

A STUDY OF FRANZ LISZT'S CONCEPTS OF CHANGING TONALITY
AS EXEMPLIFIED IN SELECTED "MEPHISTO" WORKS,
A LECTURE RECITAL, TOGETHER WITH THREE
RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS BY
BEETHOVEN, CHOPIN, DEBUSSY,
LISZT, RACHMANINOFF
AND SCHUMANN
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The purpose of this study is to analyze four late solo piano works of Franz Liszt that all bear the name "Mephisto" in their titles, in order to examine, identify and trace the development in the use of harmonic and melodic idioms that produced non-tonal or "omnitonic" effects, on the one hand, and to emphasize the need to duly accord Liszt a recognition of historical position as the nineteenth century's most influential avant garde composer whose attitude and approach had helped to shape much of the ideal of the atonal composition of this century, on the other. Chapter One presents the issues and the purpose of this study; Chapter Two investigates the principal forces that shaped Liszt's mature compositional style; Chapter Three identifies and discusses the requisites for tonal and atonal compositions; Chapter Four analyzes the four "Mephisto" dances: Waltz no.1 (1860); Polka (1883); Waltz no.3 (1883); and Bagatelle (1885). Chapter Five summarizes the findings from this study and attempts to identify in these late works of Liszt a pattern of conscientious, continuous, purposeful and progressive use of devices toward creating musical effect that would defy the established tonal requisites and undermine the tonal orientation in the composition. This study submits that it was Liszt who had first shown a way to free music from the shackles of prescribed idiomatic constraints, and to force us the listeners to approach and appreciate music for its own sound's sake. Additionally, this study submits that this effort of Liszt should be understood and appreciated in terms of programmatic association; that is, Liszt found in the persona of Mephisto the Diablo the ideal imagery for

depicting the nature of the “music of the future” where tonality would be freed from any prescribed procedural requisites.

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and

To my parents, Mr. Kyu-Dong Kim
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Liszt, the Man, His Music and His Historical Reputation

The legendary life of Franz Liszt has been well documented in countless writings during the last century and, in recent decades there has been a resurgence of interest in his music. Liszt experienced a phenomenal rise to success and fame before he was thirty years old, and even from an age of extravagance and romantic excesses, the name and life of Liszt still conjure various and even contradictory mental images: worldly and yet deeply spiritual, self-aggrandizing yet generous toward others, and having an expression in his music and countenance when performing that was at times celestial and noble, yet at other times frenzied, flamboyant, and even diabolical. Derek Watson opens his highly acclaimed book on Liszt with the following:

The genius of Liszt is by its very complex nature hard to define. Claims made for his greatness as pianist, composer, teacher, writer, champion of music old and new, and most generous musical spirit of the nineteenth century are legion. Born in Hungary and yet much nearer to Vienna than to Pest, at home and at work in France, Germany and Italy — he can be claimed by a handful of nations as their son. From Lisbon to Moscow and from Dublin to Constantinople the records speak of his versatility and his victories. The reaction created by [such a] genius is . . . like those extremely high temperatures, which have the power to disintegrate combinations of atoms which they proceed to combine afresh in a diametrically opposite order, following another type.¹

Active for almost the entire period of romantic music as one of its most eminent figures, as the greatest pianist of his time and a prolific composer of many genres, Liszt also exerted great influence as a conductor and writer. He promoted the music of past eras while at the same time tirelessly and selflessly championing the new music of many younger composers in Europe and Russia. In this regard, Liszt's name is inseparable from that of Wagner. In this historical-stylistic

perspective, however, it should be remembered that the “New German School” of music was the conception of Franz Liszt and not of Richard Wagner. As Humphrey Searle wrote:

[Liszt] was always searching for the new in music, not only in his own compositions but also by helping others, as conductor, arranger, pianist or writer. . . .
[He] moved quickly away from the standard Classical forms of music, putting his trust in new ones which he invented himself. . . .
[He felt it] his mission to heighten man’s experience and at the same time embody it in all its manifestations—the quest for the spiritual, the knowledge of the diabolical, the ceaseless exploration in spite of loneliness and insecurity.²

The last phrase “the ceaseless exploration in spite of loneliness and insecurity,” a description of Liszt’s attitudes, may seem contradictory in the light of all that is known about him. If anything, his life and activities—as performer, as conductor, as composer and writer, as arranger of many popular melodies from contemporary song and opera literature, and also as a progenitor of social gossip—were always at the center of attention of those around him, whether they were friends or critics. Was any part of Liszt’s life lonely and insecure? One answer to this question can be found in the opening paragraph of Searle’s *Grove* article: “In his compositions [Liszt] developed new methods, both imaginative and technical, which left their mark upon his forward-looking contemporaries and anticipated some 20th-century ideas and procedures.”³

What Searle refers to here is an aspect of Franz Liszt that, until relatively recently, has largely escaped the notice of the general music public, those in the musicological community, and historical-analytical theorists in particular: Liszt was not only an early voice in foretelling the dawning of a new age in tonal music, but also was the first composer conscientiously to apply his visionary and innovative devices in creating compositions that were before his own time and therefore beyond the range of immediate comprehension, and further alienated his contemporary audiences, critics and even his once-close friends and ardent admirers. Thus, Liszt found himself alone in the path of his personal quest, firm in the belief—although with a degree of uncertainty—that exploration of the idiom of the future was his musical life’s mission. When his works in newer idioms were denounced and labeled incomprehensible, he prohibited performance of these

compositions, claiming that although these works would not be understood by his contemporaries, he was confident that they would be appreciated by future generations.

Purpose of the Study

What is the nature of Liszt's music for the future, and what was the impetus that prompted arguably the most popular musician of the romantic period to devote so much of his creative energy, in spite of the controversies surrounding such efforts, to creating radical and "incomprehensible" compositions. Above all, what is the influence of these works on later generations of composers? Are there explanations for his efforts other than his visionary perception of fundamental changes in tonal music? In other words, should not the historical position of Franz Liszt as not only one of the most eminent pianists of all time but, perhaps more importantly, as a visionary composer, be reassessed? This study attempts to answer these questions through analysis of a set of his piano works titled "Mephisto," in order to trace the development of Liszt's engagement of omnitonic idioms of his own devising, and to determine if there is indeed any evidence of continuous and progressively effective uses of such idioms in the four Mephisto dances which span a period of over two decades. This study will also attempt to offer an explanation of Liszt's efforts at creating omnitonic idioms by linking these findings with programmatic ideas of Liszt, the foremost of the nineteenth-century programmatic composers. This investigation will begin with an examination of the influences that shaped the artistic temperament and personal stylistic traits of Liszt the composer.

CHAPTER 2

INFLUENCES ON LISZT'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Hungarian and Gypsy Music: Liszt's Cultural Roots

Franz Liszt's ethnic lineage can be traced through German-speaking migrants to western Hungary in the late seventeenth century. His grandfather, George List, was a school master and cantor who, in turn, taught music to his son Adam, Franz Liszt's father. Although of Hungarian descent, the family had never learned to speak the language, because Hungary as a country did not exist at that time, and the territory was annexed to Austria. (Liszt's mother was an Austrian German.) Therefore, for the Liszts and others in the region, their first language was German, spoken at home and through educational stages. The family's original surname, *List*, which was changed to *Liszt* during Adam's university years, reflects this German affiliation. At age nineteen Adam entered a Franciscan order as a novice and, although he was dismissed two years later, he always fondly remembered his association with friars. While in university, Adam Liszt studied music in addition to his primary subjects and became proficient not only in piano, but also in several other instruments. He became accomplished enough to play cello in the court orchestra at the Esterhazy Palace, sometimes under Haydn's direction when the aged composer returned to Eisenstadt for festive events. Adam Liszt was a man of ambition and musical talent as performer and composer, and later obtained a post at the Eisenstadt court as a clerk to the agent of the Esterhazy estates. And it was Adam, Franz's musical father, who recognized the unusual talent in his son, who at early age had begun to show a remarkable ability to absorb music and to reproduce by ear what he heard. But because the family's financial means were meager, Adam became the

six-year-old Franz's first piano teacher. He quickly was astounded by the extraordinary progress of his son, and the elder Liszt recorded in his journal the ecstasy he felt in recognizing his son's genius: "My son, you are marked for destiny! You will achieve all the artistic hopes that fascinated me in vain as a youth. . . . The genius, born out of season in me, will in you bear fruit."¹

Adam soon realized, however, that he was no longer able to keep pace with his son's extraordinary progress. In addition, at age eight and without any schooling, Franz also began to show a talent for composing. Thereby the father sought in earnest the best possible teacher for his gifted son, even making a plea to his master at the Esterhazy court for assistance. He found this teacher in Carl Czerny, and from him Liszt received a solid training in technical virtuosity in the classical tradition. Liszt also studied counterpoint with Reicha and, later, composition with the famed Viennese court composer Salieri, who also took an interest in Liszt and pleaded with the Esterhazy master to aid Liszt in musical training. However, these were not the first and the more deep-lying forces and molded Liszt's earliest musical personality. It was Gypsy music blended with a Hungarian cultural heritage to which he was exposed, and in which he showed a keen interest even before his music lessons from his father. He would rekindle his fascination with this music later and sustain an affinity for it throughout his life.

Liszt's exposure to Hungarian and Gypsy music from his early years and throughout his creative career can be credited in no small measure to the fact that during the first half of the nineteenth century there was a considerable surge in the popularity of Hungarian (and neighboring Rumanian) Gypsy music. Gypsy bands even gained a general social recognition and acceptance, providing them with new opportunities to play their indigenous music, as well as their own versions of the works of contemporary composers in concert halls and courts—for example, at the prestigious Ezsterhaza Palace, the estate near Liszt's early home—with notable degrees of success. Gypsy musicians also began to receive formal training, and many had attained professional status and held appointed positions.

Notable in particular is the fact that Gypsy musicians began to incorporate some impressively virtuosic figurations in their performance, particularly when accompanying dances. There are many such figurations, but characteristic features include trills in octaves, rapid passages in thirds and sixths, fast and wide-range arpeggiated patterns, unmetered “impromptu” rhythmic patterns such as fast triplets followed by a long-held note (a figuration often associated with Gypsy dances), elegiac monophonic passages (imitating solo violin) and the peculiar “Gypsy scale” containing augmented seconds. This type of music became the important driving force in bringing about a spontaneous reform of the musical language of the Gypsy bands that also assimilated contemporary European musical idioms.² These musical gestures are the ones with which Liszt felt a kinship with; he often claimed himself a “half Gypsy.” Liszt’s re-identification of himself with his cultural roots can also be appreciated by the fact that he felt it a personal loss not to have learned to speak Hungarian. He made a concerted effort to do so later in his life, and urged his son to do the same. An understanding of this inner urge of Liszt the composer, not only to regain but also to express his original ethnic-cultural personality, can lead to an appreciation of many passages in his compositions in which “Gypsy music” gestures can easily be identified, not only in the works with the name *Hungarian* in their titles, but also in other works not overtly associated with Hungarian or Gypsy music, but having the musical intent merely to evoke a sense of drama. Indeed, such Hungarian-Gypsy musical gestures are easily noted in his popular Hungarian rhapsodies, for example. But more characteristic and worthy of study, although less known and infrequently performed, is a set of seven “Historical Hungarian Portraits” (*Historische ungarische Bildnisse*) composed late in his life. The same idiomatic gestures can frequently be found in Liszt’s other “non-Hungarian” compositions, such as in the opening passage from his transcription or Reminiscence of Bellini’s *Norma*, subtitled Grand Fantasy, shown below (Example 1, next page). This has the repeated pattern of chordal sonorities followed by quick, repeated notes, the same or similar dramatic gesture that can be found in all Liszt’s Hungarian works (e.g. his Hungarian rhapsodies).

Example 1 F. Liszt, “*Reminiscences of Norma: Grand Fantasy*,” opening passage



Czerny, Berlioz, Chopin, and Other Contemporaries

In the summer of 1819 Adam Liszt brought his young son to meet Carl Czerny, the renowned pedagogue of piano and a famous student of Beethoven. Czerny’s observation concerning his encounter with Franz Liszt on this occasion was recorded in Czerny’s memoir:

[Franz Liszt] was a pale sickly-looking child. . . . His playing too was quite irregular, untidy and confused, and he had such little knowledge of fingering that he simply threw his fingers all over the keyboard in a quite arbitrary way. But despite this, I was astounded at the talent with which Nature had endowed him. He played at sight one or two things I gave him with such a natural instinct, that this showed all the more clearly that here Nature had herself created a pianist. It was just the same when . . . I gave him a theme on which to improvise: without the smallest knowledge of harmony, he still put a touch of genius into his delivery.³

In 1822 Liszt began his piano study with Czerny, the most well-known pedagogue in Vienna,

and composition study with the court composer Salieri. This year also saw the first publication of one of Liszt's compositions, a variation on the theme by Diabelli which was included among fifty variations by a number of well-established composers who also were considerably senior to the mere eleven-year-old boy. These composers included Czerny, Hummel and Schubert. Although not a part of this collection of variations, the set written by Beethoven and published separately is the most famous. In particular, Czerny—himself the composer of more than a thousand works and author of hundreds of piano studies and exercises—imposed on Liszt the most regimented exercises toward technical perfection. Czerny was obviously impressed with Liszt's progress, and he commented that, because Liszt was able to learn so quickly, "he acquired the ability to read at sight very difficult works as if he had studied them a long time."⁴ Late in 1823, Czerny arranged for Liszt to give his first public Viennese concert. Legends abound about the success of his early public performances and his appearances in aristocratic circles. His meeting with and approval by Beethoven—regardless of the credibility of whether the event ever actually took place—was regarded by Liszt himself as the highest seal of recognition and his christening as an accomplished musician. His reverence for Beethoven has been depicted in numerous paintings, and one of the more tangible demonstrations of this supposed event was the completion, at Liszt's own expense, of Beethoven's statue in Bonn. It was unveiled at a musical festival in 1845 that he jointly conducted with Spohr. Liszt showed his sense of indebtedness to Czerny with his *études*, as he also had done much earlier with his first published work on the theme of Diabelli, which is much in the fashion of the Czerny *études*.

