THE FOUR MEPHISTO WALTZES OF FRANZ LISZT

by

BARRIE MORVAL BARRINGTON

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ABSTRACT

The four <u>Mephisto Waltzes</u> of Franz Liszt constitute the focus of the present paper. Aside from the fascination they hold as individual works, they form an intriguing group related by title and heritage yet made distinct by important structural differences. Also, the separation of more than 20 years between the completion of the first and the last means that as a group they illustrate well the changes of style and concerns in Liszt's composing.

In this paper, the four works are discussed in a manner that reflects a shift in their dramatic source. The first two waltzes are closely tied to the poem <u>Faust</u> by Nikolaus Lenau and derive most of their drama from that extramusical link. The latter two pieces, however, exhibit fewer connections to the poem but contain compelling tonal and structural features.

The first two chapters discuss the <u>First</u> and <u>Second Mephisto Waltzes</u> respectively with an emphasis on those aspects that are most closely associated with Lenau's <u>Faust</u>. In addition, certain passages that are not necessarily tied to the poem but are interesting in themselves are discussed. An example of this is the coda of the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> and its effect on the piece's overall tonality.

The third chapter discusses those few elements of the <u>Third</u> and <u>Fourth Mephisto</u> <u>Waltzes</u> that can be seen as stemming from Lenau's poem, while the final two chapters are made up of tonal and structural analyses of these latter two waltzes. The <u>Third</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u>, in particular, is treated to a more intense analysis since it is the most problematic of the group. In this piece, the overall tonic is unclear as two different, yet related, keys struggle to dominate, with neither coming to a clear and decisive victory. F-sharp major and D-sharp minor are supported in turn throughout the work and can be seen to coexist at times when the piece is viewed in its background. The <u>Fourth</u>

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<u>Mephisto Waltz</u>, although tonally more clear, contains a dramatic game of frustrated expectations and then unexpected fulfillment as the tonic, F-sharp, is strongly implied twice and only later is attained with little preparation.

In order to come to terms with some of the problems posed by these works, I have used a modified form of Schenkerian analysis. Departures from, or additions to standard techniques are mentioned within the appropriate chapters.

Since the four <u>Mephisto Waltzes</u> (especially the latter two) have not been exhaustively analysed, it is hoped that this study makes some contribution to the field of Liszt research.

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Introduction

The Background of the Four Mephisto Waltzes

In 1860, Franz Liszt wrote two orchestral works based upon scenes from Nikolaus Lenau's poem, <u>Faust</u>. The first is entitled <u>Procession by Night</u> and the second <u>Dance in the Village Inn</u> (subtitled <u>Mephisto Waltz</u>). A solo piano version of the <u>Dance in</u> <u>the Village Inn</u> was written at the same time and was given the title <u>Mephisto Waltz</u>. This piano version differs enough from the orchestral piece and is so wonderfully written that it is really an independent work.

The literary passage upon which the <u>Dance in the Village Inn</u> is based depicts Mephistopheles and Faust arriving at a country inn. The following is a paraphrase of this encounter:

Faust and Mephistopheles, wearing disguises, enter an inn where a wedding celebration is in full swing. Both are in search of pleasure. Mephisto (being a jovial sort of fellow) derides the musicians for their lethargic playing, seizes the violin from one of the attending musicians, tunes it to his liking and proceeds to intoxicate the audience with his demonic playing. There follows a frenzied dance which results in an orgy. Two by two, the dancers slip out into the night; Faust, himself, with one of the girls. A nightingale's song is heard and the lovers find themselves swallowed by the roaring sea of lust.¹

Three other Mephisto Waltzes were written during the last decade of Liszt's life. The <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> was started in 1880 in Rome, and was orchestrated and completed in Pest in 1881. Its first performance took place in Pest on the 9th of March of that year. The piece was dedicated to Camille Saint-Saëns and was received with sharp criticism at its premiere. The solo piano version of the piece was written soon

after the completion of the orchestral original. Unlike the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>, though, the piano version of the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> differs very little from the piece's orchestral incarnation.

The <u>Third</u> and <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltzes</u> date from 1883 and 1885 respectively. The <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> was published immediately, but the <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltz</u> was not published until 1957 in the <u>Liszt Society Publications Volume 2</u> by Schott and Company Ltd.. Although these latter waltzes were written some 20 years after the first, they all share common basic features and, of course, a title. All four works possess a rapid tempo, a triple division of the beat, an aggressive demeanor, and a common, poem-based heritage.

Notes for Introduction

¹Sacheverell Sitwell, <u>Liszt</u>. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1967) p. 229.

Chapter 1

The First Mephisto Waltz

Section A (beginning to m. 140)

Although Liszt's <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u> does not adhere strictly to the order of events depicted in Lenau's scene, <u>Dance in the Village Inn</u>, it is an effective musical interpretation of the work. Its effectiveness lies less in its attempts to illustrate specific incidents than in its evocation of the atmosphere of the poetic passages.

Much of the 110-measure introduction has a definite association with the poem. The successive stacking of three perfect fifths in the first thirteen measures of the piece, as shown in example 1.1, refers to the passage in which Mephistopheles takes possession of the violin from the fiddler and tunes it to his liking.



Example 1.1

The pitches are not the same as those found on the open strings of the violin while tuning but the resulting effect is recognizable as such. Despite the unusual and daring sound of the resulting chord, the overiding effect is that of a dominant prolongation which prepares for the later arrival of the tonic. In order to show this process, Example 1.2 contains the opening 110 measures in a reduced form.





It is obvious that the dominant scale degree E, is prolonged throughout the entire passage in both treble and bass.

To compensate for this melodic monotony Liszt groups the introductory material in an interesting and musically exciting manner. As the main theme of measure 111 is approached, Liszt divides the material into smaller and smaller units. The first 66 measures are partitioned into equal 33-measure halves, each of which features a large wave of sound which crests and falls. The final 44 measures bring an increase in tonal activity organized as two 8-measure phrases, one 16-measure phrase (which one might divide into 4+6+6), then three 4-measure blocks. This is reflected in the reduction of Example 1.2 where significant arrivals are confined to the last one-fourth of the introduction as harmonic and rhythmic changes become more compressed in time.

The tension created by the compression of events is, to a degree, lessened in the final 7 measures of the introduction by the use of a tonic pedal that anticipates the arrival of the structurally important I at the start of the main theme in measure 111. Also, the pitch E which is prolonged throughout the introduction remains in the treble during the presentation of the main theme. This creates a very smooth transition from the introduction into the main body of the work and tends to cushion the arrival of the tonic. The arrival is also weakened by the lack of a strong leading-tone motion. G# is certainly present in the introduction but is used only as a member of a c#-minor chord between measures 87 and 98. As the reduction shows, its structural role is not as the leading-tone of A-major but as part of a mid-bass descent from E through C# to A. This bass arpeggiation anticipates and weakens the upcoming tonic arrival. Liszt may have felt it necessary to counteract the acceleration in grouping structure so the tonic of measure 111 was not overly strong. By corrupting this arrival, Liszt ensured that the next two tonic arrivals, especially the last which closes section A, are heard as stronger and more meaningful.

In addition to the introduction's structural significance, the satanic quality of this waltz is enhanced by its frantic pace. The result of the *quasi presto* tempo combined with the 3/8 meter is a duple organization with beats subdivided into rapid triplets. Under normal circumstances this quick of a waltz would be undanceable but under the spell of Mephisto's playing the gathered crowd overcomes such limitations.¹

Thematically, the introduction forecasts the melodic contour and opening rhythmic cell of the first of the two main themes of the work. This foreshadowing occurs in measures 19 and 20, and is repeated in measures 50 and 51, and, at a different pitch level, in measures 93 and 94. Example 1.3 shows the opening measures of the first theme along with the passages just cited.

Example 1.3



Like the introduction, the first theme prolongs the note E, as its melodic outline spans the octave from E⁴ down to E³. However, it is tonally more stable than the introduction since it is supported unquestionably by the tonic triad, A-C#-E. The distinctive opening leaps and consequent fall of this theme are extended and developed in the following passage, measures 137 to 145, which prolong V till the end of the section in measure 164.

