

American Liszt Society

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Los Angeles International Liszt Competition an Incredible Event

*By Geraldine Keeling and
Judith Neslény, Co-Directors*

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The eighth biennial Los Angeles International Liszt Competition was held on November 20–21, 2004 at Azusa Pacific University. It was an incredible event! 141 contestants (pianists and vocalists ages 12–35) came from 64 studios in 11 states and 3 countries. Eleven judges came from 8 states and 3 countries.

This competition is designed to encourage interest in both the music and the life of Franz Liszt. Each contestant not only performs a piece by Liszt, but also receives one volume from the three-volume biography of Liszt by Alan Walker.

We are very grateful for the support given to this competition by the American Liszt Society. Most of our judges are ALS members. In 2004 our distinguished piano jury included Mariann Ábrahám, Paul Barnes, David Butler-Cannata, Jay Hershberger, Edward Rath, Robert Roux, Jeffrey Shumway, Tamás Ungár and Alan Walker. Members of the voice jury were Janet Obermeyer and Carmen Tajada.

The winner in the Budapest Concert division was pianist Steven Vanhauwaert, student of Kevin Fitz-Gerald at the University of Southern California. He will be performing a solo recital at the Liszt

Ferenc Museum and Research Centre in Budapest on May 28, 2005, and at the Gyula Music Festival in Hungary the following week. Steven is also competing in the Liszt Competition in Utrecht in April.

The winner in the New York Concert division was vocalist Rebecca Black, student of Jane Randolph in California. She was accompanied by Jonathan Summers, who came from London. They will be giving a concert at the Hungarian Consulate in New York in the spring of 2005.

The American Liszt Society Award of \$500 was shared by two pianists, Emeshe Mali from Budapest and Matthew Cameron from Brooklyn. Emeshe took second place in the Budapest Concert division and Matthew placed third. They also each entered two other divisions and received recognition in each. They certainly epitomize the ALS ideal of promoting the music of Liszt.

The Los Angeles International Liszt Competition has ten divisions: Budapest Concert, New York Concert, Voice, Concerto, Longer Works, and five age divisions. It is unique in the world — the only Liszt competition to offer categories from ages 12 and under through age 35.

Would the real *Christus* please stand up?

Some comments on Liszt's Christus



David Friddle,
Frost School of Music,
University of Miami

Liszt composed *Christus* intermittently during the 1850s and 1860s. He dated the manuscript 1866 and wrote to Franz Brendel, on 2 October 1866, that, “My *Christus* Oratorio has, at last, since yesterday been brought to such a state of readiness that only the revising, the copying and the pianoforte score remain to be done. Altogether it contains 12 musical numbers (of which the “*Seligkeiten*” and the “*Pater Noster*” have been published by Kahnt), and lasts about three hours.”¹

Christus was, however, not finished in 1866; Liszt added “*O Filii et Filiae*,” which brought the number of movements to 13, or 14, if one counts the first movement—“*Einleitung*” and “*Pastorale und Verkündigung des Engels*” — separately, as did the first publisher Schubert and all subsequent publishers. Liszt also reversed nos. 4 (“*Die Hirtengesang*”) and 3 (“*Stabat mater speciosa*”); transposed no. 4 (formerly no. 3) up one whole tone; cut a substantial chunk out of no. 5 (“*Die drei heiligen Könige*”); and dispensed with the fourth trumpet — found in no. 10, “*Der Einzug in Jerusalem*” — altogether.

J. Schubert & Co. published *Christus* in 1872, Kahnt in 1873. Liszt supervised the publication and checked the score plates. One might therefore surmise that the final version would be free from error, and would contain each and every musical expression, performance indication, dynamic marking, and articulation that Liszt set down in the manuscript. Unfortunately, such an assumption would be mistaken. As reported by August Göllerich, the mistakes were so numerous that Liszt even prepared an errata sheet for Kahnt in 1886.²

There are dozens of errors in the Schubert score that made their way into later editions. Liszt knew that Schubert did not always maintain the highest level of quality control. “There is nothing more vexatious to me than careless editions, full of errors, such as Schubert would like to have, if only one gave his genius an unrestricted run!”³ Even though Schubert’s procedures fell short of the idealized editorial mark, his firm is not solely responsible for the inaccuracies that now appear in *Christus* editions.

As was his custom, Liszt had a “fair” copy produced for the publisher. Today the only surviving fair copy of *Christus* is in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv (GSA) in Weimar,⁴ although there is a set of handwritten parts for no. 5, “*Die drei heiligen Könige*,” in the Sächsisches Staatsarchiv in Leipzig.⁵ The notation of GSA is not in Liszt’s hand, but the plentiful emendations, corrections, and rehearsal letters certainly are. For one reason or another, a large number of Liszt’s performance markings in the manuscript — articulations, slurs, text expressions, and the like — never found their way into the fair copy or Schubert.

