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SUPER AUDIO CD

FRANZ LISZT YORAM ISH-HURWITZ
(1811-1886)
ANNEES DE PELERINAGE
PREMIERE ANNEE (SUISSE)



FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)
ANNÉES DE PÈLERINAGE – PREMIÈRE ANNÉE (SUISSE)

1. Chapelle de Guillaume Tell 6:16
Lento – Più lento – Allegro vivace – Più Moderato
2. Au lac de Wallenstadt 3:31
Andante placido
3. Pastorale 1:32
Vivace
4. Au bord d'une source 3:54
Allegretto grazioso
5. Orage 4:16
Allegro molto – Presto furioso – Meno Allegro – Più moto
6. Vallée d'Obermann 14:57
Lento assai – Più lento – Recitativo – Più mosso – Presto – Lento
7. Eglogue (Hirtenweise) 3:06
Allegretto con moto
8. Le mal du pays 5:50
Lento – Andantino – Adagio dolente – Più lento – Lento
9. Les cloches de Genève (Nocturne) 6:54
Quasi Allegretto – Cantabile con moto – Animato – Più lento

Total time: 50:22



NATURE



In 1835 the countess Marie d'Agoult exchanged her much older and, in her opinion, boring husband for a man of the world, the twenty-three year old and increasingly famous pianist Franz Liszt. Of course this would lead to a big scandal, especially because Marie was already pregnant with Liszt's first daughter Blandine, so they decided to leave France and elope to Switzerland. The 'years of pilgrimage' had begun. It was a happy time and in this period many of the piano compositions that would eventually find their way into the *Première Année* came to life. In the late summer of 1836 their friend George Sand together with her two children, Maurice and Solange, as well as her maid, joined them in the French Chamonix for a mountain excursion to the nearby Mer de Glace and far beyond. In spite of his initial reservations against the rather unorthodox Sand, the Swiss Major Adolphe Pictet, a highly spiritual and erudite man, also joined the party. It must have been a strange experience for the locals to see this remarkable caravan of tourists riding on mules passing by: the elegant and gracious Marie, impeccably dressed in traveling costume, followed by Maurice and Solange rollicking on one animal, then George in her manly costume, presumably smoking one of her famous 'poetic cigars', accompanied by the major in his capote and kepi, and finally Liszt with long hair wearing a cap à la Raphael and his young pupil, Hermann 'Puzzi' Cohen. There they went up the mountains towards the Swiss border and on to Martigny: Sand and Pictet heavily debating, the first with teasing irony causing growing impatience of the latter, and Liszt reading a book. It was almost as if they were unaware of the natural beauties that surrounded them.

It is tempting to look upon the *Première Année* as if it depicts a mountain trip, since it contains all the elements of such a journey: a lake, a folkloristic village, a sparkling spring, a mountain storm and even shepherds whistling a light-hearted tune.



However, one would walk on slippery grounds, because it concerns one of Liszt's highly disputed composing principles: programmatic music. Ever since Liszt had stopped playing in public and had settled in Weimar in 1848, he started to promote what he later called the 'Music of the Future', better known as the New German School, with champions like Richard Wagner, Hector Berlioz and Hans von Bülow. According to Liszt, music was a language that could freely interact with the other forms of art and be inspired by the world that surrounds us. The most famous examples in this respect are perhaps his twelve symphonic poems, composed during the 1850's, introducing a form that he invented long before Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss followed his footsteps. But his ideas are already apparent in the first two *Années de Pèlerinage*. As an introduction to the earliest edition of the 'Suisse' volume, Liszt wrote the following:

"I have latterly traveled through many new countries, have seen many different places, and visited many a spot hallowed by history and poetry; I have felt that the varied aspects of nature, and the different incidents associated with them, did not pass before my eyes like meaningless pictures, but that they evoked profound emotions within my soul; that a vague but direct affinity was established between them and myself, a real though indefinable, a sure but inexplicable means of communication, and I have tried to give musical utterance to some of my strongest sensations, some of my liveliest impressions."

