A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF LISZT'S SETTINGS OF THE THREE PETRARCHAN SONNETS

THESIS

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By

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This is a stylistic study of the four versions of Liszt's Three Petrarchan Sonnets with special emphasis on the revision of poetic settings to the music. The various revisions over four versions from 1838 to 1861 reflect Liszt's artistic development as seen especially in his use of melody, harmony, tonality, color, tone painting, atmosphere, and form. His use of the voice and development of piano technique also play an important part in these sonnets.

The sonnets were inexplicably linked with the fateful events in his life and were in a way an image of this most flamboyant and controversial personality. This study suggests Liszt's importance as an innovator, and his influence on later trends should not be underestimated.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Petrarchan Sonnets of Liszt are in many ways a reflection of the life and character, and above all a representation of the style and development of one of the most controversial figures in the history of music.

A close study of the three sonnets and all their available versions for voice and piano--twelve altogether, stemming from various phases of his life--shows these characteristics perhaps more vividly than any of his other transcriptions or revisions.

When confronted with a catalogue of the works of Franz Liszt, one is struck by the unusually large number of instrumental transcriptions of compositions of the most diverse nature. No less than one-half of his vast output of over 1200 compositions were transcriptions or pharaphrases of other works. He not only transcribed the works of several of the "great" composers of the past and present, but also some of his own works for other instruments or combinations of instruments.

Although these transcriptions were written for piano solo, piano duet (one piano, four hands), two pianos, organ, a combination of organ and other instruments, orchestra, voice and orchestra, voice and other keyboard instruments,[1] and

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1. Besides piano, also for harmonium and organ.

various chamber music combinations, the vast majority of them were scored for solo piano.

These solo piano transcriptions were not all simply piano arrangements of works originally composed for another medium. Some were paraphrases on themes from major operas of the day (e.g., Concert Paraphrase on Verdi's Ernani), some fantasies on one or more themes of other composers (e.g., "Phantasiestück" on themes of Wagner's Rienzi), and other completely new compositions on borrowed themes (e.g., "Soirées italiennes. Six amusements pour piano sur des motifs de M.[Mercadante]").

What were the real reasons that caused Liszt to write so many transcriptions and arrangements of works already "finished," some of them acclaimed masterpieces and tremendously popular with the public? Was it that he felt that he could improve the quality of the compositions by transcribing them? Was it that he thought that they would be more effective in another medium? Did Liszt consider these transcriptions to be a vehicle for himself to ensure his success with the public in already popular works?

In trying to answer some of these questions, we should constantly keep a few facts in mind: Liszt was first and foremost a pianist who not only liked to compose at the piano or at least try out his own compositions at the piano, but also liked to play other people's works on the piano whenever he had access to the score or had attended a performance and had the music fresh in his memory. Apart from

being an astounding sight reader, Liszt had an amazing memory for music that he had heard performed. Even as a very young child, before he had had any musical tuition, his father one day heard how Liszt sang a passage from Ferdinand Ries's Piano Concerto, several hours after he had heard it performed, and without a single mistake.[2]

Liszt could read music before he could read or write the alphabet, and he improvised on his own and others' melodies as soon as he became acquainted with the keyboard--from all accounts already at the age of about six. Besides already having this natural ability to improvise, it was the fashion for performers to be able to sit down in public, be given a theme from someone in the audience, and then to extemporize on the spur of the moment.

Liszt was already writing sets of variations for the piano at the age of eleven.[3] This technique as such fascinated him from an early age, but only a few of his more important compositions employed this as a formal device: Totentanz (1859, variations on two different themes), Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen (1862),[4] the Spanish Rhapsody (1863,

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2. Paula Rehberg and Gerhard Nestler, Franz Liszt (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1961), 11.

3. Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli.

4. This set of variations for piano is based on the theme from the opening chorus of Bach's cantata of the same name, where it is also used as a ground bass. Bach used the same ground bass later in the Crucifixus of the B minor Mass.

a set of free variations on two Spanish themes),[5] and the last of the "Paganini" Studies, "which is a set of strict variations on the terse theme of Paganini's Caprice in A Minor."[6] In spite of his writing so few sets of variations,

> Liszt probably contributed more to variation technique than anybody else. His method of the "transformation of themes" dominates all his major works, and many of his minor ones too. Moreover, if one remembers the herculean labors he expended on his revisions (which very often amount to no more than another way of varying the original). . . then one begins to see that the art of composition and the art of variation were very often one and the same thing. . . . His genius for creating variations had found a far more original outlet.[7]

Liszt's preoccupation with religion, counteracted by his irrepressible will to live a full life and to create something worthwhile, are the opposing forces of his character that kept him suspended on a very taut tightrope for all of his seventy-five years of life. He could never reconcile himself to the fact that his leanings towards the world and all its materialistic attractions were constantly kept in check by his religious convictions. More than once in his life he eloped with a married woman, even having children with one of them in spite of the fact that she was not yet divorced.

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5. "La Folia" and "Jota Argonesa."

6. Robert Collet, "Works for Piano and Orchestra," in Franz Liszt, the Man and his Music, ed. Alan Walker (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970), 278.

7. Alan Walker, Franz Liszt, the Man and his Music, 278, note 1.

The first one, Countess Marie d'Agoult (1805-1876), gave birth to his three children during the four years they lived in Switzerland and Italy. The first two versions of the Petrarchan sonnets were composed during the latter part of these initially blissful years of "marriage." In 1839 his restless nature drove him to decide on a career as virtuoso pianist. The three children were sent to be cared for by Liszt's mother in Paris and the embittered Marie d'Agoult wrote Nélida,[8] a thinly disguised biographical novel, depicting Liszt as the painter Guermann. Marie's later memoires were, fortunately for him, not published until 1927.[9] The Countess d'Agoult's view of Liszt as a man brought untold damage to his image, especially when used as a basis for Ernest Newman's study The Man Liszt in 1934, "in which they [the memoires] were employed as a stick with which to give the composer one of the biggest beatings any biographer can have meted out to his subject."[10]

The very generous and genuinely kind side of Liszt's nature is reflected in the countless instances of assistance to other musicians, even in spite of their persistent hostility

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8. Under the pseudonym of Daniel Stern.

9. By her grandson, Daniel Ollivier.

10. Walker, 371.

towards him.[11] This many-sidedness to Liszt's character is perhaps best expressed in his compositions, with the "sublime" inextricably intermingled with the "ridiculous."[12]

Liszt persistently experimented with harmony, melody, form, color, and eventually tonality. The Petrarchan sonnets in all their different versions, written over a period of twenty-three years, reflect this experimentation and gradual process of maturity and change of Liszt and his art.

Apart from the four accepted versions of the three sonnets, scholars have managed to discover several other versions of some or all three of the sonnets, some in Liszt's, some in his copyists'[13] hand.

Even today few pianists who perform the three Petrarchan sonnets (nos. 4, 5, and 6) from the Années de Pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: Italie realize that this set of sonnets was originally conceived for voice (tenor) and piano, ten years before this second piano version was composed. It was not

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11. Robert and especially Clara Schumann practically never relaxed their openly antagonistic attitude towards Liszt, in spite of the latter's genuine appreciation and championing of Schumann's music, and appreciation of his wife's pianistic qualities. Besides playing Schumann's works in public, Liszt made piano transcriptions of seven of Robert's and three of Clara's songs.

12. Perhaps the best example of this is his Totentanz, where the most sublime phrase is found in the middle of some of the most austere and phantasmagoric music he ever wrote.

13. Mostly Peter Cornelius and Joachim Raff, both composers of some repute and friends of Liszt.

until twelve years later that Liszt practically completely recomposed the sonnets for baritone or mezzo-soprano.[14]

Liszt's many dealings with publishers have made it extremely difficult to trace all published and unpublished versions of the sonnets,[15] especially as some of the manuscript copies do not have any corrections in Liszt's hand. This is, however, no reason to doubt their authenticity, as these are mostly in the handwriting of Liszt's trusted friends and copyists, Peter Cornelius and Joachim Raff.

In order to clarify the existence of all these known versions, including the dates of composition and printing, it may perhaps be advantageous to list them before discussing the generally accessible editions in print today.

Apart from Liszt's very early attempt at an opera (Don Sancho, ou le Château d'Amour),[16] the Petrarchan sonnets were probably his very first attempt at writing for the solo voice.[17]

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14. Liszt speaks of numbers two and three as conceived for tenor in spite of numbers one and three being written in the treble clef, and number two in the bass clef.

15. None of the most eminent Liszt scholars have listed or even mentioned all of the lesser-known arrangements of the sonnets.

16. Written at the age of thirteen and performed in Paris when he was fourteen. This was his only completed opera.

17. The date of his unfinished (unpublished) song, "Den Felsengipfel steig ich einst hinan" for voice and piano (Alan Walker: cat. no. 716), is unknown. The original manuscript is with Breitkopf & Härtel.

First Version for Voice (High Tenor)[18]

"Tre Sonetti di Petrarca posti in musica per la Voce con Accompagnato di Pianoforte da Francesco Liszt"

1. Pace non trovo (Number 104)
2. Benedetto sia '1 giorno (Number 47)[19]
3. I vidi in terra angelici costumi (Number 123)

Composed: 1838-1839.

First Published: Vienna, Presso Haslinger Vedova e Figlio[20] (10,094-10,096), 1847, with Italian text only.

Original Manuscript: Lost.

First Version for Piano[21]

Du temps de Pèlerinage

"Tre Sonetti del Petrarca"

1. Sonetto 47 di Petrarca
2. Sonetto 104 di Petrarca
3. Sonetto 123 di Petrarca

Composed: 1838-1839.

First Published: 1846 with three different publishers: Haslinger, Ricordi, and Latte, with the poem (in Italian)

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18. Gesamtausgabe Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, ed. The Franz Liszt-Stiftung (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1908-1936, rpt. Gregg Press: Farnborough, England, 1966) Series No. 7, I.

19. In all the other versions the order of the sonnets is Numbers 47, 104, and 123.

20. On a later edition was added: Berlino, Presso Schlesinger. There was therefore more than one publication.

21. Gesamtausgabe Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, Series No. 2, V.

preceding the piece.[22]

Original Manuscript: Lost. Copies of the Haslinger edition with corrections by Liszt are to be found in the Liszt-Museum in Weimar.

Second Version for Piano[23]

"Années de Pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: Italie"

1. Sposalizio
2. Il Pensieroso
3. Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa
4. Sonetto del Petrarca Nr. 47
5. Sonetto del Petrarca Nr. 104
6. Sonetto del Petrarca Nr. 123
7. Après une lecture du Dante, Fantasia quasi Sonata

Composed: 1849.

First Published: 1859 with Schott's Söhne, Mainz, "mit Titelverzeichnungen zum Teil von Kretschmer,[24] zum Teil von der Fürstin Wittgenstein."[25]

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22. The German translation by Peter Cornelius was added in later editions, for the first time in Breitkopf & Härtel's 1908-1936 reprint of the Gesamtausgabe edition.

23. Gesamtausgabe Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, Series No. 2, VI.

24. Edmund Kretschmer (1830-1908), German organist and composer.

25. Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein (1819-1887), Liszt's mistress from 1847. She almost married him in 1861, after which they went their own ways.

Original Manuscript: Lost. A printed copy of Number 5 in the Schott Edition with corrections by Liszt is to be found in the Ungarisches National Museum in Budapest.[26]

Second Version for Voice (Baritone or Mezzo-Soprano)[27]

"Tre Sonetti di Petrarca"

1. Pace non trovo (Fried' ist versagt mir)[28]
2. Benedetto sia '1 giorno (Sei gesegnet immer da)
3. I' vidi in terra angelici costumi (So sah ich denn auf Erden)

Composed: 1861.[29]

First Published: 1883, Schott's Söhne, Mainz (23558) "Titelverzeichnungen von der Fürstin Wittgenstein."

Original Manuscript: An incomplete copy is owned by Marchese della Valle in Pallanza. According to the Katalog des Musikhistorischen Museums von Wilhelm Heyer by Georg Kinsky (Catalogue Number 1583/84), songs 1 and 3 are in the possession of Roberto Bory, Geneva. A copy of all three songs with corrections by Liszt can be found with Schott's Söhne, Mainz. An original manuscript of an unpublished version of the

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26. Peter Raabe, Liszts Schaffen (Stuttgart, J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1931), 246. These corrections were made for a planned new edition.

27. Gesamtausgabe Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, Series No. 7, III.

28. The German translation by Peter Cornelius, with the text fitting the music exactly, appeared in the original as well as all subsequent editions.

29. Peter Raabe gives the date as "around 1865," Paula Rehberg and Gerhard Nestler as 1865, Humphrey Searle and Alan Walker as 1861.

second song, dated 1854 (!) is in the Liszt-Museum in Weimar, and likewise a copy of Number 2 by Joachim Raff in another unpublished version.

Liszt's numbers for the sonnets (numbers 47, 104, and 123) are given by most modern editions of the sonnets as 61, 134, and 156. In the final version for voice Liszt gives yet another set of numbers: XXXIX, XC, and CV. These numbers correspond with the Petrarch editions of 1548 (In Venetia al segno de la Speranza) and of 1573 (In Vinegia, appresso Gio.[vanni] Griphio).

According to da Motta,[30] Liszt made a piano duet version of the second Petrarchan sonnet under the title "Nocturne," and had it published by Haslinger (Vienna) as well as Schlesinger (Paris: no dates).

Ferruccio Busoni, who was instrumental in locating several original manuscripts for the Breitkopf and Härtel Gesamtausgabe (1908-1936) of Liszt's works, saw the orchestral possibilities of sonnet number 104, and orchestrated the original piano-accompaniment for voice.[31] Herbert Westerby[32] erroneously states the orchestration by Busoni to be a

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30. José Vianna da Motta, ed., "Vorwort," Gesamtausgabe Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, Series No. 2, VI, iii.

31. Edward J. Dent, Ferruccio Busoni, A Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 350. Full score, dedicated to Felix Senius (New York: Schirmer, 1911).

32. Herbert Westerby, Liszt, Composer, and his Piano Works (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1970), 144, note.

transcription of the second piano version from the Années de Pèlerinage.

This study is confined to the two versions for voice and two versions for solo piano, all available in the Gregg Press reprint edition of the Gesamtausgabe Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke (incomplete).

CHAPTER II

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF LISZT'S SETTINGS OF THE THREE PETRARCHAN SONNETS

Liszt could hardly have made a happier selection of poems when he chose to set three of the sonnets of Petrarch to music. The Italian lyricism, and at times youthfully explosive passion which govern these three sonnets, perfectly suited his style of composition. Although Liszt (1811-1886) lived almost exactly five hundred years later than Petrarch (1304-1374), the striking similarities in their lives and characters alone would make a fascinating study: both were preoccupied with religion, taking minor orders which entitled them to receive ecclesiastical prebends without becoming a priest; both were constant travellers, ceaselessly searching for happiness and salvation elsewhere; both loved deeply, and were inspired by a loved one to express their feelings in their art; neither married although both fathered several illegitimate children.[1]

A comparison of the four different versions of Liszt's settings of the sonnets, with special regard to the form and content of the poems not only contributes to an

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1. Jeanne Faure-Cousin and France Clidat, "Sur trois sonnets de Petrarque," La Revue Musicale CCLXLII (1972-73), 31-37.

understanding of these compositions, but it also throws new light on the artistic development of Liszt the composer. Particularly revealing is the change of approach and attitude to Sonnet No. 47 in settings spanning almost a quarter of a century.[2]

Sonnet No. 47

The division of the poem[3] into the poetical octave (2 quatrains) and the sestet (2 tercets) with the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cdc, cdc and the key-scheme of the two settings for voice, can be seen on page 68 of the Appendix.

