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Franz Liszt's Oratorio *Christus: Following the Paper Trail*

DAVID FRIDDLE

One need think merely of [Liszt's] Christus to know a work whose effect has still to dawn. Perhaps the day has almost come when contact will be re-established with its tone, its intentions, for our time is again seeking God; this search characterizes it better than do the most outstanding technical achievements.¹

Arnold Schoenberg, *Arts & Ideas*

Arnold Schoenberg wrote these words in 1911. Much of his essay is highly critical of Liszt's innovative compositions; his insights about the oratorio *Christus*, however, were both accurate and prescient. Far and away the largest example of its genre, *Christus* is an expansive work requiring not only large instrumental and vocal forces, but also a conductor who is knowledgeable about Liszt's musical language and rhetoric. The formidable challenges of this work have undoubtedly limited the number of its public performances and recordings. With the approaching centennial of Liszt's birth in 2011, there exists an excellent opportunity to reintroduce this neglected masterpiece to scholars and performers.²

Genesis of *Christus*

From its inception, Liszt conceived of *Christus* as an overview of the life of Jesus depicted in musical tableaux. He first spoke of his idea to Wagner in July 1853 and, as befits a three-hour work, *Christus* had a long gestational period. Indeed, Liszt's first obstacle was finding a suitable text. At various times he considered inviting the poet Georg Herwegh, Peter Cornelius, and Princess Carolyne

Sayn-Wittgenstein to help him prepare the text; in the end, however, he himself assembled the libretto from passages from the Bible, the Catholic liturgy and various medieval hymns.³

Four years later, during rehearsals of Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, Liszt wrote to the Princess Carolyne, "As soon as my [*Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth*] is finished, we must compose *Christus*, along the lines that we have set for this work."⁴ Living in Rome, Liszt was besieged by social obligations that made a concentrated effort to complete *Christus* difficult; he even complained about his lack of uninterrupted time to his organ pupil Alexander Gottschalg in April 1863.⁵

To escape this hectic pace, he moved into the monastery of the Madonna del Rosario outside Rome in June of 1863. There he fully devoted himself to composition, going so far as to have a dampened, upright piano installed in his monastic cell. Even though he declared *Christus* complete in October 1866, he subsequently inserted two previously composed works—*Die Gründung der Kirche* (The Foundation of the Church) and *O Filii et Filiae* (O Sons and Daughters)—expanding it to fourteen movements. Even by nineteenth-century standards the performance forces required for *Christus* are exceptional: double winds with English Horn, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, tympani, bass drum, cymbals, harp, organ and harmonium, soprano, mezzo, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass soloists, chorus, strings, and the first use of tubular bells; there is also an off-stage treble choir with woodwinds.

¹Schoenberg, *Arts and Ideas*, ed. Leonard Stein (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 445.

²To this end, I am preparing a new, critical edition of *Christus*. Supported by a grant from the Theodore Presser Foundation and the University of Miami Frost School of Music, I traveled to London to study the autograph manuscript in the British Library; to Weimar where I researched *Christus* at the Goethe-Schiller Archiv and the Anna Amalia Bibliothek; to the Sächsisches Staatarchiv in Leipzig to investigate the archive of C.F. Kahnt, one of Liszt's publishers; and, finally, to Budapest to work in the Liszt Museum and the National Széchényi Library. My discoveries have been surprising, enigmatic, frustrating, and satisfying, and the history of *Christus* as revealed in my investigative research is a fascinating and compelling narrative.

³Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 255.

⁴Paul Munson, "The Oratorios of Franz Liszt." PhD diss., Univ of Michigan, 1996, 64.

⁵"The *Christus* Oratorio progresses only slowly on account of the many interruptions that I had to endure this winter." Ibid.