Liszt's views of music and in particular its relation with nature, art and literature has met much opposition from more conservative parts of the musical world of that time. His opponents, notably Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms and the violinist Joseph Joachim, were horrified by Liszt's concept of the 'Unity of Arts'. To them, music was an absolute and self-contained art form, which stood on a much higher level than the more down-to-earth disciplines like painting and poetry, and had nothing to do with the reality of our daily lives.

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The sonata form, which was brought to a sublime level by the great masters Mozart and Beethoven, was nearly holy to them, and Liszt with his 'formless' music that surely would collapse without its program, was as a result a desecrator of the highest order. Historians have titled this conflict as 'The War of the Romantics'. Unfortunately, Wagner's anti-Semitic views (Joachim happened to be Jewish) combined with his sharp pen and Clara Schumann's personal antipathy towards Liszt did not help much to ease things between the battling parties.

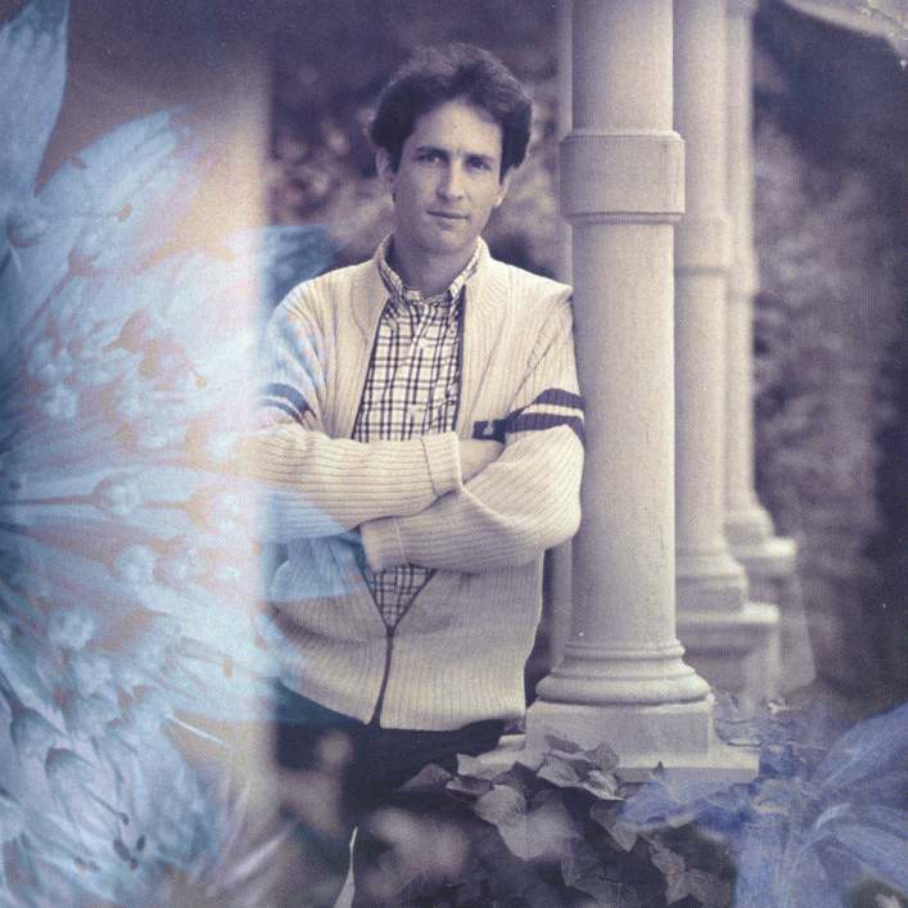
Nowadays it is clear to most people that both views have a right to exist and can even coexist. Let there be no doubt that Liszt had always been one of the greatest admirers of Beethoven and his works. He just felt that the sonata form had been stretched to its limits and new forms had to be developed in order to express his artistic feelings more accurately. The quoted text above makes it clear that Liszt never intended to actually translate images and literature into music. His real interest concerned the feelings that were evoked by the art works or nature he saw and the poems he read. Liszt only tried to express these sentiments in his music. Since these emotions are the real subject, no program – however interesting – is necessary to appreciate his music to its full extent.

