

Liszt's Symbols for the Divine and the Diabolical:
Their Revelation of a Program in the B Minor Sonata
Journal of the American Liszt Society, XV (June 1984), 39-95.

The music examples may be downloaded in autograph or computerized format at

{ [HYPERLINK "http://tiborszasz.de/en/node/53"](http://tiborszasz.de/en/node/53) } (English text)

{ [HYPERLINK "http://tiborszasz.de/de/node/54"](http://tiborszasz.de/de/node/54) } (German text)

{ [HYPERLINK "http://tiborszasz.de/hu/node/55"](http://tiborszasz.de/hu/node/55) } (Hungarian text)

Copyright © 1983 – 2010 by Tibor Szász

For private use only.



**Journal of the American
Liszt Society**

Volume XV June 1984

Liszt's Symbols for the Divine and the Diabolical:
Their Revelation of a Program in the B Minor Sonata

Copyright © 1983 – 2010 by Tibor Szász

...music is at once the divine and satanic art...
F. Liszt

Introduction

This study began on the day when I realized that the crucifixion music of Liszt's "Via crucis" is almost identical with a section of his *Sonata in B Minor*. I refer to the only place in the Sonata where dissonant chords alternate with recitatives. Finding prominent music from the Sonata in a profoundly religious work, I was compelled to search for an explanation.

The Sonata's dissonant chordal blows are interrupted by a slow recitative marked *appassionato*. After a dramatic pause, the chordal blows return and are interrupted by yet another recitative (mm 297-310).

To me as a concert pianist, this section has been problematic because the musical flow is disrupted for no apparent reason. Twenty-six years after Liszt composed the Sonata, he recalled the music from these measures for use as crucifixion music in "Via crucis". (Ex.1.2.)

[Sets of musical examples cited in the text are placed at the end of the article. Reference to specific examples is facilitated by the use of two numbers. The first indicates a "set" (a page containing many related examples), and the second refers to the specific example of the set. For instance, Ex.5 refers to all the examples of set 5. Ex.5.6 refers to the sixth example of set 5. The sets appear in numerical order.]

Musically the two passages could hardly be more alike. Their chords are identical in tonality, harmony, register, dominant pedal, dynamics, and attack. Their melody and rhythm are similar, and in both works, the chords are followed by recitatives that begin alike. Liszt disjoined the Sonata's sequence of chords and recitative even more in "Via crucis", where the musical flow is disrupted for a programmatic reason: the Passion of Jesus Christ.

In "Via crucis", the chordal blows symbolize the nailing of Jesus to the Cross, and the recitative sets Christ's words from the Cross, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" The Sonata's chords and recitative had become two separate Stations of the Cross. Such separation is traditional in most Passion music in which mob and Savior (*turba* and *vox Christi*) are musically contrasted.

The question was inevitable: did Liszt have Passion music in mind when he composed the Sonata's hammered chords and *recitativo appassionato*?

The answer came through extensive study of available source material: when Liszt composed "Via crucis", he borrowed from the Sonata because for him its chords and recitative already symbolized the Passion. The crucifixion is musically expressed in both works through Liszt's symbol for the Cross. The symbol is prominent in "Via crucis" and, as six or more musicologists have already noted, it is also present in the Sonata.

This conclusion is based on primary evidence left by Liszt in his music and his correspondence. Though most of the materials from which the evidence is drawn have long been in the public domain, and though isolated studies have been initiated to explore the programmatic associations in Liszt's music, until now no comprehensive analysis and synthesis of his musical symbolism has been made. The present study shows that many prevalent ideas about Liszt's abstract and program music are unfounded. Symbolism is such an integral part of Liszt's compositional techniques that it is time for a review of his entire output and its relation to the Romantic age, in fact, to its place in the history of music.

The objective of this paper, however, is to show that the Sonata has a program, and that

the program is revealed by Liszt through clues that lead to his musical symbols. Evaluation of the clues has led to the following eight conclusions regarding his symbolism in general, and his Sonata in particular.

1. Liszt conveyed extramusical meanings in his music, both verbally and musically: verbally, through the title, the written program, the quoting of poetry, or the setting of words to music; and musically, through symbols.

2. Liszt's symbols can be identified because he used them again and again in programmatic and texted music. In such context the symbols remain musically and symbolically consistent.

3. Contrary to the great number of Wagnerian leitmotifs, Liszt's symbols are few. Actually, they can be classified as either divine or diabolical. With a few symbols in each category, Liszt characterized a great variety of specific programmatic events.

4. One of Liszt's most important programmatic tools is associative musical symbolism. Liszt borrowed musical ideas already associated with extramusical concepts in order to express essentially similar concepts in his programmatic music.

5. Contrary to opinions that see in Liszt's programmatic indications a kind of "afterthought" having little or nothing to do with his compositional choices, this study documents that Liszt's programmatic considerations preceded his musical choices, even in a work bearing such an abstract title as Sonata.

6. Programmatic music in the Lisztian sense does not necessarily imply a blow by blow account of the story. Instead, the musical characterization of a few essential moments is usually sufficient. The Sonata is a prime example.

7. Liszt incorporated his symbols as thematic elements in the Sonata. As such they serve the form, and through the transformation of themes, they serve the program.

8. The program of the Sonata is neither Faustian nor autobiographical as is commonly speculated; rather, the program is Biblical with Milton's Paradise Lost as a likely influence.

The discussion will be in three parts: first, Liszt's religious view; second, his symbols for the divine and diabolical; and third, the meaning of those symbols in the Sonata.

I. Liszt's Religious Beliefs and Their Influence on His Music

The young Liszt's religiosity has been documented in the first volume of Alan Walker's recent biography,¹ and evidence that Liszt's religious interests influenced his composing can be seen in two unfinished works: "Etude sur l'Indifférence" (1832?)² and "De Profundis: Psaume Instrumentale" (1834).³ The first work is based on a religious work of the Abbé Lamennais, and the second includes a favorite plainchant of the Abbé. The question is whether or not the religious fervor of Liszt's youth continued.

Liszt's religiosity as a mature adult is apparent in the way he writes of it in his letters. Seven letters are quoted. Some were written long before Liszt became an Abbé. Most of the quoted letters are from La Mara's collection; the translations are by the author of this article.

Letter #1. Three years before the Sonata was complete, Liszt wrote to Joseph d'Ortigue,

¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1913).

² For a brief symbolic interpretation of "Etude sur l'Indifférence" see Dieter Torkewitz, *Harmonisches Denken im Frühwerk Franz Liszts* (Munich- Salzburg, Katzwichler, 1978), pp. 49-50.

³ "De Profundis" was reused by Liszt in an early version of *Todtentanz*. See Alan Walker, ed., *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* (London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1976), footnote pp. 273-74.

his friend who specialized in Gregorian chant. Quote:

...liturgy...this subject is the favorite for my spirit. Could you add a few sheets of music that you would choose from among the most beautiful of the Catholic plainchant?⁴

Letter #2. Unwavering religious convictions were once expressed to Wagner in a letter whose date of April 8, 1853 places it two months after Liszt completed the Sonata.