From the standpoint of compositional ideal and aesthetic perception, however, it was Liszt's contemporary composer-performers who exerted a greater influence on Liszt the composer; among them were Schumann, Berlioz, Chopin, and even his fellow pianist of rivalry, Thalberg.⁵ As a composer, Liszt wrote over 1,300 works; many are in the nature of transcription-arrangements but four hundred of them are original compositions. James Hunecker (1857-1921), an American

music critic and journalist who was also an accomplished pianist and taught at the National Conservatory in New York, regarded Liszt as the “most musical” of musicians of his time.⁶ However, as history has borne witness, the conflicts and quarrels among composers and performers over musical styles and personal allegiances during the later half of the nineteenth century caused the isolation of Liszt and even an avoidance of performing his music. In these conflicts, it should be pointed out, Liszt was often an innocent victim. He thus harbored no ill feeling toward others and, with his perpetual generosity and lack of willingness to cause further turmoil, chose rather to withdraw himself and his music from the public. But throughout his life, Liszt the piano virtuoso was also a visionary composer who, while drawing inspiration from many of his contemporaries such as Chopin, Berlioz, and Schumann, also succeeded in amalgamating these “borrowed threads” to spin out a brilliant musical tapestry uniquely his own. Studies abound that support the belief that, in forming his own compositional style, Liszt was indebted to both the poetic lyricism and arpeggiated figurations of Chopin; the spontaneity and melodic ingenuity, and even the procedures of thematic transformation of Berlioz; and the harmonic language (especially the use of non-essential harmony derived from a contrapuntal fabric of voices) and a tonal sphere (realm of key relationship) of Schumann. It can even be shown that the three-stave scoring that has been regarded as one of Liszt’s unique contributions to musical notation is actually a notational realization of the musical ideals in Sigismund von Thalberg’s legendary *cantabile* playing technique. As Watson described it, the effect of Thalberg’s playing was like “playing with three hands: the melody was sustained in the middle register with alternate hands while surrounded by a filigree of arpeggiated chords.”⁷ The following passage, excerpted from his transcription of themes from Bellini’s opera *Norma*, serves to demonstrate this three-stave notational music in which the melody is in the middle register and is played by alternating hands, while this melody is surrounded by harmonic arpeggiation of wide registral range and also played by alternating hands.

Example 2 Illustration of three-stave notation, from *Reminiscences of Norma* (mm.338-41)



It is with his innate musical sense, in the words of Czerny quoted earlier, that “the Nature herself had created” a composer, that Liszt succeeded in producing works of unique and unusual temperament. Moreover, Liszt was never content with the past and present; he was always in search of the new, not only in his playing but also in composing. Liszt’s ceaseless search for the new and fantastic was further prompted by another impetus: the effect that Niccolò Paganini’s performance had on him when he was twenty years old.

Paganini: A Source of “Devilish” Inspiration for Liszt

In 1831 Paganini gave his first Paris performance, which caused an immediate sensation

in the musical community. By this time Paganini was regarded as the preeminent violinist of his time (having won a “contest” against Charles Philip LaFont, then the most famous French violinist), and he had produced works (e.g., Caprices, op.1, and two concerti) of great difficulty and bravura. He was at the height of his career and was universally recognized and hailed as the greatest violinist of all time. One of the highest honors bestowed on Paganini was the knighthood that Pope Leo XII conferred on him in 1827. Specifically, Paganini’s renditions produced a musical effect that all but transcended the limitations of the violin. As one critic wrote on Paganini’s first Paris performance: “[The audience’s response] was a divine, diabolic enthusiasm. . . . the people have all gone crazy.”⁸

The impression that Paganini’s performance had on Liszt (himself already a celebrated pianist) when he first heard him on March 9, 1831, was profound and lasting. Besides the bravura display of superhuman virtuosity, Paganini’s appearance—his cadaverous countenance as a result of surgery on his jawbone—and, later, his sinister personal behavior (or the rumors thereof) evoked a devilish aura. Even the name *Paganini* connoted that he was a diminutive devil (Paganini) incarnate. The rumor that his superhuman virtuosity was a reward for his having made a pact with Mephisto himself (along with the many strange rumors surrounding his life) added to the already phenomenal sensation.

To Liszt, however, Paganini’s performance was a challenge not only to the German or French “virtuoso schools” of training but to him personally. He felt that he too must not only perform on a level that transcended the heretofore-known technical boundary of piano playing but also that he should create music that rose above the limitations of idiomatic piano music. There followed a series of compositions in which Liszt attempted to realize his new vision of piano music and performance techniques, such as the impossibly difficult grand fantasy on Paganini’s *La Campanella* and the subsequent Paganini *études*, which also drew from Paganini’s Caprices for solo violin. Liszt had often written or arranged works to pay tribute to his fellow composers—Berlioz, Schumann, Chopin, for example. But the above-mentioned works in response to Paganini’s

performance were not mere tributes, but were conscientious and laborious re-creations to demonstrate Liszt's ability to rise to what he felt as a personal challenge upon hearing Paganini's performance. In one respect, it can be argued that the impression of Paganini—both his performance and compositions—was more profound and lasting than any of the influences of Liszt's other contemporaries.

For a better appreciation of the extent of Paganini's influence on Liszt, it is necessary briefly to compare the lives of the two men. Many aspects of their lives are similar or even nearly identical: both were from poor but not wholly impoverished family backgrounds; both of their fathers were skilled musicians, the first to take note of their sons's unusual musical talent and become their first teacher; both showed remarkable ability, not only in mastering virtuosic techniques at a relatively young age (about twelve years of age), but also in playing at sight highly demanding pieces with ease, as though they had extensively rehearsed them; and they both showed a natural gift for composing (and, later, for conducting). Indeed both were hailed as the greatest virtuoso on their respective instruments. It may be speculated that, in listening to Paganini's performance, in studying his compositions, and in understanding his life and personality, Liszt felt an artistic kinship with this violin virtuoso. In fact some identical traits of personality existed between the two. If Paganini had made a pact with Mephistopheles himself, for example, Liszt also had affiliated artistically with Mephistopheles, and even carried a cane on which were carved three masks—St. Francis of Assisi, Gretchen and Mephisto. In performing and composing, Liszt and Paganini appeared to have been born of the same bloodline of artistic temperament and musical ideals. They made their music transcend their instruments, strove to elevate music to the levels of highest virtuosic demand, refined interpretive nuance, and emotional impact that, so that as a result their music could be adequately and correctly performed only by themselves and a few others.⁹ This is not to say that Paganini and Liszt wrote prohibitively difficult music only in order to display their bravura virtuosity or that their virtuosic playing influenced only other violinists and pianists. Paganini's virtuosity did influence other composers as well. Many studies on the

influence of Paganini's compositions on Chopin, Schumann and Liszt give evidence to the musical artistry of Paganini's music. He approached his compositional craft with great care and earnestness, and his compositions, particularly the concerti, are of an artistic merit which surpasses anything that had been written for violin up to that time. That, too, had a great influence on the much younger Liszt who, like Paganini, was endowed with the creative gift of composing.

Another element exists as a shaping force in Liszt's compositional style, and is one that not only contributed to Liszt's philosophical and aesthetic perspectives, but also in a more lasting way continued to play a major role part in giving Liszt a conceptual direction in creating a new musical language. The source of this shaping force came from François-Joseph Fétis, a composer (he wrote a violin concerto when he was nine years old), a critic, and a historical theorist (i.e., musicologist) of considerable reputation who was regarded as one of the most influential musical figures of the nineteenth century.

Fétis: The Source of A Vision into “Music of the Future”

In the year that Liszt attended Paganini's Paris performance, he also attended a lecture series by a renowned Belgian historical theorist, François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871), who was a professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory. This event greatly affected Liszt's concept of the tradition and heritage of music, and in particular his compositional attitude. This effect was as significant as or, in the context of this study, even greater than that of Paganini's performance.

François-Joseph Fétis had attended the Paris Conservatory during its early years and, in 1821, he was invited by Cherubini, a leading composer and an influential figure during the formative years of the Conservatory, to return to his alma mater as professor of composition. However, Fétis's greatest contribution during his tenure at the Conservatory was not in teaching composition—although he did, and Paganini was among his students—but as the advocate of a new approach to studying music history. While Fétis had studied the harmonic theory of Rameau

during his conservatory years and was well acquainted with the contemporary philosophical stance on the history of Western music, he put great effort into formulating revolutionary ideas, not only on the theory of music, but also on historical perspectives of music in general, these including European music, and the music of all historical periods, geographic regions and cultural heritages. He preached against the doctrine of harmony established by Rameau and took a stance on music history that departed from traditionally held perspectives. Regarding theory, he objected to Rameau's idea that the principles of harmony are endowed with and sanctioned by natural laws. It is humans, Fétis believed, who took the raw material of sounds (from and in nature) and organized and manipulated them in various ways as expressive gestures according to their tastes and temperaments, thereby giving meaning to music. He was the first to call attention to and raise interest in the music of other cultures and ethnic groups, regarding these "other" types of music as of equal artistic merit to the contemporary (e.g. classical-oriented or conservatory sanctioned) art music of European heritage. Fétis arrived at this stance from his careful study of all the music available to him, especially the music of past historical eras such as the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque periods. He also edited, transcribed, and executed performance renditions of older music, from Binchois to Bach. A powerful source of Fétis's influence on musical criticism in France was his position as founder and editor of the *Revue musicale* of Paris. And he used his writings to exert a considerable sway on the opinion of the French musical community. In short, Fétis established an attitude toward musical study that was revolutionary. Today he is regarded as one of the earliest advocates of the discipline of comparative musicology (*vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*) which today is called *ethnomusicology*. Fétis pursued this new branch of musical inquiry with the objective and systematic logic of a scientist, and put forth a number of musicological posits that are still considered valid. Among them are the following two fundamental statements expressing Fétis's historical-philosophical doctrine of music:

1. That music, like language, does not progress from one previous and hence a lower stage to the next and hence a higher one, that music of each generation and of each genre is a self-sufficient artistic entity, complete in itself and is to be appreciated on its own merit; and
2. That music simply changes from one generation to another, differs from one socio-cultural environment to another, that every society (and every ethnic people) invents its own artistic conventions and therefore its own kind of music.¹⁰

Perhaps the best-known, the most crystallized, and well-articulated doctrine of Fétis's theory of history is his classification of changes in musical idioms into four periods of stylistic manifestation, or *ordre*, all gauged and defined from the perspective of "tonality." (The connotation of this word differs slightly, but in a significant way from the English word of the same spelling.¹¹)

1. *Unitonic* (characteristic of early modal period; e.g., monophonic music)
2. *Transitonic* (characteristic of Baroque and Classical periods with its established patterns of harmonic progressions and modulation procedures)
3. *Pluritonic* (music characterized by frequent tonal shifts and modal mixtures, such as that of nineteenth century) and
4. *Omnitonic* (systematic exploitation of all possible tonal and modal boundaries of musical sounds, characteristic of music from the last decade of nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century, where the established tonal and harmonic systems and procedures were all but defied and where even a single tone can be made sufficient to create a tonal orientation in itself).¹²

It can only be speculated about the impact that Fétis, with his profound musical insight and strong advocacy, had on the young Liszt. It would seem reasonable that Liszt would feel confident that his music, the music of his Hungarian culture and even that of the lowly Gypsies, now had an advocacy and legitimacy of its musical artistry. It can also be speculated that Liszt received a

vision—at least through a conceptual imagery—of the music of the future, not only in terms of the later years of his life but also of those beyond his lifetime. Here it is worth mentioning that Fétis, the great music historical theorist, had high regard for the much younger Liszt and would pay him tribute by including excerpts from Liszt's compositions among the examples of master composers such as Bach, Scarlatti, and Beethoven in his publication (e.g., *Méthode des méthodes de piano*, Paris: c.1840; co-authored with I. Moscheles). In turn, Fétis's philosophical purview of music history and style idioms also contributed to Liszt's regard for the works of other, even older, masters, and increased his discernment of musical styles and the stylistic harmonic and contrapuntal gestures in particular. Therefore, Liszt's numerous transcriptions and arrangements should not be regarded as mere adaptations and reharmonizations of other composers' thematic material but as Liszt's way of paying homage to the art of other composers as well as helping to popularize their music and enable their works to be appreciated anew. From unadorned monophonic melody to simple chorale-like texture or full orchestral sonority, from undiluted diatonic melody and harmony to that of extreme chromaticism and rapid tonal shift through keys of the most remote regions, Liszt's compositions demonstrate his embracing of the most diverse musical idioms, as well as the care he took in treating the thematic material of other composers and in creating works that became uniquely his own. For example, the diminished seventh chord and augmented triad (and, hence, the implied whole-tone scale) had been used by various composers of Liszt's time even before the mid-nineteenth century; a bold use of augmented triads in Chopin's Etude in A^b Major (from *Trois Nouvelles Études*, 1839) is but one such example. But Liszt's harmonic treatments are decidedly bolder and unlike other contemporaries; this can be seen by examining various passages of Liszt's variation on the theme from Bach's chorale "*Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*," for example, written in 1861, shortly after the death of his son, Daniel Liszt. One passage in particular demonstrates Liszt's inventiveness in engaging the existing material to create a soundscape that is completely new, and which defies the principles of tonal music. It is a series of augmented chords, each with an appoggiatura (or, a series of minor triads

each with a passing tone) on a descending succession of tones that form a whole-tone scale:

Example 3 Parallel augmented chord over a whole-tone scale, from
 “Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,” m. 203ff

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems. The first system begins at measure 203 and the second at measure 207. The music is written for both hands, with complex harmonic structures featuring parallel augmented chords over a whole-tone scale. Performance markings include 'espress. *)' at the start of the first system, 'sf' (sforzando) in the first system, 'ritenuto' (ritardando) above the first system, 'a tempo' above the first system, 'poco a poco' (ritardando) in the second system, and 'sf' (sforzando) in the second system. The notation includes many accidentals and complex rhythmic patterns.

Whether it is with a “harmonization” by sequential parallel chords (as in the above example) or by a series of chromatic monophonic melodic fragments, the musical effect is often one that undermines all the established credos of functional tonality, and which is devoid of any harmonic implication and lacks any key orientation. It is easy to understand the reason for such keyless passages; this is a programmatic “tone painting,” conveying the profound grief of Liszt the father in agony over the death of his only son. And in one of the most poignant tonal paintings, Liszt engaged the chorale theme that depicts the agony over the death of Christ, and conveys Liszt’s own resignation and his finding consolation through a deeper faith in God. In this excerpted passage (example 4), a particular phrase, marked with brackets, should be noted. In this phrase the descending chromatic scale is harmonized by segmenting it into three sets of four-note sequences, each segment harmonically and linearly implying a particular tonal orientation in a manner that can serve as a model of what Fétis called *ordre pluritonique*. The musical idioms encompass the whole gamut of musical styles, from unitonic to transitonic, to pluritonic and finally to omnitonic.