So, read the poems by Byron and be inspired. Read Sénancour's Obermann if you like and brood a little on it. Do not picture a mountain storm, but try to imagine how you would feel if you happened to be in one. Then listen to the music...

EGLOGUE

THE MORN IS UP AGAIN, THE DEWY MORN,
WITH BREATH ALL INCENSE, AND WITH CHEEK ALL BLOOM,
LAUGHING THE CLOUDS AWAY, WITH PLAYFUL SCORN,
AND LIVING AS IF EARTH CONTAINED NO TOMB! ---

BYRON

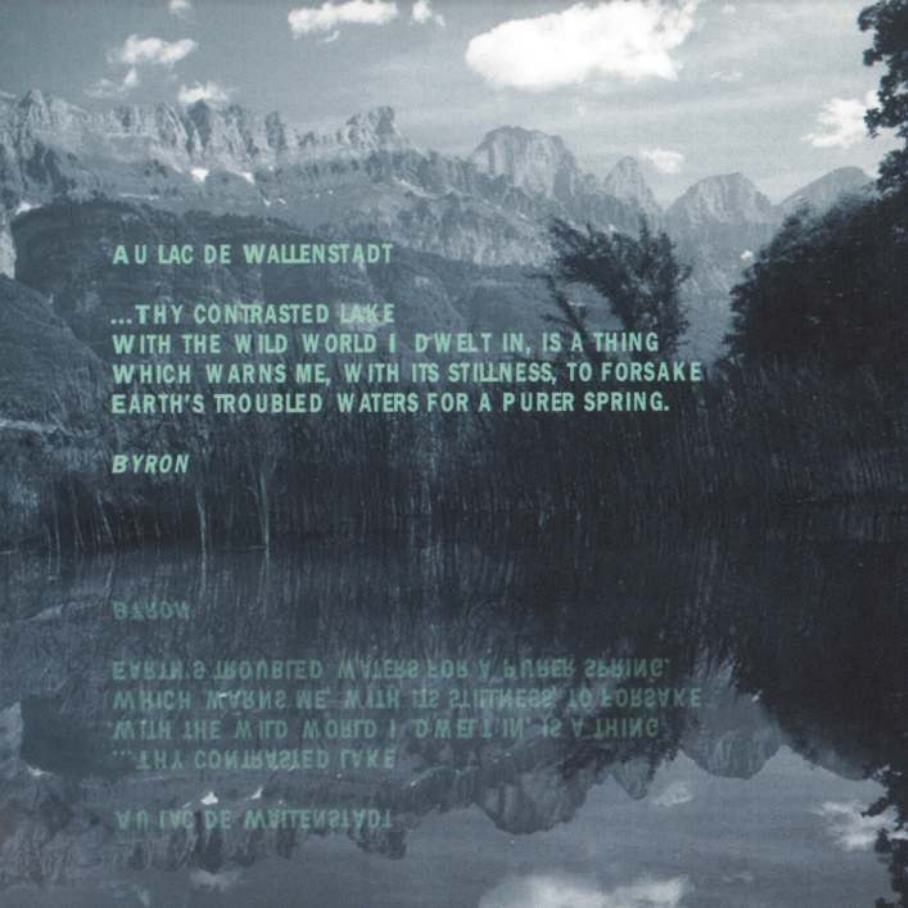


VALLÉE D'OVERMANN

QUE VEUX-JE? QUE SUIS-JE? QUE DEMANDER À LA NATURE? ...
TOUTE CAUSE EST INVISIBLE, TOUT FIN TROMPEUSE; TOUTE FORME
CHANGE, TOUTE DURÉE S'ÉPUISE; ... JE SENS, J'EXISTE POUR ME
CONSUMER EN DESIRS INDOMPTABLES, POUR M'ABREUVER DE LA
SÉDUCTION D'UNE MONDE FANTASTIQUE, POUR RESTER ATTERRE
DE SA VOLUPTUEUSE ERREUR.