Measures 165 to 206, rich in rapid scale figures and broken octaves, continue to prolong the dominant harmony in the same way. Colour and harmonic tension are added by the presence of the upper chromatic neighbour triad, f-minor. A fiery double glissando in measure 202 followed by hammered E octaves from 203 to 206 leads to a recapitulation of the first theme.

The following recapitulation of the theme and next 80 measures are almost

identical to the previous 97 measures, with the exception that much of what occurs in the later extension and development passage is a fifth lower than in the preceding parallel section. A wonderfully dramatic passage starting in measure 274 creates a shock in harmonic and rhythmic terms. When one would expect an E-major harmony. Liszt provides, instead, a widely-spaced F-4/2-chord. This chord is prolonged through the next 21 measures before it in turn is interrupted by an E-dominant 7th harmony. The F-dominant 7th chord functions, of course, as a misspelled augmented 6th chord substituting for V of E. The sudden appearance of the augmented 6th chord is accompanied by an equally effective rhythmic jolt in the form of duple grouping within the measure. Besides being exciting and colorful music, this passage brings the first large section to an effective close. The combination of harmonic and rhythmic surprises in addition to a widely spaced texture ensures that the arrival on the tonic in measure 297 is perceived as the most significant arrival in this section. Because the following statement of the first theme is harmonically static the sense of arrival is reinforced. Then, a 28 – measure transition leads into section B with a gradual lessening of texture, volume, and intensity.

In its relationship to the poem, this first large section (with the exception of the introduction) conjurs up an image of a frantic dance in which all present are caught. Faust himself is not immune to Mephisto's playing as one reads in Lenau's poem these words: "It is however the most blissful Faust with his brunette beauty, who dance storming to the forefront...". One can easily imagine the music of the first section acting as a propellant for the possessed revelers.

Section B (m. 341 - 650)

Not only does the next part of the piece offer a dramatic contrast to the previ-

ous one, it presents what is to be the only other theme of the whole work. Many of Liszt's works are constructed of but a few themes which are transformed. He uses thematic transformation to ensure variety within a piece employing a small number of themes. Rather than using older variation techniques such as augmentation, diminution, etc. Liszt endows his themes with new and varied personalities through changes of tempo, articulation, and accompaniment style.

The theme for this "B" section, shown in example 1.4, is an erotic and langorous combination of melody and harmony. It is the perfect musical description of Faust's feelings towards the girl and of Mephistopheles' role as the seducer of souls.² This theme's descriptive traits are supported by its chromatically inflected melody and placement of the rich accompaniment chords in a warm register of the keyboard. Because of their need to resolve, the melody's chromatic non-harmonic tones imbue this theme with a yearning quality paralleling Faust's desires.





The ensuing measures, which maintain the established atmosphere also contain references to the first theme. Although not blatant, these references do bind the piece in a subtle way. A good example of this can be seen in the material contained in measures 389 to 396, shown in example 1.5.



If we trace the encircled melody starting on the B-natural, we see the outline of the first theme with its initial leaps and subsequent stepwise fall. This association is partly hidden by the phrasing; measures 393 to 396 not only serve as the last half of the reference to the first theme, they also form the first half of the following phrase.

Adding to the content of Lenau's poem, certain passages suggest that Mephisto possesses a sense of humour, albeit distorted. For example, measures 457-481 seem to represent Mephisto's chortles of delight at what he has wrought. Following this passage is a varied version of the second theme, then another outburst of satanic laughter marked <u>presto</u>. After the <u>presto</u>, comes a wonderfully evocative, filagreed variation of the second theme. The texture of this material is extended by modulating sequences until measure 651 where a modified recapitulation brings with it the dance of the first section.

Section C (m 651-end)

The third section is not merely repeat of the first, as happens much of the time in a Romantic ternary piece. Instead, we are treated to what might be referred to as a double recapitulation: both themes are repeated, intertwined and developed in this

final whirlwind of a dance.

After the recapitulation of the first theme at measure 651 (in the key of B-flat), the second theme is infused with a different character than it had in section B. It is played in left-hand octaves, accompanied by rapid, triplet broken chords in the right hand, creating the sense of something ominous emerging from the flames of a fire. The emerging quality is enhanced by the sequential rise from A to B-flat. There follows a "con fuoco" variation of the first theme played in octaves in the right hand, accompanied by a thick left hand chordal texture. Probably the best illustration of Liszt's thematic transformation technique is seen starting at measure 771. This is, in part, an illustration of Mephistopheles' role as the one who takes that which is good and beautiful and transforms it into something vile and ugly. The once erotic second theme is now transformed into a horrendous mockery of itself. Wild, wide leaps and sudden changes in dynamics paint a vivid picture of the mad dancers with Faust and his partner leading the way.

The climax of the whole piece commences at measure 799 and is based on the chromatic "sighs" first heard as the extension to the second theme from measure 373 to 380. The reduction of Example 1.6 illustrates the melodic and harmonic similarity of these two passages.





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11
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Example 1.6 (cont.)



Interesting, too, is the constant battle between the neighbouring pitches, A and B-flat. There is a repeated oscillation between these two tones and their respective triads from the beginning of section C till the very end of the piece. As a result, there is really no large- scale dominant preparation to be found.³ The climax of this conflict takes place near the end of the climax for the entire piece. Measure 813 is a brilliant cadenza which is launched by the chord A-F-B-flat, and it ends with a downward rush of notes that constitutes an inversionally symmetrical pitch-class collection containing the tones of both the B-flat and A-major triads. This collection is shown in scalar form in example 1.7.

Example 1.7



Following the climax, a presto tempo ensues in conjunction with the continua-

tion of the A-B-flat struggle. The left hand trills between measures 814 and 833 are made up of the pitch classes A and B-flat and their respective chromatic neighbours. One hears, as a result, an oscillation between the two pitches leaving one to wonder which pitch is functionally the most important. This excerpt, shown in example 1.8, is the third and final appearance of Mephistopheles' laughter; it seems he is pleased his playing has had such an effect.



Example 1.8

The nightingale Lenau describes near the end of the scene is unmistakably represented in the trills within the recitative-like passage from measure 842 to 863.

Present, too, in this passage is the only prepared and sustained dominant of this final section. The diminished-seventh chord reached by chromatic means, although spelled B-D-F-A-flat, sounds and functions as G-sharp-B-D-F; the rootless V flat-nine of A major.

The dramatic conclusion of Lenau's <u>Dance in the Village Inn</u> scene—"The sea of ecstasy devours them with a roar"—has, as its musical counterpart, the coda. Yet the coda also extends and finally puts to rest any questions that might have arisen in regards to the role of B-flat in relation to the tonic—A. The final rush from measure 903 to the end (914) is, like the close of the earlier climax, a scale constructed of tones found in both A and B-flat major. Here, though, tonic-defining A and E dominate as the functionally stable notes and the B-flat and F-natural function merely as the upper chromatic neighbours. In retrospect, one realizes that the apparent A-B-flat conflict is very much on the surface of the music and does not extend beyond that level. Thus the B-flat tonicizations function simply as the upper chromatic neighbour supplying colour and tension.

The dramatically effective structure of this piece and its convincing evocation of its extra-musical stimulus stem from its sophisticated interrelation of themes, its carefully balanced tonal structure and its wonderfully pianistic texture. We shall see that the latter three <u>Mephisto Waltzes</u> (especially numbers 3 and 4) become increasingly removed from the literary source which provided such a rich background for the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>. Their drama will be derived more from Liszt's later-life forays into creating pieces based upon non-traditional tonal systems and upon structural plans which do not fit into the early romantic lexicon.