Example 4 Harmonization of the chorale melody “Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,” including a phrase with trans tonic treatment (marked with brackets)

Choral
Lento

320 Was Gott tut, das ist wohl - ge-tan, da - bei will ich ver - blei - hen. Es
dolce dim. pi ff

325 mag mich auf die rau - he Bahn Not, Tod und E - lend
maestoso

328 trei - - ben, es wird mich Gott ganz vä - ter - lich in sei - nen Ar - men
p dolce dolciss. sempre dolce e legato

332 hal - ten; drum laß ich ihn nur wal - - ten.
f slargando poco a poco più mosso *)
tre corde

Quasi Allegro

337 cresc. ff sempre marc.

Example 4: continued

342 *ritenuto* *ten.* *riten.*

ff

ten.

347 *molto* *a tempo, un poco animato*

ff

351

355 *trem.*

360

On Liszt, the impact of Fétis's philosophical view of music exceeded the legitimacy of adapting Hungarian and Gypsy-like idioms to his own compositions. It affected Liszt in his conception of the tonal nature of music, giving him not only a clearer recognition of the nature of changes in the music of his time (the pluritonic music of the Romantic period, especially in terms of expanded harmonic vocabulary and a much extended sphere of key-relationship) from that of the preceding periods (i.e., the trans-tonic music of the Baroque and Classical periods, with the established system of scales and modulatory procedures within the boundaries of diatonic key relationships in music prior to Beethoven), but also a realization that changes in the tonal nature of music will continue in a predictable path into the future in what Fétis called the period of "omnitonic" music. This may be equated with music in which, either through constant modulation augmented by chords of enharmonic or nebulous meanings (such as in equidistant chords) or by deliberate disregard for the procedures of the scalar and harmonic systems of "functional music," the tonal and harmonic meaning of music would become aurally imperceptible and conceptually untenable. In this new music, the mutual and contextual relationships of melodic tones and chordal sonorities, once implicit in the diatonic system and held sacrosanct, is all but abandoned. In other words, both the aural and conceptual recognitions of tonality will now cease to exist. Music—indeed all and any tones—may be freely engaged, without the slightest referential gesture, thereby creating the effect of all tonalities being present simultaneously or successively (as in a chain of free-order modulation), on equal terms. In short, it is a music without tonality, or *atonal* music (a term that Arnold Schoenberg detested), music in which all tonalities coexist simultaneously, or *pantonal* music (the term that Schoenberg preferred).

It can never be known why, soon after 1842, Liszt decided to abandon his career in public performance and turn more to composition. But without minimizing the influences of Czerny, Berlioz, Chopin, Thalberg, and other composers of his contemporary and the immediately preceding periods (e.g., Beethoven), it is important to recognize the more profound impact that Paganini's music and compositions and Fétis's philosophic-musical perspectives had on Liszt in

1832, and to understand that their impact continued to shape his compositional style, this being particularly observable in the works written after about 1850 (NOTE: Fétis's *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie* was published in 1849). From 1845 to 1850 and onward, Liszt exerted his influence more as conductor and as the advocate for new music (e.g., in the works of Wagner) than as the undisputed virtuoso, while he continued in his quest for the “new” in his compositional endeavors. It has been stated that, as composer, “Liszt was a great musical technician. He organized his compositions with deliberate intent to create music that is essentially new.”¹³ Liszt the composer would devote his creative energy to inventing new idioms and charting a new path toward omnitonic music; however, with each innovative tonal and harmonic gesture, the voices of criticism and even insult against his compositions grew louder. Still, Liszt persisted in his visionary quest and, toward the end, he would even admonish his now fewer but still faithful followers not to play his later compositions during his lifetime and not to publish his daringly new works, claiming with confidence that these compositions were intended for and would be appreciated by future generations.¹⁴ Thus, Liszt's critics and their allied publishers and musical organizations prevailed in silencing his new voice, and his music fell into general neglect. It is only in recent decades, nearly a century after the composer's death (e.g., in the founding of Liszt Societies in Europe and in the United States) that there has been a revival of interest in Liszt's compositions. Some now call attention to Liszt as the visionary composer who charted a musical path that eventually led to the realization of atonality in this century. Among the scholars who have written convincingly on this topic are Humphrey Searle and Alan Walker.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ATONAL IDIOMS IN LISZT'S MUSIC

An Attempt at (Re-)defining Tonality and Atonality

In his 1832 philosophic-musical lecture series in Paris and in his subsequent publications (notably the subsequent and enlarged treatise *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie*, published in Paris in 1849), François-Joseph Fétis foretold the coming of a new system (*ordre*) of musical composition which he called *omnitonique*. According to this theory, the music of *ordre omnitonique* would have the following distinctive features:

1. There will be an increasing proliferation of tones, resulting in erasing the boundaries between the diatonic and chromatic tones and their enharmonic equivalents, as well as the differences between various scale patterns and the distinctions between diatonic and chromatic chords.
2. The established prerequisites of melodic and harmonic interval connections-resolutions, and patterns of root movement and cadential formulae will be abandoned, and
“every conceivable sensation could be submitted to [the independency of] tone.”¹

In other words, the concept of tonality in music as had been known would become wholly untenable. A note sequence, whether melodic or chordal, will not be subject to any requisites of tonality and, if there is any impression of keyness in the beginning of a piece, it does not have to be reaffirmed at the conclusion of that same piece. Key or the necessity to create a sensation of keyness is no longer mandated in musical procedures.

In order to more fully appreciate the prediction of Fétis as summarized in the above statements, it is necessary to refer to definitions of tonality and atonality found in today's publications. The *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines tonality as follow:

[The] organized relationships of tones with reference to a definite center, the tonic, and generally to a community of pitch classes, called a scale, of which the tonic is the principal tone; sometimes also synonymous with key. . . .
[It] is defined and reinforced by the presence of a tonal center, embodied harmonically in the tonic triad; by harmonic progressions pointing to the tonic, especially by strong cadences, by pedal points and ostinato bases and essential diatonicism.²

The same article also describes various ways in which the sense of tonality can be weakened or even erased: by avoidance of tonic; by suppression of the dominant harmony; by emphasis on chromatic tones or chords, by [overuse of] dissonant pitches, or by [independence of] contrapuntal lines [which diminishes the clarity of the underlying harmonic progression]. Hence, atonality is defined as “absence of tonality . . . by suppression of the defining conditions of tonality . . . the elimination of the necessity for a central tonic triad and for diatonic harmonies functionally relating to it . . .” and, finally, “pitches [used] in such a way that these would be employed on a freely and equally associated basis.”³

Without further citations from any current publications,⁴ suffice it to say that present definitions of atonality reveal viewpoints remarkably close and even identical to those of Fétis which were articulated over a century and half ago, and almost a century before Schoenberg's establishment of his system of composing with twelve tones, or what he called *pantonal* music. However, these above statements are more in the nature of compositional concepts and ideas, rather than a concrete enumeration and description of the musical vocabulary and devices that ensure that the effect of a composition will be atonal. It is necessary, therefore, to mention the “material of music” and the procedures in composing atonal music.

The music of functional tonality can be described as that based on the following five basic source material and governing principles:

1. Major and minor—that is, the diatonic — heptatonic scale patterns are the basic material.
2. Diatonic chords (with each of the scale degrees as the root tone) are tertially structured.
3. Manners of chord connection (root movement) follow the three prescribed harmonic conjugation patterns: fifth (mostly down), third (mostly down), and second (mostly up), with the first (or the first two) being the most prominent and may be engaged consecutively, but the root movement of the second being of limited frequency, usually in the pattern of series of no more than three (upward-moving) chords (such as might be in harmonic progression pattern of IV-V-vi; V-vi-vii^o or vi-vii^o-I).
4. Structural unit (phraseology) is defined (i.e., demarcated and identifiable) by the prescribed cadential patterns which in general follow also the harmonic principles stated above.
5. Both melodic and harmonic movements in a composition begin and (particularly) close with assertion of the tonic pitch and the tonic triad, which functions as the point of reference of all musical gestures, so that although the supremacy of tonic may at times be challenged, it is always restored ultimately.

These are also the essential tonal requisites that bind all the compositions of the “common-practice period,” from Schütz to Saint-Saëns and from Buxtehude to Brahms, although with varying degrees of adherence to these procedural principles. However, even a casual analytic examination of works regarded as representative of this style period reveals that many of these stylistic constraints are often and deliberately violated. Even with the engagement of nondiatonic chord types and root-movement patterns of nebulous harmonic nature, swift and frequent modulations (without fully confirming the implied tonal regions) to keys of the most remote regions, abundant use of dissonances and avoidance of harmonically discernible cadences, an implicit impression of tonality exists in the great majority of compositions, even in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In other words, the non-adherence to these conditions described above does not in itself warrant the creation of composition to be atonal. Drawing from the above list of tonal conditions,

it is possible now to make a list of procedures that may be said to produce atonal effect in music, such the following:

1. Avoid (or de-emphasize the hierarchical importance of) tonic pitch or the tonic triad.
2. Avoid dominant harmony (which suggests a tonal focus by referentially pointing to tonic).
3. Avoid concordant sonorities (e.g., major and minor triads).
4. Avoid implication of tertian chords (e.g., triads and seventh chords).
5. Avoid any implication of (the established patterns of) harmonic cadence.
6. Avoid consonant intervals (e.g., major and minor thirds and sixths, and perfect fourths and fifths that are implicit in the harmonic system of tonal music) or, conversely, constantly use dissonant intervals to avoid any implication of harmony.
7. Avoid any implication of tonal hierarchy by not reasserting at the end of the piece the same tonal orientation of the opening passage (i.e., progressive tonality).
8. Use widely spaced (e.g., over an octave) intervals or engage octave displacement in the otherwise predominantly stepwise or small-interval movement in the melody.

A mere observation of these procedures, however, will not by itself ensure that a composition will be atonal. Specifically, the first five items can actually be observed in various passages in a many works of Beethoven and, throughout the nineteenth century, in the late works of Brahms and even of Wagner, where the musical effects still are wholly tonal. It may be concluded therefore that nonconformity to tonal compositional procedural requisites itself does not necessarily ensure that the result will be atonal. In order to have a clearer perception and a deeper appreciation of Liszt's later compositions, it is necessary first to identify the devices that Liszt created or adopted and then to examine how he used such devices in his compositions in an attempt to realize his ideas and ideal of omnitonic compositions.

Idioms for Atonal Music

Based on the procedural requisites of tonal music noted above, it is possible to identify more precisely the vocabulary for atonal music, vocabulary and idioms that are not necessarily alien to tonal music of the nineteenth century, but nonetheless contain factors that will undermine the integrity of tonal music. Essentially there are three such vocabulary items:

Whole-Tone Scale

The very nature of whole-tone scale contradicts and erases one of the most fundamental characteristics of all scale patterns of tonal music, which is an uneven distribution of intervals (mainly major vs. minor seconds, but may also involve others such as major and minor thirds, as in church modal patterns and pentatonic scales, and augmented second, as in certain national scale patterns, including the Gypsy and Arabian scales and harmonic minor scale). Because whole-tone scale has the intrinsic “equidistant” nature (partitioning the “obligatory octave” into equal-sized segments of six major seconds), it is impossible to use this scale to create a sense of linear gravitation in melody—such as in the leading-tone to tonic melodic “pull.” Liszt made an effective use of this nongravitational melodic line in the following example:

Example 5 Example of whole-tone scale; Mephisto Waltz no.3, mm.20-26

The musical score for Mephisto Waltz no. 3, measures 20-26, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 20-22) is marked "legato un poco marcato" and features a whole-tone scale in the right hand, starting on C4 and ascending to C5. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The second system (measures 23-25) continues the whole-tone scale in the right hand, which now descends from C5 to C4. The left hand continues with a similar accompaniment. The third system (measure 26) shows the final measure of the excerpt, with the right hand ending on C4 and the left hand with a final chord. The score is written for piano and includes dynamic markings such as "dim." in measure 25.

Augmented Triad

The nature of the augmented triad has much in common with the whole-tone scale: it is a tertial-chordal derivative of whole-tone scale; it divides an octave into (three) equal-size segments (of major third); and the chordal sonority, being nonconcordant in nature (i.e., while the chord consists of two major thirds which are consonant interval, the resultant interval of an augmented fifth makes the sonority discordant), has no aurally identifiable root because it does not contain either perfect-fifth or perfect-fourth intervals (i.e., the same augmented triad can be enharmonically spelled variously, with each of the tones becoming the “spelled root” in turn). As a chordal sonority, it is a “rootless” chord. (In fact, Gottfried Weber did not include in his 1817-23 treatises this chord—which is theoretically the mediant triad in minor key, derived from harmonic minor scale—in his listing of diatonic triads of *Grundharmonie*, regarding it as aurally untenable and therefore a “nonground” or rootless chord.) The following example illustrates the harmonic nature of this chord:

The image shows a musical staff with two systems of staves (treble and bass clef). The first system shows a C major triad (C4, E4, G4) in the treble clef and a single C4 in the bass clef. The second system shows an E major triad (E4, G4, B4) in the treble clef and a single E4 in the bass clef. The third system shows a G# major triad (G#4, B4, D#5) in the treble clef, with the G#4 and B4 notes also shown as F#4 and A4 respectively, and a single G#4 in the bass clef. The fourth system shows an Ab major triad (Ab4, Bb4, Db5) in the treble clef, with the Ab4 and Bb4 notes also shown as G#4 and A4 respectively, and a single Ab4 in the bass clef. Below the staff, the text 'Root: C E G# = Ab' is written, indicating the enharmonic equivalence of the roots.