ÉTIENNE DE SÉNANCOUR: OBERMANN, LETTRE 53





AU LAC DE WALLENSTADT

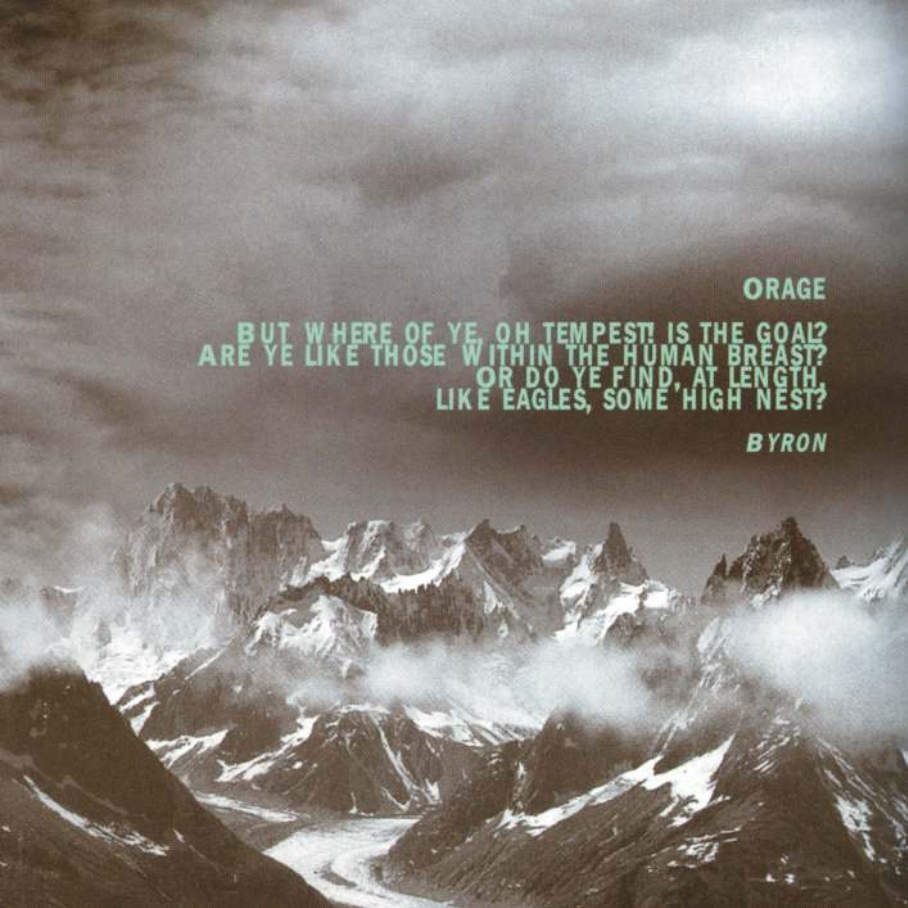
...THY CONTRASTED LAKE
WITH THE WILD WORLD I DWELT IN, IS A THING
WHICH WARNS ME, WITH ITS STILLNESS, TO FORSAKE
EARTH'S TROUBLED WATERS FOR A PURER SPRING.

BYRON

BYRON

EARTH'S TROUBLED WATERS FOR A PURER SPRING
WHICH WARNS ME WITH ITS STILLNESS TO FORSAKE
WITH THE WILD WORLD I DWELT IN IS A THING
...THY CONTRASTED LAKE

AU LAC DE WALLENSTADT



ORAGE

BUT WHERE OF YE, OH TEMPEST! IS THE GOAL?
ARE YE LIKE THOSE WITHIN THE HUMAN BREAST?
OR DO YE FIND, AT LENGTH,
LIKE EAGLES, SOME 'HIGH NEST'?

