



TAMTA
MAGRADZE

The Art of Transformation
Franz Liszt

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TAMTA MAGRADZE · PIANO

TOTAL TIME 68'31

FRANZ LISZT

01 Sarabande und Chaconne über Themen aus Almira, S. 181 12'34

FRANZ LISZT

02 Variationen über Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, S. 180 16'59

FRANZ SCHUBERT / FRANZ LISZT

03 Litanei auf das Fest Aller Seelen, S. 562 No. 1 03'40

FRANZ SCHUBERT / FRANZ LISZT

04 Mädchens Klage, S. 563 No. 2 04'50

FRANZ SCHUBERT / FRANZ LISZT

05 Die Forelle, S. 563 No. 6 (First Version) 03'41

FRANZ SCHUBERT / FRANZ LISZT

06 Soirée de Vienne No. 6, S. 427 (First Version) 06'42

FRANZ LISZT

07 Großes Konzertsolo, S. 176 20'05

The Art of Transformation

My relationship with Liszt's music began to deepen when I moved to Weimar in 2017. Weimar is so closely connected with Liszt that it was almost impossible to live and study there without becoming curious about his music. At first, this happened quite naturally. I began preparing for Liszt competitions in Weimar, Budapest and Utrecht, and each new programme brought new works into my repertoire. The more I played, the more I wanted to discover.

Over the years I have learned and performed more than sixty works by Liszt. What continues to fascinate me is the extraordinary range of emotions in his music. There is something deeply spiritual in one piece and something theatrical, intimate or brilliant in another. At the same time, Liszt understood the piano from the inside. Even when his music is extremely demanding, there is a feeling that it belongs to the instrument. For a pianist, this is very special.

When I began thinking about my first album, I did not choose the repertoire to fit a concept. These pieces were already part of my life as a performer. They were among the works I had played most often in concerts and, for different reasons, I had developed a strong connection with each of them. Only after putting the programme together did I begin to see how naturally the idea of transformation connected them.

I have often opened my recitals with the Sarabande und Chaconne on themes from Handel's Almira, just as this album begins. There is something about the opening that always gives me the feeling of a curtain rising. The pauses create an atmosphere immediately. The rhythm of the Sarabande has a certain strictness, but within it the harmonies can feel extraordinarily warm. At the beginning I hear Handel very clearly. As the piece develops, that world gradually becomes Liszt's. The transformation happens in front of us.

I experience something similar in Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen. It begins in a world that for me is unmistakably Bach, but little by little it becomes Liszt. Here the transformation is not only musical. I hear the work as different forms of spiritual pain. Something very deep and almost hidden at the beginning changes through the variations. Weeping, lamenting, sorrow and fear seem to take different shapes as the music develops. After everything that has happened, the chorale at the end feels to me like the arrival of hope and peace.

The Schubert transcriptions reveal another side of Liszt and another reason I became so interested in his music. Through his transcriptions, works originally conceived for the voice could take on an independent life at the piano and reach listeners in another form. What I find remarkable is how strongly the character of the original music remains, even when Liszt gives it a new pianistic identity.

Mädchens Klage has always affected me very directly. The first time I heard it, I was struck by the intensity of its emotion. It is not one of the Schubert transcriptions I hear performed very often, and I wanted to learn it because I wanted to share something of that same emotional experience with an audience. My fascination with this music eventually led me to learn all six of Liszt's Melodien von Franz Schubert, including Mädchens Klage and Die Forelle.

Litanei, the first of Liszt's four Franz Schuberts geistliche Lieder, S.562, takes me into an entirely different world. For me, it is one of the most deeply spiritual works among Liszt's Schubert transcriptions. There is an inwardness and a sense of calm in this music that I find profoundly moving.

Die Forelle, on the other hand, brings an entirely different energy and concludes the Melodien von Franz Schubert. I have known this music in different forms, having performed the original song with a singer as well as the Trout Quintet. Playing Liszt's transcription gave me a completely different perspective on it. Technically, it is one of the most demanding pieces on the album, although it should never sound that way.

In Soirée de Vienne No. 6, I still feel Schubert very strongly. Liszt's brilliant pianism gives the music a completely new colour, but for me Schubert never disappears behind it. I have always loved this piece and it was important to me that it should have a place on the album.

The programme ends with Großes Konzertsolo, a work that was a real discovery for me. It is rarely performed and its scale makes enormous demands on the pianist. Over the years, however, it has become one of my favourite Liszt works and, despite its difficulty, one that feels remarkably natural for me to play. I have often chosen it to close my recitals.

Here there is no Handel, Bach or Schubert. Liszt is working with his own material, but the idea of transformation remains. Themes return again and again, each time taking on a different form and character. This is an important part of what makes the work so fascinating to me. By the time we arrive at Großes Konzertsolo, transformation is no longer only about what Liszt does with the music of another composer. It has become part of his own musical language.

This album grew out of music that has been part of my concert life for many years. The programme came first, and the title followed later. Only when I saw these works together did I realise how naturally they were connected by the idea of transformation. It appears in different ways throughout the album, but what fascinates me most is Liszt's ability to transform music without losing what made it distinctive in the first place. After years of performing his music, this is the side of Liszt I wanted to share in my first recording.

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Tamta Magradze is a Georgian pianist whose concert career has taken her to more than 40 cities across Europe and the United States. She has appeared at festivals including the Lucerne Festival, the Leoš Janáček International Music Festival and the Delft Chamber Music Festival, and has performed in concert halls such as the Grand Hall of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, the Béla Bartók National Concert Hall at Műpa Budapest, the Grand Hall of the Liszt Academy in Budapest, TivoliVredenburg in Utrecht and Musikhuset Aarhus.

As a soloist, she has performed with the Hungarian National Philharmonic, Würzburg Philharmonic, Jena Philharmonic, Thüringen Philharmonie, Győr Philharmonic, Georgian Symphony Orchestra and Georgian Sinfonietta.

Magradze has received prizes at more than ten international piano competitions. In 2024, she won First Prize and the Antonio Bacchelli Special Prize at the Livorno International Piano Competition and received the Jury Discretionary Prize at the New Orleans International Piano Competition. Her other distinctions include the Audience Award at Liszt Utrecht and a Special Prize at the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition in Budapest, where she was a finalist.

Born in Tbilisi, she began playing the piano at the age of five. She studied at the Paliashvili Central Music School and the Tbilisi State Conservatoire before continuing her studies with Prof. Gerlinde Otto at the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar, where she completed both her Master's degree and Konzertexamen. Her studies and artistic development have been supported by scholarships from the DAAD, the Carl Bechstein Stiftung, Fondation Clavarte and the Theodor-Rogler-Stiftung.

The Art of Transformation, devoted entirely to the music of Franz Liszt, is her debut album.



Recording & Production

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LABEL

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