I cannot preach to you...but I will pray to God that he may powerfully illumine your heart through his faith and his love. You may scoff at this feeling as bitterly as you like....Through Christ alone, through resigned suffering in God, salvation and rescue come to us.⁵

Letter #3. Liszt's will contains a testament of his religious faith:

This is my Will. It is made on this 14th day of September 1860 when the Church celebrates the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The name of this festival also expresses the burning and mysterious feeling that has marked my whole life as with a sacred stigma. Yes, the crucified Jesus, the ardent yearning (for the Cross) and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, this was my true vocation.⁶

Letter #4. Liszt often expressed his ideas on religion to the Princess Carolyn Sayn-Wittgenstein, a Russian-born Pole of deep Catholic faith. The beginning of their liaison coincides with the gestation period of the Sonata.

Among the first letters that Liszt wrote to the Princess, one shows that religious concerns tinged their romantic involvement from the very beginning. The letter is dated simply, "Good Friday, 1847."

Isn't it true that it was on Good Friday that Dante saw Beatrice? Or was it that Petrarch met Laura?... A singular coincidence this year touches my superstitious fiber: the first of January was a Friday, the second of April, feast of my patron, happens to be Good Friday, and the 22nd of October, my birthday, will also be a Friday!⁷

Letter #5. Less than a year after Liszt met the Princess, she gave him a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, an English edition as shown by quotations that Liszt shared with her. In referring to Milton's work Liszt commented on the nature of Satan. The letter is dated five years before the Sonata was finished.

...As far as Satan is concerned...when blown up to infinite proportions, he can be nothing but Doubt, silent sorrow, gaping silence. He projects rays, just as the Sun projects rays, but being the Spirit of Darkness, these rays are Negation and Death.⁸

⁴ La Mara, ed., Franz Liszt's Briefe, 8 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1893-1905), 8:61, letter no. 62.

⁵ Erich Kloss, ed., Briefwechsel zwischen Wagner und Liszt, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel., 1919), 1:226-27, letter no. 102.

⁶ La Mara, Franz Liszt's Briefe, 5:52, letter no. 27, in French. Also 1:364-65, letter no. 240, in German.

⁷ Ibid., 4:3, letter no. 6.

⁸ "Il projette bien—comme Soleil—Esprit des Ténèbres—des rayons de Négation et de Mort—." Literal

Letter #6. Liszt sketched the opening measures of the Sonata in the second week of January 1851 (Ex.17.1).⁹ Near the end of the same month, he wrote to the Princess about

...the serpent who seduced our mother Eve.¹⁰

As this article will show, Liszt's sketch from 1851 is the musical representation of the temptation by the serpent and the consequent fall of Adam and Eve from paradise.

These words alone are sufficient to establish Liszt's concern with Paradise Lost, the Biblical serpent, original sin, the nature of good and evil, and of the divine and the diabolical at about the time that he conceived the Sonata. Actually, conflict between the divine and the diabolical appears as a recurring subject in his works.

Letter #7. Much later, in 1877, Liszt told the Princess about a confession that he made to the priest Hohmann. As he related it, this is how music affected him:

...music is at once the divine and satanic art that more than all other arts leads us into temptation.¹¹

By his use of musical symbolism, Liszt's music became inseparable from his religious beliefs: his concern with the divine and the diabolical resulted in appropriate musical symbols. Their identification comes next.

II. Identifying Liszt's symbols for the divine and diabolical and their role in the Sonata.

A. Liszt's Symbolism for the Divine

Of Liszt's divine symbolism, little has been known beyond the Cross symbol about which there can be no dispute since Liszt identified it himself. A study of the Cross symbol leads directly to its source in "*Crux Fidelis*", a Gregorian hymn of great importance in his music. "*Crux Fidelis*", in turn, leads to the Christ symbolism of the Sonata's *grandioso* motif.

No interpretation of the Sonata can be complete without an understanding of how Liszt used both the symbol and the hymn. Their symbolic use, for example, explains the musical parallels between the Sonata and "*Via crucis*", as demonstrated at the beginning of this article.

Though there is no evidence until now that others have noticed parallels between the two works, symbolism in the Sonata has been noticed. As stated earlier, at least six musicologists have commented upon the presence of the Cross symbol in the melodic contour of the Sonata's *grandioso* motif. The Cross symbol is a three-note figure that Liszt identified in his oratorio, St. Elisabeth. Made of a major second and minor third, the figure opens the *grandioso* motif.

Alfred Cortot, probably the first to comment on the Gregorian source of the Sonata's

translation: "He projects—as Sun of Darkness—rays of Negation and Death ." Ibid., 4:15-16, letter no. 15 dated 29 January 1848. See also 4:13, letter no. 13, and 4:22, letter no. 17.

⁹ See Sharon Winklhofer, Liszt's Sonata in B Minor, (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1980), pp. 170-71 .

¹⁰ La Mara, Franz Liszt's Briefe, 4:51, letter no. 57 dated Monday 27, January 1851.

¹¹ Ibid., 7:207, letter no. 195.

motif, called it "le thème de la foi," that is, "the theme of faith" and compared it to a leitmotif.¹²

Zoltán Gárdonyi, a member of the editorial board of the New Liszt Edition, was of similar mind when teaching at the Liszt Academy in Budapest. He referred to the grandioso as the "Kreutz-Thema," that is, the "theme of the Cross."¹³

In addition to Cortot and Gárdonyi, there are also Klára Hamburger, Robert Collett, Ernst Gunter Heinemann, and Sharon Winklhofer¹⁴ who have identified the typical intervals of the Cross symbol as the building block of the Sonata's *grandioso*.

Winklhofer concluded that the melodic shape of the Sonata's motif is not uncommon in Liszt's music, for she found seven additional works where it occurs. What her observations revealed, though she did not say so, is that when the *grandioso*'s melodic contour reappears in the other works, it is always with a Christian connotation. Of the seven works named, two are Masses, two deal with Christ and his Passion, one is an oratorio about a Christian saint, one is a Magnificat (the canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary), and one is about a battle between Christians and heathens.

Two overlapping Cross symbols create the opening melodic contour of the *grandioso* motif, which, in the Sonata's formal design, is significant as the D major second subject (second key area).

Why Liszt included the overlapped symbols in the Sonata's *grandioso* motif will become clear in the discussion of the Cross symbol and its source in "*Crux Fidelis*", a hymn from the Good Friday Mass. But first, the Cross Symbol.