Root: C E G# = Ab

Figure 1. Augmented triad and its enharmonic possibilities

Liszt engaged augmented triads in creating effects of tonal ambiguity, as can be demonstrated in the passage quoted below (see next page):

Example 6 Use of augmented triad; Mephisto Waltz no.3, mm.93-96



Diminished Triad and Diminished Seventh Chord

In the functional harmonic system (in which chord quality is intrinsically implied in the diatonic position of chords), a diminished triad is associated with the supertonic triad (in minor key) and the leading-tone triad (in both major and minor keys). A diminished-seventh chord (also referred to as fully diminished-seventh chord, in order to distinguish it from a half-diminished-seventh chord, where the interval between the root and the seventh is a minor seventh rather than a diminished seventh), on the other hand, has the functional harmonic association of a leading-tone seventh chord (in minor key). At the same time, it should be recognized that a diminished triad may at times be aurally perceived as an equivalent of a diminished seventh with one note omitted, but may be assumed nonetheless, depending on the spacing of that chord, as can be demonstrated in the following example:



Root: $B^{\flat} = D^{(\flat 7)} = D^{\flat 7} = B^{\flat 7} = G^{\sharp 7} (= F^{\flat 7} = A^{\flat 7})$

Figure 2. Diminished triad and its enharmonic equivalence to diminished-seventh chord

(This is the basis for the functional interpretation, as found in a number of theory textbooks, that the leading-tone triad is to be interpreted as an incomplete dominant seventh, i.e. with the root being omitted, but can be assumed nonetheless. See fig.3, below).

Although the sonority of a diminished seventh chord is quite different from that of an augmented triad, a number of important characteristics are shared: an octave is divided into (four) equal-sized segments (of minor third); the chord is discordant, and since, like an augmented triad, it is an equidistant chord, it has no aurally identifiable root (since it also does not contain a perfect fifth or fourth interval). In the tertial harmonic vocabulary (or any other harmonic system), the augmented triad and diminished-seventh chord are the only two different “true” equidistant chords possible. Like the augmented triad, a diminished-seventh chord is a rootless chord and can yield to various enharmonic spellings. For this reason also, the diminished-seventh chord is sometimes regarded as an (variously interpretable) incomplete dominant-ninth chord (with the root omitted but assumed nonetheless), as can be shown below:

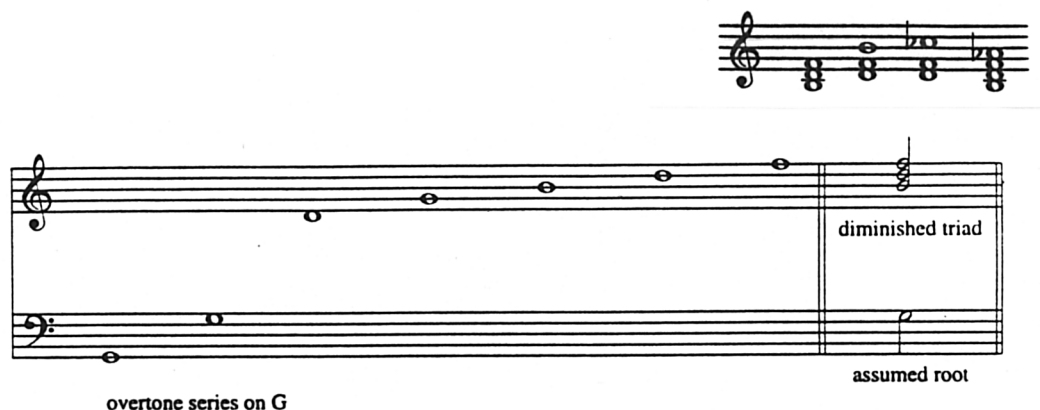


Figure 3. The equidistant nature of diminished triad and diminished-seventh chord, and their enharmonic equivalences and assumed roots

It is worth mentioning also that Gypsy scale often creates melodic (and chordal) effects that imply diminished triad or diminished-seventh chord, as can be shown below (see next page):

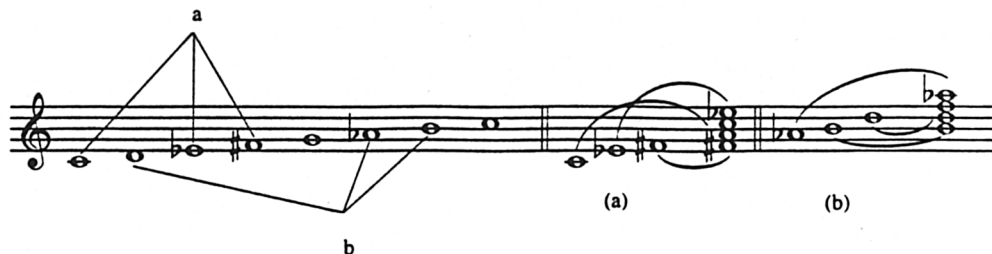


Figure 4. Gypsy scale as a diminished(-seventh) chord sonority derivative

There is an abundance of examples in eighteenth to nineteenth-century composition, in which diminished triads and diminished-seventh chords are used to affect tonal shift or undermine the integrity of one tonality in order to usher in another. However, the following example illustrates Liszt's use of diminished chords, such as diminished-minor-seventh and diminished-diminished-seventh chords, not to achieve tonal or modal shift, but to create an impression of tonal ambiguity:

Example 7 Example of diminished-seventh chords (diminished-minor and diminished-diminished); Mephisto Waltz no.1, mm.692-707



Quartal and Quintal Chords

There is no dispute that the functional tonal music supported by tertian harmony saw its first wide use in the early seventeenth century, then became fully established as a compositional system by the late seventeenth century and firmly systematized theoretically by the early eighteenth century. The principles of tertian harmony or tertial chord (the latter refers to nonfunctional harmonic use of tertially structured chord sonorities) may even be said to be derived from the acoustical—and hence nature-endowed—sound phenomenon (e.g., originated in the overtone series). Even in passages in which the vertical structure of chord at a given moment may be seen as nontertial, such sonority is always treated as “non-essential,” containing dissonant tones (relative to harmonic tones) and thus requiring a proper resolution. This can be shown below:

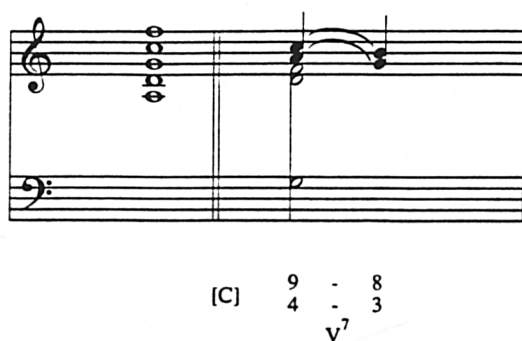


Figure 5. An example of non-tertial chord in the context of tertian harmony

It is understandable, therefore, that one of the more effective and immediate ways to undermine this natural tonal harmonic system is to construct chords in such a way that will defy the tertial principle; this can be accomplished by engaging a series of nontertial chords, such as quartal or quintal. (Hexal chord can be equated to a tertial derivative; two successive sixths, e.g., C-A-F, will produce a tertially interpretable chord; e.g., F-A-C.) While the spacing and register of notes in chords of nontertial structure will affect the nature of chords (e.g., the sense of

rootedness, as is inferred in Hindemith's theory of harmony), the sonorous effect of such chords is tonally ambiguous at best and even untenable, and any inversion of these chords further undermines any tonal inference that they may initially create, as can be demonstrated in the following example.

Functional		
9	-	8
4	-	3
	V	

Figure 6. Inversion and re-spacing of quartal (nontertial) chord and the difference in the resulting harmonic connotation

The following example will serve to illustrate Liszt's use of non-tertial chord sonorities mixed with tertial chords to create a sonorous effect of a harmonized passage which is entirely non-functional:

Example 8 Harmonization using nontertial chords; Bagatelle, mm18-22

Another device which engages chordal sonorities that may be regarded as a derivative form of tertially constructed chords, but as creating a nontonal and nonfunctional harmony, is parallel movement of chords in which tones in these chord exceed the gamut of diatonic scale degrees. In such passages, chordal sonority, or even the entire passage, creates only a palette of harmonic

colors or a soundscape, conveying no particular tonality orientation and creating no sense of harmonic gravitational direction. Such a passage can best be described as chord “succession,” rather than harmonic “progression.” The following excerpt (Example 9) illustrates Liszt’s use of parallel chords to create a tonally nebulous soundscape.

Example 9 Parallel chord in creating a non-functional sound-scape;
Mephisto Waltz no.3, mm.83-90 (only mm.83-86 shown)



Independence of Voices in Linear Fabrics

One characteristic of tonal music, including compositions of polyphonic and homophonic periods, is the consonant intervallic relation of voices. While dissonant intervals may indeed be used in vertical alignment of chordal tones at a given moment, these are, with the exception of harmonic dissonant intervals (i.e., intervals that can be found in diatonic chord sonorities; e.g., major and minor sevenths and their inversions, even major and minor ninths and their inversions, etc., all within the system of tertian harmonic idioms) treated in proper manners of non-essential dissonances (e.g., nonharmonic tones such as passing tone, appoggiatura, etc.). One of the style characteristics of mid- to late nineteenth-century compositions is the abundance of such non-essential dissonant tones, to the extent that a vertical alignment of these tones will create an

impression of a chord, although functionally untenable. Still, such chordal sonorities are always interpreted contextually and are inevitably regarded as nonfunctional or non-essential. Appoggiatura chord belongs to this category of nonfunctional (or non-essential) chord:

6 - 5	6 - 7	#4 - 5
#4 - 5	#4 - 5	#2 - 3
#2 - 3	#2 - 3	
[C]	V ⁷	I

Figure 7. Example of dissonant tones and dissonant intervals in the context of tertian functional harmony

This manner of treatment of linearity of voices is referred to as the principle of “part writing,” in which the movement of voice is controlled by and subject to harmonic principles. In essence, there is no complete freedom and unfettered independence of movement for any of the voices in a harmonized fabric of tonal music. (Even a series of notes in a melody, when harmonized, will be interpreted in the context of harmonic progression.) Conversely, the bestowing of complete independence to voices that move horizontally but exhibit no subordination to any controlling principles (harmonic or vertical-intervallic) can also yield a nontonal effect in music. This effect can be further enhanced when the collection of tones within a given passage substantially exceeds that of diatonic boundary (e.g., seven to nine, nine being the result of including two scale degrees of “modal” inflection—the mediant and submediant). In the following passage, Liszt produces through contrapuntal fabric a musical effect that is not only nondiatonic but also verges on nontonal or atonal:

Example 10 Example of independence of voices in the linear fabric creating a nontonal effect; “Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen,” mm.231-246 (only mm.232-237 shown)



The Question of Key Signature

In the theoretical system of tonal music, key signature is employed to convey a conceptual orientation of a tonality. Once that tonality is asserted through either thematic or harmonic exposition, all other tonalities that may be engaged during the course of the music will be gauged in relation to this principal tonality which, subsequently, will again be reasserted at the conclusion of a composition. This is true in short compositions such as a song, or even in an extended, multi-movement work such as a sonata or symphony. It is true that compositions in the nineteenth century show a certain degree of impatience or noncompliance with this tonal limitation; a sonata or a symphony, for example, may begin in the principal key of C minor but may end in C major. Still, the change is only in the modality, not in the tonality; the integrity of tonality still remains undefiled. With a few exceptions, Liszt continued to use key signature throughout his compositions. However, examples exist in which key signature loses its intended function. In other words, key signature in these works serves not to orientate tonality, but merely to define a

pitch collection. To further obscure any sense of tonality that sequence of tones may create, Liszt would at times alter the tonally all-important dominant harmony or the leading tone. For example, the key signature in a passage in his third Mephisto waltz has six sharps and the implied tonality in the initial phrase of this passage may be analyzed as F# major. However, even with the prolongation of C# (in the bass voice), the chord is all but dominant in function, due primarily to the fact that the all-important leading tone (E#) is never present. In fact neither F# major or D# minor is asserted in this passage, although the initial chordal sonority may even be construed as that of tonic 4-2 chord in the key of D# minor. There, however, CX (C-double sharp) as the leading tone of D# also does not make its appearance, thus creating a nontonally focused passage, as shown in the following example:

Example 11 Question of key and key signature; Mephisto Waltz no.3, mm.27-32

Among Liszt's few works that do not bear any key signature is his "Bagatelle Without Tonality," initially intended as the fourth Mephisto Waltz. Historically, this is one of the earliest works that bear no key signature. The reason for the lack of key signature throughout this piece is easily understandable; all twelve chromatic tones are freely used, and no thematic phrase or harmonic progression suggests any tonal orientation. In fact, this piece may be described as a free twelve-tone composition. It may be said that Liszt, with the abandoning of key signature in his

compositions, made a final and definitive gesture in parting with all the established systems, conceptual orientation, and compositional requisites of tonal music. Hence, in making his boldest assertion in proclaiming the essence of this compositional gesture, Liszt called it a bagatelle *without tonality*.

The Bold Assertion: “*Ohne Tonart*”

Liszt composed the bagatelle “ohne tonart” in 1885. It was initially intended as the fourth Mephisto waltz. ‘Ohne tonart’ (or *sans tonalité*; i.e., without tonality) in the title is arguably the first use of such designation for a composition in the history of music. This is worth noting, because no other nineteenth-century composer had so overtly challenged or defied the most fundamental of the requisites of tonal music. This was an unthinkably bold and defiant pronouncement, founded on the concept that took Liszt half a century to realize. There is little doubt that the seed of this musical ideal was first sown into Liszt’s musical thinking, and its subsequent maturing and fruition was sustained, by Fétis’s prophetic vision of future music which he articulated in his 1832 lecture series. (It is certain, too, that Liszt had read Fétis’s treatises on this and other subjects, as well as his numerous articles in the *Revue musicale*. For Liszt was an avid reader whose writing on music and musicians was also extensive.)

Liszt’s bold assertion should be appreciated also in the generally conservative climate of the contemporary music criticism, due in no small part to the rise of the institutionalization of conservatories in European countries and their formalized training curriculum. It is one thing to make a pronouncement as a gesture in embracing such a revolutionary view, but it is a wholly different matter actually to compose or attempt to produce a work in order to demonstrate such a radical idea. Especially for Liszt, this undertaking was with full knowledge that the work or even the mere suggestion in the title would risk not only the inevitable ridicule and denunciation from the musical public, but also further alienation from these within his already shrinking circle of

supporters. Still, Liszt steadfastly pursued his visionary quest, with an unwavering confidence that history would ultimately vindicate his effort.

At the same time, why did Liszt not consistently engage the omnitonic idioms of his own devising in all of his latest works, even those few that were composed after the Bagatelle (e.g. several sacred choral works of 1885, such as “Salve Regina”; the nocturne “En reve” 1885; and the second dance of two Hungarian Csárdás: “Csárdás obstiné” 1886)? Was Liszt not fully and firmly convinced of the worthiness of his visionary quest? The answer to this requires an understanding of one of the important aesthetic attitudes of Liszt the composer.