History of the Manuscript

Liszt's usual method of composing was first to sketch, then to make a first draft, and finally to commission a fair copy for engraving. The autograph manuscript of *Christus* consists of two parts: the twelve movements for orchestra and chorus, and Liszt's piano reduction. On the first folio of the piano reduction Liszt wrote, "Aufgefundene Manuscript von Fraülein Schmalhausen, und derselben freundlichst verehrt. F. Liszt. February, 86." ("Miss Schmalhausen found this manuscript and out of friendship I make a present of it to her.")⁶

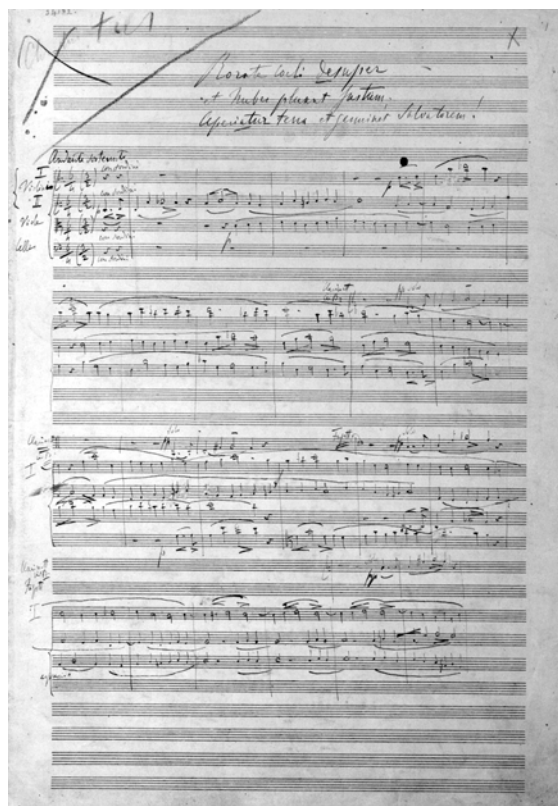
The manuscript came into the possession of the British Library via an elliptical route. Lina Schmalhausen was one of Liszt's many pupils in Weimar and was his primary caretaker during the last days of his life in Bayreuth.⁷ Chronically short of money, she was disliked by other Weimar pupils; indeed, they accused her of pilfering some of Liszt's manuscripts in order to sell them—a charge that was not without merit. Nevertheless, the characteristically generous Liszt made a gift of the *Christus* manuscript to her; the unusually careful inscription was probably made to protect her from any possible accusations of theft after his death.

Schmalhausen first offered the manuscript for sale to the trustees of the British Museum in 1889. Edward Scott replied on their behalf:

*I find on looking at the M.S. again that Liszt designedly left it incomplete when he gave it to you because he says the missing (no. 6) part was 'as published in Leipzig.' But of no. 13 there is no trace. The highest price therefore that I can offer you for it is £30.*⁸

Sophie Peters replied on behalf of Lina Schmalhausen:

*Learning from your letter that the manuscript is incomplete, she quite understands your not laying greater value on it, yet, as she prizes that manuscript very highly, she would not like to part with it for the price of 30 pounds and begs you to return it to her.*⁹



The first page of the autograph of *Christus* in the British Library

In 1892, Lina, desperate for money, wrote again.

*Having sent you Liszt's manuscript of "Christus" last Wednesday the 6th, I should be very glad to know whether it has safely reached you. In 1889 you offered to buy it for the sum of £30, I had not then been able to decide to sell it, but as I am at present in a little money difficulty, I should now take that amount which you then offered for it. I should be very much obliged & grateful if you would kindly do so.*¹⁰

The official purchase date for the manuscript, ADD #34,182, is 14 May 1892. It contains 113 double-sided paper folios and bears the dates 1863, 1865, and 1866. Liszt used brown ink for the initial notation and subsequently made extensive emenda-

⁶ A similar inscription to Fraülein Schmalhausen is found on the title page of the Fifteenth *Hungarian Rhapsody* for Piano.

⁷ For a chilling account of Liszt's death at the hands of his daughter Cosima Wagner, and the ministrations of Lina Schmalhausen to the failing Liszt, see Alan Walker, *The Death of Franz Liszt: Based on the Unpublished Diary of His Pupil Lina Schmalhausen*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

⁸ Previously unpublished letter from Edward Scott on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum, dated 14 December 1889, British Library "Correspondence Relating to Purchases, Etc.," 1889-91, Folio 132.

⁹ Previously unpublished letter from Sophie Peters (for Lina Schmalhausen) to the Trustees of the British Museum, dated 18 December 1889, British Library "Correspondence Relating to Purchases, Etc.," 1889-91, Folio 149.

