his abrupt mention of Chopin even more striking. At this point, the reader does not realize that Liszt switches the object of his praise to Chopin; the musical affect he describes in this sentence corresponds with the sentiments he had previously applied to Field’s work (“Passing through all the endless changes of elegiac feeling, colouring in this manner his reveries with…profound sadness”) (P14). Liszt almost fools his reader into thinking that he is still extolling Field, but then proclaims Chopin as the “single genius” of the Nocturne!

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87 Parcourant tous les tons du sentiment élégiaque, colorant aussi ses rêveries de la profonde tristesse…
88 Full quotation: A single genius takes possession of this department of music, to give it the depth and ardour of which it is susceptible, yet preserving all its sweetness and the dreaminess of its aspirations. Passing through all the endless changes of elegiac feeling, colouring in this manner his reveries with the profound sadness for which Young has found notes that vibrate so plaintively, Chopin in his Nocturnes has made us listen to
As the “single genius” who is capable of giving music “the depth and ardor of which it is susceptible, yet preserving all its sweetness and dreaminess of its aspirations (P14),” Liszt cites Chopin’s ability to use effective harmonic coloring to produce an “elegiac feeling” in his Nocturnes. This feeling simultaneously delights, troubles, pains, and causes sorrow (with the latter three traits often accompanying the first). Chopin’s ability to probe more deeply into the meaning and depth of each emotion surpasses the “painful feeling of absence” that Field, for example, accomplishes in Nocturne II. Liszt further compares the two composers by describing them as wounded birds, with Chopin’s “flight [as] higher [than Field’s], though his wing is more grievously wounded (P14).” One can clearly see why Liszt highlighted Chopin’s ability to evoke a deeper level of emotion through his Nocturnes; Chopin actually lived within the depths of emotion that he created in his compositions (Liszt refers to Chopin’s wounded spirit and “inward desolation”), whereas Field was inspired by Nature and wrote from imagination and perhaps not actually lived emotional experience.

The presence of Chopin in this essay almost serves to overshadow the importance of Field and his works. An important distinction that Liszt draws between the two composers tempers this unexpected addition. Even though Chopin was able to achieve a greater depth of emotion in his Nocturnes, Liszt believes that his work “tranquilizes us less” (again rhetorically fusing himself with the reader), making us glad to return to the music of Field. This corresponds harmonies which are not only the expression of our most unspeakable delights, but also of the troubles, pains, and sorrows with which they are too often combined.

Un seul génie s’est emparé de ce genre, pour lui donner le mouvement et l’ardeur dont il était susceptible, tout en lui conservant sa douceur, et le vague de ses aspirations. Parcourant tous les tons du sentiment élégiaque, colorant aussi ses rêveries de la profonde tristesse pour laquelle Young a trouvé quelques accords vibrant si douloureusement, Chopin dans ses nocturnes-poèmes n’a pas seulement chanté les harmonies qui sont la source de nos plus ineffables jouissances, mais aussi les troubles inquiets et agités, qu’elles font souvent naître.

89 See previous footnote for full text in both its original French and English translation.
90 Son vol est plus haut, quoique son aile soit plus blessée.
with Liszt’s conclusion that composers after Field should not try to copy Field’s works, as Field’s Nocturnes are “timeless” and were able to achieve a level of affect that would be unattainable to others.\(^9^1\) Liszt himself seems to hold to this belief, composing only one Nocturne during his career, *En rêve*, which he wrote in 1885, one year before his death.\(^9^2\)

Although Liszt compares Field’s and Chopin’s ability to achieve affect and their respective type of genius, he does not strongly favor one composer over the other.\(^9^3\) Instead, Liszt strives to strengthen the connection between the two by emphasizing their similarities, yet still extolling each composer’s individuality and musical innovation, a sign of their respective genius. In highlighting Chopin as a contemporary composer who successfully strayed from the trends of the “modern school” of composition, as one who forged his own path and whose works resulted in an increased level of expression and emotion, Liszt links Chopin to Field as composers who did not resort to merely pleasing society and proved successful nonetheless.

Further, as the Field essay originally served as an introduction to the 17-installment Chopin biography, Liszt links the two essays thematically.\(^9^4\) Topics such as genius, musical

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\(^9^1\) Liszt does not address Chopin’s Nocturnes in his biography of the composer as his goal with that work was to be all inclusive in his audience and not alienate any readers through use of technical musical language or discussion. Liszt intended his Chopin biography to educate his audience about the arts (“It opens for them a dazzling perspective into that strange world of tones, of whose magical realm they know, comparatively speaking, so little.”) and also serves as a guide to Chopin’s life and work for uneducated readers (“the masses in this country”) (Lisz, *Chopin*, Martha Walker Cooke, trans. Preface, vii-viii).


\(^9^3\) According to Liszt, Field represents a “natural genius,” while Chopin is a prime example of a “national” genius since he was able to capture the essence of the Polish culture in works such as his Mazurkas and Polonaises (*Chopin*, 91-93).

\(^9^4\) Liszt began to publish his Chopin biography in *La France Musicale*, the first installment of which appeared in the journal just two editions after the publication of the Field essay. The monograph became one of Liszt’s most highly contested literary works in the twentieth century due to Wittgenstein’s revision of the book in 1879. *Chopin* publication history: 1851 serial publication in *La France Musicale*; 1852 book published in Paris by the Escudier brothers, in Leipzig by Breitkopf & Härtel, and in Brussels by Schott; long excerpts of *Chopin* in English translation published in *Dwight’s Journal of Music* as early as April 1852 (Swadley, 19); 1863 – Martha Walker Cook released a translation of the entire book and also published revised translation that same year; 1877 William Reeves (London) published another edition of the Cook translation; 1879 revision with Wittgenstein’s assistance (published by Breitkopf & Härtel). The multitude of editions, translations, and republications of this literary work is one of the main sources and arguments for the authorship controversy, as explained in the Introduction (timeline – Swadley,
affect, the artist’s place in society, and the challenges of an artist’s life are not only themes that unite these two prose works, but actually run throughout Liszt’s entire literary output. Liszt mourns each composer through a nostalgic discussion of his legacy and memory, especially from Liszt’s perspective as a musical contemporary, colleague, and friend (at least to Chopin).

By establishing lines of musical connections, like the one between Field and Chopin, Liszt adds his voice to the contemporary discussion about historical lineage (see pp. 50-51). The lineage Liszt creates between Field and composers of the past and present (Liszt himself)

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19. For more information, see Edward N. Waters, “Chopin by Liszt,” The Musical Quarterly, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Apr., 1961), 170-194 and Alan Walker’s chapter “The Scribe of Weimar” (op. cit). Interestingly enough, the preface or introduction to most of the editions or translations of this book make no reference to the debate over the authenticity of its revised version.

95 One of the more interesting and pertinent commentaries Liszt provides in his Chopin biography is a comparison between Classical and Romantic art, which he then applies to their corresponding styles and periods of music. He frames this discussion with the implication of a disagreement between proponents of both periods of art, which in turn correspond to the conservative and progressive parties of the debate in which Liszt was currently participating. He asks:

“What truce could there be between those who would not admit the possibility of writing in any other than the already established manner, and those who thought that the artist should be allowed to choose such forms as he deemed best suited for the expression of his ideas; that the rule of form should be found in the agreement of the chosen form with the sentiments to be expressed, every different shade of feeling requiring of course a different mode of expression?” (73)

Furthermore, Liszt provides very specific descriptions of beauty and form for each period. Classical Art, he asserts, is centered upon a belief in the “permanent form” of beauty which left no room for creativity and improvement in artists to come, whereas in Romantic Art beauty could have no fixed form (73). Instead, “form should be adequate to the expression of sentiment.” Further, Liszt sought to create a new form “which would satisfy the exactions of the inspiration” (73-74). Though these comments are on Art as a whole, Liszt could have just as easily been describing his position on the contemporary debate regarding form in music and his belief that music of the future (program music) should not be fettered by existing forms and should instead have its form be governed by feeling alone. Likely, given the date of publication of this essay (1851), this was certainly his intention.

Liszt concludes this section of the Chopin essay reframing the debate of Classical vs. Romantic music as instead, traditional Romantic vs. new Romantic (73). He cites Romanticism as promoting “the introduction of newly awakened ideas, newly clad in new forms; forms and ideas both naturally arising from the naturally progressive development of the human spirit, the improvement of the instruments, and the consequent increase of the material resources of art” with Chopin and Berlioz as prime representatives (74). Liszt concludes this section by extolling Chopin as an ideal Romantic composer, one who was “early trained to the exactions and restrictions of rules, having produced compositions filled with beauty when subjected to all their fetters, he never shook them off without an appropriate cause and after due reflection” (75). This description of Chopin corresponds exactly with the description and sentiments of Liszt in his descriptions of both Field and Chopin in the Field essay, thus even further strengthening the connection between the two (or three, if you count Liszt himself) composers and Liszt’s Weimar prose works in general. Liszt deliberately takes the opportunity time and time again to use his writings to serve several functions, often to promote his own musical ideals and those of the New Germans, in addition to the one perhaps anticipated by the title of the work itself.

96 The editor of La France Musicale further linked the two works by including a statement before “On John Field’s Nocturnes” where he referred to it as a preface to the Chopin biography (“En attendant la publication de l’important travail sur Chopin, nos lecteurs liront avec un vif intérêt une étude biographique de F. Liszt sur John Field.”).
included) is a key point in illustrating the change in meaning and reception of this work from its first to second publication. In 1851, Mendelssohn had only recently passed away, and Schumann though still living, was no longer active as a composer. By 1859, both composers had passed away several years prior. In 1859, the conservatives were no longer spearheaded by composers themselves, but by critics such as Hanslick, who promoted the compositional style and musical aesthetics of past composers, whereas Liszt and the progressives were advocating for the work and ideas of their very live and active counterparts. Liszt used his unique position as both author and composer to strengthen his relationship to past composers.

Tracing the trajectory and development of recurring themes of Liszt’s Weimar prose through works like “On John Field’s Nocturnes” allows a first-hand look into the musical politics of the time. That we are able to consider Liszt’s article on Field’s Nocturnes from two contextual vantage points within the same historically tumultuous decade makes it an increasingly interesting case study. In its earlier context, this essay is less of a response to what had been happening in music, and instead, serves as Liszt’s proposal concerning the path that music should take in the future, with the formal developments he was making in the symphonic poems as a leading example. These themes and ideas about musical aesthetics that Liszt first promoted in 1851 were not only still pertinent to 1859 socio-cultural and musical society, but Liszt also saw the potential benefit of their reiteration in this new context. Liszt’s decision to edit and publish the first collected edition of Field’s Nocturnes later in the decade in 1859 was a calculated shrewd political move as well.

The schism between the conservative and progressive parties continued to escalate throughout the 1850s, culminating with important events and statements by both groups in 1859-1860. The same year that “On John Field’s Nocturne” was (re)published (1859) also saw the
publication of Brendel’s speech before Weimar’s *Tonkünstler-Versammlung*, an assembly of musicians who encouraged new music and promoted younger composers. It was in this address that Brendel first referred to Liszt and his progressive circle of artists as the “New German School.” Furthermore, the publication of this edition occurs right before the release of the famed 1860 Manifesto in which Brahms and Joachim, among other conservative colleagues, published a manifesto against the progressive bias of the *NZfM* in the *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo* on 6 May 1860. The timing for the republication of this essay allowed Liszt to participate in musico-political discussions from several vantage points, enabling the spread of his ideas outside of Germany.

With prospective consumers of this edition in both Europe and America – its publisher J. Schuberth & Co. had branches in New York and Leipzig – Liszt had the potential to gain a new audience for his own works as well as those of Field. As the conservative composers controlled many German musical centers at this time, such as Berlin and Leipzig, Liszt rarely travelled to these cities and his works were seldom performed there. With the release of this edition outside of Germany, Liszt uses an alternative avenue of communication to promote his views on contemporary music and musical form to readers who may not have otherwise been exposed to his perspective.

This edition would also include the essay in Liszt’s original French as well as in English and German translation, thus making Liszt’s prose accessible to its targeted international audience.

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97 Brendel had actually delivered the speech several months before (3 June 1858) during the first meeting of the *Tonkünstler-Versammlung*. It was published in the *NZfM* the following year (see Altenburg, “Franz Liszt and the Legacy of the Classical Era” and Morrow “Deconstructing Brendel’s ‘New German’ Liszt” for more information.)


audience. [See Appendix III for the first page of this essay as an example.] With few exceptions, the German and English translations are satisfactory and communicate the style of Liszt’s original French prose as well as its content.\footnote{The one major difference to note between Liszt’s French and Schuberth’s English translation occurs in the very first paragraph of the piece. Where Liszt writes that the Nocturnes are “vrais chefs d’oeuvres de sensibilité,” Schuberth’s extends the description to further link the Nocturnes to poetry and emotion. His translation reads that the works “are true masterpieces of their kind, and which are characterized in an eminent degree by delicacy of feeling, or what the poets call sensibility.” Here, Schuberth attempts to elaborate upon the main points of Liszt’s thoughts about Field. Likely Schuberth acts here on his own accord – Liszt probably did not see or care to oversee the German and English translations of this work – yet his emphasis on the Nocturnes’ “delicacy of feeling” further illustrates Liszt’s connection of the Nocturnes to program music through their common reliance and production of affect.} Interestingly enough, though a musical sensation throughout Europe in the 1830s, Liszt never had a strong following in England and was ignored in England entirely throughout his Weimar period even though he had visited the country several times in 1824, 1825, 1827, and 1840-41.\footnote{Johns and Saffle, The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt, 86-88.} John Field’s excellent reputation in England, as evidenced by the positive reception of his 1831-32 London season and British citizenship, could also be used to Liszt’s benefit.\footnote{Piggott devotes a chapter, “The Return to London,” to Field’s 1831-1832 season there.} The potential excitement of the British audience for Liszt’s work on a British composer would likely increase Liszt’s reputation and following in the United Kingdom as well.\footnote{As Ireland was part of Great Britain until it successfully formed a free state in 1927, Field was (and for the most part, still is) considered a “British” composer.} The support for Field coming from the United Kingdom is further evidenced by the reprint of Liszt’s Field portrait in English translation in the \textit{Musical World} in 1858, the year before the Schuberth edition.\footnote{“On John Field’s Nocturnes” is one of the most often reprinted article of Liszt’s literary output and perhaps the only one to reach readers in the United States as well as in the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Liszt (and Schuberth and likely others) capitalized on the fact that the native English-language audience would be interested in reading Liszt’s perspective on an “English” composer, especially since there were not too many well-known English composers in continental Europe at the time.} Sadly, Liszt’s essay on Field seemed to have absolutely no effect on his presence (or lack thereof) in England.

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The reiteration of these themes, including “naturalness” and developments in musical form that had been hotly debated throughout the 1850s illustrated both Liszt’s multi-varied approach to advancing the progressive party’s musical agenda. Liszt’s emphasis on Field’s use of melody and harmony to achieve great depths of affect positions Field’s Nocturnes, and by extension program music and Liszt’s own compositions, against the cold, overly wrought works of his contemporaries. That Liszt also encourages his readers to forge their own personal relationship with the works, as Liszt himself had done, illustrates his belief that program music could simultaneously educate its audience and strengthen its reputation through listeners’ emotional connection with the work.

This chapter also demonstrates the academic potential of examining a piece of Liszt’s prose from two different vantage points. Yet, the content of this work, especially when placed within the context of the mid-nineteenth century debate over musical aesthetics, illustrates not only Liszt’s first introduction of the recurring themes which would become central to the progressive party’s musical aesthetic, but also Liszt’s deliberate positioning of this work to provide his audience with easy access to this new approach to musical composition and thought. What was first a novel introduction of themes such as nostalgia for Field and the affect he achieves in his Nocturnes, when republished almost ten years later, “On John Field’s Nocturnes” became a restatement of an aesthetic philosophy for a new international audience of readers and the musical community alike.
Appendix I

Full page of letter to illustrate passing reference to Field:
[Goethe-Schiller Archiv, Weimar]

Sentence in which Wittgenstein refers to the Field edition:

“Les Escudier m’ont également fait parvenir l’épreuve de 2 premiers articles du Chopin – ainsi que la notice sur Field qu’a paru dans leur dernier numéro.”
Appendix II

Nocturne.
IV.

Poco Adagio.

JOHN FIELD.

Prämien-Beigabe
zu
John Field, Nocturnes.

Übertragung ins Deutsche von Th. Hagen.

ILLUSTRATIONS

par Fr. Laiszt.

Translated into English by Julius Schuberth.

Die Veröffentlichung der neun Nocturnes von Field, welche bei J. Schuberth & Comp. zum ersten Male in einer Gesamtanzeige erscheinen, entpuppt sich noch neuerlich dem Musiker aller Zeiten, welche von unermeßlichen Weise dieser reinen Melodien zugänglich sind. Denn jetzt mußte man sie aus verschiedenen Stücken zusammenfügen, es waren Blätter, in denen dieser freudige auf seinen Platz anheischte, indem er nicht den geringsten Zweifel bei ihrer Veröffentlichung als bei ihrem Verlust an den Tag legte; eine Erschei

nungsart, die seinen Talenten sei wenig Reimreichkeit, und die seine Wienerer in seine Verhältnisse, daß sie seine ständischen Werke

war zu freizeiten zu finden, — einen Aufenthalt in der Stadt, die sich vergeblich an der Umgebung wandert. Es ist sehr zu betonen, daß diejenigen auf besonderen Eigenhänden eine ganz vollständige Sammlung dieser Nocturnes zu bieten, war der wesentlichstes derjenigen, die man wieder aufgaben berechtigt war.

Die 8.6.8. Farben von Edelstein schrecken neben die Dicke, was läßt erzählen? 

Vierzig Jahre sind seit ihren ersten Gedanken verstrichen, und noch nicht und ihnen eine dauernde Freude, ein vollender Unwidersetzter. Wir fanden wir wendet in der Gesamtheit unvorstellbarer Knaverei. Alsauch noch ihre vermutete sich weder in der Persönlichkeit oder in der Stimmung, bis wir recht wie einen jüngeren, jüngeren. Es und endlich wie von selbst, gleicherweise

La publication des neuf Nocturnes de Field, réunis pour la première fois (Édition de J. Schuberth et Co.), répond, ce nous semble, au désir de tous ceux qui goûtent le charme pénétrant de ces poésies latines. Jusqu'ici on a dû les chercher dans des éditions diverses, l'auteur les ayant inouïment affublées sur sa route, car il mettait autant de diligence dans leur publication, que dans leur exténuation: n'ayant pas tant de grâce à son talent, mais qui laisse à ses administrateurs le regret de ne retrouver que difficilement l'ensemble de ses compositions, vrai
d'œuvres de sensibilité. Il est tellement que des raisons de propriété s'opposent encore à ce qu'il en soit fait un recueil de ces chefs

'd'œuvres complètes; on a du moins rassembler ceux dont la répétition doit avenir.

Les Nocturnes de Field sont gardés leur jeunesse à côté de tant de choses si vieilles; A plus de quatre-vingtans de distance il est encore une fraîcheur émouvante, et apparaissent restitutions de parfums. Où rencontrerais-nous ailleurs une telle perfection d'incomparable nature? — Personne depuis n'a eu l'occasion de reprendre les charmes de ce langage carassant, comme un regard modérate et aimanté; bercer, comme les poiles retirés du bâillement de la marche, ou les impulsions d'un hasard, qui voit avec une si vieille et lenteur, qu'on croirait entendre autour de se corbeil le brouillage d'un embrasement exprimé! Per-

This complete edition of the nine Nocturnes, or night-pieces, by Field, was first published by J. Schuberth & Co., meets in our opinion the wishes of all those who feel the charm of these impassioned compositions. Up to the present day they had to be collected from various editions; they were leaves which the author carelessly strewn about upon his path, whilst he showed not less insistance to them at the time of their publication, than when he composed them, a negligence which inured his talent with so much grace and which caused so much grief to the admirers of Field, who can with difficulty obtain his complete works, which are true master-pieces of their kind, and which are characterized to an eminent degree by delicacy of feeling, or what the poets call sensibility. It is much to be regretted that a regard for the existing rights of property offers obstacles at present to a complete collection of these Night-pieces, we have therefore collected those, to the republication of which we are excited.

Mr. Field's Nocturnes have retained their youthful grace by the side of many things that have long become obsolete. After a lapse of thirty-six years from the this time they made their first appearance, they still possess a balmy freshness and a fragrant perfume. Where else could we meet with such a perfect and incomparable simplicity? Nobody saw him had the capacity to repro-
Chapter Two

“Clara Schumann”

This chapter examines how Liszt directly engages with a central figure of the conservative party, Clara (Wieck) Schumann (1819-1896). Liszt’s essay on Schumann is the first of his series of six character portraits published in three successive editions of the NZfM (1854-1856). The decision to begin this series with a presentation of Clara Schumann provides Liszt with a platform to state clearly his political views and musical aesthetics through a critique of those embodied and presented by Schumann both in her personal beliefs and in performance.

Although his portrait of Schumann may superficially seem positive and supportive, Liszt also questions Schumann’s artistic values and approach to music as well as her true virtuosity as an artist. The way Liszt goes about describing Clara Schumann in this portrait greatly differs from others of the series. He does so through constant discussion of – whether implicit or more subtle – gender relationships and more specifically, those that pertain to Clara Schumann. That Liszt approaches Clara, as only one of the two women he wrote about, from a gender perspective is interesting enough in its own right. That he uses contemporary gender roles and societal expectations in addition to Clara’s complex relationship with them as a means to present a gendered analysis of her as an artist is even more fascinating. Lastly, that Liszt then uses this
discussion to criticize the conservative party’s musical values proves this essay to be indispensable to a discussion of Liszt’s literary works in general.

The three main topics that I will discuss at length in this chapter are: 1) Liszt’s explanation of virtuosity and its inherently gendered nature; 2) the comparison of Clara Wieck to Clara Schumann to illustrate not only the effect of her maturation on her art, but also how both Friedrich Wieck and Robert Schumann were able to mold Clara to suit their respective needs; and 3) the relationship between Robert and Clara Schumann as the rare artistic pair endowed with natural abilities that Liszt describes in the first half of this essay. By deconstructing and representing Clara Schumann through an analysis of her gender role and relationships with men, in this essay Liszt illustrates to his readers that Clara Schumann and the musical conservatives are shortsighted about the value of music and the necessity of the virtuoso for the future of music.

Liszt’s “Clara Schumann” was published as a single installment in the 1 December 1854 issue of the *NZfM*. In the issues published just prior to December (July-December 1854, Volume 41), Liszt concluded his series of twelve essays presenting Weimar’s 1854 opera season. By this point, Liszt already had a steady readership – those who had been following his opera essays of the past two editions – and had established the *NZfM* reader’s expectation to find his prose works in the journal. Thus, the overlap of Liszt’s series of opera essays with his new series of character portraits was a strategic move to maintain his readership and smoothly shift into his new topics of discussion. The placement of this article also greatly emphasized this first portrait. Clara Schumann, a well-known and respected pianist and wife of Robert Schumann, provided Liszt with the forum to create a strong position piece against the core values of the conservative party.

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105 The Schumann article is preceded by Liszt’s essays on Bellini’s *Montecchi und Capuletti*, Boieldieu’s *Die Weiße Dame*, Donizetti’s *Favoriten*, and Schubert’s *Alfons und Estrella*; it is followed by Liszt’s essay on Wagner’s *Der Fliegende Holländer*. 

67
Born in September 1819, Clara Wieck showed exceptional musical abilities at an early age. Artistically educated and molded by her father, music pedagogue Friedrich Wieck (her mother was singer Marianne (Tromlitz) Wieck), Clara gave her first public performance in 1828 and embarked upon her first tour (to Paris) in 1830. She actually met her future husband Robert at her 1828 concert; soon after he moved into the Wieck household to study with Clara’s father. Clara continued to concertize around Europe for the 1830s and gained the reputation as a skilled pianist. After a nasty dispute with her father that lasted almost a decade – Friedrich Wieck opposed the union – Clara and Robert married in 1840.106

Upon marriage, Clara Schumann only performed occasionally in public. For the first couple of years, Clara was a “Hausfrau” of sorts and remained at home managing the Schumann household, supporting her husband, and bearing children.107 Clara’s first appearance since marriage occurred on 31 March 1841 where her presence on the Leipzig stage overshadowed the premiere of Robert’s First (Spring) Symphony.108 That year (1841), Clara Schumann returned to a steady performing schedule; in addition to more local concerts, like her Weimar performance in November, Clara traveled to Copenhagen (1842) and also to Russia (1844), where she concertized and earned a great deal of money.109 At this point, in the mid-1840s, Robert’s health and longtime depression were getting increasingly worse; he committed himself to an asylum in

106 Biographical information on Clara Schumann taken from her New Grove entry and Nancy Reich’s biography, Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman (Cornell UP, 2001).
107 Reich, 107. Having children and motherhood were not a deterring factor to Clara’s career as a pianist – she relied on a wet nurse and had her children boarded with others so she was able to continue performing and touring full-time.
108 Ibid, 109. Just as Franz Grillparzer cited Clara’s performance of Beethoven as Beethoven’s “homecoming” to Vienna, Clara’s performances in Vienna always had that same effect. She was the pride of her hometown.
109 Reich, 112-114, 118-121. Furthermore, Reich states that both Robert and Clara “knew that she could earn more in one three-week concert tour than Schumann obtained from composing and editing in a year (Reich, 113).”
1854 after a suicide attempt and died in July 1856. After Robert’s death, Clara continued an active music career – mainly concertizing and teaching – until 1891. She died in March 1896.\textsuperscript{110}

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As a woman in the Victorian era, Clara Schumann was held to several social standards regarding her role in society, both in the public and private spheres. At this time, the expectation for women was that they embody “the Angel in the House.”\textsuperscript{111} Simply put, a woman should “be devoted and submissive to her husband. The “Angel” was passive and powerless, meek, charming, graceful, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious, and above all--pure.”\textsuperscript{112} The socio-economic stereotype of the “Angel” was one who was “leisured, superficially accomplished, busy with the management of servants and the family’s social life.”\textsuperscript{113} While Clara certainly upholds some aspects of the “Angel,” as a professional musician and primary earner for her family, the “Angel’s” socio-economic profile could not differ more from the real Clara Schumann.

Although she served as her own manager for the majority of her career and was a professional pianist who supported her family from ticket sales, Clara Schumann was still subjected to many challenges and limitations because of her gender in mid-nineteenth-century German society. As a result of her unique life circumstances, namely having a mentally ill husband with a limited income and seven children all by the age of 31, Clara needed to take on unusual responsibilities for a woman at that time.

\textsuperscript{110} Biographical information compiled from Robert and Clara Schumann’s respective New Grove entries.
\textsuperscript{111} “The phrase “Angel in the House” comes from the title of an immensely popular poem by Coventry Patmore, in which he holds his angel-wife up as a model for all women (http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/novel_19c/thackeray/angel.html).” The text to this poem can be found in full on the Internet.
\textsuperscript{112} http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/novel_19c/thackeray/angel.html
Three things set Clara apart from other female artists of her day: her status as a professional musician who asked for payment for every performance, her need to be the sole financial supporter of her family, and her great musical talent, which permitted the first two elements perhaps to be of less importance. Nancy Reich outlines the gender bias issues female artists often faced upon conservatory graduation:

The women conservatory graduates from the artist-musician class who were performers had problems never faced by men. As a professional, the woman musician was paid for her work and consequently regarded as unfeminine; a male agent or manager was necessary to protect her “femininity.” He could bargain for her fees, provide an escort, make tour arrangements, and, often, guarantee the public that the pianist, singer, or composer in question gave her womanly responsibilities first priority – whether it was true or not.\textsuperscript{114}

That Clara was able to challenge these norms is noteworthy, although perhaps not always to her benefit. Clara responded to the need to earn money to support her family and she rose to the occasion.\textsuperscript{115} Because she acted as her own manager, she needed to be aggressive and demanding to earn appropriate fees and have her tours be financially successful. To be fair, though money was an important incentive to tour and perform, as Liszt and other Schumann scholars note, Clara Schumann was also incredibly dedicated to her music and fulfilled by it.

From a gender perspective, given the social limitations placed not only on women at this time, but especially on female performers or professionals, Clara Schumann was an extraordinary person. Reich sums up this sentiment perfectly:

The commonly held notion of her as a combination of artist and “Hausmütterchen” (little housewife) is misleading. She had entered marriage as a world-famous figure and, as we

\textsuperscript{114} Reich, 138.
\textsuperscript{115} Clara tried very hard not to publicly emasculate her husband, even as she took over those roles typically assumed by the male provider of the family. As Robert’s health became worse, Clara needed to take on greater responsibilities, including some of Robert’s professional duties. In Düsseldorf, for example, when Robert was hired as the musical director of the Municipal Orchestra and Chorus, because of his shortcomings as a conductor (scholars usually attribute this to his personality; Robert did not often vocally criticize or make suggestions to his ensemble during rehearsals, traits that a conductor needs to be successful) and his declining mental health, Clara took on increasing musical (in addition to financial and personal) responsibilities as well and served as practice pianist and conductor during rehearsals (Reich, 136).
have seen, maintained her career as pianist and composer in a thoroughly professional way. While bearing and raising children, she was composing serious works, arranging, editing, and teaching. She was not merely Schumann’s wife and partner; she was a colleague. With Schumann’s breakdowns becoming more frequent, she was forced to make the decisions, musical and personal, which in that time and place were generally left to men. At the same time, she was still a young woman, and though perhaps not beautiful in the conventional sense (solemnity and melancholy had already settled on her features), she was attractive and she had a forceful personality. Her marriage to Schumann must have been a disappointment to her by this time: he was ill and getting worse, and even if he were to recover, there seemed to be no place for him in the musical world.\footnote{Reich, 193.}

As a result of this extraordinary situation, Clara chose to, at times, prioritize her career over her family, though she never avoided her “responsibilities” as a wife and mother.\footnote{Reich succinctly sums up Clara’s need to balance her life between being a woman (wife and mother) and professional musician:

Always conscientious, she never shirked what she regarded as the woman’s responsibilities, but she must have felt underlying resentment as she went about her homemaking duties and practiced only when her husband, the composer, would not be disturbed. Once Schumann became ill, however, and the household had a clear need for funds, his wife assumed the combined burden of career and financial responsibility more than willingly (Reich 156-157).}

Her children were all always provided for – they had enough to eat, had somewhere to live, were educated, financially stable, etc. – even though Reich and others also affirm that Clara perhaps (like her close friend and colleague Pauline Viardot-Garcia, see Chapter Four) was not able to give her children the emotional support they needed.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 154. “Despite Clara Schumann’s regular, meticulous instructions concerning her children, it seems clear that she was not sensitive to their emotional needs and that her primary concern was with the professional tasks and duties that supported the family: teaching, practicing, learning new works, keeping up with an enormous professional and personal correspondence, and, of course, her concerts, which involved ten months of travel each year (Reich, 157).”}

Concertizing and performing brought Clara Schumann a level of personal fulfillment that could never be met if she were to stay at home, serve as a full-time mother to her children, and be the “Angel of the House.” In the latter half of this essay, Liszt, who was certainly familiar with Clara’s atypical gender role, situates her within a normative gender framework. As a result, he detracts from her exceptional lifestyle and career, restores Clara as the “Angel of the House,” and places Robert in the dominant position of power.
in their relationship. Thus, as I shall illustrate in this chapter, Liszt detracts from her musical authority as a main advocate for the musical conservatives.

Clara Schumann became a central member of the conservative party through her unswerving support of the group’s musical values and aesthetics as well as her close connection to the foremost composers and musical figures championed by the organization, including Schumann, Joachim, and Brahms. Furthermore, Clara’s connection to Leipzig (home of the conservative party), Mendelssohn (seen as the founder of the conservatives, or at least the composer after whose works and values the conservative party modeled their own, especially after his death in 1847), and the Leipzig Conservatory (which Mendelssohn founded in 1843) strengthened her bond and authority as a central musical figure of the group.

Not afraid to shroud her critiques of Liszt as pianist and as composer, Clara Schumann derided Liszt in her personal diary and correspondence with Robert and others. The tension between Clara and Liszt stems from the 1840s. In Fall 1841, for example, Liszt and Clara gave joint concerts in Leipzig, where Liszt’s performances completely overshadowed hers of Robert’s compositions. Clara deemed Liszt’s performance style, which many considered virtuosic and almost miraculous, as flashy, arrogant, and disrespectful to the music. Where she strictly adhered to the score on the page, Liszt took liberties with the written notes, adding improvisations and other flourishes during performance.

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119 Joachim had been part of Liszt’s intimate group of friends in Weimar until 1857. Liszt had brought Joachim to Weimar to serve as concertmaster of the orchestra there. Joachim soon tired of constantly rehearsing drafts of Liszt’s symphonic poems in Liszt’s “workshops,” and also began to complain about Liszt’s conducting style. He moved to Hanover in 1852 and finalized his break with Liszt and the New Germans five years later. In the 1850s Joachim became more intimate and friendly with Brahms and the Schumanns and soon banded with them against Liszt and the New German School (all from Walker, 345-346). This distaste for Liszt was a commonality that surely brought Clara and Joachim closer together.

120 This tension, as we shall see in Liszt’s continued generosity towards the Schumanns throughout the mid-nineteenth century, is seemingly one-sided.

121 Several scholars have posited that Clara was also a bit jealous of Liszt’s technical prowess and skill at the piano. For example, see Reich, 209.
Clara reveals her feelings of animosity toward Liszt in her diary entries of the 1840s and 1850s. While she continued to show some respect for his skill, she found his performance style and compositions offensive. In December 1841, she wrote in her marriage diary how awful she thought Liszt’s compositions were and complained about his arrogance and selfishness, yet she noted that, “We have become very fond of him and he has always treated us in the friendliest way.”\textsuperscript{122} This illustrates the complexity of Clara’s feelings towards Liszt, especially in the early 1840s, when she still respected him as a talented performer and can note his “friendliness” towards them, but simultaneously criticized his compositions and personality. An oft-repeated anecdote about an 1848 dinner party Clara organized in Liszt’s honor when he surprised the Schumanns with a visit to Dresden sums up the issues between Liszt and the Schumanns. Reich explains that Liszt “outraged Clara by appearing two hours late for a dinner party, insulted Robert by pronouncing his Quintet “Leipzigerish,” praised Meyerbeer at Mendelssohn’s expense, and horrified both Schumanns by his “dreadful” playing.”\textsuperscript{123}

By the 1850s, however, her animosity towards Liszt had clearly escalated. In 1852, for instance, after hearing Liszt play again in Leipzig, Clara noted in her diary, “Liszt at his piano [is]…no longer music, but like demonic boozing and bluster.”\textsuperscript{124} After her concert in Weimar (1854), which perhaps prompted Liszt to write his NZfM article, Clara affirmed that “his playing sounded like infernal, devilish music.”\textsuperscript{125}

Clara’s animosity toward Liszt continued to grow even after he published his character portrait of her in 1854. She expressed her strong desire to sign the 1860 Manifesto against Liszt and the New Germans, but allegedly because of the hastiness of its publication, her signature was

\textsuperscript{122} Reich, 214-215.  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 215-216.  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 216.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid, 216.
not included.\textsuperscript{126} Furthermore, in the Collected Edition of Robert’s compositions, for which Clara served as sole editor, she chose to strike out Robert’s dedication to Liszt for the Fantasie, Op. 17, and replaced Liszt’s name with her own.\textsuperscript{127} Clara was invited to participate in a Beethoven Festival in Vienna in 1870, but refused to perform under the baton of either Liszt or Wagner.\textsuperscript{128}

Although Clara continued to be unsupportive of Liszt, he remained generous and helpful to both Clara and Robert throughout the 1840s and 1850s. In 1849 Liszt conducted Part II of Robert’s \textit{Faust} Scenes, he visited the Schumanns in Düsseldorf with Wittgenstein in 1851, and gave the first performance of Robert’s incidental music to \textit{Manfred} in 1852. The only response he received from Clara regarding the \textit{Manfred} premiere was a note asking Liszt to return the autograph score for the work. Liszt responded that he would do so reluctantly since he had hoped to keep the score as a token of friendship.\textsuperscript{129} That friendship, despite his effort, now appeared to

\textsuperscript{126} I write “allegedly” here, since I wonder if other politics weren’t involved as well. Although some work has been done – and continues to be examined by the New German School research group housed at the Liszt Hochschule für Musik in Weimar under Detlef Altenburg – on the inner workings and politics of the progressive group, I have yet to come across any studies or suggestions as to the interpersonal relationship and inner workings of the conservatives on a detailed level. Though Clara was very close to both Brahms and Joachim, likely not all members of the traditionalists shared this same level of intimacy. Furthermore, she was one of the only women – if not the only woman – of power in this group. I would posit that Clara faced at least some sort of gender discrimination as a woman and mother by members of this group, whether outwardly recognized by either party or not, due to the traditional viewpoint and attitude of its members and socio-cultural values of the time.