Sonnet No. 47, First Version for Voice (V-I, No. 47)

On closer investigation of one or two of the phrases as set to music by Liszt, one is immediately struck by the complete naturalness and ease with which he handles a language which was not his own. Here is how Liszt set the first two lines of poetry:

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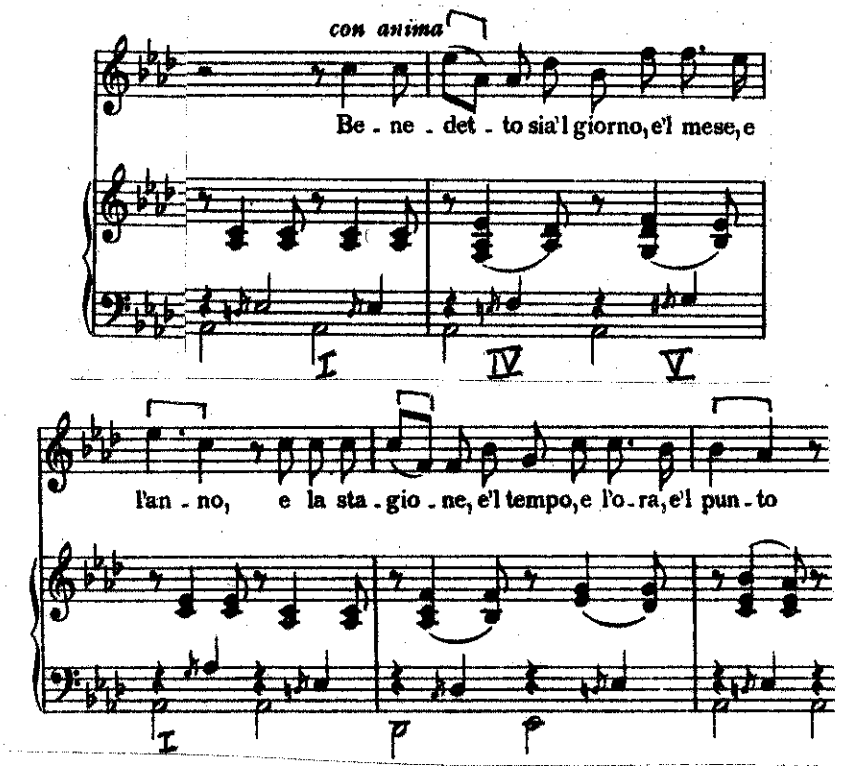
2. To facilitate reference to the different versions of the sonnets, they will be numbered as follows:
The first version for voice: V-I, 47; V-I, 104; V-I, 123.
The first version for piano: P-I, 47; P-I, 104; P-I, 123.
The second version for piano: P-II, 47; P-II, 104; P-II, 123.
The second version for voice: V-II, 47; V-II, 104; V-II, 123.

3. Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, trans. Anna Maria Armi, Universal Library Edition (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968), 96-97.

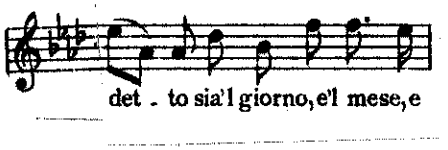
Example 1. V-I, No. 47, measures 11-15.



To see the supple way in which Liszt molded the poetry into a style which is completely his own and yet astoundingly Italian, is to marvel at his technical adaptability as a composer, ever sensitive to both the quantitative as well as the qualitative elements of the Italian language. He carefully evades the square effect of a regular accent by using the longer, syncopated upbeat ( ), thereby steering clear of every trace of an accent. The "det-to" is lengthened and the next stress (gior-no e '1) does not occur until the third beat of the measure. Now, instead of lengthening, he fuses and shortens the unstressed syllables. This rhythmic treatment, combined with the melodic stress of the poetry is a

very close interpretation of the sonnet and how it would be recited. Again to counteract the plebeianism of having all the stressed syllables on higher notes, he makes the fine distinction of reversing the melodic process on some syllables (yet keeping it on the strong third beat of the measure):

Example 2. V-I, No. 47, measure 12.



Also "mese," although the highest note of the phrase, is sung on the relatively weakest part of the measure--the fourth beat--also using the weaker step of the scale (VI), and saving the stronger notes of the Tonic triad (E-flat, C) for the more stressed "l'anno."

Less felicitous text settings are to be found in this song, as for instance "E benedette sian tutte le carte" in the B major section (measures 64-66). By avoidance of accent save on the first beat, the performer can soften the offending accentuation, but the agogic accent, although less offending, remains.

Liszt took great care to preserve the form of the sonnet in the music. The poetic octave modulates from A-flat major to D major, the sestet from D major back to A-flat major, clearly articulating both the poetic structure as well as the

content of the poem.[4] The key sequence of the octave emphasizes the (lesser) division of the first eight lines (A-flat major to C minor; B-flat minor to D major), and the sestet continues the downward pattern with two falling minor thirds (D major to B major and B major to A-flat major), which again brings one back to the home key.

The repetition of the last half of the concluding tercet, set as a harmonic and melodic recapitulation of the introduction, rounds off the arch form of the composition.

The very chromatic nature of the introduction provides an effective contrast to the simple diatonic setting of the text itself. This contributes to and heightens the beatific aspect which dominates the poem throughout. When the music does become chromatic, it is merely in order to emphasize the mounting dramatic and expressive aspect of the text. The similarity between the poem and the music is quite striking in these more chromatic sections. The gradually increasing agony of the second quatrain, beginning with the text "E benedetto il primo dolce affanno. . ." is reflected in the mounting chromaticism in the harmony as well as in the melody (measures 21-32). The initially quiet, pulsating rhythm of the accompaniment also contributes to the mounting intensity of the poem by gradually extending its compass and dynamic range.

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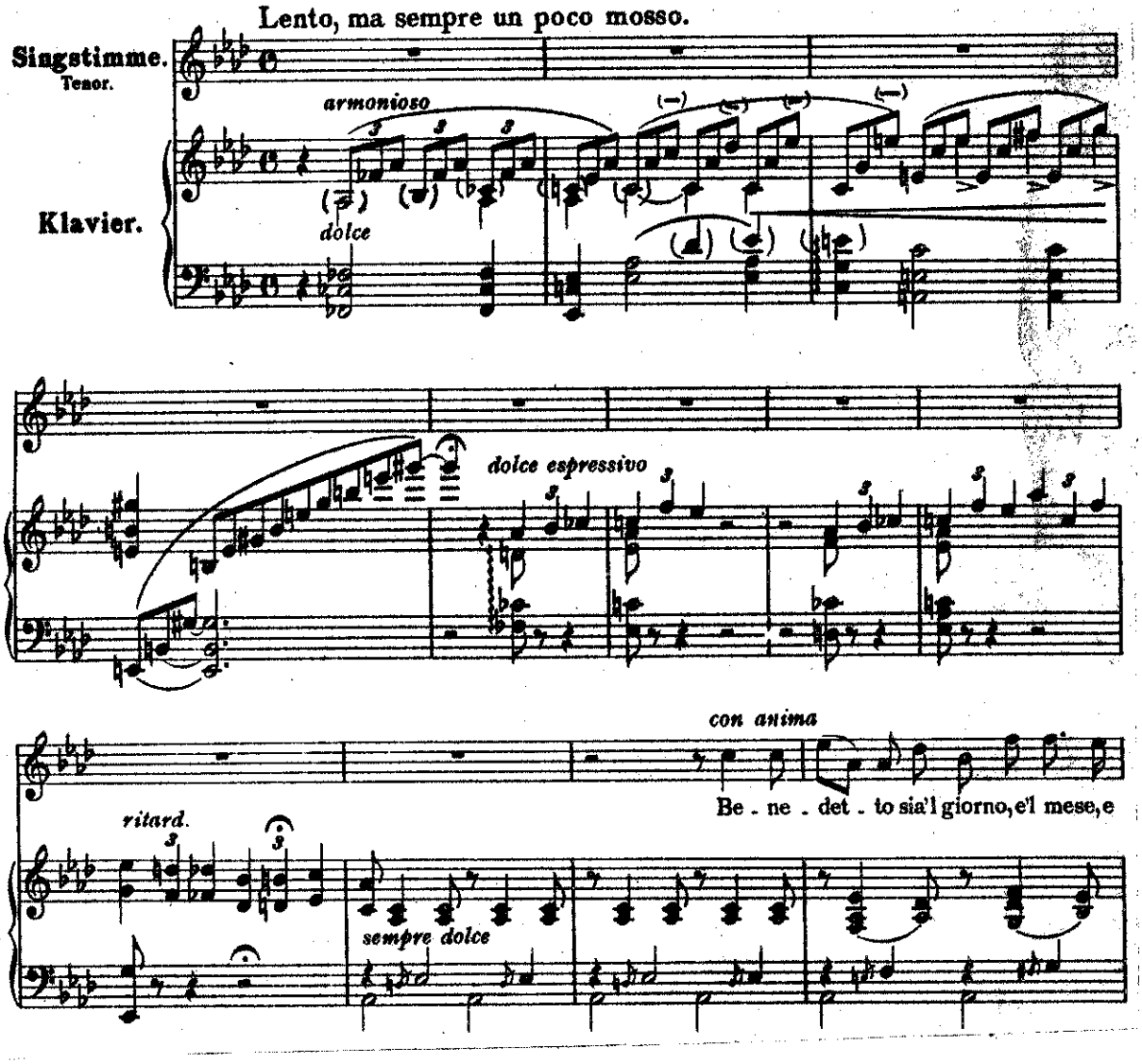
4. The octave deals with the confining and painful elements of love, and the sestet with the poet's love as reflected in all his sonnets to Laura. As the one part is a reverse image of the other, so the keys move from A-flat major to D major and then back from D major to A-flat major.

This diatonic simplicity, and in some cases, use of the pulsating or moving accompaniment after the more chromatic and dramatic music preceding it, can be found in many Italian operatic arias at the time and especially somewhat later. "Casta diva" from Bellini's Norma, "Salce, salce" and especially the "Ave Maria" from Verdi's Otello, "Pace mio Dio" from Verdi's La Forza del Destino, "Morrò, ma prima in grazia" from Verdi's Un Ballo in Maschera, and "Signore ascolta" from Puccini's Turandot, to name only a few, are good examples of similar diatonic settings which heighten the dramatic effect. All these arias are either prayers or pleas for mercy. Thus Liszt's setting of the secular beatitude of Petrarch can be traced to the operatic tradition of the preghiera scene, evoking the appropriate contrasting mood needed for an atmosphere of reverence and devotion.

This does not mean that the introduction stands apart from the song itself. It does, in fact set the overall mood of the song, while presenting the motive (armonioso) which takes new shape (dolce espressivo, measures 5-6) before generating the opening phrase of the voice (Example 3).

Example 3. V-I, No. 47, measures 1-12.



The derivation of the initial vocal statement from the kernel motive can be discerned very clearly as being the main notes of the tonic chord (A-flat, C, E-flat) and the added F; indeed the whole melodic structure of the sonnet is built on this one motive. This monothematicism underlines the unity of ideas expressed in the sonnet, marked by the constantly recurring "benedetto."

In this song the accompanist plays the role of an equal partner. This prominence of the piano in the ensemble was later criticized by Liszt himself[5] in a letter to Josef Dessauer (1798-1876), a composer well-known at the time for his excellent songs.[6]

Whether Liszt had his setting of the Petrarchan sonnets in mind when he wrote this apologia can, of course, not be proved. That in the later setting of the sonnets he drastically changed his approach, is especially clear in Sonnet No. 47.

Sonnet No. 47, First Version for Piano (P-I, No. 47)

When Liszt wrote the first piano version of the Sonnet No. 104, he did not set out to write a fantasy or paraphrase of the original setting (for tenor) as he was so fond of doing in later life. He simply rewrote the piece for another idiom, the piano. In comparing the two versions of the same piece, one realizes how versatile and adaptable Liszt was as a composer, and what tremendous technical facilities he had at his command when writing for different mediums.

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5. La Mara (pseud. for Marie Lipsius), ed., Franz Liszt's Briefe, 8 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1893-1905), II, Letter No. 394, 403. Liszt wrote: "Meine früheren Lieder sind meistens zu aufgebläht sentimental, und häufig zu vollgepropft in der Begleitung."

6. Liszt made piano transcriptions of three of Dessauer's songs in 1847 (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1847) under the title Lieder: 1. "Lockung" 2. "Zwei Wege" 3. "Spanisches Lied." In turn, Dessauer's song "Crucifix," was inspired by Liszt's Graner Messe.

The more extrovert and bravura approach which he took throughout this transcription is already to be seen in the introduction. In altering the original order of pieces,[7] Liszt selected Sonnet No. 47 to initiate the series of piano transcriptions, perhaps due to the more arresting opening. This is in keeping with the mood and character of the more extrovert and brilliant conception of the rest of the sonnet.

Liszt attached great importance to setting and creating a mood; he clearly succeeded in doing just that here, as in every one of his Petrarch settings. He had no rivals in creating a descriptive atmosphere, especially when writing for, and playing the piano. Summarizing Liszt's playing of his own works in a London concert series one year before his death, Hueffer wrote: "Liszt emphasizes chiefly the pictorial and symbolic bearings of his theme. . . ."[8] The ability to move an audience by creating highly evocative atmospheres was always one of the strongest points in Liszt's music, especially in the genre he later created, the Symphonic Poem.

That the sonnets in piano transcription still belong in this category of works influenced by extra-musical sources can be seen by the fact that Liszt later included them in

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7. The first version for voice had the order: No. 104, No. 47, No. 123, named by Liszt simply "Erstes Sonett von Petrarca," "Zweites Sonett von Petrarca," and "Drittes Sonett von Petrarca."

8. Francis Hueffer, Half a Century of Music in England, 1837-1887 (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1889), 90.

his Années de Pèlerinage, Deuxième Année: Italie. Several forms of art inspired this suite of piano pieces: No. 1 "Sposalizio," by the Raphael painting of the same name; No. 2, "Il Pensieroso," after Michelangelo's famous statue on the tomb of Giuliano de' Medici in S. Lorenzo in Florence; No. 3, "Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa," inspired by the painter, bandit, and musician; Nos. 4, 5, and 6, Sonnets Nos. 47, 104, and 123 of Petrarch; and No. 7, "Fantaisie quasi Sonata: d'après une lecture du Dante," Liszt's impressions of Dante's world of hell, purgatory and paradise as seen through the eyes of Victor Hugo. A supplement to this set was published a year after the publication of Années de Pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: Italie, under the title of Venezia e Napoli.[9] It consisted of three concert paraphrases: "Gondoliera," after a song by Cavaliere Peruchini;"La Biondina in Gondoletta," "Canzone," after a melody from Rossini's opera Otello; and "Tarantella," according to Liszt, after a "Canzona Napolitana" by Guillaume Louis Cottrau. According to Louis Kentner[10] Liszt relegated this set to the supplement, giving them minor status because they were concert paraphrases based on melodies of other composers, and lacked the profundity as well as virtuosity of the Petrarchan sonnets.

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9. Published separately in 1859.

10. Louis Kentner, "Solo Piano Music (1827-61)," Franz Liszt, the Man and his Music, 125.

Liszt deemed it necessary to change the keys of some of the later versions of the songs. The original setting for voice kept all three sonnets in the key of A-flat major because vocal tessitura had to be considered. In both piano versions the three sonnets appear in the keys of D-flat major, E major, and A-flat major consecutively. In the final version for baritone or mezzo-soprano he once again changed the key sequence, this time to D-flat major, E major, and F major. There is no evidence that Liszt intended these sets to be performed as a whole; consequently we cannot judge the importance of key relationship in each set. The prime consideration in choosing keys must have been the performer, vocalist as well as pianist.