¹⁰ Previously unpublished letter from Lina Schmalhausen to the Trustees of the British Museum, dated 9 April 1892, British Library "Correspondence Relating to Purchases, Etc.," 1889-91, Folio 86.

tions—phrase marks, articulations, tempo indications, dynamic markings, etc.—in colored pencils. It is thought that copyists used the manuscript to prepare the orchestral parts. The largest folios are 30 cm wide by 44.5 cm high, although there are smaller folios as well. An extant fair copy for the first section of the oratorio, which includes movements 1–5, is held in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv—GSA 60/B 33 (“GSA” hereafter)—in Weimar. Although the musical notation is not by Liszt, there are many corrections and additions, including rehearsal letters—in his distinctive handwriting. This copy was prepared for the performance of the Christmas portion in Rome (1867), and revised for publication in 1871. It includes a second version of “Hirtengesang an der Krippe” that is transposed up one whole tone. It was described by Georg Kinsky in his *Musikhistorisches Museum von Wilhelm Heyer in Cöln*, vol. 4 (Breitkopf & Härtel, 1916).¹¹

Liszt’s editorial method

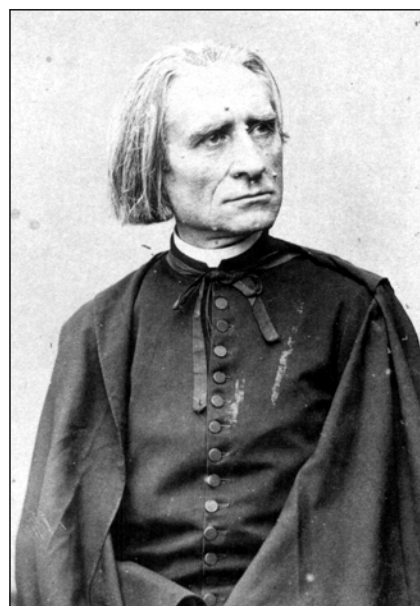
Like Beethoven, Liszt was a deliberate composer. There are many sections in the manuscript that are either crossed out in colored pencil or pasted over with another piece of manuscript paper. Large portions of various movements that are crossed out in the manuscript appear in the first edition, however, published in 1872 by J. Schuberth & Co. of Leipzig and New York; there are also numerous performance indications in the manuscript that do not appear in any published edition.

Consequently, there is no way to determine the editorial process that Liszt used between the time that the manuscript was completed and the time when the first score was published. Not even the copy of the Christmas portion of *Christus* in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv helps to unravel the conundrum because, with the exception of a few corrections and the addition of rehearsal letters, there are few clues as to how Liszt transformed the manuscript into the first printed edition.

Minus a fair copy of the entire score in Liszt’s hand, or corrected galleys or proofs, there is no way to reconcile the manuscript to the 1872 Schuberth edition, the production of which Liszt oversaw. Researchers cannot accurately determine whether markings in the manuscript were inadvertently omitted from the score and overlooked by Liszt in the proofing process, or if he himself deleted them. It is also impossible to clarify how or why the many crossed-out sections in the manuscript found their way into the printed scores, or to resolve the differences between the underlaid text and the libretto in

the front matter. Finally, there is no way to state unequivocally that the printed score that has come down to us is really what Liszt intended.

Such a claim is not as far-fetched as it might first appear. In addition to the discrepancies outlined above, there are also many instances where articulations are applied to every brass part except the Tuba; since in the printed scores the Tuba shares a staff with the Bass Trombone, an editor must decide if the staccato mark over the Bass Trombone also applies to the Tuba. In some instances, Liszt provides the Tuba with its own separate mark; in others it is clear that one articulation sign is meant for the paired instruments on a single staff. The orchestral parts from the 1873 performances in Weimar and Budapest are presumed lost. In his Liszt memoir, August Göllerich states that Liszt gave C.F. Kahnt an errata sheet for *Christus* in June 1886. Liszt intended



Franz Liszt in 1866—
the year he completed *Christus*

that these corrections be published with the Kahnt score in the front matter;¹² unfortunately this document is also lost.

There are multiple omissions of articulations and performance expressions in the printed score that appear in the manuscript. For instance:

- I. “Einleitung,” Eulenberg Edition, p. 1, m. 3, Vn. 2 has a tenuto mark (–) on the half-note C

¹¹ Paul Munson, e-mail message to author, 23 March 2004.