\textsuperscript{127} Walker, 164. Given that Clara Schumann’s strong dislike for Liszt’s performance style, music, and personality, was one of the main dramatic plots of the mid-nineteenth century, that some scholars have tried very hard to find roots of this tension early in Clara’s life as well as other reasons for her dislike is perhaps to be expected. Since Liszt continued to be generous and respectful towards the Schumanns and Clara, too, was a respectful enough person, I believe that many of these suggested reasons and anecdotes have been blown out of proportion. Two examples strike me as compelling proof for this proposition. Eva Rieger posits that Clara criticized Liszt because he was too erotic in his playing (perhaps as a means of anti-womanizing herself and separating herself from Liszt’s adoring female fans?). While a plausible suggestion, without any sort of evidence for this argument, Rieger extends Clara’s conservative musical politics to sexual ones as well. Perhaps more provocative is Alan Walker’s belief that Clara’s feelings towards Liszt can be traced to the legal disputes between her father (Friedrich Wieck) and Robert. Liszt had apparently sided with Robert, which made Clara more defensive of her father (Walker, 162). Furthermore, Wieck reportedly did not care for Liszt and given his great influence on his daughter, Walker believes that this sentiment carried over into her post-marriage life with Robert as well. While Wieck did not favor Liszt, the friendship and mutual respect between Clara and Liszt during the 1830s, during which Clara broke with her father, weakens this claim.

\textsuperscript{128} Reich, 177-178.

\textsuperscript{129} Ce n’est point sans regret que je me rends à votre désir, Madame, en vous retournant le partition autographe de \textit{Manfred} – car je vous avoue qu’in petto je m’étais un peu flatté que Robert me la laissait à titre de propriété amiable. Notre théâtre en possède une copie très exacte qui nous servira aux représentations subséquentes de
be one-sided. In 1853 Liszt dedicated his famed B Minor Sonata to Robert, to Clara’s disgust. Again, he received no response from the Schumanns even after a copy of the sonata was delivered to their Düsseldorf doorstep in May 1854. In her diary, however, Clara did not hesitate to express her sheer disbelief that Liszt would dedicate such an awful piece of music to Robert and how offensive she found that gesture.¹³⁰

Interestingly, Clara’s aversion to Liszt and his musical values and aesthetics did not stop her from asking him to arrange a performance for her in Weimar in November 1854. This concert, like the majority of her performances, was likely financially driven. Liszt was certainly aware of and sympathetic to Clara’s challenges in life and quickly organized a concert in which Clara would perform an all-Schumann program.¹³¹ Though he did not necessarily support their musical values and style of composition, Liszt did not dismiss the music of the conservative party. As his character portrait of Clara Schumann shows, Liszt believed that good music should be valued, regardless of its composer or the longevity of its popularity. After the publication of the NZfM article (to which he also received no response from Clara) Liszt still visited Clara again in Düsseldorf in 1855, staged a full-scale production of Robert’s opera Genoveva in Weimar later that year, and continued to speak favorably of the Schumanns (at least of Robert) and his relationship to them after Robert’s death.¹³²

Though Clara’s animosity towards Liszt is well documented in musicological scholarship, their relationship had not always been so strained. Liszt had first heard Clara Wieck

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¹³⁰ Reich, 216.
¹³¹ Walker, 342-343.
¹³² Though Liszt heard no response to his essay from Clara during his lifetime, Clara wrote a lengthy letter to Liszt biographer La Mara criticizing this character portrait. This note (dating from 10 October 1882) benefits from being read in its entirety. I include the entire text in Appendix I.
perform in Vienna in April 1838, which he briefly described in a letter to Belgian violinist Lambert Massart (as part of his series of *Letters of a Bachelor of Music*). The pair then spent ten days together playing music and sharing a mutually enjoyable musical experience. Clara noted this event in her diary entry of 12 April 1838 as a very positive one. Her thoughts towards Liszt were favorable and she was in awe of Liszt’s talent, power, and passion at the piano. Liszt recalled the time spent with Clara Wieck in a letter to his then long-term companion Marie d’Agoult, affirming his excitement about Clara’s talent, especially at her young age (Wieck was 19 and already an established professional pianist):

> Just one word about Clara Wieck – distintissimo [most distinguished] – (but not a man, of course). We are living in the same hotel, Zur Stadt Frankfurt, and after dinner we make as much music as possible. She is a very simple person, cultivated…totally absorbed in her art but with nobility and without childishness. She was astounded when she heard me play. Her compositions are really very remarkable, especially for a woman. There is a hundred times more ingenuity and true sentiment in them than in all the fantasies, past and present, of Thalberg. 

The next month (May 1838), Liszt dedicated his “Paganini Studies” to Clara. As their correspondence shows, the relationship remained friendly for several years. In December 1839, Liszt wrote to Clara and expressed his interest in seeing her again and playing any of his new works (he had just written, with “no exaggeration,” 400-500 pages of piano music during his recent stay in Italy) for her if she had the patience to hear them. He also jovially responded that his letter would be too long if he were to answer all of the questions about his new compositions that she had asked in her last letter. Clara’s interest in Liszt was that of both composer and pianist and she continued to ask about his compositions throughout their correspondence.

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134 Reich, 210 and Walker, 161.
136 Letter dates from 25 December 1839, written from Pest:

> Combiens je suis reconnaissant, Mademoiselle, du bien-veillant souvenir que vous voulez bien me garder!
> Et combien je me réjouis déjà du plaisir de vous revoir et de vous réentendre bientôt à Leipzig. J'ai été si
Though Clara’s opinion of Liszt was quickly changing during the early 1840s as Liszt began touring Europe as a prominent virtuoso, she still requested Liszt’s help in securing connections in Russia in a letter of 7 January 1844 (Clara was to tour there later that year). Liszt had performed in Russia once before and had strong ties with the country through the Weimar court (the Grand Duchess of Weimar, Maria Pavlovna, was of the Russian ruling family). Clara had already contacted the Grand Duchess to no avail and requested that Liszt intercede on her behalf. As usual, she also asked a series of questions about Liszt’s latest compositions, including a supposed opera as well as his keyboard works. She acknowledged that she must be annoying him with all of her questions, but was grateful for his response. At the same time as she condemned Liszt’s virtuosic performances and compositions, she was still curious about his work and sought his assistance. Several authors have noted a competitive feeling that Clara experienced when it comes to Liszt and his career, especially since she had been compared to Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg, and Adolph von Henselt in an article in the NZfM in April 1838. I believe that Clara continued to ask Liszt about his compositions and career to keep abreast of his latest developments, partly out of curiosity, and partly as a means of comparing both hers and Robert’s career to that of a successful and famed contemporary colleague.

Though Clara’s feelings towards Liszt soured in the 1840s, Liszt and Robert Schumann maintained a friendly relationship until Robert’s death in 1856. Even before the two composers

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137 I have not been able to discover whether Liszt did indeed respond to Clara’s plea and speak with the Grand Duchess on her behalf.
138 Letter dates from 7 January 1844. See Appendix II for the full text.
first met in Leipzig in March 1840, Liszt published a favorable review of Robert’s music in Paris’ *Revue et Gazette Musicale* in 1837. They visited one another in Germany, dedicated a substantial work to the other as a token of friendship, and exchanged several amiable letters. As shown above, Liszt also continued to perform and premiere Robert’s works in Weimar, a sign of unceasing respect for Robert as a composer. This (mutual) respect can be seen in Liszt’s character portrait of Clara Schumann; Liszt’s preference for Robert, as opposed to Clara, is evident through his accolades of Robert’s work and the position of power and privilege in which he places Robert when it comes to his supposedly equal relationship with Clara.

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Liszt’s portrait of Clara Schumann is structurally intriguing: he makes no mention of Clara by name until halfway through the article!\(^{139}\) This essay follows the same construction as others of the series in that it can be easily divided into two parts. In the first part Liszt presents his philosophical thoughts on music and aesthetics in a more general sense and introduces the main themes of the essay. With a lengthy discussion about Nature and those rare times when Nature bestows its gifts fully onto an artist and the even more exceptional occurrences when two of these unique souls bond together, Liszt then illustrates an example of this rare occurrence and pairing in Art in the second half. Knowing that this prose work would indeed focus on Clara Schumann, the reader can certainly (and easily) deduce that Liszt subtly refers to Clara (and Robert) as the example of this extraordinary artistic pairing.\(^{140}\)

\(^{139}\) It is likely for this reason that in its reprint of “Clara Schumann” in English translation, *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (7 April 1855, Vol. VII, No. 1) chose only to include the second half of the essay. The editor justifies this decision stating that, “We propose in two installments to translate the latter half of it [Liszt’s “very long and glowing article in the *Leipzig Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*”], the first half being altogether general and speculative.” Omitting the first half of the essay certainly affects the impact it has on readers and readers’ ability to understand Liszt’s essay on a significant level and does a great disservice to the character portrait as a whole.

\(^{140}\) The idea of a complementary artistic pairing is important to Liszt. He had benefited from a close relationship with d’Agoult and later, Wittgenstein, and was surrounded by many other examples of kindred artists inspiring one
The second half of this character portrait applies the themes of the first half to Clara Schumann, the subject of the essay herself, her role as an artist, and her relationship with Robert. As the pairing of Robert and Clara represents “the happiest union in Art,” Art will remember them together; however, Robert’s works will remain in the future (the score being a tangible object), while Clara’s talent can only be remembered by others. Because of this Liszt feels the need to focus on Clara to capture her essence in Art for future readers. Taking a chronological approach, Liszt traces Clara’s childhood as a pianist, the relationship with her father, and her union with Robert, before settling into the main point of this latter half of the essay – an extended comparison of the young Clara Wieck with the woman and artist she has become as Clara Schumann. This comparative analysis enables Liszt to question Clara Schumann’s virtuosity and approach to music as she solely reproduces what is written on the page and blanches at the idea of musical interpretation. Liszt concludes that Clara Schumann will always be admired for the perfection of her playing, her carefulness when it comes to performance, and her devotion to the mastery of her instrument. Yet upon reading this essay, one wonders if Liszt truly finds these traits admirable in an artist.

In this character portrait Liszt revisits the idea of virtuosity not only to explain and promote his own musical values and aesthetics, but also to discuss what artistic traits make a virtuoso and the virtuoso’s role in music composition and performance. Liszt certainly intended for this opening discussion to be read with Robert and Clara Schumann in mind. Upon introducing the rarity of a Nature-inspired soul and the even greater rarity when two Nature-inspired souls unite, Liszt describes what happens when these two souls are artists and “true Poets.” This introductory discussion gives the reader a deeper understanding of the scarcity and another to produce works of art, such as Chopin and Georges Sand. Thus, he can affirm with great certainty the rarity, but also incredibly unique and special nature, of the collaboration between two Nature-inspired souls.
importance of the virtuoso and even more so, the uniqueness of the partnership between Clara and Robert Schumann. Liszt explores the creation of virtuosity in this essay as opposed to the discussions of how to recognize virtuosity and a virtuoso’s relationship with music, as he does in “Pauline Viardot-Garcia” (see Chapter Four).¹⁴¹ In explaining the creation of virtuosity to his readers, Liszt not only questions Clara’s own virtuosity as a pianist, but also illustrates that her contempt for contemporary virtuosos really only depicts her own shortsightedness as an artist.

Liszt opens this essay by expounding upon the incredibly special nature of Nature itself (P1). Nature so seldomly gives itself and its wonders fully to a person. Even when such a person exists, that person’s gifts are only recognized by those few who had previously learned of this unique individual in books and stories (P1). The rarity of this phenomena Liszt compares with the appearance of a comet, volcanic eruption, or blooming of the Aloëbis plant (P1).

Liszt then compares this strange phenomenon of Nature, its unusual and miraculous quality, to the sacred bond of love (“the intimate fusion of two existences”) (P2).¹⁴² He recognizes great pairs of lovers as Romeo and Juliet, Agrippina and Germanicus, Héloïse and Abélah; couples that are only understood as a miracle or legend, yet can also exist in real life (P2). Once these rare Nature-inspired souls join together – whom Liszt identifies as the continuous line of great men and those women who loved or inspired them – like Thesis and Antithesis, they are the perfect synthesis of two souls who stand on the opposite level of perfection (P3). They are propelled by the same instinct and once united, are transformed to seek

¹⁴¹ In comparison with his portrait on Viardot, Liszt’s portrayal of Clara Schumann is much more intimate and personal. Whereas in the Viardot essay, Liszt situates himself with further distance from Viardot and glosses over any details about her personal life, in the Schumann article, a discussion of her personal life and gender role is of central importance. Certainly Liszt’s relationship with each figure (not only these two women, but all of those artists he covered in this series of essays) is different, but the difference between his connections with these two artists seems especially glaring.

the same goal (P3). Gender, and specific gender roles, is an inherent part of these connections. These souls are complementary, yet not of the same functions and capabilities (P4). Where one partner is strong enough to determine a problem, the other is sensible enough to accept the subordination (P4). Liszt likens this relationship to that between the mind and the heart (P4). One partner is the protector of a weak being, whereas the other, through love, accepts the role of acquiescence (P4). Given Robert’s known mental illness, this relationship easily applies to the real-life pair of lovers, with Clara as protector and Robert as the weaker partner.

After describing this pair in the abstract, Liszt states that this wondrous relationship should – and does – exist in Art as well. Both partners may practice their art differently and speak their music in different tongues, but their arts are equally important and they join together to express the same harmony (P5). Artists of this high level of ability are both inspired by the same ideals and unite against the trivial in art and music (P5). That this pair – Clara and Robert Schumann – unites in their dismissal of the trivial in music becomes important later in this essay when Liszt argues that a true virtuoso should not (and cannot) hierarchize one style of music over another as long as the music was composed using two core elements, feeling and form.

Liszt concludes this extended introduction stating that the two artists have equal merits; despite one partner being a woman, her creative ability (“the creative activity of virtuosity”) is not subordinate to her male partner. He cites this idea as a narrow-minded belief of today’s shallow and smooth-talking virtuoso who writes only works with no intellectual underpinning. This statement of gender equality perhaps seems unique given society’s beliefs about the dominance of the man over the woman. Liszt is very careful to promote his gender equality in a very limited, idealized sense; his equal world is far removed from reality, as we shall see when Clara and Robert are discussed in reality.

143 This is Liszt’s first reference to virtuosity in the essay, interestingly enough, in reference to a woman.
Yet one also questions this statement of egalitarianism when Liszt had just prescribed very strict, gendered limitations on the creative partnership within true virtuosity; the man is always the creator, whereas the woman serves as the muse or executor of her partner’s work. This leads one to believe that, in Liszt’s perspective, only men can be true virtuosos, though they are only complete artists with a kindred woman by their side.

Virtuosity was a clear point of contention between Liszt and Clara Schumann. While Liszt argues in this article and elsewhere that virtuosity is necessary to the continuation of music, Clara believes that the flashiness and technical bravura of the contemporary virtuoso is too overdone and offensive to the composer of the work they perform and the notes on the page. The improvisational elements that virtuoso performers such as Paganini and Liszt incorporated into their performance of a work, Clara believed, were purely for their own benefit and popularity and not to enhance the music they played. Thus she took this approach as a sign of disrespect for the art. Liszt deconstructs Clara’s views on virtuosity by proving its necessity to music and the successful performance of all works regardless of the aesthetic bent of the composer.

Furthermore, since he relegates Clara to an eternal “performer” status, she can only identify virtuosity from an outsider’s standpoint. As Liszt personally fulfills the requirements for virtuosity, he can give a more detailed, stronger, and persuasive perspective.

With the introduction of both the idea of pure virtuosity and the commonplace virtuoso, Liszt is careful to distinguish between the two entities – the idea or practice of virtuosity and the virtuoso as a person. The “singing and playing virtuosos” appear in number, yet true virtuosity,

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144 Virtuosity studies is an important field of Liszt scholarship. As Liszt was one of the earliest, most prominent, and groundbreaking virtuosos of the nineteenth-century (alongside Paganini), his thoughts on virtuosity are particularly interesting. Furthermore, Liszt’s critique of the decade he spent as a touring virtuoso (1840s), in which he felt that he (and all artists) were poorly treated and undervalued by contemporary society, is another area that should be further explored in scholarship. Dana Gooley’s monograph *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge UP, 2009) is an excellent source of information on this topic and the meaning and significance of Liszt as a virtuoso at this point in (European) history.
as a necessary element of music, warrants greater explanation and discussion. To illustrate the need for virtuosity in music and to perhaps prove its worth to naysayers like Clara Schumann and other traditionalists, Liszt relays Aesop’s parable “The Belly and its Members,” which Roman consul Menenius Agrippa tells the plebian class of workers in 503 BC to appease their grumblings about their lack of representation in the government council.145 Though individuals and other musicians are often envious of virtuosos and resent them, virtuosos, like any of the appendages of the fable, even the narrow-minded musicians he mentions earlier, are needed to provide life and longevity to music (P7). Liszt believes that music, as a living art, only truly lives through (virtuosic) performance. Yet virtuosos are also reliant upon another member of the musical “body,” the composer, and vice versa.

Without virtuosos, music composition remains an exercise of the mind (P8). Liszt makes this point through an extended comparison with music’s “sister” arts, painting and poetry. While the dramatic poet would keep writing even with no planned performance of his or her work, since the spirit passes through the words and through reading the words on the page, Liszt states that the composer should not (and would not) just continue to write “Augenmusik” for the few who are able to recognize its value: “What daylight is to the painting – performance is to the musical work! (P8).”146 Through a discussion of “Augenmusik,” Liszt shows the importance of the public in fostering creativity and virtuosity, thus further justifying his overarching goal of educating the musical public through his prose.

145 Full text of “The Belly and its Members”:
One fine day it occurred to the Members of the Body that they were doing all the work and the Belly was having all the food. So they held a meeting, and after a long discussion, decided to strike work till the Belly consented to take its proper share of the work. So for a day or two, the Hands refused to take the food, the Mouth refused to receive it, and the Teeth had no work to do. But after a day or two the Members began to find that they themselves were not in a very active condition: the Hands could hardly move, and the Mouth was all parched and dry, while the Legs were unable to support the rest. So thus they found that even the Belly in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the Body, and that all must work together or the Body will go to pieces. [http://www.bartleby.com/17/1/29.html]

146 Was die Tageshelle dem Gemälde – das ist die Aufführung dem Musikwerk!
Though Liszt admires Robert Schumann’s work, Schumann’s compositions were notoriously known, especially at that time, as “intellectual” and/or “Augenmusik” and rarely received public performance because they seemed to be unapproachable. This was recognized by Clara, Liszt, and their contemporaries and was often discussed in the correspondence between Clara and Robert. The Schumanns have lengthy deliberations about which piece would be best suited for an audience and where in the program it should be placed for it to receive maximum appreciation. Clara also asked Robert to compose a piece that would be easier for the musical public to understand. Though he was admired and valued as a composer by the Kenner (“those in the know” or “experts”) and his works were well-received in private performance, public performances of a work were also important to a composer’s career and provided great financial benefits. The musically knowledgeable readership of the NZfM could likely identify Liszt’s critique of Robert Schumann, among others, in this commentary on “Augenmusik.” Liszt does not disparage Robert’s presence or importance in music, but posits at the same time that one cannot make a career only by writing “Augenmusik,” nor does he believe that these works would necessarily have the longevity of a work that is often performed. Yet this critique of Robert is made less important and effective by Liszt’s praise and support of the composer, both veiled and direct, throughout the rest of the essay.

Liszt’s lengthy discussion of virtuosity reveals his thoughts on beauty and aesthetics in music as well as how to measure the value of a composition. He very clearly states that a piece’s “worth as a composition depends entirely on the formation of feeling from the artist (P12).” The intensity of this feeling is necessary for creation and it is the composer’s duty to translate his

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147 Ferris, 379. See his article “Public Performance and Private Understanding: Clara Wieck’s Concerts in Berlin.”
148 Demzufolge hängt ihr Werth ganz wie der einer Komposition von der Gefühlsbildung des Künstlers und der ihm verliehenen Gabe ab, der Intensität eines Gefühls auch die entsprechende, anderen faßlich sich mittheilende Form zu finden.
or her feelings into a communicable form. Worth, therefore, results from the composer’s ability to translate his or her creative thrust into a work accessible to an audience.

The two elements that comprise art and its “feeling of undisclosed beauty” are feeling and form. Both feeling and form are endowed by Nature and thus represent an organic, indisputable element of creation. Because one cannot challenge Nature and her creation, the preference of artists can only exist in those few who have an incredibly high degree of real, true artistic ability (P16). This individual must have a deep understanding of beauty and provide a greater unity between feeling and form in his or her own works than those which they judge (P16). This would prove that the artist in question is a genuine artist and is able to judge others, as his or her work most truly comprises these two fundamental elements of artistic creation. Because the artist who is worthy to judge the work of others and hierarchize art or music rarely exists, those who do judge the value of art must do so on a superficial level (P17). Thus Clara Schumann and the musical conservatives who outwardly assert a hierarchy within music and arts must fall into the latter category of artists.

Liszt continues his critique of more traditional artists by identifying the group as not only those who hold “Augenmusik” to a high standard, but who also freely disparage other works of art when they do not match certain predetermined (conservative) ideals. In Liszt’s perspective, artists aspire to attain a musical goal of expression. Thus, it follows that an artist can really only comment on the value of another work after having reached an even higher level of expression than the judged artwork itself (P9). The majority of “assessors” (i.e. the majority of the musical

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149 I would argue that this artist is even rarer to be found than the virtuoso, though the virtuoso must share some qualities with this artist, such as the ability to recognize the true emotion and feeling of a work. A major difference is that the virtuoso does not necessarily create works of his or her own that prove that he or she truly has the depth of understanding and ability to judge the value of works by others. It is also important to note that Liszt does not state that he falls into this category of great artist, nor does he include either Schumann in this group, or name any artist who should fall into this category. It seems as if this level of artistic ability and deep understanding of music is unattainable by all past and present-day composers! If these artists existed and were recognized in society – by the musical public and artistic community alike – then this level of explanation would not be necessary.
community) prove through their judgment that they do not understand the task of music in some way (P9). By discriminating against other composers and compositions, these people first and foremost show their own musical shortcomings.

Given that the goal of Liszt’s writings was to educate his reader, he takes great pains to explain clearly the relationship between the composer and virtuoso:

Virtuosity is not a passive servant of the composition because the life and death of a work of art entrusted to it [virtuosity] depends entirely upon its breath; it [virtuosity] can reproduce the splendor of its [the composition’s] beauty, its freshness, its enthusiasm; it can also distort, make less beautiful, disfigure (P10). Yet virtuosity can only enhance and express the substance it is given in a work by the work’s composer. Just as there are different levels of talent amongst virtuosos, the same disparity exists within a group of composers. The two classes of artists – Liszt again compares the composer with the painter in this section of the essay – mentioned here are those who create as a profession (“métier”) and those who create art itself (P10). Being a true virtuoso takes a great deal more effort and work than mere natural talent. Just as the painter or composer has buried secret expressions and mysteries hidden in their work of art, the virtuoso must find, comprehend, and then express these intimacies to illustrate the original intention of the creator of the work (P10). To do so, like the singer or portrait painter, the virtuoso must identify with the character and emotional content of the work. The opposite approach where one who “with uncomprehending loyalty, merely followed the contours presented to him,” or simply plays the notes on the page, without embedding one’s own passion or emotions gathered from one’s life experience “would

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150 Nicht passive Dienerin der Komposition ist die Virtuosität; denn von ihrem Hauche hängt das Leben, wie der Tod des ihr anvertrauten Kunstwerkes ab: sie kann es im Glanz seiner Schönheit, seiner Frische, seiner Begeisterung wiedergeben, sie kann es ebenso verdrehen, verunschönen, entstellen.
be a bad or no artist at all (P10).”¹⁵¹ From this dichotomy, Liszt seems to imply that a true virtuoso cannot just replicate the notes on the page and must insert him- or herself into the understanding of the work and the performance in some way. This discussion also demonstrates that musical talent and virtuosity cannot be taught through formal education or training.

Liszt rephrases his main point in this section – the explanation of these two classes of virtuoso or artist – for even greater emphasis in the next paragraph. He affirms that virtuosity “does not babble like a starling who has been taught sayings. On the contrary, it brings ideas to appearance and takes them out of the limbo of intangible abstraction and into the sensuous living world (P11).”¹⁵² Into which category of virtuosity does Clara Schumann fall? If Clara’s connection to music is through pure reproduction, greatly differing from Liszt and others, is Clara still a virtuoso or is she merely a talented vessel that can be molded by others and through which music speaks? Or is the music not even really living and breathing in her hands since she is entirely faithful to the page? In placing Clara Schumann within Liszt’s description of virtuosity, though he does not state so directly, Liszt implies that Clara cannot be a virtuoso, or even identify virtuosity or works of great musical worth. With this system of evaluation in place, Liszt’s description and assessment of Clara Schumann as a contemporary virtuoso pianist becomes more complex than the pleasantries found on the surface of the text.

In the next section of the essay, Liszt proceeds to trace Clara’s life and career from her youth as Clara Wieck, through a transformative period as a more mature Clara Wieck (perhaps prompted by the break with her father), to her marriage to Robert wherein she becomes the great

¹⁵¹ Das wäre ein schlechter oder gar kein Künstler, der mit verständnisloser Treue bloß den ihm vorliegenden Konturen folgte, ohne diese auch mit dem aus der Auffassung der Leidenschaften oder Gefühle geschöpften Leben zu durchdringen!
¹⁵² Sie ist kein Akt leerer Receptivität – sie plappert nicht wie ein Staar eingelernte Redensarten nach. Im Gegen teil: sie bringt die Ideen zur Erscheinung und versetzt sie aus dem Limbus unkörperlicher Abstraktion in die fühlbare lebende Welt.
artist Clara Schumann. This tri-partite division is a new and meaningful way to examine Clara’s maturation and development as an artist. Liszt never presents Clara as an independent person and always hides her personal agency underneath the shadow of the prominent man in her life at that time. He devotes several paragraphs to describing Clara’s experience as a child and child musician, though he tempers the negative results of her father’s strictness. Friedrich Wieck’s influence can be seen in Clara’s views on music and style of performance. The effects of her relationship with her father have also been impressed on Clara’s personality and the subsequent relationships she shared with men for the rest of her life. Again, given that Clara’s experiences with her father were known to the public, that Liszt does not name Friedrich Wieck does not diminish his obvious reference to Wieck. Liszt believes that too often parents whose children show a spark of talent then push these children to attain “a fruitless virtuosity, a mostly mindless, often nonsensical presentation of masterworks” or performances which do not gain in value by fleeting success (P20).153 As a result, these children have stunted intellectual development and if not truly talented, have the potential to become those judgmental musicians and “smooth-talking” virtuosos whom Liszt mentions earlier in the work (P20).154

Clara Wieck, who did exhibit great musical talent at an early age, falls into this category of child musician (as does Liszt himself). Wieck planned Clara’s daily schedule and education according to his very strict and severe standards from a very young age.155 His goal was to create a virtuoso out of Clara. She had instruction in reading, writing, French and English, music theory

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153 Sie verlegen sich auf das Erzielen einer unfruchtbaren Virtuosität, eines größtenteils geistlosen, oft unsinnigen Vortrags von Meisterwerken, die durch leeres Abdreschen nicht begriffen werden, oder auf mittelmäßige Produkte, die durch momentanen Erfolg nicht an Werth gewinnen.
154 In this section, Liszt could also be reflecting upon his own childhood as a young virtuoso whose father (Adam Liszt) supervised his musical education and early concert career.
155 Wieck describes his pedagogy in his book, Piano and Song (Didactic and Polemical): The Collected Writings of Clara Schumann’s Father and Only Teacher, first published in Leipzig in 1853. The book was then translated into English by Henry Pleasants in 1988. Reich also introduces Wieck as a pedagogue and outlines his pedagogy in Chapters 1 and 2 of her Clara Schumann biography.
and harmony, composition, counterpoint, orchestration, voice, piano, violin, and score reading, often studying with famous musical figures of the day.\textsuperscript{156} Wieck was also a firm believer in daily walks, a practice that Clara continued throughout her life. Between all of these lessons and her walks, Clara did not have much time for general school topics or personal time for herself. As an adult, she “was embarrassed about her lack of general education and told Brahms that she often felt uneasy in intellectual circles.”\textsuperscript{157} Clara appeared to be a willing participant in her father’s pedagogical experiment throughout her childhood and became very dependent on him.

Wieck’s presence in Clara’s childhood diary is very telling about the degree to which he was involved in, and perhaps truly lived through, the life of his daughter. Until she was eighteen years old, Clara’s diary entries were supervised, annotated, or actually written by her father himself.\textsuperscript{158} Wieck literally takes Clara’s voice away and replaces it with his own! Her entries often included the rewriting of acerbic letters her father had sent to various colleagues, friends, and enemies.\textsuperscript{159} His entries were almost always written in the first-person, as if he were Clara herself.\textsuperscript{160} Reich believes that,

Wieck used the diaries as a way of communicating with and educating his child; he preached and philosophized. Information, praise, reproach, condemnations, exhortation are all clearly seen in his black, bold handwriting, but he persisted in using the first person throughout, as though Clara were writing; he even referred to himself as “Father.” Most startling is the way he seemed to be taking over her personal identity.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{156} Reich, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 195.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, 42.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, 42.
\textsuperscript{160} In Nancy Reich’s and Anna Burton’s article “Clara Schumann: Old Sources, New Readings,” the authors prove that Clara’s journal is partly written in Wieck’s hand. In Berthold Litzmann’s two-volume monograph, \textit{Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life Based on Material Found in Diaries and Letters}, Litzmann fails to distinguish between the two pens. Since the translation of his publication became one of the main English-language sources for Clara’s correspondence and personal writings, Burton and Reich rightly point out that this fact has been overlooked in musical scholarship for far too long and needs to be considered in future Clara Schumann studies.
\textsuperscript{161} Reich, 42-43.
Theirs became an entirely co-dependent relationship. Dr. Anna Burton has written several articles on the psychological development of Clara Schumann and on the alarming psychological relationship Clara experienced with her father. Burton affirms that Clara “functioned as an extension of her father – symbolically, as a phallic supplement – and had already begun to personify her father’s ego ideal.” Burton continues, “she also fully internalized Wieck’s work attitudes – moderation, naturalness and regularity of exercise – as well as the artistic ideals that he proclaimed – truthfulness to the spirit of the music, wholeness, good proportion, and placing art above material gain.” Though her father often tried to sabotage her life and career once Clara chose to defy him and marry Robert, she was still always sympathetic to her father and often wrote in her diary and correspondence how she missed him and sought his approval. Wieck’s influence over his daughter would remain to some degree for the rest of her life.

Furthermore, the “misfortune” and “sorrow” that Liszt sees in young Clara’s expression were repeatedly noticed by others and was often remarked upon in print and correspondence. Even though Liszt surely knew of Clara’s difficult upbringing and the complex relationship she shared with her father, he writes in this portrait of Clara Schumann that Clara Wieck, as a talented child with a domineering parent, left her childhood “unscathed” (P20). Since she was one of the few “chosen” artists, she was not blunted by this strict training. Despite the probable danger of this experience, Liszt notes that Clara instead acquired “an early strength, which in a

162 Burton, 217.
163 Ibid, 217.
164 For further information see Litzmann, vol. II, pp. 130, 207-208, 301-302.
165 In the midst of a favorable letter after hearing Clara Wieck perform in Weimar in 1832, the tutor to the Duke of Weimar, for example, notes that despite her musical and wonderful performance, he pities Clara for the sadness he sees in her eyes (Reich, 50):

Poor child! She has the look of unhappiness and of suffering, which distresses me; but she owes perhaps a part of her fine talent to this inclination to melancholy; in examining closely the attributes of the Muses, one could almost always find there some traces of tears.

The original letter can be found in Eugenie Schumann, Robert Schumann: Ein Lebensbild meines Vaters (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1931), 225.
feminine constitution can be regarded as a doubly favorable case” (P20).\textsuperscript{166} Liszt contradicts his statement that Clara left her childhood “unharmed” in the next paragraph where he states that life was especially hard for Clara at the beginning of her studies, as she was an even more sensitive musician who was “afflicted with a scattered imagination and an airy, dreamy spirit, that allows what has been received [the inspiration] to mature only slowly (P21).”\textsuperscript{167} Therefore, the harsh criticism she faced from her father had a deep impact on her tender, introverted nature. To best illustrate Clara’s tenderness, Liszt relays Clara’s love for kittens and the anecdote of how she would spend her incredibly short breaks from practicing or her lessons blissfully happy petting a kitten. Even when scratched, she remained elated from the time she and the kitten were able to spend together (P21). In relaying both this anecdote and in his description of Clara’s childhood education in general, Liszt portrays Clara as just a talented child, completely molded by her father, with a sensitive spirit, who loved simple elements of life such as kittens.\textsuperscript{168}

As Clara matures, Liszt notes that she veers from the path of other childhood prodigies, and instead of gaining ennui, she gains a deeper understanding of the music she plays (P22). She viewed music very differently from how it was taught to her (by her father, among others) “and that rescued her!”\textsuperscript{169} Soon, Clara no longer needed a teacher and she becomes increasingly enraptured by Art.\textsuperscript{170} She is less afraid of embracing Art (she is “at an age, which is capable of little else than approaching these flames, without becoming consumed by them”) and thus she

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{166} Trotz aller dieser Gefahren eine frühzeitige Kraft, was bei einer weiblichen Organisation als ein doppelt günstiger Fall anzusehen ist.
\item\textsuperscript{167} Denn nothwendig sind diese mit einer zerstreuten Imagination und einem lässigen, träumerischen, das Empfangene nur langsam in sich reifen laßenden Geiste behaftet.
\item\textsuperscript{168} As Nancy Reich notes, starting around the age of 15, Clara Wieck was also a defiant adolescent, far removed from the girl who was satiated with the company of a cat (Reich, 56-57).
\item\textsuperscript{169} Ohne Zweifel begriff sie die Musik anders, als man es ihr zu lehren suchte, und das rettete sie!
\item\textsuperscript{170} Clara broke with her father in 1838 at the age of 19 and set out on a Paris tour on her own; she made all of the tour arrangements by herself and the tour was successful, despite her father’s many attempts at sabotage of both her tour and her reputation. A main reason for their rupture was Friedrich Wieck’s disapproval of Clara’s engagement to Robert. Clara chose to marry Robert and end relations with her father. The two reconciled in 1841, though their relationship remained strained for the rest of Wieck’s life (he died in 1873).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
ends up maturing into the “land of the Ideal” and paid less and less attention to the outside world. Simultaneously, as Liszt implies, Clara also becomes much more insular and introverted and only finds joy in music where she can continue her search for and embrace the “Ideal” (P22).