The Cross Symbol

In his oratorio St. Elisabeth, Liszt borrowed melodies that he believed to be programmatically compatible with the legend. In acknowledging the help he received in finding the melodies, he named each person and the melody he supplied. However, one borrowed melodic figure was of his own choice. Liszt identified it as his own symbol for the Cross, and said that he had already used it. He named three of his works, and added "et cetera," which can only mean that the Cross symbol was used by him in works he did not name. (Liszt's words, "unter andern" --"among others" implies "et cetera.") Scholars have inadvertently established that "et cetera" could stand only for the Sonata in b minor, for of his compositions completed by 1862, the date of St. Elisabeth, only four have been found to contain the Cross symbol: the three that Liszt named, and the Sonata, the only work where the symbol occurs in music that is seemingly abstract. In identifying his symbol for the Cross, Liszt notated its three pitches and said that they begin many chants, and he named two. Both refer to Christ: the Magnificat with its reference to the Virgin Mary, and thus to Christ's birth, and "Crux Fidelis", with its reference to Good Friday, and thus to Christ's death.

What is there more commonplace in fact than the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! The

¹² Alfred Cortot, ed., Liszt: Sonate en Si Mineur, (Paris, Editions Salabert, date unreadable), footnote, p. 8.

¹³ Information received from Klára Hamburger, student of Gárdonyi, writer on Liszt, in a letter to the author dated June 21, 1983.

¹⁴ Klára Hamburger, Preface, Liszt Ferenc: Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth, (Budapest, Editio Musica, 1974), p. ix; Alan Walker, ed. Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music (London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1970; reprint ed., 1976), p.323, footnote 1; Ernst Gunter Heinemann, Franz Liszts Auseinandersetzung mit der geistlichen Musik (München-Salzburg, Katzibichler), p.87; Sharon Winklhofer, Liszt's Sonata in B Minor, p. 267, note 48.

manger and the Cross, are they not the divine commonplaces of the poor and the infirm in this world?

.....
Thus we march to the glimmering of the star of Bethlehem—and climb the stations of Golgotha.¹⁵

By linking two Christ-related chants to the Cross symbol, Liszt indicated that for him, the Cross motif is symbolic of Christ and the Cross. However, even though he named two chants that open with the Cross symbol, and even though he used the *Magnificat* in the Dante Symphony,¹⁶ his own musical use of the symbol, even in the Dante Symphony, can be traced only to "Crux Fidelis" (Liber Usualis, p. 742).

"Crux Fidelis" is the musical and symbolic source of the Sonata's grandioso motif that begins the second key area. The chant has two salient features that make it unique among those that open with the three-note figure of the Cross symbol. In his music Liszt retained both features. One is symbolic, the other is musical.

Unlike any other chant, "Crux Fidelis" opens with the word "cross" and also with pitches that form a pentatonic scale, the only permutation of the pentatonic that accommodates two consecutive Lisztian Cross symbols. And now, the essential statement:

The melodic contour of the grandioso is made of the same pentatonic permutation as "Crux Fidelis".

Ex.2.2 is the grandioso melody itself.

Ex.2.3 isolates the pitch classes of the grandioso, showing them as an ascending pentatonic scale.

Ex.2.4 shows that the pentatonic scale of the grandioso can also be derived by overlapping two Cross symbols.

All seven occurrences of the grandioso second subject are stylized adaptations of "Crux Fidelis", the hymn that symbolizes the Passion. *Appassionato* and *con passione*, Liszt's words with the Sonata's grandioso motif, are thus clarified as referring to the Passion. In addition, Liszt's explicit demand in the Lehman manuscript that the *Recitativo appassionato* be printed in large notes now become understandable: the recitatives represent *vox Christi*, and are thus to be distinguished from other cadenza-like passages printed in small notes. Yet Liszt's instructions have been disregarded until the 1973 publication of a facsimile of the manuscript and of an *Urtext* edition of the Sonata, both by the Henle firm. All previous editions have printed the recitatives in small notes.

That the *grandioso* symbolizes Christ and the Cross will be clarified further in the discussion of the hymn's place in the Catholic liturgy and in Liszt's music.

"Crux Fidelis" is the refrain of the hymn "Pange lingua." Both are sung to the same melody. In the Catholic liturgy as Liszt knew it, the hymn was central to the Solemn Adoration of the Holy Cross during the Good Friday Mass of the Presanctified. Ascribed to Venantius Fortunatus of the sixth century, the hymn celebrated the receipt of a relic of the True Cross brought to the monastery founded at Poitiers by Saint Radegonde.

The many verses of "Pange lingua" dwell impersonally upon the function of the Cross in the scheme of redemption from original sin. "'Crux Fidelis'," on the other hand, is a reverent, personal homage to the tree from which the Cross was made. The repetitious refrain can be translated as follows:

¹⁵ La Mara, Franz Liszt's Briefe 7:11, letter no. 10, and 6:322, letter no. 300.

¹⁶ Ibid., 8:148, letter no. 120, and 8:387, letter no. 408.

Cross faithful, noble among all trees:
No arbor brings forth
Such remarkable foliage, flowers, seeds;
Sweet tree, sweet nails, sweet weight sustains.¹⁷

In a letter, Liszt reverently paraphrased the refrain as follows:

...the s y m b o l i c Pine [spaced as in La Mara] ...The Pine that dominates the hills of Rome ...extends its branches toward the heights where the sign of the redemption of the world appeared shining with triumph to Constantin; ...it is to the tree, noble among all others, whose foliage, fruits and seeds carry all grace and all benediction that the pine bears witness, and it is the hymn of the Croix fidèle ["Crux Fidelis"] that it urges me to sing.

Liszt's letters identify his symbolic use of "Crux Fidelis" in his symphonic poem, Hunnenschlacht. According to him, they hymn symbolizes "the solar light of Christianity" that he found in Wilhelm von Kaulbach's painting, from which he adopted both name and symbolism. How carefully Liszt consulted his programmatic sources before composing can be read in his own words. After seeing the painting, Liszt had his first idea about how he would end the music of Hunnenschlacht. Later he wrote that he was serious about a composition based on the painting, but that he wasn't ready:

I have to see again the reproduction of the battle.

The prefaces to Hunnenschlacht, one by Richard Pohl and one by Giovanni Sgambati, are in exact accord with the intentions that Liszt stated in his letters. That the prefaces were added after the piece was composed is of no consequence: the programmatic ideas came first, and they were the reason for Liszt's choice of "Crux Fidelis" and the cruciform symbol as the musical counterpart of Kaulbach's symbolism. The Cross in Kaulbach's painting is held like a banner, high above the Christian forces. Liszt referred to "they symbol of redemption, the crucifix," and added, "I absolutely wrote Hunnenschlacht for the sake of the hymn "Crux Fidelis"." In still another letter, Liszt referred to "Crux Fidelis" as "the hymn of the Cross" and later expressed the wish that he had done better musically in Hunnenschlacht, ...in order to adore the Croix fidele ["Crux Fidelis"] our hope and salvation!