¹² *Ibid.*

- in MSS and GSA ; likewise in the Cl. 1, m. 12; Vla. m. 12, accent (<) on half-note B-flat in MSS and GSA;
- II. "Einleitung," Eulenberg Edition, p. 2, m. 41, Vn.1 has accent (^) on half-note C in MSS + GSA;
- III. "Einleitung," Eulenberg Edition, p. 34, m. 67, Cl. 2, Bsn. 1, marked *p*, MSS and GSA;
- IV. "Stabat mater speciosa," Eulenberg Edition, p. 56, m. 46, Alto *f espressivo*, not *mf*, MSS and GSA; p. 58, m. 99, Liszt wrote "III." into GSA to designate a manual on the organ;
- V. "Die heiligen drei Könige," Eulenberg Edition, p. 100, mm. 89 and 91, accents only in Vn. 2 in GSA and MSS; indeed Liszt took the unusual precaution of writing the accents above the notes, inside the staff, which was not his usual custom in marking articulations;
- VI. "Die heiligen drei Könige," Eulenberg Edition, p. 127, m. 333, Vn. 2, Vla., articulation (^), GSA and MSS.

In a score as large and complex as *Christus*, there are literally hundreds of pieces of information on every page; consequently, more than a few mistakes passed into the printed scores undetected. Often copyists simply omitted expressions in one part, as in "Einleitung," Eulenberg Edition, p. 24, m. 247, where Liszt marked the Oboes "*leggero*," or in "Die heiligen drei Könige," Eulenberg Edition, p. 104, m. 124, where Liszt marked the violoncello and contrabass lines "*sempre staccato*" in the MSS. Liszt was certainly aware of the dangers of inexact engraving. He expressed his frustrations to Dr. Franz Brendel on 7 September 1863: "There is nothing more vexatious to me than careless editions, full of errors, such as Schuberth would like to have if one gave free reins to his good nature!"¹³ Although Liszt proofed Schuberth's plates, there were still significant errors, enough that Liszt felt the need to prepare the 1886 errata sheet referred to above.¹⁴

History of Published Editions

- A. 1872: J. Schuberth, plate 4934; PV 4933
- B. 1873 and/or 1880: Kahnt, plate 2410; PV 2412
- C. 1874: J. Schuberth, reprint of 4934 with Liszt's cuts from Weimar 1873 performance, pages with cuts plate 5211; fancy, color title page
- D. 1903: O Filii et Filiaë, G. Schirmer
- E. 1914: Alleluia, let all mankind rejoice, (O filii) H.W. Gray, ed. Clarence Dickinson

- F. 1941: An angel spake unto the shepherds, (Angelus), H.W. Gray, ed. Clarence Dickinson
- G. 1968: Our Father (Pater noster), Concordia, ed. Leonard Van Camp
- H. 1971: Gregg International, reprint of Kahnt
- I. 1972: Editio Musica Budapest, ed. Gábor Darvas
- J. 1987, Stabat mater speciosa, Carus Verlag, ed. Günter Graulich

There are many problems among the published full scores. The Kahnt edition of 1873 is, for all intents and purposes, indistinguishable from the 1872 Schuberth. Even though there are several corrections, the Kahnt score contains 332 pages, as does Schuberth; the system and page breaks are identical; even the fonts on title pages are the same. Kahnt was not above passing off Schuberth's work as his own. The score in the Anna Amalia Bibliothek is just such an example—Kahnt did not even change the Schuberth plate numbers; in fact, he pasted his own firm's name and logo over Schuberth's on the color title page. Unfortunately this score was lost in a recent (2004) fire.