Liszt recalls first having heard Clara Wieck perform in Vienna during her tour there in 1837-1838. This successful tour marks the brink of Clara’s break with her domineering father; Liszt captures this transformative moment in his essay. Clara is in the process, as we shall see, of moving from one man’s control to another. This independence, though, is fleeting, as she was already engaged to Robert at this time, so she never truly had the opportunity to be an independent person, woman, and artist.

By having Clara evolve from her “unscathed” childhood and strict rule of her father into the artist striving to live in the “Ideal,” Liszt prepares her for life with Robert, her kindred spirit and perfect love. She had been “chosen” or groomed for life with Robert, yet first needed to pass through the intermediate stage of life as Clara Wieck trying to reach the “Ideal.” He describes Clara Wieck’s ability to draw her listeners in after her into her poetic world, “to which she floated upward in a magical car drawn by electric sparks and lifted by delicately prismatic but nervously throbbing winglets (P23).” This visual image implies both a lack of control on Clara’s part to manage her gift and musical talent; the “nervously throbbing winglets” who carry her are indicative of this. The supernatural (“magical”) elements show that hers is a talent that is both very powerful and very delicate and that she needs only to defer to her own ability (and

171 Sie drang dabei mehr und mehr nach dem Äquator hin, wo man inmitten der Flammen der Kunst athmet, – in einem Alter, welches sonst wenig dazu geeignet ist sich diesen Flammen zu nähern, ohne von ihnen verzehrt zu werden.
172 Als wir Clara Wieck vor siebzehn Jahren in Wien hörten, zog sie die Zuhörer mit sich fort in ihre poetische Welt, zu der sie in einem von Lichtsunken gezogenen und von kleinen zierlichen, prismatischen, aber nervig schwungvollen Flügeln gehobenen Wunderwagen emporschwebte. [Dwight’s]
mentor perhaps?) to guide her to not subdue her talent, but to be able to use it to its full advantage. Though she was recognized and adored by her audience and the press as a “daughter of Germany,” Liszt comments that when not performing she “seemed like a silent Naiad, who feels unearthly in the land of Prose” (P23). He reiterates that Clara was now happiest in the land of the Ideal where she could sit and enjoy her music to the fullest. It was through this Ideal-ized vision, however, that Clara was able to produce an exceptional performance of Beethoven’s F Minor Sonata, a piece Liszt referred to as a “cold, tired piece” (P31), that was rare, spirited, and revealed the work’s hidden inner charms (P23). Liszt quotes the entire text of a poem by Franz Grillparzer, “Clara Wieck und Beethoven,” composed after the poet heard Clara Wieck in performance in Vienna (perhaps even the same concert as Liszt).

This poem and Liszt’s reference to it might seem out of place in this essay. Yet when one looks back to Liszt’s first mention of Clara Wieck in print, his 1838 letter to Massart (see p. 76), one finds that Liszt chose the same poem to be published in its entirety in the earlier prose work. Thus he not only provides some continuity in his mention of Clara Wieck/Clara

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173 Sie streuten vor ihr Perlen und Gesänge und feierten diesen Benjamin ihres Stammes, der mit schweisendem geistvollem Blick umherschauend seltsam lächelnd einer schweigenden Naiade glich, die im Lande der Prosa sich unheimlich fühlt. The Naiads were water nymphs of Greek mythology. For more information, see the entry on “Naiads” in The Handbook of Classical Mythology (ABC-CLIO, 2004) by William F. Hansen.

174 What is interesting is that he does not relate her need to escape from reality to any issue in her then-present day life. I would posit, in accordance with the views of other Clara Schumann scholars, such as Anna Burton, that her need to go into a dreamland was a direct result of the mental and emotional abuse she experienced from her father. Authors often apply psychoanalytical techniques to discover more about Clara’s childhood and its effect on her later development. For example, many have analyzed why Clara did not start to speak until the age of four and then the reason why this “deafness” did not fully disappear until age eight (Reich, 37). The consensus among Clara Schumann scholars is that in addition to there being almost no speech in her house growing up, Clara was also negatively affected by the angry speech and arguments she overheard between her parents; music, on the other hand, which she at first associated with her mother, was a safe haven for her and allowed her to escape from language and reality even then, at a very young age.

175 Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872) was a famed Austrian writer and dramatist. Keenly interested in music, Grillparzer often wrote about contemporary composers and styles; he also composed the eulogy to be read at Beethoven’s funeral. For more information, see Philip Gordon, “Franz Grillparzer: Critic of Music,” The Musical Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Oct., 1916), pp. 552-561.

176 Excerpt mentioning Clara Wieck from Liszt’s Letters of a Bachelor of Music: “I came at just the right time to hear an interesting young pianist, Clara Wieck, who already this past winter has had very nice and justified success. Her talent has delighted me. She has real advantages: a deep, true feeling, a consistent internal exaltation. The
Schumann in his prose, but also continues to solidify her connection to the poem itself, which
Grillparzer published in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur* two days after the concert.

Clara Schumann did not perform Beethoven at all in her Weimar concert of 1854; as previously
stated, it was an all-Schumann program.\(^{177}\) Liszt recalls Clara Wieck’s performance of the
Beethoven to illustrate the strength of her musical abilities when she was a young(er) woman, as
well as the almost accidental nature of her wondrous musical performances. This sentiment is
illustrated in the Grillparzer by the protagonist, as she daydreamed, who was able to
unexpectedly find the exact key needed to unlock the “magic” of the “wondrous man’s” soul.
The poem also emphasizes her girlhood and the spiritual, perhaps unnatural (though Nature-
inspired), supernatural quality of Clara’s relationship to music.

From Liszt’s introduction to Clara Wieck as a youthful, extraordinarily talented girl
whose maturation occurred under the domain of a very strict father, Liszt now presents the more

\begin{verbatim}
A wondrous man, tired of life and the world,
Angrily locked up the magic of his soul
In a diamond-hard and well-kept shrine
And tossed the key into the sea and died.
Poor small souls exhaust themselves in the striving –
In vain! No tool can pry the obstinate lock
And so the magic sleeps on as does its master.
A shepherd’s daughter while playing on the beach
Watches the hasty and senseless search.
Daydreaming in young girl fashion,
She sinks her white fingers into the water.
They seize and lift and hold tight. It is the key!
Up she jumps, up, with her heart beating faster,
The shrine looks at her as though it had eyes.
The key fits. The lid flies open. The spirits
Ascend, then drop and bow
To the lovely, innocent mistress
Whose white fingers guide them as she plays.”
\end{verbatim}

In performing this sonata in Vienna, Comini states that, “On 7 January 1838 Clara Wieck brought Beethoven
“home,” not presumptuously, not accusingly, but legitimately, through sheer musical weight (195).” Beethoven had
moved to Vienna in 1792 at the age of 22 and remained there until his death in 1827.

\(^{177}\) Interestingly enough, in his character portrait of Clara Schumann, though he certainly mentions hearing her
perform in Weimar, Liszt does not make mention of her concert program, nor any substantial details of her
performance.
seasoned version of Clara Wieck whom Robert was soon to marry. Through his normal foundry of Nature-inspired imagery, Liszt describes Clara Wieck as a matured version of the girl previously introduced. She still was not able to control her passion, or better put, her passion had yet to develop fully; the transparency of her imagined world with its “mild flames [of passion]” coupled with the purity of her execution resulted in an unconscious coquetry which Liszt describes as a “playful, carefree mood” (P26). Clara’s unrestricted unfolding of grace and soaring imagination came from an “inward and commanding impulse” and not from “self-conscious passion, or decided will” (P26). Although “unstable and capricious,” Clara Wieck still knew how to make music beautiful, though her temperament, according to Liszt, heavily affected the way in which she interacted with the notes on the page.

The rhythmical accent struck her more than she determined it; the movement of her play depended on the influence of the hour, the day, on sunshine and a tranquil mood. The melody did not remain always alike; now it came out nebulous and pale like the fair features of a Walkyr on a grey cloud, and now it advanced toward you bright and beaming as a gypsy child waving the tambourine (P26).

Despite these changes in temperament Clara Wieck remained in the land of imagination and the Ideal. She had not yet reached her full artistic potential, which Liszt believes will change upon marriage to Robert.

Liszt attributes Clara’s “unconscious coquetry” to her age and artistic immaturity. With her youthful enthusiasm and unawareness, to Liszt Clara Wieck is almost preferable to the more serious style of Clara Schumann:

178 Die Reinheit ihres Spiels schloß ein gleichsam unwillkürliches Schillern nicht aus, das man für eine sich selbst unbewußte Koketerie halten mochte. Neckische, sorglose Laune war ihr nicht fremd.
179 Man sah, die Phantasie der jungen Künstlerin erging sich hoch, hoch da oben, mehr aus innerlich gebieterischem Hang, als aus selbstbewußter Leidenschaft und der Entscheidendheit des Willens. [Dwight’s]
180 Die rhythmische Betonung traf sie mehr, als sie dieselbe bestimmte. Die Bewegung ihres Spiels hing vom Einfluß der Stunde, des Tages, von Sonnenglanz und Gemüthsruhe ab. Der melodische Gesang blieb sich nicht immer gleich; er trat bald nebelhaft und gleich wie die schönen Züge einer Walküre auf grauer Wolke hervor, bald glänzend entgegenkommend wie ein das Tamburin schwingendes Zigeunerkind. [Dwight’s]
through this purposeless and naïve way, through the evident want of all thought of before or after, through the magic spell of a peculiar charm, through the innocent unfolding of all her excellencies, through the truthful simplicity of this poetic enthusiasm, which never dreamed that it was poetry, became almost more attractive than her more serious and solid attributes (P27).181

Inevitably, though, especially under the partnership and guidance of Robert Schumann, whom Liszt deeply respects, Liszt must present Clara Schumann to the public as the “better” artist.

Clara Wieck, this dreamer who was in the process of finding her own voice and making her own decisions, finally exerting slight amounts of agency as a person, was now ready for her marriage to her kindred spirit, Robert Schumann. Only through Robert and the passion of his love could Clara be brought back to the earth (P24).182 They found in one another, both “wont to wonder in the balsam groves of the Ideal,” a perfect, complementary match, for “he lived to write poetry, and she was alive through poetry (P24).”183

Though theirs was a seemingly perfect love, it is through his description and presentation of this relationship that Liszt inflicts the most damage to Clara Schumann’s authority as an artist and promoter of the conservative ideals. Liszt introduces Robert as the dominant partner in this supposedly equal pairing of complementary artists. Robert, characterized in 1837 by the Parisian Gazette Musicale as a composer to be remembered in history, was a great influence on Clara Wieck. Though they had a “like propensity from birth” and were “equal,” these facts “did not exclude a positive superiority of the husband to the wife, it necessarily followed that uninterrupted contact with an intellect so lofty and imposing, so confounded with her own ideal,

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181 Alles das war unwillkürlich, plötzlich, entzückend, so daß selbst die Unvollkommenheiten des jungen Wesens durchnahme Absichtlosigkeit und Naivität, durch den sichtbaren Mangel aller Vor- und Nachgedanken, durch einen Zauberbann in eigenen Reizen, durch ein keusches Gefallen an der eigenen Schönheit, durch dieses unschuldige Entfalten aller Vorzüge, durch die Wahrheit dieser poesieschwärmenden Einfachheit, die keine Ahnung hatte, daß sie selbst Poesie war, – durch alles das fast anziehender wurden als durch ihre ernsteren und gediegeneren Eigenschaften. [Dwight’s] „Schönheit“ is better translated as “beauty.”
182 Welche andere Leidenschaft als die Liebe konnte einen auf den Gipfeln musikalischen Gefühls und Gedankens so heimisch eingebürgerten Genius auf diese Erde zurückführen?
183 Ihre Geschicke erfüllten sich in dieser unter dem Segensstrahl der Kunst erblühten gegenseitigen Liebe und fortan „lebte er dichtend und sie dichtete lebend!“
and environed with her own visions, such as Robert Schumann, stamped the indelible impress of his profile on Clara’s talent (P25).” The presence of Robert in her life, whom Liszt describes as the contemporary composer who “thinks the most about music” (P25), served as a central catalyst for Clara Wieck’s transformation into the great artist Clara Schumann. With this statement, Liszt again denies Clara any agency for instigating or taking credit for her own development as an artist. She is merely filling a predestined role.

In the introduction to his discussion of the newly christened Clara Schumann, Liszt states his surprise that on her visit to Weimar, he found that “the lovely Muses’ playmate had become a consecrated, faithfully devoted, severe priestess (P28).” The youthful luster of her eyes that he remembered from Vienna and their encounters thereafter had now become a serious and fixed look. Liszt describes this newfound Clara Schumann (in comparison to Clara Wieck), stating: “The flower crown, once so loosely woven in her hair, now scarcely hides the burning scars, which the holy circlet has impressed so deeply on her brow (P28).” The “mild flames” of Clara Wieck have blossomed into an “electric stream of divine fire” – she had found her passion as an artist and it now clearly emanated through her feeling and fingers during performance.

Clara Schumann interprets and embodies this “divine fire” through perfection in performance. To Clara, this approach to performance truly respects both the composer and the art of music. She is such a perfectionist that Liszt believes that any error at all is a wound to her soul

184 Da die relative Gleichheit der beiden Künstler eine positive Superiorität des Mannes über die Frau nicht ausschloß, mußte die unausgesetzte Berührung mit einer so erhöhten und imponierenden Geisteskraft, die so eingenommen für das eigene Ideal, so umringt von den eigenen Visionen war, wie Robert Schumann, das unverlösliche Gepräge seines Profils auf Clara’s Talent werfen. [Dwight’s] A small correction to Dwight’s translation is the “superiority of the husband over the wife” and not “to the wife.”

185 Aus der lieblichen Spielgenossin der Musen ist eine weihvolle, pflichtgetreue und strenge Priesterin geworden. [Dwight’s]

186 Die sonst so leicht in das Haar geflochtene Blumenkrone verbirgt jetzt kaum die seengenden Narben, die der heilige Reif tief in die Stirne gedrückt. [Dwight’s] This essay is rarely mentioned in Liszt or Clara Schumann scholarship. When referenced, though, scholars often include this quote, as it sums up Liszt’s description and feelings of the changes made in Clara’s personality and relationship to music upon marriage.
Clara’s flawlessness and further retreat into her musical Eden comes with an increasing internal (and apparently external) sorrow and melancholy: “An unimpeachable perfection characterizes every tone of this soft, suffering Sibyl, who, breathing heaven’s air, remains connected only by her tears with earth (P28).”Especially during performance, the only place in which Clara is truly “home” and feels most comfortable and fulfilled, she is clearly distant from her listener and exists solely inside of her own mind; her only physical connection to the earth is her tears. It is as if her body does not exist. A rare being, Clara Schumann is so devoted to Art that her “real” life seems an interruption:

One easily sees, how she only wakes, so long as she hears music, or plays herself; how as the last tones die away, her soul shuts up, like the flower cup, whose petals droop ere the last ray of the sun has vanished, and only opens itself to the new spiritual day, when she is borne up on the wings of harmony (P29).  

The flighty dreamworld of Clara Wieck has greatly increased in intensity, as has Clara’s need and ability to escape there during performance. One wonders, though, what her personality is like when not performing. Liszt makes it seem like Clara Schumann is not personable, or is lacking in personality in general. If she only truly “lives” and is energized through performance and within her own world of music, where speech and other people do not necessarily exist, how well does she interact with others? In private, as seen through her letters to close friends and family and her diary entries, Clara Schumann is a passionate person with opinions and ideas on seemingly everything. In front of an audience though, her serious side takes over and she “chastens” any (lively) elements of her personality as not to detract from the music she presents.

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187 Eine vorwurfsfreie Vollendung charakterisirt jeden Ton dieser fansten, leidenden Sibylle, die Himmelslüfte athmend, mit der Erde nur noch durch ihre Tränen verbunden bleibt. [Dwight’s] “The Sibyls were mortal women, endowed with unearthly powers of prophecy, in whom the gods confided secrets of the future. Under certain circumstances they shared these secrets with mankind, but were not always believed. According to legend there were ten of these prophetic women in ancient times (Evslin, Gods, Demigods, and Demons: A Handbook of Greek Mythology, 194).”

188 Sieht man doch leicht, wie sie nur wacht, so lange sie Musik hört oder selbst musiziert, wie beim Verklingen der letzten Töne ihre Seele gleich dem Blumenkelche beim letzten Sonnenstrahl sich schließt und dem neuen geistigen Tag nur dann sich wieder öffnet, wenn die Flügel der Harmonie sie emportragen. [Dwight’s]
Liszt contrasts the distance of her approach to performance, though possibly inevitable once she begins to play, to his own virtuosic approach, where he intimately connects to the audience both through his musical flourishes and the performance of popular works. Liszt, like other virtuosos, performs not to the audience necessarily, but for them and their musical enjoyment. Clara Schumann does not (and perhaps cannot) understand true virtuosity, so she chooses to condemn it.

Liszt’s tone and imagery drastically changes in his discussion of the “priestess” Clara Schumann, especially in comparison to the “dreamer” Clara Wieck. Religious imagery dominates this discussion, as seen above in the evolution of the “crown of flowers” into a “holy circlet” deeply impressed upon Clara Schumann’s brow. The combination of this “holy circlet” and the “divine fire” emanating from Schumann’s fingers during performance pave the way for the highly spiritual and religious language to follow.

Liszt also emphasizes Clara Schumann’s ability to lose herself completely in her music and to “worship” the music she presents. More importantly, Clara’s “worship” circles around a reverence to music, as all music is equally holy, and the variability of humanness disappears. Hers is strictly an “objective interpretation of Art” where she “chastens her own feeling, so not to become a guilty and a treacherous interpreter. She renounces her own imagination, that she may declare the oracle as an incorruptible mediator, as a faithful expounder (P30).” This statement is a critique of Clara’s (and the conservative party’s) steadfast dedication to the direct reproduction of music instead of further interpreting or expressing the music through performance (the approach of Liszt and others). Liszt’s comments here tie this discussion, now

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189 Zitternd, auch nur ein Iota des zu kündenden Spruches zu verlieren, eine Silbe falsch zu betonen und so zur schuldigen, trägerischen Interpretin zu werden, bezwingeit sie ihr eigenes Gefühl. Die Orakel als unbefleckte Vermittlerin und treue Auslegerin zu verkünden, entsagt sie den eigenen Eingebungen. [Dwight’s] „Eingebungen“ is better translated as “intuition” or “impulses.”
focused specifically on Clara Schumann, to his thoughts on virtuosity and performance presented earlier in the essay.

After illustrating Clara Schumann’s approach to performance as a means of “worship,” Liszt recalls Clara Wieck’s performance of the Beethoven F Minor Sonata immortalized in the Grillparzer poem. He reflects fondly that in hearing Wieck’s performance “we experienced an inmost spiritual satisfaction (P31).” It is interesting to note that Liszt distinguishes (and likely prefers) Clara Wieck’s performance by her ability not only to depart into her musical Eden, but to have her performance be spiritually fulfilling for her audience as well. Liszt uses “we” to state that Clara Wieck’s audience undertook a spiritual journey with her. Contrastingly, in her ascent, Clara Schumann leaves her listener behind. Liszt affirms that the only way Clara Schumann affects her audience is through reaching her fantasy musical world. She needs “a public of the majesties of Art, in order that the secretly struggling fire of her soul may so seize upon all hearers, as to make her own breast heave (P34).” She is only able to communicate with her audience through her passion and by having them witness her own struggles and the inner ascent that she experiences through music. Though Clara Wieck’s and Clara Schumann’s journey was one she embarked upon alone, the audience’s passage alongside the artist distinguishes the performance of Clara (Wieck) Schumann in her respective stages of musical development.

Liszt follows this memory of Clara Wieck performing Beethoven by chastising those who try to imitate the sublime instead of embodying it fully: “For if anything can turn the sublime into the gall of bitterness, it is the ridiculous imitation of it (P32).” What is puzzling about this statement is how it relates to Clara Schumann herself. Under which category does she fall?

190 Als wir sie jedoch von Clara Schumann ohnlängst vortragen hörten, ergriff uns innerlichtes .geistiges Behagen.“ I would translate this phrase stating that Schumann’s performance “possessed us [with] inner spiritual satisfaction.”
191 Auch für Clara Schumann bedürfte es ein Publikum von Majestäten der Kunst, wenn das heimlich ringende Feuer ihrer Seele alle Zuhörer so ergreisen sollte, wie es ihre eigene Brust erbeben macht. [Dwight’s]
192 Denn was kann uns das Sublime bitterer vergallen, als seine lächerliche Nachahmung? [Dwight’s]
Especially if, given the placement of this proclamation, Clara Wieck’s performance exemplifies the sublime that Liszt describes. Is Clara Schumann, through her fierce devotion to music as a religious practice, only able to achieve a mere imitation or surface-level portrayal of the Sublime that she seeks? Perhaps Liszt sees her strict, unwavering adherence to the score as an element of bitterness, especially in relation to the more free approach he and others take during performance. Yet even without a clear answer to these questions, through this essay Liszt now ensures that these sorts of inquiries about Clara’s artistry are now being asked.

Furthermore, after this statement regarding the presence of those who merely imitate the sublime, in the penultimate paragraph of this character portrait Liszt returns to his description of Clara Schumann and her perfectionist approach to performance. He offers a very detailed account of the ritualistic acts Clara takes before performance to ensure that her concert is as perfect as possible. She removes any elements of chance by familiarizing herself with the instrument and the performance space – Clara practices on the same instrument (at times for hours) she will use in the concert, adjusts the seat, tries every note on the piano, and prefers to do her preparation and practicing in the place of performance to understand the acoustics of the room (P33). Liszt believes these actions result from “her duty to the calling,” though he acknowledges that this “duty” also at times makes her life quite difficult. Clara has become so devoted to her art that, in her perspective (or at least her perspective in Liszt’s imagination), “to remain faithful to the dignity of Art, one most approach its every festival with the same earnestness, the same devotion (P33).”

Every time Clara enters her place of worship, all must be in perfect order for her “worship” to attain her high standards. Since his NZfM readers probably had heard Clara Schumann perform at some point in the past twenty-five years (either

193 Sie erlaubten ihr nicht, ihrer von der Kunst des Augenblickes und zufälliger Stimmung abhängigen persönlichen Begeisterung zu vertrauen; sie überzeugten sie vielmehr, daß, um der Würde der Kunst treu zu bleiben, man zu jedem ihrer Feste mit demselben Ernst, mit derselben Weihe schreiten muß. [Dwight’s]
as Clara Wieck or Clara Schumann, they were likely to be awed by either performance), Liszt deconstructs the perfection of Clara Schumann’s performance into a series of almost compulsive acts as a means of educating and alerting his reader to Clara’s need to be in total control during performance. The severity of her traditionalist approach to music should not be wholly hailed.

Liszt concludes this comparison between Clara Wieck and Clara Schumann – and the character portrait itself – with a summary of each Clara (Wieck and Schumann) and the legacy Clara Schumann leaves behind. Whether these comments are favorable is debatable. Liszt equivocates: “And so we found the whilom mostly melancholy, but yet often cheerful, always fascinating fairy changed to the conscientious servant of an altar, animated, as it seemed, more by divine awe than by divine intoxication (P34).” Clara Schumann, he believes, will always be admired for her spotless playing, her meticulousness, and her devotion to mastery. That these are the traits Liszt isolates as comprising Clara’s legacy greatly diminishes the contributions of the artist who was not only the main promoter and proprietor of Robert Schumann’s works, but also a professional pianist in her own right, whose effect on the nineteenth-century concert program and lineage of students can be traced through to the present-day.195

Liszt’s closing line of this character portrait reads: “Her talent seems to us like a personification of the secular oratorio: a Peri yearning for her Paradise, in constant mystic contemplation of the Sublime, the Beautiful, the Ideal (P34).” Thus, he concludes, Clara Schumann is never really able to achieve her mastery of the Ideal, though she tries so hard to capture it during her passionate, personally-removed performance. Yet, the focus of this

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194 So fanden wir die ehemals meist melancholische, aber doch oft heitere und immer reizvolle Fee zur gewissenhaften Dienerin eines Altars geworden, die mehr von Gottesfurcht als Gottestrunkenhkeit beseelt erscheint. [Dwight’s] “Whilom” is an archaic term for “former.”
195 David Ferris presents an interesting analysis of Clara’s public and private performances of Robert Schumann’s work in his 2003 article “Public Performance and Private Understanding: Clara Wieck’s Concerts in Berlin.”
196 Clara Schumann ist keine Pianistin und Konzertgeberin im gewöhnlichen Sinne des Wortes. Ihr Talent erscheint uns gleichsam als eine Personificirung des weltlichen Oratoriums: eine Peri, die sich nach ihrem Paradiese sehnt in fortwährend mystischer Beschauung des Erhabenen, des Schönen, des Ideals. [Dwight’s]
character portrait has never fully been on Clara herself. Robert Schumann arrives again in the final sentence with Liszt’s reference to Schumann’s oratorio “Das Paradies und die Peri” (1843). This move both draws attention away from Clara, while also reinforcing the power relationship between the Nature-inspired artistic pair, Robert and Clara.

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Analyzing the relationship between Robert and Clara Schumann within the socio-cultural context of gender relations in the mid-nineteenth century illustrates both how they conform to and conflict with normative gender roles. Since this couple was exceptional and rare from the start, as evidenced by Liszt’s discussion in the first half of the essay, that their gender roles were also out of the ordinary is perhaps to be expected. Most importantly, that Liszt chooses to reframe their relationship to conform to the gendered expectations of a heteronormative society is telling in several ways. What is the effect of this “normalizing” on Clara, her identity as an artist, and her role in society?

Given that he was certainly aware of her challenges in life – Liszt often asked after Robert’s health in his letters and knew how passionate Clara was about her music firsthand – his presentation of Clara Schumann as a serious, devoted “priestess” of music and art is surely accurate and based on personal experience with the couple. Yet, the ways in which Liszt describes Clara’s relationship to both her father and Robert obliterates any personal agency Clara may have in her life and relegates her to the normative subject-object power relationship that typically occurs between men and women in society. For Robert and Clara to embody the artistic

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197 "Throughout her lifetime she was described as a “priestess,” and the appellation seems appropriate not only because of her consecration to her art, but because of her characteristic solemnity. Sober and earnest, she was often teased for her serious demeanor. Dressed almost always in dark colors, she did not condescend to court her audiences by cultivating an appealing stage personality, by personal display, or by playing popular music (Reich, 152)."
couple of the first half with its clearly defined gender roles, Liszt needs to reframe the corresponding roles of their “real” lives to match.

Liszt first introduces Clara Schumann to the reader as part of a pair. He shifts to this (second) half of the essay, in which he discusses the namesake of the essay directly, stating that, “There can be no more happy, more harmonious union in the world of Art conceivable, than that of the inventing husband with the performing wife; of the composer, representing the idea, with the fair virtuoso, realizing it; both standing on the highest steps of the Art altar in regions to which the merits of commonness can never rise (P19).”

Though there was likely no confusion at the start of the essay that Liszt referred to Clara and Robert as the ideal artistic couple, here he makes it impeccably clear. He also explains the (musical) role of each partner – the husband as creator and composer who invents the music and the wife as virtuoso musician who recreates the notes on the page and executes her husband’s work (see p. 82).

Furthermore, Liszt closes this introductory paragraph using Robert’s own words to describe his wife: “Others make poetry – she herself is a poem (P19).” With this, he also simultaneously strengthens Robert’s presence in Clara’s character portrait. Liszt emphasizes Robert even further by repeatedly placing Robert’s name ahead of Clara’s when discussing the two throughout the prose. He continues to transform the reality of the pair to have them more closely embody his idealistic pairing of artists, again to Clara’s detriment.

198 Keine glücklichere, keine harmonischere Vereinigung war in der Kunstwelt denkbar, als die des erfindenden Mannes mit der ausführenden Gattin, des die Idee repräsentirenden Komponisten mit der ihre Verwirklichung vertretenden Virtuosin: beide auf den höchsten Stufen des Kunstaltars stehend und in Regionen lebend, zu welchen die Nebel der Gemeinheit nicht mehr empordringen können. [Dwight’s] In the beginning of this quote, I would translate “war” as “was” instead of “can be.”

199 „Andere dichten...sie ist selbst eine Dichtung.“ Liszt merely paraphrases Robert Schumann’s NZfM article here; it is up to the reader to either look back at Schumann’s early prose or somehow fill in the gap Liszt leaves here in this essay. This gap serves to significantly detract from Robert’s praise. The author of Dwight’s translation of the second half of this essay includes the whole quote, so I include it here.
In his descriptions of both Clara Wieck and Clara Schumann, Liszt fashions the artist’s public performance as an interior and private personal experience of sorts. The interiority of this action, though Clara was performing in public as a professional musician, is coded feminine. Victorian society believed that the domestic, private sphere is where women “belonged,” whereas men should occupy the public sphere of business, government, and commerce. That Clara had entered the public sphere as a professional in a male-dominated field is a feat of recognition for a woman. That Liszt removes her public persona and engagement in the public sphere both relieves Clara Wieck/Clara Schumann of her agency, independence, and personal strength, but also more closely links her to Robert, whom, due to the stage of his mental illness at the time when Liszt composed this portrait, was, and had primarily been, spending a great deal of time at home. An “interior” disease, Robert’s illness was both mental and emotional. The idea of interiority was not only often associated with Robert as a person, but several scholars have identified this trait in his compositions as well. Yet Liszt essentially omitted Robert’s (mental) health from his essay. This meant that Robert and Clara could continue to be the incredibly rare, supposedly “equal” (or at least equally contributing) partners of note in the first half of the essay. When we examine the text more closely, however, Robert and Clara are not equal at all. Liszt needs to work hard to map his idealized artists onto the real-life Schumanns; this proves even more difficult as Liszt tries to promote his own musical agenda at the same time.

200 “Separate Spheres,” Encyclopedia of feminist literary theory separate spheres, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, ed., 586. Therefore when women entered the public sphere, whether as an artist or in another position, they ultimately broke with the public-private gendered dichotomy with varying results. For more on women who were achieving fame in the early nineteenth-century and breaking gendered boundaries at least partly out of necessity, see Claire Brock, The Feminization of Fame 1750-1830, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

201 The identification of inwardness in Schumann’s music is usually found when discussing his smaller (chamber) works and Lieder. Janet Schmalfeldt provides a strong case for the interiority of Schumann’s compositions in the concluding chapter (Chapter 9: Coming Home) of her book In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music (Oxford UP: 2011).
Although Clara represents the heart in Liszt’s heart-mind pairing and is in the caretaker position (P4, pp. 80-81), perhaps physically stronger than her partner at this point, Robert, as the mind, is still in control. Robert has chosen to give her this power – he is the active partner in this decision-making process, while she is the submissive one. Though he has acquiesced, through love, and has allowed her to care for him, he acts and she responds. Furthermore, as the mind, he does not behave according to any “feminine” emotions but makes a clear-cut decision.

A second example of this inequality occurs during Clara’s transformation from Clara Wieck to Clara Schumann. According to Liszt’s essay, Robert Schumann is the only known cause and motivating factor for this change. A complicating factor, though, is that Liszt prefers the younger Wieck to the married Schumann. Yet Liszt does not hold Robert responsible for this drastic change. Robert’s direct influence on Clara must have been a main component contributing to Clara’s withdrawal into music and the intensity of her search for “the Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Ideal.” That Robert was able to so strongly influence her not only comes from his position of power as a musical genius, but also from his position of power as a man and the dominant partner in their relationship.

One could argue that this imbalance of power just fits into the societal gender norms of the time. Yet Liszt repeatedly strays from these norms, for example, when he states that the male and female partners have equal importance in Art, equally contribute to their perfect union, and that the female virtuoso should be equivalent to her male counterpart. But perhaps this equal “creative partnership” can only exist in the Ideal of the first half of the essay. And I’m not sure that the female virtuoso can exist at all. When Liszt discusses reality, because they are a man and woman living in mid-nineteenth-century Victorian society, Robert and Clara can never be on the
same social level, or embody the same gender roles, and that tempers and perhaps even makes their creative partnership go awry.

Liszt desexualizes Clara in his attempt to reframe Clara and Robert as adhering to conventional gender norms as well. For example, he strips Clara of her “womanhood” when she “worships” at the piano: “When she mounts the tripod of the temple, the woman speaks to us no more (P30).” Though this statement is possibly complimentary, one can interpret it differently within the context of this analysis. When she is connected with music, Clara fully transforms into the chaste priestess, solely devoted to her art and not swayed by physical desires or the responsibilities she may have in her daily life. Liszt desexualizes Clara here to emphasize her purity and to further enhance the religious imagery of his prose. By chastening Clara Schumann, Liszt also places her more firmly in line with the “Angel of the House.”

Liszt engenders Clara Schumann in the professional realm to detract from her musical authority, though she clearly adhered to normative female roles in her personal life and beliefs. Despite being a strong advocate for herself in the professional sphere, Clara exemplifies many personality traits of a “typical” woman of the time – she is very emotional, self-conscious, insecure about her compositions and her relationship with Robert, is often jealous of his (platonic) relationships with other women, and is knowingly dependent upon the men in her life (father, Robert, later Brahms). Her public and private personas greatly differ. She does not embrace feminism (or the precursor to those ideals at this point in history) and has embodied and propagated normative gender roles for women. In the musical realm, Clara Schumann believes that female composers are naturally and always going to be unsuccessful due to their femininity

\[\text{Wenn sie den Dreifuß des Tempels besteigt, spricht nicht mehr das Weib zu uns. [Dwight’s]}\]

\[\text{Clara’s private thoughts and beliefs can be easily seen through study of her diaries and personal correspondence. See the two Litzmann volumes and Reich biography for evidence.}\]
and womanly personalities.\textsuperscript{204} This character portrait of Clara Schumann is clearly not a fair assessment of her personal beliefs.

Or perhaps, Liszt has Robert Schumann in mind this entire time. The strength of Robert’s presence in this character portrait of Clara Schumann is undeniable. Liszt gives to Robert an incredible amount of unspoken power and authority over his wife and her development as an artist, though whether or not this influence has resulted in a “better” artist is still questionable. Moreover, the next character portrait Liszt publishes as part of this set focuses on Robert Schumann himself. This lengthy piece of prose is more than four times longer than the character portrait of Clara and is the second longest portrait in the series.\textsuperscript{205}

As he “womanizes” Clara, Liszt simultaneously “masculinizes” Robert. At this point, Robert Schumann was in the midst of paralyzing depression and mental anguish; he would attempt suicide in February 1854, two months after the publication of this article.\textsuperscript{206} Furthermore, that Clara was the primary financial earner of the family was surely known not only by their close circle of friends, but the artistic community at large, and even perhaps by those reading this \textit{NZfM} article. Though theirs was a special case, the musical public surely noticed that Clara Schumann, as a woman and mother, was taking over many male-coded social activities (though by necessity). This anomaly could easily be seen as a poor reflection on Robert’s social duty as the male in the household. By presenting Robert as a strong male figure with great musical

\textsuperscript{204} Clara always seems to be wavering about her own creative ability as a composer and the strength of her compositions, despite the praise she may have received from others. See Reich, 228-229.

\textsuperscript{205} Only Liszt’s “Berlioz und seine ‘Harold Symphonie’” is longer than the Schumann essay.

\textsuperscript{206} Reich marks this year (1854) as the start date of Robert’s “final breakdown.” That year Schumann then decided to commit himself to a mental asylum in Endenich, where he would remain until his death in late July 1856 (Reich, 142-151). Though they communicated through monitored correspondence (monitored on Robert’s side; his doctors did not want him to be “excited” at all by any information in Clara’s letters), Clara and Robert Schumann did not see one another for almost two-and-a-half years. She was finally permitted to visit him two days before his death, at a point where Robert was too weak to move or speak (Reich, 144).
authority and as a gifted composer, though he was at the time committed to a mental asylum, Liszt restores Robert’s musical and social reputations.

