

A portrait of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a black lace dress. She is looking down and slightly to the side, with her hands raised near her hair. The background is dark and out of focus.

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CLASSICS

W524

LUCILLE CHUNG
PIANO

FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

1	Toccata , S. 197a	[1.16]
2	Unstern! Sinistre, disastro , S. 208	[4.55]
3	Wiegenlied (Chant du berceau) , S. 198	[3.15]
4	Bagatelle sans tonalité , S. 216a	[2.47]
5	Abschied, russisches Volkslied , S. 251	[2.23]
6	Resignazione (Ergebung) , S. 263/187a	[1.23]
7	Schlafllos! Frage und Antwort , S. 203	[2.35]
8	Im Traum , S. 207	[1.49]
9	Trübe Wolken (Nuages gris) , S. 199	[2.52]
10	Gretchen from the Faust Symphony , S. 513	[17.51]
11	Sonata in B Minor , S. 178	[30.39]
	Total timings:	[71.47]

LUCILLE CHUNG PIANO

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ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

Franz Liszt is a composer whom I have always found intriguing, fascinating and puzzling. Much has been speculated about Liszt. He was the 19th century equivalent of a rock-star, at home on the piano as well as in all social circles. He was the first real touring Pan-European artist, leading multiple lives at once, and yet finding the time to write so much music.

Most of Liszt' music has universal appeal. One can find copious connections to the past as well as a new individual voice developed from his reportedly stunning pianistic skills, but inspired by a wide range of attributes: pagan folk to deeply religious music. Later in life, he somehow deconstructed his music, as in an act of de-composition, looking deeply inwards into his own intricate, perhaps troubled, mind. He wrote miniatures with titles as puzzling as their form, harmonic structure and lack of motivic material. He was able to produce music that at once revered the past, basked in the glow of the present, and paved a long road, which would clearly lead us to the Second Viennese school.

My relationship with Liszt started with the composer's obvious piano-centric and romantic repertoire. It then deepened immensely as a challenge. I was one of Lazar Berman's first female students. Berman was regarded as his generation's ultimate Liszt interpreter and was quick to judge that a diminutive lady with hands spanning a 9th (although I can now stretch a 10th on a good day) would ever succeed in playing Liszt well. By the time I made my debut in Budapest at the Great Hall of the Liszt Academy, performing Liszt' First Piano Concerto, I had won awards for my performances of the B minor Sonata and graduated from the Hochschule "Franz Liszt" in Weimar. Mr. Berman came around.

The B minor Sonata, which is considered one of the greatest masterpieces of the repertoire has been a close companion for most of my musical life, but it was not until I was exposed to the late works on this album that I started to understand Liszt' music on a deeper level. I like to think that his late works are deconstructed in a way that perhaps reveal his innermost secrets. At last, he is giving us a glimpse of his fears and despair and is searching for new musical tools to express them. He is taking everything that had made

him popular and throwing it away. Gone are the sweeping romantic gestures and melodies, the rich chords, the pianistic razzle-dazzle. This is music that cherishes economy of means, silences and uneasiness. In this process, I discovered that the older Liszt was always present in the earlier works, if perhaps buried in his subconscious. It is what makes Liszt's music special and timeless.

The unique program on this album, centered around the B minor Sonata, and including the ravishingly beautiful "Gretchen" transcription from the Faust Symphony, as well as a selection of the late works, is my homage to Liszt, and an attempt to draw a full circle around his fascinating world and psyche.

Lucille Chung, 2018

Franz Liszt (b. Raiding [Doborján], Hungary [now Austria], October 22, 1811; d. Bayreuth, July 31, 1886)

Franz Liszt's transformative development of piano technique, accomplished through his performance, composition, and pedagogy, represents his greatest and most lasting contribution. He was for the piano what Niccolò Paganini was for the violin: a visionary composer-performer who redefined the standard of virtuosity for his instrument. As with Paganini, Liszt's extraordinary facility was part and parcel of his compositional approach. (Also like Paganini, Liszt's instrumental ability derived in part from unique physical advantages. Long, narrow hands that lacked webbing between the fingers allowed him to stretch the length of a tenth with ease. With the unusual flexibility in the fourth finger of each hand, he could create luminous accompanimental textures while managing multiple voices in counterpoint.)