The 1972 Edition Musica Budapest edition is not a critical edition, nor does EMB make such a claim. In declining an invitation to consider the upcoming critical edition for publication, EMB Choral Editor Antal Boronkay remarked that EMB is not interested "in publishing a playing (hire) material of *Christus* as we have our own publication—even if it is not a critical edition."¹⁵ In the preface, Gábor summarizes his editorial method:

The edition of C.F. Kahnt Nachfolger Leipzig of 1873, with number 2410, has been used as source (marked A). The above edition had been prepared with the use of the score plates checked by the composer and used in the 1872 edition of Schuberth & Co. We were helped by the autograph manuscript under ADD 34182 in the British Museum...This dates from 1866 and contains only 12 mvts. Amendments and additions have been placed in square brackets, and to distinguish the recommended ligatures broken slurs have been used. The correction of obvious mistakes and amendments made on the basis of analogy have not been indicated in any special way. The text has

¹³ Lipsius, Marie, [La Mara] *Franz Liszt's Briefe* (Leipzig, 1893-1905; Eng. trans. of vols.i-ii, 1894), no. 20.

¹⁴ Göllerich, August. *Franz Liszt*. (Berlin: 1908).

¹⁵ Antal Boronkay, e-mail message to author, May 19, 2004.

been faithfully and strictly adhered to but modern notational methods have been used. Differences in phrasing and other indications in analogous situations have been ignored.¹⁶

Apart from the fact that Gábor did not consult the fair copy in GSA, he makes wholesale assumptions about assigning articulations without disclosing their source in critical commentary. His thirty-four critical notes seem inadequate for a three-hour oratorio. Moreover, Gábor separated the “Pastorale und Verkündigung des Engels” from the “Einleitung und Pastorale” in a manner that is entirely inconsistent with the MSS and GSA: he starts numbering the measures at the soprano entrance (Eulenberg Edition, p. 32) while retaining Liszt’s own rehearsal letters (notated in his hand in GSA), which continue sequentially from the “Einleitung” through the conclusion of the “Pastorale.” Finally, Gábor chose not to consult the Richter score, with Liszt’s corrections and annotations, which is held in Budapest. While the EMB edition is certainly a step in the right direction, it does not fill the need for an edition that takes all available sources into account.

Structural and descriptive analysis of *Christus*

Liszt distributed the fourteen movements into three parts:

I. WEIHNACHTS-ORATORIUM

1. Einleitung “*Rorate cæli*” (Isaiah 45: 8) segueing into
2. Pastorale und Verkündigung des Engels “*Angelus Domini*” (Luke 2: 10–14)
3. Stabat mater speciosa (Hymne)
4. Hirtengesang an der Krippe
5. Die heiligen drei Könige (Marsch) “*Et ecce stella*” (Matthew 2: 9)

II. NACH EPIPHANIA

6. Die Seligpreisungen “*Beati pauperes spiritu*” (Matthew 5: 3–10)

7. Das Gebet: “*Pater noster*” (Matthew 6: 9–13)
8. Die Gründung der Kirche “*Tu es Petrus*” (Matthew 16: 18)
8. Das Wunder “*Et ecce motus magnus*” (Matthew 8: 24–26)
9. Der Einzug in Jerusalem “*Hosanna, benedictus*” (Matthew 21: 9)

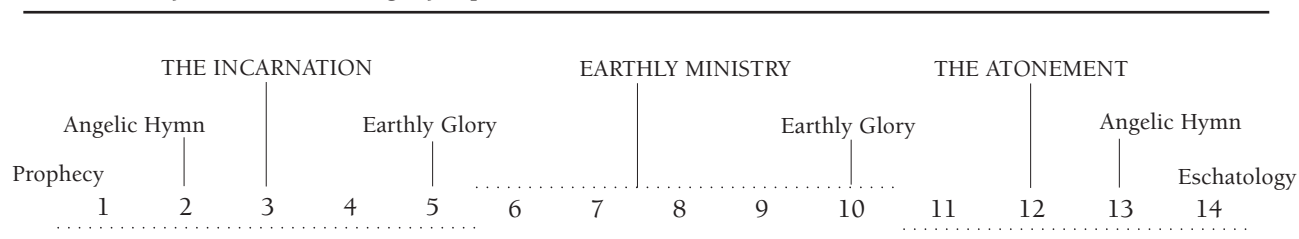
PASSION UND AUFERSTEHUNG

10. Tristis est anima mea (Mark 14: 34–36)
11. Stabat mater dolorosa
12. O Filii et Filia (Oster-Hymne)
13. Resurrexit “*Christus vincit*”

Liszt was thoughtful about the ordering of the movements. In fact, he reversed the original positions of “Die Hirtengesang” (no. 3 in the MSS) and “Stabat mater speciosa” (no. 4 in the MSS). Moreover, Liszt transposed the key of “Die Hirtengesang” up one whole step in GSA, having the copyist use tall staff paper as opposed to the wide staff paper used for the remainder of the “Weihnachts-Oratorium.”

