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# NEWS & INFORMATION

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## **WHEN THE PIANO IS MIGHTIER THAN THE ORCHESTRA**

### **Rapid "Liszt" Action: Duo-Pianists Georgia and Louise Mangos Make Compelling Case for Composer's Potent Symphonic Poems**

A new release from Cedille Records continues to fuel a debate over the musical value of some of Franz Liszt's long-lost music for two pianos.

*Liszt: The Complete Symphonic Poems for Two Pianos, Volume II* (Cedille CDR 90000 024), is the latest installment in a three-part series performed by duo-pianists Georgia and Louise Mangos. The disc includes Liszt's own two-piano versions of "Prometheus," "Mazeppa," "Festklänge," and "Héroïde funébre." The third CD will be recorded in 1996.

The Mangos sisters, who live and teach in suburban Chicago, pieced together the complete set of 12 scores while foraging for fresh duo-piano repertoire in collections in North America and Europe. They are the first to perform this body of work in our century, much less record it.

Musically and rhetorically (in the program notes), the project makes the case that these piano works are revelatory expressions of musical ideas, as legitimate as their orchestral counterparts and perhaps even superior. It refutes the notion that these are merely stripped-

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## LISZT SYMPHONIC POEMS -- 2

down simplifications for home entertainment and study in the pre-phonograph Victorian era.

In the CD booklet, prize-winning author Alan Walker argues that the duo-piano versions are as original, as close to the underlying musical concept, as the orchestral arrangements and "quite capable of leading an independent life." He summons Busoni for expert testimony: "Notation itself is the transcription of an abstract idea .... From this first transcription to the second is a short and comparatively unimportant step. Yet, in general, people only make a fuss about the second." Moreover, Liszt himself regarded the two-piano versions of the symphonic poems as independent concert pieces.

When Volume I was released in 1993, the *Chicago Sun-Times* called the piano versions "more compelling than the orchestral ones." *American Record Guide* agreed, saying the Mangos sisters "make a good case" for the music.

The sisters seem telepathically in sync with each other at the keyboards -- *Audio* magazine noted their "absolutely perfect coordination." Their musical kinship reflects their close personal relationship. Both were born in St. Charles, Ill. (four years apart), and have been performing together since 1981. They graduated from the New England Conservatory and studied with Paul Badura-Skoda and Joerg Demus at Munich's Hochschule for Musik, as well as with Earl Wild at the University of Ohio.

When not concertizing in the U.S., Canada, and Europe or scouting for forgotten two-piano scores, they teach applied piano and chamber music at Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Ill. The second generation Greek-American sisters -- each is married to a Greek-American architect -- live about a block apart.

Other comments on the Mangos sisters' first CD:

- "They have all the power these knuckle-busting pieces require, as well as

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LISZT SYMPHONIC POEMS -- 3

subtlety and delicacy" -- *Stereo Review*

- "The Mangos sisters ... certainly do it right ... sensitive, idiomatic, and virtuosic performances" -- *CD Review*
- "Their playing is powerful and energetic, and it sounds as though they are enjoying themselves" -- *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times*
- "Stunning ... you must hear this disc" -- *American Record Guide*
- "An absolutely smashing debut ... Highest recommendation" -- *Fanfare*

Cedille CDs are distributed by Bayside Distribution and also by JEM Music Corp. and are available nationally at finer classical record stores. For a free catalog and the whereabouts of local retail outlets, consumers are invited to write to Cedille Records, 5255 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-2220, or call (312) 989-2515.

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**Liszt: The Complete Symphonic Poems for Two Pianos, Volume II**

Prometheus

Mazeppa

Festklänge

Héroïde funébre

Georgia & Louise Mangos, duo-pianists

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