There is no question that Liszt was a leading champion of programmatic music. Earlier in his life he made a piano transcription of Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, which was published in 1834, before the symphony was published in full score, and which thus served as the basis for extensive critical analytical essays that Fétis and Schumann, among others, wrote; Fétis the negative criticism, and Schumann the positive support of Berlioz’s new work. It is of considerable significance to recognize that Liszt shared with Berlioz the same belief regarding music, that “music was the dramatic expression of an emotional experience, *an imitation of life itself*.”⁵ That is, for both Berlioz and Liszt, more than for any other romantic composer, every musical idea and every musical gesture must be intimately associated with and intended as a faithful portrayal of some image in life or some personality trait. This fundamental attitude about music was articulated in Berlioz’s essay “On Imitations in Music.”⁶ Berlioz, in one of his 1835 essays published in the *Gazette musicale de Paris*, expressed his confident hope that the day would come when the public and critics alike “will allow the artist full and complete freedom to formulate his own modes of expression.”⁷ Therefore, if any devices for creating an omnitonic music are to be used, their justification must rest on identifying an appropriate programmatic image for the intended composition. To Liszt, then, this justification of programmatic image in using omnitonic devices was Mephisto the diablo.

Mephistopheles (in the medieval legend, to whom Faust sold his soul in exchange for wisdom and youth) was a personification of the diabolical and was associated in music with that of a tritone. (The famous statement in various medieval treatises, “MI contra FA, diabolus in musica,” is the basis of this association. See Note 8, Chap.3.) In functional music, tritone is an inseparable element of dominant harmony (i.e., essential dissonance in V^7 , $vii^{\circ 7}$ and vii°). Especially in the fully diminished seventh chord, there are two tritone intervals, equally spaced and, as discussed previously, the chord yields to enharmonic spellings and thus various interpretations and resolutions. Essentially, this interval has no aurally identifiable root (refer to fig. 2), and it may even be construed as an incomplete diminished seventh chord which, in turn, also has no aurally assertable root tone. In other words, both harmonically and tonally, a tritone (which characterizes a diminished triad and diminished seventh chord) possesses a cynical and deceptive personality. It can be either a part of a consonant discord or a dissonant concord (as Rameau had regarded the interval of a minor seventh—as that in V^7 —as concordant dissonance since it is within an aurally discernible range of natural overtone series).

The prohibition of tritone in the hexachord system and the fact that it was specifically mentioned in regard to the hexachordal permutation process is well known.⁸ Liszt must have seen tritone’s particular musical personality trait of rootlessness as connoting a peculiar programmatic imagery—specifically, the personality trait of Mephisto the diabolus. It is understandable, therefore, that all of Liszt’s compositions bearing the name *Mephisto* (including his *Faust* Symphony) contain various omnitonic devices, and this, in turn, can be more fully appreciated with a recognition of Liszt’s attempt to depict the cynical and deceptive personality of Mephisto. In the opening passage of the *Faust* Symphony, Liszt engaged a chromatically descending succession of (arpeggiated) augmented triads to portray the same Mephistophelean character. And from the first to the last of his Mephisto dances, we are able to trace the development and increasingly effective employment of omnitonic idioms of Liszt’s own devising.

In short, Liszt's bold assertion "ohne tonart" can be regarded as connoting a programmatic imagery of Mephisto and, in turn, this interpretive view is fully in accordance with the aesthetic attitude of Liszt, the foremost of the composers of programmatic music.

CHAPTER 4

LISZT'S CHARTING OF MUSICAL PATHWAYS TOWARD THE FUTURE

Analysis of the Four Mephisto Dances

The First Mephisto Waltz

The first Mephisto waltz, entitled “Episode from Lenau’s *Faust*,” is a piece within a set of programmatic “Dances at a Village Bar” (*Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke*). Like Liszt, Lenau was a Hungarian German. (His *Faust* contained many episodes that are not found in the original work of Goethe.) The first Mephisto waltz was composed in 1859-60 and was dedicated to his illustrious student Tausig, who was the preeminent piano virtuoso of his time. He was considered Liszt’s equal, even by the master himself, who described Tausig’s technique as “infallible.” This waltz is the most lengthy of all the Mephisto dances (904 measures) and technically the most challenging.

The waltz is a highly programmatic work. It contains a number of descriptive passages that paint detailed tonal imagery of not only scenes, but also actions of the characters in the story. For example, the opening gesture of quintal sonority which is regarded by Dubal as “surely one of the most daring things created by any pre-Bartók composer” depicts Mephisto “the devil tuning up his fiddle,” which, in turn, creates an immediate effect of tonal ambiguity. Also, the motivic-melodic gestures in the middle section, which have been regarded as “one of the most voluptuous episodes outside the *Tristan* score,” connotes seduction.¹ Noteworthy also is Liszt’s use of some harmonic progressions that anticipate the idiom peculiar to Scriabin’s compositions, and these passages are in turn contrasted with diabolical sounding frenzied waltzes.

The first Mephisto Waltz is in the key of A major; the first statement of the theme (m.111 ff.) is in A major, and the final cadence reasserts the principal tonality of A major. However, the initial passages—even up to the point at which the theme is introduced—do not in any way support or even suggest the key of A major, at least in the functional harmonic processes of tonicization. One may argue that the opening passage (mm.1-61) is a dominant prolongation preparing to establish the principal key. However, even with the E-pedal, the harmonic implication is all but dominant in function because the all important leading tone is never present and in fact is always substituted with G-natural, the subtonic scale degree of A. But perhaps the most noteworthy in this initial passage is the incessantly percussive quintal-chord sonority, which immediately creates and sets a tone of the composition that is sinister, cynical, and deceptive, as shown in example 12:

Example 12 The opening passage in Mephisto Waltz no.1, as an example of using quintal sonority to obscure tonal orientation

The image shows the first 21 measures of the opening of Franz Liszt's Mephisto Waltz no. 1. The tempo is marked 'Allegro vivace (quasi presto)'. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The music is written for piano. Measures 1-9 are marked 'mf' and feature a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated pattern in the left hand. Measures 10-19 are marked 'f marcato' and show a more active right hand with sixteenth-note runs. Measure 20 is marked 'p' and features a descending melodic line in the right hand. Measure 21 ends with a final chord. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The musical notation shows a four-measure progression on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The notes are as follows:

- Measure 1: Treble clef has a half note A (line 4) and a half note C# (line 1). Bass clef has a half note E# (line 2) and a half note G# (line 3).
- Measure 2: Treble clef has a half note B (line 2) and a half note D# (line 3). Bass clef has a half note F# (line 1) and a half note A (line 2).
- Measure 3: Treble clef has a half note C# (line 1) and a half note E (line 2). Bass clef has a half note B (line 1) and a half note D (line 2).
- Measure 4: Treble clef has a half note D# (line 2) and a half note F# (line 3). Bass clef has a half note C# (line 1) and a half note E (line 2).

Below the staff, the Roman numeral progression is written: [A] I⁶ vi⁴ = iv⁶ V. A horizontal line is drawn under the last two chords, with the text "iii (or C# minor)" centered below it.

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The music quickly and unperceptively returns to A-major (via G# major chord, which is the enharmonic equivalence of A^b major) but, during the transitional passage (mm.144-c200), the tonality is elusive. While chords are all tertial, the manner in which the prolonged E (the dominant of A) is alternated with arpeggiated F-minor chord—and thus making E sounding more like the leading tone of F—creates an eerie effect which also banishes any sense of tonal focus:

Example 13 Use of traditional triadic sonorities to create tonal ambiguity;
Mephisto Waltz no.1, mm. 187-98

Passages exist that are fully within the idiomatic boundary of tonal and functional harmony; the passage in D^b major (m.339 ff.) is such an example. The key of D^b major is the enharmonic mediant key of the principal key A-major, and Liszt (as well as many other nineteenth-century composers) used the mediant relation to create during the modulatory process a sense of an emotional uplifting or a tender affection (e.g., in the Finale of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, or in Liszt's *Liebstraum* No.3, where the tonal region first shifts to B major, the enharmonic lowered mediant [bIII] of A^b, and this tonal region in turn is immediately followed by a passage in C major, the mediant [III] of A^b). But even in these tonally relatively stable passages, the music never comes to any point of full tonal repose. In other words, tonality in these passages is more often than not vaguely suggested or fleetingly inferred, but never firmly asserted.

Precisely at midpoint in the piece (m.452), the music enters into the lengthy closing section of frenzied waltz passages, intermittently recalling a more melodious and harmonically more tonally oriented phrases. This closing section is characterized by the frequent—indeed persistent—use of diminished sonorities (including diminished triad, fully diminished seventh and diminished minor-seventh chords). To be sure, there are passages in which tonality is implied (e.g., m.478 ff.) but the tonal impression is always fleeting, and the use of diminished and augmented chordal sonorities quickly erases whatever tonal orientation the music might have created in the preceding measures. It goes without saying that all these—the tonal versus the non-tonal passages, or the melodious against the percussive and frenzied dance passages—can best be appreciated in terms of the intended programmatic imagery of the conflicts between Mephistopheles and the two human characters (Faust and Marguerite) in the Mephisto legend.

A few comments regarding the passage immediately preceding and leading to the driving to the final cadence may be appropriate. After a tonally ambiguous passage with a succession of a series of nondiatonic chords (G[#] major-minor 7th to C-minor 6-4 to F minor-minor 7th), the music comes to a pause on a fully diminished seventh chord (m.856, B-D-F-A^b, which, enharmonically, is vii^o7 of A major). There follows a presto passage in which harmonic movement is essentially that of dominant prolongation (vii^o7, V7) and harmonic tonicization (dominant harmony to tonic and subdominant substitute to tonic). Suddenly, the lowered submediant (F major) chord becomes the dominant harmony of B^b minor, which is the Neapolitan region of A major. This B^b minor chord in the first inversion can certainly be regarded as the Neapolitan-sixth chord of A (although the minor sonority is an anomaly). This progression of lowered submediant to Neapolitan harmony—thus constituting a dominant-to-tonic progression in the Neapolitan region—has been used often enough, from the days of Beethoven and Chopin. The chord in measure 892, in the context of the preceding harmonic progression, therefore, would sound as a dominant chord of B^b with a dissonant fourth (B^b which is to be resolved to A, as in 4-

3 suspension). The anticipated resolution tone A indeed appears in the next measure. However, what follows is a peculiar linear movement (two hands alternating in octaves) that can be analyzed as follows: a (form of) Gypsy-scale pattern in A (A-B \flat -C \sharp -D \sharp -E-F-G \sharp -A) with the missing leading tone (G \sharp), in measures 893-98; and, from measure 899 to the end, a chromatic linear cadence in contrary motion to tonic A. This can be illustrated by way of the following reductive notation:

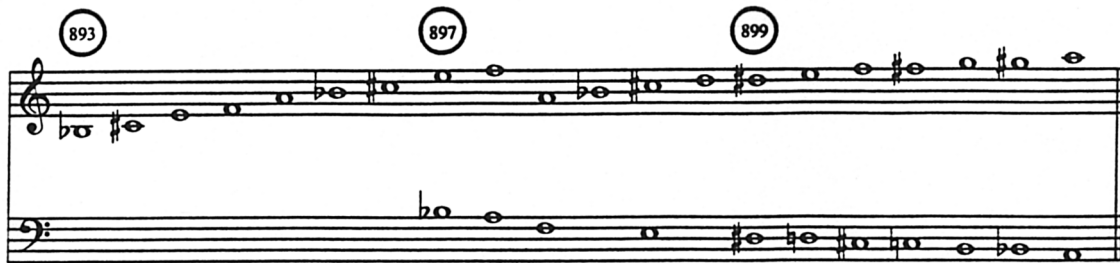


Fig. 9 A treatment of linear cadence in Mephisto Waltz no.1 (mm.893 - 901)

About two decades exist between the first Mephisto waltz and the subsequent Mephisto dances: the second Mephisto waltz was composed in 1881; both the third waltz and the Mephisto Polka were composed in 1883; and the fourth waltz or “Bagatelle Without Tonality” was composed in 1885. During the intermittent years between the first waltz and the subsequent Mephisto dances, Liszt encountered a number of personal tragedies and conflicts (e.g., the death of his only son, Daniel, the death of his first daughter, Blandine, and the unresolvable frictions between him and his only surviving child, the second daughter, Cosima, over her marriage to Wagner, etc.). Many of his compositions after 1860 mirror his preoccupation with death, as the titles of many of his compositions from this period will give evidence. It may be speculated that this increased concern about death found immediate association with Mephisto and is reflected in the Mephisto dances, with Liszt regarding Mephisto and the dissolution of tonality as the darker and cynical phases of the life of music itself. There is also a decidedly noticeable—if not a dramatic—contrast between the

first Mephisto Waltz and all the earlier “Mephisto-inspired” works (such as the Faust Symphony and the Dante Sonata) written before 1860, on the one hand, and the those after 1862 or, more specifically after 1880, on the other. In the post-1880 Mephisto dances, gone are the virtuosic—even frivolous—ornamental figurations which include rapid chromatic scale passages or the Liszt signature of fast arpeggiations of wide spans. These are still observable in the First Mephisto waltz, but are completely nonexistent in the third waltz, Polka and Bagatelle. In portraying the sinister and cynical persona of Mephistopheles, things ornamental, bravura or frivolous find no justifiable usefulness. This imagery of bare and unadorned sinister life must recall the most bizarre events following the death of Paganini; even the most basic of the society-mandated and church-sanctioned funeral ritual ornaments were denied him, creating one of the most macabre scenes imaginable. And it was Liszt, ever generous toward others, who, although having kept for some time a respectable distance from Paganini, felt compelled to intervene in order to obtain a minimally decent burial for and due recognition of the deceased virtuoso who earlier had profoundly inspired him. To do this, Liszt wrote a moving tribute, published in the *Gazette Musicale* on August 23, 1840, in which he declared Paganini’s art as “a miracle which the kingdom of art has seen but once.” As Walker states, “Liszt admired Paganini’s art as he admired no one else’s. [Paganini’s art] left an ineradicable impression upon him. And when Paganini died, Liszt felt as if he had lost a kindred spirit.”²

Mephisto Polka

The Mephisto polka was dedicated to Lina Schmalhausen, one of Liszt’s “inner-circle” piano students. However, she is remembered more as one among the closest and most ardently devoted of Liszt’s followers, frequently attending to and assisting in the many needs of the aged master whose health was in rapid decline.