Liszt did not set out to create a narration of the life of Jesus; rather, he selected fourteen scenes from the life of Jesus and composed for each what is, in effect, a descriptive tone poem. In the “Pastorale und Verkündigung des Engels,” a soprano soloist, followed by the women of the chorus, announces the nativity to the shepherds; the English Horn introduces a pastoral melody in 12/8 time that creates an appropriately idyllic mood. “Hirtengesang an der Krippe” continues this musical atmosphere, beginning with the pipe-like calls of the woodwinds; indeed the strings do not enter until m. 73. “Die heiligen drei Könige” is a stately march that begins with dotted figures and open fifths; the middle section changes to a more lyrical, solemn character when the Magi encounter the infant Jesus.

TABLE 1 Symmetrical ordering, by topic, of movements in *Christus*¹⁷



¹⁶ Liszt, *Christus*, ed. Gábor Darvas, preface.

¹⁷ Munson. 1996, 79.

In “Das Wunder,” Liszt creates an extremely effective storm scene that suggests the tossing about of the boat containing Jesus and his disciples. After an extended exposition, the men of the chorus shout for help; nonplussed, Jesus quietly calms the menacing weather. “Der Einzug in Jerusalem” depicts the festival that surrounds the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, complete with full chorus and all six soloists singing “Hosanna.” The highly chromatic, tortuous harmonies of “Tristis est anima mea” create a mood of anguish and fear, appropriate for the scene of Jesus in Gethsemane. The longest movement, “Stabat mater dolorosa,” is a companion to the third movement “Stabat mater speciosa,” in fact, some of the text is identical. In “Stabat mater dolorosa,” Liszt uses the Latin hymn of the same name as the melodic basis for the entire movement. An expansive movement of more than thirty minutes, it represents Liszt’s personal association with grief and conflict. It is highly dramatic, filled with imaginative textual painting and some of the most sensuous choral writing of the entire Romantic era. An offstage chorus of women or boys (Liszt specifies that either is acceptable), singing the Easter hymn “O Filii et Filiae,” announces the resurrection. A victorious conclusion for orchestra, chorus and full organ based on the Latin hymn “Christus vincit” concludes the oratorio.

Comparison of Christus to earlier oratorios

Traditionally, oratorio was narrative-based and contained all the elements of un-staged opera: soloists portraying characters and singing arias and recitative; choruses that either punctuate the unfolding plot or stand independent of the surrounding action; and declamatory solo passages to move the plot forward. Depending on the composer, the orchestra can be merely an accompanimental appendage or a full-fledged partner in the dramatic action. Liszt broke with this tradition and created a work—one he called his “musical last will and testament”—that drew upon older models while significantly branching off into new musical, formal, and dramatic spheres.

Except for the brief passages in “Das Wunder” and “Tristis est anima mea” where Liszt identifies the baritone soloist in the score as *Christus*, there are no characters. The soloists do not portray specific individuals as much as they give voice to more universal emotional responses to the mood and text. So, when the mezzo-soprano sings the beginning of “Stabat mater dolorosa,” Liszt permits the listener to assign any of the historical women in the Passion story—Mary, Martha, or Mary Magdalene—to her voice, or to simply identify with the singer as a kind

of universal figure—a person like ourselves, who reacts viscerally to scenes of horror and despair.

Liszt dispenses with recitative entirely. Since he is not relating a narrative *per se*, there is no need to propel the plot forward, as had traditional recitative. It is not hyperbole to suggest that Liszt invented the precursor of the film score. In place of traditional narration, Liszt creates a sequence of aural images that invite the listener to conjure his or her own personal story—his own moving pictures—a private theater that is unique to each individual.

As applied to *Christus*, the term tableau is both fitting and misleading. In the sense that Liszt illustrates particular scenes from the life of Jesus, the term—traditionally defined as “a vivid or graphic description or a striking incidental scene, as of a picturesque group of people”—is appropriate. A third definition—“an interlude during a scene when all the performers on stage freeze in position and then resume action as before” is inaccurate. Liszt’s music is anything but static; indeed, from his fluid orchestrations to his thematic transformation to his keen sense of dramatic pacing, the scenes are free-flowing musical poetry.

