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### Richuan Hu and Nick Yeutter, pianists, in a Recital of Works by Franz Liszt

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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**UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**

**Richuan Hu and Nick Yeutter**

*pianists*

*in a recital of works by*

**FRANZ LISZT**

**Friday, November 22, 2013**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Perkinson Recital Hall**



WORKS BY FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

*Joint Piano Recital*

PROGRAM

***La campanella*** (The Little Bell)

Richuan Hu

***Liebstraum*** No. 3 (Dream of Love)

Nick Yeutter

***Un sospiro*** (A Sigh)

Richuan Hu

***Mephisto Waltz*** No.1

Nick Yeutter



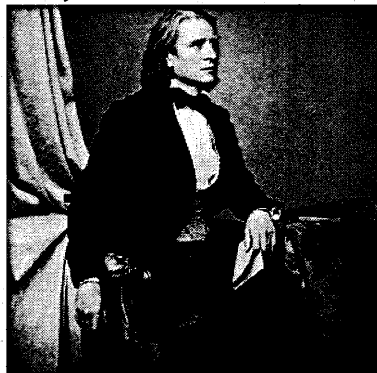
Please silence cell phones, digital watches, and paging devices before the concert.

FRANZ LISZT was much more than one of the greatest piano virtuosos of the nineteenth century. He was also a groundbreaking composer, conductor, and mentor who helped revolutionize music in ways that defined him as one of the most influential figures of the Romantic Era.

As a major supporter of the New German School, Liszt was an ardent advocate for progress in music. Many of his later works foreshadow a number of twentieth-century compositional devices. While Liszt promoted new works by his Romantic contemporaries (e.g. Berlioz, Wagner, and Grieg), he often paid homage to earlier composers such as Bach and Beethoven. Liszt revitalized their pieces with passion and Romantic vigor; even to this day, pianists around the world perform Liszt's transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies.

As a composer, Liszt was a major proponent of "thematic transformation" – developing a melody or motif to complex degrees. His technical brilliance as a pianist also translated into his works. However, other pianists were intimidated by his music, often deeming it too difficult to perform, which sometimes hindered Liszt's efforts to promote his music. In addition, Liszt's personal life often resonated in his music. As he toured the world as a concert pianist, he often found himself ensnared in an array of sex scandals involving French countesses and Russian princesses, among others. However, he tried to put his reputation as a philanderer to rest by becoming a Franciscan in 1860, even at the cost of sending him into a deep depression for nearly the rest of his life.

All in all, Franz Liszt was a complex man who wrote and performed complex music. His legacy as a Romantic pianist is unrivaled. His influence on composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is unparalleled. But more importantly, Liszt's widespread contributions to the art of music will always be remembered.



*La campanella*, Italian for "The Little Bell," is the third of Liszt's *Six grandes études de Paganini* (Grand Paganini Etudes). The piece was composed in 1851, in the key of G-sharp minor. The Paganini etudes are based on the violin compositions of Niccolò Paganini. Paganini was an inspiring figure to Liszt. In Liszt's early years, he was determined to become as great a virtuoso on the piano as Paganini was on the violin. Consequently, both the violin and piano etudes are some of the most technically demanding pieces for their respective instruments.

According to Phillip Friedheim in the journal *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 1, No. 2, "Many devices with which Liszt expanded piano technique resulted from his impulse to transcribe. In attempting to recapture orchestral sonorities, new pianistic effects were evolved. The overwhelming influence of the music of Paganini on the young Liszt can only be fully measured by examining his earliest Paganini transcriptions, the *Grande Fantasia de Bravoure sur La Clochette* (1831-32) and the first version (1838) of the six Paganini etudes, (of which *La campanella* is No. 3). They are almost pathologically difficult." The player has very limited time to move large distances between keys while playing with rapid speed, and trills are often combined with other themes in the same hand while the other hand is making those jumps.

However, neither Liszt nor Paganini relishes technical brilliance exclusively. *La campanella* also tells a beautiful story. The significance of bells in the title should be clear from the very beginning of the piece, where the D-sharp octaves lightly evoke the sound of distant bells. While Liszt challenges performers technically, he rewards them by allowing a great deal of leeway for interpretation. The theme of the piece is presented teasingly throughout until the final climactic passages. The performer can therefore choose to play each of the thematic presentations in a unique way.



Liszt composed *Liebstraum* No. 3 for solo piano in 1847. The title, which translates to "love dreams," was Liszt's second adaptation of Ferdinand Freiligrath's poem, "O lieb." In Liszt's original adaptation for solo soprano and piano, the melody follows the opening lines of the poem:

*O lieb, so lang du lieben kannst!*  
*O lieb, so lang du lieben magst!*

According to Kenneth Hamilton, this yearning melody is not only an archetype of Romantic-era piano music, but it also showcases Liszt's "fertile lyric gift." As *Liebstraum* No. 3 progresses, Liszt manipulates this theme in different key signatures and with different tempi. He also builds up to the climax very strategically: he first thickens the texture by arpeggiating the left hand after the first *quasi cadenza*, then he propels the speed and intensity of the arpeggios with dramatic *fortissimo* dynamic swells, all while repeating the main theme in octaves in the right hand. Once the dust settles after the second *quasi cadenza*, the theme returns to its original key of A-flat major. From there, the texture gradually decays until Liszt's final, delicate recapitulation of the melody.

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*Un sospiro*, Italian for "A sigh," is the third of Liszt's *Trois études de concert* (Three concert etudes). The piece was composed in 1848 in the key of D-flat major. As the name suggests, the intention of these etudes is concert performance, and of the three, *Un sospiro* is especially famous for its technical difficulty and depth of character.


*Un sospiro* is written on three staves. The melody resides on the topmost staff, where the performer is responsible for choosing which hand to use for those notes, since the underlying arpeggios are continuous and require both hands. As in *La campanella*, the performer again has little time to reach large distances. The underlying arpeggios in *Un sospiro* also need to be kept relatively even, which is challenging due to the work's fast tempo and the demands of the third-staff melody. A sigh is a human expression appropriate for a myriad of occasions. Since each performer of *Un sospiro* may decide how the title relates to the piece, I choose to view my "sigh" as an expression of contentment or elation.

Liszt's first Mephisto Waltz was composed between 1858 and 1859, right before he fell into his depression-ridden "late" period. During that time, he began writing avant-garde music that harmonically foreshadowed twentieth-century techniques. However, Mephisto Waltz No. 1 was composed with virtuosic, Romantic themes. Kenneth Hamilton considers the tone of the piece adventurous and its harmonic scheme Beethovenian, and this classification further embodies much of the music Liszt composed during the 1850s.


Mephisto Waltz No. 1 is an example of programmatic music that revolves around the German folk legend of Faust and his devil-in-disguise companion, Mephistopheles. Specifically, the music portrays a scene from Nikolaus Lenau's 1836 poem, Faust. Liszt describes the scene in a program note that quotes Lenau:

"There is a wedding feast in progress in the village inn, with music, dancing, carousing. Mephistopheles and Faust pass by, and Mephistopheles induces Faust to enter and take part in the festivities. Mephistopheles snatches the fiddle from the hands of a lethargic fiddler and draws from it indescribably seductive and intoxicating strains. The amorous Faust whirls about with a full-blooded village beauty in a wild dance; they waltz in mad abandon out of the room, into the open, away into the woods. The sounds of the fiddle grow softer and softer, and the nightingale warbles his love-laden song..."





*Thank you for attending this  
evening's performance.*





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