In this first piano version Liszt revelled in sheer bravura pianism with all its soaring scale passages, alternation of hands with big chords and melody, the latter at times so hidden in the texture of sprawling chords on alternating staves, that it was considered necessary to add a third stave, with the melody to be brought out by the performer (measures 10-28).[11]

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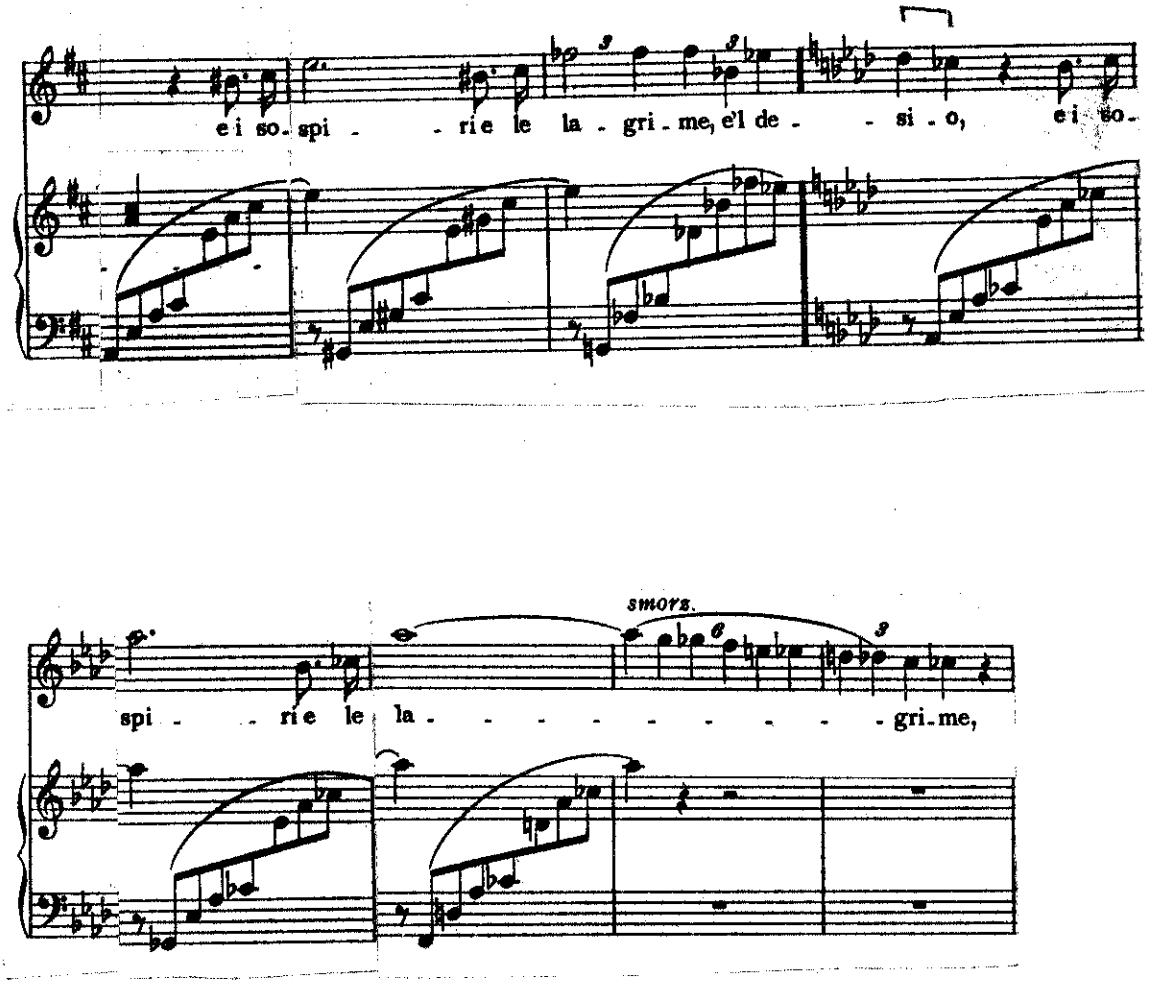
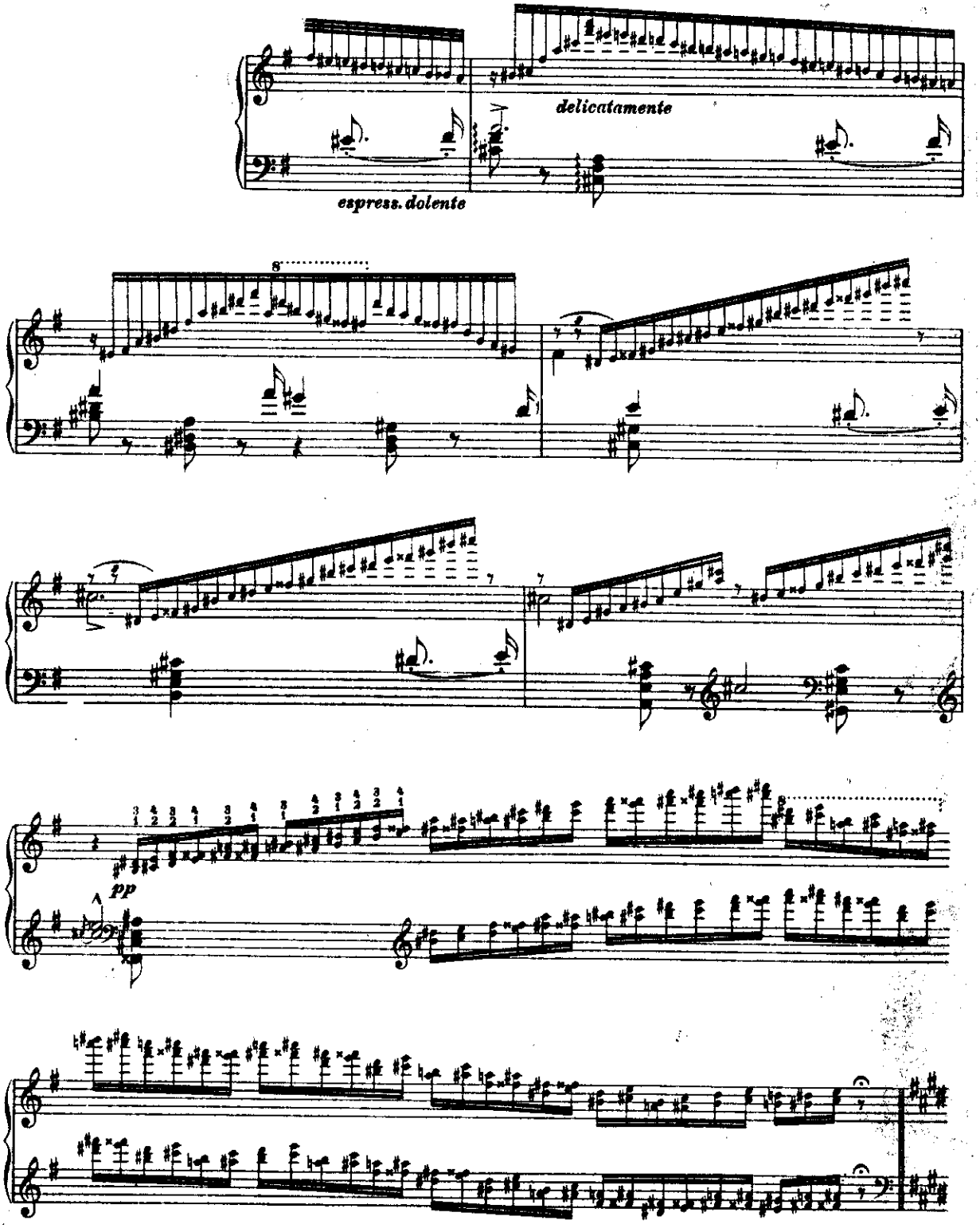
11. Liszt's preoccupation with virtuoso piano technique can be seen in his compositions of the time: 12 Grand Studies, Op. 1. (1826); 12 "Transcendental" Studies (1838); 6 "Paganini" Studies (1838); 3 Concert Studies (1848). Several compositional devices used by Liszt in the piano transcriptions of the Petrarchan sonnets are elaborated upon in the 3 Concert Studies (1848). The cascades of leggiero passages in "La Leggierezza," the distribution of the melody between the two hands (although here more a crossing of hands) and the insertion of slow cadenzas, as in "Un sospiro," are the most obvious ones.

The two versions V-I and P-I are virtually identical with regard to the themes, the harmonies and the modulations, but one need only to compare the following corresponding examples to realize how different the basic approach is.

Example 4. V-I, No. 47, measures 53-59.



Example 5. P-I, No. 47, measures 49-54.



Here the extemporizer, the virtuoso pianist is speaking. Some rhythmic changes are to found (compare P-I, measure 58 to V-I, measure 63), but they are not of any real consequence.

It is as though Liszt is constantly seeking new ways to express the same music, as though writing variations on a theme. He was always experimenting to find something new to express and a new means of expressing it. When he thought that he could not improve any further on his achievements, he went on to something else--not because he grew tired of what he was doing, but because he believed that he could improve himself by taking up new challenges. After only seven years of serious uninterrupted concertizing and at the early age of thirty-seven, he gave up his public career. Having reached a level of pianism which nobody else could equal at the time, he gave up a brilliant career in order to do what he thought to be his real calling in life--to compose.

Sonnet No. 47, Second Version for Piano (P-II, No. 47)

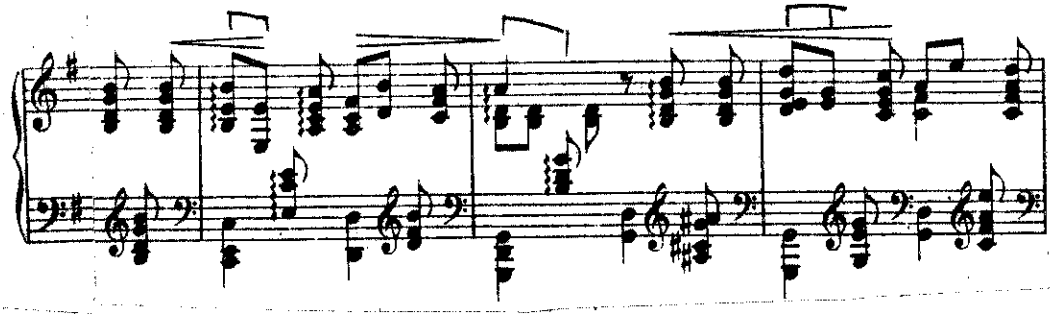
Almost two decades after the initial versions Liszt decided to include new transcriptions of the three sonnets in his Années de Pèlerinage, Deuxième Année: Italie. Again the music stayed basically the same, but the changes were more consequential than those in the first piano version (P-I, No. 47).

The piano writing is less bravura for its own sake, more serene and simpler without being any the less effective.

The greatest change is rhythmic--$\frac{2}{3}$ ($\frac{6}{4}$) instead of $\frac{4}{4}$ in the main section--which gives the piece more of the character of a barcarolle. To counteract this the previously used syncopated rhythm of the accompaniment is transferred to the melody, much as Schumann was fond of doing.[12] This adds an extra dimension to the expression of a mood which was already in the music, and which, after the initially restful section beginning at measure 12, very clearly is to be found in the poem. An agitated and restless rhythmic drive depicts the sufferings of first love (measures 29-35).

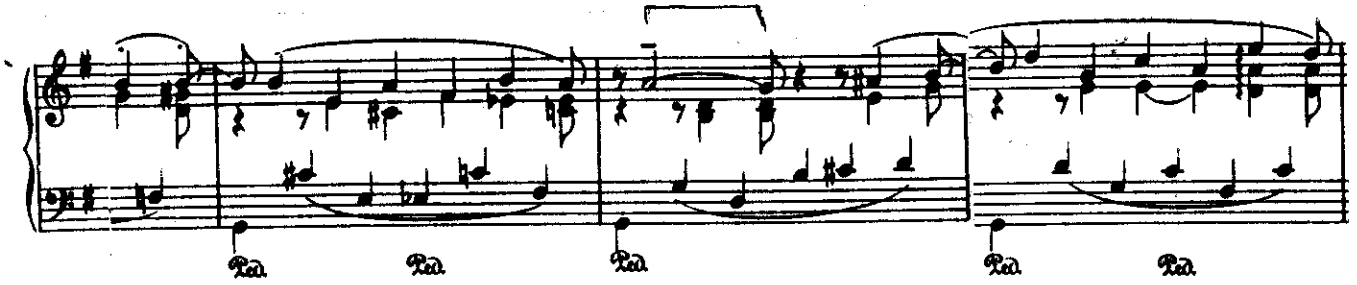
In places the harmony is more chromatic than in the first piano version, but the piano writing is less bravura. Example 6 and 7 show Liszt's different treatment of the same passage.

Example 6. P-I, No. 47, measures 36-38.



12. Examples of this kind of treatment of the theme can be found in all three movements of Schumann's C Major Fantasie Op. 17 (dedicated to Liszt, an honor of which he was very proud although the work was never actually performed by him).

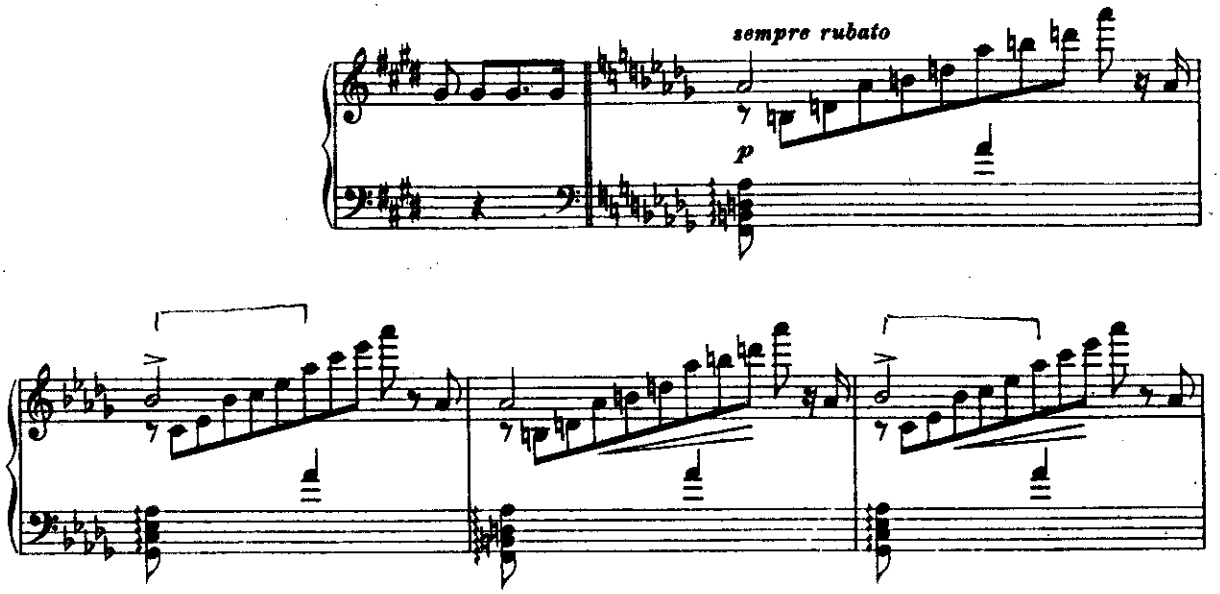
Example 7. P-II, No. 47, measures 40-42.



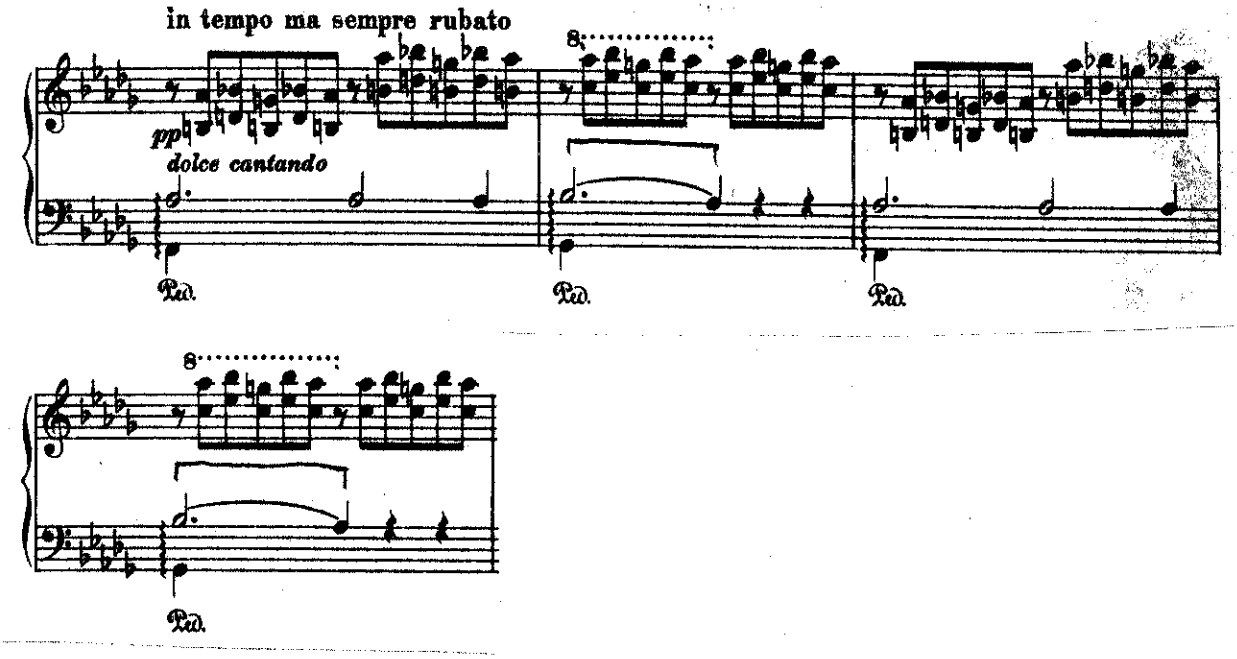
This new approach seems to have added to the depth of feeling of the work and is an unmistakable sign of Liszt's gradual process of maturing.