Even before his health so rapidly declined, Robert’s masculinity had been questioned in the press. This was partly due to the primacy of chamber works, which were often performed in the private sphere, in his compositional output. The musical community and critics also gossiped about Robert’s sexuality and sexual preferences, both during his day and in later scholarship, as Robert was possibly bisexual and had admitted in his diaries to engaging in homosexual activities.207

Through this essay and through their correspondence, as noted above, one can clearly see that Liszt greatly respected and admired Robert Schumann as a composer. Yet Schumann does not cleanly fit into the paradigm of the ideal “creating” artist or virtuoso that Liszt establishes in the first half of this essay. He primarily writes “intellectual” music. Even though Liszt notes that Schumann is the contemporary composer who “thinks the most about music” and that his compositions will survive his death and surely continue to be studied, performed, and analyzed in the future, that does not disguise the fact that at that time, Schumann’s works were not often performed. Is Schumann, as a musical genius, somehow above or immune to Liszt’s beliefs about virtuosity and performance? Or is Liszt too sympathetic to Schumann’s cause at this point to do anything but praise his now-declining mind and remember those works which he composed when in better health? Regardless, Schumann’s “intellectual” music has indeed outlasted his lifetime and as Liszt predicted, has succeeded to become a worthy contribution to music history.

Liszt’s character portrait of Clara Schumann is a complex representation of the famed pianist. He does not diminish her technical ability, in fact, her skill and perfection at the piano is perhaps one of Liszt’s rare complements of Clara in this work. Yet through his presentation of Clara, Liszt offers a version of the artist in which she embodies conventional gender norms in order to question her virtuosity and approach to music. Liszt’s engagement with contemporary politics in this essay not only reveals his thoughts on the virtuoso and its necessity for the longevity and life of music, it also shows the weaknesses of one of the conservative movement’s main promoters. It is unfortunate, though, that Liszt’s need to promote his own musical values and aesthetics in this essay is to Clara Schumann’s extreme detriment, as she was an extraordinary figure in nineteenth-century music history.
Appendix I:

Dear Madam,

I found the article which you so kindly sent me, when I returned home, and I thank you for the warm interest which is evident in your words. We should be glad to know where we could find the article by Liszt, on which you have drawn; my children would like to have it, although many things in it are not correct. On the other hand there is so much that is discerning and fine that one cannot help feeling pleased and warmed. Since, as you tell me, you think of using the article in a book that you are bringing out, let me call your attention to one or two mistakes. They have reference chiefly to my Father, who, because he himself took art seriously and trained me to do the same, has unfortunately been placed before the world in quite a false light. People do not understand that, if anything of importance is to be achieved in art, one’s whole education and course of life must differ from that of ordinary people. My Father always kept physical as well as artistic development in view: in my childhood I never practised for more than 2 hours, and in later years for 3 hours a day, and every day I had to walk with him for an equal number of hours in order to strengthen my nerves, and until I was grown-up he always took me away from any party at 10 o’clock as he considered it necessary for me to have sleep before midnight. He did not let me go to balls because he said I needed my strength for other things than dancing, but he always let me go to good operas, and even in my earliest days I had constant intercourse with the most distinguished artists. Such were the pleasures of my childhood, not dolls, which indeed I never missed. People who cannot understand a serious training of this kind put it all down to cruelty and thought that my execution, which may well have been in advance of my childish years, would be impossible unless I were kept working day and night, whereas it was just my Father’s genius as an educationalist which enabled him to make me progress as I did, with only moderate work, at the same time carefully training my mind and character.

To my sorrow, I must say that my Father has never been accorded the recognition that he deserved. I thank him all my life long for his so-called cruelties. How should I have been able to practise my art amidst all the trails that have befallen me, how should I even have continued to live, if my Father’s care had not given me so sound and strong a constitution? It is absolutely false to say that I was kept at the piano as long as my strength held out. Further, Liszt says that in spite of all this playing I never found music a burden. I can only reply that of my own free will I spent many hours of my free time over operas, piano-scores and other music, as it is impossible to do when one is over-tired. There is one tiny mistake in the inscription which Goethe wrote round the medallion that he gave me, it is not the ‘clever; but the ‘artistically gifted Clara Wieck’. I will not touch on other isolated mistakes in what Liszt says – it would be better become someone else to set them right.

I end by asking you to send me a line to tell me where Liszt’s article is to be found. I hope it will be possible for you to make a few alterations before your book appears.

With kind regards
Yours sincerely
Clara Schumann

[Translation taken from Litzmann, vol. II, pp. 365-367.]
Appendix II:

46. Clara Schumann
Leipzig, den 7. Jan. 1844

Verehrtester Herr Doctor,


Haben Sie neuerdings nicht Etwas für das Pianoforte geschrieben? – Ich bemerke aber eben, dass ich Ihnen mit vielen Fragen lästig gefallen bin, durch deren Beantwortung Sie uns aber zu grossem Dank verpflichten. Mein Mann grüsst Sie herzlich mit mir,

Ihrer Ihnen aufrichtig ergeben

Clara Schumann
Chapter Three

“Robert Franz”

Robert Franz (1815-1892), who was first introduced to the musical public through Robert Schumann, comprised the triumvirate of nineteenth-century Lieder composers alongside Schumann and Franz Schubert. A seemingly neutral musical figure at the time, Franz was supported by both Schumann and Liszt, but did not publicly ally himself with either the musical conservatives or progressives. In private correspondence, though, Franz actually sided with the musical views and values of the conservative party. Though Liszt was surely aware of Franz’s political alignment, in this essay Liszt reframes Franz as a more liberally-leaning composer by re-presenting themes of prior reviews of Franz’s music in the *NZfM* with a progressive bent. As a result of some trying life circumstances (mainly his loss of hearing), Franz found himself from 1867 fully in need of and reliant upon the financial support of Liszt, among others. Therefore, he was in no position to elucidate his perspective on the mid-century debate over aesthetics in a published forum. While Liszt perhaps wrote this encouraging essay about Franz as a

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208 Jürgen Thym, “Crosscurrents in Song: Five Distinctive Voices,” In *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, Rufus Hallmark, ed., Schirmer Books, New York, 2010, 172. Although the musical community did not refer to a triumvirate of mid-nineteenth-century German Lieder composers by name until the last thirty years of the century, that Franz, Schubert, and Schumann, as the primary three contributors to the genre at that time, comprised this group is to be expected. This is illustrated even on a very small scale in the *NZfM* reviews of Franz’s Lieder – Schubert and Schumann are the only two other composers ever to be mentioned by name and compared to Franz at length. See p. 121 for more information on Schumann’s involvement in Franz’s early career.
philanthropic measure, that he deliberately aligns Franz with the progressive party through discussion of Franz’s use of form and expression (the central traits of program music) places this essay within the political atmosphere of the time.

Liszt hails Franz as an individual throughout this character portrait. He traces the roots of Franz’s individuality to the failure of the conservatory system of education and illustrates the development of Franz’s unique approach to musical composition once he strayed from that formal path of instruction. An idiosyncratic element of Franz’s works, his Lieder are grounded upon the expression of mood. This singular text-music relationship in Franz’s works is illustrated through Franz’s treatment of the word, the form of his Lieder, and the level of expression he is able to achieve in setting these texts. Liszt’s emphasis on these musical attributes, those which are also central to those of the musical progressives, even more firmly aligns Franz with the New German School.

Liszt then proceeds to publicly take away this individuality by characterizing Franz as one who upholds the musical values of this progressive group. As such, Franz not only appears to be a “convert” to the New German School, as evidenced by this essay and the addition of Franz’s name to the list of NZfM supporters, but also reinforces the core ideals of progressivism – individuality, expressivity in music, and the manipulation of form to suit music’s (and text’s) newfound needs. Yet as we can clearly see in this essay, Liszt had to exert a great deal of effort in this reframing of Franz.

By tracing the presence of Robert Franz in the NZfM through three distinct periods, from Schumann’s initial review in 1843, to Liszt’s 1855 essay, through to 1860 (the period right after the publication of Liszt’s article), I explore where Liszt’s analysis of Franz and his works fits into the reviews of Franz published in the same journal. Though Franz himself contributed three
articles to the NZfM during this 17-year period, I draw the majority of my evidence from others’ critiques of Franz’s music. Does Liszt draw from past reviews in his character portrait of Franz? Did his character portrait of Franz affect the way that Franz was written about in the NZfM in the following years? Had prior authors also tried to politicize Franz in some way? In short, this chapter is a history of how Franz was treated in the NZfM during a seventeen-year period and is analyzed within the framework of the mid-century debates over aesthetics.

Liszt’s character portrait of Robert Franz was published in the July-December 1855 edition of the NZfM, alongside two other character portraits, Liszt’s “Berlioz und seine ‘Harold’ Symphonie” and “Sobolewski’s Vinvela.” Another review of Franz’s Lieder (Op. 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21) appeared earlier in the edition, making Franz’s presence in this volume of the NZfM the most prevalent of the decade. More importantly, in this review the critic F. G foreshadows Liszt’s essay and justifies its importance in contemporary musical culture and society (see p. 126 for more information). Dwight’s Journal of Music republished this character portrait almost in its entirety in English translation a mere few months after the NZfM, spanning five editions in 1856. Breitkopf & Härtel then published a revised version of Liszt’s prose work in book form, at Franz’s behest, in 1872. For this expansion, Liszt added a five-paragraph introduction, one new paragraph, and an afterward (seven paragraphs). These changes were minimal and made no significant changes to the themes and main points of the essay.

Liszt’s choice of Robert Franz, a relatively minor composer in today’s canon, was both politically and philanthropically inspired. Franz was born in Halle in 1815, making him a

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210 Franz’s presence in musicological scholarship is slim. He is often grouped alongside second-tier nineteenth-century German Lied composers such as Louis Spohr, Carl Loewe, and Peter Cornelius, or as the sole focus of a short, mostly biographical article (reminiscent of an encyclopedia entry). Analysis of Franz’s Lieder is equally as scarce. In Franz scholarship, Liszt’s essay is rarely mentioned and even more seldom quoted from. In the only full-length article on Franz, “Evolution versus Authenticity: Johannes Brahms, Robert Franz, and Continuo Practice in the Late Nineteenth Century,” Elaine Kelly presents an interesting and compelling analysis of Franz’s participation
direct contemporary of Liszt, Chopin, and Schumann, among others. After exhausting Halle’s limited selection of music teachers and then a brief sojourn in Dessau under the tutelage of Frederich Schneider, Franz returned to Halle in 1837 and took to furthering his musical education there through personal study.\footnote{It was upon his return to Dessau that Franz continued his resolve to be an independent person and a composer of his own individual style. Liszt affirmed that Franz now saw through the “false importance which attaches to certain secrets of the trade” and sought to seek his own way “and before all things to perfect his intellectual self (P58).” [Dwight’s]}

At this point in his career, Franz stopped composing for six years to instead focus on “the enlargement of his circle of ideas, for the attainment of a higher stand-point, from which the whole relation of Art to the past and present of society may be surveyed; from which one may see how far Art has already fulfilled its mission, and what will be its problem for the future; from which one may learn to seize its starting point and to anticipate its goal (P62).” After studying the music of Bach and Handel and contemporaries Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, in addition to participating in the intellectual environment in Halle at that time, Franz returned to composition.

Composing in a single genre of music, Franz published over 280 Lieder, usually in groups of six, from 1843-1884. Franz chose to treat texts both by famous and lesser known, older and newer poets. He most often set works of Heine, Osterwald, Lenau, Geibel, and

in the debate over early music performance and editions in Germany in the 1860s and 1870s. The (German-language) conference proceedings on Robert Franz published by the Händel-House in Halle (1993) is another good source of information.\footnote{This self-imposed break from composition was an unknown venture for a conventional commercial composer of the time, again marking Franz as non-conventional in both his practice and being. At the time of the Liszt essay, Franz had just recently returned to composition.}
Eichendorff. His musical style was characterized by the use of short, strophic forms, often indicative both of the poem’s construction and the structural influence of the *Volkslied*. This strophic form supported a lyrical melody through which Franz carefully interpreted the idiosyncrasies, mood, and imagery of each individual text. The accompaniment was often polyphonic in texture, reminiscent of Bach and Handel. Porter succinctly sums up Franz’s style of composition:

There are no long songs – some occupy one page only – and many of them are in a modified strophic form in which slight but subtle and significant alterations are made for each stanza, sometimes in the melodic line and sometimes in the harmony or its figuration. The vocal line is always kept within easy bounds and the tempo is mainly on the slow side in order that melody and words may receive full expression.

Furthermore, Franz so carefully selected the key and vocal range of his works to best express the mood of the poem that he frowned upon transposition. Since his songs were often in the mezzo-soprano range and set syllabically, they could be performed by both men and women. Broadly speaking, Franz’s compositional style was influenced by the works of Bach, Handel, Schubert, Schumann, Protestant chorales, and German *Volkslieder*. Since his songs were not published in the order that they were written, there is not only no accurate chronology of Franz’s compositions, but also no clear stylistic development.

During his lifetime Franz gained more respect and recognition from abroad in the United States than he did at home in Germany. A gradual loss of hearing over twenty years left Franz

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213 Thym catalogues Franz’s most popular poets: Heine (67 songs), Wilhelm Osterwald (50 songs), Lenau (18), Burns (15), Geibel (13), Eichendorff (12). Thym, 171.
214 See George Pullen Jackson’s four-part article “The Rhythmic Form of German Folk-Songs” in *Modern Philology* (1916-1917) for a brief intro to the *Volkslied* and its traits.
216 Thym, 175-176.
218 The Romantic trend (continuing to present day) to divide composer’s life and career into periods of development perhaps contributed to Franz’s weak presence in musicological scholarship today.
219 One of Mendelssohn’s students, Otto Dresel, promoted Franz in the States and saw that his works were published and often performed there. “As early as 1865 songs of Franz were published in America with English texts. Two
almost completely deaf and with “emotional” problems which forced him to resign all of his public positions by 1867.\textsuperscript{220} His last set of songs was published in 1884, though he continued to compose until 1886, six years before his death. He also served as Director of the Halle Singakademie from 1842-1867 and taught at the University in Halle from 1851-1867.\textsuperscript{221}

It was this loss of hearing that spurred Franz’s contemporaries to rally to his aid. Financial support came in from benefit concerts in both Europe and America, with the profits presented to Franz.\textsuperscript{222} He was also the recipient of other honors and awards: the appointment as a Knight of the Order of Maximilian by King Ludwig II of Bavaria in 1878, celebrations of his 70\textsuperscript{th} birthday in both Germany and Austria (1885), receiving the Order of the Crown from the German Kaiser, and an honorary citizenship bestowed upon him from the city of Halle. Perhaps the greatest recognition of his contributions to music was the renaming of the Halle Singakademie in 1907 to the “Robert-Franz-Singakademie-Halle.”\textsuperscript{223}

Liszt was at the head of a community of musicians who came together to support Franz. Liszt and Franz first met in Vienna in 1846. Shortly thereafter, Franz dedicated Op. 7 to Liszt. In turn, Liszt transcribed thirteen Franz Lieder for the piano two years later, in 1848. The two men visited one another several times in the 1850s, whether in Weimar (1851) or Halle (1852, 1855).\textsuperscript{224} Liszt was also instrumental in the publication of Franz’s Op. 9 Lieder and his four-hand

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\textsuperscript{220} Scholars often feel compelled to mention Franz’s “emotional” problems, which may or may not have stemmed from his deafness, always in a vague way. I have not come across any actual details on the nature of these problems, aside from depression, which is then justified as a “normal” response to Franz’s deafness and ensuing self-imposed isolation.


\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Ibid}, “Robert Franz.”

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Ibid}, “Robert Franz.” That name still stands today.

\textsuperscript{224} These visits were documented in letters from Liszt to Wittgenstein housed in Weimar’s Goethe-Schiller Archiv in their respective years (1851, 1852, 1855).
\end{flushright}
piano arrangement of Schubert’s String Quartet No. 14 in D minor. As we shall see from Liszt’s character portrait of Franz, Liszt respected his colleague and willingly lent his name to support Franz’s cause.

Franz had remained an impartial player in the debates over aesthetics until the 1850s. Franz’s letter to his friend the German poet and novelist Max Waldau in 1850 praising Wagner’s Lohengrin seems to have set his until then unwilling participation in the decade’s politics in motion. Waldau published the letter anonymously in the Neue Oderzeitung, though Kleeman and Lester affirm that the musical community had easily uncovered the identity of the author, Franz. After reading this letter, Brendel asked Franz if it could be reprinted in the NZfM with Franz’s name attached; Franz promptly refused. Liszt then stepped in and appealed to Franz personally to reconsider not only the publication of his letter in the pages of the progressive journal, but also the addition of his name to the NZfM’s public list of supporters. This time, Franz acceded. His letter was published in the journal in the January-June 1852 edition of the NZfM under the title “Ein Brief über Richard Wagner.” His name also joined those on the masthead of the journal in outright support of the NZfM soon after. Liszt must have knowingly put Franz in an awkward situation. Franz was really in no position to refuse Liszt’s requests, especially since Liszt was not only an extremely powerful figure in the music world at the time, but was also securing financial support for Franz, either with his own money or acquiring it from others on Franz’s behalf.

225 Kleeman and Lester, 514.
226 Franz had attended the premiere of the work conducted by Liszt in Weimar in 1850 and recounted the experience to Waldau in this letter alongside his own positive response to the work. He also dedicated his Op. 20 to Wagner that same year.
227 Kleeman and Lester, 516-517.
228 Ibid, 517.
Several scholars have noted Franz’s reluctance to be associated with the New German School, especially since he was more musically aligned with their conservative counterparts.\(^{229}\)

James Deaville sums up Franz’s feelings towards the so-called War of the Romantics succinctly:

“This may be true publicly [that Franz did not want to take sides in the mid-century debates, according to Thym], where he did not want to besmirch his benefactor Liszt, but privately, with Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann, Franz took a stand against the music of the New German movement.”\(^{230}\)

Furthermore, because scholars sometimes consider Franz as one of the last representatives of the Berlin School of composition, his connection to Mendelssohn and the musical conservatives of the time is made even stronger.\(^{231}\)

Interestingly enough, it is Franz’s activity in the 1860s/1870s over the contemporary treatment of early music – mainly that of Bach and Handel – that causes his alliance to shift, as he was then no longer accepted by the conservative party.\(^{232}\)

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\(^{229}\) Thym, for example discusses Franz’s participation in this debate in his contribution to *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, “Crosscurrents in Song: Five Distinctive Voices” (2010). See especially pp. 172-173.


\(^{231}\) Lorraine Gorrell, “Chapter Eleven: The Supporting Cast,” *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, Amadeus Press, 2005, 234. Gorrell explains that compositions of the Berlin School were marked by the use of strophic form and the clear presentation of the words. One can clearly see the connection to Franz’s style of composition.

\(^{232}\) Briefly put, Elaine Kelly describes the more liberal approach as being “clearly committed to the revival, but maintained that music, instruments, and listener expectations had evolved since the time of Bach and Handel, a fact that had to be taken into account if early music was to find an audience (184).” On the opposing side, “for adherents of the opposing “Romantic” school, however, the past represented something very different, something to be appreciated for its own sake (Kelly, 183).” The treatment of basso continuo was a main point of contention between the two groups because “the shortage of solid evidence concerning realization practices allowed extensive liberties to be taken with the continuo part; consequently, both factions appropriated it as a platform for their aesthetics (184).” Franz espoused his thoughts on the music of Bach and its treatment in the nineteenth-century in an essay he published in the *NZfM* in 1857. Under Franz’s leadership, Halle would become a performance center of Bach’s works in Germany in the 1860s. He followed up this essay several years later with an open letter to Hanslick (1871) about the unfounded grievances of Brahms, Chrysander, and the conservative party. Seeing as this debate really flourished after Liszt’s essay on Franz in 1855, of course Liszt makes no mention of it in the original prose. He does briefly refer to this debate, an important element to Franz’s contributions to music history, in his 1872 revision of this essay. Perhaps Liszt does not focus on this recent (and ongoing) development in Franz’s life as not to detract from the original essay and it’s themes, but the debate over the modern performance of and editions of early musics would certainly have given Liszt even more fodder for Franz’s affiliation with the musical progressives of the time. See Elaine Kelly, “Evolution versus Authenticity: Johannes Brahms, Robert Franz, and Continuo Practice in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 182-204.
Despite Franz’s personal and musical connection to the conservatives, in his essay Liszt portrays Franz as not only sympathetic to, but representative of the progressive ideals. As part of the main Lieder composers of the time, Liszt likely saw that the progressives had no real presence. He needed a well-known song composer to demonstrate that the musical values and aesthetics of the New Germans could be embodied by Lieder. Liszt is very careful to label Franz as a “thinking artist” to place him in direct relationship to Schumann and compares Franz to Schubert in his prose work. This connection to Schubert and Schumann legitimizes Franz as a composer and place his “simple” songs in direct competition with the two acknowledged masters of Lieder composition.

Schumann himself introduced Robert Franz to the musical public in an *NZfM* review of Franz’s Op. 1 Lieder in 1843, three years before Liszt and Franz had even met. One of Franz’s earliest public advocates, Schumann had published these works without Franz’s knowledge (Franz had sent the manuscripts to Schumann for his comments). Schumann followed this review in the next edition of the *NZfM* (January-June 1844) with his thoughts on Franz’s *Schilflieder*, Op. 2. In both reviews, he presents Franz as a composer of the “modern” (German) approach to song composition. Not only does Franz set poems from new, young poets such as Rückert and Eichendorf in these works, but his sensitivity towards the emotions in this text inspires him towards a new style of composition as well.

In this earliest review, Schumann identified Franz’s main contribution to music as successfully “restoring the poem” as a representation of the “new” approach to the Lied. In Franz’s Lieder the music serves to highlight the tone, mood, and feelings evoked by the text. This approach distinguishes Franz from composers of the past and many of the (then) present. To

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233 In his *New Grove* entry on Franz, Kravitt cites an excerpt from a letter in which Franz expresses his genuine surprise at the publication of his works by Schumann: “Without my knowledge and without my request, he [Schumann] has given my songs to a publisher and they have been printed.”
Schumann, this aspect of Franz’s music is distinct, even from his first publication: “He wants more than simply good or bad music, he wants to restore to us the poem in its incarnate depth.” Upon making this statement, Schumann proceeds to briefly illustrate exactly how Franz approaches the nuances and differences in poets and poems set in this collection (Op. 1), while still privileging the expression of the text over the music. For example, Schumann distinguishes between the “charming naïveté” of Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s “Tanzlied im Mai” and the “courageous outbursts” Franz presents in several Robert Burns poems. In this review, Schumann is quite vague about how, musically, Franz achieves these expressive ends. Yet, as he explains in the beginning of this article and again at its close, Schumann’s goal in this first mention of Franz in the *NZfM* is to encourage others to discover Franz’s music for themselves: “If one wanted to list his traits individually, one would not finish; people devoted to music will already uncover them.”

Schumann makes up for the vagueness of his first critique with the discussion of Franz’s music in his next review. Since these poems were all written by the same poet – Nikolaus Lenau – Franz was presented with a new challenge, and in Schumann’s perspective, achieved admirable success in his settings. The prevailing element in this set is “the elegiac tone – the silent dreamy essence of these poems, the gentle mourning that settles itself mildly and softly around the heart – although not exclusively, then preferably an element that speaks to the composer’s being and

\[\text{234} \] Er will mehr als wohl- oder übelklingende Musik, er will uns das Gedicht in seiner leibhaftigen Tiefe wiedergeben. Thank you to Sabine von Mering for her assistance in the translation of the German idiom „wohl- oder übel-.“ “Wohl- oder übel” can also be translated as “cannot be helped” or “whether one likes it or not.” Seeing as “wohlklingend” (“pleasant-sounding” or “melodious”) is often used to describe music, von Mering suggests that Liszt provides an element of irony in his adaptation of this phrase in this example.

\[\text{235} \] Wollte man einzelne seine Züge anführen, man würde nicht fertig; innige Musikmenschen werden sie schon herausfinden.
Though this single tone applies to the whole body of works, Schumann is quick to mention that these Lieder do not fall prey to monotony. Franz is able to weave together more than one mood – though one is always stronger than the other – in a single song, to add another layer of meaning and expression to the work. The specific musical element that Schumann identifies as central to Franz’s musical language is harmony. Since Franz had achieved mastery of traditional Western harmony and counterpoint, he was able to use harmony to its full expressive advantage. Still, Franz employs harmony to illustrate the intentions of the poet, “without resorting to juvenile painting.” Even when Franz uses so-called “amateur” harmonic moves, such as avoiding the natural cadence, Schumann believes that he is musically justified to do so, as this move heightens the expression of the text.

In both reviews Schumann characterizes the “old” style of Lieder composition as comprising a “little, trivial melody and little strolling triplets” or having a “trembling accompanimental formula.” These elements one will not find in Franz’s works. His is a fresh perspective on the Lied and Schumann hopes that “friends of true music will enjoy them [Franz’s Lieder].” In these two reviews, Schumann lays the groundwork for reviews to come. Many of these ideas and even specific details find their way into Liszt’s essay as well. Schumann emphasizes the importance of Franz’s new approach to composition – especially to those who support “new” music – and isolates the uniqueness of the music-text relationship found in Franz’s Lieder. Though Schumann only really mentions one contributing musical factor of Franz’s successful expression of a text – his mastery of harmony – the inclusion of a description

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236 Es ist aber der elegische Grundton, das still träumerische Wesen dieser Gedichte, die sanfte Trauer, die mild und weich um das Herz sich legt, wo nicht ausschließend, doch vorzugsweise ein des Componisten Sein und Wesen zusagendes Element...
237 Um endlich von letzterer, namentlich der Harmonik, noch Einiges zu sagen, so ist sie höchst delicat, eigenthümlich den Intensionen des Dichters mit inniger Zuthlichkeit bis in Einzelheiten sich anschmiegend, ohne in zu kindische Malarei zu verfallen.
of musical features and their contributions to Franz’s Lieder becomes a common tendency for critics in future assessments, Liszt included.

Though the debate between the musical conservatives and progressives surely had its roots in the 1840s, Schumann does not take an overly political approach to his analysis of Franz in either review. With his early support of Franz noted in print, in addition to Franz’s consistently conservative use of older forms in his works, Schumann might have anticipated that Franz would be associated with the conservative composers. Perhaps because Franz so comfortably fit within the parameters of the musical conservatives, Liszt sought to dismantle this relationship in his essay. At the time when Schumann wrote his two reviews (1843, 1844), his words held less political importance than those of Liszt, who wrote a mere ten years later. An examination of the NZfM reviews published between those of Schumann and Liszt will show that Franz continued to be a neutral figure in contemporary musical politics until the early 1850s when he became a pawn for the progressive party.

Reviews of Franz’s Lieder and vocal works – both secular and sacred – appear in the NZfM seven more times before the publication of Liszt’s character portrait (see Table 1 at the end of this chapter for a complete listing). Considering that the NZfM underwent a radical change in leadership during this period – the position of editor passed from the conservative Schumann to the New German School leader Brendel – one might expect the subsequent reviews or tone of the journal to change as well. Though only examining reviews of Franz’s Lieder, a small case study, I do not find this to be the case. While Brendel now served as editor, the next four reviews of Franz’s Lieder were written by critics (pseudonyms M., H-----s., and Emanuel Klitzsch) held over from Schumann’s tenure.238 If a change in tone – representative of the new progressive

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238 Thym notes in his article “Schumann in Brendel’s Neue Zeitschrift für Musik from 1845 to 1856” that one of the challenges Brendel faced upon taking over the editor position of the NZfM was that he had to do so “with a staff of
political bent of the journal – was to have occurred at all regarding Robert Franz, it would likely have occurred after the publication of Franz’s letter praising Wagner in 1852 (see p. 119).\textsuperscript{239} This also appears to be around the time that the *NZfM* underwent a substantial change in contributors.\textsuperscript{240} The next two reviews of Franz’s works (post-1852) were written by Theodor Uhlig (an important member of the NGS) and an author who published under the initials F.G.\textsuperscript{241}

Similar themes are brought up in each review, regardless of the critic’s political bent.\textsuperscript{242} Franz’s originality and individuality as represented by his innovative approach to the music-text relationship (H-----s, for example, speaks of the “natural” or “organic” connection between text and music in Franz’s Lieder) comprise the main topics of discussion in these prose works. The music-text relationship is partly made apparent through Franz’s careful selection of texts and his ability to capture changes in the strophic text through subtle changes in melody, harmony, and/or accompaniment. Actual moments of criticism of Franz’s Lieder are scant. These critics, whether conservative or progressively-minded, presented Franz for the most part as a non-political composer. Though Franz approached musical form in an innovative way, his use of form was surprisingly not a significant point of discussion in these considerations of his works.\textsuperscript{243}

\textsuperscript{239} Franz also contributed two more articles to the *NZfM* during this 17-year period (1843-1860) – one on Bach’s Cantatas in 1857 and a critique of F. Hinrich’s Op. 1 Lieder in 1859.

\textsuperscript{240} Thym, 29.

\textsuperscript{241} Uhlig wrote about Franz’s Op. 15. *Kyrie a capella für vier Chor- und Solostimmen*, a sacred work, and thus not covered in my analysis above.

\textsuperscript{242} Three of the six reviews published after those of Schumann and before the Liszt essay were actually written by the same critic, Emanuel Klitzsch. Klitzsch was a close friend of Schumann from when they both lived in Zwickau. Klitzsch appears to be one of the only critics who continued to publish regularly in the *NZfM* after Brendel became editor. Perhaps in respect to Schumann, or merely to state his own views and perspective, Klitzsch continued to be a more neutral voice in the journal throughout the 1850s. He primarily wrote reviews of works and not featured articles for the journal.

\textsuperscript{243} As Dana Gooley has brought to my attention, form was not so important in the nineteenth-century discussion of song. Perhaps this logically accounts for the lack of attention to form in Franz’s Lieder in the *NZfM* during this time. The one review that paid more attention to Franz’s novel use of an old form was in an essay by F. G., “Lieder von Robert Franz,” published in the same volume as the Liszt portrait. As the function of this essay was to introduce and prepare for the Liszt essay, F. G. states that one should not really label all of Franz’s latest Lieder as songs, as some “approach other forms in text and music – such as the Romance and what the French call the Chanson.” [Mit gutem
F.G. introduces Liszt’s character portrait of Franz to the *NZfM* readership declaring:

For some time, in the “Neue Zeitschrift für Musik” this composer was not thought of; he who occupies one of the highest honors in the field of song, whose direction the school of thought of song composition has taken in present day, was particularly influential and still is. The reason for the long silence about such a significant and living person still in the height of his career, is that one of the valued employees of the N. Zeitschrift promised to present an exhaustive article on the latest works Robert Franz, the same [promise] until now he was not yet in a position to deliver.\(^{244}\)

According to F.G., Liszt’s essay strives to fill a noticeable and unwarranted gap in contemporary music criticism and scholarship – a gap which could only be filled with detailed analysis and consideration of Franz’s musical works. Although F. G. writes that Liszt, the “valued employee of the N. Zeitschrift” mentioned here, would present his thoughts on Franz’s latest works, Liszt’s article, in fact, does not address these particular works at all. Instead, Liszt focuses on explaining to his reader the traits that make Franz a notable artist.

Akin to the other portraits in this series, Liszt’s essay on Robert Franz can be easily divided into two parts. Unlike the Clara Schumann portrait, for example, Franz is clearly the named and foremost subject of the essay from Liszt’s opening paragraph. The first half of the essay discusses Franz’s Lied aesthetic, the significance of the German Lied as well as its main contemporary composers, artistry in the mid-nineteenth century, and ends with a lengthy discussion of Franz’s connection to the poets and poems he set and the music-text relationship in his works. In the second half, Liszt provides a biographical overview of Franz’s life, musical...
background, education, and path to becoming a composer, in addition to Franz’s musical influences and his thoughts on the artist and musical aesthetics. This biographical section is mostly factual, yet also includes the roots for Liszt’s argument about Franz’s individuality that he so heavily emphasizes in the first half. By including the biographical section as the second half of this essay, Liszt guides his readers to view Franz through the lens of themes provided in the first half. The already compelling arguments about Franz’s individuality and significance as a contemporary Lied composer are made even stronger by the facts of the second half.

Franz, exclusively a composer of the Lied, expresses his idiosyncratic approach to art even through his choice of genre. As one of the most “German” genres of composition, the Lied (inspired by the Volkslieder of the past) allows a composer to express a simple feeling or mood. This feeling can only be successfully achieved by a special sort of artist, one “who loves Art for Art’s sake” (P9) and who is inspired by the German Muse. Liszt identifies a certain type of naïveté needed in an artist to truly express the sentiment of the text; Franz, more so than Schubert, for example, embodies this naïveté to its fullest extent. Liszt places Franz’s strand of naïveté in a rare second category, as one which is “although less charming by its spontaneity, less interesting and surprising in its expressions and in its phrases; it nevertheless appeals to us as moving and poignant (P11).” Furthermore, Franz is “self-taught” [“Autodidakt”] (P7) and is...

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245 Liszt devotes an entire paragraph describing Schubert’s naïveté in contrast to that of Franz: “Schubert’s imagination was of an excited and impassioned order” – so impassioned he did not fully develop; “A long-breathed labor was a hard thing for him, since he did not reach the point of concentrating his fire, of economizing his forces.” [Dwight’s] Schubert wanted to “make a scene of every subject; but he crowded it into a single scene, and thereby the Lied remained with him a Lied in so far as it did not simply strive to describe an action; this dramatic lyrist was content with lending the form of a scene to a purely subjective impression, and so he did not leave the natural element of the Lied, which embraces the portrayal of moods of mind and seeks to give to its pure dreams not so much shape as groundwork (P13).” [Dwight’s] In the next paragraph, Liszt continues this comparison between Schubert and Franz affirming that, “Franz on the contrary is so far from being dramatically constituted, that he never once requires a scene (P14).” This comparison to Schubert continues to elevate Franz’s compositions and reputation as a composer.

246 Stellt sich bei dem lyrischen Dichter oft eine zweite Naivität ein, die, wenn sie auch weniger bezaubernd durch ihre Spontaneität, weniger pikant und überraschend in ihrem Ausdruck und in ihren Wendungen ist, nichts desto weniger oft um so rührender und ergreifender auf uns einwirkt.
the founder of a new line of lyrical composers. As no one’s heir, he is unique among his contemporaries and had discovered a new song style. This style had an effect on its listener that no one could foresee: “His tender, far-reaching and euphonious voice seized hold of, without wounding, everybody, and the crowd listened deeply touched, without being conscious how unusual these tones, how strange this language was to them (P7).”\textsuperscript{247} Thus, Liszt clearly and simply musically justifies his attention on Franz in this character portrait.

Liszt also admires Franz in that he only composes when inspired and believes that for this reason, among others, Franz should serve as a model for his colleagues. This, in addition to the focus on a single genre, greatly differentiates Franz from other composers of the day who had an enormous compositional output, but whose works simultaneously perhaps greatly fluctuated in level of quality. Schubert, for example. As Liszt explains to his readers early in the essay, Franz’s dedication to his art makes his work a bit more challenging for the layperson to understand and appreciate. Through this essay, Liszt strives to deconstruct Franz’s challenging works – the subtlety of his moods cannot be easily grasped by all, especially since so many other Lieder were bombastic in their attempt at expression – so that audiences of the (then) present and future will have the proper tools and knowledge to appreciate and support Franz and his works. Liszt presents Franz’s individuality in several ways to allow each reader to appreciate Franz on the level that he or she is able.