How Liszt adapted the hymn in his music can be seen in set 4 of the Examples. It was only in Hunnenschlacht that he quoted the hymn at some length. In other works, he stylized its opening, usually by featuring its two Cross symbols or by reducing it to the pentatonic pitch classes mentioned earlier. Liszt stylized the hymn by beginning the first of the two consecutive Cross symbols on the dominant, and the second on the tonic. The pentatonic pitch classes isolated from the hymn's first eight notes show that Liszt reduced the hymn's opening to the ascending pentatonic pitches that, along with "cross" as its first word, distinguish "Crux Fidelis" from other hymns. The examples cited above are from the words that Winklhofer identified as containing the Sonata's grandioso melodic shape. In every one, Liszt made sure that the symbol - whether that of the Cross or the pentatonic pitches of "Crux Fidelis" - was musically prominent. In works where no symbolism was intended, the same intervals do not have the same prominence. The difference is important. Yet, since programmatic association is supplied in all the works except the Sonata, it may be assumed that the musical similarities imply programmatic similarities as well. Note that the Mass for Male Voices retains the grandioso melodic shape with the words, "You alone are highest, Jesus Christ." These examples show that the melodic shape of the Sonata's grandioso reappears in seven other works, always with reference to Christianity. In

¹⁷ "Crux Fidelis", inter omnes Arbor una nobilis: Nulla silva talem profert, Fronde, flore, germine: Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, Dulce pondus sustinet.

addition, the grandioso recurs with consistency in Liszt's music in yet another way: in its harmonies.

The Grandioso harmonies

Liszt reused the Sonata's grandioso harmonies twice: first, in *Hunnenschlacht* where they accompany the opening of "Crux Fidelis," in which Liszt identified by quoting the lines of the hymn, and second, in "Via crucis" where they accompany Christ's Passion. The musical parallel between the Sonata and "Via crucis" establishes the programmatic meaning of the pesante chords in the Sonata. The major harmonies of both works are yet another parallel. Surprising though it may be, Liszt reused not only the Sonata's minor harmonies for the Passion music of "Via crucis", but also its grandioso with the major harmonies. Why would Liszt use major harmonies for Christ's death? Marked piano (*dolcissimo*) in "Via crucis", they prepare for, and accompany, Christ's last words from the Cross, "It is finished." The reason for the luminous, major chords that occur at the moment of Christ's death have an explanation by Liszt when he said, "In general the great and little composers color the Requiem with the blackest black." His attitude was different: "...I tried to give a character of sweet Christian hope to the sentiment of death..." "Sweet" as Liszt used it recalls "dulce" of "Crux Fidelis" where the word occurs three times, and his words "Christian hope" touch upon the core of his faith, centered around the mystery of *vitam ex morte*, that is, of life that springs from Christ's death on the Cross. The certainty that the Sonata and "Via crucis" harmonies refer to "Crux Fidelis" can be ascertained because they are identical with the harmonies that accompany "Crux Fidelis" as quoted in *Hunnenschlacht*. It is of more than passing interest to note that Liszt's grandioso harmonies relate to the plagal Amen formula, and that Wagner made use of both the grandioso harmonies and the Cross symbol in *Parsifal*. To Liszt's Cross symbol as it appears in the Chorus of the Crusaders in *St. Elisabeth*, and to the Sonata's "Amen" harmonies, Wagner added yet another "Amen" formula known as the "Dresden Amen." Combined, these three elements constitute Wagner's leitmotif of the Holy Grail. At the moment when *Parsifal* makes the sign of the Cross with the sacred spear, Wagner quotes Liszt's Cross symbol with the Sonata's grandioso harmonies. The very next moment, the evil *Klingsor's* magic castle disintegrates. Evidence of Liszt's divine symbolism as presented up to this point can be summarized in the following statement: because Liszt always reuses the melody of the Sonata's grandioso with Christian connotation, and because its harmonies can be directly connected with "Crux Fidelis" in *Hunnenschlacht* and the Passion in "Via crucis", it is concluded that the grandioso symbolizes Christ and the Cross. The major harmonies symbolize Christ as a heavenly being, while the minor harmonies symbolize Jesus as a human being who died on the Cross to pay the ransom for original sin. And now to the Sonata's diabolical symbolism.

B. Liszt's Symbols for the Diabolical

The diabolical is inseparable from the divine. Without *Klingsor*, there would be no need for *Parsifal*; without *Lucifer*, there would be no need for Christ. The whole Judeo-Christian concept is centered around the Fall of Man caused by diabolical temptation, and Man's redemption through divine intervention. The duality permeates the philosophical and artistic output of the Romantic age. In much of Liszt's music, and particularly in the Sonata, the duality is the crucial conflict.

While Liszt's idea of representing Christ and his crucifixion in the Sonata was probably inspired by the Bible, the symbolic concept for the Sonata's exposition could have originated just as easily from Liszt's reading of *Paradise Lost* before he started on the Sonata. The poem opens as follows:

Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse...

In explaining these lines, Milton Y. Hughes singles out the two personages symbolizing fall and redemption: "Man" is Adam, and "greater Man," is the Son of God. The two are symbolized in the Sonata's exposition, significantly, one in a minor and one in a major key. Adam, as will be shown, is assigned the first key area (b minor), and Christ, as shown earlier, is assigned the second key area (D major). The melodic symbol for both relate to Gregorian chant: the diabolus in musica symbolizes Adam who succumbed to Lucifer, and "Crux Fidelis" symbolizes Christ.

The tritone: diabolus in musica

As might be expected, when the musical context is diabolical, Liszt draws upon the tritone as freely as other composers (Ex.26). But that does not mean that there is a devil behind every tritone in his music. It is Liszt's prominent use of the tritone that establishes its symbolic function in programmatic and texted works.

Liszt referred to the tritone in letters at least twice. Writing to d'Ortigue, he pokes fun at the Abbé Raillard whom he calls the "f e a r l e s s knight" of Gregorian chant. As he says,

...not only does Mr. Abbé Raillard refuse to recoil from the diabolus in musica; he even confronts his choir boys with a pandemonium of little devils in the form of quarter tones.

To Liszt, the prototypical tritone, B - F, is a potent symbol. In his letter to Camille Saint-Saëns, dedicatee of his second Mephisto Waltz, he remarks on the blatant tritone B - F with which the work begins and ends. But he is not objective. To the contrary, his letter shows how closely the music reflects his own personal feelings.

...No one feels more than I the imbalance between good will and the actual results in my compositions. Nevertheless, I continue to write, in spite of fatigue...To aspire to higher things is not forbidden: it is only the attainment of such aspirations that remains the question, somewhat like the ending of my Mephistophelean Waltz on the pitches B - F.

With his sighs that human imperfection thwarts high aspiration, Liszt cast light on how he used musical symbolism. From his clues, the symbolism of the Waltz may be deduced.