Liszt did not simply rearrange the material, but showed how, when writing for another medium, he could recreate the work, in this case utilizing new piano sonorities to serve the expression of the music (see Examples 8 and 9).

Example 8. P-I, No. 47, measures 64-67.



Example 9. P-II, No. 47, measures 68-72.



The poems are quoted as a preface to each piece in order to assist the pianist in finding the underlying mood of the poem, in current editions in German as well as Italian.

Sonnet No. 47, Second Version for Voice (V-II, No. 47)

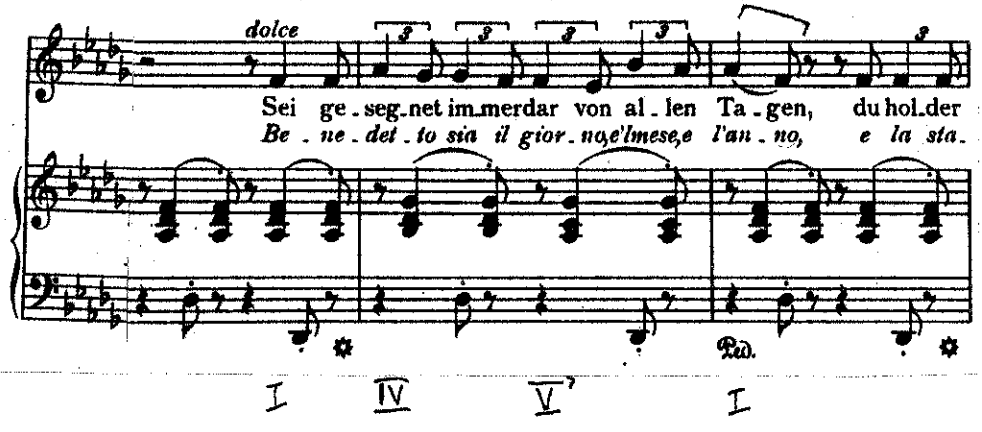
The drastic artistic changes that Liszt underwent in later life are perhaps nowhere to be seen more clearly than in the final version for voice of the three Petrarchan Sonnets, especially in Sonnet No. 47, "Benedetto sia 'l giorno."

The now considerably older Liszt,[13] somewhat less driven by the strong passions which governed his earlier life, this time saw the sonnet in a completely different light--so

13. He was fifty years of age when he wrote this version, twenty-three years after the first setting of the sonnets.

different, in fact, that he deemed it necessary to write a completely new setting. His more sedate and introverted approach is reflected not only in the calm and simple accompaniment which barely changes throughout the song, but also in the smooth, almost dispassionate treatment of the voice, which is now confined to the relatively smaller range of a major tenth in the most comfortable part of the voice.[14] The rhythm is also different (now a smoother, flowing "barcarolle" triplet figure--the accompaniment stays in C $[\frac{4}{4}]$--reminiscent of the rhythm of the second piano version), and the only recognizable resemblance to the original setting lies in the basic contours of the melody, supported by more or less the same harmonic structure. Compare the following example with Example 1.

Example 10. V-II, No. 47, measures 10-12.



14. The first setting for tenor has a range of almost two octaves using the very extreme upper range of the voice.

Initially even the modulations are the same, but soon they diverge from the old pattern, only to return to the old key of E major, a minor third above the tonic key, as in the original setting. The main harmonic progressions remain surprisingly similar in the two versions, both making considerable use of the pivot chord, VI, the final version particularly emphasizing this progression by making a kind of reiterated plagal cadence, reflecting the repetition of the "benedetto" at the end.

While the quantitative rhythm of the poem is reflected to a lesser extent in this setting of the sonnet, the overall mood of the poem is admirably portrayed in the music.

The cadenzas incorporated in all the earlier versions are completely eliminated here, with only a couple of vestigial phrases, now functioning as unaccompanied, monophonic links, thematically binding the sections of the song together, and creating a reflective summing-up in the repetition of "si, ch' altra non v'ha parte" near the end.

The now even simpler version of the opening theme (measure 84) and the equally simple repetitions of the "benedetto" of the voice line at the end, once again emphasize the beatific element of the poem. The atmosphere created with such simple means is breathtaking.

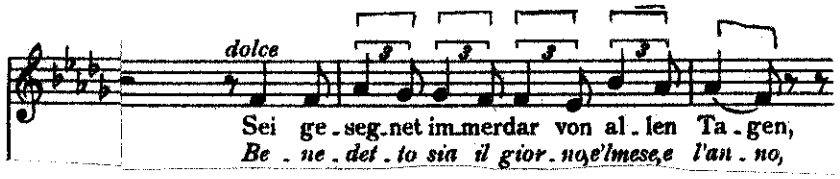
No setting of this sonnet could be more like an art song and less like an operatic aria. All emotions and expressions are on a more intimate level, and Liszt's growing religious

tendencies are reflected in this emphasis of the "benedetto" in the poem and especially in the intimate setting of the very crux of the sonnet as summed up in the last line: "si, ch'altra non v'ha parte" (so that no others share in it).

The elimination of the first beat of the measure in the accompaniment throughout the song enhances the soaring quality of the main theme. This negation of the accentuated beat is increased by the pulsating syncopations in the accompaniment and the avoidance of strong cadences and clear modulations. The structural sections are consequently lengthened.

As with all the earlier settings, this sonnet is built on one single motive, that of the stepwise falling second:

Example 11. V-II, No. 47, measures 10-12.



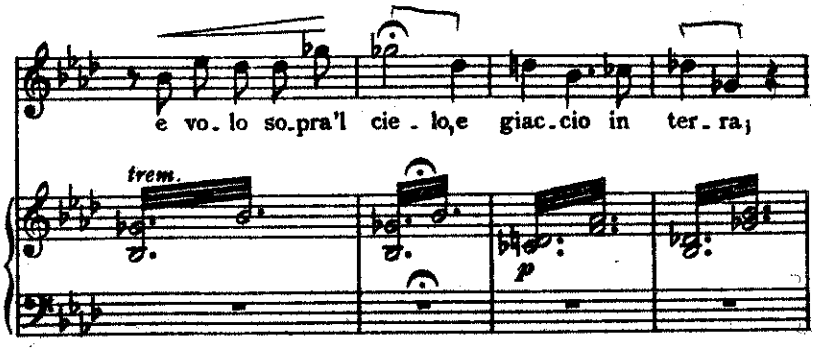
This sigh motive can be traced in all the settings of all the songs. (Compare Examples 1, 6, 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, etc.

Sonnet No. 104

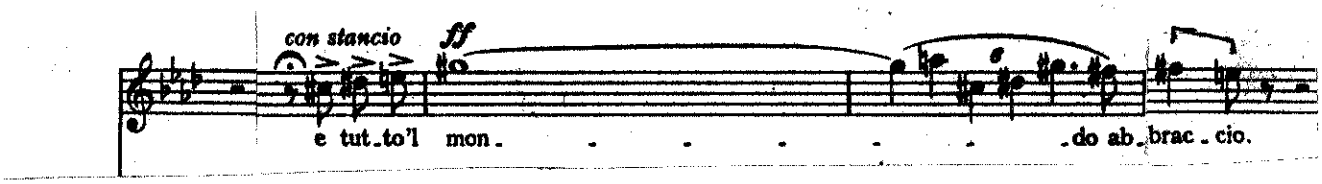
Sonnet No. 104 provides an effective contrast to the other two because of its more dramatic nature (See Appendix, p. 70).

The dramatic antithesis found in every line (except for the last) of the poem is reflected in Liszt's very operatic approach to the sonnet. He very aptly chose the form of the Italian recitative and aria to convey the activity of the first quatrain as opposed to the reflective passivity of the rest of the poem. The dramatic elements are thereby effectively counteracted by the lyric elements. This intricate fusion of these two components is heightened by Liszt's constant recapitulation of the dramatic recitative, itself interspersed with arioso lyricism. The inner tension created by the antitheses found in every line of the poetry reaches new heights with Liszt's use of vocal rests (taken over by the piano as in measures 6, 7, and 8) and fermati (measure 16). The delay of the second half of the phrase creates the tension. The restless modulations of the first quatrain (A-flat major, F minor, G-flat major, E major) reflect the different thoughts of the lines of the poem and the ever-changing, ever-growing regions in which they move. Vivid use of tone painting of the text can be seen in the following examples:

Example 12. V-I, No. 104, measures 15-18.



Example 13. V-I, No. 104, measures 24-27.



With the music rising on the word "heaven" and falling on the word "earth," not to mention the setting of "e tutto 'l mondo abbraccio" with its all-embracing, extended phrase depicting the whole world, Liszt achieved excellent effects.

The suspended state of the poet's love in the sonnet must have inspired Liszt to write a broad, soaring melody for the rest of the poem. A sweeping arpeggio accompaniment supported by the frequent use of the augmented triad, and the now slower moving harmonies suspend the music all the more. As in the setting of Sonnet 47, the progressions and key-areas based on VI, play a major role in the music (measures 26, 38, 41, 42, 47, 63, 65, 66, 98, 100, 102, 104, and 110).

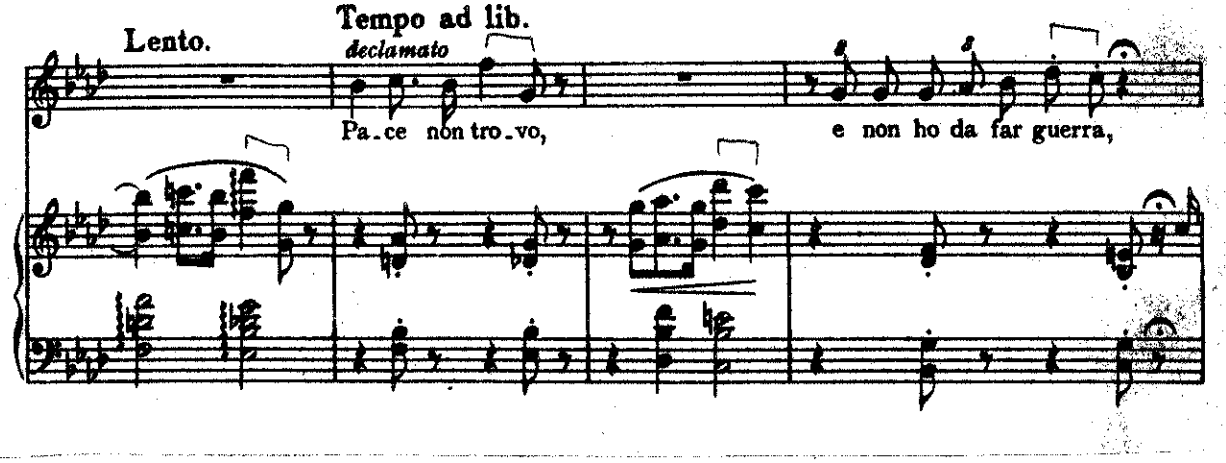
The insistent return to the key of A-flat major (the home key) at the beginning of each quatrain and the sestet is not only a reflection of the key-scheme of the whole cycle,[15] but also provides a means of unification in the song itself. This clarification of the form by accentuating the beginning of each new section of the poem at the same time separates the different patterns of rhyme and the difference in content between the sections.

---

15. All three sonnets of the V-I version are in the key of A-flat major.

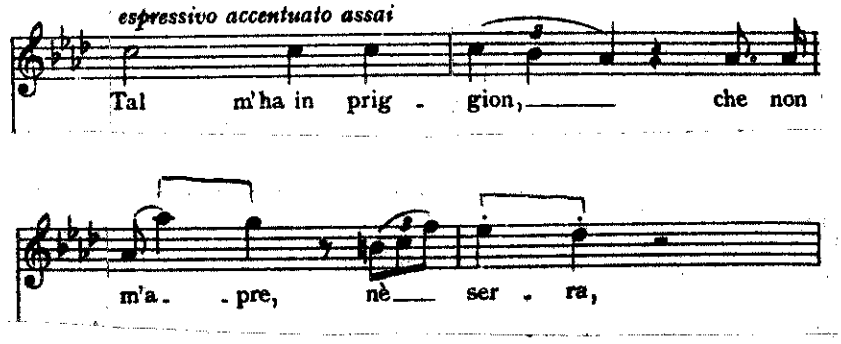
Thematic material in this version of the song is used most economically. As the following examples will show, the whole song is again built on a single motive or theme (Example 14).

Example 14. V-I, No. 104, measures 5-8.



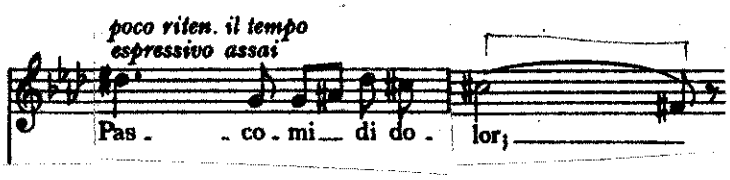
The motive is first heard in this form as the opening vocal phrase, anticipated on the piano in the preceding measure. The syncopated figure of the introduction (measures 1-4), even the next considerably different theme at measure 37 (Example 15) can both be traced back to the original motive.

Example 15. V-I, No. 104, measures 37-40.



The significantly altered theme found at measure 80 (Example 16) also has distinct similarities with the original motive:

Example 16. V-I, No. 104, measures 80-81.



Also the Coda (measure 97) is a variation of the first two measures of the expansive theme at measures 37 and 38 (see Example 15).

The economic use of material is exemplary and contributes to the unity of the composition. Notice the sigh motive in the final measures of all these themes (Examples 14, 15, and 16).

This economy of thematic material is of course nothing new in music. Beethoven was Liszt's example of this technique.[15] In this setting Liszt showed that he knew how to derive new themes from given ones, and yet make them so different that they appear to be completely new material, and, more importantly, so different that they express something completely

15. Liszt's piano transcriptions of Beethoven's Symphonies were started a year before the sonnets (1837), and completed in 1864. He was an ardent admirer of Beethoven's music.

new--in this case a new thought in the poem. This technique can be seen as the beginning of his later "transformation of themes."

Let us also consider the harmonic structure of the phrase "Tal m'ha in prigion" (measure 45):

$\underbrace{A^b,\ F^b\text{Augm.},\ f,\ b^b}_{\text{Introductory Phrase}}$ $\underbrace{G^b,\ D\ \text{Augm.},\ (C^b),\ E^{b7},\ A^b}_{\text{Complementary Phrase}}$ [16]

This sequential use of a harmonic pattern[17] which returns to A-flat major at the close of the complementary phrase, is answered by the key of C minor for the next two lines of the poem, the A-flat major phrase dealing with Laura, the following one with love itself. The change of key (A-flat major to C minor) is a reflection of different levels of love.

The harmonies wander chromatically without allowing the music to modulate, eventually returning to the point of departure (See lines 4 to 7, A-flat major to A-flat major; also lines 8 to 14, A-flat major to A-flat major). The key is suspended, like the feelings of the poet, and is properly ambiguous.

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16. These augmented triads can also be interpreted as having a different root and enharmonic notation, e.g.,
$\underbrace{A^b,\ A^b\text{Augm.}\ (F^b{=}E^\natural),\ f,\ b^b}_{\text{Introductory Phrase}}$ $\underbrace{G^b,\ G^b\text{Augm.},\ (C^b),\ E^{b7},\ A^b}_{\text{Complementary Phrase}}$
This constructional use of the keys of A^b & G^b on complementary phrases has already been used in the introduction (in halving the first quatrain) but on a more extended scale and with real modulations. (A^b means A-flat major, f means F minor, Augm. means augmented etc.)

17. The strict harmonic sequence of the complementary phrase is broken by the addition of the harmony of C-flat minor, shown in parenthesis.

Summing up the whole sonnet as in the last line of the poetry, Liszt reverts back to the original form of the theme (measure 91). This brings the music to a logical and satisfactory close. The fact that this setting somewhat resembles the first movement of a sonata (more in thematic use than in key structure) is probably purely coincidental.[18]

In setting this sonnet to music Liszt was more interested in conveying the dramatic emotional meaning of the poem by means of painting the words and their meanings in the music. This means of conveying the text is a very direct one, and closely resembles the operatic approach of Italian opera of the time.