Liszt is very clear in his explanation of Franz’s originality. He believed that Franz did not embrace his individuality as a result of his formal education, but in spite of it. Couched in a discussion of Franz’s upbringing and education, Liszt takes the opportunity in this essay to continue to remind his readers about his own views on the nineteenth-century conservatory.

\textsuperscript{247} Seine zarte, weithintragende, wohlklingende Stimme ergriff die Gemüther, ohne jemand zu verwunden, und die Menge lauschte gerührt, ohne sich bewußt zu sein, wie ungewohnt diese Töne, wie fremd diese Sprache ihr war. [Dwight’s]
system. Though this topic comes from the latter half of the essay, it clarifies the roots of Franz’s individuality and what caused him to stray from a more conventional (and conservative) path. Furthermore, with this critique of the conservatory system, Liszt simultaneously critiques the musical conservatives whose foundation lay with Mendelssohn and the founding of the Leipzig Conservatory. By distancing Franz from the conservatives, Liszt draws him closer to the musical progressives. The contemporary musical public in the Franz essay, as in other Liszt portraits, suffers from exposure to artists primarily coming out of a conservatory education and therefore are not able to identify and appreciate “true” art and artists. Thus Franz had yet to be appreciated enough during his lifetime, though his approach to composition was more interesting and effective than many better known (conservative) composers.

The conservatory system of music education Franz found in Dessau failed not only him, as one of the most talented students, but the students in general. Through his description of Friedrich Schneider as an ineffective teacher, Liszt discusses not only the importance of the master-student relationship, but the contributing factors that make such a relationship successful. Liszt reiterates his beliefs about the negative impact a formal conservatory education makes upon its students by simply stating that, “In a heavy, stagnant, thickly intellectual atmosphere, the unhindered natural development becomes impossible for the student (P50).” Schneider, too, had ties to Leipzig first as a student at the University of Leipzig and then as organist at the St. Thomaskirche (1812), further linking him to the conservatives, even

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248 “If there are masters, whom unfettered, youthful partisans rejoice to follow with almost blind devotion, and, inflamed with a noble courage, seal their doctrines with their own names, with their heart’s blood, marching with reckless enthusiasm beneath their banner, such masters stand upon the most dangerous outposts of Art, and fight with a courage which is called desperation by their adversaries, but which in successful cases justifies the saying of Virgil: Audentes fortuna jurat.” These masters who have “founded but not keep up schools” are always surrounded by students and can create an air of creative electricity. This creative environment would never have survived (or even bloomed) in Dessau: “For Schneider such a feeling would have been rather strange and distant. He did not feel the need of living in an atmosphere in which the mind follows independently its own direction, and thus his school lacked one of the most indispensable requisites of Art.” [Dwight’s]

249 In einer schweren, stagnirenden, dick-geistigen Luft wird die freie Entwicklung dem Jünger zur Unmöglichkeit...
though his time spent in the city predated that of Mendelssohn. I argue that by 1855 this lapse in time was inconsequential given the strong ties between the city of Leipzig, its musical community, and musical conservatism. It is of no surprise, then, that Schneider and his method of teaching ultimately failed Franz in Dessau. This “failure,” though, certainly helps Liszt in his creation of a more liberal Franz.

Though students form their own groups and diverge from the master in the aftermath of an oppressive conservatory environment – Liszt cites this segregation as the only redeeming element of Franz’s experience in Dessau – Liszt will not (or chooses not to) see the beneficial aspects of this experience. This flourishing, more secretive student environment was indeed the community in which Franz first began to develop his compositional style. Perhaps the conservatory experience is then needed, because those creative, talented students, for whom that environment does not provide ample support, proceed to move along an alternate path. This action would never have come to fruition if not for their original oppressive formal education. In Franz’s case, it also spurred his own self-examination and ultimately pushed him into joining the intellectual community at Halle. The combination of these factors resulted in the “thinking artist” at the core of Liszt’s essay.

That Liszt also characterizes Franz as a “thinking artist” places him on the same plane as Schumann.250 Upon returning to Halle, Franz joined the budding intellectual community that was growing there. Although the public musical life was not overly large, Halle was home to a great university and intellectual environment, especially in the field of philosophy. The one philosopher Liszt cites in this portrait as an influence on Franz and his way of thinking about art is the Young Hegelian Arnold Ruge. Even though Franz was not outwardly part of this early

250 In addition to Liszt describing Schumann in the Clara Schumann portrait as the contemporary composer who “thinks the most about music,” several scholars have noted Schumann’s intellectual approach to music as well. See Heinz J. Dill’s “Romantic Irony in the Works of Robert Schumann” (The Musical Quarterly, 1989) for example.
movement, “still he exercised his analytic and sympathetic reflection upon all that was noble and fruitful in these investigations of philosophic freedom (P55).”²⁵¹ As a result of his engagement with contemporary philosophy, Franz believed that the artist must not limit his creativity to the tangible object, but instead to creatively embrace the atmosphere of ideas which surround him (P56).

In Franz, as a “thinking artist,” one found “a kind of insatiable curiosity, an incessant thirst, which study does not quench, but only the more violently kindle” (P63).²⁵² Franz’s mind was more occupied with thoughts than “special labors” (musical conventions or expectations, for example), though he did study Schubert and Bach and followed the development of the “Romantic” school. Yet now, influenced by contemporary philosophical inquiry, Franz’s focus was turned to aesthetics instead of merely the making of music. That Franz was able to successfully apply contemporary philosophical thoughts and discussions to his works contributes to the strength of emotion he is able to produce in his works and a much deeper understanding of both the text and music.

The overarching theme of Liszt’s discussion of Franz’s Lieder is Franz’s dedication to the creation of the mood (“one sharply pointed fundamental feeling”) (P15) and atmosphere called for by the text in his Lieder.²⁵³ This emphasis on mood and expression put Franz in direct opposition to the musical conservatives. Though the conservatives also believed in the musical expression of a text, the way in which Liszt describes Franz’s approach to Lieder composition is

²⁵¹ Wenn sich Franz den emporkeimenden neuen Ideen nicht unmittelbar anschloß, sie nicht durch Wort und Schrift verbreitete, so wendete er seine analysirende und sympathisirende Reflexion an alles, was edel und fruchtbringend in diesen Untersuchungen der philosophischen Freiheit war. [Dwight’s]
²⁵² Vor allem beherrscht ihn eine Art nie zu sättigender Neugier, ein unaufhörlicher Durst, welcher durch Studien nicht gelöscht, sondern immer heftiger entfacht wird. [Dwight’s] I would translate the last clause as “but becomes ignited more intensely.”
²⁵³ Mood was so integral to Franz’s Lieder that in his chapter on Franz in his History of German Song, Louis Elson tabulates and lists the feelings evoked and characterized in almost two dozen of Franz’s songs. These feelings include “Daintiness,” “Religion,” “The Forest,” “Angry Sea,” and “Pathos” among others (pp. 201-202).
reminiscent of the ways in which he and the New Germans discuss the central traits of program music.\textsuperscript{254}

Expression of feeling is of the greatest importance to Franz and gives to his works a kind of purity and organicism: “In him speaks, in the noblest language of Art, the clear, intelligible echo of the feeling which has moved him (P14).”\textsuperscript{255} Describing him as a “psychical colorist,” (P14) Liszt emphasizes Franz’s ability to construct a detailed situation and landscape within a short amount of time. Further, the shorter the text, the more earnestly Franz invents lines “to characterize his object (P14).” Thus, in Franz’s Lieder, listeners serve as “companions of his feeling.” The listening experience of one immersed in the atmosphere Franz creates through his works is almost tangible:

To this end he had not taken possession, like Schubert, of our imagination; he does not try to impress us through accessories, to bribe us through picturesque surroundings, or shocked through a poignant spectacle, to overwhelm through the nervous excitement of a painful impression, through his enchanting pathos. He sketches his contours only with precise strokes, which quietly pulls us immediately into the magic circle of his emotion and one drop at a time communicates with us the burning charms of his impressions until we have emptied the proffered cup with him. (P14).\textsuperscript{256}

Franz does not fool his audience with virtuosic passages, but strives to accompany them on a journey in an exploration of the text’s core sentiment.

Furthermore, the mood created in Franz’s Lieder is at times quite subtle and/or complex:

“This sense is frequently a very complex one, since Franz particularly deals with poetic moods

\textsuperscript{254} Refer back to the analysis of “On John Field’s Nocturnes” in Chapter One.

\textsuperscript{255} In der edelsten Sprache der Kunst spricht bei ihm das klare vernehmliche Echo des Gefühls, welches ihn selbst bewegte. [Dwight’s] Dwight’s translation here omits the word “selbst.” With the addition of “selbst” to the sentence – translated as “himself” – Liszt reiterates Franz’s relationship to musical feeling and expression more strongly.

\textsuperscript{256} Dazu bemächtigt er sich nicht, wie Schubert, unserer Phantasie; er versucht nicht, uns durch die Staffage, durch die malerische Umgebung zu bestechen, durch ein ergreifendes Schauspiel zu erschüttern, durch die nervöse Erregung eines schmerzlichen Eindrucks, durch sein hinreißendes Pathos zu überwältigen. Er skizziert nur mit präzisen Strichen seine Konturen, um uns sogleich leise in den Zauberkreis seiner Gemüthsbewegung zu ziehen und tropfenweise den brennenden Reiz seiner Eindrücks uns mitzuteilen, bis war mit ihm den dargereichten Becher geleert haben.
which conceal in themselves a contradiction between feeling and situation (P15).” As a result, at times his “tone-poems” might not leave a lasting effect on the uneducated listener – an outcome which Liszt tries to change with his breakdown of Franz’s musical style and Lieder in this essay. Only “the appreciative heart” who can “feel and understand” Franz’s works will surely benefit from his approach (P15).

Referring to Franz’s Lieder as “tone-poems” is an important rhetorical move. This phrase is immediately associated with program music and the New German School – both in the mid-nineteenth century and today. Although “tone-poems” usually do not refer to music with text, that Liszt connects these Lieder with his own symphonic poems, among other program music, illustrates the capacity to which Franz is able to not only express mood and feeling, but elicit a powerful emotional response in his listener as well. It also goes almost without saying that this (political) move strongly connects Franz with the musical progressives.

Mood becomes even more complex and subtle in several of Franz’s works. The more time one spends with Franz’s Lieder, the more one finds that the predominating feeling is shaded by another – “with the joy there mingles a breath of despondency, and sorrow is transformed almost before our eyes into a blissful self-forgetfulness (P16).” Though seemingly simplistic on the surface, the moods presented in Franz’s Lieder and their subsequent emotional responses in the listener are anything but commonplace. One needs to put forth effort to experience the intricacies, delicacies, and complexities of Franz’s works, an effort which, Liszt explains, will...
have increasingly fruitful results with time. As seemingly closed-minded, the musical conservatives surely represented those who cannot appreciate Franz’s works to their fullest degree.

Because Franz focuses so heavily on the expression of a mood, he must pay special attention to the feeling and expression called for by each individual text. The same musical flourishes and elements will not suit each poet. Therefore, Franz only works with texts that speak to his sensibility in some way; he does not treat texts that are too bold, a point that Liszt expands upon in his discussion of Franz’s careful selection of Heine texts.

To best exemplify Franz’s treatment of texts, Liszt advises his reader to think about Franz in terms of the poets he sets. Liszt illustrates, through separate consideration of four different poets (Heine, Lenau, Burns, and Osterwald), that Franz did indeed set each poet differently based on his style and the singular needs of each text. In this section, Liszt not only focuses on Franz’s approach to each poet, but illustrates their contrasts as well. Of the poets mentioned, two (Lenau and Osterwald) appeal directly and effortlessly to Franz’s sentiment; of the two others (Heine and Burns), Franz chooses only to select those texts which appeal to his own temperament. Interestingly enough, though, Liszt does not make this distinction clear. The first two poets are those who represent “modern” German poetry, while the latter two were poets of the past. Therefore, Franz’s sensibility clearly resonates with that of the modern and the new, which in turn perhaps makes his approach to composition also seem more novel and progressive.

Heine (and Goethe) provided the greatest challenge for Franz. Liszt’s discussion of Franz’s music-text relationship when setting texts by Goethe was not included in his original publication of this essay. It was added as the only new full paragraph in Liszt’s 1872 revision of this work. Franz had not set any Goethe texts by 1855, so there was no mention of the famous

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260 Perhaps this fact would have been obvious to Liszt’s readers, so he did not feel the need for further discussion.
poet in Liszt’s original version. Between 1855-1872, however, Franz did set a single Goethe text, which then warranted the inclusion of the famed poet in the essay’s revision. Why Liszt chose to include a paragraph on Goethe and not on another poet whose texts Franz set more often was likely a ploy to promote Franz’s popularity and authority. Furthermore, Goethe’s presence in this character portrait further linked Liszt to Goethe and Weimar, as Goethe and Schiller were (and even are) perhaps the two most renowned artistic and cultural figures to live and work in Weimar.261

Since Goethe was a prominent poet whose works were very frequently set by contemporary composers, adding a brief paragraph on Franz’s relationship to the great writer allowed Franz even greater authority as a Lied composer. Schubert, for example, set over eighty of Goethe’s poems; this includes some of Schubert’s most famous Lieder, such as “Erlkönig” and “Gretchen am Spinnrade,” among so many others. Liszt justified Franz’s reluctance to setting Goethe, stating that Goethe somehow went against Franz’s nature and that this reluctance exemplified the at times challenging relationship between composers and poets (P23). Yet, it is apparently to Franz’s benefit that he did indeed choose to set a work of Goethe, though the text was as strange and confusing to him as it likely was to his audience when hearing Franz’s finished work. Perhaps since the musical conservatives set Goethe’s text more often than Franz, they did not pay as careful attention as Franz in expressing the core expression of the text in their Lieder. Franz’s attention to the innermost details of a text, especially in comparison with his contemporaries, is evident in his treatment of Heine’s texts as well.

Whereas other composers often focused on Heine’s lyric-epic poems, Franz focused only on Heine’s lyric poems or the lyric feeling he drew from an epic poem. Offering specific

examples ("Aus den Himmelsaugen droben," Op. 5 and "Wie des Mondes Abbild zittert" and "An dir blaue Himmelsdecke," both from Op. 6), Liszt explains further that Franz was especially good at (and happiest when) “mirroring the pantheistic religious aspects of his [Heine’s] philosophy: the movement towards a universe beyond itself, expanding to the infinite; the dissolving soul, if you like (P18).” Liszt does not hesitate to write that Franz is less successful in those Heine pieces which do not “represent earnest conflict (P19).” In these works, Franz’s music is especially subtle as there is no central point of conflict (P19). That he chose only to set the “better side of that [Heine’s] divided nature” was to his benefit, as Franz was able to read even a challenging Heine text for its lyrical potential and many works by Heine, though set by other contemporary composers, did not fit Franz’s specific criteria.

As in his setting of Heine, Franz is “attracted only by the kindred side” of Burns. He cannot express Burns’ “realistic downrightness” but instead sets his naïveté and feeling of pathos (P21). At the start of his career, Franz felt an affinity to Burns’ poetry because of their folklike texts. Yet Franz soon found that the two (Burns’ poems and that of the Volkslied) greatly differed: “Burns, an artist by nature, organizes his material, goes beyond the vague noise and gets at pointed forms, whereas the Volkslied contains itself with vague hints and ejaculations (P21).” Franz chose to draw inspiration from original Volkslied and only set fifteen texts by Burns in his career (see Footnote 213).

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262 Am glücklichsten giebt er die pantheistisch religiösen Momente seiner Weltanschauung wieder: die in ihrer Bewegung nach dem Universum über sich selbst hinaus zum Unendlichen sich erweiternde, wenn man will: zerfließende Seele.
263 Burns was highly influenced by the Scottish folksong. Perhaps one of his most famous reworkings of a Scottish folksong is “Auld Lang Syne” which is now traditionally sung at midnight to welcome in the New Year. For more information on Burns and his connection to the folk song, see Gerald E. H. Abraham’s “Burns and the Scottish Folk-Song” in Music & Letters (Jan. 1923, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 71-84).
264 Sie ergiebt, daß Burns, eine künstlerisch angelegte Natur, seine Stoffe gliedert, über das Unklar-Naive hinaus zu pointirteren Formen gelangt, während das Volkslied sich mit Andeutungen und Stoßseufzern begnügt. [Dwight’s] I would translate the last clause of this sentence like this: “whereas the Volkslied itself is content with hints and heartfelt groans.”
Franz’s tailoring of his musical style to best suit the sentiment of the poem comes through clearly in Liszt’s description of Franz’s treatment of Lenau’s poems. In Lenau’s works, the contradictions “do not admit of the same covering up as Heine’s. These are more reflective, those [the former] are of native growth, given with the poet’s own individuality, who is always followed by a dark and spectral shadow. You feel this in the poems, and are pained by the formlessness; in the music this mysterious element gains firm and lovely forms (P20).”

To best portray this mysterious “shadow” element, Franz incorporates “greater melodic independence of the accompaniment” (P20). Liszt even goes so far as to state that through music Franz is able to express Lenau’s “shadow” better than the poet himself in words. Simply put, in his setting of Lenau’s works, Franz directly follows and embraces the contour and movement of the text, ranging from the freer moments to its peculiarities.

Franz was perhaps most familiar with Osterwald’s texts and the sentiments and expressions found there. Franz knew Osterwald from when he was a child and the two had remained friends throughout Franz’s lifetime. Through the exchange of thoughts and ideas, both in person and in correspondence, Franz was able to personally connect with Osterwald’s poetry on several levels. Liszt provides only a short paragraph on Osterwald, though, with no real indication of how Franz approached the poet’s texts. He only vaguely affirms that Osterwald was

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265 Diese sind mehr reflektiert, jene sind naturwüchsig mit der Individualität des Dichters, dem stets ein träüber, gespensterhafter Schatten folgt, gegeben. Man fühlt diesen in den Gedichten, wo die Gestaltlosigkeit peinigt; in der Musik jedoch kann dieses unheimliche Wesen feste und schöne Formen gewinnen. [Dwight’s] The end of this sentence is better translated as, “in music, however, this sinister nature can gain strong and beautiful forms.”

266 „Even where the poet moves more freely, where he takes a deeper breath [ex], the composer does not lose sight of Lenau’s constrained style, but rather adheres constantly to its peculiarity (P20).” Auch wo sich Lenau freier bewegt, wo er tiefer aufathmet, ist seine Weise in ihrer Gebundenheit von Komponisten nicht aus den Augen gelassen; seine Eigenthümlichkeiten sind vielmehr stets festgehalten, wie bei den Liedern: „Stille Sicherheit“ (Op. 10) und „Frühlingsgedränge“ (Op. 7). [Dwight’s]
a “poet of a kindred spirit to Robert Franz, in that he is thoroughly youthful (P22).” The reasons behind Liszt’s brevity here remain unclear.

Upon establishing Franz’s unique relationship with each poet, Liszt describes exactly how Franz was able to musically establish the mood of the poem with such conviction. Franz paid close attention to both music and text. Therefore the union of the two in his Lieder was particularly striking. By separately introducing Franz’s treatment of text and music in his works, Liszt deconstructs for his reader exactly how through the inspired individual treatment of these elements Franz is able to express a mood so effectively. The music and text unite to form a complete whole, a product which only Franz is able to create with true success: “Franz is the model in the truly chaste, inwardly cherishing acceptance of the poetic word to the musical heart. Never does his musical reproduction breathe the slightest breath of any misuse of the poetic object to a preconceived musical purpose (P24).” Whereas other composers often err in the treatment of texts, “the breadth, consistent uniformity of his lyrical works should become highlighted as impeccable (P24).” Not only should audiences appreciate and support Franz, but colleagues should look to his works for models as well.

An element which sets this character portrait of Franz aside from others of the set is Liszt’s inclusion of actual examples of works. When discussing each poet Franz set in turn, Liszt includes examples of the ensuing Lieder. This level of detail is often absent from Liszt’s prose works, leaving his reader with a vague glossiness regarding specificities of the personage’s life.
and compositions. In this case, though, there are several reasons as to why Liszt might have included this detailed information. Since Franz published several hundred works, perhaps Liszt wanted to call attention to those which best illustrated the main points of his essay. It also illustrates not only Liszt’s familiarity with Franz’s output, but his mastery of them as well as his personal connection to both Franz and his works. This could also be a ploy for Liszt to encourage his readers to buy Franz’s works, seeing as Franz so desperately needed money. Or perhaps Liszt, in a subtle way, strove to inspire a comparison between the works of Franz and those of Schumann who set many of the same texts.270

The one poem set by both Franz and Schumann which Liszt mentions in this essay does indeed inspire comparison between the two composers: Heine’s “Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome.” Schumann had included this poem as part of his famed song cycle “Dichterliebe” (composed 1840); Franz set the same text as part of his “Sechs Gesänge,” Op. 18 (published c. 1855). The selection of this text to include in his essay was surely no coincidence on Liszt’s part. Even though Liszt does not directly mention Schumann or his setting of this Heine text, many readers could easily make this connection. Liszt closes his paragraph on the relationship between Franz and Heine with a mention of this work: “The coquettishness and tragic-artfulness of many Heine songs are not represented. Only in the cases which allowed a graceful turn, the song “Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome” (Op. 18), for example, did Franz dare to work with nuanced punchlines which, with overarching irony, call actual content into question at the end (P19).”271 In this statement Liszt calls attention to the way in which Franz chooses to end this piece. In Liszt’s

270 As explained in more detail on p. 29, Klitzsch proceeds to follow Liszt’s lead and compare the Lieder of Franz with those of Schumann in his next review (1857).
perspective, Franz has been able to capture the “tragic refinement” of Heine’s text even in such a small gesture as the concluding phrase of the work.

A brief consideration of Franz’s treatment of this final phrase in comparison to the end of Schumann’s version will illustrate Liszt’s point further. The “encroaching irony” of this “tragically refined” text lies within Heine’s last verse. Here, we find out that the angelic image painted upon golden leather hanging in the great cathedral of Cologne on the Rhine River, an image to which our protagonist has turned in times of need, is an absolute match to his beloved.272 This ending leaves the listener with feelings of sadness, as the protagonist has not reunited with his beloved. The listener surely now has several questions as to the history of this relationship as well. This beautiful poem, which at first seems to be extolling the Rhine and the cathedral of Cologne, is truly a rueful and painful memory for the protagonist who can only look to these elements of grandeur and beauty with regret and sadness. With one last line, Heine is able to transform the majesty of Cologne’s cathedral to an almost cruel image of what cannot or can no longer be, the protagonist’s relationship with his beloved.

Franz captures the irony of this last statement through simple elements of music. He separates the last phrase with more silence than anywhere else in the song (two beats of rest in the accompaniment, and an eighth- and then quarter-note of rest in the vocal line), begins the

272 Original Heine text:

Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome,
Da spiegelt sich in den Well’n
Mit seinem großen Dome
Das große, heil’ge Köln.

In Dom da steht ein Bildnis
Auf goldnem Leder gemalt;
In meines Lebens Wildnis
Hat’s freundlich hineingestrahlt.

Es schweben Blumen und Eng’lein
Um unsre liebe Frau;
Die Augen, die Lippen, die Wänglein,
Die gleichen der Liebsten genau.

English translation (Paul Hindemith):

In the Rhine, in the holy stream
Is it mirrored in the waves –
With its great cathedral –
That great, holy city Cologne.

In the Cathedral stands an image
Painted on golden leather;
Into the wildness of my life
Has it shone, friendly.

Flowers and little cherubs hover
Around our beloved Lady;
The eyes, the lips, the cheeks –
They match my beloved’s exactly.
vocal line on the second beat of the measure (as opposed to the pick-up from the bar before which occurs throughout this song), directs the pianist and singer to both play and sing softly, simplifies the syllabic melody, and in the penultimate measure, emphasizes the minor sonority in the accompaniment through stepwise motion from F to A (I\textsuperscript{6}-ii-iii; it is also preceded by a minor vi chord, which lays the foundation for the use of minor of this passage). The dissonance of the minor iii chord is resolved to the dominant on the last eighth note of the measure, before returning to the tonic D Major in the last bar (see Figure 1).

This passage is further emphasized by the phrase which directly precedes it (“die Augen, die Lippen, die Wänglein”). Here Franz recalls the climactic note of the piece – the high E on the word “gestrahlt” in m. 18 – in his setting of the word “Wänglein” (“the cheeks”). Further, the note values of this measure (m. 25) quicken to more fully express the narrator’s excitement over the mere memory of his beloved. With the increase in intensity of the penultimate phrase (mm. 21-26), the effective simplicity of the concluding three measures is made even stronger. This phrase is also a just one example of the modified strophic form which Liszt identified in Franz’s works. By straying from the exact repetition of the musical setting of the opening verse (see mm. 1-5) Franz is both able to express the text more effectively (an arpeggiation up from A to the high E, instead of the move from that same A down to F as in m. 5) and also better prepare for this strikingly simple conclusion. A full score of this work can be found in Appendix I.
These musical elements are not unique to the conclusion of this work, but comprise the rest of the piece as well. Franz’s “Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome” clearly illustrates the ease of his style of Lieder composition. The melody, usually either arpeggiated or moving one step at a time, is accompanied by block chords. This accompaniment often matches the melodic tones and their movement. Further, there is never any question of the 6/8 time signature of the piece – two beats are very heavily emphasized per measure. What sets this passage apart is not how the music sounds, but what comes just before the last phrase, and more importantly, what arrives after. Silence. An abrupt ending where the surprise of Heine’s last phrase receives neither introduction nor conclusion. Franz leaves the listener to grapple with the tragic twist of this poem alone. Furthermore, seeing as Franz had already created one mood – religious, perhaps – this sudden expressive shift to sorrow likely makes the listener reevaluate the rest of the work.

Schumann’s setting of Heine’s poem is similar to that of Franz. He also includes a mostly triadic or stepwise-moving melody, often begins new phrases on the upbeat, and places strong emphasis on the first and third beats of the measure (Schumann’s setting is written in cut 4/4
time) (see Figure 2). The repetitive rhythmic accompaniment of this work (a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth-note), though, extends throughout the piece, which gives the song a sense of constant movement. This faster-moving accompanimental figure in the middle voice takes precedence over the slow-moving chords of the bass. In comparison to the block chordal accompaniment of Franz’s Lied, Schumann’s repetitious figure is much more active.

Schumann’s setting of the final phrase, however, differs greatly from Franz’s interpretation. He relies upon increased chromatic inflection of the melody to deliver the poignant last line, but more importantly, Schumann continues the accompanimental figure for seventeen measures after the conclusion of the vocal line.

Figure 2

Schumann employs this extended conclusion both to give the listener more time to adjust to the surprising twist of the text and to provide a strong sense of finality to the song. Where Franz lets the expression of the text dominate over the music, in Schumann’s setting the
hierarchy between text and music is hard to tell since the rhythmic element of the accompanimental figure never changes, even with this last line of text, and the music continues long after the vocal line has concluded. While Schumann’s setting is still certainly successful, especially when taken within the context of the entire song cycle, we can see why Liszt highlights Franz’s version as the one which more expressively captures the “tragic” essence of the ending of Heine’s poem.

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“The musical kernel of every song,” Liszt states, “is utterly simple: a harmonic, thematic or declamatory turn or phrase commonly controls its whole course (P25).”273 Yet what makes Franz’s Lieder unique is that this musical core is still elastic enough to be “serviceable for the most various shades of feeling” (P25).274 Harmonic modulation and not melody throughout determines the development of feeling, yet both work together to create the mood of the work: “While the harmonic web seeks to sketch the set of the mood, the melody strives to reproduce the mood itself (P25).”275 That Schumann identified harmony as the most important musical factor in Franz’s first two published collections of Lieder remains true in Liszt’s assessment as well.

Liszt shows how Franz’s inventive use of harmony is clearly a foundation for expressing the text. For example, poets seldom begin with an outburst of feeling, just as Franz does not start with an overly passionate melody that would detract from the word: “Only with the increased warmth of the poetic expression the musical expression grows as well. And in the beginning the

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273 Der musikalische Kern eines jeden Liedes ist durchweg einfach: eine harmonische, thematische oder deklamatorische Wendung oder Phrase bestreitet gewöhnlich den ganzen Verlauf. [Dwight’s] “Normally” might be a better word to use here than “commonly.”

274 Sie ist stets von großer Elasticität, wodurch es dem Komponisten möglich wird sie den verschiedensten Nuancen der Stimmung dienstbar zu machen. [Dwight’s]

275 Wie das harmonische Gewebe die Situation der Stimmung zu zeichnen bemüht ist, so strebt der Gesang die letztere selbst wiederzugeben. [Dwight’s]
melody, often initially unassuming in its modesty, arrives at the right moment to a tenderness
that casts a retroactive shimmer upon each shy, lusterless appearance (P26).\textsuperscript{276} The harmonic
movement here is implied, as its job is to “set the sketch of the mood” upon which the melody
elaborates.\textsuperscript{277}

Yet what of the form of these works, within which the melody and harmony intertwine? It is only too easy to categorize Franz’s works as being strophic and leaving it at that. In this
eyssay, though, Liszt emphasizes the novelty of Franz’s use of older forms, lest Franz seem too
conservative in his approach to composition. Therefore, Liszt presents Franz’s slight, but
effective modifications of traditional, strophic form as a result of his individuality, and not, as the
conservatives might argue, a heralding back to more traditional, older forms (the antithesis of
Liszt’s use of form in his program music, for example). Franz does, in fact, conscientiously tailor
the form of his works to each poem, an element which Liszt is careful to mention when
describing Franz’s creative process in the first half of this essay. Yet the degree to which Franz’s
at times very subtle alteration of strophic form can be seen as innovative or progressive is up to
the reader.

According to Liszt, first Franz meticulously studies the poet and text to decide which
form – strophe, strophe/antistrophe, new phrase – is best suited to the pure expression of the
sentiment of the text. Then he makes his musical decisions. Franz’s choice of “key, time, rhythm,
the form of accompaniment, the conduct of the voice both in its homophonic and polyphonic
aspect, will never appear accidental, arbitrary (P27).”\textsuperscript{278} The result is a complete work of great

\textsuperscript{276} Erst mit der erhöhten Wärme des poetischen Ausdrucks wächst auch die des musikalischen und die anfangs oft in
ihrer Bescheidenheit unscheinbare Melodie gelangt im rechten Moment zu einer Behutsamkeit, welche einen
rückwirkenden Schimmer auf jenes scheue, glanzlose Auftreten wirft.
\textsuperscript{277} See Footnote 276 for original German text.
\textsuperscript{278} Die Wahl der Tonart, des Taktes, des Rhythmus, der Begleitungsform, der Stimmführung nach ihrer
homophonen und polyphonen Seite werden nie zufällig oder willkürlich erscheinen. [Dwight’s] “Des Taktes” refers
here to “meter” and not “time.”
emotional strength and character whose “liquid metal of the pre-post-and-later-ludes fills up the depressions and protuberances of the mould so that no gap, no rent, no split may mar the beautiful rounding of the whole (P27).”

Thus, through his careful union of music and text, Franz is able to produce a complete mood in his work.

That Franz clearly embodied the future of Lieder composition is evidenced through his kindred nature with contemporary, young German poets and his level of attention to the word. Franz did not feel the need to adhere to certain tropes of composition or ally himself with a specific school. He took each text on its own and set the central mood of the poem using different elements of music to highlight its expressivity, whether through manipulation of the melody, harmony, form, or otherwise.

Or that is at least what Liszt would like his reader to believe. Though I do believe that Liszt successfully transforms Franz into a progressive composer, this transformation is surely aided by its historical context and is not predicated upon Liszt’s character portrait alone. Liszt’s great effort to achieve this conversion should not go unnoticed. The rhetorical ease and vivid imagery of other works is not found here to the same extent. And Liszt almost never refers to Franz’s use of form, even though form is a central topic of contention between the musical conservatives and progressives (see pp. 145-146). Furthermore, Liszt does not successfully argue that Franz is any more independent or creative than Schubert or other contemporaries. Franz is an individual, yes, but Liszt would have had a very challenging time trying to prove to his reader that Schubert is any less of a talented or unique composer. Liszt does successfully argue, though, for Franz’s elevation in the artistic community. Liszt’s comparison between Franz and the

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279 Das flüssige Metall der Vor-, Nach- und Zwischenspiele legt sich ausfüllend in die Vertiefungen und erhabenen Partien der Gußform, so daß keine Lücke, kein Riß, keine Spalte die schöne Rundung des Ganzen stört. [Dwight’s] I would revise Dwight’s translation to read “prelude, postlude, and interlude” instead of “pre-post-and-later-ludes.” A better translation of “Riß” would be “cut” or “tear.”
painter Albrecht Dürer as well as Chopin add to this endeavor. To Liszt, Franz needs to be on the same plane as Schubert and Schumann before he is able to praise him as a contemporary progressive composer. In my opinion, Liszt is much more successful in the former endeavor than the latter.

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Liszt’s character portrait of Franz did indeed affect the way in which Franz was then presented in subsequent NZfM reviews. Four reviews of Franz’s Lieder and vocal works were published in the NZfM between 1856-1860 (see Table 1 for reference). Though the themes which appear in these reviews are similar to those that appeared both before and within Liszt’s portrait, the way in which these authors discuss the music-text relationship in Franz’s Lieder reflect a probable Lisztian influence. Franz’s ability to choose texts and his treatment of them are main points of discussion in each review. This is especially seen in the anonymously-authored critique of Franz’s Op. 30 songs, in 1858. The critic primarily highlights the singular fusion between music and text in these Lieder, asserting that Franz “sees its task only in a life-like reproduction of the poetic substrate that penetrates so indulgingly the most secret detail that even the tiniest traits of the poetry find their true reflection in musical expression.”

He proceeds to first present the poems, then how they influenced Franz’s shaping of the music. This clearly mimics the structure of Liszt’s discussion of Franz’s Lieder. In his breakdown of the music, the author lays emphasis upon musical elements including key, melody/motif, rhythm, and harmony to illustrate the subtleties of Franz’s treatment of these elements to best express the needs of each poem. Furthermore, he includes an entire paragraph on poetic substance and on how Franz

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280 Sie will nichts an und für sich sein, sondern erblickt ihre Aufgabe lediglich in einer lebensvollen Reproduction des poetischen Substrats, die so hingebend in das geheimste Detail eindringt, daß auch die leisesten Züge der Dichtung ihr treues Spiegelbild im musikalischen Ausdruck finden.
expresses poetry through music. This attention to the detailed and complex way in which Franz set text to music was not present in those reviews published prior to Liszt’s 1855 essay.

Another, perhaps even more direct connection to Liszt’s character portrait, is the surprising presence of the idea of naïveté in two of the (post-1855) NZfM reviews. Naïveté – either to describe the poet or composer – was not mentioned in any critiques of Franz’s works written before 1855. Yet Liszt spends a great deal of time explaining and emphasizing the importance of identifying the specific type of naïveté that Franz embodies. Although the author of the 1856 review cites the naïveté of the poetry Franz chooses to set, this connection to Liszt is more clearly seen in Klitzsch’s 1857 review of Franz’s Op. 25 and Op. 26 Lieder.\textsuperscript{281} Klitzsch describes Franz’s naïveté as being an uncorrupted, integral element of his being.

Klitzsch, as the link between the NZfM under Schumann and then under Brendel, can best illustrate Liszt’s potential influence over later Franz reviews. In his critique Klitzsch reiterates several themes brought up in the Liszt essay – that still only a select few can understand Franz’s works and that only through attentive study can one understand Franz’s aesthetic effect and his individual approach to composition.