Unpublished corrections and abridgments

The score held by the National Széchényi Library in Budapest—the Schubert 1872/4 edition (plate number 4934)—contains an inscription on the second folio in Liszt’s hand.

Hans Richter, in dankbares Erinennung [sic] seiner meister haften [sic] Direction dieser Oratorium, bei der Fest Aufführung in Pest am Sonntag 9ter November 1873.

*ergebenit F. Liszt
19ter Nov: 73, Pest.*

(Hans Richter, in grateful memory of your masterful direction of the oratorio at the festival performance in Pest on Sunday, 9 November 1873.)

Hans Richter conducted what has always been considered the first complete performance of *Christus* in Budapest; Liszt attended rehearsals and the performance. In Richter’s score there are several significant corrections in Liszt’s hand that have never been incorporated into any of the published editions.

“Einleitung,” No. I:

- second bar after letter F (m. 111)—marked “Bis,” indicating that he wanted this bar repeated;



Printed Flute parts, Einleitung, measures 349-51.



Same passage, corrected in manuscript.

- twelfth bar after letter Q (mm. 349–351)—changes in the flute parts (see example above);
- letter S (m. 531)—addition of a fermata in the first beat above the oboe part.

“Stabat mater dolorosa,” No. XII:

- ninth bar after letter A (m. 39)—“4 Viertel” ([Conduct in] four beats) is written above the clarinets. Liszt had already marked that section “Alla breve taktieren” (Conduct by the half note).

Likewise, at the beginning of “Der Einzug in Jerusalem,” Liszt indicates “Alla breve taktieren” and the same indication in “Stabat mater dolorosa” is present in Schubert. The inclusion of conducting indications in printed scores is controversial. Liszt was outspoken about the art of conducting (see Preface to the Symphonic Poems). The fact that he made these indications in the same score that contains the corrections and cuts would indicate that he intended them to be included in a future edition. Moreover, in “Der Einzug in Jerusalem” Liszt

includes detailed conducting instructions, going so far as to write “1, 2, 3, 4” over the first four measures beginning at m. 236; he then writes, “(Von hier an Alla Breve, in 2, taktieren)”.

In the first performance of all three portions of *Christus*—which Liszt conducted—substantial cuts were made. These abridgements were subsequently published as part of the front matter in the 1874 Schubert edition bearing the plate number 5211 (the remainder of the oratorio is identical to the 1872 edition, which bears the plate number 4934); this edition is the only source of Liszt’s cuts. Traditionally, the November 1873 performance in Budapest, at which Hans Richter presided, is considered to be the first performance with no cuts. Interestingly, however, the Richter score in the National Széchényi Library (wherein the above corrections were noted in Liszt’s hand) contains a second set of cuts in Liszt’s hand. Moreover, Liszt owned a C.F. Kahnt score of *Christus* that, until recently, was held in the Liszt Music Academy. This third score contains yet another distinct set of abridgments.

TABLE 2 Comparison of Abridgements in *Christus*

LISZT’S 1873 PERFORMANCE CUTS	RICHTER’S SCORE	LISZT’S OWN KAHNT SCORE
1. “Einleitung, Pastorale” third bar after letter F to the fourth bar after letter Q		1. “Einleitung, Pastorale” letter R to letter S
4. “Hirtengesang an der Krippe” letter E to letter I	4. “Hirtengesang an der Krippe” letter C to letter G	3. “Stabat mater speciosa” one bar before letter E to letter T
5. “Die heiligen drei Könige” fifth bar before letter C to the third bar after letter F	5. “Die heiligen drei Könige” twelfth bar after letter B to letter F	
9. “Das Wunder” seventh bar after letter K to the second bar after letter O		
11. “Tristis est anima mea” letter D to the eleventh bar after letter G	11. “Tristis est anima mea” fifth bar after letter D to the seventh bar after letter G	
12. “Stabat mater dolorosa” a. last bar before letter T to the ninth bar of letter Y b. last bar before letter Dd to the second bar before letter li	12. “Stabat mater dolorosa” letter Ee to letter Ff	

