



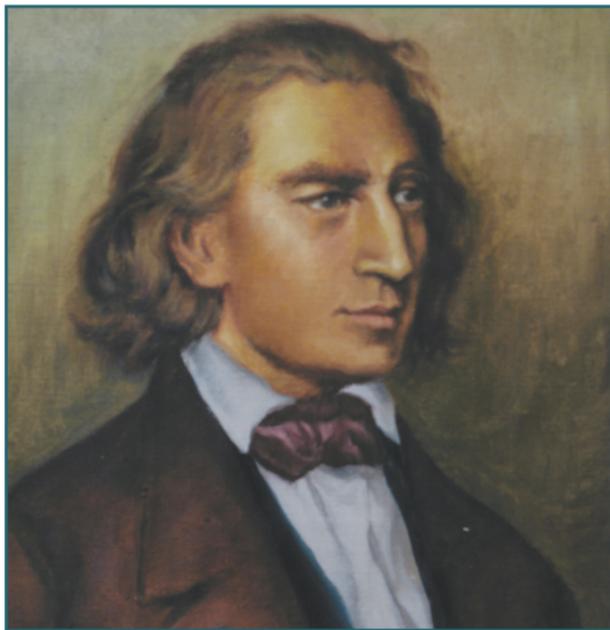
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DDD

FRANZ LISZT

Ballades • Polonaises Trois Morceaux Suisses

Jean Dubé



COMPLETE
PIANO
MUSIC



VOLUME
22

Franz Liszt (1811-1886): Ballades • Polonaises • Trois morceaux suisses

The power of ambition urged him on. A chaos of ideas fermented in him. He must have a world...in which he could at the same time rule alone. Chopin had given romantic piano music a powerful impetus. He made use of it. This was now his world. – The pianoforte the throne from which he exercised his creative might.

Carlo: Liszt and French Romanticism.
Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, 5th May 1838

Born at Raiding, in Hungary, in 1811, the son of Adam Liszt, a steward in the service of Haydn's former patrons, the Esterházy Princes, Franz Liszt had early encouragement from members of the Hungarian nobility, allowing him in 1822 to move to Vienna, for lessons with Czerny and a famous meeting with Beethoven. From there he moved to Paris, where Cherubini refused him admission to the Conservatoire. Nevertheless he was able to impress audiences by his performance, now supported by the Erard family, piano manufacturers whose wares he was able to advertise in the concert tours on which he embarked. In 1827 Adam Liszt died, and Franz Liszt was now joined again by his mother in Paris, while using his time to teach, to read and benefit from the intellectual society with which he came into contact. His interest in virtuoso performance was renewed when he heard the great violinist Paganini, whose technical accomplishments he now set out to emulate.

The years that followed brought a series of compositions, including transcriptions of songs and operatic fantasies, part of the stock-in-trade of a virtuoso. Liszt's relationship with a married woman, the Comtesse Marie d'Agoult, led to his departure from Paris for years of travel abroad, first to Switzerland, then back to Paris, before leaving for Italy, Vienna and Hungary. By 1844 his relationship with his mistress, the mother of his three children, was at an end, but his

concert activities continued until 1847, the year in which his association began with Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, a Polish heiress, the estranged wife of a Russian prince. The following year he settled with her in Weimar, the city of Goethe, turning his attention now to the development of a newer form of orchestral music, the symphonic poem, and, as always, to the revision and publication of earlier compositions.

It was in 1861 at the age of fifty that Liszt moved to Rome, following Princess Carolyne, who had settled there a year earlier. Divorce and annulment seemed to have opened the way to their marriage, but they now continued to live in separate apartments in the city. Liszt eventually took minor orders and developed a pattern of life that divided his time between Weimar, where he imparted advice to a younger generation, Rome, where he was able to pursue his religious interests, and Pest, where he returned now as a national hero. He died in 1886 in Bayreuth, where his daughter Cosima, former wife of Hans von Bülow and widow of Richard Wagner, lived, concerned with the continued propagation of her husband's music.

His friend Chopin died in 1849, and two years later, in Weimar, Liszt was working with Princess Carolyne on a book on the Polish composer. It was natural that he should turn his attention, at least superficially, to some of the forms that Chopin had made his own. To this may be added the fact that Princess Carolyne was Polish.

