



Franz Liszt

Lebenswanderung

Alexandra Kaptein

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Lebenswanderung: Song transcriptions

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Winterreise, 12 Lieder von Franz Schubert, S.561

1	Gute Nacht	5:39
2	Die Nebensonnen	4:53
3	Mut	1:29
4	Die Post	3:40
5	Erstarrung	3:22
6	Wasserflut	4:02
7	Der Lindenbaum	5:17
8	Der Leiermann	3:04
9	Täuschung	1:52
10	Das Wirtshaus	4:33
11	Der stürmische Morgen	1:04
12	Im Dorfe	4:32

12 Lieder von Robert Franz, S.489

13	Auf geheimen Waldespfeiden, Op. 2 No. 1	2:20
14	Drüben geht die Sonnescheiden, Op. 2 No. 2	3:34
15	Trübe wird's, Op. 2 No. 3	1:38
16	Sonnenuntergang, Op. 2 No. 4	1:19
17	Auf dem Teich, Op. 2 No. 5	2:49
18	Der Schalk, Op. 3 No. 1	3:19
19	Meerestille, Op. 8 No. 2	3:01
20	Der Bote, Op. 8 No. 1	4:33
21	Treibt der Sommer seine Rosen, Op. 2 No. 5	1:57
22	Gewitternacht, Op. 8 No. 6	5:28
23	Das ist ein Brausen und Heulen, Op. 8 No. 4	1:40
24	Frühling und Liebe, Op. 3 No. 3	2:07

Total playing time 77:22

About the album

Composer, pianist, organist, and conductor Franz Liszt is a fascinating and intriguing figure in the music world. His legendary and charismatic personality, along with his musical innovations, significantly influenced Romanticism and the subsequent generations of composers. Liszt's innovations involved the changing role of the piano, the development of tonality, and the connection of art, literature, and religion with music.

I recently discovered Liszt's transcriptions and was amazed at their quantity. Almost half of his oeuvre consists of arrangements of music by other composers, and song transcriptions are a specific subcategory. Here, Liszt creates "*Lieder ohne Worte*" or "songs without words" because the poetry and text, which are crucial elements of the songs, are missing. It's fascinating to see how Liszt translates the poetic content into the musical narrative, creating an additional interpretive layer that enhances the symbolic content of the poem. Through pianistic and virtuosic elaborations, Liszt changes the aesthetic of the performance. Playing and analyzing these transcriptions has changed my love and appreciation for these pieces. We're fortunate to have Liszt's transcriptions notated, since they are translations from one medium to another, bringing out what Liszt believed to be the essence of the original composition, becoming far less ambiguous than the original compositions.

Lebenswanderung

Both instrumental song cycles are complex and compound monodramas. They explore themes of lost love, the torments of reawakening hope, and the path to resignation. The real and imaginary worlds blur together and may even vanish. This music requires introspection, solitude, and an appreciation for nature as the symbolic stage of the soul. Through wandering, both literally and figuratively, one gets to know their true self and the meaning of life.

Liszt began publishing transcriptions in 1838, starting with *"Franz Schubert's 12 Lieder"*, *"Schwanengesang"*, and *"Winterreise"*. The latter was a fusion of Schubert's lyrical, introverted melancholy with Liszt's own temperamental, virtuoso persona, creating a sublime, transcendental, and spirited work. Liszt created independent cycles by selecting appropriate poems, reordering them, and creating a new cogent narrative. He strengthened musical coherence between songs by reusing memorable motives and characteristic accompanimental figures. By reordering and interpreting the tonal, thematic, and narrative order out of Schubert's set of lieder, Liszt created one of the first concrete examples of the "instrumental" song cycles.

The *"Winterreise"* transcription cycle is a set of twelve pieces that are interconnected on various levels. Each song moves a third lower than the previous one, creating a series of interlocking trichords that weave their way through the entire set. The harmonies of the second half of the cycle reflect those in the first half, transposed a whole step higher, creating poetic and dramatic content and coherence of internal plot through the reordering of songs. This restructuring offers a different interpretation of the cycle by emphasizing the duality between the inner world of imagination, dreams, aspirations, and bright memories and the outer world of external reality. Modal shifts between *"Wasserflut"* and *"Der Lindenbaum"*, *"Der Leiermann"* and *"Täuschung"*, and *"Der stürmische Morgen"* and *"Im Dorfe"* create a sense of fraternity, which Liszt immediately undermines, thereby heightening the wanderer's already desperate situation.

Robert Franz was a German Lied composer who is still relatively unknown. He was part of the later school of Lied composers from the 1830s until the end of the century and is usually mentioned alongside Hugo Wolf, Felix Mendelssohn, and Robert Schumann. In 1843, Schumann helped him publish his first book of songs, and Franz Liszt was also a great admirer of his work. Franz's music combines the lyrical romanticism of Schumann with the strict contrapuntal settings of Bach, as well as old German folksongs. This is because he was an organist who studied Bach and Händel's music extensively, while also reflecting poems with life-like

profundity through the folklore elements. Liszt met Robert Franz in Dessau in February 1844 and praised Franz's first collection of songs, hinting that he would be happy if Franz would dedicate a set to him, which Franz did in his *"Sechs Gesänge, Op. 7"*, published in 1846. In 1848, Liszt transcribed the *"12 Lieder von Robert Franz"* not only to promote them but also to enrich his own concert programs. Liszt admired Franz so much that he not only made transcriptions of his work but also wrote an entire book about him (*"Robert Franz von Franz Liszt"*). The transcriptions were so popular that they outsold the original voice and piano scores. An important feature of Liszt's transcriptions is that he insisted that his publishers print the poem/text in the score at the appropriate points, meaning that it was of great benefit for the performer. According to Liszt, the melody of the song should be acquired as a preparatory study to performance: in declamation corresponding to the text so that it becomes a lively impulse of performance. This shows that in Lied transcriptions, the important aspects of the poetic text are kept in performance, even when the words and the personality of the vocalist are left out, and even when an additional interpretive layer is imposed on the music.