Liszt's treatment of the voice here was somewhat better than in Sonnet 47 (V-I, No. 47). Although he does give the voice more chance to rest by interpolating longer interludes on the piano, the general tessitura lies very high. He writes one ossia up to C-flat (measure 75), and two more up to D-flat, but, except for the last one (measure 104), they are not as difficult to sing because the voice is treated with consideration immediately before, and rapidly moves through the high points. From "Tal m'ha in prigion" (measure 45) the vocal lines are more lyric and sustained and therefore less demanding than at the dramatic beginning.

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18. Introduction, First Subject (measure 5), Second Subject (measure 37), Development (measure 70), Recapitulation--abridged (measure 91), Coda (measure 97).

Sonnet No. 104, First Version for Piano (P-I, No. 104)

As in Sonnet No. 47, Liszt makes an almost exact piano transcription of the song, except that he writes a completely new introduction, based on the triplet figure link of V-I, No. 104 (measures 60-61). Completely new, it nonetheless sets the atmosphere for the rest of the piece.

Built on a chromatic rising and pulsating bass, the nocturne-like opening theme of the right hand eventually develops into the sigh motive (measures 1-12, also measures 13-17).

He then proceeds with "Tal m'ha in prigion," leaving out the music of the first quatrain (V-I, No. 104), and transcribing it for piano in very much the same way as he did with Sonnet No. 47.

The recitative character of the opening of V-I, No. 104, is maintained with the main lyric theme accompanied by arpeggio chords, all to be played by the left hand only (measure 22). The real song with its arpeggio accompaniment begins at measure 36. Liszt's stylistic approach to the rest of the piece closely resembles that of P-I, No. 47.

There are some extensions of the phrase (measures 30-35), several incorporations of brilliant bravura cadenzas and embellishments of the theme (measures 50, 55, 59, and 67), and minor alterations such as added counterpoint (measure 62). True, these elements are not to be found in V-I, No. 104, but the harmonic and modulatory pattern of the original song is strictly adhered to.

By leaving out the first part of the song, Liszt introduces the basic form of the theme upon which the original work was constructed, only once very near the end (measure 80). This slight inconsistency is compensated for by the beauty of the phrase, its *recitando* character, and stylistic similarity with what has gone before.[19] The Coda (measure 84) again brings back the main material, and the piece ends with a restful reminiscence of the "new" theme.

This version of the sonnet could be titled "Nocturne," so closely does it resemble the Nocturnes of Chopin and John Field.

Sonnet No. 104, Second Piano Version (P-II, No. 104)

Liszt treats this version for the piano as a much stricter and more literal transcription than his first piano version, and although he also leaves out the first four lines of the poem, he reverts back to the original introduction, transcribed literally for five measures, thereby again introducing the main motive at the outset of the song. Apart from a few changes in register which add color and variety, he again--as he did in P-I, No. 47--leaves out the first note of every measure in the accompaniment (measures 21-37) and adds several *ossias* (alternatives) in the cadenzas (measure 44). A few other minor changes (exclusion of the upbeat to measure 65,

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19. Liszt reintroduced this theme briefly at the outset of P-II, No. 104, thereby improving the composition considerably.

rhythmic variants, and a change in the double thirds in the right hand) do not make this a completely different version; they simply deviate slightly from P-I, No. 104. The composition remains basically unchanged.

Unlike P-II, No. 47, Liszt's treatment of this second piano version is more colorful and ornate than its predecessor. A few ossias make it easier (measures 29-31) and more interesting (measure 44). There is more chromaticism, different counterpoints and textures, all of which add up to a more vivid and interesting version.

Sonnet No. 104, Second Version for Voice (V-II, No. 104)

As with the final setting of Sonnet No. 47, the most drastic changes in the setting of this sonnet occur in this, his final version.[20]

In the introduction Liszt uses the same basic idea of the first setting for voice, but he eliminates the ties over the bar-lines and changes the outcome of the phrase, not introducing the basic motive until measure 7, this time in the piano.

Again eliminating the music of the first four lines of the poem as he did in both piano versions, Liszt introduces the following "main" theme with the first line of the poem.

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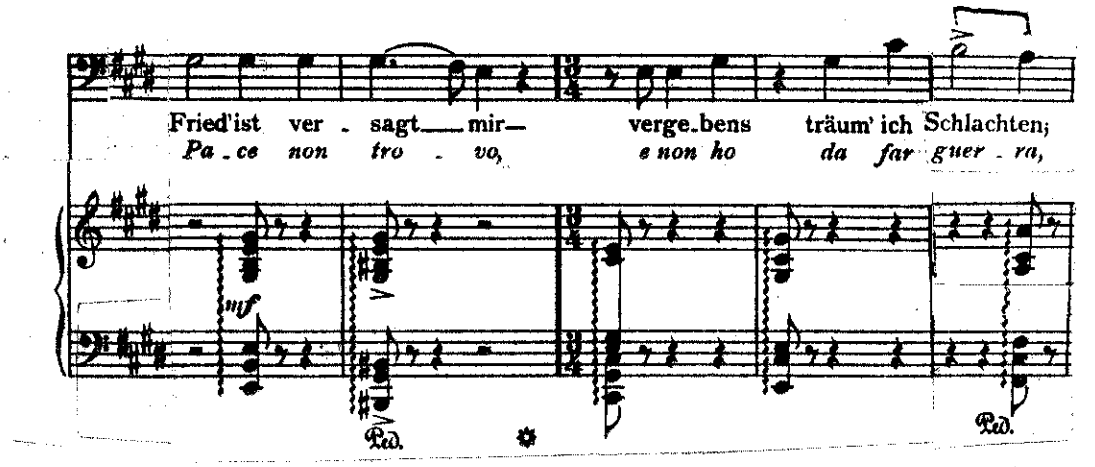
20. Peter Raabe, "Vorwort," Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d.), Series No. 2, VI, iii. Reprinted in England by Gregg Press Ltd., 1966, Series No. 2, VI, iii. Mention is made of yet another version of the second sonnet (he probably means 104) for four hands under the title of "Nocturne" printed by Haslinger and Schlesinger, n.d.

Example 17. V-II, No. 104, measures 14-18.



As in both piano versions of this sonnet, the theme is accompanied by a harp-like accompaniment, irregular in rhythm, giving the idea of a recitative. By changing the meter from C $[\frac{4}{4}]$ to $\frac{3}{4}$, back to C $[\frac{4}{4}]$ and again $\frac{3}{4}$, Liszt adds to the rhythmic irregularity and thereby creates the feeling of the rhythmic freedom of recitative.

The measures of dramatic tremolo accompaniment (measures 26-37) are reminiscent of V-I, No. 104. Those components, previously constituting the main part of the song, are now presented as a searching, lengthy buildup, with tremolos and chromatically shifting harmony, developing the theme and finally dissolving the tonality on a diminished chord (measure 72). After a long pause the voice continues in a quiet, unaccompanied recitative-like cadenza, joined by the piano in the most unobtrusive manner. This temperance of the dramatic operatic recitative by reverting to the more introspective,

aimless recitative (e.g., measures 75-81), reflects Liszt's change of approach to the same poem after twenty-three years. Compared to V-I, No. 104, the accompaniment is amazingly simple but nonetheless effective.

Also this song closes with a quiet, restful Coda set to the last line of the poem. The piano postlude virtually ends up in the air with the merest indication of the tonic harmony on the last G-sharp, the last three measures consisting of only a single unaccompanied line.[21]

Tonality is more ambiguous than in the first setting, and towards the end of the piece the tonal center seems to become even more undecided.[22] This coincides exactly with what the poem expresses towards the end: "Egualmente mi spiace morte e vita: In questo stato son, donna, per Vui (Voi)" (Not caring whether I live or die: In this state, dear Lady, I am for you). It also reflects Liszt's tendency towards atonality in his later years.

Liszt knew how to preserve the drama of V-I, No. 104 without making it blatantly operatic. His decidely less reflective and more flamboyant style of earlier years seems to have become purer in trying to convey the essence of the

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21. In later life Liszt frequently composed unaccompanied single themes.

22. The tonality of the Coda (measure 86) leans more toward C minor with its insistence on the secondary dominant (G-sharp major), also four measures from the end--the last chord as such.

music. He does not literally paint the words, but conveys the atmosphere that the word evokes.

The use of insistent sigh motives familiar in earlier settings (measures 4, 5, 8, 13, 18 etc.) puts this song into the category of an arrangement. The way in which he used this material makes it into a completely new song. Although the harmonic structure of the song is vastly different from V-I, No. 104, Liszt keeps the outstanding harmonic feature of the main theme--the use of the augmented triad.

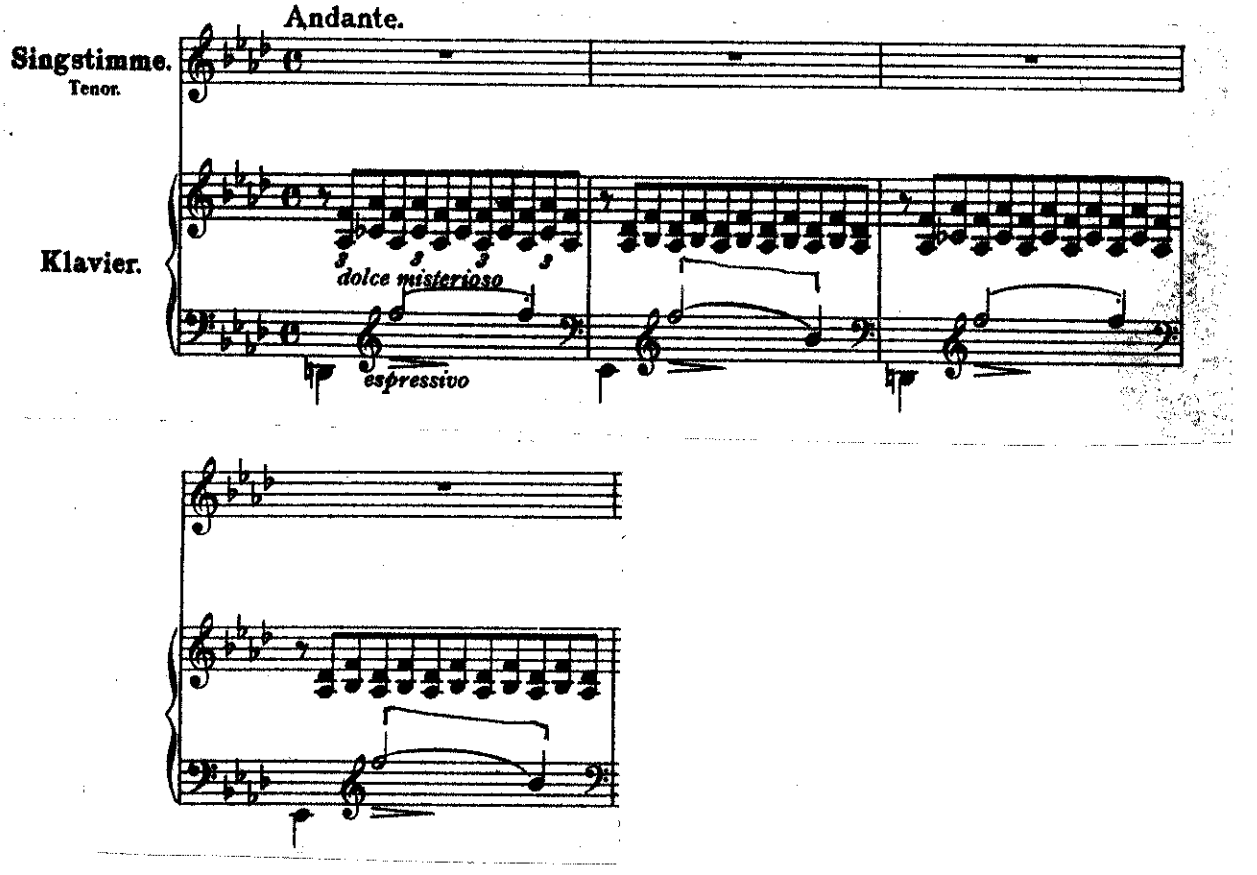
Sonnet No. 123

Liszt's setting of Sonnet No. 123 (for the text see Appendix, pages 72-73) is once again an exemplary interpretation of the contents and atmosphere of the poem. Whereas Sonnets Nos. 47 and 104 deal more with the poet's human reaction to love, "I' vidi in terra angelici costumi" moves in the realm of the intangible, with the beauty of the loved one only reflected in the incorporealities of this world: shadows, smoke, dreams, light, sighs, and music. Liszt responds to the differing nature of the poetry with a shift of approach. Whereas in the first settings of the other two sonnets he was mostly concerned with madrigalesque word-painting, in No. 123 he restricts himself to merely creating the overall atmosphere.

Sonnet No. 123, First Version for Voice
(V-I, No. 123)

The introduction, "dolce misterioso" sets the mood of the song by means familiar already in the setting of sonnets 47 and 104: chromatic harmonies with a vague sense of key, eventually coming to rest on the chord of the dominant, an initially heard motive, (measures 1-2), gradually crystallizing into a theme heard over an A-flat pedal bass over a simply arpeggiated accompaniment. The procedural similarity to V-I, No. 47 notwithstanding, Liszt here achieves a more impressionistic quality by the use of unresolved, shifting chords of the seventh and the static repetition of short motives without betraying any melodic direction (Example 18).

Example 18. V-I, No. 123, measures 1-4.

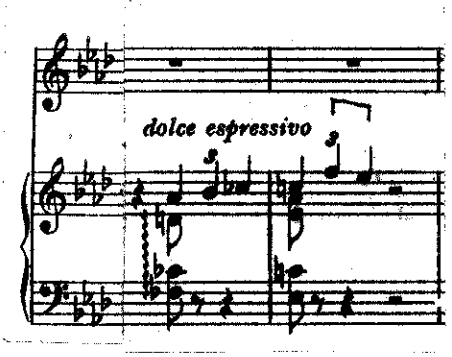


The rustling figure as used here by Liszt to enhance the atmosphere, and so characteristic of the Impressionists, is probably one of the first uses of its kind on the piano.

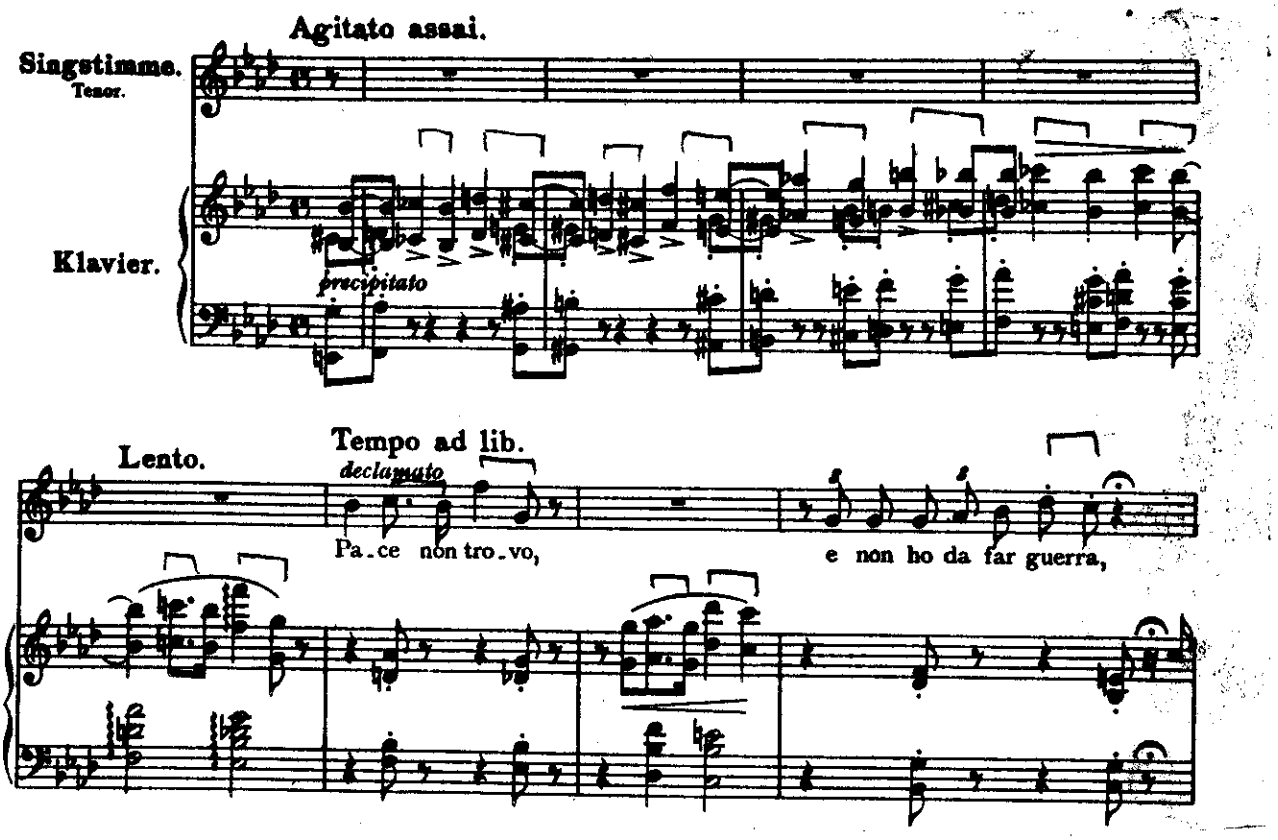
That Liszt was satisfied with this opening may be inferred from the fact that he kept the first four measures unchanged in all four versions. The slight change in V-II, No. 123 is one of simplification and of timbre (the motive is now played in octaves and the accompanying triplet figure is written as a broken Alberti-like figure, all a sixth higher than in V-I).