Because of his overwhelming gifts as a performer, one rarely thinks of Liszt the composer irrespective of Liszt the pianist. As biographer Alan Walker contends, "Liszt composed with the outlook of a performer, and performed with the insight of a composer." Yet his

compositional output must be considered on its own merits as well. Aside from his contributions to the piano literature, Liszt developed the symphonic poem, an orchestral form that would become one of the late Romantic period's quintessential genres. His reimagining of the symphonic form is most powerfully manifest in his greatest orchestral work, *Eine Faust-Symphonie in drei Charakterbildern* (1857) (A Faust Symphony in three character pictures), after Goethe. Though programmatic, the *Faust Symphony* does not narrate Goethe's *Faust* per se, but provides sketches of Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles. (Liszt's arrangement of the Symphony's "Gretchen" movement appears on this disc.)

But of course, in considering Liszt the composer, his piano music is key. The piano provided the laboratory for Liszt's innovations. And beyond merely representing one of the richest and most daunting contributions to the instrument's repertoire, his extensive catalogue of piano music demonstrates radical new methods of thematic development and bold experiments with harmony and form – innovations that made Liszt the most influential composer of the New German School, the progressive vanguard of Western music in the latter half of

the Nineteenth Century that included Wagner and Berlioz.

Liszt's representative early works for the piano include his *Grandes études de Paganini* and the *Études d'exécution transcendante*. The technical challenges contained in these scores, composed between 1838 and 1840 and dedicated to Clara Schumann, reveal the breathtaking extent of Liszt's virtuosity. Moreover, they represent the first of the pianist Liszt's pathbreaking technical advances (developments contemporaneous with the evolution of the piano itself into a larger instrument, capable of greater dynamic and textural possibilities). Liszt returned to the Paganini and "Transcendental" Etudes in 1851, ironing out some of their thorniest difficulties (though they remain extremely challenging) and revising voicings and textures to achieve a clearer, more brilliant sound. The following year, he would begin writing the centerpiece of his piano oeuvre.

Liszt dedicated his **Sonata in B Minor, S. 178 (1852–53)** to Robert Schumann – a reciprocal gesture following Schumann's dedication to Liszt of his Phantasie, Op. 17. Liszt sent the manuscript to the Schumanns' home, but it arrived only after Robert had entered the asylum

in Endenich where we would live out his final years. Clara was indifferent to the Sonata and never performed it. She was not alone in her indifference; following the work's premiere, given by Hans von Bülow in January 1857, Berlin's *Nationalzeitung* derided it as "an invitation to hissing and stamping." Eduard Hanslick declared, "anyone who has heard it and finds it beautiful is beyond help."

Certainly, the B Minor Sonata's form is unorthodox, and its expressive character takes no prisoners. Historical perspective, however, has remedied its initial reception; today, the Sonata is widely regarded as a highly original work, and one of Liszt's greatest accomplishments.

It is a work of startling formal ingenuity. Across its four continuous movements, Liszt superimposes a macrocosmic sonata form, so that the first movement serves as the exposition; the second movement, the development; the third movement, the transition to the recapitulation; and the finale, a triumphant recapitulation and introspective coda. But in addition to combining sonata structures (as well as, *nota bene*, a fugato third movement), the Sonata furthermore demonstrates the expressive gravity of Liszt's symphonic poems

and foreshadows the leitmotivic dramatic thrust of Wagner's operas.

The Sonata continues to be the most intensely scrutinized of Liszt's compositions, as much for the intrigue surrounding a supposed program as for its sheer expressive magnitude. Though Liszt never explicitly offered a program, the Sonata's narrative quality is too strong to dismiss, especially considering Liszt's general aesthetic predispositions. "New wine demands new bottles," he famously proclaimed, regarding the traditional forms as the purview of history (and Brahms as lamentably old-fashioned). From the composer of *Après une lecture du Dante*, *fantasia quasi sonata* and *St. François d'Assise: le prédication aux oiseaux*, the pedestrian 'Sonata in B minor' seems out of character. Peter Raabe, the German conductor who assembled the first complete chronology of Liszt's music, theorized that the B Minor constituted a *Faust* Sonata, with themes, à la *Eine Faust-Symphonie*, depicting Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles. Others have suggested that the Sonata illustrates the fall of man; still others speculate that the Sonata is autobiographical.

The Sonata's first page presents the cellular material on which much of the Sonata's structure is based. The descending scale played *piano*,

sotto voce in the work's opening measures signals important junctures as the Sonata progresses, as if lowering and raising the curtain between acts.