Notes for Chapter 1

¹ A question arises regarding the rhythmic organization of these introductory measures. In the orchestral score, Liszt has indicated that the silent first measure should be the first beat of a 4-bar long hypermeasure. Once established, the hypermeter remains valid throughout the introduction so that structurally important events like the arrival on the tonic in measure 109 (of the orchestral score) fall on the first beat of a hypermeasure. In the piano score, however, two additional measures later in the introduction create a lack of agreement between the hypermeter and significant structural occurrences. This leaves one to wonder why this discrepency exists and whether to excise the two extra measures in a performance of the piano piece.

² Mary A. Hunt, Franz Liszt: The Mephisto Waltzes. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1979), p. 29.

³The B-flat, as the flattened second degree of A-major, might be interpreted as functioning as a member of the Neopolitan harmony. Since there is no N⁶- V - I progression in this final section, though, the B-flat prolongs the A as its upper chromatic neighbour. Thus the pitch is used as a source of harmonic colour.

Chapter 2

The Second Mephisto Waltz

Section A (beginning to m. 179)

Like the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>, the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> is cast in a large three-part form. This time, however, the overall design is a simple ternary one since the material from the first large section is heard again in the final part. An introduction and a coda frame the main body of the work. In its adherence to Lenau's poem, though, this piece is less faithful than the first. The relationship to the poem is a more general one with fewer direct references to Lenau's text. The Mephistopholean dance is present, as is the more langorous, contrasting theme in the central section, but more specific elements such as the nightingale's song are no longer present.

The rather literal representation of violin tuning in the introduction of the <u>First</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u> has its parallel in the stylized passage at the beginning of the <u>Second</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u>. Example 2.1a contains the first 13 measures of the <u>Second Mephisto</u> <u>Waltz</u>.



Example 2.1a

Here we listen to Mephistopheles correcting an out-of-tune fifth (B-F tritone) by raising the note F to F-sharp. The arresting tritone opening, like the unusual stacking of fifths of the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>, leads logically into the overall tonic. However, instead of participating in a straightforward dominant prolongation, the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u>'s opening tritone leads to the tonic E-flat through a less direct voice-leading scheme. Example 2.1b graphs that voice-leading.





The tritone which is corrected to the perfect fifth becomes part of a dominant-ninth chord on B. By measure 26 this has turned into a diminished-seventh harmony on D-sharp with the D-sharp maintained as an E-flat. This chord then resolves as a common-tone diminished-seventh to the tonic, E-flat.

It is possible to distinguish three important themes in this piece, two of which are found within the A section, while the third acts as the contrasting B-section theme. Example 2.2 shows the beginnings of all three themes.¹



Example 2.2

These themes are undeniably more motivic than those of the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>, so the melodies are faster-paced and more reiterative in construction. That is, they are made up of small, equally divisible pieces which are dependent upon their being combined with one another. Thus, short one-to two-measure units are repeated and/or joined to form the thematic material. In Liszt's later style themes formed in this manner are themselves subjected to repetition and modulating sequence to form the larger phrases and sections. This building-block approach sometimes leads to a rather monotonous texture, especially when realized in the solo piano medium.

A good example of Liszt's manner of melodic construction is the first theme. It is made up of two basic building blocks; the first characterised by a rapid stepwise ascent terminating in an accented octave, the second by a descending scale which outlines the tonic triad, followed by a turning figure emphasizing the dominant pitch, Bflat. On a larger scale the theme is extended over the following 20 measures by three other fairly distinctive phrases constructed of blocks of new material. Each of these building blocks is heard from two to eight times in each phrase, and each phrase is heard anywhere from two to four times. The construction is rather symmetrical; with the exception of the introduction and the transition to the B section, the entire piece is built of phrases of four to eight measures in length.

A trait of Liszt's later compositional style — the prolongation of unstable harmonies — is illustrated in example 2.3.

Example 2.3



m. 55

The B (C-flat)-D-F-A-flat chord is extended over the eight measures from 55 to 62 by parallel 7th chords shown in the example by stemless noteheads. This prolonged diminished—seventh chord acts as VII^{o7} of the parallel minor, thus resolving functionally

to the E-flat tonic in m. 63. The next twenty measures are an almost exact replica of the first twenty measures of the first theme with only two phrases of extension.

After an 8-measure transition the second theme is presented in m. 91. It is also constructed of short units which are repeated many times with little alteration other than a rise in pitch level. A modified first theme is then heard with its second half extended and re-harmonized. This leads into a second and varied presentation of the second theme. The remainder of the A section is constructed of the first theme and its three-phrase extension, this time transposed up a half-step to E. Another 8-measure prolonged diminished—seventh harmony rounds off the section and is transposed up one half-step from its original appearance.

The relationship to Lenau's poem thus far is not as explicit as in the <u>First</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u>; only the rapid triplet division of the beat creating a satanic waltz and the introduction commencing with a distorted perfect fifth can be traced to the literary stimulus of Lenau's poem.

Section B (m. 179 to m. 406)

The character of section B is very similar to that of the central section in the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>. They both contain themes of an erotic nature and offer a great contrast to the outer portions of the piece. After section A ends in measure 178, with a long silence, the tempo changes and we hear a 44-measure transition that is relatively chromatic compared to the preceding material. In a larger-scale harmonic sense, this transition serves to tonicize B-major via a flat-II-V-I progression. A reduction of this passage is presented in example 2.4.

Example 2.4



One is able to see from the graph that the voice-leading in the transition is smooth despite the fairly distant relationship of the participating harmonies. The upper voice's C immediately rises to the E-flat in m. 191 (an anticipation of the D-sharp of the tonicized B-major chord) which in turn is seen as an upper neighbour to the C-sharp of the F-sharp 7th harmony of m.198. The inner G-natural anticipates the F-sharp of the V⁷ chord of measure 198 when it descends chromatically to, and remains on, the G-flat of measure 192. The mid-voice pitch, B-flat found in m. 191 is, of course, the enharmonic anticipation of the leading tone of the B-major B section.

The third theme, marked *espressivo*, *languido*, contains a significant example of one of Liszt's favorite harmonies, the augmented triad. Liszt's employment of this harmony has been traced from his early years throughout his composing life in an article by R. Larry Todd. According to Todd, the "orphan of traditional music theory found a secure place in the music of Liszt"². Todd also points out that Liszt used the augmented triad as a powerful tool in the transmission of extra-musical ideas. The use of the augmented triad in what might be referred to as the love theme of the piece is contrary to Liszt's usual usage of the chord, though. For the most part he employed the augmented harmony to represent death, despair, and hopelessness.³ This harmony, found in the third theme, is created by a simple, chromatic neighbour motion

within the B-major chord. The F-sharp of the chord rises to a G-natural, resulting in the augmented collection heard in measure 225. The third theme, therefore, contains but a single chord prolonged by the oscillation between a pitch and its upper chromatic neighbour.

In measure 239 after a short four-measure transition, the third theme is transposed up a fourth to the subdominant, E. This is followed by a second fourmeasure transition and a subsidiary theme which acts as an extension to the third theme. Much of the material in this part of the piece is harmonically difficult to explain in terms of traditional functional harmony. Within this rather unstable area an augmented chord is generated by means other than an upper chromatic neighbour motion. Here the chord results from an anticipation in the upper voice between a prevailing major 6/3 harmony and a minor 6/3 chord that acts as a neighbour harmony. Example 2.5 shows this passage in reduction.

Example 2.5



The third theme, with its accompanying transition and extension is repeated with little change in measures 298 to 330. The subsidiary extending theme (first heard in measure 255) is lengthened through repetition starting at measure 330 until tempo 1 returns at measure 370. From this point until measure 406, a combination of the third theme and the rapidly ascending scalar component of the first theme acts as a bridge from section B to the recapitulation of the A section. Also, since m. 330 there has been a rise in pitch level through a series of half-steps. This climb is presented in a reduced form in Example 2.6. From the bass E-sharp in m. 330 there is a slow ascent to the B-flat of m. 382 which is prolonged for the ensuing 16 measures. This prepares for the re-emergence of the E-flat tonic in m. 422.



