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LISZT for TWO

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES FOR PIANO FOUR-HANDS

1 No. 1 in F Minor (11:24)
2 No. 2 in C# Minor (10:13)
3 No. 3 in D Major (8:02)
4 No. 4 in D Minor (9:53)
5 No. 5 in E Minor (8:46)
6 No. 6 in Eb Major, □Carnival at Pest□ (11:02)

7 MEPHISTO WALTZ FOR TWO PIANOS (11:18)

Georgia & Louise Mangos

TT: (71:25)

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LISZT'S HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES & MEPHISTO WALTZ

notes by Henry Fogel

When Franz Liszt composed the first of his nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies (for solo piano) in 1846, he was convinced that he was basing them on authentic Hungarian folk material as played to him by gypsies located in Hungary. The real truth became clear in 1906, when Bart□ and Kod ly published the results of their trips collecting genuine Hungarian folk music. What Liszt actually transformed in his Rhapsodies were commercial, composed Hungarian light music that the gypsies had transformed into their own unique performing style □ a style we have come to know in its slow-fast alternating dance pattern exemplified by the cs rd s. Between 1846 and 1854, Liszt wrote and published the first fifteen of his Rhapsodies. He returned to the form in his later years, publishing four more in the 1870s.

These Rhapsodies are remarkable for many reasons. They appeal to the visceral in all of us with the athletic demands they place on the performers. At the same time, they speak to the sensual side of our nature with their exceptional melodic invention, unique harmonic language, and shimmering colors. The Rhapsodies are marked by their variety of moods, within each work, and from piece to piece in the set. They are virtuoso showpieces; music that cannot succeed if the performer lacks flair. But flair and technique alone will not suffice. An understanding of keyboard color and (always with Liszt) its relationship to orchestral color is key in performing these works, as is an understanding of the architecture of each one. What ultimately distinguishes these pieces is their uniquely successful balance of keyboard wizardry and lyrical beauty, and the variety and depth of their musical thoughts.

Liszt must have been particularly fond of six of the original fifteen, because he treated them differently from the others. In addition to the solo piano editions, he made for these not one but two other versions: orchestral, and piano duo (one piano, four-hands). It is not known whether he composed the piano duet versions simultaneously with the bet-

ter-known one-pianist originals, or somewhat later. We do know that Liszt performed these versions with students in his later years, but there is no documentation about when they were made, or why. Since Liszt changed numbering around, and in some cases transposed keys, a chart might be useful:

PIANO DUET VERSIONS	ORIGINAL PIANO SOLO	ORCHESTRAL VERSIONS
No. 1 in F Minor	No. 14 in F Minor	No. 1 in F Minor
No. 2 in C# Minor	No. 12 in C# Minor	No. 4 in D Minor
No. 3 in D Major	No. 6 in D-flat Major	No. 3 in D Major
No. 4 in D Minor	No. 2 in C# Minor	No. 2 in D Minor
No. 5 in E Minor	No. 5 in E Minor	No. 5 in E Minor
No. 6 in E-flat Major	No. 9 in E-flat Major	No. 6 in D Major

No. 1 (using the piano duet numbering) must have contained material Liszt deeply loved, for not only did this fourteenth solo Rhapsody become the first for orchestra and piano duet, but Liszt re-worked its material for piano and orchestra in his Hungarian Fantasia. The Rhapsody is dedicated to Hans von B□ow, Liszt□s son-in-law at this time (later to be replaced in that role by Wagner □ to whose music Liszt felt very close, and whose influence can be felt particularly in the piece's slower sections.) No. 2, dedicated to the great Hungarian violinist Josef Joachim, seems more complex than many of the Rhapsodies with its intermingling of a very serious mesto beginning, a wild gypsy central section, and an energetic march. No. 3 dedicated to Count Antal Apponyi, is actually a setting of four Hungarian popular songs from Liszt□s time, and is one of the most overtly brilliant of the Rhapsodies. In its solo version, the pianist's ability to traverse its flying octaves with evenness of tone and touch has long been seen as a test of technical accomplishment. The octaves still fly in the duo version, and if the performance is successful it is impossible to tell where one pianist begins and the other leaves off.

No. 4 is the most famous of all; the second of the solo piano Rhapsodies, it

is dedicated to the great Hungarian patriot-statesman and friend of Liszt, Count L szlo Teleky. The exceedingly dramatic beginning, perhaps reflecting Liszt's feelings about the heroic nature of the dedicatee, probably helps account for the work's popularity. As attention-getting an opening as exists in music, the piece moves from bold opening to a soulful section that recalls a gypsy violin, a more upbeat portion reminiscent of a cimbalom, and a brilliant finale that pulls out all the pianistic stops. No. 5 is the only one of the six to keep both its original number and key. Although dedicated to Countess Szid□ia Revicsky, many consider this work a tribute to Chopin, who died in 1849. That may explain the unusual nature of this Rhapsody, certainly the most introspective of all. It is titled H□oide-□□ iaque, and some of its material recalls Chopin themes. The sixth and last is dedicated to Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, an important Hungari violinist and composer. Ernst wrote a set of □Hungarian Airs,□ and Liszt wanted to honor him for his service to Hungarian music. Thus, this is the longest of Liszt□s Rhapsodies, and the one that veers farthest from its folk-like origins into major compositional complexities. The virtuosity and range of color in this last Rhapsody, titled □Carnival at Pest,□ is a test of any pair of pianists□ abilities to get around the keyboard without hurting each other!

Like the Hungarian Rhapsodies, the Mephisto Waltz No.1 exists in versions for solo piano, piano duo, and orchestra. The solo piano version probably came first (1858-59), but it is not known with certainty whether Liszt worked on the other versions simultaneously or subsequently. Liszt appended to the score an excerpt from Lenau□s Faust poem, in which the Devil interrupts a village wedding (with Faust looking on), appropriating a musician□s violin to play his own macabre music. This score demonstrates to us the division between the beautiful and the diabolic that is at the center of much of Liszt□s music (A Faust Symphony, for instance); it is a fascinating blend of the menacing and the sultry. The challenge to performers is that they must show us both extremes while unifying the various elements into a coherent whole.

Henry Fogel is President of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Georgia and Louise Mangos have concertized throughout Europe and the United States, including recitals for the International Chopin Society and performances with the International Chamber Music Festival in Germany and Austria. In 1987, the Mangos sisters were one of the twelve out of 129 contestant teams selected to compete in the first Murray Dranoff International Duo-Piano Competition in Miami. The Mangos's many broadcast performances on radio and television have included live performances for Chicago fine arts radio station WFMT-FM and an appearance as the selected artist for a television special on duo-pianism for Continental Cablevision.

Chicago area natives, the Mangos have appeared on numerous Chicago area recital series including the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series, the Chopin Foundation Concert Series, and the concert series of the Art Institute of Chicago. Georgia and Louise have won grants from the Illinois Arts Council, and were chosen to participate in the Illinois Artstour program, a select group of artists that tour the state. The Mangos sisters have earned individual degrees from the New England Conservatory, Boston University, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. As a two-piano team they continued their studies with Paul Badura-Skoda and Joerg Demus at the Hochschule f□ Musik in Munich and have coached with Adele Marcus of the Juilliard School, Dr. Bela Nagy of Catholic University, and Earl Wild at the University of Ohio, Columbus.

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