The marked similarity of the following measures (measures 5-11), with the rising melodic contours, to the corresponding passages in some of the other songs can be seen from the following examples. Note the similarity between the final phrases (marked in square brackets), ending in a sigh motive.

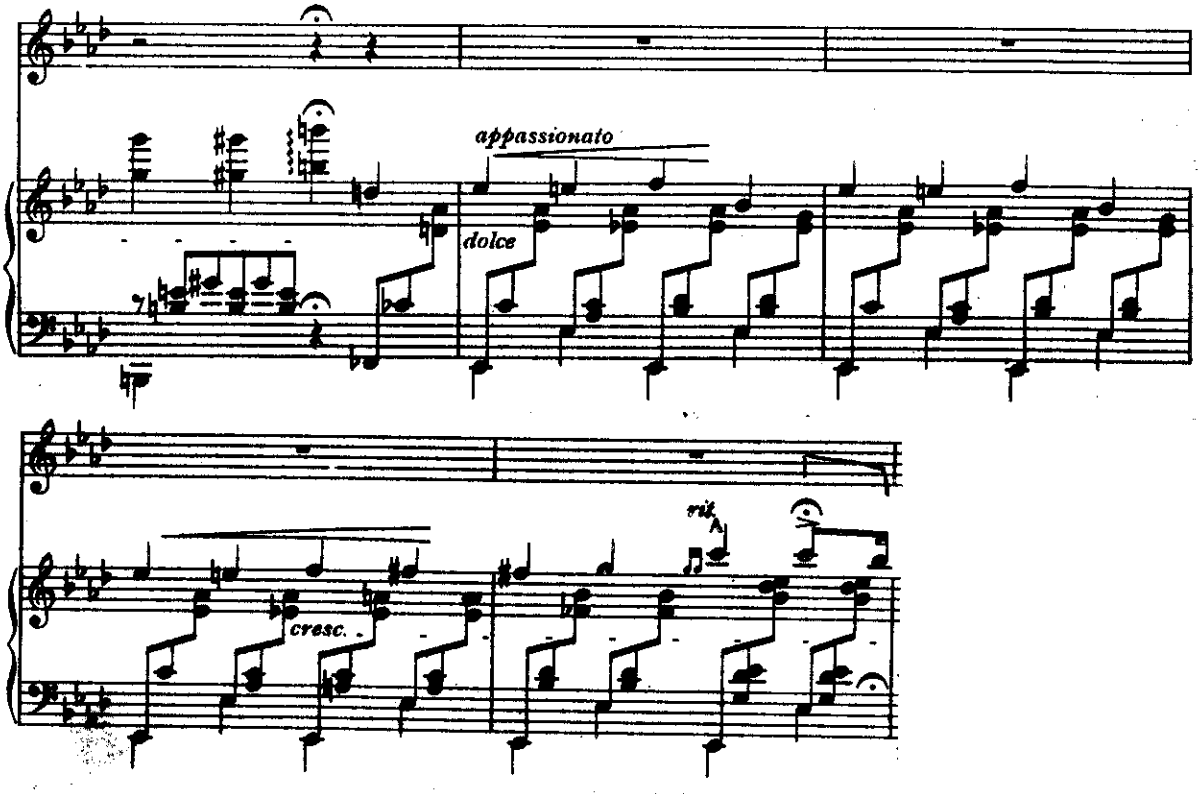
Example 19. V-I, No. 47, measures 5-6.



Example 20. V-I, No. 104, measures 1-8.

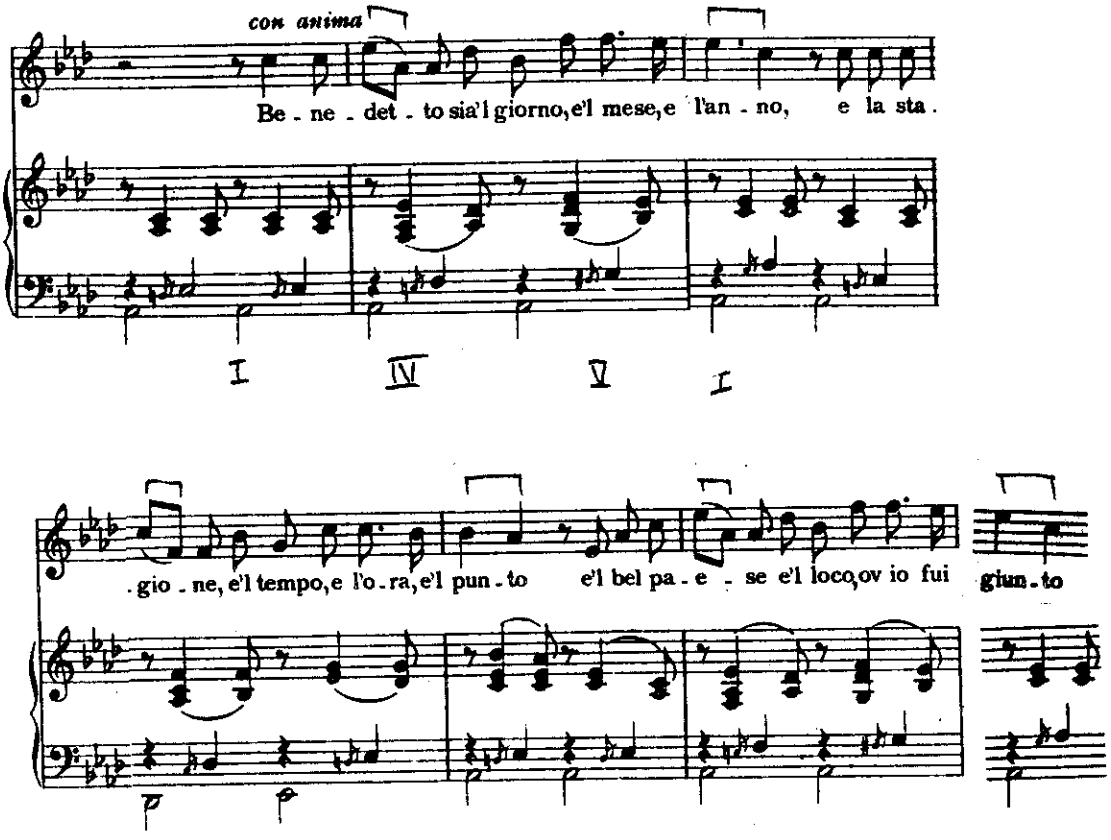


Example 21. V-I, No. 123, measures 7-11.

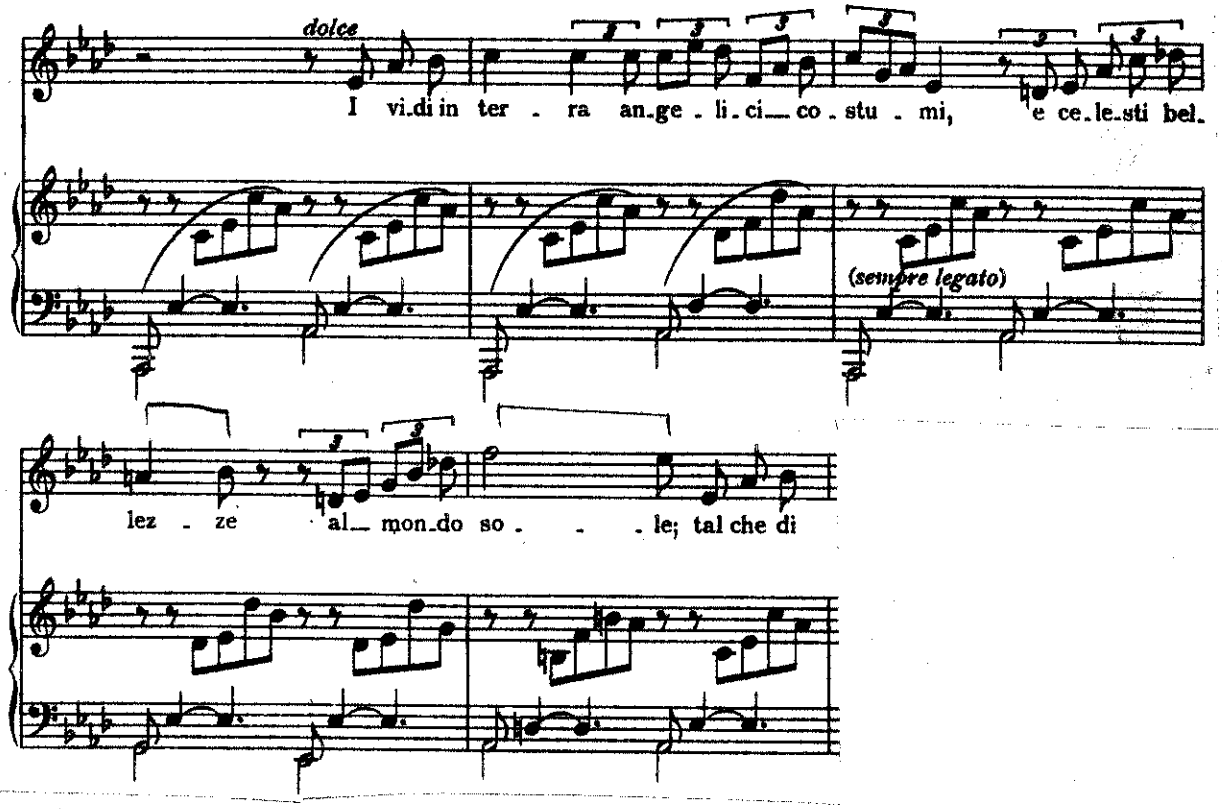


Elements of similarity can be traced in the main themes of sonnets nos. 47 and 123. The themes are florid embellishments of the tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies, making use of the sigh motive.

Example 22. V-I, No. 47, measures 11-17.

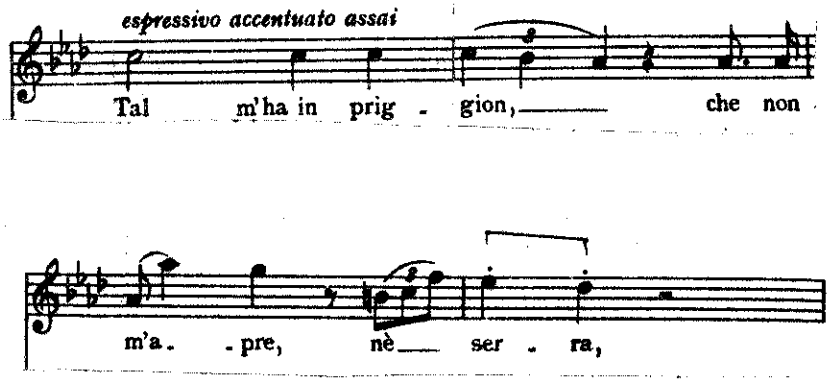


Example 23. V-I, No. 123, measures 13-17.



Although using different harmonies, the main theme of sonnet no. 104 also ends with the sigh motive.

Example 24. V-I, No. 104, measures 37-40 or 45-48.



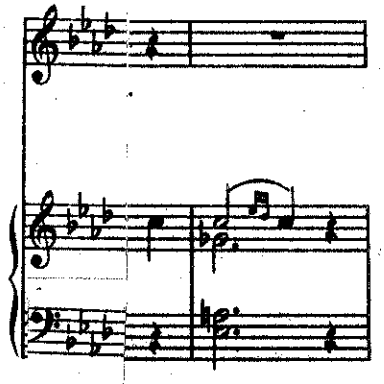
Liszt used the submediant modulation to great effect in the setting of V-I, No. 123 (Appendix, page 72). The poetic octave modulates from A-flat major to E major. A sudden and most effective shift to C major (flat-VI of E major) marks the beginning of the sestet and leads back to A-flat major (flat-VI of C major) at the outset of the second tercet. The difference in melodic character also sets the C major middle section clearly apart from the other two. This gives the song a clear ABA form. The opening figure (Example 18) again appears to the final line of the poem "Tanta dolcezza avea pien l'aere e'l vento" (measure 62), accentuating the recapitulatory form of the song. The ending contains some of the most beautifully atmospheric music in these songs. Dolcissimo broken chords (measures 55-60) enhance the "armonia;" the high tessitura of these chords, the "cielo" (heaven); and the postlude (measures 69-74), the air and the wind; all of these suggest the atmosphere of the text rather than the word itself. The sigh motive, which, as we have seen, is a feature of all three songs, ends this song and thereby the whole group. The repeated plagal repetition of flat-VI to I in the final measures also reflects the dominating harmonic and key progessions to be found in the three settings.

The florid Italian lyricism which characterizes this setting captures the lyric canzona character of the poem, an element found in most of Petrarch's poems.[23]

Sonnet No. 123, First Piano Version (P-I, No. 123)

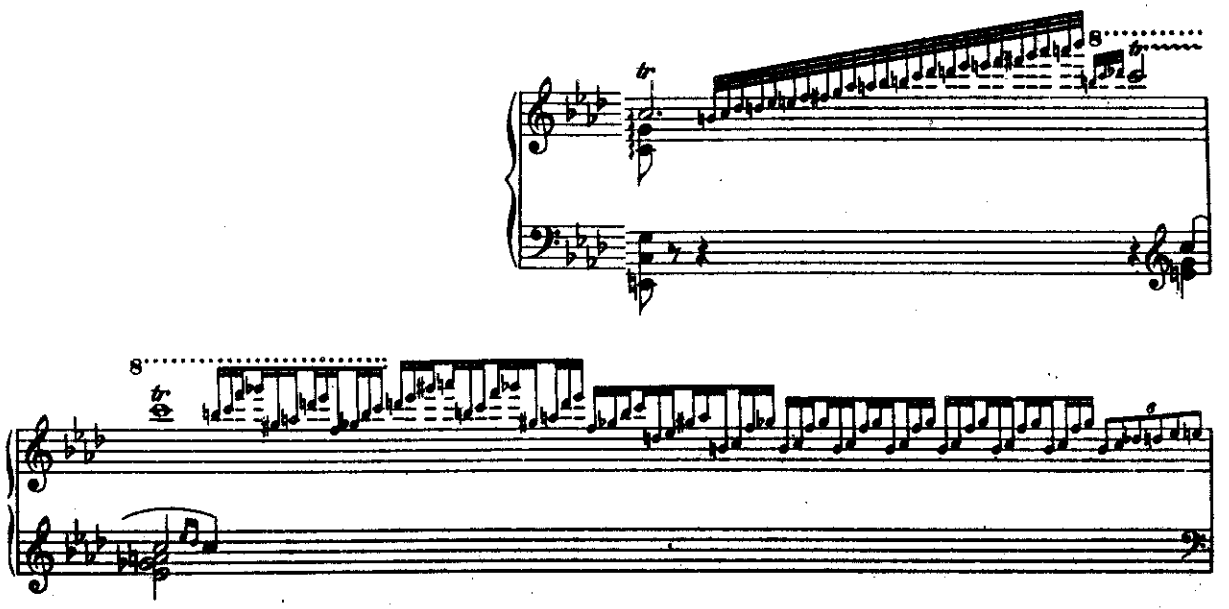
Following the pattern of the first piano transcriptions of the other two sonnets, this is a mere "arrangement" for the piano, characterized by brilliant cadenzas and lush ornamentation. For instance, a simple passage from the original version for voice (Example 25) is transformed into a passage of virtuoso display (Example 26).

