Liszt as Prophet: Religion, Politics, and Artists in 1830s Paris

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Abstract

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This dissertation is a study of Liszt’s formative years in Paris, with a particular focus on three of his mentors: the priest Félicité Lamennais, the poet-statesman Alphonse de Lamartine, and the musician and mystic Chrétien Urhan. Of all the important figures Liszt encountered during this period, Lamennais, Lamartine and Urhan stand apart in their pursuit of a prophetic mission, whether in religion, politics, art, or a combination thereof. I contend that their influence—more than any other—shaped Liszt’s fundamental identity as a liberal Catholic artist, dedicated to social and artistic progress driven by faith.

I begin with an introductory chapter on important developments in Paris before and during Liszt’s time in the city. The instability of the French Revolution resulted in a dynamic society in which new political, religious, and artistic movements could form and interact. Republican values continued to seek a foothold in the oppressive climates of the Restoration and July monarchies. Similarly, the Church—reinstated by Napoleon but still greatly diminished in power—struggled for relevance in an increasingly indifferent society, leading many Catholics to embrace liberal causes. Finally, the emergence of a new generation of Romantic artists dedicated to leading society forward emerged as an unexpected legacy of the Enlightenment.

Each of the three central chapters of this dissertation focuses on one of the figures listed above, and on their impact on Liszt’s life and music. Lamennais’ radical political and religious message encouraged Liszt to express similar views in word and in music. Lamartine’s innovative religious poetry prompted Liszt to seek an equivalent in music. Finally, Urhan’s seamless merging of sacred and secular music inspired Liszt to adopt a similar approach in his
own compositions. In the final chapter, I trace the continued impact of these figures in Liszt’s life and work. Ultimately, I argue that the groundwork for Liszt’s most celebrated artistic innovations had already been laid in the early 1830s, and that many of his later works are only comprehensible within the framework of the political, religious, and artistic education he received in his youth.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments……………………………………………………………………………………..ii

Dedication………………………………………………………………………………………………..v

Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………………..1

Chapter One: Politics, Religion, and Artists…………………………………………………………7

Chapter Two: Liszt, Lamennais and Liberal French Catholicism……………………………50

Chapter Three: Liszt, Lamartine and French Romanticism……………………………………110

Chapter Four: Liszt, Urhan and the Redemption of Music………………………………………152

Chapter Five: Enduring Legacies……………………………………………………………………206

Epilogue……………………………………………………………………………………………………..256

Bibliography………………………………………………………………………………………………261
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For my parents
Introduction

Scholars have long acknowledged the importance of Paris in Liszt’s compositional development. Émile Haraszti was of the opinion that “Liszt spent the most important period of his life in Paris,”\(^1\) while Richard Prod’homme claims, “In the long existence of the artist Liszt—more than sixty of the seventy-five years that he lived—France, and Paris in particular, holds perhaps a predominant place, not so much for the number of months or years he spent there as for the influence exercised by the French culture on the formation of his adolescent spirit.”\(^2\) Finally, Klára Hamburger sums up these sentiments: “Paris determined the future development of Liszt’s life, activity and thought.”\(^3\)

Given this consensus, the relative paucity of scholarship devoted to Liszt’s Paris years is surprising. However, there are a number of explanations, both pragmatic and ideological. For one, there is simply not as much documentary material as in later eras. Liszt was still young, his correspondences were not as voluminous as in later years, and his fame was not as great. Also, depending on one’s point of view, the ambitious works of the early 1830s were either too ambitious for their day, or flawed, unpolished efforts. Whatever the case, they certainly indicate an uncompromising aesthetic not destined to win favor with audiences. It is not until the late 1830 that we find Liszt developing a compositional style geared towards the public, in the opera paraphrases and concert showpieces that remain so popular today. The uncomfortable aberration

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\(^1\) “La plus importante époque de la vie de Liszt s’est passée à Paris.” Émile Haraszti, “Liszt à Paris,” *La Revue*.


of the early, experimental Liszt continues to be conveniently swept under the rug, confounding as it does received ideas of who he was and how his career developed.

Nevertheless, the early 1830s constitute one of the most significant periods in Liszt’s life, in some ways more significant than the Glanzzeit that followed. True, the virtuoso years cemented Liszt’s place as perhaps the greatest pianist in history, and unquestionably the one who did the most to revolutionize piano technique. Without the celebrity he achieved in these years, it is doubtful that Liszt would have possessed the necessary clout to pursue the compositional ambitions of his later years. However, it was the years before the Glanzzeit that most determined precisely what these ambitions would be, and that saw the crystallization of his enduring beliefs on art, politics, and religion. Therefore, it is time to seriously address the significance of these years, primarily by examining in detail Liszt’s relationships with the three people I argue were of greatest importance to his development in this period: Abbé Felicité de Lamennais, Alphonse de Lamartine, and Chrétien Urhan.

