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# NEWS & INFORMATION

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## **LANDMARK LISZT: CELEBRATED SYMPHONIC POEMS NOW A 'CYCLE' BUILT FOR TWO**

### **Duo-Pianists Georgia & Louise Mangos Complete First-Ever Recordings of Key Piano Works**

Cedille Records has released the final volume in its historic collection of Liszt's own two-piano versions of his twelve symphonic poems from the Weimar period (1848-61). The three-disc series comprises the first complete recording of these works, most of which had disappeared from the repertoire by the turn of the century. The series also marks the recording debut of sister duo-pianists Georgia and Louise Mangos, who found rare published editions of Liszt's scores while searching to expand and enrich the duo-piano literature.

"Returning Liszt's two-piano versions to the concert repertoire has been a long and thrilling journey for us," the Mangos sisters write in the program notes. "We're convinced that these landmark works are as vibrant and emotionally compelling as ever."

The Mangos sisters have been performing the Liszt in concert with gratifying results. "These works really have the ability to ignite an audience," Louise Mangos says. "It's unusual to get a robust, standing ovation for music that hasn't been heard in 125 years. But audiences respond to these works as if they were familiar favorites."

The Chicago-area concert pianists and music professors discovered the scores, which have never been published in modern versions, while scouting for duo-piano repertoire in European libraries, collections, and music shops.

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## LANDMARK LISZT -- 2

The first Liszt CD (Cedille CDR 90000 014), released in June 1993, includes *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*; *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo*; *Les Préludes*, and *Orpheus*. Comments such as "stunning," "absolutely smashing," and "sensitive, virtuosic and idiomatic" were the order of the day from most reviewers. The second disc (Cedille CDR 90000 024), released in October 1995, includes *Prometheus*, *Mazeppa*, *Festklänge*, and *Héroïde funébre*. The *Chicago Sun-Times* praised it for "astounding heavy metal pianism" and "almost surreal musicianship and interpretation."

On the newest CD (Cedille CDR 90000 031), the Mangoses perform the folk and Gypsy-imbued *Hungaria*, which resembles an expanded version of one of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*; the powerfully compact and eerily ethereal *Hamlet*; the furious, then contemplative *Hunnenschlacht* (Huns' Battle), inspired by a mural depicting a battle "so fierce that the spirits of the dead were seen continuing to fight in the sky" (from the program notes); and the joyful, brooding, and ultimately splendid *Die Ideale*, based on Schiller's poem of disillusionment and spiritual attainment.

All three Cedille CDs were produced by James Ginsburg, with engineers Bill Maylone (Volumes I and II) and Lawrence Rock (Volume III). The recording team set out to capture all the power of two concert grands in full-sized concert halls, using a single pair of Schoeps MK 2 Linear omnidirectional mics. Audio critic Al Fasoldt described Volume No. 2 as "an ideal example of how to capture big percussives without sacrificing the underlying purity of the concert Steinway's tones."

"Liszt's two-piano transcriptions of his tone poems are monumental in scope," writes former *Piano Quarterly* publisher Robert Silverman in the CD notes. "These major works take on a whole new meaning when the musical palette is pared down to its essentials. The architecture and various melodic strands are clear to the ear. . . . Yet the use of two pianos allows for great outpourings of sound -- comparable to that of a full orchestra."

"I'm not sure [Liszt] conceived the piano as having any limit of coloration," Louise Mangos said in an interview with *Fanfare's* James Reel. Reel echoed other reviewers in commenting, "The riveting Mangoses performances make a far better case for these works than the three integral orchestral cycles I have heard."

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Now, a competing series has begun to emerge from Hungary's Hungaroton label. "We invite comparison," Cedille's Ginsburg says. Beyond any issues of musical or sonic merit, Cedille's series presents the symphonic poems in numerical order, on three CDs rather than four, and strictly in Liszt's duo-piano versions rather than piano four-hands versions. "Having begun our undertaking back in 1993, it's gratifying to see other record companies starting to share our enthusiasm for this music," Ginsburg says.

Born four years apart, the Greek-American Mangos sisters ("Think of them as the 'Lagrècques,' quips Ginsburg) pursued separate musical odysseys before joining forces. Together, they studied in Vienna with Paul Badura-Skoda and Jörg Demus; in New York with Adele Marcus of Juilliard; and in Washington with Béla Nagy of Catholic University. Later, they received coaching and encouragement from composer-pianist Earl Wild, himself a master Lisztian. "The Mangos sisters achieve perfect coordination, as one piano and pianist," observed *Audio's* Edward Tatnall Canby.

Starting with this release, Cedille CDs are being distributed to retailers by Qualiton Imports, one the nation's oldest and most highly respected independent distributors of classical recordings. This assures that Cedille CDs are available at additional finer classical record stores nationally. 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, call (773) 989-2515, or send e-mail to [cedillerec@aol.com](mailto:cedillerec@aol.com).

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*LISZT: THE COMPLETE SYMPHONIC POEMS  
FOR TWO PIANOS, VOLUME III  
Cedille CDR 90000 031*

Hungaria (17:25); Hamlet (12:02)  
Hunnenschlacht (12:43); Die Ideale (22:32)

Georgia & Louise Mangos, Duo-Pianists