Since the *"12 Lieder von R. Franz"* are lesser-known transcriptions by Liszt, here follows a short summary of the poetry: In *"By a secret forest path"* the poet is wandering by the reedy shore hearing his love's singing. *"Meanwhile the sun departs"* and with it the reflection of his love in the pond, and in sorrow he awaits the light of the evening star; *"The gloom of the rushing clouds"* occludes the stars and the sorrow remains; *"Sunset and storm"* lead him to believe his lover's face to be visible in the lightning; and *"On the pond"* the light of the moon finally reveals the beauty of nature and leads to the sweetest inner reflection of his love. *"The Lad"* finds himself curious, compelled and bewitched in turn by the mysteries of nature. *"Calm Sea"* conjures up images of a mysterious king of the deep who controls the destiny of those on the sea and who sings to his harp. *"The Messenger"* from the beloved arrives by way of the wind playing on the strings of a zither, which the poet likens to his heart. *"The Summer puts forth its roses"* is a recollection of former happiness amidst present sorrow; *"Stormy Night"* an

impassioned plea that the poet's storm-tossed soul be comforted by the maiden deciding to love him again. "*What a showering and howling*" tells of a girl looking out into the stormy night, her eyes full of tears; and "*Spring and Love*" gently restores hope of the healing powers of spring and love's rebirth.

I am truly thankful for all the support from my family, friends and sponsors, who have made this production possible, and whose kindness gave me a chance to realize my dream. This production was partly realized in collaboration with the Dutch Franz Liszt Kring foundation.

Alexandra Kaptein

Alexandra Kaptein is a Dutch concert pianist, born in 1999. She is currently studying with Frank van de Laar as part of her second Master's program at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. In addition to graduating cum laude Bachelor from the ArtEZ Conservatory and Masters at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, Alexandra studied Music Theory at the Royal Conservatory. She has performed with renowned orchestras, such as the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra and performed on the National Radio 4 (AVRO/TROS) and locations such as the Leidse Schouwburg and Koninklijk Concertgebouw. She won first prizes at the Von Bremen Piano Competition, the EPTA International Piano Competition, International Piano Competition Enschede; Piano Competition in s-Hertogenbosch and the International competition in Val Tidone 'Silvio Bengali' Italy. In addition to her competition success, Alexandra has participated in various masterclasses with renowned pianists such as Leslie Howard, Hannes Minnaar, Alexander Gavrylyuk, and Boris Gilburg. Franz Liszt has been a significant source of inspiration for Alexandra, encouraging her to dive into his music, research and analyse his works and record her debut album with TRPTK. She is also the vice president of the Franz Liszt Society in the Netherlands, where she is writing and publishing articles that unite her interests in Music Theory, Musicology, and Performing.





trptk

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With each recording, we try to craft an auditory journey, where the walls of your listening space dissolve to reveal the vaulted grandeur of a concert hall, the sacred quiet of a church, or the intimate warmth of a studio. Our role is that of a careful curator — we blend into the background, allowing the artists and the space to speak through the music.

We choose artists who resonate with this philosophy: musicians who inspire us not just with their talent, but with their drive to push boundaries whilst maintaining a heartfelt connection to their audience. It's this balance that guides our collaborations and helps us fulfill our pledge to bring forth recordings that honour the integrity of high fidelity sound, and the essence of musical storytelling.

At TRPTK, we quietly step back and let artistry take the spotlight. We're here to capture rather than enhance, and to deliver not just the sound, but the very soul of the music to you.

Brendan Heinst

founder & senior recording and mastering engineer

Equipment used on this recording

Microphones

Josephson C617 with Microtech Gefell MK221 capsules *main mics*

Josephson C42 *height mics*

Microphone preamplifiers

Grace Design m801mk2

AD/DA conversion (11.2MHz 1bit)

Merging Technologies Hapi mkII

Merging Technologies Anubis

Grimm Audio CC2 *master clock*

Weiss Engineering Saracon *samplerate converter*

Monitoring

Grimm Audio LS1be *main loudspeakers*

Grimm Audio SB1 *subwoofers*

KEF LS50 Meta *height loudspeakers*

Hegel C55 *amplifier*

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Purecable Optimus Power *power cables*

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Credits

Recording & mastering engineer **Brendon Heinst**

Editor **Hans Erblich**

Cover photo **Jozua Dieleman**

Liner notes **Alexandra Kaptein**

Recording dates **August 15th to 17th 2023**

Recording location **Studio 1, Muziekcentrum van de Omroep, Hilversum (NL)**

Recording format **11.2MHz 1bit in 5.1.4-channel immersive**

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