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On December 11, 1823, the twelve-year-old Franz Liszt and his father Adam arrived in Paris. Fresh from his comprehensive training with Czerny and public successes in Vienna, the young virtuoso was primed to ascend to even greater heights in France’s capital. Despite some early successes—glowing accolades in the French press, successful concert tours in Britain—Liszt’s initial period in Paris was largely defined by a number of devastating setbacks: the poor reception of his opera Don Sanche, the failure of his first love affair (with Caroline Saint-Cricq), and most notably the death of his father. By the end of the decade Liszt was spiritually and artistically adrift: he composed very little, concertized rarely, and contemplated joining holy orders.
The July Revolution of 1830 roused him from his lethargy, launching him once more into the world. Within a few years he was an active presence in the most prominent circles of Parisian society. When asked the address of the young pianist, Berlioz replied, “Him? He lives everywhere!” He was a frequent guest at the Hugo residence, where he took part in gatherings of a group of artists known as the “Cènacle.” Derived from the “Cène” or “Last Supper,” the name was fitting for the sense of divine purpose these artists attributed to their work. Through Hugo, Liszt met other members of the circle, notably Vigny, Musset, Gautier, and Dumas.

Written in the language with which he was by now most comfortable, French literature and poetry naturally came to hold a place of honor in Liszt’s reading. As Ben Arnold has shown, Liszt’s library grew to contain hundreds of works of French literature that included “nearly every important French writer active between 1799 and 1870.” According to his friend and early biographer Joseph d’Ortigue, Liszt read voraciously in this early period, often for four consecutive hours daily. With typical youthful enthusiasm, he once approached the famous historian François Mignet requesting that he teach him all of French literature. In one of his most frequently quoted letters, Liszt in 1832 described his obsessive behavior to his friend Pierre Wolff:

Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber, are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury; and in addition I spend 4 to 5 hours practicing exercises (thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolos, repeated notes, cadenzas,

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etc. etc.). Ah! Provided I don’t go mad you will find an artist in me! Yes, an artist such as you desire, such as is required nowadays!

What sort of artist did Liszt have in mind? The presence of the first triumvirate of French Romanticism among his list of authors indicates he had already assimilated their radical ideas. He told one student to read Hugo in order to play an etude of Moscheles, and alluded to the preface of *Cromwell* in his letters. In an 1833 letter to Marie d’Agoult he jokingly refers to “V.H. (I should have put Gothic letters for you to understand the initials more easily),” indicating a fondness for his friend’s medievalism. When d’Agoult met Liszt earlier that year at the salon of the Marquise de Vayer, she was immediately impressed by “the force and liberty of a spirit that attracted me…Franz spoke impetuously in an abrupt manner. He vehemently expressed ideas and judgments that were bizarre for ears such as mine, habituated as they were to the banality of received opinions.” Like his artistic mentors, Liszt was already breaking with convention.

In part this was purely a musical phenomenon. In an article on Liszt and Romanticism, Paul Henry Lang argues that in the early 1830s music was still lagging behind the other arts, both in France and in Germany. He cites the heavy use of “classical precepts of composition” found in the music of Chopin and Schumann, and the list could easily be extended to include Alkan, Henselt, and any number of other piano composers of the era. In contrast, the important pieces that Liszt wrote in this period were radically experimental in terms of formal construction and harmonic language. It is especially this new approach to form that Lang applauds: “Liszt’s great

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innovation and achievement consisted in proving that it was possible to create a well-rounded and logically organized piece of music without forcing the ideas into the established frames of traditional forms.”

Liszt’s new outlook was also directly informed by the Romantic belief in the new priestly role of artists. He was an admirer of the Saint-Simonian movement that, as Ralph Locke argues, was “perhaps the most influential social movement of its day.” Founded in 1825 by disciples of the recently deceased Comte Henri Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians advocated a form of utopian socialism, in which the tools of industrialization would be applied to build a better society based on solidarity and cooperation. The Saint-Simonians were the first in their era to advocate “un art social” as a means of promoting their goals. Locke considers it “well known” that Liszt received his first inspiration to address “such social issues as the artist’s role and the problem of music and religion” from the Saint-Simonians.

Purely in terms of chronology Locke may be correct, but ultimately Liszt would seek out more explicitly Christian voices than the largely secular ministry of Saint-Simonians, “New Christian” though it purported to be. In an 1835 letter, Liszt writes, “The two classes, which, by virtue of their office, their authority, are capable of reconciling every class…and of leading mankind, in mutual love, towards the great humanitarian aim are priests and artists.” It is therefore not surprising that it is among these classes that we find Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan, united by a belief in God and in the salvific power of music.