Liszt wrote his two *Polonaises* in 1851. The first, sometimes known as *Polonaise mélancolique*, in C minor and marked *Moderato*, starts with a short introduction, before the expressive entry of the principal polonaise theme, developed with occasional hand-crossing and leading, through a cadenza, to a major-key secondary theme, itself expanded before the return of a version of the first theme, marked *Allegro energico*. A passage in the manner of an improvised cadenza brings a return of the second theme and reminiscences of the principal theme in the coda. The second *Polonaise*, in E major, is marked *Allegro pomposo con brio*, and has a few introductory bars before the characteristic rhythm of the dance is heard. There is a contrasting trio section in A minor, leading to a declamatory passage and a cadenza, the return of the original key and a more elaborate and delicately ornamented development of the original material, before it returns in its initial vigour.

The *Ballade* as a musical form was also closely associated with Chopin, whose four *Ballades* seem to have had a literary source. Liszt's *Ballade No. 1 in D flat major* was written between 1845 and 1848, before Chopin's death, and has the descriptive subtitle *Le chant du croisé* (The Crusader's Song). It was dedicated to Princess Carolyne's cousin, the sculptor Prince Eugen Wittgenstein. The brief *Prelude*, hinting at what is to come, modulates to D flat major for the main theme, marked *Andantino, con sentimento*, perhaps derived from a possibly earlier piano piece in A flat major. There is a modulation to A major for a *Tempo di marcia, animato*, a march to be played, we are told, elegantly and fast, before a return to an elaborated version of the first theme in the original key.

Ballade No. 2 in B minor was written in 1853 and dedicated to Count Károly Leiningen, brother-in-law of Prince Eugen Wittgenstein. Marked *Allegro moderato*, it opens ominously, with a melody slowly emerging over menacing chromatic figuration in a lower register.

A shaft of light appears in an intervening *Allegretto*, which returns in contrast after the resumption of the opening mood, now in B flat minor. An *Allegro deciso* follows and a passage of tempestuous activity, quietening into a delicately worked version of the *Allegretto*, now in D major. The mood of the opening returns, in G sharp minor, leading to later contrasts between the two principal elements and moods of the work, leading to a final climax and gently positive conclusion.

Liszt's *Au bord d'une source*, a graphic and poetic interpretation of the scene suggested in the title, first appeared in the *Album d'un voyageur* of 1835-36, first published in its complete three books in 1842. It was later revised to form part of the *Années de pèlerinage, première année, Suisse*, evoking the Swiss landscape that appealed so strongly to the romantic temperament. The *Album d'un voyageur*, in its third book, provided three paraphrases. These had been first published in 1836 as *Trois airs suisses, Op. 10*, and included *Improvisata sur le ranz de vaches: 'Départ pour les Alpes' de Ferdinand Huber* (Improvisation on the Ranz de Vaches: 'Departure for the Alps' by Ferdinand Huber), *Nocturne sur le 'Chant montagnard' d'Ernest Knop* (Nocturne on the 'Mountain Song' of Ernest Knop), and *Rondeau sur le 'Ranz de chèvre' de Ferdinand Huber* (Rondeau on the 'Ranz de chèvre' of Ferdinand Huber). These were published in various places, including Haslinger's complete edition of the *Album d'un voyageur*, when they had the general title *Paraphrases*. They were finally published in 1877 under the title *Trois morceaux suisses*.

The first and third of the *Paraphrases* make use of material from the Swiss composer Ferdinand Huber (1791-1863), whose interest in Alpine folk-music had led him to collect examples of alpine repertoire and even tune instruments so that three might play together. The first, based on the cowherds' traditional *Ranz de vaches*, is a series of free variations on the theme heard

at the beginning. The second paraphrase, with the new title *Un soir dans la montagne* (An Evening on the Mountain) uses a yodelling song melody by the Swiss cellist, composer and publisher Ernest Knop, and includes

a dramatic storm, as alpine weather deteriorates. The third of the set is a *Rondeau* based on Huber's version of the goatherds' *Ranz de chèvres*.