I believe that one can plausibly argue that Liszt, while checking the proofs, would probably not have deleted a single staccato dot, say, over the third beat of a particular measure in the second clarinet part, even though the other woodwinds are so marked.⁶ Or that he would decide that the double basses should play a passage of octave D-sharp whole notes unisoni, despite having first marked the same passage divisi in the manuscript.⁷

So, how did all of these mistakes and omissions slip past Liszt, the copyists and editors? It would appear that all parties, Liszt included, must share the blame. Either Liszt was incredibly mercurial about the addition and subtraction of musical elements to and from the manuscript of *Christus* in the publication process, or he just failed to notice. He may not have even checked the fair copy or Schubert's plates against the manuscript; to save valuable time he may have simply tried to examine them while trying to correct and amend everything from memory. We may never know. Certainly the copyists failed to exactly reproduce the manuscript; Schubert's editors were either incompetent or negligent.

Consequently, the *Christus* that now exists in published — and, thus in recorded — form is not the *Christus* that Liszt set down on music paper (30 cm x 44.5 cm, in brown ink augmented by subsequent phrase markings, dynamic indications, articulations etc., in polychromatic pencils), in his cell at the monastery of Madonna del Rosario outside Rome. By creating a new, critical edition of *Christus*, I aim to remedy that situation.

As my primary sources I used a digitized version of the manuscript,⁸ the 1872/4 Schubert edition — which contains the abridgements authorized by Liszt for the 1873 Weimar premier performance,⁹ and is signed by Liszt's pupil Alexander Gottschalg — both from the British Library, reproductions of the fair copy and color slides of additional manuscript pages from the GSA,¹⁰ and pages from the score of *Christus* that Liszt gave to Hans Richter after the 1873 Jubilee performance in

Budapest — which contains corrections and cuts made in Liszt's hand — from the Hungarian National Library in Budapest.¹¹ I was aided by Liszt scholars in the United States and abroad, library staff in five countries, and a small army of students from the University of Miami. Funded by the Presser Foundation, the Dr. M. Lee Pearce Foundation, the University of Miami Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music's dean, William Hipp, the University Graduate College and Provost's Office, I have refit the many puzzle pieces found in this mélange of documents into a score that I hope is more faithful to Liszt's original conception.

The *Christus* that we will hear in Lincoln, performed from the new score, is hardly a radical overhaul. Rather, it is a good faith attempt to restore the several layers of expression that were inadvertently peeled away from Liszt's initial outpouring as documented in the manuscript. Following many months of intensive study of the primary sources, I am persuaded that Liszt's handwritten score is the closest approximation of the music that he heard in his mind's ear.

Musicologists and scholars still debate whether to give primacy to a published score that was known to and approved by a composer or to the original sources. Liszt was devoted to *Christus* and composed it with the knowledge that he might never hear it performed. It manifested his religious inspiration and personal theology and was his musical last will and testament. Accordingly, I find it difficult to believe that Liszt would consciously lessen the expressive

potential of *Christus* by deleting from the published score any written directive that would help future performers to discover and re-create each and every pearl of artistic beauty that is the essence of this magisterial work.

1. Liszt to Franz Brendel, Monte Mario (Madonna del Rosario), 2 October 1866, in *Briefe*, ed. La Mara (Leipzig, 1893), 2:94.
2. August Göllerich, *Franz Liszt* (Berlin, 1908), 173.
3. Liszt to Franz Brendel, 7 September 1863, 2:52.
4. Franz Liszt, *Christus*, GSA 60/B 33, Goethe-Schiller Archiv.
5. Franz Liszt, "Die drei heiligen Könige," Musikverlag C.F. Kahnt, Nr. 81, Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig.
6. A few examples will suffice: "Einleitung," sixteen bars before letter M, Vn 2 & Vla, in addition to Vn 1, marked *dolce semplice* in manuscript, which was left out of Schubert; "Hirtengesang," letter M, all woodwinds, in addition to Flutes, marked *f* in manuscript; "Die drei heiligen Könige," eight bars before letter G, *ben sostenuto legato e tranquillo assai* misattributed to Vn 1 in Schubert when it is clearly intended for Vn 2 in manuscript; "Der Einzug in Jerusalem," two bars before letter R, Vla has accent mark (^) to match Vn 1 in manuscript, which was left out of Schubert; "Resurrexit," letter G, strings marked *fp* to match woodwinds and horns in manuscript, which was left out of Schubert. Moreover, Liszt extensively used hairpin markings to indicate crescendo and diminuendo; many of these were omitted in Schubert. Phrase markings indicated as slurs were almost universally changed from the manuscript.
7. "Einleitung," five bars before letter W, CB marked *divisi* in manuscript, which was left out of Schubert.
8. Franz Liszt, *Christus*, 1866, Rare Books and Music, ADD 34,182, British Library.
9. Franz Liszt, *Christus*, (Leipzig: J. Schubert & Co., 1872/4), Music, Hirsch iv. 829, British Library.
10. Franz Liszt, *Christus*, GSA 601B 2, Goethe-Schiller Archiv.
11. Franz Liszt, *Christus*, (Leipzig: J. Schubert & Co., 1872), Ms Mus 3.522, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár.