

Sonata in B Minor

Edited by Nancy Bricard



About This Edition

The Sonata in B Minor by Franz Liszt (1811–1886), dedicated to Robert Schumann, is an important contribution to piano literature. Composed in Weimar in 1853, the first edition was published in 1854 by Breitkopf and Härtel, Leipzig, and the first performance took place in Berlin on January 22, 1857. The pianist was Hans von Bülow.

Foreword

The title page of the autograph appears as follows:

*Grand Sonate
pour le Pianoforte
par
F. Liszt
terminé le
2 Fevrier 1853*

English translation: Grand Sonata for the piano by F. Liszt, finished 2 February, 1853. The manuscript consists of 26 pages.

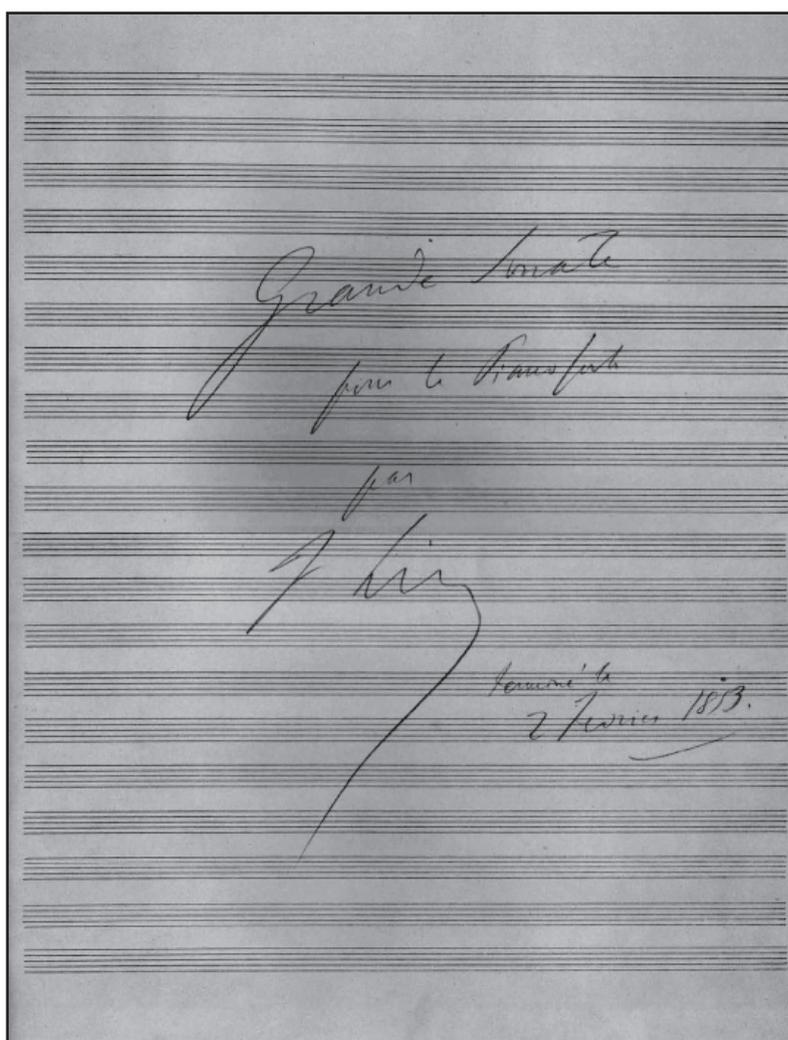
This critical edition addresses the sources and discrepancies that exist between various publications and the original autograph manuscript, as well as consideration of tempi, pedaling, fingering, and interpretation. This edition also makes reference to important historical events, the life and career of Liszt, his contributions to pedagogy and teaching, and matters of musical language and influences.