Keith Anderson

Jean Dubé

Winner of the Sixth Utrecht Liszt Competition in 2002, the French pianist Jean Dubé has played the piano from the age of five. As a soloist and chamber musician he appeared on television and radio in France and abroad. At the age of nine he was invited to open the Mozart Bicentenary, playing Mozart's *Concerto No. 5* with the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra. In the same year he was unanimously awarded first prize in the 'Jeunes Prodiges Mozart à Paris' Competition. Jean Dubé studied with Jacques Rouvier and Jacqueline Robin and followed masterclasses with Dimitri Bashkurov, Lev Naumov, Oxana Yablonskaya, Rudolf Buchbinder, Vladimir Krainev, Leslie Howard and Murray Perahia. In 2000 he was awarded the Yvonne Lefebvre Scholarship during the Orléans Twentieth Century International Piano Competition, enabling him to study in Dublin with John O'Connor at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. He was the youngest graduate ever in the history of the Conservatoire of Nice, and at the age of fourteen he gained the first prize in piano from the Conservatoire National Supérieur in Paris. In international competitions he won first prize in the Francis Poulenc Competition in Brive-La-Gaillarde in 1997, and the 1998 Jeunesses Musicales Competition in Bucharest, taking second prize in the Takasaki Art and Music Competition in 2000. In December 2000 he was awarded the Second Grand Prize at the Olivier Messiaen Competition in Paris, where he also won the Yvonne Loriod Prize and the Editions Durand Prize. In April 2002 Jean Dubé was the undisputed winner of the 6th edition of the prestigious International Franz Liszt Piano Competition of Utrecht. His delicate playing during the Final was also rewarded with the Audience Award. As part of the First Prize, Jean Dubé made the present recording for Naxos, and will also perform over ninety concerts in more than twenty different countries. In addition to many concerts in Europe, his international touring includes engagements in Ecuador, Venezuela, Indonesia, Korea, Hong Kong, Canada and the United States (with Barnabás Kelemen, the winner of the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis). Dubé has also been invited to play at some of the world's most important music festivals: *Musical Olympus* (St Petersburg, Russia), *Delft Chamber Music* (The Netherlands), *Wagner Festspiele* (Bayreuth, Germany), *Raritäten der Klaviermusik* (Husum, Germany), *Grachtenfestival* (Amsterdam), *Busoni Festival* (Bolzano, Italy), *Great Romantics* (Hamilton, Canada), *Festival of Flanders* (Belgium), *Kuhmo Chamber Music* (Finland), *Klavier-Festival Ruhr* (Germany) as well as the *European Liszt Nights* in Utrecht, Budapest and Weimar. Orchestral performances include appearances with the St Petersburg Symphony, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the Győr Philharmonic, and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestras, the WDR Rundfunkorchester, the North Netherlands Orchestra, the Prague Chamber Symphony and the North Hungarian Symphony Orchestras. In 2003 Jean Dubé was selected for the prestigious *Akzo Nobel for Young Talent* project, performing in Göteborg with the Göteborg Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Hans Graf), in Budapest with the Hungarian Symphony Orchestra Matáv (conducted by András Ligeti) and in Birmingham with the Philharmonia (conducted by Paul Daniel).



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 Playing Time
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**Franz
LISZT**

(1811-1886)

Complete Piano Music • 22

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|---|--|--------------|
| | Deux Polonaises, S223/R44 | 20:55 |
| 1 | Polonaise mélancolique in C minor | 12:08 |
| 2 | Polonaise in E major | 8:47 |
| 3 | Ballade No. 1 in D flat major:
Le chant du croisé, S170/R15 | 7:37 |
| 4 | Ballade No. 2 in B minor, S171/R16 | 14:21 |
| 5 | Au bord d'une source, S156/R8 | 5:08 |
| | Trois morceaux suisses, S156a/R8 | 26:28 |
| 6 | Ranz de vaches:
Mélodie de Ferdinand Huber, avec variations | 10:16 |
| 7 | Un soir dans la montagne:
Mélodie d'Ernest Knop: Nocturne | 8:28 |
| 8 | Ranz de chèvres:
Mélodie de Ferdinand Huber: Rondeau | 7:44 |

Jean Dubé, Piano

Recorded at Potton Hall, Suffolk, UK on 16th and 17th June, 2003
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