Klitzsch goes beyond Liszt’s essay and instead of comparing Franz to Schubert (following Liszt’s lead), his comparison is between Franz and Schumann.\textsuperscript{282} Since Franz and Schumann set several of the same texts, Klitzsch also believes that a comparison between the two composers will illustrate Franz’s unique approach to setting texts in a purely lyrical way: “He succeeds best at the purely lyrical, because the nature of the tone poet [Tondichter] feels most at home here; smaller ones, however, in which only lyrical playfulness is expressed, Robert

\textsuperscript{281} In this example, the author of the 1856 review refers to the text of Martin Luther’s poem “Die beste Zeit im Jahr ist mein.”
\textsuperscript{282} Perhaps, as explained on p. 139, this comparison follows Liszt’s lead as well.
Schumann (“Dichterliebe”) has appropriately characterized. Klitzsch’s comparison between the two composers is not to highlight one over the other, but to illustrate the diversity of lyrical approaches taken in contemporary works. It does, however, create a comparison that continues from the endpoint of Liszt’s essay. Klitzsch’s description of Franz as a “Tondichter” further indicates Liszt’s presence in this review.

Overall, in this character portrait Liszt is able to successfully highlight both Franz and the New German ideals. This transformation is achieved, though, under questionable circumstances. While (or perhaps because) he financially supports Franz, Liszt uses Franz as a political pawn and dubs him “progressive” against his will and almost despite his compositional style. Though Franz is perhaps more of a challenging figure than others for Liszt to convert, and one might question how well Liszt accomplishes this task, that Liszt’s influence is seen in later reviews of Franz’s works in the NZfM illustrates his ultimate success in this endeavor. Even though some readers might recognize the perhaps forced nature of Liszt’s endorsement of Franz in his essay, his conversion of Franz provides great evidence for the influence of Liszt’s written word in the mid-nineteenth-century.

\[283\] Die rein lyrischen gelingen ihm am besten, weil die Natur des Tondichters sich hier am heimischsten fühlt; die kleineren dagegen, in denen bloße lyrische Spielereien ausgesprochen sind, hat Rob. Schumann („Dichterliebe“) sehr treffend wiedergegeben.
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| Band 48 | Januar bis Juni 1858.  
| Band 50 | Januar bis Juni 1859  
19.

Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome.

The Rhine reflects in its clearness.

Im Legendenton.
Andantino.

Leise, Softly

Op.18 №2.

SINGSTIMME.

Im Rhein, im heil'gen Strome, da spiegelt sich in den
The Rhine reflects in its clearness, as though from its depth twere

Mit der Verschiebung.

Pianoforte.

Well, mit seinem gros sen Dom, das grosse, heil'ge
with all its great ca - ther - dral, my no ble, sa cred Co -

Cöln, das grosse heil'ge Cöln. Im Dom, da steht ein
Cologne, my no ble, sa cred Co loge. A bove there stands an
Bildniss, auf gol-de-nem Grun-de gemalt; in meines Le-bens
i-mage, that glo-ri-ous face, which you see; through all my gid-dy

Wild-niss hat's freundlich hin-ein ge-strahlt; hat's freundlich hin-ein ge-
ife. Now has kind-ly smiled on me. has kind-ly smiled on
cresc.

strahlt. Es schweben Blu-men und Engel um uns're lie-ben Frau, die
me. There ho-ly flowers and an-gels a-round the ho-ly Maid, the

Leise. Softly.

Auf, die Lip-pendie, Wän-glein, die gleichen lieb-sten ge-
smile, the se-cretair of pro-tec-tion, of-ten round my be-loved has play'd.
Chapter Four

“Pauline Viardot-Garcia”

Liszt’s article on celebrated opera prima donna Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821-1910) is the last in the series of Liszt’s character portraits from his Weimar period, one of his last publications in the NZfM, Liszt’s final article from his Weimar period, and essentially the last substantial published literary work of his career, with the exception of his book The Gypsies and their Music in Hungary (1859). As the culmination of so many strands of Liszt’s life and career, the examination of this character portrait proves essential to an analysis of Liszt’s Weimar works. That he chose to conclude his literary career in Weimar with an essay on Viardot should not be overlooked. This portrait of Viardot provided Liszt with the opportunity to restate his thoughts on contemporary opera, the need for an educated audience, and the role of the artist in society (an idea Liszt first put forth in his 1835 essay “On the Situation of Artists and on their Condition in Society”). By exploring this prose work partly through the lens of “On the Situation of Artists,” one can track the development of these ideas over nearly twenty-five years. As he clearly explains in his NZfM essay, Viardot represents Liszt’s ideal artist. Through his

284 Although Liszt titled his essay “Pauline Viardot-Garcia,” I will follow the trend in musicological scholarship and refer to Viardot-Garcia solely by her married name, Viardot.
285 Liszt’s “On the Situation of Artists” essay was published in the Gazette musicale de Paris in six installments (or articles) between May and July 1835. In November 1835, Liszt penned an addendum to this essay in response to the critique of Germanus Lepic (a pseudonym for Pierre Alexander Sprecht).
focus on Viardot and her artistry, Liszt educates his reader about the importance of the artist, with hopes to achieve his goal of teaching the musical public how to recognize and value “great” artists in the future.286

When first reading this essay, we learn that Viardot is distinguished from her contemporaries by her intelligence and knowledge of not only music, but arts and literature as well. Moreover, Viardot’s musical talent extends from performance to composition, from teaching to pedagogy, a rare combination of skills. Viardot has proper social etiquette, is witty and charming, and has attracted a bevy of interesting and famous friends in diverse fields of the arts and humanities to her side. Each trait on its own is not necessarily unique, but their collection within a single artist is rare. Upon deeper examination of Liszt’s prose, though, Liszt’s critique of contemporary opera, performance practices, and vocal technique (especially those of the German school), as well as the traits he values in an artist come through. Liszt uses Viardot’s “whole” performance style as a prime example of a “good” or “real” artist, especially when compared to her flashy contemporaries; he cites Viardot’s recent performances of Norma and Rosina in Weimar as examples of her unique artistry. In assessing these specific performances, Liszt simultaneously highlights Weimar as a sample audience, as one who has benefitted from Liszt’s efforts over the past thirteen years. As a result, Weimar’s musical public is able to truly appreciate the expressive depth of Viardot’s special approach to performance.

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286 One could also take a gendered approach to analyze this essay. As one of only two prose works that Liszt wrote about women in his entire literary output – the other being an essay on Clara Schumann from 1855 (see Chapter 2) – a discussion of Liszt’s approach to analyzing a female artist and composer, especially in comparison to her male contemporaries, would prove beneficial to further study of both Liszt and Viardot, among other topics. Does Liszt value the same aspects in Viardot as he would a male artist? Does he make gendered assumptions or have underlying social (gendered) expectations? Does he highlight Viardot’s personality and home life in lieu of her musical talent? Or does the presence of her ability as a homemaker in his essay make a statement enough in itself? Extant correspondence and literary works, among other archival documents, would offer a solid starting point for this study.
Viardot was a unique nineteenth-century musical phenomenon. Although she came from a very musical family, Viardot was still able to achieve fame for reasons other than her family name. Viardot’s intelligent dramatic decisions informed her “whole” performance style, where music and drama aligned to produce the utmost representation of the plot, characters, and events on three fronts, audibly, dramatically, and visually. FitzLyon cites Viardot’s operatic debut as a prime example of this approach. At her debut, Viardot refused to stop the action of the opera to repeat the “Willow Song” (Otello), though it was requested by the audience. Even in the earliest stages of her career, Viardot abided by her own aesthetic ideals and at times went against contemporary performance practice norms. Emerson highlights another element of Viardot’s artistry, her belief that historical accuracy would aid the in-depth development of her character: “One element of that approach – apparently unique for the time – was a thorough study of the literary and historical background of the libretto and a zeal for historical accuracy that extended to the designing of her own costumes.” As a result, Viardot’s “appeal to the masses was less immediate; her performances were too subtle, too original, and indeed too intellectual.” FitzLyon adds that “she made no concessions to popular taste.” Liszt chose to educate the audience to the nuances of Viardot’s performance by explaining its intricacies and how she fashioned these elements to benefit her performance as a whole.

Though she achieved fame under her married name, it was certainly Viardot’s maiden name, Garcia, which first helped to propel her into the musical milieu of Paris. Viardot’s father,

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288 Ibid, 65.


290 FitzLyon, 65.

the Spaniard Manuel Garcia, was the original Almaviva in Rossini’s *Barber of Seville*, as well as a respected pedagogue who created successful opera singers in his two elder children. Viardot’s brother, also named Manuel Garcia, a baritone, was a renowned vocal pedagogue whose writings on the topic, such as his *Traité complet de l’Art du Chant* (Paris, 1840), are still used today.\(^\text{292}\)

Perhaps best known of the Garcia offspring was Viardot’s older sister, the mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran. Malibran was recognized for her immense musical talent (especially her vocal range, which allowed her to sing both contralto and soprano parts, but resulted in great strain on her voice), tempestuous personality, and her early death from a riding accident at the age of 28.\(^\text{293}\)

Pauline Viardot, thirteen years younger than Malibran and fifteen younger than Manuel, followed in the lineage of her musical family first by exhibiting great talent at the piano. It was her mother’s decision, after Viardot’s father’s death in 1832, to push Viardot away from the piano and towards developing her voice, with hopes that Viardot would follow in her family’s footsteps and become an opera singer. At this point Viardot had already studied piano with Liszt and Charles Meysenberg, and had taken lessons in composition and theory with Anton Reicha. She aspired to become a concert pianist.\(^\text{294}\) Though she only studied with Liszt for a short while in the early 1830s, Liszt and Viardot remained in contact – both meeting in person and through correspondence – for the rest of Liszt’s life. Viardot also continued to pursue composition with great acclaim, but only moderate success.\(^\text{295}\)

\(^\text{292}\) Garcia’s books were unique in that they were based on experiments he had completed on the larynx and the scientific process of singing itself. Other publications included “Mémoire sur la voix humaine” in *Comptes-rendus des séances de l’Académie des sciences* (12 April 1841), “Observations on the Human Voice,” in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 7 (1855 ; 339-410), and *Observations physiologiques sur la voix humaine* (Paris, 1861) [http://www.harmonicorde.com/Manuel%20Patricio%20Garcia.html].


\(^\text{294}\) See FitzLyon Chapters 1 and 2 for an overview of the Viardot family’s musical identities and contributions.

\(^\text{295}\) Patrick Waddington, with the assistance of Nicholas Žekulin, has compiled a chronological catalogue of Viardot’s compositions, listing both published and unpublished works. This project is a great asset to scholars and invites scholarly pursuit of Viardot as composer in the future.
Viardot made her operatic debut in London in 1839 as Desdemona in Rossini’s *Otello*. Other career highlights included becoming the principal singer in an Italian opera company in St. Petersburg for three seasons (1843-1846) and securing a long-term engagement with the Paris Opéra from September 1848 – May 1849. Viardot’s seasons in Russia greatly distinguished her from other European singers. Richard Somerset-Ward states that Viardot was the “first major European singer to perform regularly in Russian in Moscow and St. Petersburg, at a time when Glinka and Dargomîzhsky were establishing Russian as a language of opera for the first time.”

Viardot’s best known role at this point was Fidès, a character she created in Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* in its 16 April 1849 premiere in Paris. Viardot also created the title role in Gounod’s *Sapho* (first performed in Paris two years later, on 16 April 1851). Between these two premieres, Viardot sang the soprano solos in Mozart’s Requiem at Chopin’s funeral (October 1849), where she and many others mourned the death of a composer whom Liszt and Viardot both held in the highest regard. After the publication of Liszt’s *NZfM* essay, Viardot collaborated with Berlioz and sang the lead roles in the resulting (revised) revivals of Gluck’s *Orphée* (1859) and *Alceste* (1861). On 24 April 1863, Viardot gave her farewell performance in Paris, *Orphée* by popular request.

Other members of Liszt’s and Viardot’s shared social group were Berlioz and Georges Sand. Viardot was also close friends with Robert and Clara Schumann, especially Clara, with

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297 FitzLyon, 146-147, 224.
299 FitzLyon, 273.
302 FitzLyon, 371.
303 Viardot and Liszt, only ten years apart in age, were both active in Paris at the same time.
whom she performed several times in Russia, Hungary, and Germany. Throughout her career, Viardot collaborated with and promoted the careers of several composers, including Chopin, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Wagner, Fauré, and Schumann, among others. Saint-Saëns wrote *Samson et Dalila* for her and Berlioz created Didon in *Les Troyens* with Viardot in mind.

That several operatic roles were written for Viardot is significant given the trends in opera composition at that time. Since music had increasingly become a commercialized venture, the idea of a composer’s written score as the “authentic” work overshadowed and diminished the idea of an artist’s performance as artwork. Rutherford explains the two main measures taken to ensure the “authority” of the written score: “The composer’s ownership of the score was eventually established and protected by two strategies: by the introduction of copyright laws; and by a reduction of the singer’s status from collaborator to subordinate – with the subsequent removal of the notion of a ‘definitive’ performance, thereby ensuring that the work was repeatable.”

That Viardot not only had roles composed with her in mind, but that she still worked in collaboration with several contemporary composers shows how her skills were recognized by others and that her importance went far beyond her performances on stage.

Because Viardot spoke fluent Spanish, French, Italian, English, German, and Russian, her diction was highly accurate. Furthermore, her knowledge of several languages and cultures also allowed her to compose and improvise in different national styles as well as assist composers of

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304 In these concerts Viardot was both accompanied by Clara Schumann in addition to performing two-piano and four-hand piano compositions with her (Hamburger 197-198). It did not matter to Liszt that Viardot was close to both Schumanns, central figures of the conservative musical party. This proves that the lines between the conservative and progressive parties at this time were blurred, and not as hostile as other scholars have suggested. 305 Somerset-Ward, 178. 306 *Ibid*, 179. Liszt was instrumental in helping Saint-Saëns to achieve the first performance of *Samson et Dalila* in Weimar in 1877. Though retired from Weimar, Liszt still likely had influence over his successor Eduard Lassen, who then conducted the premiere of the work (“Samson et Dalila,” *New Grove*). 307 Susan Rutherford, “‘La cantante delle passioni’: Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance,” *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Jul., 2007), 136.
different origins (for example, France, Russia, Germany). She was also instrumental in promoting the careers of several contemporary Russian composers. Viardot sang works by Glinka and Dargomyzhski both in Russia and Europe, and was friends with Anton and Nicholas Rubenstein. Later in life, she also promoted the works of Borodin and Tchaikovsky.

Viardot’s willingness to help unknown contemporary artists was perhaps partly due to her belief in the St. Simonian movement, which she shared with Liszt and Georges Sand. Liszt refers to this shared view when reflecting on his ongoing struggles as an artist in a letter to Viardot from 9 November 1858:

Alas! If you continue to so measure your time I would have little luck, because the task I have undertaken (and that with God’s help I will accomplish, without regards to the claims and lashes of others), does not lead me to Paris or London soon. We can only dedicate ourselves now to that which I do and which is dear to my heart.

The last line of this excerpt reveals Liszt’s devotion to continue on his artistic mission despite the difficulties he often faced. Liszt recognized Viardot as an ally in this endeavor and threads St.

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308 “Viardot,” *New Grove*. Viardot’s fluency in so many languages, in addition to her Spanish background, not only added to her international allure, but perhaps also added to the sense of exoticism that critics often commented upon in critiques of Viardot. For more information see Roberta Montemorra Marvin’s “Idealizing the Prima Donna in Mid-Victorian London,” which analyzes the specific exoticized, gendered, and classed aspects to the portrait of Viardot included in the 13 May 1848 edition of the *Illustrated London News*.

309 FitzLyon, 297.


311 St. Simonianism, a political and social movement, had its roots in the ideas and publications of the French theorist Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon in the early nineteenth-century. Though not entirely devoted to the plight and role of the artist, several prominent musical figures embraced Saint-Simon’s ideas. Under the tenets of the St. Simonian movement, it is the artist’s responsibility and mission to give his or her art to the public. Entrusted with a “sacred mission to serve humanity and to raise it to a higher level (F FitzLyon, 81),” the artist serves in a similar capacity as a priest whose duty it is to “creat[e] the ambiance in which people can identify the values to which they should aspire (Steen, 89).” See Ralph Locke’s, “Liszt’s Saint-Simonian Adventure,” *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring, 1981), 209-227. In this article, Locke provides an excellent overview and analysis of Liszt’s relationship with the St. Simonian movement, as well as an extensive list of primary and secondary sources.

312 Hélas ! Si vous continuez à si bien mesurer votre temps je n’aurais guère de chance, car la tâche que j’ai entreprise (et que Dieu aidant j’accomplirai, nonobstant le dire et mèche d’autrui) ne me conduit ni à Paris ni à Londres de sitôt. On n’y a que faire de s’occuper maintenant de ce que je fait et de ce qui me tient à cœur. [Goethe-Schiller Archiv]
Simonian beliefs about the artist throughout his Viardot essay. Like Liszt, Viardot believed in creating Art for Art’s sake and not for personal profit.

Despite the eternal nature of her artistic mission, Viardot’s strenuous career took a great toll on her voice. By 1859 it was clear to Viardot, her audiences, and critics, that at only 38 years of age, Viardot’s voice was already on the decline. In her 1858 performances in Pest (just prior to the NZfM publication), Hungarian critics note that Viardot’s voice had lost its freshness and that her high notes were not as clear as they once were. Despite these flaws, Viardot was still able to perform effectively. These same critics praised Viardot’s musicality and overall dramatic performances and highlighted her ability to truly embody her characters through a comparison with the leading contemporary dramatic actress Adélaïde Ristori, a heroine of Italian tragedies who had performed in Pest in 1856. As Fidès, Hungarian critics again emphasized Viardot’s excellence in portraying a “living” character through her interpretation of character, drama, and music. This further attested to the variety of Viardot’s talents, which she combined to produce a strong performance. Her success did not rest solely on her voice, or upon musicality in general.

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313 Though Liszt had increasingly less to do with the movement in the 1850s than in the 1830s, his beliefs about the artist remain the same and remain, as I argue, rooted within the St. Simonian belief system. Liszt’s past connection to the St. Simonians is merely enhanced in this essay through Viardot’s support of the movement as well.

314 She clearly expresses this sentiment in a 29 July 1859 letter to close friend Julius Rietz. Viardot to Rietz: “What you write concerning Joachim is painful, saddening. I should not have thought such a thing of him. I really begin to believe that one can expect nothing else nowadays. And it seems to me that the cause, unfortunately, is very simple. Nearly all artists are uneducated donkeys – lazy creatures who work at only one thing, which they call their art. They appear to be something as long as they are scratching or thumping or clawing or blowing on their instruments. Once the session is over, nothing remains but an ignorant, mean, selfish man whose whole thoughts are bent on making as much money as he can, whatever be the cost. Ah, assuredly it is fine to be a great artist, but on condition of being first of all and above all a man in the moral sense of the word. Poor Clara, I pity her with all my heart, for it must be a very bitter experience for her to see herself thus pushed aside by a friend.” (38) [1916, Musical Quarterly, Part 3/3]


316 Ibid, 195.
Scholars can uncover a good deal of detail about the relationship between Liszt and Viardot through examination of their correspondence, which spans almost fifty years, from the 1830s through to Liszt’s death in 1886.\footnote{Fortunately a large number of letters between Liszt and Viardot are extant and available to scholars in archives today. Collections of letters are held in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv in Weimar (where my own archival research took place), the Viardot family archive in Paris, and the Houghton Collection at Harvard University, among others. There are also several letters – both translated into English and left in their original language – published in various collections of correspondences. The impressions I gathered of the relationship between Liszt and Viardot result from the letters I consulted both in print and in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv. It is quite possible that other letters exist or are lost in which the relationship I portray is a bit different.} Viardot was often casual and jovial in her letters to Liszt, where one can easily gather a sense of her personality and sense of humor. Liszt typically responds in a more formal way. He was careful to maintain distance from Viardot and seldom shared personal details or thoughts. Liszt did not often reveal his inner thoughts in most of his correspondence, even to friends. Perhaps this blandness was a result of their initial relationship as teacher and student. For example, Viardot included a drafted musical phrase on the top of a letter to Liszt from 24 December 1858 in which she asks for Liszt’s suggestions on its completion. Viardot actually wrote this letter from Weimar during her stay, which Liszt chronicles in his essay. Though Liszt may have been away, surely there were other composers in Weimar (or in the Altenburg, one of Liszt’s disciples perhaps) that Viardot could have sought assistance from. Yet she chose Liszt, her trusted teacher and friend. Further, when Viardot protests to Liszt in 1859 that he never spoke to her about his current projects, despite her continued questioning, she clearly wanted Liszt to confide in her as a colleague and friend.

Yet there is also a clear mutual respect between the two parties. Liszt described their relationship in an 1870 letter to Wittgenstein: “Besides, she and I get along sufficiently well for me not to aspire to being better understood by her.”\footnote{Liszt to Wittgenstein. 25 April 1870. As translated in Williams’ book of letters (pp. 714-715).} Viardot reiterated this sentiment, stating in 1859 that she and Liszt shared a mutual “deep and sincere affection,” but were never entirely comfortable with one another: “There is no true sympathy between us – we have met, not found
each other…”

Both clearly enjoyed the other’s company and regularly invited the other to concerts – Viardot often encloses tickets for Liszt in her letters – and for visits.

In addition to their personal camaraderie, Liszt likely also saw in Viardot an ambassador for the spread of his aesthetic ideas throughout Europe. He had a history of keeping his pupils close (von Bülow and Cornelius, for example), and recognized Viardot as a very talented genuine artist whose performances were not full of the ersatz “artistry” of her contemporaries. Viardot seemed happy to share her thoughts about the debate over musical aesthetics, at least in private. She illustrated her support for Liszt and the New German School in a letter from March 1859, two months after the publication of Liszt’s NZfM article. After thanking Liszt for writing the article, Viardot reasserted her loyalty to Liszt and the New Germans, though she heavily criticized Hans von Bülow and his behavior. Von Bülow, to Viardot, was not a good spokesperson for the New German movement; his personality was off-putting and he was entirely too aggressive. To Viardot, von Bülow (and his close followers) were “impassioned, impatient, violent, sometimes to the grit, and he must have quarrels; they write diatribes against those who, through ignorance or by prejudice are not inclined to take their word, and denounces the music that was the admiration of their lives in favor of a music which requests that its connoisseurs and time to be justly appreciated. Their demand is absurd.” Ultimately, she concluded that von Bülow was overly provocative and scandalous and did not help the cause.

Viardot believed that Liszt was the only person who could propel music in the right direction in the future. She encouraged Liszt to continue his important work by quoting the moral of Aesop’s fable, Le Lion et Le Rat: “Patience et longeur de temps / Font plus que force si que

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319 As quoted in FitzLyon, 338.
320 Ils sont exaltés, impatients, violents parfois jusqu’à la gravière et il faut des querelles, ils écrivent des diatribes à et contre dans ceux qui, par ignorance au par préjugés ne sont pas portés à la croire sur parole, et à dénoncer à la musique qui a fait l’admiration de leur vie favor de une musique qui demande de connaisseuses et du temps pour être justement appréciée. Leur exigeasse est absurde. [Goethe-Schiller Archiv]
rage.” Her reference to this well-known fable surely did not go unnoticed by Liszt. What is unclear, though, is who she meant to be the “Lion” in the story, von Bülow or the opponents of the New German School in general.

Liszt’s and Viardot’s relationship continued both in person and through correspondence after Liszt’s departure from Weimar in 1861. Evidence of their correspondence continues until at least 1883, when Liszt wrote to Viardot from Venice and asked that she meet with the young German composer Engelbert Humperdinck. The pair had previously reconvened in Paris in 1861 immediately after Liszt’s departure from Weimar and met again in 1863 when Liszt visited the Viardots in their new home in Baden Baden.

Letters from the late 1870s and early 1880s further show the congenial relationship between the two, with both parties regularly inviting the other to concerts, calling on one another in person, making introductions, recommending pupils, and providing general support to the other person. Liszt’s letter to Wittgenstein on 25 April 1870 described Viardot’s current stay in Weimar and her activities there illustrated their lasting friendship and Liszt’s amiable feelings towards her:

This evening I shall be dining with Monseigneur, and on Thursday with the Viardots and Turgenev, who are rather disposed to divide their time between Baden and Weimar – by spending the summer season in Baden and the winter here. Mme Viardot is giving lessons to the Grand Duchess’s two daughters, and is also preparing several external pupils for the stage. She will shortly be singing the role of Fidès in Le Prophète – and [Gluck’s] Orfeo, for a second time, at the theatre. I am spending my time pretty well in making her sojourn here more comfortable – finding that she is at once an illustrious adornment and an agreeable advantage for both Court and town. Besides, she and I get along sufficiently well for me not to aspire to being better understood by her!...

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321 Aesop’s Fables were translated into the French by Jean de la Fontaine. This tale tells the story of a lion who captured a rat, but, responding to its pleadings, set it free. Soon after, when the lion was caught in a hunter’s net, the rat came to the lion’s rescue and was able to slowly gnaw through the rope. The moral of the fable is that “Patience and time do more than force and rage.”


323 FitzLyon, 371.

324 Translation reproduced from Williams’ edition of letters (pp. 714-715). Though Williams dates this letter to 1870, Hilary Poriss rightly pointed out to me that since Viardot retired from the stage in 1863, the fact that Williams
Liszt’s “Pauline Viardot-Garcia” was published as a single installment in the 28 January 1859 edition of the NZfM. As Viardot had just spent a couple of weeks in Weimar (December 1858), it is only fitting that Liszt used this visit and her performances there as the setting for his essay. As Viardot was an artist whose life and career were grounded in Paris and whose last two lead roles at the time, Orphée and Alceste, had also primarily been performed there, Liszt’s publication of this article in the NZfM, and not one of the Parisian papers (ex. La France Musicale or the Gazette) is significant for several reasons. In addition to the fact that all of his other character portraits (save the John Field essay; see Chapter One) were published in the NZfM, the NZfM still acted as the political mouthpiece for the New German School. The readership of the NZfM would already be familiar with (and sympathetic to) Liszt’s and the New German School’s perspective on several of the recurring themes found in this essay, such as critiques of contemporary opera, musical progress, and the modern musical audience.

Since Liszt had only published one article in the NZfM since his series of character portraits in 1855 (Kritik der Kritik. Ulibischeff und Séroff in 1858), his article on Viardot surely drew special attention.\textsuperscript{325} It makes no difference that the NZfM readership would likely not have
cites her as singing in these full-length operas seven years later seems problematic. Regardless of the actual year in which this letter was written, Liszt captures his relationship to Viardot and illustrates his favorable feelings towards her.

\textsuperscript{325} Alan Walker, \textit{Franz Liszt, Vol. II: The Weimar Years (1848-1861)}, Cornell University Press, 1989, 497-498. Though he did not officially tender his resignation and move from Weimar until late August 1861, Liszt had been much less active in Weimar since 1858 and sent his letter of resignation to Grand Duke Carl Alexander in February of 1859 (one month after the publication of the Viardot essay). From January – June 1858 Liszt conducted only one opera and two concerts in Weimar, though he accepted conducting engagements in Prague, Vienna, and Pest (Walker, 485/488-492). Walker asserts that Liszt’s sparse time in Weimar during this time was a result of his poor relationship with theater administrator Franz von Dingelstäd (488-492). Liszt had conducted his last concert in Weimar – an all-Beethoven program – in December 1858 and published a last testament in 1860 summing up his disappointing experience with Weimar that permeated the past thirteen years (497-498). Liszt had only remained in Weimar through that summer to be present at the second meeting of the Tonkünstler-Versammlung (Summer 1861), “where he kept a low profile, refused to conduct any of his own works, and expressed an outward and apparent contempt for the Weimar audience” and to close down the Altenburg (Walker, 537/547-548). Liszt seemed only too
had many opportunities to hear Viardot in person, though she did occasionally travel through Germany, as evidenced by her Weimar visit. In his prose portrait of the artist, Liszt clearly and vividly described Viardot’s unique approach to performance and breaks it into simple elements and concepts for the reader to understand. Liszt did not publish this article in the NZfM to promote any upcoming performances. Instead, it is the concept of Viardot, as Liszt’s model artist, and his idealistic intention to use this figure of an artist to educate the public that Liszt sought to emphasize in his choice of Viardot as focus of this prose portrait. This article aimed to show that while musical skill is important, an artist is much more than musical talent, with Viardot as the prime example.

Liszt’s character portrait of Viardot can be divided into two parts, roughly in the middle of the piece. The first half introduces Viardot as an artist, whereas in the second half Liszt explains how Viardot uses her artistic skills to create an expressive and effective performance. Liszt immediately distinguishes Viardot from her contemporaries and then describes the collection of traits that makes Viardot a “real” artist, traits that include her ease with both the “Northern” (German) and “Southern” (Italian) schools and her musical education, friends, and family. He credits Viardot’s artistic ideals and variety of musical skills for the success of her intelligent and dramatic performances. Liszt foreshadows the main themes of the second half of the essay in the first half as well. When describing Viardot’s unique traits as an artist, for

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happy to leave Weimar, though ironically enough, some of his belongings remained in the Altenburg until 1867 when he was notified that the house needed to be prepared for another family (Walker, 552).

One can also trace Viardot’s performances in Germany in the French and German newspapers of the day.

In the end of January 1859, the same time as when this edition of the NZfM was to be published, Viardot was set to embark on a 50-concert two-month tour of Great Britain (FitzLyon, 340).

For an excellent, concise, and clear introduction to the Italian and German (and French and Russian) schools of opera, see Chapter 27 in the Burkholder, Grout, Palisca text A History of Western Music, 8th Edition, 2010. Simply put, the Italian style was marked by bel canto singing, changes of mood (in both the characters and the music), and elevated drama, whereas the German style revolves around a spiritual or physical purpose to the characters and plot, the frequent use of folk-like melodies, and a more equal role for the orchestra to enhance the dramatic elements of the plot.
example, he compares her to contemporary artists, and thus prepares the reader for his critique of the German and Italian schools that follows.

Pivoting on a discussion about Viardot’s mastery over her voice and its (then) current decay (which Liszt reframes as “the difference between the thriving and self-conscious beginner and an accomplished artist”) (P15), Liszt transitions to the second half of the essay. Here he offers his opinions on “good” singing, the importance of educating a musical audience to recognize “true” artists, and virtuosity, before proceeding to an analysis of Viardot’s specific performances in Weimar where she performed Rosina (Barber of Seville) and Norma (Norma). He concludes the essay with brief comments on the future of opera, expressing hope that the musical audience (his readers) and artists themselves will be able to recognize “real” artists like Viardot in the future.

Viardot’s identity as a “real” artist is at the core of this character portrait. Liszt opens his essay and introduction by allying Viardot and her aesthetic with that of the St. Simonian movement. Viardot is knowledgeable of – and assumes responsibility for – her talent and the importance of integrating it into her performances to develop both her own art and art in general (P1). She believes, as does Liszt, that it is her personal and public duty as one graced with such talent to offer her audience the “hospitality” of her art (P1). Upon setting this foundation, incorporating Viardot into the very small group of elite artists who, according to Liszt, take their social and musical responsibilities as an artist seriously, he begins to explain why Viardot is such a rare artistic entity.

First, Liszt affirms Viardot’s depth of talent as a dramatic actress whom he describe as a “brilliant dramatic phenomena,” naming her as the best of a group of talented performers that

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329 Welcher Unterschied bestünde den zwischen einer blühenden und befangenen Anfängerin und einer vollendeten Künstlerin...
includes past and present famed actresses and singers – Pasta, Malibran, Schröder-Devrient, Ristori, Rachel, Seebach, and others (P2). Liszt then offers several reasons why Viardot alone is able to achieve such great dramatic effect: the combination of musical styles (Italian, French and German), her excellent education (musical, social, and intellectual), and her personality (P2).

Liszt believes that in this case the musical genius of Viardot’s family is hereditary (P4). He distinguishes Viardot from her contemporaries yet again (foreshadowing the second half of the essay) by stating that she does not abuse her talent for economic or selfish means like other artists, for example, by solely performing in the salon setting. This is especially meaningful: a salon audience – likely more appreciative of sophisticated art and dramatic performance – would probably understand and appreciate Viardot’s performance more than the opera audience.

In the paragraphs that follow Liszt further elaborates on each of the previously identified artistic traits. Viardot’s social circle, for instance, comprises a variety of European literary and artistic celebrities, including “the Orientalist Renan, the historian Henri Martin, the statesman Manin, the poets, painters, critics, composers, writers of tragedies like G. Sand, Ary Scheffer, Eugene Delacroix, Chorley, de Musset, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Gonoud, Chopin, Adelaide Kemble, Adelaide Ristori, both photographers Wielohurski, and many others” (P3). He praises her

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330 As his readers would likely already be familiar with the other artists Liszt names here, they would realize not only the significance of having Viardot at the top of this list, but also, if they were familiar with the performance styles of the others, that the means through which Viardot gives a “whole” performance are not necessarily new. What is novel and special about Viardot’s performance is her ability to transcend these typical means of performance – drama and gesture, for example – into something more. Giuditta Pasta, for instance, marked her presence in early nineteenth-century opera through the ways in which she used her body – her voice, face, etc. – to achieve new levels of dramatic expression (Rutherford, 110-112). Viardot was known for the same elements, so what made her performance unique? Liszt purports that Viardot’s use of her voice and body was more complex and sophisticated and she achieved greater affect and depth of expression than singers of the past and present.

331 Liszt describes Viardot’s father as the “most perfect type of singer with passionate, fiery, powerful and inexhaustible talent, full of creative, artistic power…” and her brother as “equally talented” to Viardot (P4). Interestingly enough, he does not really discuss Viardot’s famous sister Maria Malibran. Critics too often compared Viardot and Malibran in print and Liszt wanted to have the sole focus of this portrait lie in Viardot and her accomplishments and artistry in itself.

332 …ja die eifrigste Freundschaft einer ganzen Reihe von europäischen literarischen und künstlerischen Celebritäten, wie des Orientalisten Renan, des Historikers Henri Martin, des Staatsmanns Manin, der Poeten, Maler,
comprehensive knowledge of several branches of art, especially literature, and her ability to include elements of these different disciplines into her interpretation of a character or a work.

Viardot is also a “true” artist by strictly adhering to her own musical aesthetics. Without sacrificing her career, she still works vigorously toward promoting an artistic ideal. Quick to state that Viardot’s appearance shows “beauty of the soul” instead of beauty of the exterior, Liszt reframes a seemingly negative aspect often mentioned by critics into something positive and special. Furthermore, Viardot inspired author and friend Georges Sand to create the title character of Consuelo (1842-1843) not because of her looks, but because of her musical talent and perspective on artistry.³³³

Liszt then returns to the idea of Viardot’s ability to incorporate several different styles of music – Spanish, French, and German – into her performance. She is the rare artist whose performance can profit from combining all three (P6).

