About Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt was a composer, conductor, critic and teacher, he was best known as a pianist. He was the first of the virtuoso performers. When Liszt walked onto the stage, he took over the hall, amazing the audience with his incredible technique and his awesome presence. He was a true showman and the man who invented the solo recital. Although some were annoyed by his personality, Liszt was one of the greatest pianists the world has ever known.

As a composer, Liszt, of course, wrote music primarily for the piano. He also transcribed popular orchestral works for this instrument.

Many of his pieces are tremendously difficult and few pianists can perform them properly. Later in his life, he started writing music for the orchestra and composed wonderful melodies.

Liszt also wrote music criticism and was known as a conductor and teacher. He trained many of the performers of his time in his tradition.

Because of his ego and attitude, Liszt was always a controversial figure. However, he is recognized as one of the dominant personalities of 19th century Romantic music.

Hungarian Rhapsody #2

A rhapsody is a free-form piece that takes different tunes and strings them together.

Liszt composed 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies. Hungarian Rhapsody #2 is the most famous and became a part of virtually every performance of the greatest pianists of the time. The piece has two distinct sections – the Lassan (Hungarian for slowly), the slow section of the csárdás, a Hungarian folk dance; and the Friska (from the Hungarian friss for fresh), the fast section of the csárdás.

When you listen to the Hungarian Rhapsody #2 can you hear the formal, stately tone in the Lassan and the turbulent, jubilant tone in the Friska?

Born: October 22, 1811
Died: July 31, 1886

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What Happened During the Lifetime of Franz Liszt?

1803 | The Louisiana Purchase
1811 | Franz Liszt was born on October 22nd. He came from Raiding in the Kingdom of Hungary which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
1816 | Indiana Statehood
1826 | The First Photographs
1836 | The Battle of the Alamo
1849 | Hungary split from Austria
1861-1865 | The American Civil War
1867 | Alaska purchased from Russia
1876 | Alexander Bell invented the telephone
1878 | Thomas Edison developed electric light
1886 | Franz Liszt died on July 31st
1889 | Statue of Liberty unveiled
1903 | Wright Brothers flight at Kitty Hawk

The Piano

Franz Liszt was best known as a pianist. Write as many musical words as you can that begin with the letters in PIANO.

P ________________________
I ________________________
A ________________________
N ________________________
O ________________________

Spell Using Note Names

Use the notes on the musical staff to spell the words below.

Musical Innovations

Franz Liszt was a composer, conductor, critic, and pianist. He was also an innovator. He invented:
- The Symphonic Poem - a new musical form
- The Master Class – a new way to teach
- The Solo Piano Recital - Liszt was the first to turn the piano so the audience could see his hands and feet when he performed.
- New ways of conducting