Example 2.6

Section C (m. 406 to end)

The concluding part of the piece contains nearly all of the material from the first A section save for the first 20 measures of the first theme. The famous coda, ending with the same B-F tritone with which the piece begins will now be discussed. This attempt to solve the analytical problems posed by this passage is intended to aid a performer in making performance-related choices.

The first 34 measures of the coda, which commences in measure 498, are very much in E-flat major, and lead effectively to a prolongation of the dominant (B-

flat) harmony. As the reduction of example 2.7 shows, there is a gradual climb to the B-flat ⁵ in the treble from the G⁵ of measure 510. The B-flat triad is transformed into a dominant seventh by the addition of the A-flat in measure 523. This harmony is prolonged by sheer repetition until the shocking *fff* interruption of the B-natural of measure 532.⁴



Example 2.7

This B is part of the B-F tritone which opened the piece and is associated with Mephisto's tuning of the violin. Its return in the concluding measures reminds us of the poem which inspired the creation of the waltz and recalls the tonic of the central B section. Aside from its evocation of the literary source of the piece, however, the manner in which it enters suggests a way of hearing the work. In this hearing we follow the dyad B-F and its various expansions and contractions from tritone to perfect fifth to major sixth and back throughout the course of the piece. Example 2.8 is a graph representing this process.

Example 2.8



The B-F tritone of the opening expands to the perfect fifth B-F-sharp, which then grows once more to become the B-flat-G of section A's tonic arrival. This interval contracts to B-Fsharp in section B which in turn grows to become the B-flat and G of the return of part A. With the coda, B-flat and G shrink first to B-flat-F of the dominant prolongation starting in measure 506 then finally returning to the B-F tritone first heard in the opening. We see that the series of dyads possesses a near-symmetrical structure in which the central B section acts as the pivot point in the "evolution" of the dyad.⁵ This process is essentially atonal; it is possible that Liszt was attempting to free the tritone from its traditional role as a dissonant interval member of a dominant or diminished seventh chord that contracts to a major or minor third. In the <u>Second</u> Mephisto Waltz this interval gains a significant amount of independence as it has become one of the structure-defining features of the work. Also, because of the tritone's historic association with Satan as the "Diabolus in Musica", its enhanced profile in the piece is appropriate.

The question of the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u>'s overall tonality has not yet arisen as we have focussed on mid- and foreground tonal events. The bulk of the material, however, points to E-flat as the clear tonic with B-major providing tonal contrast in the middle section. The introduction and especially the coda, though, prominently feature the tritone B-F and seem to call into question E-flat as the unanimous choice as overall tonic. In respect to this tonal problem, L. Bardos states that this piece is in the key of B! ⁶. He reasons that to begin and end a piece on the same

note, independent of traditional tonality is one way of establishing the key. He calls this a "tonality symbol". However, the sheer weight of the E-flat tonality within the piece is far more convincing than an agreement between the opening and closing pitches. Besides, the tritone, B-F is hardly a secure footing upon which to base a tonality.

Despite the less literal treatment of the episode from Lenau's <u>Faust</u>, one senses that the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> still owes much to the poem. The presence of the central, langorous section maintains the connection between this piece and its predecessor and literary stimulus. As will be seen, the <u>Third</u>—and <u>Fourth Mephisto</u> <u>Waltzes</u> are further removed from the poem for they lack the contrasting material found in the B sections of the first two <u>Mephisto Waltzes</u>.

Notes for Chapter 2

¹ A closer look at the second and third themes reveal an interesting relationship between them. The first three pitches of the third theme form an approximate inversion of the first three of the second. This motivic similarity helps to unify the contrasting sections. A similar relationship is seen in <u>First Mephisto</u> <u>Waltz</u> where a sub-theme of section B contains the outline of part of the main theme of the work.

² R. Larry Todd, "The Unwelcome Guest Regaled: Franz Liszt and the Augmented Triad". <u>19th Century</u> <u>Music</u>, vol. 12, no. 2, (Fall, 1988): page 94.

³ A typical example of Liszt's use of the augmented triad during the latter years of his life is found in the song <u>Der Traurige Mönch</u>. Almost the entire piece is constructed of augmented triads and whole-tone scales used to paint a picture of a melancholic monk.

⁴The reiteration of the tonic pitch, E-flat, in the bass throughout the coda is in keeping with Liszt's later practice. Tonic, and other scale degree pedal points are often employed within many of the pieces from his twilight years. In this piece, 101 measures are underpinned by a tonic pedal. The use of pedal tones maintains a certain stability through passages in which Liszt has weakened or destroyed the sense of key through the use of unusual harmonies or through progressions which seem aimless. On the other hand, the use of a tonic pedal in conjunction with the dominant, for example, can weaken a cadence in which the dominant is involved.

⁵ If one also considers smaller passages within each A section where the B-F tritone returns as part of a diminished seventh chord this dissonant interval might be seen as an intermediary between the B-flat-G of the E-flat tonic and the B-F sharp of the secondary tonal center of the middle section.

⁶L. Bardos. "Ferenc Liszt, The Innovator", <u>Studia Musicologica</u>. 17, (1975): 3-38.
Chapter 3

The Third and Fourth Mephisto Waltzes; their extramusical connections.

Unlike their namesakes, the <u>Third</u> and <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltzes</u> possess very few passages which are unmistakably linked with the episode from Lenau's poem. They do, however, still contain a few elements and characteristics which evoke the moods and events depicted in the literary work.

Aside from their common title, the most general of these connections is the rapid, triplet division of the beat used to evoke a waltz of a truly daemonic temper. Also, as with all of the Mephisto Waltzes, they open with a distinctive, attention-getting passage. In the case of the first two works, this opening is a fairly definite depiction of violin tuning. The <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> begins with a more stylized version of the tuning gesture: a remarkable satanic fanfare of 4 pitches which, with the exception of a major third, are separated by perfect fourths. The opening of the last waltz does not conjure up images of any sort of stringed instrument, or make any bold announcement. Instead, its introductory measures play a rhythmic game of placing rests on the downbeats of the first 8 measures. As with the first three waltzes, capturing the attention of the listener is a major role of this introduction. Attention is focussed in the fourth waltz, however, by what is lacking (downbeats) rather than what is present.

The first three waltzes share certain aspects of their textural and thematic design. The <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> contains a passage akin to the contrasting, central sections found in the first two waltzes. At measure 180, the tempo slows slightly and the dynamic level suddenly falls to *p* and *dolce*. For the first time in the piece, a legato, broken-chord accompaniment is heard in the left hand offering much relief from the predominant repeated-chord texture. The great contrast between this passage and the

one immediately preceding is enhanced by the lack of any sort of transition between them and by the juxtaposition of two distantly related harmonies (an F-sharp dominant 9th and an A dominant 9th). However, despite the great beauty of this segment, it does not fulfill the same programmatic role as did the larger, contrasting sections of the first two Mephisto Waltzes. Instead of bringing to mind images of an erotic respite from a frenzied dance, it functions more perfunctorily as a relief from some rather harsh surroundings.

Another feature shared by the <u>First</u> and <u>Third Mephisto Waltzes</u> are quiet, high trills. In the first waltz these are used in measure 861 to evoke nightingales just before the stormy coda. In the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> evocative trills are similarly situated with respect to the coda in measures 242-3 and 246-7. Example 3.1 contains excerpts from both works.



Example 3.1

Example 3.1 (cont)



Because of their brief duration and more measured execution, the trills of the <u>Third</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u> sound less bird-like and, as will be seen in a more detailed account of the piece later on, certain structural attributes of this trilling passage overshadow these tenuous extra-musical associations.

Another specific similarity is seen in the closing of the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> which reflects the final moments of Lenau's poem in the same way as the first waltz does. After quiet, trilling interludes, both codas commence at full tempo and build to a great climax which might be seen as illustrating the great emotions that consume the lovers.