With her natural Spanish spirit, her French upbringing, and her German sympathies, she combines the properties of different nationalities as such in herself that one does not allow any soil an exclusive right to her, but one would rather call the art “the Fatherland of her free choice and love.” Some great artists owe their talent to the calling forth of an enthusiastic reproduction of an innate national element in its most perfect and ideal form.³³⁴

The “Southern” (Italian) and “Northern” styles are highlighted in particular (P7/P8). It seems as though her “natural Spanish upbringing” is perhaps merely inherent from birth. Liszt attributes the passionate elements of Viardot’s performance to the “Southern” style which she “inherited

³³³ “Consuelo” was first published in the Parisian periodical, La Revue indépendante, which had been founded by Sand, Pierre Leroux, and Viardot’s husband Louis the previous year in 1841.
³³⁴ Mit ihrem spanischen Nautrell, ihrer französischen Erziehung und ihren deutschen Sympathien vereinigt sie die Eigenheiten verschiedener Nationalitäten derart in sich, daß man keinem bestimmten Boden einen ausschließlichen Anspruch an sie zugestehen, vielmehr die Kunst „das Vaterland ihrer freien Wahl und Liebe“ nennen möchte. Manche große Künstler verdanken dem Talent, ein ihnen angeborenes nationales Element in seiner vollendetsten und idealsten Form zu reproduzieren den Enthusiasmus, welchen sie hervorriefen.
[as] her birthright,” whereas the emotional “Northern” elements she mastered through her studies.\textsuperscript{335} To illustrate her success in this approach, he cites her performance of Fidès, for which she won great acclaim.\textsuperscript{336} Through this conglomeration of style, Viardot illustrates control over her voice, musical form, and her performance as a whole (P7). Liszt reinforces the paucity of this ability: “the real intimate understanding of the two styles will always be a great rarity” (P10).\textsuperscript{337} Not only does an artist need to understand fully the properties of each style, but also needs to be talented enough to incorporate them into performance.

The next traits contributing to Viardot’s rarity as a “real” artist are her skills as a composer and pianist. Viardot frequently composed her own works in addition to creating transcriptions of pieces by Chopin, Schubert, and Brahms, and a critical edition of fifty Schubert Lieder.\textsuperscript{338} Her compositions consist mainly of songs and operettas.\textsuperscript{339} She even chose to at times

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{335} In general, Liszt identifies the core elements of each style as such: Italian – passion, joy, pure sensations; German – passionate intensity.
  \item \textsuperscript{336} He refers to this role several times in this essay; as explained above Fidès was the role Viardot was most likely associated with at this point in her career. The reference here is made to this paragraph:
    Whoever understood, like her, the Muse of Rossini with its graceful, moody vehemence and then again to understand the majestic clarity of a Handel, was, through the elasticity of her talent and speed of her dramatic intuition by Nature perfectly prepared to give Meyerbeer’s characters their fullest impression (P10).
    \begin{quote}
    Wer so, wie sie verstand die Muse Rossinis mit ihrem graziösen launischen Ungestüm und dann wieder die majestätische Klarheit eines Händel aufzufassen, war durch Elasticität des Talentes und Schnelle dramatischer Intuition von Natur aus dazu berufen den Gestalten Meyerbeers ihren höchsten Ausdruck, ihr vollstes Relief zu verleihen.
    \end{quote}
  \item \textsuperscript{337} Das wirkliche innige Verständnis der beiden Stile wird immer eine große Seltenheit bleiben.
  \item \textsuperscript{338} “Viardot,” \textit{New Grove}. Viardot’s other publications, including a singing manual based on the Garcia method and a “collection of songs and arias…with comments on phrasing, accentuation and interpretation” served as an “important source for the understanding of performing practice in the nineteenth century” (\textit{New Grove}).
  \item \textsuperscript{339} FitzLyon, 395. One could also analyze this part of the essay exploring Liszt’s views on female composers in general. A starting point could be Liszt’s comparison of Viardot with her daughter, Louise Héritte. Liszt presents an interesting juxtaposition between the two women in terms of their ability to balance being a female composer with having a successful marriage. Héritte’s compositions include an opera, a cantata, piano and string quartets, a vocal trio, and several songs (Steen, 213). In a letter to Wittgenstein from 26 May 1879, Liszt writes:
    Another reply: M. Héritte married Mlle Louise Viardot, daughter of the most illustrious Pauline Viardot-Garcia – who has always had an excellent home life with her husband, Louis Viardot, by whom she has at least 4 children. The contrary is the case with Mme Héritte, legally separated, they say, from her husband – but retaining his name, which she joins to her father’s. She composes, with all the bravura of genius, the great musical works I have mentioned to you: \textit{Le Feu du Ciel}, \textit{Caïn}, \textit{Le Dieu et la Bayadère}. I have up to now met no female composer possessing a talent so vigorously frenzied! Mme Héritte-Viardot has liver
\end{itemize}
incorporate her transcriptions of Chopin’s Mazurkas into her performance of Barber (as she did in her Weimar performance, for example).

Although active as a composer from the mid-1830s through 1910 (the year of her death) with her works generally very well-received, Viardot’s New Grove entry by Beatrix Borchard states that, “Viardot did not regard herself as a composer, yet her work was highly professional.” This places Viardot in line with any number of female artists who dismissed their own compositions as they were more highly praised and supported for their other artistic outlets. Unlike her contemporaries, Viardot did take her compositions very seriously, as evidenced by the more than eighty letters to her publisher Henri Héugel concerning the publication of her works.

Liszt recognizes the importance of Viardot’s compositional efforts on several fronts. As a composer, he believes that Viardot,

offers us the rare view of an impassioned female heart that truly beats for art for art’s sake, this possession upon which she builds all of her tone shapes; this heart is seized by all music which it draws into her own charm and magic; it composes itself with a feeling of great tenderness, expresses itself through harmonic subtleties. More than one famous composer could envy her these fine points, which next to the regret that she has written too little, still, justify the hope that she will also let this talent develop whose attempts so far confess a close affinity with Chopin.

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This letter could be a good departure point for future studies since it addresses the two main points always in contention when discussing the trials of being a female composer, mainly the balance between home life and musical talent, and the ability to manage both successfully within a gendered socio-cultural context.


341 Thank you to Hilary Poriss for directing me to this collection of letters, which one can access through Gallica.

342 Diese geniale und zugleich gelehrte Künstlerin, die uns das so seltene Schauspiel eines für die Kunst um der Kunst willen echt begeisterten Frauenherzens bietet, das ergriffen ist von allen Tongebilden, die es in den eigenen Reiz und Zauber hineinzieht, komponiert und selbst mit einem Gefühl von großer, sich in harmonischen Feinheiten aussprechender Zartheit. Mehr als ein bekannter Komponist könnte sie um diese Feinheiten beneiden, die uns neben dem Bedauern, daß sie noch zu wenig geschrieben, zu der Hoffnung berechtigen, daß sie auch diesem Talente, dessen bisherige Versuche eine nahe Verwandtschaft mit Chopin verrathen, seine Entwicklung angedeihen lassen werde.
Here Liszt cites Viardot’s “female heart” as the source for the delight and charm of her compositions and the delicacy of her harmony. Her gender, her womanness, gives Viardot a special compositional tool from which several well-known contemporaries could learn. That Viardot “wrote too little” could conceivably represent Liszt’s aspirations for Viardot to continue composing, especially since her performing career was perhaps at an end, and to develop an audience for her future published works.

Liszt also points out that Viardot’s compositions go beyond her published oeuvre. With the ingenuity of her cadenzas, roulades, and ornaments, Viardot is able to use her ability as a composer in performance as well. These improvisatory gestures not only add to the dramatic elements of the plot, but also increase the audience’s interest in and emotional connection to Viardot’s characters. Interestingly enough, early in her career, Viardot was criticized for these same traits, mainly the overuse of melodic embellishment. As Steen describes in his Viardot biography, “Schumann complained that, as Rosina in the Barber, Pauline ‘transformed the whole opera into a great variation. She scarcely left one melody untouched.’”

Liszt transforms Schumann’s critique into an effective element of Viardot’s performance in the same role. Furthermore, because she was so familiar with the works of the great masters and their styles, Viardot could model her own ornamentation in the style of a specific composer during performance. Liszt believes that Viardot should be just as proud of her skills in ornamentation as highly celebrated actresses are of the sparkly gems that adorn their costumes, yet Viardot’s skills are indeed more precious and sparkle more brightly (P12).

Liszt’s knowledge of Viardot as a composer likely stemmed from when she was under his tutelage in the mid-1830s. Patrick Waddington’s 2011 online edition of Viardot’s compositions, publications, and transcriptions, cites her first published work to be the Lied “Die Kapelle” in

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1838, although he also lists several prior, unpublished works from the mid-1830s.\textsuperscript{344} That Viardot also includes an excerpt of music at the top of her previously cited letter to Liszt in 1858 indicates that he was certainly aware of her forays into composition. Insofar as Liszt was Viardot’s friend and mentor since the mid-1830s, she may have often turned to him for assistance with her musical works.

It is also possible that Liszt already knew of Viardot’s operettas and thus his mention of her compositions served to highlight her continued attention to these works in the future. The premiere of Viardot’s first operetta \textit{Le dernier sorcier}, set to a text by Ivan Turgenev, took place at the Weimar theatre on 8 April 1869 in honor of the Grand Duchess’s birthday.\textsuperscript{345} A second performance occurred three days later. The preparation for this performance was a joint effort by several members of the New German School – Pohl translated the libretto into German, while Lassen set out to orchestrate the composition from its original piano-vocal score.\textsuperscript{346}

The year when Viardot began working on her first operetta, \textit{Le dernier sorcier}, cannot be easily confirmed. Turgenev scholar Nicholas Žekulin claims that references to \textit{Le dernier sorcier} can be found in Viardot’s correspondence as early as 1859, but it was not performed until ten years later.\textsuperscript{347} Yet FitzLyon believes that Viardot did not start composing operettas until the mid-

\textsuperscript{344} Waddington catalogue.
\textsuperscript{345} FitzLyon, 396.
\textsuperscript{346} \textit{Ibid}, 395. The Grand Duke of Weimar enjoyed 	extit{Le dernier sorcier} so much that he commissioned Viardot to write a full-length three-act opera for the next season. Unfortunately this commission never came to fruition due to the onset of the Franco-Prussian War (FitzLyon, 395). Liszt shares the news of \textit{Le dernier sorcier}’s upcoming performance with Wittgenstein in a letter from 2 April 1869:

\begin{quote}
For the Grand Duchess’s birthday [8 April], 2 operettas will be performed, both of them pretty and even distinguished: Lassen’s \textit{Le Capitif}, an episode from Cervantes, successfully performed in Brussels – and Mme Viardot’s \textit{Le dernier des Sorciers}, the text of which is probably by Turgenev, a close friend of Mme Viardot. She will be coming here next week to discuss with Lassen the orchestration of her \textit{Sorcier} – of which she has as yet written only the vocal and piano score.
\end{quote}

Though he was instrumental in securing the performance of this work in Weimar, Liszt was not able to attend either performance – he was away in Vienna attending a performance of his own work, the oratorio \textit{Die legende von der Heiligen Elisabeth} (1857-1862) (FitzLyon, 395).

\textsuperscript{347} Nicholas Žekulin, Program notes to a 2005 production of \textit{Le dernier sorcier} at the University of Calgary.
to late-1860s when her career and life were much less frantic. Regardless, Liszt’s emphasis on Viardot’s creativity through composition further adds to her profile as a virtuoso artist fully embodied by her art.

Through his discussion of virtuosity in the second half of the essay, Liszt reminds his readers of the traits that contribute to Viardot’s “real” artistry. He equates Viardot with a “great lecturer” and explains that both require the “virtuosic” ability to truly express and explain an idea, or in her case, not only “the idea, but the thought, characters of a work or a role” (P21). Liszt believes that virtuosity is the only place where an artist is in the position “to reproduce what can come from artistic expression” (P22). Virtuosity should not be on parade, but, instead, be a pure expression of feeling. These thoughts recall his description of Viardot’s complete performance and ability to genuinely interpret, express, and embody a character and plot. Further, by associating Viardot with “all great lecturers,” Liszt equates music and performance with the skill of public speaking and presentation, implying that one needs to have knowledge and intellectual ability to be successful, both of which Viardot clearly possesses.

The pivotal (and centrally located) point of this article lies in Liszt’s acknowledgement of Viardot’s recent difficulties with vocal control and quality. Instead of evading this issue, he defends Viardot’s vocal problems stating that they were the result of nature, her personality (a “nervousness” stemming from her childhood), her maturity as an artist, and the pure amount of strain she has put on her voice in recent years as an actively sought-out performer. Because she was gifted with a naturally mutable voice, Liszt believes that Viardot had been too hard on her voice and pushed it too much to reach both high and low notes not normally found in her range

348 FitzLyon, 394-395.
349 Bei Frau Viardot dient, wie bei allen großen Vortragenden denen das heilige Feuer der Poesie nicht mangelt, die Virtuosität nur zum Ausdruck der Idee, der Gedanken, des Charakters eines Werkes oder einer Rolle.
350 Die Virtuosität ist nur dazu da, daß der Künstler alles wiederzugeben im stande ist, was in der Kunst zum Ausdruck kommt.
Furthermore, he attributes this vocal decay partially to Viardot’s feminine nature and nervous disposition; female performers, in Liszt’s perspective, suffer from this more than their male counterparts. Thus Viardot, at least in part, cannot help that the condition of her voice has decayed (P14). Liszt reframes the potential negative aspect of Viardot’s failing voice by stating that it shows that she is not a beginner, but a mature artist. Lastly, considering the career that Viardot had led over the past few decades, he believes that her voice was really not in severe decline, and given her talent on stage, the variance in vocal quality should not detract much from her overall dramatic performance. Akin to her outward appearance, Viardot’s voice is an “exterior virtue,” implying that it is perhaps more surface-level than the core elements of her expressive abilities (P14). Viardot’s voice is just one means by which she is effectively able to communicate expression and emotion to her audience, one contributing element of so many.

With his discussion about the apparent strain on Viardot’s voice, Liszt briefly humanizes Viardot and makes her a flawed individual. Neitherviardot, nor “real” artists in general, are entirely perfect; thus Liszt cannot merely list and describe her unique traits and abilities. Here, he reiterates the idea that it is not just musical talent that creates an artist, but what he or she does with this talent. Further, Liszt hereby acknowledges growing contemporary criticism of Viardot’s performance (see p. 161). Lastly, Liszt takes a practical approach to the inclusion and placement of this topic within the essay as a whole. This discussion of Viardot’s voice is a thematic connection between the article’s two halves. It is an attribute that Viardot uses to her (expressive) advantage to create a “whole” performance (as presented in the first half), but also an element that is central to Liszt’s discussion in the latter half when he critiques contemporary

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351 This is not the first time Liszt mentions one of Viardot’s “negative” traits. He refers to Viardot’s errors at the piano, yet stating that Viardot redeemed herself through her mistakes by somehow “fumbling for the right key” in an artistic manner (P13).
opera, singing, and vocal practices, with Viardot’s specific (Weimar) roles and performances as
the standard upon which to compare others.

Lisztt’s presentation of Viardot as the epitome of a “real” artist continues the themes of
his “Artists” essay more so here than in other prose works. He returns to the themes of his earlier
work with a vengeance, since Viardot, as an artist and follower of the St. Simonian movement,
lends herself so well to those same ideas and discussions. The St. Simonian movement is but one
link between Liszt’s portrait of Viardot and his “Artists” essay. Both promote the importance of
an educated audience and the need to support new composers and their repertoire. By tracing the
development of Liszt’s thoughts on the artist and its role in society from his early period to the
latter days of his literary career, we are also able to examine how society and the musical culture
of Paris had changed throughout the mid-nineteenth century. The main point of Liszt’s “Artists”
was that musicians suffered from existence in a subaltern space in society. He catalogues a
number of social circumstances that kept the artist in this lowest stratum of society and their
harmful effects on the artists’ physical, emotional, and financial states.

The influence of the St. Simonian movement within this text is evident from the first
article. Liszt states that artists are chosen by God to serve a predestined purpose, that these artists
“give a life to matter, a form of thought and realizing the ideal that elevates us by invincible
sympathies to the exaltation and visions of the celestial” (Article 1, P4). Further, Liszt
describes artists as apostles, initiators, priests, all encompassing a religion that is ineffable,
мysterious, and eternal, that appears and builds incessantly in everyone’s breasts (Article 1, P4).
Liszt clearly states the goal of this essay in this opening section:

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352 Ces hommes prédestinés, foudroyés et enchaînés qui ont ravi au ciel la flamme sacrée, qui donnent une vie
à la matière, une forme à la pensée et réalisant l’idéal nous élèvent par d’invincibles sympathies à l’enthousiasme et
aux visions célestes.
to describe their personal, political and religious relationships; - recount their pains and misery, their labors and their disappointments; - to tear apart the system of all the places where they are still bleeding and strongly protest against the oppressive evil or insolent stupidity that withers, the torture and condescension that at most is used like a toy; - to examine their past, prophesy their future, give rise to their titles of glory; - to educate the public that these men and these women who we entertain and who buy our COMMODITY, that appear to us or where we go, that we must do our mission, that we are doing at last (Article 1, P4)!³⁵³

As a result of the grievances listed here, artists are kept in a state of subalternity. Liszt cites a lack of faith and the selfishness of a great number of people within society as a main reason why artists cannot rise above their current positions (Article 3, P9). Because they are kept within this subaltern status, artists are not able to fulfill their sacred mission, and must instead “collapse miserably and squat in the gilded mud” (Article 3, P11).³⁵⁴ In the last article, Liszt rallies all musicians to unite and “to form a common, brotherly, religious bond among themselves and to establish a universal society” with the goal to raise the condition and worth of artists in society.³⁵⁵

Despite sharing several similar themes, a problem arises when considering these two literary works in tandem. Though they both reflect upon the current state of artists in society, it is impossible to trace the traits that signify true artistry from one essay to the other. In the “Artists” essay, Liszt speaks on behalf of all artists, as a class of society. Aside from personal anecdotes, the only artist (composer) he mentions by name is Berlioz. Otherwise, his anonymous “artists”

³⁵³ définis leurs rapports individuels, politiques et religieux ; - raconter leurs douleurs et leurs misères, leurs fatigues et leurs déceptions ; - déchirer l’appareil de toutes leurs places toujours saignantes et protester énergiquement contre l’iniquité oppressive ou la stupidité insolente qui les flétrit, les torture et daigne tout au plus s’en servir comme de jouets ; - interroger leur passé, prophétiser leur avenir, produire tous leurs titres de gloire ; - apprendre au public, à ces hommes et à ces femmes que nous amusons et qui achètent notre DENRÉE, d’où nous venons où nous allons, ce que nous avons mission de faire, ce que nous sommes enfin !… (Article 1, P4)

³⁵⁴ Et nous, aussi hélas ! nous PRÊTRES de l’ART, chargés d’une mission et d’un enseignement sublime, au lieu de demeurer fermes et vigils comme les sentinelles du Seigneur qui ne se taisent ni nuit ni jour, au lieu de veiller et de prier, d’exhorter et d’agir, nous nous sommes affaisés et misérablement accroupis dans la fange dorée… (Article 3, P11).

³⁵⁵ Nous appelons TOUS LES MUSICIENS, tous ceux qui ont un sentiment large et profond de l’art, à établir entre eux un lien commun, fraternel, religieux, à instaurer une société universelle…Taken from Ralph Locke’s translation of Article 5 in *Franz Liszt and His World*, edited by C. Gibbs and D. Gooley.
span a wide range of skills, occupations, and levels of talent. Liszt classifies his “artists” into four different groups (performers, composers, professors, and music critics); as long as one could fit within one of these groups, then one is officially an artist for these intents and purposes. A conglomeration of artists result. Liszt’s identification of this social class is through means that greatly differed from conventional norms. His artists came from different backgrounds and families and presumably varying levels of financial privilege. He does privilege artists, however, who strive to educate the public, are forward-thinking and progressive, and, above all, those who have not been conservatory-trained or support the conservatory doctrine.\(^{356}\) Viardot, though only a young woman in the 1830s, develops into an artist who represents these ideals. Furthermore, since she had made her operatic debut in 1839, five years after this essay had been published, Viardot fits into the artistic paradigm of Paris that Liszt draws within the text.\(^{357}\)

This idea of artists comprising their own social class is not as apparent in the Viardot essay as in the earlier article. Liszt implies that Viardot is part of not only the artistic nobility, but is a member of a high social class in general. Though Viardot perhaps does not seem to live within a subaltern domain, the general public of her time still considered chamber and symphonic “working” musicians to be lower classes of “sophisticated” society. It would be an overstatement to affirm that Liszt discusses the still current subaltern status of artists in his Viardot essay, especially when his point is to glorify Viardot and her artistry and not relegate her

\(^{356}\) Summary of the “Conservatoire” section: Liszt believes that it is superfluous to keep repeating this traditional repertoire as it drowns out the voice of contemporary composers and leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, choruses are rarely more than mediocre and even more rarely still able to execute music with intelligence and appropriate sentiment. Smaller chamber groups (string quartets, solos, duets, etc.) are sacrificed for the orchestral mass. These musical presentations are not suitable and satisfying to contemporary society. Concerts should happen more often and with more variety with different programs that present both the work of great German masters and contemporary composers (ex. Cherubini, Spohr, Onslow) and other younger composers (Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Hiller, etc.). These concerts would represent a stronger and more complete education and healthy musical society (Article 5, P12).

\(^{357}\) While Viardot was not educated in the Conservatory system, several of her “flashy” contemporaries were, thus illustrating the continued relevance of Liszt’s critique of Conservatory training later in the nineteenth-century as well.
to the subaltern domain. Yet, if we were to think about why Liszt feels the need to create a character portrait of one of the most renowned opera singers of the time, the idea of artists still existing in a subaltern sphere becomes a clear and plausible reason.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect to come from a consideration of these essays together is the vital role of the audience as representative of its musical society. Liszt mentions at the very beginning of the “Artists” essay that the situation of artists depends directly upon its contemporary society (Article 1, P3). He believes that we cannot separate the two, but need to study and discuss the ideas that govern society, especially in terms of the social position of artists, even those ideas which appear strange or disagreeable (Article 1, P3). Whereas in the “Artists” essay, Liszt faults society and its musical institutions (with unswerving traditionalists at its core) for the poor position of its artists, in the Viardot article, Liszt seems blame the artists themselves for the poor education of their audience, which had resulted in the continued debasement of its (“true”) artists. The issue at the core of each case study is that contemporary society is still, and will remain, ignorant of recognizing and appreciating artistry until they are trained and educated to do so.

The society Liszt describes in the “Artists” essay is more interested in science than art. They contest the value of the artist, and his or her social necessity by continuing to question the importance of music. This society wants to evaluate the “worth” of art in terms of scientific progress. Liszt believes that this line of questioning is outrageous as art and science cannot be

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358 Though he devotes a section to “théâtres lyriques” in his “Artists” essay, the point of that section was to draw attention to the issue of contemporary composers not being able to have their works performed in Paris’ main theaters; Liszt does not discuss opera singers at all.

359 Liszt provides a fine example of this in the story he shares in the brief essay “Encore quelques mots sur la subalternité des musiciens” published in response to M. Germanus Lepic of La Gazette musicale. Liszt often remembers the silence after a wonderful performance of Beethoven, Mozart or Schubert works and the great noise after performance of “miserable bagatelles” (Encore quelques mots, P14).
compared using the same measures. As long as society continues to worship and be swayed by science, art can never survive and fully contribute to the bettering of its members.

Liszt offers music as a means to connect to and learn from the past which contemporary society continues to ignore, that they leave “documents, as silently piled treasures, sleeping forever motionless in our libraries” (Article 1, P2). This is an idea that appears in the Viardot essay as well. By not turning to the past to guide the future, people remain ignorant, with immature presumptions, and often believe and promote fallacies about the artist and music. That the public takes art for granted merely as a traditional element of beauty and refinement is evident in Liszt’s comparison between the artist and a piece of furniture in contemporary salons: “And too often after lively discussions, I was led to reflection after reflection wondering if, in effect, the artist was no more than a sufficiently pleasurable thing in a salon (Encore quelques mots, P14)?”

The status of artists in (Parisian) society, though revered in the past, has descended to an incredibly low point in (then) present society.

Nor are the people behind the musical institutions of Paris – artists, impresarios, administrators – free from fault. Liszt cites the impresarios of Paris, as evidenced by their unwillingness to produce contemporary opera, as merely possessing the desire to continue the status quo. In their current positions, impresarios and directors have a full house, happy audience members, and enthusiastic journals, thus they have no direct impetus to execute the vast changes Liszt calls for to reform the musical institutions of Paris (Des théâtres lyriques, P1). They are not advancing art, but have won public favor. With the same old “masterpieces” being performed in the concert halls of Paris throughout the nineteenth-century (Liszt cites the symphonic repertoire

360 Que de documents, que de trésors entassés silencieusement, dorment à jamais immobiles dans nos bibliothèques, ces gouffres de l'intelligence !
361 Bien souvent, après de vives discussions, j’ai été conduit de réflexion en réflexion à me demander si, en effet, l’artiste était autre chose qu’un amusoir assez agréable dans un salon.
in the “Artists” essay and the operatic repertoire in the Viardot essay), musical culture and society, and its audience and artists cannot progress and develop to the best of their ability. This limits all aspects of art and artistry and contributes to its ongoing state of demise. Viardot tries to stretch these boundaries by promoting contemporary composers and works, from both Russia and Europe, but often to no avail. She is frequently alone in these attempts. Liszt sadly asks how, despite the continued effort and devotion of great artists, that music and musicians had lost both their authority and any awareness of their mission (Article 2, P5).362

Liszt reiterates his belief that the education of the artist must continue to develop alongside audience education to the benefit of artistic society. He heavily stresses the public’s responsibility to maintain the presence and state of art and music in society in both essays. In his classification of the artist into three classes in “Artists” (Liszt designates the honorary fourth class as the music critic), he states that it is the public who is left to sort them. The public must be able to do so “in terms of talent, great and small, classical and romantic, invalid and novice, vulgar and sublime, etc., etc. – and above all in moral terms, to Artists and Artisans (Article 2, P12).”363 Once the public has named one an “artisan,” that artist is rewarded with several advantages. These benefits include high praise, money, and public advocates. Liszt sarcastically remarks, “The public here is duped sometimes, but to what importance (Article 2, P13)?”364

Given the great responsibility to title one an artist, especially given the benefits to that title, the

362 Sans nous arrêter ici aux mystères et aux allégories qui ont consacré la croyance de la multitude et des savants (mythes grandioses, allégories fécondes, si sottement raillées par nos Béotiens), sans évoquer de nouveau comme le fit Chénier dans son discours à la Convention nationale, Orphée sur les monts de Thrace soumettant les monstres des forêts au pouvoir de la lyre, Arion échappant au naufrage, Amphion bâtissant des villes par la magie des sons; » sans rouvrir avec le noble député « les Annales de l’histoire qui immortalisent la lyre de Tymothée, les chants de Tyrtée, et tant d’autres prodiges de la musique », bornons nous à constater dans sa généralité son immense et multiple influence sur les sociétés antiques ; posons comme un fait avéré, incontesté, sa puissance politique, philosophique, sociale et religieuse, au temps du paganisme, et demandons ensuite comment il a pu se faire qu’à mesure que, grâce aux efforts et aux dévouements incroyables des artistes, l’art grandissait et grandissait encore, la musique et les musiciens aient perdu à la fois toute autorité, toute conscience de leur mission?

363 …sous le rapport du talent, en grands et petits, classiques et romantiques, invalides et imberbes, vulgaire et sublime, etc., etc. – et sous le rapport moral, en Artists et Artisans.

364 Le public en est dupe quelquefois ; mais qu’importe.
public must be able to recognize artistry to do its job faithfully! Liszt reiterates this point, the necessity to both educate and stress the education of the public, in the Viardot essay by illustrating the public’s ongoing responsibility to recognize and then support the development and creation of “good” art and artists.

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Liszt presents his critique of contemporary opera, singers, and audiences in the latter half of this character portrait. The trend in society is only to emphasize rough exterior values and not to appreciate inner talent, which results in the fame of moderately talented, and often physically attractive singers, but not that of great artists (P16). After introducing such a mediocre society, Liszt assures his readers that instead of complete artistic decay, great artists, such as Pauline Viardot, still exist in the present day. The achievements of this rare type of artist are made on behalf of the future (P17).

In great contrast to Viardot’s high level of artistry in performance, through Liszt’s essay we can clearly see that he believed contemporary opera singers to be musically uneducated, of mediocre talent, and too flashy on all levels, including their vocal ornamentation, body movement, and costumes. These singers were there purely for entertainment and to produce a spectacle. Whether Liszt was being fair in his assessment is up for debate. It was at this point in history that prima donnas were finally achieving some sort of freedom and control over their performance on the operatic stage. Prima donnas such as Pasta, Malibran, and Grisi, were gaining more recognition for their effective creativity in interpretation and expression during performance. Liszt acknowledged these artists in his list of talented contemporary opera singers (see p. 168). In his negative assessment of contemporary opera, he referred to the majority of
singers, and not those few talented artists he names in his essay.\textsuperscript{365} With this framework in mind, it is evident why Liszt saw the importance of not only promoting Viardot as an artist, but explaining her approach to performance to his audience as well.

Liszt hopes that Viardot’s contributions to art are not as transitory as her life and career. She is an excellent model for singers of the future, especially since Liszt believes that singers of the present are not properly learning how to sing. This lack of training and knowledge furthers the poor musical education and low artistic standards of contemporary audiences (P17). He traces this problem back to the late 1830s, to a qualitative and quantitative diminution of the singer’s reputation and responsibilities. Liszt disapproves of the current standards of evaluating a singer and his or her performance, a change from a more musical assessment of the past to an increasingly superficial evaluation of talent in the present. He maintains that since Rossini, among other contemporary composers, is not being performed often enough, developing one’s vocal talent is now not seen as necessary to having a successful career. This is especially apparent when comparing the education of contemporary singers to singers of the past. Liszt sarcastically observes that whereas in the past, one would spend one’s childhood and several years devoted to developing one’s voice, now it seems that, “To the master and student, a few years seem to be more than enough for study, yes, even a few months, a series of lessons given and lessons taken, are supposedly sufficiently enough; the audience even thinks so to its own detriment! The making flexible, the formatting, strengthening and mastery of the (vocal) organ

\textsuperscript{365} For more on the nineteenth-century \textit{prima donna} and her relationship to opera and performance see Susan Rutherford, \textit{The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1830}. Cambridge University Press. 2006; and Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds. \textit{The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century}. Oxford University Press. 2012. The Introduction to this collection provides an extensive list of sources for addition information.
have almost become a legend” (P17).\(^{366}\) This is once again justification for the support of artists such as Viardot, the talents of which occurs only once every twenty-five years.

The rarity of good singing is detrimental to performer and audience alike. Instead of having high expectations, contemporary audiences merely hope that singers have control of pitch (P18). Liszt writes bitterly that singers strive only to meet these low standards, frequently singing on the wrong pitches. Furthermore, without proper vocal training, singers are often inconsistent in performance: “The best singers give us simply what they can, as it comes, good or bad, and the rest scream” (P18).\(^{367}\) And so the audience must settle for mediocre performances, to Liszt’s great disappointment, especially when opera has the potential not only to enrapture, but also to educate its audience about music and musical aesthetics (P18). Thus Liszt presents the detrimental cycle of contemporary opera. Because singers cannot educate the audience through performance, the audience has very limited expectations about the singer. This results in a flashy rendition of a canonical work, though the flashiness does not make up for the performance’s poor musical substance.

Yet again Liszt offers Viardot as the redeemer to this problematic sequence of events. He cites Viardot as one of the only promoters of “authentic singing” (“Eigentliches Singen”) in contemporary opera. Liszt defines “authentic singing” as an act “in which the melody sounds as if it could have been played on a beautiful violin, entwined with tasteful ornaments and arabesques; akin to the frame of a Rubins, it only increases its splendor and enhances its full

\(^{366}\) Ein paar Jahre scheinen übergenug zum Studium, ja ein paar Monate, eine Reihe von gegebenen und genommenen Stunden sind dem Meister und Schüler, ja auch dem Publikum zu seinem eigenen Schaden, hinlänglich ausreichend! Das Biegsammachen, das Bilden, Stärken und Beherrschen des Organs ist fast eine Sage geworden.

\(^{367}\) Die besten Sänger geben es eben, wie es kommt, gut oder schlecht, und die übrigen schreien, was sie können.
amount of fieriness; [it] is a foreign word in the dictionary of artists and arts” (P19). Because of the lack of “authentic singing,” Liszt finds it challenging to mention a specific singer – a virtuoso who can produce emotion and feeling in every performance – save, of course, for Viardot.

Liszt takes special care to explain to his reader what he means by the phrase “authentic singing,” especially in the absence of “authentic singers” themselves. He finds this especially important since the younger generation of singers and musical audience alike continue to hear tirades about great singers and compositions of the past, yet when they hear these old compositions performed mechanically and without spirit, it leads them to believe the piece to be mechanical as well (P20). Liszt sums up this thought ironically commenting that, “but only mechanical imitation could recognize the mediocrity!” (P20) Liszt strives, yet again, to pull the musical audience and performers from their current complacent state of mediocrity.

This common thread of education of both the artist and audience could also be a bit confusing for the reader. Liszt disparages those artists who come from a conservatory background and those who have only completed a superficial training of their voice or instrument. Yet he does not offer a sound alternative. In this situation, Viardot should not be used as a model. She was never formally educated or trained, but is also the exception to most

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368 Eigentliches Singen, welches die Melodie wie gespielt auf schöner Geige ertönen ließe, umrankt von geschmackvollen Arabesken und Verzierungen, die wir die Fassung eines Rubins nur zur Erhöhung seines Glanzes und zum Spiel seines vollen Feuers beitragen, ist ein Fremdwort im Künstler- und Kunstlexikon.
369 In this passage Liszt actually refers to Viardot as “the sister of Malibran.” In this essay Liszt deliberately does not compare Viardot with her famed sister. Why he refers to Malibran here remains a puzzle.
370 Wir betonen das Gesagte um so mehr, als in Ermangelung wirklicher Sänger die junge Generation nur zu leicht dem Glauben sich zuwendet, die von den Alten mit Recht als verloren beklagte Kunst habe nur aus sinnlosen Rouladen, aus gedankenarmen Notentiraden bestanden und, wenn sie ältere Kompositionen nach dem todtenden Buchstaben ohne Geist und Gemüth ausführen hört, sich vorstellen könnte, die ehemaligen Sänger hätten es auch nicht besser gemacht – als ob sich nicht gerade an dieser manchmal wohl geschickt mechanischen, aber auch nur mechanischen Nachahmung die Mittelmäßigkeit erkennen ließe!
rules regarding artistry since she clearly follows her own aesthetic mission and is endowed with unique talents and abilities. Liszt presents Viardot more as an anomaly than as a living artist.

Liszt builds upon his critique of contemporary opera singers by evaluating the Italian and German schools, with one of which these singers usually align. In this section Liszt actually deconstructs Viardot’s interpretations of Rosina and Norma to illustrate how she embodied both the German and Italian schools in performance. Through this discussion, he uses Viardot’s performances to critique the German school and praise its Italian counterpart. From his atelier in Germany, Liszt is safe to publish this sort of critique in the pages of the NZfM.

Recognized by scholars and performers as one of the most challenging roles in the operatic repertoire, Liszt shows how Viardot as Norma is able to achieve dramatic and musical success through complete understanding and embodiment of her character and its relation to other characters and dramatic events in the plot.\(^\text{371}\) Liszt’s decision to stage Norma in Weimar is no surprise given the combination of contemporary and canonical works he conducted in Weimar’s Hoftheater during his tenure there.\(^\text{372}\) Further, with Viardot’s ease in this demanding role, Liszt recognized the wonderful opportunity to continue to educate his Weimar audience with an excellent performance of a challenging work.

Liszt’s structure in this part of the essay is a miniaturized version of his prior prose works on opera. He opens with thoughts on its libretto and the central character of Norma herself and

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\(^{371}\) Bellini’s *Norma* had first been premiered at La Scala in Italy in December 1831 with the famed soprano Giuditta Pasta in the titular role. The plot of *Norma* revolves around the love triangle between Norma, a Druidic priestess, the Roman proconsul and father to her two children, Pollione, and a young temple virgin, Adalgisa. Pollione and Adalgisa (who knows nothing of his kinship to Norma) fall in love and plan to run away together. When Adalgisa tells Norma of this plan, Norma curses Pollione and prepares to murder their two children. In place of murder, Norma has a change of heart and decides to throw herself on the same pyre as her convicted (and captured) husband, so they may die together instead.