The 2nd Mephisto Waltz opens with an ascending series of imperfect fifths (tritone B - F), which is answered by an ascending series of perfect fifths (B - F#), a move from imperfect to perfect that expresses imperfect Man's aspiration for perfection.

But the goal is not reached. Man's hopes are thwarted by his imperfection, which is symbolized at the end with the return of imperfect fifths (B - F), this time falling to low register.

In Liszt's religion, all human imperfection is a result of the fall from the state of divine perfection, and of course, the fall is the result of diabolical temptation. Thus it is that the tritone in the Waltz symbolizes both Mephisto and the imperfect human being. By the same token, the tritone in the Sonata symbolizes both the diabolical and fallen Man. Liszt used the tritone B - E# (B - F) as the musical common denominator of the Lucifer-Satan duality, which parallels the fall of man.

The Lucifer-Satan Duality

Liszt's personification of the diabolical in the Sonata reflects the generally accepted Christian theology in which original sin resulted from the temptation by Lucifer, personified by Moses as the serpent. Upon succumbing to temptation, Man, and with him the serpent, was expelled from paradise. And so it was that Adam and Eve became fallen beings, just as the once glorious Archangel Lucifer, called "the Bearer of Light," became a fallen angel known as Satan, "the Adversary."

The etymological roots of the two names show that their symbolic meanings are dissimilar in spite of the popular tendency to interchange them. Even Liszt used the two names interchangeably.

Yet the names Lucifer and Satan remain a duality expressing the fall from above to below, or to use Liszt's words, from "là-haut" to "ici-bas." Liszt, as most composers, distinguished heaven and earth with high and low registers, but in the Sonata he also used registers to distinguish the formerly glorious Archangel Lucifer from his fallen counterpart Satan.

The Lucifer-Satan duality is expressed in other arts as well. Two prints from Renaissance art are shown. The first print represents the fall of Lucifer; the second represents Lucifer and Satan as two separate beings at the time of the Last Judgment. Notice that Lucifer is above with crown and wings, and that Satan is below with neither crown nor wings. The emphasis on damnation is a remnant of medieval imagery that is contrary to the Romantic spirit with its emphasis on redemption. For a comprehensive perspective on the fall and redemption in Romantic literature, consult M. H. Abram's book, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature, (New York, W.W. Norton, 1973).

Goethe redeems the eternal part of Faust's soul, and Victor Hugo redeems the fallen archangel in the final line of his epic, "The End of Satan" with the words: "Satan est mort, renaiss, ô Lucifer céleste!" The Lucifer-Satan duality in the Sonata is shown in set 2 of the Examples. The first key area of the Exposition is shown as Ex.2.1.

Unlike the second key area with its single motif for Christ, the first key area has two: the interlocked, yet distinct motifs for Lucifer and Satan. They are interlocked around the accented tonic tritone, B - E#, which is, of course, the prototypical diabolus in musica, B - F. Beginning with a falling seventh, the right-hand motif in high register stands for Lucifer. Beginning with a chain of repeated notes, the left-hand motif in low register stands for Satan. Together, as the first subject of the Sonata, the two motifs symbolize fallen Man. Throughout the Sonata, they go hand in hand. The Symbolism of the two motifs can now be decoded. First, the Lucifer motif.

The Lucifer Motif in the Sonata

The musical imagery for Lucifer depicts the fall from paradise. In the Sonata, the fall is a series of successively falling intervals. The symbolism is not original with Liszt. Bach, in his organ chorale prelude, "Durch Adam's Fall," symbolizes Adam's fall as a basso ostinato on the pedals with three successive falling sevenths.

Since the prelude is in Bach's famous Orgelbüchlein, it was probably known to Liszt.

The falling seventh suited Liszt's symbolic thinking very well. It is prominent in his Mass for Male Voices with the words "Et homo factus est" (and he became man and was crucified for us, Ex.12.3). Original sin and crucifixion are linked, or course, for the advent of one caused the need for the other. Liszt commented that

Death,... is our deliverance from an involuntary
bondage, consequence of the original sin.

Identification of the motif in the Sonata as Lucifer is possible with Liszt's Bells of the Strassburg Cathedral, a work whose programmatic ideas were inspired by Longfellow's Golden Legend. In Liszt's work, Lucifer and his spirits are the principal characters opposed by the power of the Cross and the cathedral's bells. The musical symbolism for the programmatic ideas are shown in set 12 of the Examples.

The first musical gesture of the piece (Ex.12.12) shows the Luciferic spirits attacking the Cross on the top of the cathedral. The pitch classes of the gesture can be used to reconstruct those of the Lucifer motif in the Sonata (bracketed in Ex.12.12).

Ex.12.13 contains the second musical gesture of the piece: repelled by the Cross, the Luciferic spirits tumble down.

The music is identical with that in the Sonata evoking the proud Lucifer's fall (Ex.12.11). Both involve descending arpeggiated diminished seventh chords.

The falling seventh interval, characteristic of the Lucifer motif in the Sonata, is immediately featured in Bells of the Strassburg Cathedral. The Luciferic spirits are identified by Lucifer's opening sentence in which the word "spirits" is set to a descending interval that has the identical pitch span as the falling diminished seventh of the Sonata's Lucifer motif.

Lucifer's last words, "Come away ere night is gone," recall the Sonata's Lucifer motif (Ex.12.6, mm 11 to 13).

The most obvious clue to the identity of Lucifer in this music as the formerly glorious Archangel occurs when the Luciferic spirits remind their leader of their fall from heaven, shown in Ex.12.16. Notice the three downward octave leaps, highlighted with dotted arrows, that symbolize Michael's war on the Luciferic spirits.

It is significant that in Parsifal, Wagner reused the Sonata's Lucifer motif as the leitmotif for the accursed Kundry [Act I, m. 215ff].

It must not be believed, however, that Lucifer's musical symbol is only the downward intervallic leaps. Liszt always symbolized Lucifer, Adam, and Prometheus by two musical gestures: first, with a bold upward leap symbolizing Prometheus reaching for the divine fire, or Adam reaching for the divine knowledge of good and evil; and only thereafter, the second, downward gesture symbolizing their fall, that is, Prometheus bringing the divine fire down to earth and being chained to a rock, and Adam and the serpent falling to their new earthly habitat (Ex.13.1-10). Liszt redeemed each one (Ex.13.11-14).

The Satan Motif

While the falling sevenths of the Lucifer motif symbolize the fall itself from above to below, the evenly spaced, sharply marked chain of repeated notes symbolize the already fallen devil known as Satan, or to use his medieval personification, Mephistopheles.

Liszt's symbolic use of the repeated notes in the Sonata can be deduced because in other works they are consistently used as a symbol for the satanic.