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This study, then, is largely a biographical one, but one based around the goal of better understanding Liszt’s music. It is founded on several premises. The first is that the child is the father of the man, and that these formative experiences determined much of what followed in Liszt’s career. In other words, I am of the mind that Liszt’s musical style is best read chronologically, not as a series of disconnected episodes, but rather as a continuous narrative in which each chapter builds on what has come before. The second premise is that influence is a retrospective process, in which the younger party actively engages with the past, reshaping it to suit his or her needs. In this case, Liszt absorbed the ideas of Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan, but reworked them to make them his own. In so doing, he changed subsequent perceptions of these figures, whom we often now view only through their affiliation with Liszt.

My final premise is that music is capable of carrying within it complex cultural signification, expressing nuanced ideas about politics, religion, and art. No one believed this more strongly than Liszt himself, who, like Mahler after him, sought to encapsulate the world in his art. His music is replete with heavily laden signifiers, from chorales and plainchant to military signals, marches, and cavalry charges. The myriad ways Liszt inflects these topics is one of the more fascinating aspects of his style, and something we already see in these early works. It is perhaps this aspect more than any other that marks these early works as significant forerunners to the more familiar works of the 1840s and beyond.

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15 For the usefulness of biography as a tool for understanding musical style, see Hans Lenneberg’s Witnesses and Scholars: Studies in Musical Biography (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988).


17 I am here largely indebted to the work of Michael Baxandall, who brilliantly likens the process of influence to a cue ball reconfiguring the other balls on a pool table. See his Patterns of Intention (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 60.

18 In this regard I chiefly draw upon topics theory, and the work of Raymond Monelle in particular. See my review of his The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military, and Pastoral in Current Musicology (Number 89, Spring 2010).
Chapter One: Politics, Religion, and Artists

Any study of Liszt’s interactions with Lamennais, Lamartine and Urhan must first begin within the broader context of politics, religion, and art in France, and particularly in Paris. The years surrounding those critical to this study were ones of constant upheaval in France, with a liberal, republican ideology spawned by the revolution of 1789 in competition with more conservative, monarchical views. This situation in turn informed the religious climate, in which the Catholic Church, almost eradicated by the Revolution, fought to regain its position at the center of French life. While Church leaders generally placed their hopes in the monarchy, a growing faction—with Lamennais at the forefront—advocated social justice and allegiance to divine rather than temporal powers. Finally, the post-Enlightenment era saw the emergence of a new breed of artist in France, committed to political and social causes. Completing the complementary nature of this triptych, these artists infused their work with a religious, prophetic rhetoric, such as in the work of Lamartine and Urhan.

I: The Restoration Monarchy

The historian François Furet has made a strong case for considering the French Revolution not merely as the years immediately surrounding 1789, but as a process that took almost a century to complete. As Furet puts it, “only the victory of republicans over monarchists in 1876-7 provided modern France with a regime that established in lasting form the full range of the principles of 1789 ensuring not only civic equality but also political liberty.”19 The first revolution, far from accomplishing its goals, merely set off a violent chain reaction that would continue to pit competing ideologies and classes against one another for decades to come. Within a mere thirty years, France saw the dissolution of the monarchy, a secular Republican

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government driven to extremism, a partial return of the church and nobility in the Napoleonic Empire, and finally the restoration of the Bourbon royal family in 1815. Three successive revolutions—in 1830, 1848, and 1870—continued the pattern of social unrest. In each instance dire material conditions provided the necessary catalyst, but competing political ideologies were always the root cause. Such dramatic shifts give a sense of the strong divisions that plagued nineteenth century France, with monarchist, republican, and imperial factions struggling for dominance.

A prudent ruler knew how to balance such extremes, and between 1815 and 1825 France enjoyed relative stability under the Bourbon Restoration of Louis XVIII, brother of Louis XVI. The rebirth of conservatism that Metternich achieved in Austria was not possible in post-revolutionary France; the wounds were too deep, the memories of inequality too strong. Though hardly a progressive himself, Louis recognized the necessity of allowing a liberal voice in politics, and he steadfastly upheld the charter of 1814, which preserved most of the reforms of the Napoleonic code.20 However, the ultra-royalists were a powerful force in Louis’ new government, enjoying an initial five to one majority in the 1815 Chamber of Deputies.21 Headed by Louis’ brother the Comte d’Artois (the future Charles X), the ultra-royalists refused to accept the concessions of the past twenty-five years. Instead, they sought to turn back the clock to a time when the church and crown were the undisputed rulers of France. For them, the term “Restoration” meant the restoration of the values and class system of eighteenth century

21 Ibid, p. 37.
France. As Louis’ government grew progressively more liberal, the ultraroyalists sought an excuse to alter the political system.