\(^{372}\) In the 1854 season alone, Liszt conducted works by Gluck, Beethoven, Weber, Meyerbeer, Schubert, Auber, Bellini, and Donizetti, among others.
tells of the opera’s main themes, before discussing specific elements of Viardot’s performance. He takes a parallel approach to Viardot as Rosina in the paragraphs that directly follow.

He introduces *Norma* by naming Felice Romani’s libretto as one of the best amongst the newer *opera seria*. He highlights its “adventurous material, its beautiful diction and its ingenious tableaus” in addition to the complex three-way relationship at play in the plot between Norma, Pollione, and Adalgisa (P24).³⁷³ Romani created an intriguing character in Norma herself as a woman who is caught between feelings of love, piety, and jealousy. Liszt sees Norma as representative of a certain type of woman found throughout history and literature:

> There will always be women who consecrate themselves through religious vows to eternal virginity, whose political character can also be represented through her skillful vocation. Love will always hold the power, move women to perjure her vows, her beliefs and her Fatherland. Jealousy will always become to the same degree more feverish, as passion is criminal (P24).

³⁷³ Liszt believes that Romani has captured Norma so perfectly that her character, one filled with suffering, disgrace and self-sacrificing, yet nourishing love, whose actions are spurned by maternal fear in conflict with loving desperation, will continue to be meaningful to audiences in the distant future (P24). Further, the character of Norma embodies an eternal conflict and portrays the ultimate choice, as Norma, “a woman revered as a prophetess, like a queen, chooses the most disgraceful death, so not to be seen as dependent on her beloved” (P24).³⁷⁵ Norma is simultaneously akin to other women of the past and in the present-day, yet Norma, as portrayed by Viardot, challenges this standard through her expressive performance.

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³⁷³ Der besten Tragödie von Goumet, einem ernsten, hochstrebenden Dichter, entlehnt, dessen „Divine Epopée“ mit ihrem gewagten Stoff, ihrer schönen Diktion und ihren erfindungsreichen Bildern nur zu bald einer unverdienten Vergessenheit anheim gefallen ist...

³⁷⁴ Es wird immer Frauen geben, die durch religiöse Gelübde sich ewiger Jungfräulichkeit weihen, ebenso wie sie durch ihr Geschick berufen sein können, politischen Charakter zu repräsentieren. Die Liebe wird immer die Kraft besitzen, Frauen zum Meineid an ihrem Gelübde, ihrem Glauben und ihrem Vaterland zu bewegen. Die Eifersucht wird immer in dem Grade fieberhafter werden, als die Leidenschaft verbrecherisch ist.

³⁷⁵ Denn wer könnte kalt bleiben, wenn ein Weib, geehrt wie eine Prophetin, wie eine Königin, den schmachvollsten Tod wählt, um sich nicht von dem Geliebten verlassen zu sehen?
Upon laying this foundation, Liszt is able to focus specifically on Viardot and her performance. She is given an extraordinary libretto to work with and the liberty to use her dramatic and expressive potential to its fullest extent with this role, especially with Liszt as conductor. Liszt highlights several elements of Viardot’s performance in both the first and second acts, before devoting an entire paragraph to the climax and conclusion of the opera.

In the first act of *Norma*, Liszt highlights Viardot’s interpretation of the prayer for the “chaste goddess” (the famous aria “Casta Diva”) as full of a great emotional depth that had not been experienced previously in the first scene (P25). Viardot swelled to such a climax at the end of the scene that she entirely overshadowed all the other priestesses that sang beside her. Next, he isolates Viardot’s use of ornamentation, which she employs to enhance the drama even further. Lastly, Liszt highlights Viardot’s acting in the final trio of this act. Here, he describes his personal reaction to Viardot’s performance as one emotionally moved by “the individual sad solemn way in which she intoned the words, interrupted by anger and suppressed sobs” (P25).

In the second act, first he cites her ability to portray emotion through manipulation of her voice as another unique dramatic element to her performance: “For the fearful, despairing life in the second act, she found in long-held notes, wrath-filled runs and the most singular scornful swirling passages, deeply moving accents until in the last scene from the words “In this hour…,”

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376 The emergence of conductor and stage director in the mid-nineteenth century was to “ensure the integrity of the score and the coherence of interpretation (Rutherford, 137).” Therefore, the fact that Liszt was the conductor in these performances likely allowed Viardot to interpret the roles as she saw fit.

377 Liszt says almost nothing about the music or Bellini in this section of the essay, though he had conducted Bellini’s *Montecchi et Capuletti* in 1854 with an accompanying literary introduction published in the *NZfM*. There is no evidence that Liszt disliked Bellini or his work in the literature, so this omission should not be seen as a slight on the composer himself. Liszt’s choice to omit mention of the composer or the music in discussion of an opera, though, does stray from the typical pattern as found in his other essays on opera.

378 Im Final-Trio wirkte sie besonders durch die eigenthümliche schmerzlich-pathetische Weise, in der sie die Worte, wie von Zorn und unterdrücktem Schluchzen unterbrochen, intonirte.
she had elevated herself to the highest Holy Orders of serious tragedy” (P26). Viardot further escalates the drama of this scenario through use of her body and face, yet does so with what Liszt calls “a wonderful eloquence.”

Norma’s death scene is the climax of both the opera and Viardot’s performance itself. Liszt describes this scene by illustrating the depth and layers of emotion that Viardot is able to achieve through her specific artistic choices: “She knew how to continually increase the suspense of these last moments until she sees unexpected tears on the father’s hand and when she sees that she has (emotionally) stirred him, considering the tremendousness of [his] fate, she joins with convulsive vigor, the hand of the Sever with that of her father, to her heart,” and so on (P27). Viardot’s dramatic elevation of this scene was not taught or even learned from experience, but comes from within her being as a “true” artist and thus cannot be imitated by others performing the same role.

Liszt concludes this section stating that, “We have never seen this conclusion played so enchantingly and gladly confess that since “Norma” was first given with the attractiveness of novelty, we have never seen her conceived with such urgent noble passion in each of the deepest fibers of the character” (P28). Liszt continues to emphasize the same few elements of Viardot’s performance with a directness and simplicity that permitted his readers to draw from this section (and article as a whole) his main point. In Liszt’s opinion, Viardot’s Norma was simply the best.

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379 Für das angstvolle, verzweifelnde Leben im zweiten Akte fand sie in langgehaltenen Noten, in zornfüllten Läufen und höhnischen Passagenwirbeln die eigenthümlichsten, tief ergreisendsten Accente, bis die in der letzten Scene von den Worten an: „in dieser Stunde...“ sich zur höchsten Weihe tragischen Ernstes erhob.

380 Die Spannung dieser letzten Augenblicke wußte sie fortgesetzt zu steigern, bis sie unverhoffte Thränen auf des Vaters Hand erblickt und, da sie ihn angesichts ihres ungeheuren Schicksals gerührt und betroffen sieht, mit einer konvulsivischen Heftigkeit die Hand des Sever mit der des Vaters auf ihrem Herzen vereinigt.

381 Wir haben diesen Schluß niemals so hinreißend spielen sehen und gestehen gerne, daß wie, seit „Norma“ zuerst mit allem Reiz der Neuheit gegeben wurde, sie nie mit einer so bis in jede tiefste Faser des Charakters dringenden edlen Leidenschaftlichkeit aufgefaßt sahen.
When comparing Viardot’s performance as Norma to those of earlier Normas, famed singers Pasta and Malibran, one can see again why Liszt placed Viardot above her contemporaries earlier in the essay. Pasta, for whom the role was written, premiered the work and Malibran’s first performance of Norma occurred shortly after. As Pasta was known for using her body and gesture as a means of dramatic expression, Bellini actually left space in the score for Pasta’s dramatic movements. Therefore, Pasta, and each Norma since, needed to be creative in her use of gesture in performance. Rutherford contrasts Pasta’s innovative use of gesture with that of Malibran, concluding that Pasta’s approach was the more effective one. Malibran’s “gestures,” Rutherford explains, “were made freely, regardless of the musical rhythm,” in stark contrast to Pasta’s “rhythmical gesture” which she used to enhance the connection between music and performer. Rutherford sums up their differences as follows: “For Pasta, the music was a fabric on which she wove her gestures, movement and melody thus becoming a single, unified express; for Malibran, it was rather a backcloth against which she moved at impulse.”

Viardot’s Norma comprises the same elements as her artistry, a combination of styles that only she, as a “true” artist, is able to achieve. Viardot’s style mixes those of Pasta and Malibran. Liszt’s description of Viardot’s performance of the final trio of Act 1 is a fine example. As

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383 Ibid, 128-131.
384 An integral element to opera performance in the first half of the nineteenth century, gesture, specifically, the timing and variety of gesture, was a learned skill (Rutherford, 113-114). Gesturing to music presented its own unique set of challenges. Rutherford explains that, “Music, however, demanded a much slower pace of delivery, with commensurately more emphasis on the individual gesture (113).” Rutherford names Pasta as perhaps the first singer who developed the ability to use gesture to enhance the drama of her musical performance. She believes that Pasta was not merely offering “pantomimic gestures,” but that her movements presented “the action of a living picture” (114). Instead of simply miming to music, Pasta interpreted the music through use of her entire body. This affects the audience and critics by presenting them first with an image and then aural companion (“The critic both saw and heard this gesture (114).”) “Pasta’s gestures preceded, rather than simply accompanied, the act of singing: the spectator’s response is initially aroused through his eyes – he sees first, and then hears (Rutherford, 117).”
385 Rutherford, 131.
386 Ibid, 132.
previously stated, Viardot interprets her role here “[as seen] through the individual sad solemn way in which she intoned the words, interrupted by anger and suppressed sobs” (P25).\(^{387}\) She clearly begins, like Pasta, by joining music and gesture to effectively portray an emotion, sadness, yet then this emotion overtakes her character and Norma/Viardot can no longer merely gesture to music, but must break free of those boundaries to dramatically express the depths of her character’s feelings. This same breaking with the Pasta/Malibran tradition can be found in several of Liszt’s evocative descriptions of Viardot’s performance as Norma as well as Rosina.

Liszt does not compare Viardot’s performance in *The Barber of Seville* to that of *Norma*, but instead highlights her ability to provide a “whole” performance, regardless of the work. As Rosina, Viardot must use her skills to embody a much different character. As opposed to the vengeful, emotionally stirred and conflicted Norma, Rosina is sweet and innocent on the surface, manipulative and scheming underneath. Liszt structures his discussion of *Barber* in the same way as he had *Norma*. He first introduces the opera, in this case paying homage to the composer and not the librettist, before moving to Viardot’s performance, highlighting exceptional elements of her performance.\(^{388}\)

Liszt introduces *Barber* as a masterpiece. Overall, it contains “no weak numbers, no half-successful situations, no single useless superfluous transition moments. Life, fire and desire flow equally luxuriant in all veins of this opera. Each figure here is a comedic type, that in which every memory lives and every fantasy is familiar” (P29).\(^{389}\) Though this great transformation of a

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\(^{388}\) *The Barber of Seville* had its premiere on 20 February 1816 in Rome. The plot contains a variety of comical figures and relationships. Ultimately, Count Almaviva, at times in disguise, tries to win the hand and love of Rosina, a young, beautiful woman. Treachery and mischief dominate both acts of this *opera buffa* and it concludes on a happy note, with the marriage of Rosina to her love, Almaviva.

French libretto “gives only a faint silhouette of the original,” Cesare Sterbini’s (the unnamed librettist) text was still able to “stimulate the genius of the composer,” Rossini, to create this original work (P29). Liszt sees this opera as enormously dependent upon its actors and their ability to create and maintain the interest of the audience. This feat, he maintains, was achieved by the (Italian) actors at the premiere of this work and suggests that subsequent actors should look to this first performance as a model.

The Italians perform it with unparalleled spirit. Their mischievous irony, their fine rogue humor, their pointedly sinful humor, never denigrates into burlesque. It does not overload their costumes, but instead gives its characteristic expression to the bustle [Tournuren]; so that there is never a disturbing disparity that comes between lively music and the appearance of a pretentious, rigid attitude, as is often the case in Germany (P29). 390

Herein lies Liszt’s most transparent critique of the German school. His conclusion is that the stiffness of German actors and singers does not lend itself well to Italian opera.

Liszt continues his introduction to Viardot as Rosina with a list of admired Italian singers who were especially known for their Rossini roles (especially in Barber) (P30). He names Manual Garcia (Viardot’s father – again reminding his readers of her musical lineage) as Figaro, and Rubini and Mario as Almaviva, among others. Liszt then highlights Rossini’s own Italian spirit and sense of humor through comparison with “the incredible vivacity of a Champagner,” which Rossini expressed in Barber from the “fizzy jokes of the accompaniments” to arias of the opera, such as “La Calunnia” (P30). Yet even among the best Rosinas, Liszt affirms that not one could surpass Viardot in this role. Liszt finds the depth of expression and emotion that Viardot achieves as Rosina astonishing. From “the graceful loveliness of her coquetry,” to “her decisive lively and yet chaste gestures,” to “her distinguished pout,” to the “most elegant roguery in

390 Die Italiener führen sie mit unvergleichlichem Entrain durch. Ihre schelmische Ironie, ihr feiner Gaunerhumor, ihre spitzsündige Komik artet nie ins Burleske aus. Sie überladen nicht das Kostüm, geben aber dafür ihren Tournuren einen so charakteristischen Ausdruck, daß nie ein störendes Mißverhältnis zwischen lebhafter Musik und gezierter, steifer Haltung zum Vorschein kommt, wie es in Deutschland nicht selten der Fall ist.

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teasing and taunting [which] gives her a double trait of deceit and goodness of soul [seelengüte],” Viardot presents Rosina as a complex figure able to redefine and represent several relationships and events throughout the opera (P30). With the few words “victory is mine,” Liszt reports that Viardot, “through the risqué reversal and adaptation of her songs” is able to achieve “a small masterpiece of subtlety and girlish mischief.” Viardot’s delivery of these three words, for example, coupled with her acting and singing, allows her to portray her own understanding of Rosina as she functions within the predetermined environment as established by the librettist and composer.

The aesthetic choices Viardot makes during performance elevates not only Rosina’s development, but those of other characters and the plot of the opera as well. Liszt cites Viardot’s decision to stay onstage during Bartolo’s aria in Act I as a prime example. By remaining onstage, she is able to react dramatically to the action: Viardot “remains present and pales continuously through delightful performance and certainly not overacted, but fettered by exemplary facial expressions” (P30). This type of dramatic decision is one that many other contemporary singers, those who do not understand listening or acting or drama to the same extent as Viardot, could never achieve to the same level of expression.

He proceeds to describe specific elements of her performance, confirming Viardot’s mastery of the role of Rosina, especially in the first act. Act I, Liszt declares, “is just a triumph for Madame Viardot: no word that she does not accompany with the most appropriate gestures,

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391 Die graziöse Lieblichkeit ihrer Koketterie, ihre backsischartige und doch nicht ungezogene Widerspenstigkeit, ihre entschieden lebhafe und dennoch züchtige Geberde, ihr vornehmes Schmollen, ihre höchst elegante Spitzbüberei im Hänseln und Necken geben ihr einen Doppelzug von List und Seelengüte, welcher die Leidenschaft des verliebten Grasen höchst erklärich macht.
393 Statt, wie es meist üblich ist, während der großen Arie Bartolo’s die Bühne zu verlassen, bleibt sie zugegen und weiß fortgesetzt durch reizen des Spiel und durchaus nicht outrirte, sondern musterhafte Mimik zu fesseln...
no measure in which she does not sing with singular bravura” (P30). Though already strong in Act I, it is in Act II where Viardot truly excels. Liszt finds Viardot’s singing performance especially effective in the second act “when she unfolds the inexhaustible wealth of her coloratura and emotional expression in the Spanish songs and in Chopin’s famous Mazurka” (P31). Liszt’s description of Viardot’s performance of this song, complete with several different images of nature – a rainbow, birds both flying and resting on a branch, dewdrops – is quite picturesque (P31). Her coloratura and ornamentation inspires Liszt’s imagination to run rampant. Liszt presents this moment in the opera as Viardot’s artistic climax of her performance as Rosina. The strength of Viardot’s performance continued until the end of the Lesson Scene with the closing variations of “Cenerentola” (P32).

Liszt concludes this discussion on Viardot and her performances as Norma and Rosina by directly evaluating the Italian and German schools, before returning to Viardot and his hopes for the future of opera. Liszt allies himself with his readers, hoping that we (himself included) can stand up to “future Philistines” and recognize in the future the merits and importance of a great artist, such as Viardot, whose “friendship” has been valuable to us for more than twenty years (P33). Therefore, even as Viardot’s career might soon be over, her influence and effect on contemporary opera should remain present and inspire audiences to recognize and appreciate artistry in years to come.

Yet, Liszt also fears that the state of music and audiences in Germany will prevent his wish from coming to fruition. He strongly believes that the German school is detrimental to Europe’s musical community:

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394 Der ganze erste Akt ist nur ein Triumph für Frau Viardot: sein Wort, das sie nicht mit dem entsprechendsten Geberdenspiel begleitete, kein Takt, den sie nicht mit einziger Meisterschaft sänge!

395 Dennoch übertrifft sie in der im zweiten Akt enfalteten Gesangskunst sich selbst, wenn sie den unerschöpflichen Reichthum ihrer Koloratur und ihres seelischen Ausdrucks in den spanischen Liedern und in Chopin’s berühmter Mazurka entfaltet.
But Germany is not Italy and, when even there (Italy) the qualified singers become more and more of a rarity, how much harder must not it be to find on this side of the Alps capable interpreters of music, of which the larger and often more significant half of its worth lies in the execution of the virtuoso, and whose (music’s) passion, whose core and quintessence will always remain foreign to the German audience as well as to the German artists, even if they were to try to work on singing and hearing it for centuries (P33)!\textsuperscript{396}

Liszt finds the German singers empty of virtuosity and rarely can one find a “capable interpreter of music” in their midst (P33). Liszt does not want to critique the German school into abolishment, but help support and better the school and its singers by looking to the Italian school and “true” artists for reference. By addressing the mainly German readership of the NZfM, Liszt strives to improve the German school from within, using its own community to put these changes into effect. By offering excellent productions of several Italian operas, Liszt can provide his German audience with the standards to which the German school should strive to meet.

Liszt indicates his preference for Italian opera, at least as a teaching device, through his choice of repertoire and his analysis of Viardot’s performances. Though Viardot did often perform in Italian opera and had done so in the past, she was best known at this point in her career for her French works, Meyerbeer’s \textit{Le Prophète} and Gounod’s \textit{Sapho}. During this visit to Weimar though, three of her four performances were in Italian operas – in addition to \textit{Norma} and \textit{Barber}, Viardot was also scheduled to sing Azucena in \textit{Il Trovatore} as well as her usual role of Fidès in \textit{Le Prophète}. Viardot’s mastery over such disparate roles further illustrates her exceptional talents.\textsuperscript{397}

Weimar, as a place of musical progress, is the musical backdrop to Liszt’s descriptions of Viardot’s Rosina and Norma performances. Liszt likens Weimar to other musical capitals in

\textsuperscript{396} Aber Deutschland ist nicht Italien und, wenn dort schon die geeigneten Sänger mehr und mehr eine Seltenheit werden, wie viel schwerer muß es nicht diesseits der Alpen sein fähige Interpreten für eine Musik zu finden, deren entschiedene und oft bedeutendere Hälfte ihres Werthes in der Ausführung des Virtuosen liegt und deren Leidenschaft, deren Mark und Quintessenz dem deutschen Publikum, wie den deutschen Künstlern immer fremd bleiben wird, sollten sie auch Jahrhunderte lang daran singen und daran hören!

\textsuperscript{397} Though singers at that time did not specialize in certain role types as they do today, it was still rare to have a single singer perfect characters composed in very different musical styles.
Europe and actually elevates Weimar over other European stages, asking, “On which European stage may those operas ever be given on two evenings?” (P23) Liszt, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, praises the choice of music programming, which he himself, as Kapellmeister, is responsible for.

Liszt clearly wanted Weimar to be the final thought in the minds of his readers. The transition to these concluding sentences of the final paragraph is especially odd considering that the first half of the paragraph serves as a much better conclusion to the essay! In these first sentences Liszt reiterates his ideas on the future of music, opera, and the artist, ending with Viardot’s role and responsibility as a rare “true” artist. This essay would be much better served if it concluded here with the thought of Viardot as the prime example of a “true” artist in present day. Yet Liszt unexpectedly transitions from Viardot to Weimar. He states that he, along with the people of Weimar, wishes that Viardot could act in every role; her performances would be a welcome gift to the community. The audience would certainly react “with joyful applause and experience an almost painful regret (P34)” that Viardot’s recurring performances could not be a reality. They have already experienced this sadness since she for some reason could not perform in Azucena in Verdi’s *Trovatore* as expected in that visit to Weimar (P34).

Liszt does not explain Viardot’s missing performance, but reiterates this loss, stating that it had been expected (and desired) by the Grand Duke and Duchess of Weimar as well (P34). He also mentions that Viardot was also missed at the Hofconcert on 1 January where she had promised to perform the role of Desdemona in the third act of Verdi’s *Otello*. Liszt reaffirms to his readers that Viardot would present an excellent Desdemona and concludes his essay by

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398 Auf welcher Bühne Europas immer an den beiden Abenden jene Opern hätten gegeben werden mögen, es gibt keine...
stating that the musical community in Weimar would like to hear her Desdemona again (P34). This unanticipated conclusion highlights the Grand Duke and Duchess of Weimar as music patrons, thus implying that Weimar had support (and funds) from its nobility and rulers and that they often hosted visiting artists of Viardot’s high level. As a result of its lively musical community, much in part to Liszt and the New German School, Weimar’s musical audience was a successful test community for Liszt’s theories on the (re-)education of Germany’s musical audience. A progressive musical environment for being able to put on two different performances on the same stage, Weimar was perhaps even more unique, now at the end of Liszt’s tenure there, to house a musically educated audience that could appreciate both of Viardot’s performances, as well as her dramatic performance style, despite the gravity of the musical situation occurring at that time throughout Germany.

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Rhetorically, this essay is a bit isolated from the others of its type. Aspects of Liszt’s literary style remain the same – the vagueness, glossing over unpleasant issues, vivid natural imagery – but the prose here is more straightforward than one might expect. Liszt’s descriptions of Viardot in performance are often clear and transparent, and he includes more detail about Viardot’s background as an artist and the German and Italian schools than usual. Perhaps Liszt, too, recognized the significance of this essay as a conclusion to so many elements of his life in Weimar and literary career as a whole. Or perhaps Liszt wanted to more strongly connect his readers to the themes that stood at the center of his musical aesthetics. Whatever the reason, the directness of Liszt’s prose in this character portrait more closely unites him with his reader. He is still the authority, but is also earnestly speaking to his reader about topics and themes he feels deeply passionate about. He is not introducing these operas to them, as in the other opera essays.
of this period, but is trying to explain to his audience why they should care about art and “good” artists and to provide the means to evaluate art(ists) in the future. Through his prose Liszt offers his (present and future) readers a special set of analytical tools, so they may continue to use them even after Liszt himself, and this generation of readers, are dead and gone.

The nature-inspired imagery in this essay is to be expected. Readers who had been following Liszt’s writings in the *NZfM* throughout the 1850s would already be comfortable with his often florid writing style. He is most ornate in his explanation of Viardot’s relationship to the Italian school:

That her blood inherited a Southern glow [which] identifies her by birthright with the Italian school, in which the rushing foam of passion in full effusion is allowed to overflow the rim of the cup, which appears to be what the artform signifies and less to keep it safe, as to the frothing of an intoxicating drink, in a fiery, excited auditorium. 400

This description of the overflowing passion of the Southern school provides vivid images of Italian composers, performers, and the works themselves. Liszt continues to laud Viardot and the Italian school later in the essay: “The refined and richness of talent of Frau Viardot has unmistakably blossomed in the roots of Italian art and includes all of the tropical fire within its latitude.” 401 Since Viardot had made her first appearances in Paris in a variety of roles in Rossini operas with the Théâtre Italien, Liszt also reminds his audiences that the Italian company was the first to recognize (and employ) Viardot’s talent. 402

A second type of imagery often employed is of religion. Liszt’s use of religious imagery is almost exclusive to his discussion of Viardot as Norma. His carefully chosen words produce a

400 Die ihrem Blut vererbte südliche Gluth identifierirt sie durch Geburtsrechte mit der italienischen Schule, welche den brausenden Schaum der Leidenschaft in vollem Ergutz über den seingeschnittenen Rand des Bechers hinausströmen läßt, welcher die Kunstform bedeutet und weniger zum Insichbewahren da zu sein scheint, als zum Übersprudeln des berauschenden Trankes in ein feuriges, aufgeregtes Auditorium.
401 Das edle und reiche Talent der Frau Viardot ist unverkennbar am Stamme italienischer kunst erblüht und schließt das ganze Feuer tropischer Breitegrade in sich.
402 “Viardot,” *New Grove.*
religious tone and image of Viardot as the Druidic priestess.\footnote{While one can certainly connect Viardot-as-priestess with the tenets of the St. Simonian movement, Liszt could also here merely be interacting with the contemporary romantic discourse on religion and art.} When describing Viardot in the final trio of \textit{Norma}, he affirms that “she was particularly effective through the idiosyncratic painful-declamatory manner in which she intoned the words, interrupted by anger and suppressed sobs.”\footnote{\textit{Op. cit.} Footnote 378.} The use of “intone” (with its religious connotation) provides readers with the musical and dramatic image of Viardot in action at this pivotal point in her performance.

To keep Viardot’s artistry as the primary focus of this essay, Liszt glosses over any remotely undesirable aspects of Viardot as an artist or person. The only negative situation referenced concerns the unjust “libel” spread around Paris, the impetus of which Liszt does not explain. Though this “libel” could refer to several different events or situations, it may be an allusion to her relationship to the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev. The two were close friends, and rumored lovers, for almost forty years. Liszt omits not only any reference to Turgenev, but also to the time she spent in Russia. Liszt glosses over this unpleasant event, opposing this attack with the defense that because Viardot led an artistic life of such purity, these suspicions of libel never held.\footnote{Turgenev eventually followed the Viardots to Baden Baden, and built his own house there alongside their own. Viardot and Turgenev had first met in St. Petersburg in the mid-1840s and continued their relationship both in Europe and in Russia with periods of greater and less intensity over the next almost forty years. Liszt acknowledges in several letters to Wittgenstein throughout the 1860s and 1870s that he knew about Viardot’s relationship with Turgenev. With the omission of Viardot and anything related to Russia, Liszt also fails to highlight Viardot’s philanthropic work there and her support of upcoming unknown contemporary Russian composers. Considering that she and Liszt shared this passion, that he omits any mention of her support of Russian composers is surprising, especially since he had obliquely referred to her support for European composers earlier. For more information on the charity work of the nineteenth-century \textit{prima donna} see Hilary Poriss’ “Prima Donnas and the Performance of Altruism” in \textit{The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century}.}

As for Viardot’s personal life and relationships, Liszt’s readers would assume that Viardot was not only a remarkable artist, but that her skills transferred to a happy home life as well. Viardot, in reality, led a complicated personal life. She valued art and her career, and chose
to further both, even to her family’s detriment. Further, she also faced difficulties securing performances in Parisian opera companies early in her career.

Had he placed Viardot’s struggles as well as her triumphs at the forefront of his essay, Liszt could have emphasized the importance of educating his audience even further. That Viardot had not always been recognized as an intellectual and rare performer was certainly due in part to the lack of knowledge by the (Parisian) audience. Critics of her early performances often disparaged her use of seemingly too many ornaments. Perhaps, however, this is yet another example of how Viardot was possibly performing her roles at too high of a level for critics and opera-goers to appreciate. With Liszt’s guidance through this character portrait, he ensures that Viardot’s performances will be attended by a more educated audience in the future. Liszt’s rhetorical clarity in this essay allows him to communicate to his reader on a more direct level. Thus, readers should have fewer questions or confusion regarding the identification of a “real” artist and why (and how) they should support these artists in the future.

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Liszt does not (and cannot) classify Viardot artistically or stylistically, thus placing her on an artistic pedestal. He makes it almost impossible for any other person to near Viardot’s level of ability, yet openly explains why he has done so. Viardot is a rare type of artist that appears so seldomly in society that Liszt wants to make sure that musical audiences are able to recognize and appreciate when one as special as Viardot finally emerges.

He deliberately chooses to isolate Viardot and does not align her with either the conservative or progressive musical parties of the day. As a “real” artist, she is neutral, or

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406 Viardot’s children Louise Héritte and Paul Viardot describe their difficult family life in FitzLyon’s biography (325-326).
407 It is also possible that she may have indeed been ornamenting her arias too fully and as she came into her own talent, was able to more effectively communicate her art to the public.
perhaps just existing in a higher universe than the quarrels that existed in the German press below. Liszt elevates artistry above musical politics, especially when discussing an artist operating under the guise of the spiritual mission set out by the St. Simonian movement. The education of the musical public and the role of the artist in society were issues that should have been a joint effort of both progressive and conservative composers; perhaps our audiences today would then finally be able to recognize “true” artistry when it finally recurs.\footnote{It is only fitting that Viardot’s next role after the publication of Liszt’s NZfM character portrait was that of Orpheus in Berlioz’s revival of Gluck’s Orphée. As Orpheus, Viardot could truly illuminate the power of music – both through her embodiment of the gifted musician, and the performance of herself as a “true” gifted artist. Though the Viardot-Berlioz collaboration occurred after Liszt had published his Viardot portrait, Viardot as Orpheus surely represented continued realization of his proclamation of Viardot’s unique artistry.}

Liszt reflects upon Viardot fondly much later in life from Rome in a letter to Mme. Malwine Tardieu twenty-two years after the publication of the NZfM essay (20 January 1882):

When you see Madame Viardot again, tell her that I still cherish an enthusiastic recollection of her – a typical Orpheus, Fides and Rosina – and, besides, an enchanting composer and a pianist full of ingenious dexterity.\footnote{La Mara, \textit{Letters of Franz Liszt}, Vol. 2, Constance Bache, trans., New York: Greenwood Press, 1969, 394-395.}
Conclusion

That Liszt’s writings, especially from his Weimar period, warrant more discussion in musicological scholarship goes uncontested. They provide a clear avenue into the core ideals and beliefs of the musical progressives and the New German School from the perspective of their leader, Liszt. And even if he had help in the preparation of these works for publication by either Wittgenstein or one of his disciples, this published result proves even more important and worthy of academic study. This means that not only Liszt, but his supporters as well, believed in the necessity of the dissemination of these works in the NZfM at this time, regardless of whether or not Liszt alone was able to devote enough time to their publication. All involved knew the significance of Liszt’s name and reputation and the potential it had to sway readers to his and the New German’s point of view regarding contemporary musical politics and aesthetics.

Yet as I demonstrate through the examination of the four character portraits in this dissertation, Liszt’s writings never truly hold up to close analysis: his prose description does not easily apply to an actual Field Nocturne, Viardot does not wholly embody Liszt’s idea of a “true” artist, Clara and Robert do not fully exemplify his idealized Nature-inspired pair of artists, and Robert Franz is hardly a liberally-leaning composer. But because his focus is not necessarily on the minutiae of each argument, these gaps do not detract from the overall message of his prose.
Liszt wants to educate his readers, yes, but to educate them in his own way of thinking about music, so they may recognize and be able to support true artistry in the present and future. I do not believe that he thinks that his readers will dissect each piece, or put them into conversation with one another beyond a superficial level. For instance, even though one can trace the development of Liszt’s thoughts on the artist through analysis of his prose works, it is hard to believe that anyone from the mid-nineteenth-century would have attempted to view the Viardot portrait with Liszt’s earlier “Situation of Artists” as a lens, as I have done in Chapter Four. Given the almost twenty-year time difference in their publication dates, this comparison would likely have been near impossible!

Furthermore, it is the collection of works as a whole, especially in Liszt’s prolific Weimar period, that is perhaps more important than the dissection of each individual essay. That these works not only cover so many disparate topics in contemporary music – the musical figures I analyze in this project, Liszt’s essays on nineteenth-century opera (both Wagner and Weimar’s 1854 opera season), as well as his thoughts on modern music criticism, among other topics – show that Liszt took several different angles and approaches to reiterate the same few themes to his readership.

Liszt’s goals as an author show clearly through his Weimar works. Thus, some variation of the themes of virtuosity, artistry, the value of a piece of music, and musical education occur in every one of Liszt’s Weimar essays. This move – the recurrence of central ideas – also proves to be very effective. If Liszt perhaps did not convince a reader of Viardot’s “true” artistry, perhaps his thoughts on the artist in his Clara Schumann essay would be more successful.

In each essay, Liszt speaks from both a more philosophical perspective and also from realistic or personal experience, with subtle focus on his own career, and more direct focus on
the careers of other artists (usually the titular characters themselves). Virtuosity, for example, is an idea that Liszt returns to perhaps most frequently in this series of character portraits. Since he continues to question the idea and meaning of virtuosity for himself, but more so for the purpose of educating his reader, in these prose works (especially those analyzed in this dissertation) Liszt identifies the roots and creation of virtuosity, how it is fostered in an artist (generally not through formal education), who is able to identify virtuosity, how an artist explores or shows his or her virtuosity, and the effects of an audience remaining ignorant to a virtuoso’s talent for the future of music. Indeed, a complicated concept, but Liszt’s questioning of virtuosity (and related ideas) illustrates to his readers that despite being a musical authority, he does not take his (or their own) thinking process for granted. By deconstructing his own process step-by-step, Liszt allows his reader to follow him along the same path of inquiry and resolution, regardless of whether the reader has seen a certain opera or, in fact, is a musician.

Liszt writes for readers with diverse musical backgrounds. He does take some musical knowledge for granted – that is to be expected for those readers who are subscribing to the NZfM – but does not pervade his writings with musical examples. This is partially to appeal to a variety of readers, but is also cause for less distraction. With the addition of musical examples (or other tables, images, etc.), readers would focus less on Liszt’s ideas and more on his analysis of a specific measure, phrase, or melody. This detracts from the overall message of the prose. Liszt does not claim to be an analysis expert, but someone exploring the concepts and construction of contemporary music and its inherent value system (both within music itself and to society) alongside his reader. But Liszt also most certainly knows that in this joint journey, because of his career and reputation, he would always be the authority and strives to keep that position of power in his writings and as figurehead of the New German School in Weimar.
It is also important to note that Liszt’s writings work on two different levels: locally within the mid-nineteenth century debate and more broadly contributing to Liszt’s overall pedagogical mission. He certainly penned these essays with contemporary politics in mind, but also with the hope that they would outlast his lifetime. Since Liszt’s Weimar prose continued discussions and themes from his earlier prose, these works also must be considered independent of their historical and political context. By examining these character portraits simultaneously within the purview of the New German School and also as a part of Liszt’s separate literary output, we are able to investigate the importance of these works in greater depth.

The long-term effect or influence of Liszt’s criticism and Weimar prose works remains to be seen. It is my hope that this dissertation provides the initial research and inspiration for studies such as this to be undertaken by other scholars in the near future. Study of Liszt’s prose works, their preparation, and original publication details provide a foundry of knowledge about the mid-century debate over aesthetics, the structural workings of the New German School, and Liszt as a an author, among many other interesting topics and musical figures of nineteenth-century Germany and beyond. An examination of Liszt’s reputation and presence in the United States, for example, would be another project to stem from this study. Though Liszt never travelled across the Atlantic, his prose, compositions, disciples, and reputation certainly did. Much research and scholarship on Liszt is still to be done, with an examination of his entire literary output of central importance.
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