Ex.14.2 and 14.2a are from the Legend of St. Christoph, a work yet unpublished, but recorded on Hungaroton SLPX 11381. They show parallel quotes from the poem's first two verses. The examples are identical both verbally and musically until the word "devil" is reached. The devil is symbolized prominently by the tonic tritone G# and the repeated notes in the piano part played forte.

To portray St. Christoph in the service of the king and the devil, Liszt borrowed vocal lines, D minor harmony, and rhythm in both melody and accompaniment from Mozart's banquet scene in Don Giovanni. Such extensive borrowing for symbolic parallels is typical of Liszt.

Liszt was consistent in his use of repeated notes to symbolize the satanic (Ex.15). The recognition of non-legato repeated notes, evenly spaced and sharply marked, as Liszt's symbol for the Devil, Satan, and Mephistopheles proves erroneous the notion that there is no motif for Mephistopheles in the Faust Symphony. Richard Pohl, Liszt's student, thought that since

Mephisto was the spirit of negation, Liszt had given him no individual thematic substance. The notion is still current even though Liszt's letter regarding Milton's Satan shows clearly that in his thinking, the Devil did have substance. The quote from his letter is repeated here:

...He projects rays, just as the Sun projects rays, but being the Spirit of Darkness, these rays are of Negation and Death.

Unrecognized until now, Liszt gave musical substance to Mephistopheles as a chain of repeated notes. In fact, the entire substance of measures 1 to 10 is symbolic of Mephisto (Ex.27.4; Ex.28.7; Ex.29.5). It is only after the fermata (Ex.14.3, m 10) that Mephistophelean distortion of Faust's themes begins.

Liszt did not invent the repeated note symbol. Just as the grandioso Christ motif can be traced to "Crux Fidelis", and the Lucifer motif to Bach, Liszt's Satan motif can be traced to Weber, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, and Alkan (Ex.16.1-3 and Ex.27.1-3).

Liszt borrowed from others for his large-scales programmatic or texted works such as St. Elisabeth, St. Christoph, Christus. It is also suspected that he borrowed from others for the large-scale Sonata. Every one of its motifs can be traced to earlier texted or programmatic music (Ex.19). The divine and diabolical connotations were already present in their works. The symbolic essence of the connotations were retained by Liszt in the Sonata. Yet he created a work so successful for its originality that, for the 130 years since its completion, nobody suspected its heterogeneous musical and symbolic sources.

Some of the uses of symbolism in the Sonata are similar to those in Chopin's Scherzo No. 1 in b minor (Ex.26.5), and in Alkan's Grande Sonate, 2nd movement, Quasi-Faust (Ex.31). Both contain thematic and symbolic antithesis between the divine and the diabolical.

III. The Sonata's Program Decoded: Original Sin, Crucifixion, Last Judgment

The musical and programmatic parallels between Liszt's works are sufficiently plentiful to show that his religious interests were centered around the divine and diabolical, and that he used identifiable musical symbols for the two in various works, including the Sonata. The evidence can be used to decode the symbols of the Sonata's motifs as they pertain to its main programmatic events.

The crucifixion was already decoded through parallel music between the Sonata and Via crucis. What remains are the programmatic roles of the Lucifer and Satan motifs in the Sonata's opening measures that symbolize the fall, and the roles of the Christ, Lucifer and Satan motifs in the closing measures that symbolize the Last Judgment.

The opening Lento

The Sonata's opening seven measures, marked Lento assai -- piano, and sotto voce, symbolize Lucifer as he surreptitiously tempts Man in the Garden of Eden. The section leads into the Allegro energico where Man's falling into sin and his expulsion from paradise are symbolized.

Everything about the Lento symbolizes the deception of the tempter, and Man's succumbing to the temptation. The listener who has no score to guide him through the Lento is deceived as surely as Adam and Eve were in paradise. The listener has nothing to orient his ear to the B minor key signature, nothing to explain the pitch sequence of the opening seven measures, and nothing to indicate the metric downbeats. He is the unwitting victim of musical symbolism that evokes Lucifer's deception.

The Biblical imagery involves Lucifer who tempts and Man who is tempted. For this reason, Liszt's music is polyphonic. The top voice is that of Lucifer whose tempting is symbolized exclusively through the off-beat repetition of pitch G, notated with stems up. The lower voice is that of Man whose receptivity to Lucifer's temptation is symbolized through the repetition of G, notated with stems down (Ex.17.2, Ex.17.4, Ex.17.6). Man's reaction to the temptation is also symbolized in the lower voice (Ex.17.3 and Ex.17.5). Not even the Henle Urtext edition (1973) has retained Liszt's stemming as it appears in the Lehman manuscript.

Liszt's music summarizes the drama in paradise as recounted in Genesis 3:11-24 (King James Version of the Bible). The details of the deception can be followed in the music, for the action takes place in three stages symbolizing Lucifer's three temptations:

Ye shall not surely die,...
your eyes shall be opened,
...and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.

Lucifer's negation of the divine warning regarding the forbidden fruit is symbolized by negation of strong beats and by stress of off-beats in three different measures: 1, 4, and 7. (See Ex.17.2, 17.4, 17.6, and Ex.29 and Ex.30). With off-beat stress perceived as beats one and three by the listener, the true meter is negated throughout the entire Lento. (Negation of strong beats can be visually expressed in live performances.)

Lucifer's deception can be symbolized by the repetition of the pitch G because G in the designated key signature of B minor is the sixth degree. The sixth degree above all others is associated with deceptive cadences, and hence, deception. Its repetition and almost constant presence creates the illusion of a tonic (mm 1-8). Man's first hesitant, yearning responses to the temptations, with the reaching up of his hand toward the apple, is symbolized by widening, ascending intervals, a minor seventh individually marked crescendo, and a major seventh also individually marked crescendo (Ex.17.3 and 17.5).

That the opening interval is an ascending 7th rather than a descending second is clear in the Lehman manuscript (see earlier version of the opening and the stem for the F# played by the thumb of the right hand introduced in measure 454). It is also noteworthy that a sketch from 1851, (reproduced in Ex.17.1) contains an upward gesture to symbolize Man's reaching for the forbidden fruit.

The two hesitant withdrawals of Man's hand are symbolized by descending scales, each similarly marked decrescendo (Ex.17.3 and 17.5). The immediate use of accidentals so veils the B minor pitches of the descending scales in the opening that many scholars consider them a phrygian and a gypsy scale. Such nomenclature freezes Liszt's dynamic process of distortion into a meaningless abstraction. The distortion of B minor pitches is symbolic of Lucifer's distortion of the truth. There is no gypsy scale in the whole Sonata. (See Ex.32 for an explanation.) Instead of phrygian and gypsy scales, there are only two distorted sequences of B minor pitches. The alternation of scales that sound, first diatonic, then chromatic (Ex.17.3 and Ex.17.5), symbolize the increasing power of the tempter over Man. The distorted scalar pitches are finally rectified (m 31, left hand) and again, more prominently featured (mm 673-674, both hands).

