

PREFACE

PIANO CONCERTO IN E-FLAT MAJOR, Op. posth.
R –, SW –, NG2 Q6, SH 125A

Liszt's Concerto in E-flat Major, op. posth., was unknown prior to 1989, when the score was first published.¹ The work was not mentioned in any of the catalogues that were compiled during the composer's lifetime, and the initial clue to the Concerto's existence was provided by the correct identification of a copyist's manuscript in the Goethe and Schiller Archive in Weimar. With this manuscript as a basis, it became possible to recover Liszt's autograph, divided among three archives, where it was listed as material from Concerto no. 1, also in E-flat major. Examination of the reconstructed autograph reveals that Concerto, op. posth., was composed in 1839 and intended by Liszt for his first concert tour that began later that year.

THE THREE CONCERTOS OF 1839

Works for piano and orchestra bracket Liszt's 'years of pilgrimage' (1835–1839). In the months before he left Paris on 1 June 1835, Liszt had copies prepared of the earliest surviving version of Concerto no. 1² and *Grande fantaisie symphonique*,³ and he was working on *De profundis* (*psaume instrumental*).⁴ He performed *Grande fantaisie symphonique* on 9 April 1835, and likely would have played the other works in subsequent concerts had he not been summoned by the Countess Marie d'Agoult to join her in Basel, where he arrived on 4 June. Indeed, within two months, Liszt realized that he would not be returning to Paris anytime soon and wrote to his mother on 26 July, asking her to send him three of these manuscripts: 'The *Concerto* of my composition copied by Belloni with the piano part and score from which he copied it; the *Fantaisie symphonique* on themes of Berlioz (performed at my concert) copied by Belloni and bound — the orchestral parts are unnecessary; a large blue notebook where another Concerto

symphonique that I wrote this winter in Ratzenloch can be found',⁵ respectively, Concerto no. 1, *Grande fantaisie symphonique*, and *De profundis*.⁶

But concerts were intermittent, and there was little need for a concerto. For an orchestral performance in Paris on 18 December 1836, Liszt revived *Grande fantaisie symphonique*, and for an appearance in Vienna on 18 April 1838, he played Carl Maria von Weber's *Konzertstück* in F Minor, op. 79.⁷ This successful series of concerts in Vienna in April and May 1838 must have made Liszt aware that he did not have an original work for piano and orchestra that was suitable for a touring pianist: Concerto no. 1 was a sprawling composition in three movements that had never been performed, and *De profundis* was incomplete and destined to remain so.⁸ As for *Grande fantaisie symphonique* — the only concerto that Liszt had performed — it was a paraphrase based on a work by Hector Berlioz that had never been heard outside of Paris, and audiences in other cities would be unable to appreciate Liszt's elaboration of the source material. Within a year, this gap in his repertoire would be impossible to ignore.

Hints of an upcoming concert tour are found in Liszt's letters from the first months of 1839, and by the end of July, his plans have become more specific: 'My intention being to visit Vienna, Munich, and perhaps Leipzig at the beginning of next year (before going to England in the month of April)'.⁹ Similar thoughts are found in d'Agoult's invitation to Ferdinand Hiller from the same month: 'Try to come, for we are at our last stop in Italy. We will spend the month of October in Naples, then I return to Paris and Franz will probably make a tour of Germa-

¹ Liszt Ferenc, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in E-flat Major*, op. posth., edited by Jay Rosenblatt (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1989).

² D-WRgs 60/H3b, H3c. R 455, SW/SH 124, NG2 H4; GA I/13 (published version). Although Liszt did not label the concerto until he revised it in 1849, this discussion uses the familiar numbering from the published version.

³ D-WRgs 60/H7 and F-Pn Ms. 24109. R 453, SW/SH 120, NG2 H2; the fantasy was edited by Reiner Zimmermann (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1981).

⁴ D-WRgs 60/H1. R 668, SW 691, NG2 H3, SH 121a; NLE VII/2. For dating of these three manuscripts, see MLTS, pp. 365–366, and RCC, pp. 452–453.

⁵ 'Le *Concerto* de ma composition copié par Belloni avec la partie de Piano et la Partition d'après laquelle il l'a copié — // La *Fantaisie symphonique* sur des thèmes de Berlioz (exécutée à mon concert) copiée par Belloni et relié — les parties d'accompagnement sont inutiles — // Un gros cahier bleu où se trouve un autre Concerto symphonique que j'ai écrit cet hiver au ratzen loch —'. HLM, p. 65 and endnotes on p. 74. Liszt's reference to 'ratzen loch' (rat hole) is his apartment in Paris (HLM, p. 74, n. 11). Gaetano Belloni is discussed below.

⁶ The letter and identification of these works is discussed in RCC, pp. 214–219.

⁷ LLW, p. 26.

⁸ See the discussion that relates this work to its time and place of composition in the Preface to NLE VII/2 written by Jay Rosenblatt.

⁹ 'Mon intention étant de visiter Vienne, Munich, et peut-être Leipzig au commencement de l'année prochaine (avant de passer en Angleterre au mois d'Avril)'. Br. 1, p. 29 (to Breitkopf & Härtel). La Mara suggests 'June 1839' for the date of this letter, but information in the archives of Breitkopf & Härtel place it at the end of July; Oskar von Hase, *Breitkopf & Härtel: Gedenkschrift und Arbeitsbericht*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1919), vol. 2, p. 151.