Mephisto Polka is without doubt the simplest (and technically the least challenging) of all the

Mephisto dances and, with the exception of the bagatelle, the shortest. Tonally, it is the “mildest” and, indeed, the score may even appear to be a fully tonally oriented composition. Chromaticism is limited to the category of linear auxiliary (neighboring-tone or passing-tone type), and chordal sonority—more often than not being realized on the left hand (in chordal or arpeggiated figures)—may appear diatonic and even functional, especially in the outer sections (mm.17-89 and 113-223). However, the simplicity in notation disguises the true character of the music. There is no doubt that the general impression of the sonority is that of a tertian chord, but nowhere to be found is the functional harmony which clearly creates the relational behavior of tonic, dominant, and subdominant harmonic functions. If anything, the general impression of the music is modal, which at the same time is in perpetual fluidity and constant transition. If any tonal orientation is suggested, such effect is quickly undermined by the following sonority, which may in turn vaguely (and now even more weakly) suggest another tonal focus. It should be pointed out, however, that the implied tonality is A major; in many passages this A is found as the lowest pitch in arpeggiated or chordal figures, as if it is a drone or a pedal tone. However, this A tonal orientation does not remain steadfast; its hierarchy is challenged and contradicted, except at the final cadence. Although the inner voices move in linear fashion, the chord sonorities—at times minor and at others augmented—create a fleeting sensation that F[#] or even C[#] may be emerging as the temporary tonic. In other words, two or three tonal orientations are in constant conflict, each attempting to deny the hierarchy of the other and each vying for tonal supremacy. Therefore, the best description of these outer sections of this polka is, to use Fétis’s classification label, “transitonic,” or even “pluritonic,” the latter implying the simultaneous—that is, vertically aligned, as opposed to horizontally segued—coexistence of two or more tonal and modal focuses. The following excerpted passage (Example 14, next page) illustrates the transitonic/pluritonic character of this work:

Example 14 Trans tonic-pluritonic passage; Mephisto Polka, mm.58-71

The relatively short middle section begins in measure 81, with noticeable changes in texture and rhythmic motive, which is repeated persistently until the initial theme reenters at measure 108. Without resorting to measure-by-measure or chord-by-chord analysis, suffice it to say that this passage can be described simply as in parallel chord succession, in which the predominantly minor triadic sonority is contrasted occasionally with major triads and diminished-seventh chords. Throughout, the individual voices in the chord move in major-second and minor-second stepwise motion, suggesting no tonal orientation whatsoever at any given point. From the standpoint of the

structural design of this piece, this middle section is a transitional or episodic passage separating but bridging the two outer-lying sections. Tonally, this middle section is also the most unstable, which, in turn, justifies its role as the transitional passage. Throughout, one cannot help but notice the total absence of a particular chord that is intimately associated with and is regarded as indispensable in functional harmony: the major-minor seventh chord, or dominant-seventh harmony. Although the work is chordal and even tertially oriented, the absence of dominant harmony, together with parallel chord successions in which individual voices move sinuously in seconds, paints a tonal portrait that provides no decisive directives toward creating a tonal focus.

In comparison to the other Mephisto dances, the polka has a sunny and gay countenance. Perhaps this is intentional; it may be regarded as Liszt's gesture to salute or thank Lina Schmalhausen for her continued devotion in being attentive to the master in his feeble physical state.

Third Mephisto Waltz

The third Mephisto waltz is dedicated to Marie Jaëll, who was the student of Herz and Moscheles, and won the first prize in Paris Conservatoire competition at age sixteen. She became one of the most illustrious French pianists of her day. Saint-Saëns, Jaëll's composition teacher at the Conservatoire, and who also dedicated his first piano concerto to her, commented about her interpretation of Liszt's works with the following words; "There is only one person in the world [besides Liszt] who can play Liszt—Marie Jaëll."³ The Third Mephisto Waltz at first did not carry any dedication; it was after Jaëll's playing the work for Liszt (who asked her to repeat certain passages over and again) that he made extensive revision on the work, and dedicated it to her.

The work is in the key of D# minor; the key signature and the final cadential tone support this identification of tonality. However, these two may indeed be the only factors that suggest the tonality of this waltz as D# minor.

The opening passage is of considerable interest: the first phrase (mm.1-10) engages a series of arpeggiation figurations that suggest A[#] minor tonality but, with an added fourth (D[#]) on the upper end of this chordal sonority, create also an impression of a quartal triad (E[#]-A[#]-D[#]). This sonority may be interpreted as the dominant prolongation of D[#] but, again, the all-important leading tone is absent, and the following chord (m. 11) negates the feasibility of this harmonic interpretation. There follows a passage (mm. 11-18) that is all but tonally oriented and, in fact, is without any tonal orientation; all twelve chromatic tones are used sequentially. If anything, it is wholly impressionistic in effect, with parallel minor triads in the first inversion position in chromatic descending sequence. (Some chords need to be read enharmonically; for example, chord in m.13, which is spelled quartally as C[#]-F-B^b will be heard as D^b-F-B^b, the first-inversion B^b-minor triad.) From measures 20 through 26, the tonal effect is decidedly ambiguous: a palette of tritone-dominated sonority is followed by another of successive augmented triads (F-A-C[#] in mm. 21-24), which then dissolves to a succession of chromatically ascending major third intervals (a pattern which is intrinsic to augmented triad sonority and whole-tone scale): A-C[#] to B-D[#] to C[#]-E[#] (mm. 24-26). This indeed anticipates the impressionistic (and atonal-sounding) passages in Debussy's works (e.g., in his *préludes*). The passage that follows (mm. 27-34) cannot be precisely deciphered as to whether the sonority is tertially or quartally oriented. Taken as a whole, however, the passage imparts a sense of dominant prolongation of a tonal orientation, especially with the introduction of the main theme in F[#] major (m. 56 ff.) over the continued dominant prolongation of the preceding measures. The character of this theme is worth brief comments. The melodic gesture is very much reminiscent of Russian folk melody, which is modal in character and contains the characteristic melodic cell consisting of an interval of a perfect fourth with adjacent seconds above or below the fourth. (One is reminded here of the impact that Russian music had on Liszt and that Liszt made a concerted effort to promote the works of a number of emerging Russian composers.) The theme is then transposed and is stated over the prolongation

of tonic harmony (mm. 57- 61), which soon dissolves into tonal ambiguity. Throughout this passage in which the theme is stated, no terminal cadence—harmonic or linear—is ever engaged in bringing a musical phrase to a definitive tonal repose.

New thematic material begins the next section (m. 67 ff.), giving an impression that the tonality is F (or, more precisely, F-Lydian), but the sonority at the end of the thematic statement is a major-minor seventh chord in third inversion (F-A-C-E^b, with E^b in the lowest voice), suggesting that the sonority may be dominant (of the key of B^b). However, the four-measure theme with its harmonization (mm.67-70) is repeated, each time in chromatic stepwise descending sequence, from F to D, thereby creating false impressions of tonal orientation but confirming none. There follows a short passage (mm.83-91) of two-octave chromatic descent of parallel minor chords (i.e. D minor to C[#] minor to C minor to B minor, etc.) all in six-three inversion. This passage is in fact a restatement of the piece's introductory phrase (mm. 11-19) from which the basic harmonic vocabulary was drawn and used in the preceding passage, measures 67-82.

After another appearance of the short introductory phrase used earlier (i.e., mm. 27-34 = mm. 99-106), the music begins its drive toward climactic conclusion (m.111). In this rather extended section, all the previously presented themes are engaged and manipulated. This becomes a sequence of frenzied dances. The order of reappearance of these themes is worth noting: the sequence is in the exactly reversed order (i.e., “A” theme in m. 35 ff. reappears at m. 180 ff.; “B” theme in m. 67 ff. reappears at m. 127 ff.; and “C” theme in m. 91 ff. reappears at m. 111 ff.). Therefore, from the point of view of structural design, this piece is a textbook example of an arch form; it is a conservative musical form, in that it was favored by many nineteenth century composers, including Brahms. From the tonal perspective, these passages employ arpeggiated figures and chordal structures that also appear conservative—that is, of tertian-oriented idioms. The tonally oriented themes, harmonized by arpeggiated figurations and chordal sonorities that are closely aligned with functional harmony (i.e., chords that are identifiable as possessing tonic,

dominant, or subdominant function, etc., such as in m.196 ff.) all make this waltz rather mild and conservative. Still, while tonal orientation is fleetingly conveyed from time to time, no tonal center is harmonically confirmed at any point. That is, no section—whether it is a phrase or a section identifiable with thematic, textural, or figurative contrasts—is brought to a tonally reposeful—or cadential—conclusion. In the concluding phrase, the sign of functional harmony disappears completely; the single chordal sonority in mm. 261 and 263 is A# minor triad in six-four inversion, which defies the functionality of diatonic harmony in every respect. While it is possible to argue that A# minor may be regarded as the modally-inflected dominant harmony of D#, E# in the lowest voice that moves to tonic (D#) creates an effect that is more akin to linear cadence rather than to a harmonic cadential pattern. Modal mixture or tonal-modal ambiguity characterizes the entire musical process, and the principal tonality (D#) is asserted with repetition or prolongation of the principal scale degrees (i.e., tonic, dominant) only at the close of the piece without engaging any of the established harmonic cadential formulae. This is shown in the example below:

Example 15 Final cadential phrase, Mephisto Waltz no.3, m. 271ff.

The image displays a musical score for the final cadential phrase of Mephisto Waltz no. 3, measures 271-274. The score is written for piano and features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, triplets, and rests. Performance instructions such as "sempre ff" and "stringendo" are present. Measure numbers 271, 274, and 278 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Bagatelle Without Tonality

The bagatelle, the last of Liszt's Mephisto dances, is also his final testament to his experimentation with devices in creating omnitonic music. Idiomatically, nothing that is used in this work is new; all the melodic and harmonic vocabularies are the same as those found in his earlier works and in other Mephisto dances in particular. However, it is in the manner of engaging the same musical gestures which he had tried earlier and in the intensity of engaging these same idioms that Liszt produced a completely new musical effect. From the first measure to the last, there is not a single passage or phrase that connotes, implies, or remotely suggests any tonal focus. To be sure, there are chords that appear suspiciously tertial, if not functional, especially in the few measures in the opening passage. But even there, the overall effect is strangely new and surprisingly nontonal.

The innocent-looking G major triad in six-four inversion (mm.13-16) leads directly to a passage in which the notes in the chords are derived from a whole-tone scale (e.g., C#-D#-F-G-A-B). The same process is repeated again, and now the melodic idea is harmonized by the alternating of diminished-seventh chords and augmented triads (m.37 ff.), which undermines any tonal focus. This sense of tonal ambiguity is further heightened by the melodic motive, which on closer examination also reveals an element that contributes to this sense of tonal ambiguity: three-note and four-note cells which are constructed by alternating major and minor second intervals. Tetratonic sets used in measures 46-52, shown in figure 10 (next page), illustrate this feature. This is a significant point, for the alternation of major and minor seconds in scalar structure is the quintessential condition of octatonic scale. And this octatonic scale is one scale pattern that is often associated with nontonal music, one which was used by various early twentieth-century composers in their atonal but nonserial (i.e., nondodecatonic) compositions, including Bartók, Scriabin, and Stravinsky

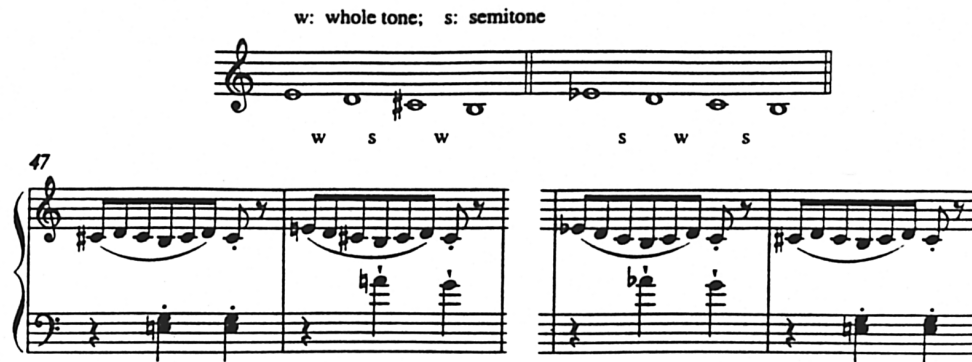


Fig. 10 Tetratonic pattern with alternating major and minor second intervals, Bagatelle, mm.46-52 (only mm.47-51 shown)

It is true that only a segmentation of this octatonic scale is found here in Liszt's composition. Still, the principle and the aim are the same: to break the condition of tonal music by defying the established order of the semitone and whole-tone arrangements in all diatonic scale patterns (i.e. in all pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic scales). Thus the cornerstone of diatonicism is removed.