Man's succumbing to temptation, that is, his reaching for the apple, is symbolized by upward leaps of octaves (Ex.17.7), by the change from Lento assai to Allegro energico and by a crescendo that peaks in a forte climax (m 9).

The symbolism of the fall in the Allegro energico has already been explained under the Lucifer-Satan duality.

The Sonata's final page

Original Sin, Crucifixion, and Last Judgment, the three tenets of the Christian faith, are

all symbolized in the Sonata. With musical symbols decoded for original sin and the crucifixion, the interpretation of the symbols for the Last Judgment requires no more than a reading of the common interpretation of the Apocalypse, which Liszt followed closely in his music (Ex.18).

Ex.18.1: The Christ motif returns for the seventh and last time. The key is the tonic B major (mm 700-703), and for the first and only time, it is to be played triple forte. In this way, the motif symbolizes the glory of Christ's return on the day of Judgment.

Ex.18.2: The Christ motif continues in a surge of harmonies that move into high register, musically symbolic of the raising of the living and the dead to stand before the Judgment seat. (See also Ex.33.2 for a similar symbolic solution in Mozart's Requiem.)

Ex. 18.3: Following a dramatic pause, a return of the Andante sostenuto (mm 711-728) symbolizes those on the right-hand side of Christ. The melody is one of religious devotion borrowed by Liszt from a lied by Maria Pavlovna. In the Sonata it functions as the motif of devotion to Christ. (See also Ex.19.8 and Ex.23.)

Ex.18.4a: Allegro moderato: whole-note chords rising to high register in the right hand symbolize the redemption of those on the right-hand side of Christ

Ex.18.4b: At the same time, the repeated-note symbol of Satan in the left hand recurs without change either of its low register or pitch B. It is symbolic of the immobilized souls on the left-hand side of Christ.

Ex. 18.5: The Lucifer motif, now pianissimo, returns in B major. The D natural of measure 10, (Ex.17.8) becomes the D# of measure 738 (Ex.18.5). Fallen Man is redeemed.

The concluding Lento assai symbolizes damnation versus redemption:

Ex. 18.6: The descending scale, now minus its original upward interval that symbolized Man's yearning for divine knowledge of good and evil, moves down from B to the lowest C, one tone short of two octaves. It symbolizes the unredeemed souls sinking to the brink of the bottomless pit. (See also Ex.33.9 and Ex.33.10.)

Ex.18.7: Ethereal chords high above move to an unresolved B major tonic 6/4, Liszt's symbol for eternal life given to those redeemed. (See also Ex.34.)

Ex.18.6a: The final tone, the lowest B on the keyboard, then sounds. It is symbolic of the unredeemed who meet the apocalyptic second death.

Liszt did not, he could not, sustain the final 6/4 chord on the piano without a sostenuto pedal. But when he had the means to sustain the harmony he did so. Compare the Sonata's ending with the first ending of the Dante Symphony's Magnificat where the unresolved B major tonic 6/4 chord is held indefinitely until it etherealizes.

In view of Liszt's orchestral solution for an essentially identical programmatic situation, the use of the sostenuto (Steinway) pedal is the modern pianistic device for expressing Liszt's symbol of eternity which logically ends the Sonata. The application of the sostenuto pedal to sustain the final B major 6/4 chord would be in keeping with what Liszt wrote about his Requiem.

He said that he had found light, not darkness, for writing about death, a light that shines

... in spite of the terrors of the 'Dies irae.'

It is this light that illumines the final pages of the Sonata.

IV. Conclusion

With this, the decoding of the Sonata might be thought to be complete. But several things are yet to be said. Only a fraction of the musical symbolism permeating Liszt's music has been covered. The topic is wide open for further investigation. With the essential dramatic elements of the Sonata made clear, it doesn't take much imagination to fill out the action in the rest of the Sonata. For instance, when Liszt wrote to the Princess about Satan in Paradise Lost, he

introduced the statement as follows:

... One thing above all others has charmed me: It is the affirmation of frank and complete love between man and woman, not only the mystical and figurative love, but the real and tangible love so contrary [to that spoken of by] the pedantic theologians to whom Milton accords no voice in his work.

In the Bible the first two human acts mentioned are sex between Adam and Eve, and violence between Cain and Abel. In view of Liszt's comments about love between man and woman in Paradise Lost, it is easy to imagine that measures 120-254 represent Adam and Eve seeing each other with their newly opened eyes, and measures 255-276 represent the eruption of violence between Cain and Abel.

The Lucifer motif in measures 120-140 seems to imply Adam's growing desire for Eve. Through the machinations of Satan (mm 141-152), Eve appears to him in sensuous, seductive femininity (m 153ff). Love making ensues (mm 205-238, climax in 233-238). A denouement follows (mm 239-250).

At this point, Liszt introduced a harmonic device known as the devil's mill (Teufelsmühle: mm 251-254), after which violence erupts (mm 255- 276). Having characterized the human condition of fallen Man (sex and violence), Liszt reintroduces the motif of original sin (mm 277-285). Man no longer strives to be god-like as when he reached for the knowledge of good and evil. The ascending seventh intervals (Ex.17.3, Ex.17.5) become descending seconds. Man is sinking into sin. It is at this moment that the Christ comes to his rescue by submitting to the crucifixion beginning at measure 297.

Two ascending cruciform symbols (mm 307, 308, right hand) introduce two ascending scales (mm 309-10 and 312-13) that symbolize the upward impulse given to mankind through Christ's sacrifice. The evil forces must retreat (mm 314-330).

The following Andante sostenuto is harmonized in the style of a four-part chorale (mm 331ff), symbolic of Man's devotion to Christ. At the end of the slow movement, the passus duriusculus reappears in the top voice of the left hand (mm 422-426). Though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, and Man falls again, prey to the diabolical as symbolized with the fugato (mm 460-532).

The restatement of the first key area (mm 533-672) is not to be interpreted programmatically. These measures adhere to the tradition of restating the first key area as part of the abstract sonata form.

The Presto and Prestissimo (mm 673-699) symbolize Armageddon with the martial rhythm (m 682ff in the left hand, and m 690ff in the right). The accented D natural (m 697ff) symbolizes the imminent defeat of the diabolical forces as the Christ appears for the Last Judgment (mm 700ff).

This interpretation has been provoked by the evidence, of course. For final words, Liszt shall speak for himself.

... At the risk of being taken for an intolerably conceited person, I believe that the understanding of certain music requires an intelligence and a most elevated, most edified, most refined moral sense among artists and listeners, one that is not ordinarily found among them. The predominance of the grossest habits ... is still excessive in the music world. Perhaps it will diminish little by little and Perhaps also I shall then find my public. I no longer search for it, and I no longer have time to wait for it.

Later in his life, having changed his mind, Liszt made his often quoted statement. "I can wait."

With this key to his symbolism, may his time of waiting be shortened.