Example 25. V-I, No. 123, measure 61 with upbeat.



23. Willi Apel, "Canzona," Harvard Dictionary of Music (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1951), 118-20.

Example 26. P-I, No. 123, measures 63-64.



Except for these and other slight differences following the same principle, Liszt did not radically change the original version (see measures 1-7, 11-14, 41-45, and 65-80). For the sake of obtaining greater unity in the piano transcription, Liszt alters the figuration of the closing statement (measures 65-69) of V-I (measures 62-73) to correspond to that of the opening. The arpeggiated accompaniment is used only in three places--whenever the music works up to a climax. Other interesting alterations are in the melody (measures 7 and 14), and balancing of the phrase structure (see measures 31-40, compared to measures 28-35 of V-I, No. 123). Changes in harmony are slight.

Sonnet No. 123, Second Version for Piano (P-II, No. 123)

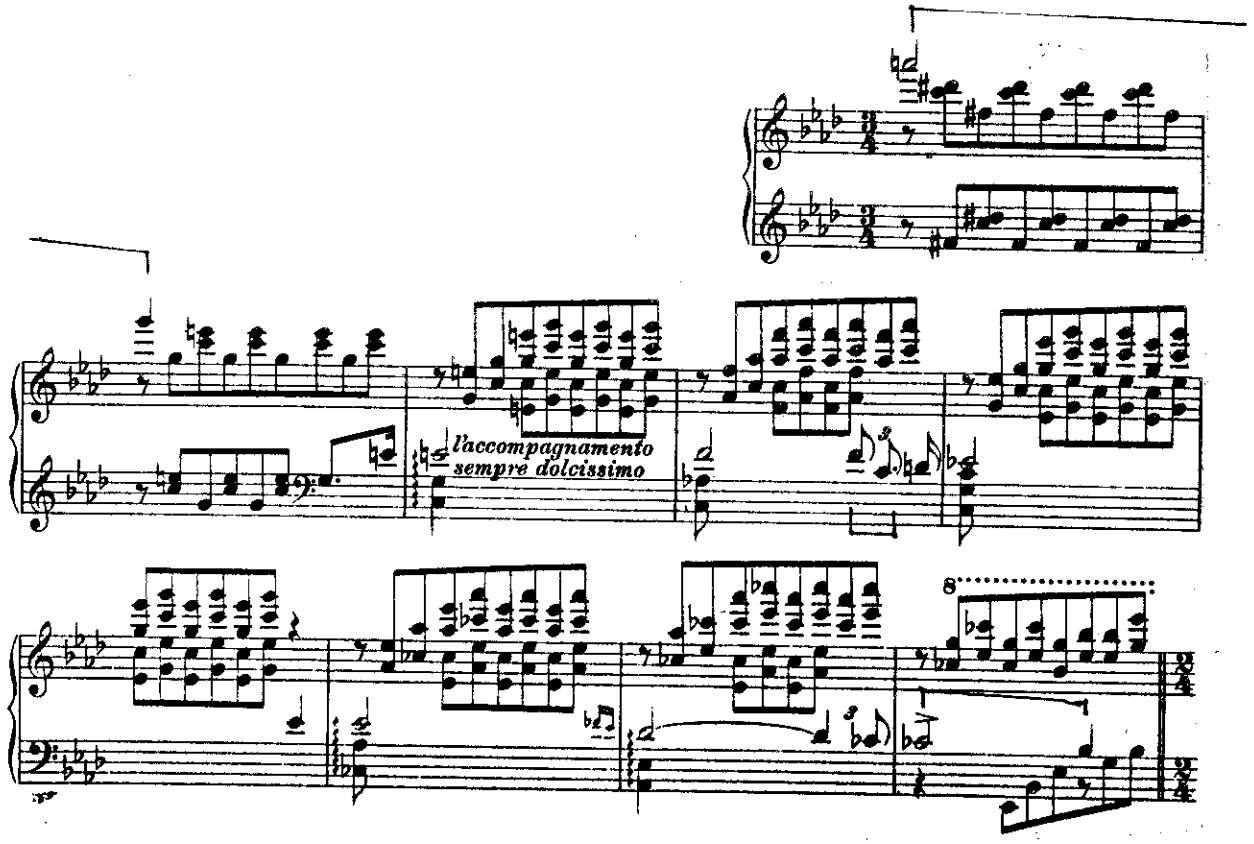
The stylistic changes of this second piano version closely resemble those made in the other two sonnets. In many instances Liszt reverts back to the original version, (V-I, No. 123) keeping some elements of P-I, No. 123 as in measures 6-7, where the harmonies, phrase structure, and melody resemble P-I, No. 123, and the texture of the right hand that of V-I, No. 123.

The use of silences between phrases (measures 8, 10, and 15) and in the off-beat accompaniment (measures 11-27) gives a more halting character to the music. The gradual re-introduction of the flowing accompaniment figure of the first four measures (Example 18) enhances the gradual build-up of the music until measure 40, after which the procedure is repeated (measures 41-60).

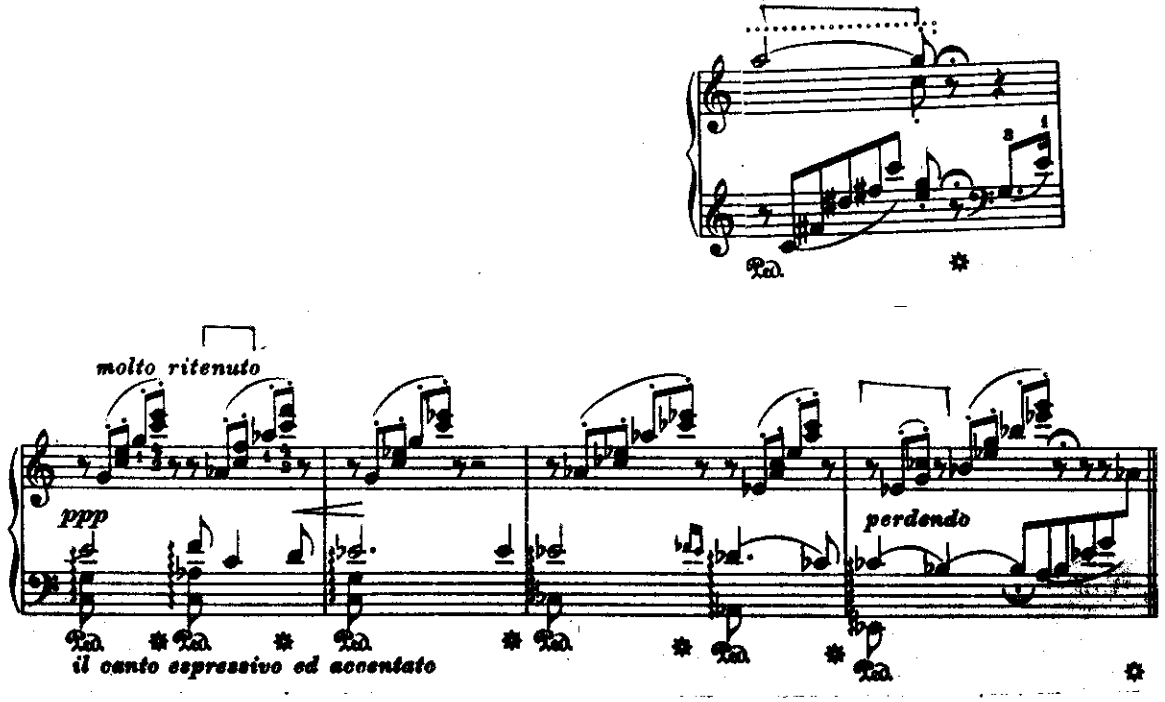
The thicker, more chromatic texture of the section (starting at measure 30), the addition of fermati (measures 31 and 33), and the extension linking the following section, at the same time balancing the phrase, all follow the same pattern as before.

Liszt does not change the meter to $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$ in the following section (measures 44 and 49) as he did in the previous versions. How much simpler this passage is in this final version for piano, can be seen from the following two examples.

Example 27. P-I, No. 123, measures 44-52.



Example 28. P-II, No. 123, measures 44-48.



At measure 58 the cadenza which previously consisted of a single line, has been harmonized and rhythmically regularized, thus accentuating the chromaticism. Also the brilliant right hand of the following cadenza (P-II, No. 123, measures 64-67) has been given new rhythmic regularity, resulting in a shift of the beat. Except for the interruption of the flow of the accompaniment in the left hand (measures 75-77) and two changes in the distribution of the chord in the left hand, the music remains nearly identical. The notation of the rhythm of the closing sigh motive differs slightly from version to version.

Sonnet No. 123, Second Version for Voice (V-II, No. 123)

It is with this last and much later version of the sonnet 123 that Liszt made the most significant changes in the music.

Now in the key of F major (transposed to suit the tessitura of the baritone or mezzo-soprano), the modulations,[24] after a strong confirmation in F major (measure 9), take different turns. The ambiguity of an ever-fluctuating tonal center signals Liszt's gradual tendency away from tonality.

Here the use of tonal ambiguity sets some sections apart from those with a more definite tonal stability. The form

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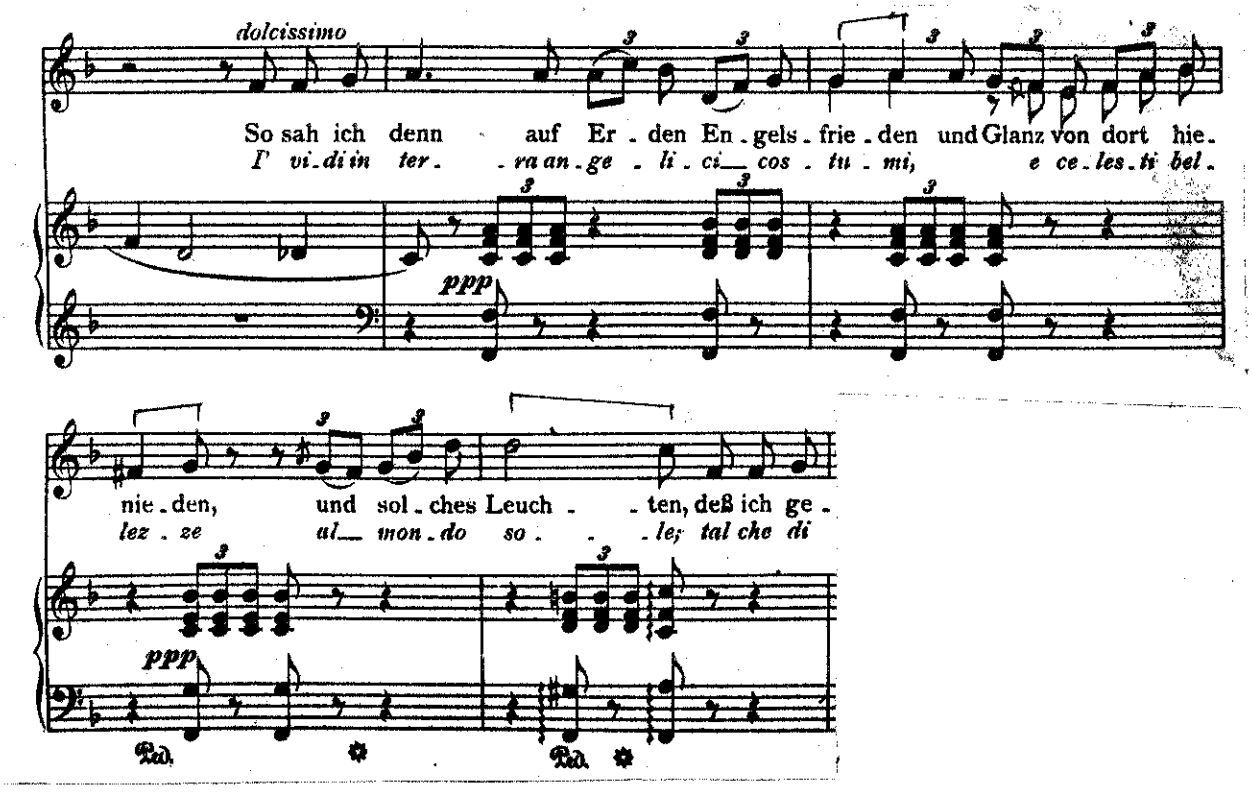
24. In the section beginning at measure 23 one can hardly speak of modulations, rather of a series of harmonic progressions.

(ABA) is articulated by a tonally unstable B-section (A: measures 1-18; B: measures 19-64; C: measures 65-82).

Richard Strauss's "Frühling" from his Vier Letzte Lieder shows a striking similarity in the use of the flat-VI harmony, the structural use of sections of tonal stability as opposed to those without a firm tonality, and also the willful use of wrenching harmonic progressions. The tonally ambiguous beginning eventually settles in C major (Figure C) for a while, only to move on again to end in a long and triumphant coda in A major (the key signature is that of C major). Strauss's frequent use of harmonies which have their roots a tone or semitone and a third apart, rather than a fourth or fifth (as with the Classicists), is occasionally used by Liszt in V-II, No. 123 (see measures 26, 27, and 28).

Although the same themes are used as in V-I, No. 123, both texture and procedure are simplified. The reduction of the vocal range is not as marked as in V-II, No. 47, but the melodic line is more restful, eliminating the wide leaps previously used within a few notes of the phrase. Compare the melody of the following example with that of Example 23.

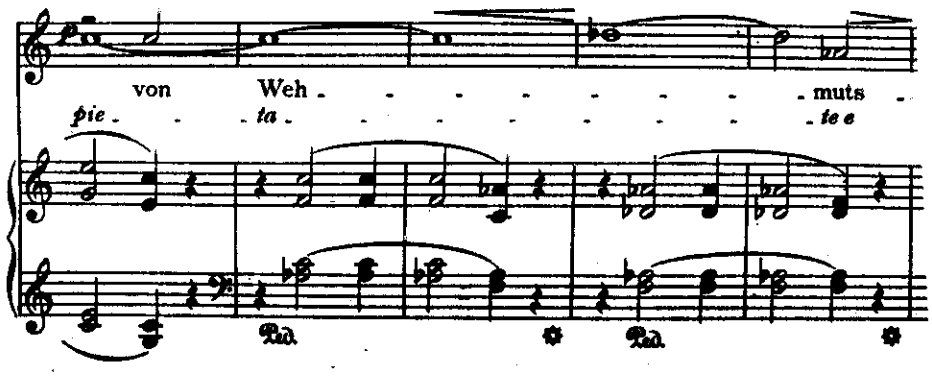
Example 29. V-II, No. 123, measures 8-12.



Notably shortened from 12 to 8 measures, the introduction makes extremely economic and organic use of the material and the harmonies. So concise are Liszt's means that he can suggest the dominant harmony (measures 7-8) by a single voice line. Later (measures 47-48 and 64-65) the single line even allows him to modulate.