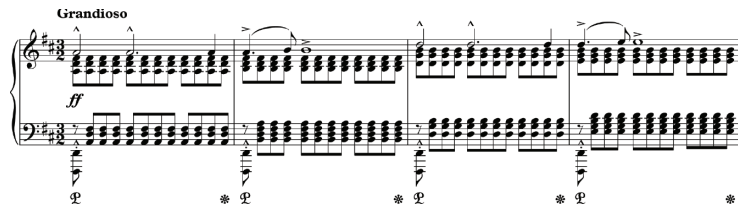
The first subject combines two consequential motifs: the first, an assertive dotted-rhythm gesture

followed by a descending triplet; then, in the bass, a marcato gesture built on repeated notes.



In signature fashion, Liszt metamorphoses these motifs over the course of the Sonata. The movement's second subject begins with a

sweeping *Grandioso*, derived from the repeated notes at the Sonata's opening.



This soon blooms into a beguiling passage, marked *cantando espressivo* – likewise the

repeated-note cell transfigured.



The Andante sostenuto recalls the profound slow movements of late Beethoven, whom Liszt revered. The key, F-sharp major, held programmatic significance for Liszt: according

to Walker, it is Liszt's "beatific" key, shared by the "Paradiso" section of the *Dante* Sonata, the *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, and *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* – all works

with spiritual overtones. The repeated-note motif resurfaces, now *dolcissimo con intimo sentimento*. The inclusion of a fugato third movement likewise evokes late Beethoven. Taking the assertive Allegro energico motif as its subject, this fugue of finger-twisting chromaticism serves to return the Sonata to the large-scale recapitulation of the finale.

The piano music of Liszt's last years exchanges the breadth of the Sonata in B Minor for pithy, densely compressed miniatures. "This is the language of outcries and asides, of whispers and laments," writes Alan Walker. "It stands in opposition to the exuberant, life-enhancing compositions of his younger years." The harmonic sensibility becomes increasingly untethered, as in the cheeky *Bagatelle sans tonalité*, S. 216a (1885). The chromaticism and tonal liberty of these pieces looks ahead to the twentieth-century dissolution of traditional tonality at the hands of Schoenberg, Debussy, et al. Witness the restless nocturne *Schlaflos, Frage und Antwort*, S. 203 (1883), after a poem (no longer extant) by Liszt's student Antonia Raab; or *Unstern! Sinistre, Disastro*, S. 208 (1881), whose opening, ominous tritones, uttered in stark octaves, escalate to crashing *fortississimo* dissonances at the work's climax – as if

"a prisoner were hammering on the walls of his cell," writes Raabe, "well knowing that no one would hear him."

Liszt correctly foresaw that such dissonances as he indulged in would come to pervade modern music, and that twelve-note chords would become fundamental to Western harmony. "In fact," he predicted, well ahead of his time, "it will soon be necessary to complete the system by the admission of quarter-and eighth-[tones] until something better turns up!"

For its subtle austerity, *Trübe Wolken (Nuages gris)*, S. 199 (1881) represents perhaps the most remarkable of Liszt's late piano miniatures – "a gateway to modern music," writes Walker, and, according to theorist Allen Forte, "a high point in the experimental idiom with respect to expressive compositional procedure." Its sinister opening utterance, blighted in its first measure by a jarring tritone, barely sketches the home key of G Minor; quietly terrifying tremolandi rumble beneath a series of augmented triads, anticipating the Impressionist touch of Debussy.

So do some of Liszt's last creations contain an understated poignancy, melancholy, and nostalgia – from the gentle *Wiegenlied (Chant*

du berceau), S. 198 (1881) to the devastatingly apathetic whisper of *Resignazione (Ergebung)*, S. 187a/i (1877–81), whose haunting final measures seem to simply give up.

If not the portrait of the artist as a young Romantic, perhaps history's lasting image is of Liszt in old age, weathered and disheveled, as in the famous photograph taken by Nadar four months before the composer's death in July 1886. His once lustrous mane is now stringy and lusterless, his face pockmarked, and his gaze quiet. The bouts of depression that he suffered late in his life are recorded in the lines on his brow. "I carry a deep sadness of the heart," Liszt confided to a friend, "which must now and then break out in sound." Such sadness is given voice in these final works, whether in their autumnal pathos or their eldritch harmonic schemes.

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LUCILLE CHUNG

Born in Montréal, Canadian pianist Lucille Chung has been acclaimed for her "stylish and refined performances" by *Gramophone* magazine, "combining vigour and suppleness with natural eloquence and elegance" (*Le Soir*).