To be sure, *Christus* is a lengthy work that requires great fortitude on the part of every participant, including the listener. When faced with limited rehearsal time or resources, conductors might certainly be tempted to abridge not only *Christus*, but any expansive work. It is true that Liszt sanctioned the cuts in the 1873 Weimar performance, even though he himself did not determine them; Karl Müller-Hartung, who prepared the chorus, made the choices during the rehearsals in the weeks preceding the concert.¹⁸ As is almost always the case, however, diminishing the length of a masterpiece inevitably diminishes the work itself. The rarity of opportunities to mount such elaborate productions begs the question as to whether in the long run reducing a three-hour work by twenty minutes is worthwhile; and, since the cuts themselves are often repeated sections, less rehearsal time is gained by omitting them than one might imagine.

Conclusion

Liszt attached extraordinary importance to his oratorios—*Christus*, *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth*, and *St. Stanislaus*—and his other religious music, such as the *Missa solennis*, *Ungarische Krönungsmesse*, *Missa Choralis*, *Via crucis* and the *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco*. He also left a lega-

cy of harmonic and formal innovations within these masterworks. Shortly after he arrived in Rome—where both *Christus* and *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* were composed—Liszt wrote that “After having, as far as I could, solved the greater part of the Symphonic problem set me in Germany, I mean now to undertake the Oratorio problem...” adding that “...to me it is the one object in art... to which I must sacrifice everything else.”¹⁹

There have been a limited number of performances of *Christus* in the second half of the 20th century; consequently Liszt’s last musical will and testament has not acquired the audience it deserves. After the completion of *Christus* Liszt wrote, “When and where [*Christus*] will ever be heard is of no importance to me. The writing of my compositions is for me an artistic necessity and the fact that they are written is enough for me...”²⁰ Liszt’s remarkable attitude about the fate of his largest work demonstrates both his great maturity and an awareness of the vicissitudes of the musical world in which he lived.

David Friddle is a doctoral candidate in choral conducting at the University of Miami, where he studies with Jo-Michael Scheibe. His new, critical edition of Christus will be published later this year by Bärenreiter.

IN MEMORIAM:

Dawn Culbertson (1951-2004)

Dawn Culbertson of Baltimore, Maryland passed away suddenly last Thanksgiving evening. Ms. Culbertson was a frequent contributor to these pages, reviewing choral concerts in the Washington and Baltimore areas for many years. In addition to her activities as a music critic for a variety of national and local publications, writing on everything from medieval music to jazz and contemporary popular styles, she was a composer, lutenist, recorder player, classical music radio host, and avid choral singer. She founded the Baltimore Composers Forum in 1993, and recently founded Vox Asylum, a choral ensemble performing anti-war music of all periods. She was well-known for her eclectic musical interests, and often interspersed her performances of Renaissance lute music with renditions of punk rock and jazz on the same instrument. Her catholic tastes, honest yet never caustic critical ear, and energy in the cause of forgotten corners of many repertoires will be greatly missed.

¹⁸ Dezso Legány. *Liszt and His Country: 1869-1873* (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1983), 187.

¹⁹ Patrick Kavanaugh. *The Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 97.

²⁰ Hermann Wilske. 1998. Program notes for Franz Liszt’s *Christus*. Henriette Bonde-Hansen, soprano; Iris Vermillion, mezzo-soprano/alto; Michael Schade, tenor; Andreas Schmidt, bass; Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart; Krakauer Kammerchor; Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart; Helmut Rilling, conductor. Hänssler Classic 98.121. Three compact discs.

Multiple back issues of the AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW and RESEARCH MEMORANDUM SERIES are available through Chorus America. Back issues of the AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW are available to members at \$7.50; back issues of the RESEARCH MEMORANDUM SERIES at \$2.00. Bulk prices will be quoted on request. All requests for back issues and index listings should be made to the American Choral Foundation, c/o Chorus America, 1156 15th Street NW, Suite 310. Washington, D.C. 20005. (202) 331-7577. An index to all volumes of the American Choral Review can be found at <chorusamerica.org>. Proposals for articles may be addressed to William Weinert, Eastman School of Music, 26 Gibbs Street, Rochester, N.Y. 14604, or <wweinert@esm.rochester.edu>.