BYRON

CHAPELLE DE GUILLAUME TELL

EINER FÜR ALLE –
ALLE FÜR EINEN

SCHILLER





LES CLOCHES DE GENÈVE (NOCTURNE)



Recorded 26-28 February 2003
at the Doopsgezinde Remonstrantse Kerk
Deventer, the Netherlands
Producer/ Balance Engineer/ Editing
& Stereo-/ Surround Mastering: Bert van der Wolf
Executive Producer: Martin Odijk

Instrument: Steinway & Sons D-274, Serial No. 554005,
supplied by Ypma Piano's Alkmaar Amsterdam
Piano Technician: Michel Brandjes

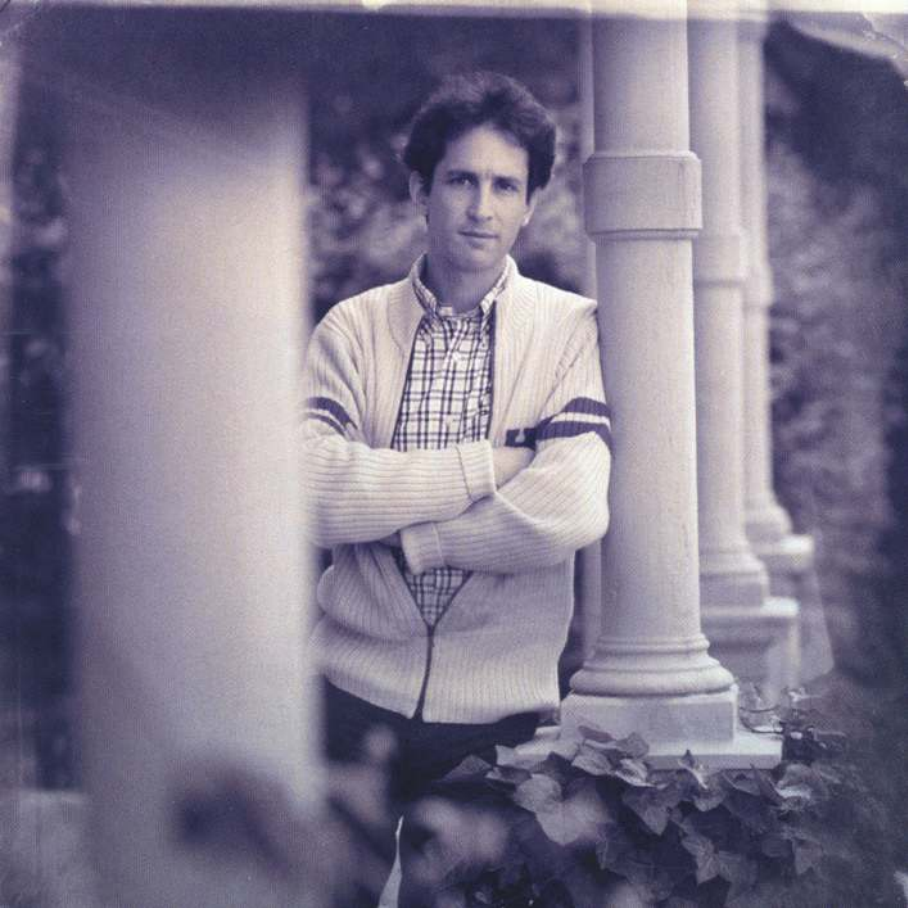
Recording Equipment:

Microphones: Sonodore RCM-402 Active Omnidirectional Microphones
Microphone pre-Amps: Rens Heijnis custom built
Converters: dCS 904 DSD AD converters, dCS 955 DA converters and dCS 974
sample rate-/format converter for downsampling to CD-layer from DSD original
Loudspeakers: Avalon professional Mixing Monitors, Avalon Eidolon
Headphones: AKG K-1000 with custom built amplifier
Amplifiers: Spectral DMA 150-S and PASSLABS X-5
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