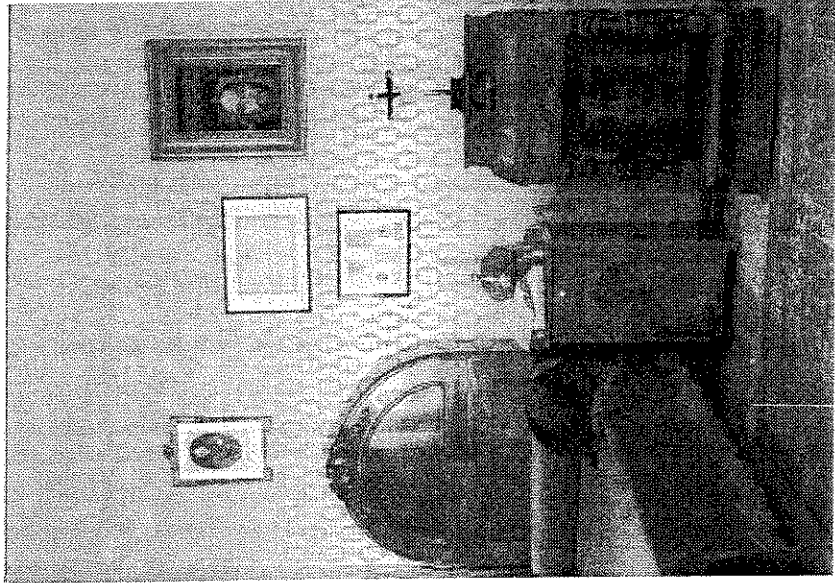


**LISZT AND THE CROSS:
MUSIC AS SACRAMENT IN THE B MINOR SONATA**
Dr. Paul Barnes, University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music



Liszt's study-bedroom

Mankind is a sacramental being by nature and needs the instrumentality of both sacraments and symbols to attain communion with the Invisible. Boris Bobrinsky, Preface to Michel Quoist, *The Icon: Window to the Kingdom*, p.9

We see that it is not the task of Christianity to provide easy answers to every question, but to make us progressively aware of a mystery. God is not so much the object of our knowledge as the cause of our wonder. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, p.16

How in the end did they not perceive that to try to spiritualize religion to the point where it subsists devoid of all external manifestation is tantamount to claiming a reform of the work of God, the great and sublime artist who, in creating the universe and mankind, revealed himself as the omnipotent, eternal and infinite poet, architect, musician, and sculptor.

Liszt, quoted in Paul Merrick's Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt, p.25

As formerly, nay, more so, music must recognize God and the people as its living source; must hasten from one to the other, to ennoble, to comfort, to purify man, to bless and praise God.

Liszt, On the Future of Church Music (1834)

Music, for Liszt, was the voice of God. He often behaved as if music possessed healing properties. Because of its divine origin, he seemed to say, mere exposure to it was a spiritual balm.

Alan Walker, Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, p.390

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Rux fi dé-lis, inter ómnes Arbor úna nó-bi-lis:
Cross faithful, Noble among all trees

Nulla sílva tá-lem pró-fert, Frón-de, fló-re, gé-rmi-ne:
No arbor brings forth Such remarkable foliage, flowers, seeds

* Dúlce lígnum, dúlces ciáv-os, Dúlce pón dus sú-s tí-net.
Sweet tree, sweet nails, Sweet weight sustains.

Liber Usualis, p. 742

Art is heaven on earth, to which one never appeals is vain when faced with the oppressions of this world.

Liszt, quoted in Walker, Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, p.391

Is not music the mysterious language of a faraway spirit world whose wondrous accents, echoing within us, awaken us to a higher, more intensive life?

Liszt, from Berlioz and His Herald Symphony

This is my Will. It is made on this 14th day of September 1860 when the church celebrates the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The name of this festival also expresses the burning and mysterious feeling which has marked my whole life as with a sacred stigma. Yes, the crucified Jesus, the ardent yearning for the Cross and the exaltation of the Holy Cross, this was my true vocation.

Liszt, Last Will and Testament

The path of a true artist does not lead away from religion—it is possible to have one path for both. Love God, be good and upright, so that you will reach ever higher in your art.

Adam Liszt, quoted in Alan Walker, Franz Liszt, 1987, vol. I, p. 117

Art, for [Lamenais and Liszt], was God made manifest; it ennobled the human race; insofar as the artist was a bearer of the beautiful, he was like a priest ministering to his congregation.

Alan Walker, Franz Liszt, 1987, Vol. I, p. 159

The icon is a song of triumph, and a revelation, and an enduring monument to the victory of the saints and the disgrace of the demons.

St. John of Damascus (eighth century)

On the use of Crux Fidelis in Liszt's symphonic poem Hunnenschlacht: In the middle of the picture appears the Cross and its mystic light; on this my 'Symphonic Poem' is founded. The chorale 'Crux Fidelis,' which is gradually developed, illustrates the idea of the final victory of Christianity in its effectual love to God and man.

Letters of Franz Liszt, trans. Constance Bache, London, vol. II, p. 292

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