Appendix A

Liszt's Symbols

Alan B. Hersh, in a pioneering study as a candidate for the Doctor of Music degree at Indiana University in 1971, found symbols scattered in a few of Liszt's piano works; yet he did not realize that they were part of a consistent symbolic language affecting his entire output. Among Liszt's symbols for the divine Hersh mentioned subdominant harmony, predominantly diatonic mode, high register, and the major 6/4 chord (in *Funérailles* where, to Hersh, it suggests the "other-worldly"); and among the symbols for death and the diabolical, he mentioned the tritone and the diminished seventh chord, repeated notes, chromaticism, low register, descending line, obscure tonality.* [*Alan B. Hersh, "A Consideration of Programmatic Associations in the Piano Music of Liszt" (Indiana University, September 1971), pp 28-36. This work is bound together with another paper by Hersh on Karol Szymanowski].

In addition, he mentioned many descriptive musical gestures in the piano music of Liszt. Because these gestures, such as those used to suggest the movement of water, have many forms, they lie outside the classification of symbols as used in the present study which considers a symbol as a clearly defined and relatively inflexible musical element.

Along with many others, Hersh suspected a program for the Sonata, but his study did not go far enough for him to speculate on its nature. Without specific reference to the Sonata, he said, "I would like to advance the view that Liszt, in his use of musical symbolism, was going Wagner one better by achieving the true unification of music and ideas without recourse to words."** [***Ibid.*, 9. 13.] Hersh's statement was given as a hypothesis.

In the 130 years since Liszt composed the Sonata, many people have felt intuitively that it somehow expresses the divine and diabolical. In spite of that, its program could never have been decoded without Liszt's words accompanying his programmatic and texted works.

The present study concludes that the musical symbols used by Liszt existed first either as symbols or as musical ideas ripe for symbolism in the texted and programmatic music of his predecessors or contemporaries. When in proper context in Liszt's music, the musical elements below can become bearers of symbolism as indicated:

Symbolism for the divine:

two symbols for the Cross:

- a. "Crux fidelis" and the Cross symbol (3 pitches)
- b. the cruciform symbol (4 pitches visually arranged as points of the cross. See Ex.24 and Ex.25.)

one generic harmonic progression: the plagal Amen cadence

one symbol for redemption and eternity: the prolonged or unresolved major 6/4 chord

one metric symbol:

triple meter (tempus perfectum con prolatione perfecta
used for the 7th and last Christ motif, m. 700, Ex.31.10).

In general the divine symbolism may include tonal stability, major tonalities, diatonicism, pentatonicism, consonance, legato, high register, and an ascending line.

Symbolism for the diabolical:

three generic symbols for death and the diabolical:

- a. the tritone (diabolus in musica)
- b. the diminished seventh chord
- c. emphasis of weak beats and prolonged syncopations

two generic symbols for the diabolical:

- a. quick upward scalar thrust (anacrusis)
- b. appoggiaturas

one symbol for Lucifer, the Bearer of Light:

successive falling sevenths

one symbol for the Devil., Satan, and Mephistopheles: repeated notes

one metric symbol: duple meter (tempus imperfectum)

Note: see duple meter for the Sonata's Lucifer and Satan motifs, both in alla breve (cut C), and in particular see Liszt's complete Mephisto music in which the feeling of triple is replaced by the feeling of duple meter according to Liszt's instructions for interpreting the meter (See Ex.29.3, Ex.29.7, Ex.29.10.) "It is as though the waltz aspect of these works has been quite transformed by virtue of its association with the character of Mephistopheles."*** [***Mary Angela Hunt, "Franz Liszt: The Mephisto Waltzes" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1979), pp. 152-53.]

In general, the diabolical symbolism may include minor tonalities, tonal instability, atonality (see the Bagatelle without Tonality originally titled Mephisto Waltz), chromaticism (including the passus duriusculus and various chromatic modes), dissonance, staccato, low register, a descending line. To Liszt, fugato was more appropriate for the diabolical than the divine. (See La Mara, 1:197, letter no. 136; 1:111, letter no. 84; 7:291, letter no. 285, and 8:58, letter no. 59.) The scherzando may also be symbolic of the diabolical.

*Alan B. Hersh, "A Consideration of Programmatic Associations in the Piano Music of Liszt" (Indiana University, September 1971). pp 28-36. This work is bound with another paper by Hersh on Karol Szymanowski.

**Ibid., p. 13.

***Mary Angela Hunt, "Franz Liszt: The Mephisto Waltzes" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin., 1979), pp. 152-53.

Appendix B

The Relation of Program and Form in Liszt's Music

Liszt called himself a "well-intentioned Program Composer," and as such, he considered program and form equally important. The Recapitulation of the Sonata in B Minor fulfills the demands of the form and not that of the program.

The following comments about Liszt's music, written by Friedrich Niecks, were so much to Liszt's liking that he copied them in a letter to Walter Bache:

1. "Form is an abstract idea."

2. "A harmonic combination or progression may be against the rules of a system etc."
3. "Programm-music is a legitimate genre of the art."

*La Mara, Franz Liszt's Briefe, 2:259, letter no. 214.

**Ibid., 2:265, letter no. 222.

Sources of Musical Examples

Most of the musical examples that illustrate the text of this article are in the public domain. Some, however, have been taken from copyrighted publications such as the New Liszt Edition (Editio Musica, Budapest-- Bärenreiter Editions), Eulenberg (in collaboration with Editio Musica, Budapest), Henle, Boosey and Hawkes, Schirmer, and University Microfilms International Research Press.

The writer is indebted to Imre Mező (editor of the New Liszt Edition), and László Eősze (of Editio Musica, Budapest) for clarifications regarding certain Weimar manuscripts used in preparation of the New Liszt Edition.

Tibor Szász, concert pianist and recording artist,
received his Doctorate of Musical Arts from the
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The author is grateful to musicologist Dr. Edna Kilgore of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for her precious help in editing this article.

END

For private use only.

Liszt's Symbols for the Divine and the Diabolical:
Their Revelation of a Program in the B Minor Sonata
Journal of the American Liszt Society, XV (June 1984), 39-95.

Copyright © 1983 – 2010 by Tibor Szász

Filename: Liszt_Sonata_Szasz_Embedded_fonts.doc
Directory: D:\\$ SZASZ_BUSINESS_Performer_Scholar.\$\$ \LISZT\SZASZ
LISZT ARTICLE JALS 1984
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: LISZT'S SYMBOLS FOR THE DIVINE AND DIABOLICAL:
Subject:
Author: USER
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 12/2/2009 12:58 AM
Change Number: 9
Last Saved On: 2/25/2010 4:49 PM
Last Saved By: USER
Total Editing Time: 23 Minutes
Last Printed On: 2/25/2010 4:49 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 20
Number of Words: 8.778 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 50.037 (approx.)