She made her debut at the age of ten with the Montréal Symphony Orchestra and Charles Dutoit subsequently invited her to be a featured soloist during the MSO Asian Tour in 1989. Since then, she has performed an extensive concerto repertoire with over 65 leading orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Moscow Virtuosi, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Flemish Radio Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife, Orquesta Sinfónica de Bilbao, Staatskapelle Weimar, Philharmonie de Lorraine, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Belgrade Philharmonic, the Seoul Philharmonic, KBS Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Dallas Symphony, UNAM Philharmonic (Mexico), Israel Chamber Orchestra as well as all the major Canadian orchestras, including Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, National Arts Centre (Ottawa), Calgary, Winnipeg and Metropolitain, among others. She has appeared with conductors such as Krzysztof Penderecki,



Vladimir Spivakov, Vasily Petrenko, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Peter Oundjian, Gerd Albrecht and Charles Dutoit.

As a recitalist, she has performed in over 35 countries in prestigious venues such as the Wigmore Hall in London, New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center and Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., the Dame Myra Hess Series in Chicago, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Madrid's Auditorio Nacional, the Great Hall of the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, and the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Festival appearances include the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, MDR Sommer Festival in Dresden, Lübecker Kammermusikfest, Santander International Festival in Spain, Felicja Blumental Festival in Israel, Music@Menlo, Montreal International Festival, Ottawa Chamber Festival, Bard Music Festival in NY, International Keyboard Institute and Festival in NYC, ChangChun Festival in China, and the Bravissimo Festival in Guatemala.

In 1989, she was recognized on the international scene as the First Prize winner at the Stravinsky International Piano Competition. She won Second Prize at the 1992 Montreal

International Music Competition, at which she also won a Special Prize for the best interpretation of the unpublished work. In 1993, she received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Governor General of Canada and in 1994 won the Second Prize at the First International Franz Liszt Competition in Weimar. In 1999, she was awarded the prestigious Virginia Parker Prize by the Canada Council for the Arts.

She graduated from both the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School before she turned twenty. She decided to further her studies in London with Maria Curcio-Diamand, Schnabel's protégée, at the "Mozarteum" in Salzburg with Karl-Heinz Kämmerling and received the Konzertexam Diplom from the Hochschule "Franz Liszt" in Weimar, where she worked with the late Lazar Berman. She also graduated from the Accademia Pianistica in Imola, Italy with the honorary title of "Master" and from Southern Methodist University under Joaquín Achúcarro where she is now a Johnson-Prothro Artist-in-Residence. Ms. Chung is the recipient of the prestigious Honors Diploma at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, Italy.

Lucille Chung has been hailed as "a considerable artist, admirable for her bold choice of music" by *The Sunday Times* for her recordings of the complete piano works by György Ligeti on the Dynamic label. The first volume was released in 2001 to great critical acclaim, receiving the maximum R10 from *Classica-Répertoire* in France, 5 Stars from the BBC Music Magazine, and 5 Stars on Fono Forum in Germany. The final volume, which also contains works for two pianos, was recorded with her husband, Alessio Bax and once again received the prestigious R10 from *Classica-Répertoire*. Her all-Scriabin CD won the "Best Instrumental Recording" prize at the 2003 Prelude Classical Awards in Holland as well as the coveted R10 from *Classica-Répertoire* in France. She also recorded the two Mendelssohn Piano Concerti on the Richelieu/Radio-Canada label, which was nominated for the Prix Opus in Canada. In August 2005, Bax and Chung recorded Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* with the Fort Worth Symphony under Maestro Miguel Harth-Bedoya, which was released in 2006. In 2007 she released a solo album for the Fazioli Concert Hall Series and recently, Lucille embarked on an exclusive contract with Disques XXI/Universal. So far, she has released two CDs, *Piano Transcriptions of*

Camille Saint-Saëns and *Mozart & Me*. Both CDs continue earning critical praise and have been broadcast internationally. 2013 marked the release of a piano duo disc with Alessio Bax, presenting Stravinsky's original four-hand version of the ballet *Petrouchka* as well as music by Brahms and Piazzolla for Signum Records.

Lucille is fluent in French, English, Korean, Italian, German, and Russian. She and husband, pianist Alessio Bax make their home in New York City with their daughter, Mila, and are artistic co-directors of the Dallas-based Joaquín Achúcarro Foundation.

In 2016, she released Poulenc Piano Works which was chosen as the Recording of the Month on MusicWeb International.

www.lucillechung.com

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Recorded in Saffron Hall, Saffron Waldon, Essex, UK from 14th to 16th April 2017.

Producer – Anna Barry

Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch

Editor – Jennifer Howells

Cover Image – © Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Design and Artwork – Woven Design www.wovendesign.co.uk

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