In a less specific vein, there are a few musical features found within the last two Mephisto Waltzes that are also found in the first two and pertain to the overriding devilish character expressed by these pieces. Some of the most important and distinctive of these traits are grace notes (evoking either a viscious or playful effect), loud or dissonant trills or tremolos (sounding angry or aggressive), and sudden accents. For instance, the passage that commences in measure 27 in the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> contains a series of chords punctuated by grace notes, which call attention to the top voice and also lend an incisive sound to the quiet, staccato passage. By the end of the passage, each of the three chord-tones has been preceded by its own grace note,

which adds to the intensity and bestows an appropriate, playful touch.

Tremolos, which in the central part of the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u> suggested the chortling of Mephistopheles, are heard in the third waltz several times accompanying a repetition of that piece's opening motto. As in the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u> the tremolo here carries a certain mean-spirited humour and also serves the more technical requirement of sustaining a rather thin chord in a less resonant part of the keyboard.

Unexpected accents and rhythmic jolts, very similar to those near the end of the first section of the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u>, are present in two prominent spots in the third waltz between measures 67 and 82, and between 127 and 142. In both passages, the predominant triplet subdivision of the basic pulse is interrupted by a sudden appearance of duple subdivision and the attendant placement of dynamic accents on the second eighth-note of the duple-divided beats. This metric distortion may be taken to represent the perverse character of Mephistopheles.

The <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltz</u> possesses fewer of these evocative attributes, partly because of its far shorter length and partly due to its far more concentrated musical material. The main examples of Mephistophelean gestures are located between measures 85 and 113 where there are two extended trills and a series of tremolos.

Chapter 4

The Third Mephisto Waltz

Of the Mephisto Waltzes, I find the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> to be the most puzzling—but also the most compelling—of the group. A multitude of thematic building blocks arranged in a seemingly casual manner combined with an ambiguous tonal focus lie at the root of this puzzlement. More specifically, questions arise as to how one should hear the opening fanfare (ms. 1-10) and its recurrences (at ms. 107, 143, and in the coda) in relation to the piece's structure and tonality. How much relative weight should be given to tonal arrivals such as those in measure 111 on F-sharp major and in measure 237 on e-flat minor (d-sharp)? Which of these two "competing" tonalities (Fsharp major or d-sharp minor) ultimately prevails? And finally, how might one perform worrisome passages such as the coda in a convincing way?

Hearing a single, overall tonality for the piece would certainly help a performer come to terms with these issues and may result in a better performance. But the question of tonality with regards to Liszt's <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> is unsettled; some analysts, such as Mary A. Hunt in her dissertation "Franz Liszt: The Mephisto Waltzes", support F-sharp major¹, while others, like the performer John Ogdon, tend toward d-sharp minor.⁴ Analyses of the issues leading to this lack of consensus, and a study of the intriguing problems encountered in supporting either view, will form the basis for this chapter. All of the difficulties met within this piece are, I believe, not products of haphazard compositional procedures or whimsy; instead they are manifestations of Liszt's active search for new ways of organizing tonal structures.

If one were to choose to support d-sharp minor as the piece's overall tonic, some of the evidence would include: D-sharp (or functionally associated pitch classes,

especially A-sharp) is often placed in a very important rhythmic position; the areas in which D-sharp gains prominence are the opening and the closing of the piece, areas which conventionally host the establishment and re-establishment of the tonic; and the d-sharp minor triad is clearly unfolded in the uppermost voice in the first half of the piece.

The foregoing supports for d-sharp minor are all related in that they are essentially rhythmic in nature. The features which champion F-sharp major as the tonic, on the other hand, are more related to harmonic function. These include: two long dominant prolongations from measures 35-50 and from 119-126; and a strong cadence on Fsharp at measures 111 and 127, the latter of which is set up by a well - prepared dominant.

In order to attempt to supply an answer to the question of tonality in this work, the remainder of this chapter will present an analysis of the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u>. This analysis will be based upon the analytical methods of Heinrich Schenker, as it indicates linear and harmonic structures connecting middleground events. The analysis will not go to the level of the *Ursatz* since this piece, like most of the later works of Liszt, does not seem to be based on that I-V-I model. Certain additions and modifications to the standard Schenkerian procedures are also necessary and will be mentioned in connection with the graphs.To gain an understanding of the work as a whole, and to illustrate some of the points just made, an overview of the thematic and harmonic design will first be presented.

The themes of the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> are constructed of short, easily discernible units which are combined to form larger phrases and periods. In this regard the third waltz is similar to the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u>. Example 4.1 contains the thematic building blocks from which the work is made.

Example 4.1

thematic unit 1





thematic unit 2





thematic unit 3



Example 4.1 (cont.)



thematic unit 4 µm. 35 q. £ dr-Ħ 0 P 2 0 -..... G 6 ____ 77 ┛





When the work is viewed in terms of these themes and their recurrences, the following large-scale structure results: introduction, section A (from measure 11 to 82), section B (from measure 83 to179), section C (measure 180 to 252), and the coda (measure 253 to end). The following graphic represents this succession.



Example 4.2; thematically delineated structure for Third Mephisto Waltz :

When the tonal design of the piece is considered, however, one can discern 4 segments. The first section contains the introduction and the initiation of tonal ambiguity (measures 1-107), the second section embraces the approach to, and prolongation of, the F-sharp major tonal center (107 - 143), the third leads out of this key and into more ambiguity(143 -224), and the fourth (224 to end), which includes the coda, gives fairly strong support to d-sharp minor as the closing tonality although remnants of F-sharp echo in the bass. In this broad perspective, the opening fanfare figure acts a delineator of these larger structural divisions. It opens the piece, commences the drive to the first, large F-sharp cadence, finishes the F-sharp section, and ends the piece with some support of a d-sharp minor tonality.

Whichever of the two views one considers, it is evident that the overall plan of the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> is very different from the previous two Mephisto Waltzes. Both of its predecessors are larger, three-part forms that contain lengthy, contrasting middle

sections. Within both central parts are themes which, because of their expressive qualities, bring to mind images related to Lenau's <u>Faust</u>. The lack of this contrasting "B" section is what really sets the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> apart from the first two dances.

Having undertaken an overview of the piece, we are ready for a more detailed account of the F-sharp major—d-sharp minor tonal conflict. Unlike the earlier Mephisto Waltzes, in which formal contrast was provided by evocative themes, the <u>Third</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u> derives its drama more abstractly from this tonal polarity.

The Third Mephisto Waltz in Detail

Although the thematic design of the waltz is multifaceted, its components are at least clear. Harmonically, the design of the piece is locally clear but ambiguous in its larger-scale aspects. To demonstrate this, graphs will be presented throughout this discussion. A set of smaller graphs containing much foreground detail will appear at appropriate points in the prose. A single, more background graph will be placed near the end of the discussion to summarize the harmonic structure in a graphic form.

One's attention is immediately riveted by the striking fanfare with which the piece opens. The pitches C-sharp, E-sharp, A-sharp, and D-sharp are heard *fortissimo* and their sound is blended by use of the damper pedal, which is depressed throughout the opening 5 measures. Example 4.3 contains the first 5 measures of the piece. The first question one might ask is: what is the nature of the resulting chord and how does it function harmonically here and elsewhere in the piece? This collection of pitch classes is the first manifestation of the ambiguity which infests the piece. Ways in which it might be interpreted are varied: in d-sharp minor the chord could be labeled as a minor V with a suspended fourth (the d-sharp); in F-sharp major it could be part of a V¹³ chord. The collection might also be the tonic of a-sharp minor with an added fourth, or the dominant

Example 4.3



ninth of g-sharp minor with a missing third. Because of the wide range of choices and because these four pitches are the only ones heard for the first 10 measures, one must rely on other aspects of the opening to discern the prominence of one pitch as a tonic over the others. D-sharp is accented as it is the highest of the four pitches. It is also given considerable weight from a rhythmic standpoint as it is stressed by its longer duration and its placement as the rhythmic goal of an anacrusis. The anacrusis is repeated on a larger rhythmic scale: not only do the last three beats of measure one act as an upbeat to the d-sharp of measure two, but measures 1, 2, 3 and 4 act as a larger upbeat to measure 5, where the D-sharp is attacked and held. The numerals above and below Example 4.3 shows this relationship. The upper numbers show the whole-note beats in the large-scale anacrusis figure while the lower ones indicate the quarter-note beats in the local anacrusis.