There follows a passage which is, to borrow a traditional nomenclature, episodic. It could otherwise have been labeled as *transitional* (since no tonal orientation is established in the preceding or the following passages); this passage is marked by the chromatically ascending bass line supporting chords that are permeated with tritones. Examination of the chordal sonorities, which are repeated sequentially (though not exactly) on C#, D, Eb and E, reveals a significant feature: the chord, with moving soprano-line, provides a multiple interpretation of harmonic functions. From the sheer sonorous effect, the five-chord pattern forms a succession of the following chord types: whole-tone chord; major-minor-seventh chord; whole-tone chord (with a complementary tone to the first whole-tone chord), then oscillates back to the first chord. However, the overall effect is that the moving voice is merely a linear gesture without affecting the essential character of the underlying harmonic function, which is the augmented-sixth harmony, as shown in figure 11 below (see next page):

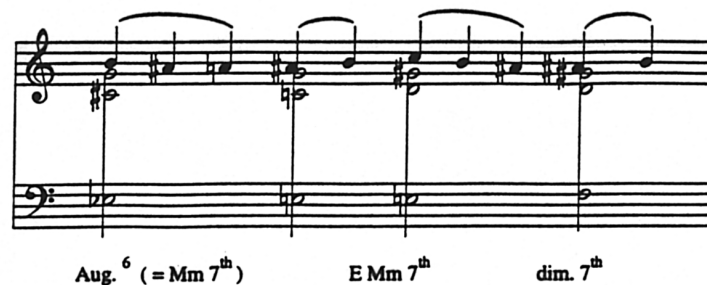


Figure 11 Augmented-sixth harmony in nonfunctional use

In this way, the implied tonality (cf. analysis above) becomes somewhat nebulous and, at best, fleeting, because the sonority shifts continually chromatically upward, without engaging even the all-important dominant harmony (i.e., the chord of resolution to the goal-oriented augmented-sixth harmony). It is akin to using major-minor seventh chord in a parallel and sequential manner. That is, the sonority, although intrinsically associated with the dominant-seventh harmony or enharmonically spelled augmented-sixth harmony and thus connoting a key center when taken individually, becomes a device in creating an impressionistic sound effect when it is engaged sequentially, as can be found in many of Debussy's portrayal of soundscapes (e.g., in *Prélude* No.10, Book I, "*La Cathédrale engloutie*," in the transitional passage, mm. 62-67, where a series of major-minor seventh chord is used in a descending sequence). It is true that the phenomenon of parallel major-minor seventh sonority occasionally does occur in functional harmony. However, there, it is always in a semitone descending fashion and with a clearly decipherable functional relation, but never in a whole tone sequence, as shown below:



Figure 12 A functional interpretation of a semitonal descend of major-minor seventh sonority

A pause and a quasi-cadenza (mm.85-86) mark the midpoint in this piece; the second half can be described as a modified version of the first half, engaging the same melodic and harmonic gestures, including the alternation of different chord sonorities (e.g., diminished-seventh chord and a chord derived from a whole-tone scale, e.g., mm.119-38), chromatic linear movement over repeated chord-succession patterns, and sequential use of (enharmonic) major-minor seventh sonority. Concluding these passages of tonal ambiguity is an extended cadential phrase (mm.177-83); first a four-measure chain of diminished triads engaged in a series of four chromatic ascending sequence (mm.177-180), followed by a three-measure chain of fully diminished-seventh chords in similar ascending motion. Although with the dynamic crescendo and registral highlighting, this final cadential phrase of the last of the Mephisto dances denies recognition of any tonal orientation. Indeed, this is a fitting conclusion to the piece, proclaimed by the composer to have no tonality.

Liszt and Changing Perspectives of Tonality in the Nineteenth Century

It is commonly acknowledged that tonality—both the concept and the practice—underwent dramatic changes during the nineteenth century. Gone were the boundaries demarcating the realm of diatonic keys and chromatic keys, and composers of this period appeared to be bent on exploring the outer limits of the tonal universe. Beethoven may be regarded as the earliest composer fully to explore the uncharted territory of tonality, and his “Waldstein” Sonata, op.53, among many examples, substantiates his experimentation with tonality. While it may appear to be oversimplifying this complex topic, suffice it to say here that one of the most important determinants that contributed to—and will aid in understanding—the changing tonal perspectives of nineteenth-century music was the removal of modality as an inseparable requisite of tonality. It is the recognition of the equivalency of major and minor modes of the same tonic (e.g., C major and C minor are of the same tonality; their modality differs but is exchangeable) that undergirds the

nineteenth-century attitude toward tonality. No longer is the modal character of the principal key regarded as inviolable. Consequently, modal mixture becomes an acceptable device, rather than an anomaly, in the course of modulatory procedures. And this modal mixture (or, more specifically, the coexistence of the two opposing modalities—major and minor—of the same tonic) served as the impetus for the expansion of the realm of tonal regions (i.e., relatable key areas) far beyond that of the preceding style periods.⁴

During the Baroque and Classical periods, the range of modulation was determined by the concept of diatonic keys (or more commonly called “closely related” keys). For example, the diatonic keys of the principal key C major are: D minor, E minor; F major; G major; and A minor (all the notes in the tonic triad of these keys are diatonic notes within the C major scale). The diatonic keys of the principal key of C minor, on the other hand, are: E^b major, F minor, G minor, A^b major, and B^b major (which are, it is to be noted, the same set of keys—including C minor—of the diatonic key of E^b major). The two sets of keys—the diatonic keys of C major versus that of C minor—are not coexisting as per difference in the modal character of the principal keys. However, when C minor is allowed to coexist with C major as the principal key, the range of relatable keys is expanded considerably, including both sets of diatonic keys. Therefore, with the modal mixture, the principal key of C major will accommodate any and all of the following keys: C minor; D minor; E^b-major; e-minor; F major; F minor; G major; G minor; A^b major; A minor; and B^b major. Additionally, if the diatonic keys are also allowed to shift their modal characters, then the keys of D major, E major, and A major also will become its relatable keys.⁵ It is from this perspective of modal mixture that one can more fully appreciate the causes—both the theoretical and aural-perceptual—for the expanded tonal realm that characterizes the music of the nineteenth century.⁶

Harmonically, two features characterize Romantic music: one is an increased use of chords of modal mixture (as the result of coexistence of two modes; see above); the other and perhaps of the more notable, is the frequent use of equidistant chords. In particular, the fully diminished-seventh

chord is a part of the regular staple of harmonic progression, engaged in both functional and nonfunctional manners (e.g., as $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ and as appoggiatura chord, respectively). These changes in tonal and harmonic perspectives in turn brought about changes in the cadential formulae and phraseology; the periodicity of musical phrases demarcated by cadential patterns of established harmonic repose is often weakened by frequent use of elided cadences (e.g., deceptive cadence is but one such example) and, along with frequent tonal-modal shifts, the tonal orientation becomes blurred and indeterminable.

Even a casual examination of Liszt's compositions or the works of any one of the nineteenth-century composers, gives evidence to these characteristics of romantic music: an expanded universe of relational tonal region as the result of the modal mixture, the weakened state of cadentially-oriented musical periodicity and thus loosening of structural designs, and the diminished clarity of the implied tonal focus. Therefore, the peculiar Lisztian idiom is not in the frequency or the range of tonal-modal shifts; in the Romantic "harmonic" idioms, such as the frequent engagement of fully diminished seventh or even the augmented triads; or in the lack of clearly definable structural units such as phraseology or tonal area. For such was the general state of music, the common musical language spoken by the majority of composers of the nineteenth century. It is true that one can detect Liszt's use of bold and daring harmonic gestures, even in his earlier works, which appear to be in fully traditional idioms. For example, in the closing measures in his *Liebestraum (Notturmo) in A^b major No.3*, the two fully diminished-seventh chords are of secondary-leading tone chord function ($\text{vii}^{\circ 7}/\text{ii}$ and $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}/\text{I}$), but do not segue to their proper chords of resolution and, instead, are followed by another diminished chord. The effect of tonal focus, therefore, is decidedly unsettling. However, even in a passage such as this, tonal orientation is not entirely undermined, because the phrase is always concluded with an all-important cadential formula which serves to put to rest any doubt of tonal focus.

In one perspective, the "toying with tonality" was a prevailing attitude and a commonly shared

compositional approach during the nineteenth century. Tonality was purposefully cast in a state of unsettledness, whereby the eventual confirmation of the principal tonality is all that much more triumphant. This can be observed in large-scale compositions and in shorter pieces; for example, in Beethoven's First Symphony (the opening measures), as well as in Brahms's intermezzi (e.g. op.119, no.2). One may argue, therefore, that Liszt's tonal experimentation is very much within the framework of compositional idioms of his own time, and that, if anything, the difference between Liszt and other composers in the use of these common musical idioms in creating various degree of tonal ambiguity or a lack thereof is only a matter of degree and not of substance. In the use of the kinds of these common Romantic musical idioms, therefore, Liszt cannot or should not be claimed to be revolutionary, visionary, or particularly innovative.

The significance of Franz Liszt in the charting of the omnitonic idiom is not in the use of scalar, melodic, or harmonic idioms itself, but in his unique ways of manipulating the idioms that other composers also used. That is, Liszt used various scalar, melodic, and harmonic idioms with a purposefulness of undermining completely any implication of tonality in composition, and this is clearly observable in a number of his compositions from about 1860. Equally significant in understanding Liszt's experimentation with tonality is a perspective, as the present study submits, that Liszt found a programmatic justification in elimination of tonality in music with the image and persona of Mephistopheles, and his progress toward realization of omnitonic music can be traced in Mephisto dance series, from that of 1860, 1881, 1883, and finally culminating in his last Mephisto waltz—subsequently titled “Bagatelle”—of 1885, with a bold assertion “without tonality.”

Liszt's Realization of Omnitonic Music

The previous section included an analytical examination of Liszt's four Mephisto dances, the works that spanned a period of about a quarter of a century. With Mephistopheles Liszt found the programmatic justification for pursuing and exploring the idioms which, in his own perception,

would create the effect of omnitonic music. Analyses of these Mephisto dances and the comparison of the devices used in them also reveal a pattern of development of increasingly intensified and effective use of the omnitonic idioms of Liszt's own devising. This may be summarized as follows:

In the first Mephisto waltz, the overall effect still conveys a definable tonal orientation, because the keyness in many passages is clearly implied; there exist passages in which functional harmonic progression can be identified (via Roman-numeral analysis). Within this largely tonal composition, however, there are also signs of an attempt to deny the traditional procedures of establishing tonal focus. One such sign is the absence of leading tone in an otherwise dominant harmony; leading tone is substituted with the subtonic degree, such as that seen in the use of church modes or anhemitonic pentatonic scales by Debussy, Milhaud, and Stravinsky in their works, or in many of Hindemith's compositions of half a century later. Another device is the overt attempt to reject the tertian functional harmonic progression; this includes quintal chord sonority, thematic lines over a sustained chord (without any harmonic movement), and nonfunctional use of repeated chordal sonorities, such as diminished-seventh chord and augmented triad, and non-use of any established harmonic cadential patterns at the conclusion of a phrase. Regarding the cadential demarcation, noteworthy is the use of linearly oriented formulae, such as chromatic linear cadence which, although giving a sense of repose, denies the association with harmonic repose.

In the Mephisto polka, the tertially structured chords are used throughout. However, no passage of functional harmonic progression can be found. The general sonority impression is that, while the piece is chordal, the music is primarily modal. Tonal orientation is decipherable, but it is created more by way of pedal tone or a "drone," rather than by engaging harmonic progression patterns. At the same time, this sense of tonal focus is often fleeting and constantly fluid, as though any tonal orientation that is implied in a passage is quickly denied and usurped by yet another fleeting one.

One important device that emerged as an effective means of creating tonal ambiguity is the parallel chord succession. The same device has been used in a number of Liszt's previous works, but the intensity and the extent of the usage identifies this device as one that Liszt now realized to be of greater significance in creating omnitonic effect. The same device was imitated and adopted by many early-twentieth-century composers, notably Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud, Bartók, and many other "impressionistic" composers.

In the third Mephisto waltz, the following can be observed: the avoidance of leading tone, the successive and sequential use of chordal sonorities in parallel fashion (such as that mentioned above) and in the same "inversion" position (such as six-three position), and the use of all twelve chromatic tones in sequence a la "segmentation of a tone row." Again, there is a deliberate non-use of harmonic cadential pattern, and any effect of cadential demarcation is achieved more by the linear movement of voices than by harmonic means.

In the last Mephisto dance, the Bagatelle, all the above-mentioned devices are engaged. However, one feature distinguishes this dance from all previous ones: no key signature is used, and tonal orientation is completely absent. In all previous Mephisto dances, tonality is suggested in the opening passage, though only vaguely and often quickly denied, and the tonality is asserted at the conclusion of the piece, though without using traditional means of cadential conclusion. In the Bagatelle, in contrast, there is not a single note that can be identified as tonic, either harmonically or modally. The undeniably clear gestures of defying tonal orientation, some that have been used in earlier Mephisto dances but to greater effect, are the following: alternation of equidistant chordal sonorities (diminished seventh and augmented triad) in a chain fashion, oscillation of contrasting chordal sonorities (e.g., whole-tone chord and major-minor seventh chord), and use of melodic and chordal cells that are derived from the octatonic scale. While the non-use of harmonic cadence is apparent in the Bagatelle also, it is in the final cadence that the definitive seal of Liszt's intent in creating omnitonic music can be seen: the three-measure chain of fully-diminished seventh chord in ascending motion. With this, Liszt closes his pursuit of the path

toward omnitonic music idiom. Programmatically, it can be said that the intended imagery of this final cadence is to portray Mephistopheles's sinister laughter as he takes his final leave, ascends and vanishes into nothingness. With this gesture and in the mind of Liszt, the foremost programmatic composer, the tonality of music can be said to bid its final farewell.

One may argue that the effect of Liszt's omnitonic compositions—even his Bagatelle without tonality—is entirely different from that of atonal compositions of the Second Viennese school and the compositions of free tonality in the twentieth century. It should be noted that the use of the dodecaphonic procedure, for example, does not in itself assure that the effect will be wholly atonal; Alban Berg and Ernst Kr̆enek, and even Schoenberg, wrote compositions that, although based on dodecaphonic procedure, contain tonal orientation. Therefore, the important difference between Liszt's music and the atonal compositions of today lies not so much in the varying degrees of or the absence of tonal orientation; it is in the degree of intensity in the employment of dissonance that Liszt's compositions would sound “rather tonal” by comparison and to the ears of a present audience. For example, while diminished-seventh and augmented chords are discordant and, therefore, in functional tonality require proper resolutions, these same tertian chords, even when used in wholly atonal compositions, would sound tonal and mild to present-day musical taste. Also, it is worth mentioning, for example, that there is no consecutive minor-second/major-seventh interval in any of Liszt's chordal sonorities, the same interval class that is quintessential in the twentieth-century atonal compositions. His compositions, therefore, are omnitonic or even atonal; they simply are not harshly dissonant.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Influence of Franz Liszt the Composer

In the final chapter of *Franz Liszt, the Man and His Music*, Alan Walker posed a question in his essay titled “Liszt and the Twentieth Century” on his historical position, and then provided an answer:

The question arises: who was Liszt addressing in these last works? In a letter to Princess Wittgenstein Liszt once confessed that his only remaining ambition was to hurl [his] lance as far as possible into the boundless realm of the future. These words are significant, and the princess grasped their meaning: ‘Generations will pass before he will be perfectly understood; he has hurled his lance much further into the future than Wagner. . . . [The] seventy-four-year-old Liszt once . . . remarked: “The time will yet come when my works are appreciated. True, it will be late for me because then I shall no longer be with you.” The conclusion is inescapable. Liszt was deliberately setting himself to address listeners as yet unborn. One of his favorite observations whenever his music met with blank incredulity was: “I can wait; my shoulders are broad.”’¹

There follows one of most thorough accounts of Liszt’s influences on future composers. It is impossible to add anything new or of significance to Walker’s narrative, as he cites numerous examples as convincing evidence of Liszt’s profound influence on many prominent composers after him, among them Debussy, Stravinsky, Busoni, even Schoenberg, and, later, Messiaen, to name a few. Suffice it to say that Liszt was correct in his vision that his music would be understood and appreciated by future generations and that his music did greatly influence the attitudes of and contributed in shaping the idioms used by future composers.