Editorial Considerations

Sources: This edition is based on the facsimile of the autograph of Liszt's Sonata in B Minor for piano, which was provided by Rigbie Turner of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, and the first edition published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1854. These sources have been studied in depth. Also consulted were the following editions, which are based on the above-mentioned sources:

—G. Henle Verlag, 1973, *Liszt Sonate b-moll • b minor • si mineur*, Ernst Hertrich, editor, with fingering by Hans-Martin Theopold

—Dover Publications, Inc., 1990, *Sonata in B Minor and Other Works*, a republication of portions of Vols. 7, 8 and 9 (*Verschiedene Werke für Pianoforte zu swei Händen*) of Series II (*Pianofortewerke*) of *Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke, herausgegeben von der Franz Liszt-Stiftung*, originally published by Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 1924–1927, with editorial notes by José Vianna da Motta



Title page of the autograph manuscript of Liszt's Sonata in B Minor



Liszt invented the class system of teaching, which is now common in most conservatories. As stated by Arthur Friedheim:

Having invented the class system of teaching, Liszt believed in it implicitly, on the ground that the teacher does not have to play the same piece over and over again for different pupils and repeat endlessly his suggestions for fingerings, phrasing, pedaling and the like; that if the pupil who is only a listener knows the work that is being played he has the same advantages as the performer, and if he does not know it he becomes better prepared to study it later. It was also Liszt's opinion that even the best teacher has his good and his off days. Its best aspect is, of course, the chance the pupils have to play for critical listeners and to rid themselves of nervousness and gain confidence.⁹

Many great pianists studied with Liszt. Bertrand Ott,¹⁰ a professor of piano at the Conservatoire d'Angers in France, divided Liszt's teaching into five periods, each associated with the teaching of famous pianists such as the following:

Paris Period	1827–1836	
	1837–1847	Concertizing throughout Europe
First Period at Weimar	1847–1861	Karl Klindworth (1830–1916), German
		Hans von Bülow (1830–1894), German
		Carl Tausig (1841–1871), Polish and Liszt's preferred student
Rome Period	1862–1868	Giovanni Sgambati (1841–1914), Italian pianist, conductor and composer
Traveling/Pedagogy Period	1868–1880	In Weimar, Rome and Budapest
		Amy Fay (1844–1928), American
		Arthur Friedheim (1859–1932), Russian origin
Second Period at Weimar	1881–1886	Eugen d'Albert (1830–1894), Scotch
		Rafael Joseffy (1853–1915), Hungarian
		Moriz Rosenthal (1862–1946), Polish
		Emil Sauer (1862–1942), German
		Alexander Siloti (1863–1945), Russian
		Vianna da Motta (1868–1948), Portugese

⁹ José Antonio Bowen, "Liszt: The Teacher," *Journal of The American Liszt Society*, 52/53 (Fall 2002/Spring 2003): 18.

¹⁰ Ott, 46–54.

to Robert Schumann

Sonata in B Minor

Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)

Lento assai

(a)

p sotto voce

6

Allegro energico

f

RH

11

f marcato

15

p agitato

The score consists of five systems of music. The first system (measures 1-6) is marked 'Lento assai' and 'p sotto voce'. It features a piano introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A circled 'a' is above measure 3. The second system (measures 7-11) is marked 'Allegro energico' and 'f'. It shows a change in tempo and dynamics, with a right-hand (RH) section starting in measure 7. The third system (measures 12-14) is marked 'f marcato'. The fourth system (measures 15) is marked 'p agitato'. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Dynamics range from piano (p) to fortissimo (f). The key signature is B minor (two sharps).

(a) The G octaves in measures 3 and 6 should sustain throughout the measure. The fact that Liszt didn't put a half rest to finish the measure might suggest that he was not aware of how long it would take for the tone to die away (see also measures 751 and 753).

Andante sostenuto

331

Musical score for measures 331-336. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is Andante sostenuto. The score features a melody in the right hand with various fingerings and slurs, and a bass line with chords and single notes. A *dolce* marking is present in the right hand.

337

Musical score for measures 337-341. The tempo remains Andante sostenuto. The right hand continues with melodic lines and slurs, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

342

Musical score for measures 342-346. The tempo remains Andante sostenuto. The right hand features more complex melodic passages with slurs and fingerings. A *poco riten.* marking is present in the right hand.

347

Quasi adagio

dolcissimo con intimo sentimento

Musical score for measures 347-350. The tempo changes to Quasi adagio. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings, and a *ppp* dynamic marking. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. A *pp sempre una corda* marking is present in the left hand.

351

Musical score for measures 351-355. The tempo remains Quasi adagio. The right hand continues with melodic lines and slurs. The left hand has a steady accompaniment with some chordal textures.

673 **Presto**

ff

678

682 **Prestissimo**

ff *fuocoso assai*

686

8

8

690

ff sempre

(kk) This parenthetical articulation is missing in the autograph and first edition. Some editions also add this articulation to the same spot in measure 688; however, this editor finds that questionable there and has left it unmarked.