From a melodic perspective, the D-sharp gains a certain prominence by virtue of its position on top of the perfect fourth, A-sharp to D-sharp. This rising-fourth motion emphasizes the upper member of the pair because of an implied 5-1 motion. Also, measures 11 through 23 can best be explained as a prolongation of the lower chromatic

neighbour, D-natural, to the D-sharp. This can be seen in Graph 4.1, which contains a reduction of the first 34 measures of the piece.



Graph 4.1

Example 4.4 reproduces measures 11 through 19 and shows the long, chromatically descending string of first inversion triads which prolong the D-natural. This Dnatural, that is prolonged from measure 7, may be thought of functionally as a C-double sharp because it returns in measure 27 to D-sharp. In this interpretation, then, it is one of the only appearances of a functional leading tone thus far in the work.



. .



Example 4.4 (cont.)



Graph 4.1 shows that up until measure 27 D-sharp functions structurally as a tonic, as it has support in rhythmic and melodic ways. However, a considerable harmonic and tonal uncertainty is created by the presence of a C-sharp prolonged in the bass against the D-sharp reiterated in the upper voice. We shall see that these two pitch classes frame much of what happens in the work; an immediate manifestation of the conflict appears in the very next passage (measure 27 ff) in which a symmetrical collection framed by the C-sharp and D-sharp is reiterated. This chord is shown in Example 4.5.





This chord can easily be converted to either a d-sharp minor 6/3 triad or a F-sharp major 6/4 triad depending upon which of the framing tones one considers to be a non-chord tone.

The next section of the piece (see Graph 4.2) contains the first hint at the upcoming F-sharp tonality: the rising fourth, C-sharp to F-sharp in the bass. Hearing the F-sharp as a tonic, however, is prevented by the relatively unstable harmonies present in the remainder of the texture. The first half of the area between measures 35 and 66 prolongs a dominant-ninth chord built on C-sharp, the latter half maintains one on F-sharp.





The harmony built on the F-sharp resolves as an augmented 6th chord to the Fmajor triad of the next passage. Measures 67 to 82 are presented in a reduced form in Graph 4.3. This passage is a completely regular sequence and descends by half-step from F to D.

Graph 4.3



Because of the relentless descent and lack of any rhythmic variation, these measures are disruptive of tonal stability. Liszt eases the descent from one harmony to the next by adding a flatted 7th to each triad which is reinterpreted enharmonically as a raised 6th degree and resolves as part of a German Sixth chord, very much like the resolution of the preceding section's F-sharp dominant-ninth. The downward momentum created by this passage would seem to strongly imply that C-sharp major will follow.

Graph 4.4 contains a reduction of the passage from measure 83 to 110.



Much of this passage is similar to one that was heard from measure 11 to 35 but it is modified by the addition of off-beat neighboring-chords and octave doublings. The just mentioned thrust toward C-sharp between measures 67 and 82 is delayed by the prolongation of the d-minor triad between measures 83 and 98. In this passage, then, the D-natural could be interpreted as the upper neighbour to C-sharp, contrary to its earlier role (measures 11 to 27) as the lower neighbour to D-sharp. This D-natural is then deflected upwards to D-sharp in measures 99 - 110 and then the D-sharp itself becomes the upper neighbour to the C-sharp at the end of measure 110. A surprisingly effective anacrusis to the upcoming F-sharp chord is created by this D-sharp to C-sharp motion, and it is enhanced by the division of the last beat of the bar into 8th-notes. This is the first point in the piece in which the prevailing tonal ambiguity gives way. The D-sharp to C-sharp anacrusis is contained in Example 4.6 which is a reproduction of the piece from measure 107 to the arrival on the F-sharp in measure 111.





The prolongation of F-sharp major is accomplished by the presentation of two thematic blocks, at measure 111 and 127, that we have not heard beginning in F-sharp before. The effect is so strong that, were it not for the strong support of d-sharp minor during the last 52 measures of the piece, one could say that the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> is in the key of F-sharp major based upon this robust embrace of that tonality. Graph 4.5 shows measures 111 to 180 in reduction.



Graph 4.5





The measures between 111 and 127 function as a large preparation for the even stronger arrival on F-sharp major in measure 127. This arrival is made stronger by the protracted preparation and the explicit C-sharp dominant 7th chord prolonged through measures 124 to 126. The reduction reveals an interesting feature. The somewhat odd succession of chords—F-sharp 5/3, G-sharp 6/4, A 6/3 turning into C-sharp 7—actually has an important structural role. It reproduces the small-scale D-sharp to C-sharp 8thnote anacrusis of measure 110 in a much larger scale in the bass. This also reinforces D-sharp's role as the upper neighbour to C-sharp within an F-sharp major framework. So this large bass pattern binds both F-sharp cadences while at the same time utilizing the two counteractive pitches, C-sharp and D-sharp.

A breakdown of the just established tonal center begins with the introduction of an E-natural in measure 129. The ensuing measures are near replicas of those from measure 66 to 82 where a four measure figure was repeated four times in descending half-steps. In this later occurrence, however, the texture is thicker and the commencing pitch is F-sharp rather than F-natural. This passage ends in measure 142 on what appears to be a b-flat minor chord. Because of the bass E-flat, though, the actual harmony is a dominant ninth on E-flat (without the G); a chord which contains exactly the same pitch classes as the fanfare figure which follows immediately in the next measure (143). Also because of the bass, the fanfare seems to be rooted on D-sharp (E-flat).

We see, then, that the fanfare in measure 143 is placed in a position analogous to the d-minor prolongation from measure 83 to 98. There, the d-minor triad which was earlier heard as a lower neighbour to D-sharp was reintroduced as an elaboration of a downwards directed sequence towards C-sharp. Here, the fanfare is also brought back as an elaboration of the step on E-flat/D-sharp in a descending sequence. Consequently we expect the downward impulse to continue in the upper voice to the C-sharp and attenuate any suggestion of D-sharp.

Instead, the D-sharp starts to regain prominence as it is prolonged over the next 16 measures. The opening figure leads into a section that, like measures 35 to 66 earlier in the piece, prolongs a series of two dominant-ninth chords; one on C-sharp, the other on F-sharp. In keeping with the building-block approach to construction used by Liszt in his latter years, these measures are only slightly varied from their original form heard earlier in the work. They differ, though, in their formal function, as shown by the manner of their resolution into the following passage. Previously, the F-sharp dominant-ninth chord resolved in the manner of an augmented sixth harmony to an F major triad. At this juncture, however, its resolution passes directly to an A-major ninth sonority. (The use of unresolved, parallel ninth chords is a coloristic device that is usually associated with Debussy and later composers from the turn of the century.)

In its melodic and textural make-up, the passage initiated by the A-major ninth chord is very different from anything else in the piece. This passage is included in the reduction of measures 180 to 224 in Graph 4.6.





Graph 4.6 (cont.)



The 32 measures from 180 to 212 act in some ways as a musical foil to the rest of the waltz in that the predominant repeated chord texture and loud dynamic give way to a gentle broken chord figure in the left hand. The music slows somewhat and drops dramatically in dynamic level to *p* and *dolce*¹. One might be tempted to draw a parallel between this and the central "love theme" sections of the previous two Mephisto Waltzes. This passage, however, merely alludes to that quality and so does not form the basis for a large, contrasting structural entity. From a structural point of view, though, this passage is quite important. In graph 4.6 we see the bass gradually rising from the F-sharp established in measure 164 through the G-sharp in 184 to the A-sharp in bar 192. The A and B, then, are upper neighbours to the more important G-sharp and A-sharp. From 196 to 212 the bass ascends from A-sharp to D-flat. At this point (measure 212), the D-flat supports a cadential 6/4 chord. However, the last of the parallel 6/3 chords between measures 212 and 224 lead the D-flat back down through C-flat to the B-flat last heard in measure 195.