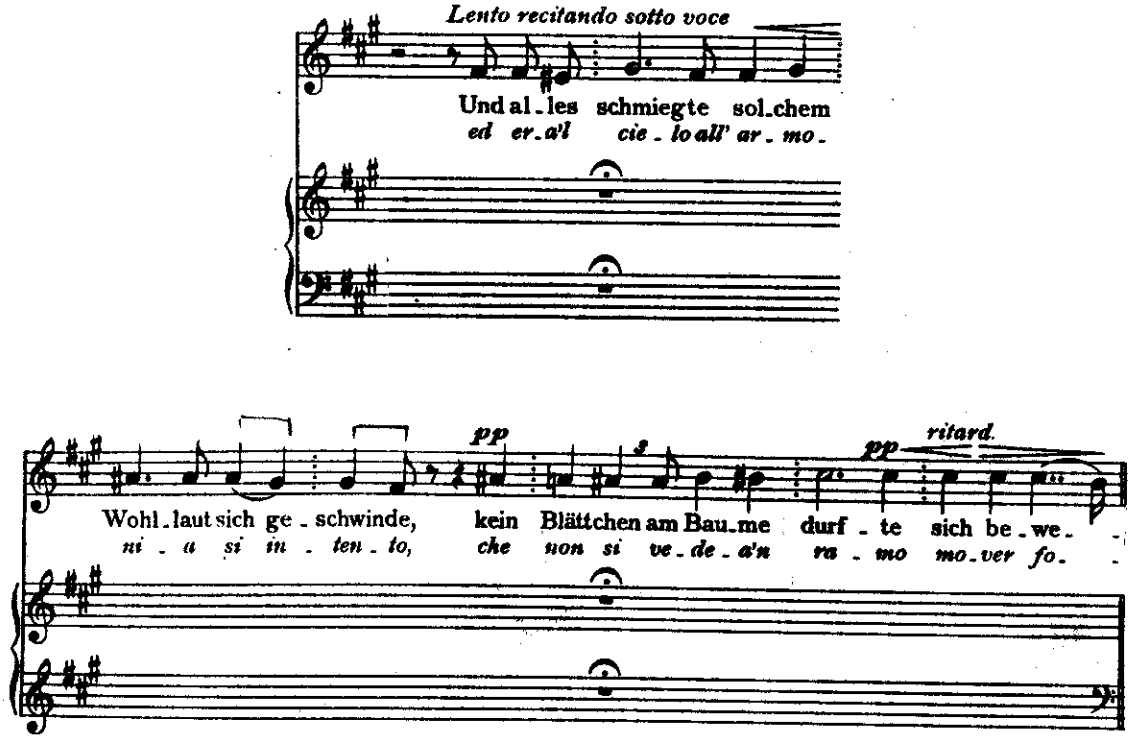
Some examples of simple yet effective painting of the atmosphere of the text can be found in the long expressive phrase on "pietate":

Example 30. V-II, No. 123, measures 42-46.



The scarcely-moving vocal line of the recitando of measure 64 signifies the immobility of the atmosphere--the air and the wind and the leaves.

Example 31. V-II, No. 123, measure 64.



Liszt has, in this last version of the song, come closest to depicting the text--not by a literal, isolated interpretation of the word, rather by a description of the atmosphere that is suggested by the word. Compare the static, chordal, and atmospheric postlude of this song to the florid, moving postlude of all the other versions, V-II describing the atmosphere that the quiet wind and air creates, V-I describing the gentle contours of the wind, at the same time inferring the sighs for the loved one.

Once again, the final version demonstrates a new approach in renouncing the initial operatic conception in favor of the more intimate style familiar in the German Lied.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

A curious fact connected with the dates of composition and rewriting or transcribing of these sonnets is that they always went hand in hand with great emotional upheavals, setbacks, and even changes in Liszt's life. Emotions and experiences of extreme happiness and despair seem to have been inextricably entwined during these periods.

When the sonnets were first composed for voice, and transcribed for piano (1838-39), Liszt had just returned to Italy with Countess d'Agoult, who had shortly before born him a second daughter, Cosima (she later caused Liszt untold agony, but also great happiness, because of her liaison with Wagner). In 1838 Liszt played in Vienna on behalf of the victims of the flood of the Danube; his philanthropic nature, one of the better sides of Liszt's complicated character, remained with him throughout his whole life. In 1839 his son, Daniel (who died at the early age of twenty-one) was born; notwithstanding this happy event, he temporarily separated from Countess d'Agoult and returned to Vienna, then to his native Hungary. This was the beginning of his astounding career as a virtuoso.

In 1846, when these songs were first published, the now estranged and embittered mother of his three children

published her novel Nélida, a fictional account of her relationship with Liszt, for him an extremely damaging document.

The next crucial date in Liszt's life was 1849, when the sonnets were reworked as part of Années de Pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: Italie. The Tsar Nicholas I refused to grant the Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, whom Liszt had met at Kiev in 1847 and who joined him with her daughter in Weimar in the following year, permission to divorce her husband so that she could marry Liszt. In 1849 his long and stormy friendship with Wagner began to develop.

In 1858, when the second and final version for piano was published, Liszt, after eight years of mixed successes as conductor at Weimar, resigned his post as musical director. As if to add to his misfortunes, his son Daniel died in the following year.

The year in which Liszt recomposed the sonnets for voice (1861) was one similarly marked by happiness and despair, by productivity as well as failure to achieve his goals. The message that the Princess was now free to marry him ended in the cancellation of the arranged marriage in Rome, which was to take place on his fiftieth birthday.[1] His composition of many notable works, especially religious works (Legend of St. Elizabeth, Christus, and others), and

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1. At the last minute, on the evening of the planned event, the Vatican had further objections to the union.

several successes in their performances, were counteracted by the shattering of his hopes of being given an official position as musical director to the Vatican.

1883, the year in which the second version of songs was finally published, marks a particularly sad event for him. Richard Wagner, his very close friend and the husband of his daughter Cosima, died--as a result Liszt composed "Am Grabe Richard Wagners."

The antitheses in Liszt's life, particularly in these years when he busied himself with the Petrarchan sonnets, are indeed remarkable. Perhaps the sonnets, and especially no. 104 (Pace non trovo), with its similarly violent and contrasting ideas, always attracted him in times of great happiness or great crises. The settings of this sonnet always enjoyed the most popularity and are perhaps better than the others. The reason for this is probably to be found in Liszt's great affinity with this sonnet, which contains the essence of his personality--his diversity and complexity of character.

These characteristics in Liszt's personality influenced and eventually governed the outcome of his life, and are readily apparent in the great number of compositions that he wrote during his long and colorful life. With subject matter of great extremity, ranging from the celestial to the infernal, from the heights of happiness to the depths of despair, from the religious to the worldly, Liszt has

covered a vast field in his compositions. This large scope of expression which we see in his works stood him in good stead. His palette of color, expression and subject matter was perhaps larger than that of any other composer, certainly of anyone before him.

But, the larger the palette, the more difficult it is to handle, and, as with most other great composers, the quality of work could not always be of the highest caliber. The inconsistencies in Liszt's compositions are perhaps more apparent than those to be found in other composers' works, because of this more exposed scope of expression in which he worked.

However, one should not judge him on his lesser works, but on the great deal of extremely fine music that he did write.

It must also be remembered that Liszt, as far as the twentieth century is concerned, was a figure who bridged the gap between the tonality and forms of the classic era and the atonality and its forms of our century. Humphrey Searle[2] very aptly points out that Liszt was born two years after the death of Haydn and died a year after the birth of Alban Berg.

Liszt's constant experimentation with harmony, tonality, color, form, and emotional expression in music always put him ahead of his time and pointed the way for others to

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2. Humphrey Searle, The Music of Liszt, 2nd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), 122.

follow. He was the first to experiment with and use these devices in such an extreme way. He opened the door to atonality by his revolutionary way of using the diminished[3] and augmented chords and the whole-tone scale,[4] thereby gradually suspending tonality,[5] fully a quarter of a century before Schönberg's first venture into atonality.[6]

Alan Walker[7] tells of Arthur Friedheim's[8] account of seeing Liszt's treatise on harmony (in manuscript), which was called "Skizzen für eine Harmonie der Zukunft." Liszt said about it: "I have not published it because the time for it is not ripe." He was fully aware of the fact that he was playing the role of innovator and that he was in many ways ahead of his time.

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3. The emancipation of the diminished chord, used to create a floating, shifting tonality, can be traced back to earlier composers, Bach's "Chromatic Fantasy" being one of the finest examples.

4. Liszt's melodrama Der Traurige Mönch of 1860 is almost entirely based on the whole-tone scale.

5. His "Bagatelle sans tonalité," composed in 1885, was found again in the Liszt-Museum in Weimar and published in Budapest in 1956. It was originally intended to be the "Fourth Mephisto Waltz." The opening theme of his Faust Symphony (1857) and compositions like "Nuages Gris," "Teleky Laslo" and "Unstern" are also atonal.

6. In the last movement of his String Quartet, No. 2 (with soprano, 1908).

7. Alan Walker, Franz Liszt, The Man and His Music (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970), 362.

8. A pupil of Liszt.

There is no doubt that Liszt went much further in his use of modern harmonies than any of his contemporaries. Wagner once wrote the following lines to von Bülow:

> There are many matters on which we are quite frank among ourselves (for instance, that since my acquaintance with Liszt's compositions my treatment of harmony has become very different from what it was formerly). . . .[9]

The Liszt-Wagner relationship was a most fruitful one and it is difficult to say who influenced whom more. This is an intricate problem with which we cannot be concerned here.

Liszt's organic use of the augmented triad as he employed it in sonnet no. 104 in all its versions for voice and piano, was only the beginning of later compositions by him and others--compositions which were based principally on the augmented triad.[10] This different use increasingly became a means of suspending tonality instead of a mere coloristic harmony.

Liszt's constant search for greater unity, as we have seen in the course of the different settings of the sonnets, is also reflected in his creation of the one-movement piano sonata and piano concerto. These telescoped forms were very soon copied by other composers, eventually leading to the use of similar forms in works like Alban Berg's Wozzeck.

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9. Searle, The Music of Liszt, 64.

10. For example, Liszt's Faust Symphony, and H. Wolf's "Das Verlassene Mägdlein."

The essence of Liszt's use of transformation of a theme in his later works, as found in its very beginning stages in these settings of the Petrarchan sonnets, can be compared to Schönberg's use of a "basic theme or a series of notes in an endless variety of forms in order to promote the unity of the composition as a whole."[11]

As far as texture is concerned, one can find several composers of the late nineteenth century who were influenced by Liszt's earlier virtuoso style, such as Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. But his later works, as reflected in the late settings of the sonnets, show a different approach: a purity of style as found in the methods of Stravinsky and Webern.

As far as sheer pianism is concerned, Liszt's influence on his contemporaries and successors was immense. He opened new dimensions of expression with his superior technique, sometimes employed as a means in itself to stun the listener, but later increasingly used only as a vehicle to express his visionary musicality. He created new vistas of sound never before heard on the piano. Debussy, Ravel, Bartok, Smetana, and Janacek all echo the music of Liszt at some stage or other.

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11. Humphrey Searle, "Liszt and 20th Century Music," Liszt-Bartók Report of the Second International Musicological Conference (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963), 278.

Camille Saint-Saëns saw Liszt's influence on the history of the piano as immense, only to be compared with the revolution that Victor Hugo brought about in the mechanics of the French language. He considered Liszt's influence on the piano

> Far greater than Paganini's on the violin, because Paganini confined himself to those inaccessible regions where he alone could excel, while Liszt deigned to take the practical road, where those who wanted to take the trouble of working seriously would be able to follow.[12]

Liszt never ceased to try to change things that he thought needed changing. His was a conquering nature continually challenged to create something new--whether it was the technique of the piano or trying to find a new form of church music at the end of his life, he never rested on his laurels.

It was Bartók, who as a young man made an intense study of Liszt, was greatly influenced by him, and wrote in his autobiography:

> The great artist's true significance was revealed to me at last. I came to recognize that, for the continued development of musical art, his compositions were more important than either Wagner's or Strauss's.

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12. Camille Saint-Saëns, Portraits et Souvenirs (Paris: Calman-Lévy, Editeurs, n.d.), 22.

APPENDIX

Sonnet No. 47*

	Rhyme	Table of Keys*** V-I	V-II
Benedetto sia 'l giorno, e 'l mese, e l'anno,	a	Ab	Db
E la stagione, e 'l tempo, e l'ora, e 'l punto,	b		
E 'l bel paese, e 'l loco ov'io fui giunto	b		
Da' duo begli occhi, che legato m'hanno;	a	c	f
E benedetto il primo dolce affanno	a	b^b	e^b
Ch'i' ebbi ad esser con Amor congiunto,	b		
E l'arco, e le saette ond'i' fui punto,	b		
E le piaghe che 'n fin al cor mi vanno.	a	D	G
Benedetto le voci tante ch'io	c	D	E
Chiamando il nome di mia Laura ho sparte,**	d		
E i sospiri, e le lagrime, e 'l desio;	c		e
E benedette sian tutte le carte	d	B	
Ov'io fama l'acquisto, e 'l pensier mio,	c		
Ch'è sol di lei, sí ch'altra non v'ha parte.	d	Ab	A D^b

*Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, trans. Anna Maria Armi (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968), 218. For translation, see Appendix, p. 69.

**In V-II this line reads: "chiamando il nome de mia donna ho sparte." The change was made by Petrarch when revising the sonnets for a later edition.

***The Table of Keys for the two songs of each sonnet (see pages 70 and 72) uses Ab instead of A-flat major, c instead of C minor, etc.

Sonnet No. 47*

Blessed by the day, the month, the year,
And the season, the time, the hour, the moment,
And the country, the place where I was first joined
By two fair eyes that have tied me here.

And blessed by the first sweet agony
That I felt in becoming bound to love,
And the bow and the arrows piercing me,
And the wounds that I bear so deep in my heart.

Blessed by the many voices that I raised,
Calling the name of my lady, and spreading it,
And blessed by the sighs, and tears, and the desires;

Blessed be all those sonnets
Source of all my fame, and blessed my thoughts,
That are for her alone, no one else has a part in them.

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*Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, 97.

Sonnet No. 104*

	Rhyme	Table of Keys V-I	V-II
Pace non trovo, e non ho da far guerra;	a	Ab	E
E temo, e spero; et ardo, e son un ghiaccio;	b	f	c
E volo sopra 'l cielo, e giaccio in terra;	a	Gb	Ab
E nulla stringo, e tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.	b	E	Db
Tal m'ha in prigion, che non m'apre né serra;	a	Ab-b^{b}	
Ne per suo mi ritien né scioglie il laccio;	b	Gb	
E non m'ancide Amore, e non mi sferra,	a		
Né mi vuol vivo né mi trae d'impaccio.	b	c	
Veggio senza occhi, e non ho lingua, e grido;	c	Ab-b^{b}	
E bramo di perir, e cheggio aita;	d	Gb	
Ed ho in odio me stesso, et amo altrui.	e	F-ab-B	
Pascomi di dolor, piangendo rido;	c	B	
Equalmente mi spiace morte e vita;	d	Ab	
In questo stato son, Donna, per Voi.**	e		E

*Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, 218. For translation, see Appendix, p. 71.

**The original text reads: "per vui." Liszt sacrificed the rhyme of Petrarch's medieval Italian for the modern form "Voi."

Sonnet No. 104*

I find no peace and I am not at war;
I fear and hope, and I burn and I freeze;
I rise up to the sky, lie on earth's floor;
And I grasp nothing and I hug the trees.

She has jailed me, and nor opens nor shuts,
Nor keeps me for her own, nor tears the noose,
Love does not slay and does not set me loose,
He wants me neither alive nor out of ruts.

I see and have no eyes; no tongue, and cry;
I wish to perish and call help to fly;
And I abhor myself and love another.

I feed on grief, in tears and laugh I smother;
Death and life are the objects of my hate;
Lady, because of you, such is my state.

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*Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, 219.

Sonnet No. 123*

	Rhyme	Table of Keys V-I	V-II
I' vidi in terra angelici costumi	a	Ab	F
E celesti bellezze al mondo sole;	b		
Tal che di rimembrar me giova e dole,	b	f	d
Ché quant'io miro par sogni, ombre, e fumi.	a	Eb	C-c
E vidi lagrimar que' duo bei lumi,	a	b^b	g
C'han fatto mille volte invidia al sole;	b		Eb
Et** udí' sospirando dir parole	b	Gb	
Che farian gire i monti e stare i fiumi.	a	E	
Amor, senno, valor, pietate, e doglia	c	C-c-Eb	(E)
Facean piangendo un piú dolce concento	d		
D'ogni altro che nel mondo udir si soglia:	c		A
Ed era il cielo a l'armonia sí intento	d	Ab	F#
Che non se vedea in ramo mover foglia,	c		
Tanta dolcezza avea pian l'aere e 'l vento.	d		F

*Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, 248. For translation, see Appendix, p. 73.

**Some editions give "ed udí'."

Sonnet No. 123*

I saw on earth angelic manners show;
Heavenly beauties, in the world, alone,
So that recalling them is joy and woe,
For it seems shadow, smoke or dream that shone.

And I saw those two lights with tears abound,
That thousand times were envied by the sun;
And I heard between sighs some words resound
That make hills move and rivers stop to run.

Love, wisdom, valour, pity and distress
Made in weeping a sweeter symphony
Than any to be heard here in this world;

The sky was so entranced by the harmony,
That no leaf on the branch was being curled;
The air and wind were filled with such sweetness.

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*Francesco Petrarca, Petrarch Sonnets and Songs, 249.

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