There have been a number of leading composers of the first half of the twentieth century who overtly recognized the significance of Liszt the composer and gave their own assessments of

Liszt's influences on composers after him. Among these composers who duly assessed Liszt's historical position are Bartók, Ravel and Searle. The following is a particularly telling assessment by Bartók on the significance of Liszt's compositional influence:

Liszt's works had a more fertilizing influence on the following generations than Wagner's. Let no one be misled by the host of Wagner's imitators. Wagner solved his whole problem, and every detail of it, so perfectly that only a servile imitation of him was possible for his successors; it was almost impossible to derive from him any impulse for further developments, and any kind of imitation was barren, dead from the outset. Liszt, on the other hand, touched upon so many new possibilities in his works, without being able to exhaust them utterly that he provided an incomparably greater stimulus than Wagner.²

Like Bartók, Searle also pointed out that the significance of Liszt lies not so much in the exact musical idioms he used but, rather, in his approach to thinking about the new in music.³

It is a significant loss that Liszt's manuscript of the intended theoretical treatise, *Sketches for a Harmony of the Future*, was lost. The manuscript of his earlier work bearing the title "Prélude Omnitonique" which was exhibited in London in 1904, also disappeared. Had these—particularly the treatise—survived, Liszt would have been accorded the distinction of having written the earliest treatise on "modern" harmony. Still, through his numerous compositions and in his Mephisto dances in particular, one is able to glean the essential concept as well as the specific vocabulary and procedures in the use of the omnitonic idioms of Liszt's own devising.

A Reassessment of Liszt's Historical Position

Finally, the significance of Liszt's tonal experimentation and his devising of omnitonic idiom must be appreciated in a proper historical context; that Liszt wrote these works in the period when conservatory-sanctioned stylistic idioms still undergirded the prevailingly conservative opinion, not only of the general music community, but also of music criticism. This conservative attitude was not only on the matter of tonality and harmonically related idioms such as chord progression and cadential pattern but also over other—literally every identifiable—aspect of composition,

including instrumentation and orchestration, melodic style and construction, and formal designs. A vivid testimony of this conservative attitude of musical criticism is Fétis's lengthy analytic essay on Berlioz's *Fantastic Symphony*.⁴ This attitude was further reinforced by the publication of numerous textbooks on music theory—including part writing, aural training or *solfeggio*, composition and orchestration, and form—for use in conservatories throughout the European countries, including France, Germany, and England. Indeed, George Macfarren, a prominent English pedagogue of the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of this present century who also had greatly influenced the theory pedagogy in the United States through his theory textbooks, expressly prohibited his students from listening—let alone performing—Liszt's late works, for fear that their young musical ears may be contaminated.

Liszt's contribution, then, must be recognized in his effort to free tonality, even in the face of mounting offense or outright shunning even by his once-close artistic friends—Chopin, for example, by showing how effectively to engage melodic and harmonic idioms that were not a complete departure from that of the past, yet to create musical effects that are free of tonal restrictions and still possessing artistic merits uniquely their own. Certainly, Liszt did not create a wholly new system, as did Schoenberg, that would completely usurp the ones from the past. The significance, rather, is the fact that Liszt formulated a pattern of musical thinking and an attitude toward composing, and succeeded in creating a series of artistically satisfying—that is, programmatically justifiable—compositions in which tonality is no longer a mandated requisite. These same works, which were until fairly recently denounced, ignored, or simply avoided, now enjoy an increasing popularity because of their sheer artistic merits. The revival of Liszt's compositions and their enthusiastic reception must also be credited in no small part to the founding of Liszt Societies (first in England in 1950, then) in Europe and the United States. The time is long overdue, then, that these late works of Franz Liszt should now also be duly and fully recognized for their historical importance, as a significant corpora of artistic and visionary compositions that charted the earliest and most revolutionary pathways toward atonality.

A number of Liszt's later works has been rediscovered only recently; his "Bagatelle without Tonality," for example, resurfaced in Weimer in 1956. No doubt many of his lost works will continue to be rediscovered and, thereby, his music will continue to be re-appreciated and his historical position as the nineteenth century's most forward-looking composer be heightened. It is therefore regrettable that, even today, Liszt's fame is some times exploited in some musically insignificant context.⁵ In the light of these recent rediscoveries of Liszt's works and the weight of scholarship by Searle and particularly Walker, among others, it is only justifiable that the historical position of Franz Liszt must be so reassessed, with the recognition of him as a visionary composer who broke the deathgrip of tertian functional harmony and the traditional concept of tonality, and was the first to usher in the modern, indeed atonal, attitude toward composition. As John Ogdon remarks:

Liszt was responsible for breaking the German stranglehold on nineteenth-century composers, and scattering the seeds of modern music almost literally to the four winds. His music shows an avant-garde attitude to the problem of composing which was without parallel in the nineteenth century.⁶

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

1. Derek Watson, *Liszt*. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 1.
2. Humphrey Searle, "Liszt," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie, ed., Vol.11, 50-51.
3. Ibid., 28-29.
4. In *A Stylistic Evaluation of Charles Valentin Alkan's Piano Music* (DMA dissertation, University of North Texas, 1988), Joel Ahn investigates the idiosyncratic idiom in Alkan's music that was before his time and thereby caused his music to be misunderstood and ignored. Alkan was a contemporary and acquaintance of Liszt, and the two had apparently shared mutual admiration as pianist and composer. Unlike Liszt, however, Alkan opted to lead a rather secluded life; in fact he was a recluse whom fortunes did not frequent. It was only early in this century when Alkan's music was brought forth for reexamination, through the singular efforts of Busoni and a few others. Ahn's study enumerates and describes melodic and harmonic idioms in Alkan's works, many of which bear some resemblance with those in Liszt's Mephisto compositions. However, the existence of possible correlation and mutual influence in the use of "non-tonal" idioms in the compositions of Alkan and Liszt awaits future investigation.

Chapter 2

1. Watson, *Liszt*, 8.
2. Balint Sarosi, "Gypsy Music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie, ed., Vol.7, 864-70.
3. Watson, *Liszt*, 9.
4. Ibid., 11.
5. The famous "duel" between Liszt and Thalberg took place in March 1837, a series of "contests" performance between the two eminent pianist over a period of several days. Princess Belgiojoso, a Parisian salon proprietor and the sponsor of this event, declared the historical verdict with the following remark: "There is only one Thalberg in Paris, but there is only one Liszt in the world." The famous incident is described variously in a number of books and documents.
6. Arthur Friedheim, *Life and Liszt*, edited by Theodore Bullock (New York: Taplinger, 1961), 175.

7. Liszt acknowledged his indebtedness to Thalberg--though not precisely in reference to this manner of notation--by performing Thalberg's works in public, and he continued correspondence with him for a time, even writing a tribute to him on his death, as noted in Watson, *Liszt*, 42.
8. Cf. Boris Schwarz, "Paganini" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol.14.
9. In the chapter "Liszt the Composer" in *Life and Liszt* Friedheim--Liszt's protégé and close confidant--offers a convincing argument regarding this point, which, in his view, also contributed to a less than fully successful propagation of Liszt's later compositions. See particularly 180-83.
10. The majority of study on Fétis's writings is in French. A few are in English, and, among them, the following three works should be mentioned: Rita Marie Reymann, "François-Joseph Fétis, 1784-1871, *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie*: An Annotated Translation of Book I and Book III" (Master's thesis, Indiana University, 1966); Robert Shelton Nichols, "François-Joseph Fétis and the Theory of *tonalité*" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 1971); and Anthony Jay Kosar, "François-Joseph Fétis's Theory of Chromaticism and Early Nineteenth-Century Music" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1984).
11. The term *tonalité* used by Fétis has connotation beyond the theoretical concept of "key" or even the various pitch-sets of "diatonic" scales; more importantly the term signifies the entire process of creating the tonal effect--both melodic and harmonic--in a composition and, therefore, is the *Gestalt* of composition. In essence the term has a connotation closer to non-Western musical terms for the (inadequately synonymous) Western word *scale*, such as *raga*, *maqam*, or (Japanese) *sen-po*, which are often translated into English (e.g., in ethno-musicological studies) as "melody-type."
12. The categorical reference to "omnitonic" in the summary article on Fétis (in David Damschroder and David Williams's *Music Theory From Zarlino to Schenker* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1990), 85, is not wholly accurate. While the "third category" (pluritonic) does refer to the tonal nature of compositions of the period (i.e. Fétis's time or at least to the time of the publication of Fétis's treatise), the "fourth category" (omnitonic) cannot be used in referring to music of the first half or even the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century (Fétis died in 1871). The term *omnitonic* (which connotes an all-present tonality or a tonality where all pitches are present or all the tonalities are implied with no particular hierarchical order, as in the principal and relative key relationship of the classical music) is more properly applicable to music from very late nineteenth century up to about the time of World War II.
13. Nicolas Slonimsky, "Liszt" in *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th ed.
14. Cf. Walker, *Franz Liszt*, vol. 3, *The Final Years, 1861-1886*, 455-56.

Chapter 3

1. Cf. Arthur Friedheim, *Life and Liszt*, 185.

2. Don Michael Randel, ed., "Tonality" in *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 862.
3. Ibid., 56.
4. In the section titled "The Dissolution of Functional Tonality" in Joel Lester's *Analytic Approaches to Twentieth Century Music* (New York: Norton; 1989), 6 ff, 13-14, for example, Lester carefully enumerates the conditions for tonal music and for atonal music. While certainly not verbatim, all the points in Lester's narratives are in the summary of Fétis's theoretical statements as given in this study (cf. p.24).
5. See Edward Cone's introductory essay "The Composer and the Symphony" in *Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony* (New York: Norton Critical Scores Series, 1971).
6. Noteworthy is the following statement in defining "imitations in music":
 "... [to understand] imitation of music, not in the technical sense which refers to fugue and the fugal style, but in the sense of producing certain noises which describe or depict by musical means objects whose existence we are aware of only through our eyes."
 The essay was published in 1837 in *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, of which Berlioz was at that time the editor. The entire essay is contained in Jaques Barzun's *Pleasures of Music* (New York: 1951), who also was the author of the English translation.
7. See *Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony* (New York: Norton Critical Scores Series), 220, note 7.
8. "MI contra FA diabolus in musica." It is to be understood that, in this statement, MI refers to that of the natural hexachord (thus the pitch E), while FA refers to that of the soft hexachord (thus the pitch B^b), and, hence, "MI against FA" refers to the interval that is formed between E and B^b, which is a tritone.

Chapter 4

1. David Dubal, *The Art of the Piano* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1995), 353.
2. Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music*, (London: Barny & Jenkins, 1970) 54-55.
3. Dubal, *The Art of the Piano*, 131-32.
4. One of the earliest theorists to write convincingly on the matter of modal mixture (i.e., the coexistence of two opposite modes of the same tonality) is Joseph Gottfried Weber. His singularly influential treatise, *Versuch einer geordneten Theorie der Tonsetzkunst* (Mainz, 1817-24) clarified a number of theoretical issues that were in dispute, including the question of tonality vs. modality, and tonal-region (or key-) relationship. Weber was also the first to establish the system of harmonic analysis via Roman numerals. See below.
5. Cf. Gene Cho, *Theories and Practice of Harmonic Analysis* (San Francisco: Mellon Research University Press, 1992) 73 -80 (cf. also 47-52, on Weber's theory of key relationship).

6. There are various terms in current use that are designed to describe the particular tonal relationships frequently found in nineteenth-century compositions, such as *mediant*-, *the third*- or *chromatic third*- or even *chromatic mediant*- relationship. Still, these terms lack in preciseness in identifying not only the mutual *intervallic* relationship of the tonal region relative to the principal key, but also the different *nature* of tonal relationship. In clarifying the tonal relationship, the differentiation of tonality and modality should be made an important aspect in the consideration. The following may serve to clarify the issue of proper labeling of tonal relationship: If the principal key is C major, the nature of tonal relationship of C major to E minor, to E-major, or to E^b-major is significantly different. Although all three keys are in “third” or “mediant” relationship to the principal key of C major, E minor is a diatonic key, while E major is a diatonic key (the tonic pitch E is a diatonic scale degree of C) but the modality is being shifted from minor to major (a practice that can be traced to as early as Baroque compositions, e.g., by Vivaldi and Handel), and E^b major is a key that is obtainable only by virtue of modal mixture; since E^b-major is a diatonic key of C minor, E^b major will become a relatable key to C major when C minor is to coexist with C-major.

Chapter 5

1. Walker, Franz Liszt: the Man and His Music (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970), 350-51. See also “The Music of Liszt’s Old Age” in Walker’s *Franz Liszt*, vol. 3: *The Final Years, 1861-1886*.
2. Cf. Harold Thompson, *The Evolution of Whole-tone Sound in Liszt’s Original Piano Works* (Ph.D. diss., the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1974) 15. This remark by Bartók made in his lecture, cited in Thompson’s work, is translated into English in Part II of “The Liszt Problems” in *The Monthly Musical Record*, 78 (Nov 1948), part 2, 236-37.
3. Humphrey Searle, *The Music of Liszt* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966).
4. *Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony* (New York: Norton Critical Scores Series, 1971). A complete English translation of Fétis’s critical essay is included in the introductory part of this issue of the Norton Critical Scores.
5. See James Deaville, “The Making of a Myth: Liszt, the Press, and Virtuosity” in Michael Saffle and James Deaville, ed., *New Light on Liszt and His Music: Essays in Honor of Alan Walker’s 65th Birthday*, ANALECTA LISZTIANA II: Franz Liszt Studies Series no.6 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1997), 181. Among other works cited, one titled *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* by Susan McClary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) should be noted.
6. Dubal, *The Art of the Piano*, 361.

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