Graph 4.7 contains the remainder of the piece from measure 224 to the end.

Graph 4.7



The dotted line connecting these two harmonies represents the fading of the Fsharp major tonal center since the C-sharp dominant 9th never does resolve and is left hanging. At the same time, starting in measure 224, d-sharp minor seizes control. The final blow to F-sharp is the chromatic slump of the pitches D-sharp and G-sharp to D and G-natural in bar 244. The fall of these two pitches signals the demise of the once predominant F-sharp tonal center. The D-natural, in particular, acts (as it has done previously) enharmonically as the leading tone of d-sharp minor.

I

One of the most dramatic events, both musical and structural, occurs in measure 251. This bar is occupied by one lone pitch— A-sharp. It is approached by a *diminuendo* and *rallentando* and is, therefore, played quietly and emphasized by an agogic accent. A sense of anticipation is created by the event since it is certainly recognized as but a brief respite from the preceding and following assaults. Also, this single A-sharp is, in my reading, <u>the</u> dominant preparation for the final, closing reference to d-sharp minor, just as the implied C-sharp dominant 9th harmony in measure 240 was the final inclination toward F-sharp major.

The musical weight placed on the A-sharp in measure 251 combined with the preceding passage's definite focus on D-sharp as a tonal center are, for me, enough to carry D-sharp through the coda to the end. The <u>overall</u> apprehension of tonality, however, is left uncertain. If Liszt had supplied a C-double sharp in the coda or, conversely, ended the piece with a V-I cadence in F-sharp, there would have been no question at all. Both tonalities are frustrated by Liszt's closing the piece with the four pitches of the opening's fanfare. This most ambiguous collection of pitches signals the defeat of both keys as neither the strong, centrally located F-sharp cadences nor the final section's support of d-sharp minor can overcome the far stronger impression of tonal uncertainty.

A background sketch of the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> makes up Graph 4.8. I have tried to show in this graph how important structural events can be interpreted in either Fsharp major or d-sharp minor. This is done by having upward-pointing stems and beams for the d-sharp minor interpretation and downward pointing ones for F-sharp. We see in the upper voice how the F-sharp of measure 111 and the A-sharp of 127 function as either 3 and 5 in an unfolding of the d-sharp minor triad or as 1 and 3 in F-sharp major. Much of the bass, in an F-sharp major interpretation, is occupied by the prolongation of C-sharp and an unfolding of a second inversion F-sharp chord. Thus, the D-flat in measure 212 is seen to be connected to the C-sharp of measure 148. The implied Csharp dominant 9th of measure 240 is left unresolved as F-sharp major fades and dsharp takes over. The unconnected dotted line from the C-sharp indicates the

unfinished state of the gesture toward F-sharp major. In d-sharp minor, however, the bass support materializes as we get closer to the end with a small V to I gesture in measures 224 to 236 and a larger, more significant one from measure 251 to the end.





Because the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u> does not rely on extramusical literary references for its drama as much as the two earlier waltzes, it must find another source for its inner life. Liszt has, I think, most skilfully created a work that is imbued with a high degree of drama and excitement despite the lack of an incontrovertible tonal focus.

Notes for Chapter 4

¹Mary A. Hunt. <u>Franz Liszt: The Mephisto Waltzes.</u> (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. 1979).

²Allan Walker, Ed.. Franz Liszt. The Man and His Music. (New York: Taplinger Pub. Co. 1970). p. 167.

Chapter 5

The Fourth Mephisto Waltz

If Liszt had completed the sketches for a contrasting section, the <u>Fourth</u> <u>Mephisto Waltz</u> would have an overall structure similar to that of the third¹. However, as it stands, the section labelled as "C" in Example 5.2 is not included in published versions of the waltz. In this sense, then, the <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltz</u> is incomplete.

Despite the lack of a contrasting section, the <u>Third</u> and <u>Fourth Mephisto</u> <u>Waltzes</u> do share certain features. Both have a short introduction in which a distinctive and significant theme or figure is heard. The third sections of each contain weighty events such as a long delayed tonic arrival in the <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltz</u> and the introduction of varied and contrasting thematic material in the <u>Third Mephisto Waltz</u>. Finally, both works have codas which call the closing tonality into question.

This waltz has three themes or, more aptly, three thematic units which are repeated throughout the work. The first of these is predominant and will be referred to as the main theme of the piece. The three units are reproduced in Example 5.1.



Example 5.1

Example 5.1 (cont.)





Example 5.2; thematically delineated structure for the Fourth Mephisto Waltz:



Unlike the earlier more programmatic waltzes, the distinctive introductory measures of the Fourth Mephisto Waltz do not mimic the tuning of a violin. Instead, the dance gets under way immediately. The footing of this opening is far from assured, however. As with the previous two Mephisto Waltzes (and to a degree, the first), tonal uncertainty greets us. None of the Mephisto Waltzes opens with the tonic and the fourth follows suit. However, unlike the openings of the <u>Second</u> and the <u>Third Mephisto</u> <u>Waltzes</u>, the pitch with which the piece commences is closely related to the tonic. See Example 5.3. The dominant scale degree, C-sharp, is prolonged through the initial 8 measures by repetition of the C-sharp minor scale beginning and ending with C-sharp itself. In conjunction with the prolongation of C-sharp, Liszt has provided a rhythm that makes uncertain the notated 6/8 meter. As can be seen in Example 5.3, nothing falls on the downbeats of the first 8 measures save for eighth-note rests. If one were to play these measures without any kind of shaping or nuance, the meter might be perceived as 6/4 with the first C-sharps as the downbeat. A small stress on the "E" of measures 1, 3, and 5 and a slight crescendo through the last beats of measures 2, 4, and 6, however, will provide enough support for 6/8 so that Liszt's metrical subterfuge will be heard.



Example 5.3.

Example 5.3 (cont.)



The first statement of the first thematic unit in measure 9 sets in motion the tonal game which occupies much of this work. However, unlike the <u>Third Mephisto</u> <u>Waltz</u> where a true conflict existed between two tonics, the overall tonic in the fourth waltz is clear. The "game" in this piece is one of setting up expectations for the arrival of the tonic, F-sharp, thwarting them, then unexpectedly fulfilling them.

Graph 5.1a is a reduction of the <u>Fourth Mephisto Waltz</u> and reveals this aforementioned game.



Graph 5.1

Graph 5.1 (cont.)



In the treble part, between measures 9 and 49, there is a sequence involving three half-step rises, from D to E-sharp. In parallel with the upper voice the lower part has a gradual chromatic rise from F-sharp to G-sharp then a drop to the C-sharp of measure 49. This bass part, if viewed in isolation, is perfectly syntactic in F-sharp major, implying a progression from I passing to ii through a chromatic passing-tone, then proceeding to V. However, the bass F-sharp is harmonized as the third of a D-major chord, the G is the third of an E-flat harmony and the G-sharp is the middle member of an E triad. Each of the first two pitches of the bass is a pedal tone that lasts for 16 measures and underpins a repeated upper-voice pattern indicated by the figured bass in Graph 5.1²

Starting in bar 49, the dominant 7th harmony in F-sharp major is outlined by a

series of rising scales. Combined with the long chromatic climb already undertaken in the treble voice from C-sharp to E-sharp, the goal of F-sharp is strongly implied. The surprising D-natural of measure 57 acts as a deceptive cadence and leaves no doubt that the tonic will not be heard at this point.

Between bars 57 and 73, the long, C-sharp to E-sharp chromatic rise originally heard from measure 1 to 49 is echoed in miniature. From the two eighth-note C-sharps at the end of bar 64 through to the downbeat of 73 the chromatic steps previously taken are twice retraced (this is marked by an asterisk in Graph 5.1a). The only deviation from the original climb is that the E-sharp is spelled as an F-natural so as to fit with the predominant B-flat harmony in these measures. As indicated in the graph, though, this F natural prolongs the leading tone E-sharp of F-sharp major.

