

A Composer,s View

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British composer Humphrey Searle examines the Rosemary Brown/Liszt composition "Grübelei"

This is a very interesting piece, though it doesn't exactly resemble any piece of Liszt's that I know—apart from one bar which I will come back to later on—it is the sort of piece which Liszt could well have written, particularly during the last fifteen years of his life, when he was experimenting in new directions. One

very remarkable point is that most of it is written in $5/4$ time against $3/2$; nowadays, of course, we know that Pierre Boulez can conduct five with one hand against three with the other, but this sort of thing was not common in the nineteenth century. On the other hand Liszt did write $7/4$ in the first movement of the Dante Symphony, and even $7/8$ in the original version of the Faust Symphony, and he was certainly not averse to experiments of this kind. The harmonic style is basically that of the nineteenth century, though highly chromatic—again typical of Liszt—and formal design of the piece is quite Lisztian. "Grübelei" is defined in the dictionary as "meditation" or "musing" and the piece certainly has this character.

The markings in the score are mainly in Italian, according to Liszt's usual practice, though there is one in French "avec tendresse," which is also in character. Coming to actual details, there is one bar which resembles one of the cadenzas in the well-known third Liebestraum—the Liebestraum in fact.

In "Grübelei" we have



and in the third Liebestraum the passage is



The differences are, apart from the number of repetitions, that in "Grübelei" the right hand is an octave higher and the left an octave lower than in the Liebestraum, and in "Grübelei" the passage is written in sharps and double sharps, whereas in the Liebestraum it is written in flats: but the notes are the same. At any rate, this is an extremely interesting piece, whoever it is by, and we must be grateful to Mrs. Brown for making it available to us.

Humphrey Searle