This entire 64-measure process (from measure 9 to 73) is repeated in a slightly modified form starting at bar 73. In the B-flat segment (measure 121 ff), however, the compressed renditions of the ascent from C-sharp to E-sharp gain in intensity, then, in measure 137, plunge unexpectedly into a root position F-sharp major chord. At last, the twice-delayed goal is reached. Looking at Graph 5.1b, however, we see that the prolonged B-flat of measures 57 ff and 121 ff is actually part of a larger bass arpeggiation of the tonic triad C-sharp—A-sharp (B-flat)—F-sharp.

Once on the tonic chord, Liszt maintains an F-sharp pedal point for 24 measures. Above this constant bass appears the first thematic unit, then a series of rapidly repeated triads starting on B-flat and descending chromatically to the tonic. The first thematic unit is then heard in the left hand accompanied by righthand chords until bar 169, where F-sharp major is interrupted by a climb to the pitch E-flat, which is prolonged for 16 measures. The final dominant pitch, C-sharp, is reached by way of a descent from this E-flat through D, harmonized by a Neapolitan (G-major) harmony. Five bars before the end, the G-natural is raised to a G-sharp in order to better prepare

and emphasize the final C-sharp. If one performs the ending of the piece with no *ritardando*, the C-sharp's role as the dominant is made more clear. The desire to continue past the final pitch is enhanced by the *a tempo* drive toward some point beyond the conclusion of the waltz.

This final waltz is, of the four, the most compressed and economically written. Basic quarter- and eighth-note motions are maintained throughout in conjunction with a thin, almost stark texture. Also, a strong sense of unity is created by the small-scale repetition of the twice-played 48-measure climb from C-sharp to E-sharp. Finally, the lack of a contrasting segment of any size creates an imbalance. The ascent from the Csharp to the tonic F-sharp is a fairly long and involved process. The descent back to the C-sharp of the end occupies far less time and space. If Liszt had finished the *Andantino* section he sketched, the large rise to the tonic would have been more balanced by a fall from it.

Notes for Chapter 5

¹The largest sketch that has survived is 60 measures in length while two others are 3 and 6 measures respectively. All three sketches can be found on page 58 as an appendix to the second volume of the <u>Liszt Society Publications</u> published by Schott and Co., London.

²Pedal tones in Liszt's later style are commonly used to bind areas of unstable or uncertain harmonic content.

Conclusion

It was Liszt's desire during much of his life, and especially during his final decade, to create music that was based upon atypical forms and tonal practices. Pieces like the last two Mephisto Waltzes were a result of this musical exploration as were other well known works such as: <u>Nuage Gris</u>, <u>The Bagatelle Without Tonality</u>, the four <u>Valses Oubliées</u>, and the <u>Czardas Macabre</u>. Most of the late piano pieces share a dark, almost sinister character and an appropriately cheerless title. The majority of the works are written in an austere style with frequent passages of bare octaves and single-line recitativo. Bravura cadenzas and impassioned outbursts so frequently found in Liszt's early and mature works no longer exist. Liszt did not seem to be at all interested in creating works which would please the public or even be understood. As the great pianist, Alfred Brendel described Liszt's outlook from the final years:

"It is not...from the 19th century concert stage, from the display and intoxication of virtuosity that these pieces (later works) grow. They do not seek to be persuasive, they hardly even seek to convince. In Liszt's own words, 'exuberance of heart' gave way to 'bitterness of heart' — bitterness resulting from the death of two of his children, bitterness at having been unable to marry the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, bitterness at the disappointment in his friendships with Wagner and Hans von Bülow, and the lack of appreciation of his works."

Throughout the course of this paper, I have endeavoured to illustrate some of the changes in Liszt's musical concerns as embodied in the four <u>Mephisto Waltzes</u>. I have also attempted to show, through analysis, how the dramatic impact arises in the early works mainly from references to Lenau's poem, <u>Faust</u>, or in the later works from internal structural and tonal considerations.

The first two waltzes are, I feel, fine examples of his mature style² with strong and quite faithful links to the literary work which stimulated their production. Their mar-

velous dramatic impact is, in many ways, bound to the poem and both are full of some wonderful, typically Lisztian piano writing. We cannot ignore the fact, though, that each contains passages and processes that are compelling even without an extramusical reference. The introductory measures of the <u>First Mephisto Waltz</u> and the coda of the <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> are fascinating enough without these associations and a listener would be quite satisfied during a performance of these works even without knowledge of the story. But for a complete comprehension of these pieces, familiarity with their literary background is essential.

The latter two waltzes, however, possess far weaker ties to Lenau's work and are almost entirely dependent on intriguing tonal and structural features for the source of their equally compelling drama. Both lack the large contrasting section in the center of the piece that provides relief from the manic dance and embodies the more erotic element of Lenau's poem. Also, neither contain passages that are unmistakably suggestive of the poem, Faust. For instance, the fanfare of the opening measures, although somewhat akin to the piling of fifths in the First Mephisto Waltz, is far more difficult to interpret.

Despite their lack of unmistakable programmatic references, though, the last two waltzes do evoke the elemental conflict of the poem in their unusual and conflicting tonal designs.

Notes for Conclusion

¹Alfred Brendel. "Liszt's Bitterness of Heart", liner notes from: Liszt: <u>Late Piano Works</u>. Philips 9500 775.

²The <u>Second Mephisto Waltz</u> is from the last decade of Liszt's life and does contain some features more typical of that period, but its *raison d'etre* is still tied to the poem by Lenau.

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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Recital Hall Sunday, September 13, 1992 8:00 p.m.

DOCTORAL LECTURE/RECITAL*

BARRIE BARRINGTON, piano

Mephisto Waltz No.1 (1860)

Second Mephisto Waltz (1880-81)

- INTERMISSION -

Third Mephisto Waltz (1883)

Fourth Mephisto Waltz (1885)

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in Piano Performance.

65.

F. Liszt (1811-1886)

F. Liszt

F. Liszt

F. Liszt

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Recital Hall Wednesday, April 22, 1987 8:00 p.m.

GRADUATE RECITAL*

Barrie Barrington, Piano

"In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn..."

Brian Cherney

J. Hayd≬n (1732-1809)

Sonata in C Hob. XVI:50

Allegro Adagio Allegro molto

Images Bk.II

C. Debussy (1862-1918)

Cloches à travers les feuilles Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut Poissons d'or

-- INTERMISSION --

Humoreske, Op.20

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Einfach - Sehr Rasch und Leicht Hastig - Nach und Nach Schneller - Wie Vorher Einfach und Zart - Intermezzo Innig Sehr Lebhaft Zum Beschluss

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral of Musical Arts Degree with a major in piano performance.

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Recital Hall Wednesday, April 23, 1986 8:00 p.m.

*GRADUATE RECITAL

Barrie Barrington, piano

Michael Mosonyi Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este	F. Liszt (1811–1886) F. Liszt
ix Little Pieces, Op. 19	A. Schoenberg (1874-1951)

INTERMISSION

Sonata in B flat, Op. 106

L. Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro Scherzo Adagio Sostenuto Largo - Allegro risoluto

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral of Musical Arts Degree with a major in piano performance.

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Recital Hall Tuesday, February 18, 1992 8:00 p.m.

DOCTORAL RECITAL*

BARRIE BARRINGTON, Piano

with

Robert Caldwell, percussion Brenda Fedoruk, flute Charles Inkman, 'cello Ellen Silverman, piano

Trio for Flute, 'Cello, and Piano in G major, Hob. XV, No.15

J. Haydn (1732-1809)

Lukas Foss (b. 1922)

Allegro Andante Allegro moderato

Ni Bruit Ni Vitesse

INTERMISSION

Sonata for Flute and Piano

Allegretto Adagio sostenuto Allegro non troppo

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56b

Oskar Morawetz (b. 1917)

J. Brahms (1833-1897)

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in Piano Performance.