They found one with the assassination of the Comte d’Artois’ son the Duc de Berry in 1823. Even though the perpetrator insisted he had acted alone, the ultras argued that the act was a harbinger of impending anarchy and chaos. Playing upon these fears, they were able to tailor the constitution to their advantage, restricting suffrage to a wealthier, more conservative electorate. This checked liberal majorities in the Chamber, but the left would soon regroup and reestablish their dominance. Louis XVIII could countenance this, but his brother could not. Therefore, when the Comte d’Artois succeeded Louis as Charles X in 1825, the first seeds of the July Revolution of 1830 had already been planted.

The very nature of Charles’ coronation set the tone for his reign. Held in the cathedral of Reims—the traditional site of French coronations—the elaborate ritual included the king prostrating himself as the Archbishop of Reims poured holy oil into seven openings in his shirt. This anointing, an act dating to Biblical times, indicated that the king’s power derived not from the people, but directly from God. A thousand doves were released in the cathedral at the moment Charles took his seat upon the throne, while trumpets and rifles announced the event outside as the doors opened. To many, this spectacle served only to make the king appear ridiculous and out of touch, rather than as the chosen vessel of God’s will on earth.


24 Indeed, as Richard Jackson points out, the French term sacré for coronation indicates a greater emphasis on the religious component than, say, English coronations. See Richard Jackson, Vive le Roi! A History of the French Coronation from Charles V to Charles X (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 3.

Despite this jarring return to the past, there were some mitigating factors. According to scholar Richard Jackson, the pomp of Napoleon’s coronation some twenty years before paved the way. Napoleon’s creation of a new knightly order, the Legion of Honor, and his revival of the old ones to accompany the return of exiled nobles, indicated that the French fondness for titles and ritual had not been wholly extinguished by the revolution. Louis XVIII intended to be crowned in much the same way as Charles later would be, but delays and declining health forced him to abstain. While many were opposed to the idea of a coronation in the first place, Romanticists were supportive of the ritual’s rich ties to the past. Chateaubriand insisted on the coronation as essential to tradition, and Lamartine wrote of his attendance at the ceremony, “…the aged universe dreams that it will see a new golden age reborn.”

Victor Hugo wrote a commemorative ode that received an official royal printing, although he would later grow disillusioned with Charles’ conservatism and later censorship of his work, remarking, “Reims is the land of chimeras. It is perhaps for that reason that they crown the kings there.”

Certain aspects of the coronation were signs of the times. Modern concessions were made to the ritual, including a modification of the oath to reflect that this monarchy was constitutional, not absolute. Like his brother before, Charles swore to uphold the 1814 Charter, although he would later work to curb its promises of religious freedom and civil rights. Traditionally, French kings inaugurated their rule by curing with a touch those afflicted with scrofula, proof of their divine right to rule. Understandably, Charles was reluctant to have such powers put to the test, and indeed the words uttered by the king had already been changed to the more equivocal “may God heal you.” That said, the decline of belief in the king’s divinely appointed powers is evident in the number of afflicted who bothered to show up. The

26 Jackson, *Vive le Roi!*, p. 198.

27 Ibid.
coronations of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI had seen over two thousand people touched for scrofula, whereas just over one hundred appeared for Charles.\textsuperscript{28} It was an inauspicious debut for a king who was out of touch, literally and figuratively, with a changing French society.

**II: The July Revolution**

Alan Spitzer sees the defining characteristic of the French generation of the 1820s not so much as hostility towards monarchy (they were too young to remember the abuses of the ancien regime), but rather anxiety in the aftermath of the Empire.\textsuperscript{29} The legend of Napoleon had only grown in his exile: the image of a mythic emperor condemned to an exotic, distant isle provided a perfect outlet for the Romantic imagination, epitomizing the archetypal tormented, isolated genius. Napoleon’s memoirs, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, rank as perhaps the greatest bestseller of the nineteenth century, a testament to the fascination he continued to inspire.\textsuperscript{30} The new generation of Restoration France was too young to have experienced firsthand the upheavals of the Napoleonic era, and it was an era more concerned with dreams and an idealized past than harsh reality. The most notable figure from literature personifying this phenomenon is of course Julien Sorel from Stendhal’s *Le Rouge et le Noir*, the young curate who both idolizes and idealizes Napoleon, with only a vague notion of who he was or what he did.

In contrast, Charles sought France’s true identity in the pre-Revolutionary past. Lamartine, who knew Charles personally, offers this trenchant assessment of his abilities:

> Thought, which matures the forms as well as the minds of men, had been but little cultivated by the Comte d’Artois. As a man of impulse, all his qualities were gifts


of nature, and scarcely any the acquired fruit of labor and meditation; he was imbued with the spirit of the Gallic race, superficial, quick, spontaneous, and happy in random repartees, the friendly and communicative smile, the open look, the extended hand, the cordial attitude; with a lively wish to please, an ardent thirst for popularity, very safe in confidential intercourse, with a constancy—rare upon the throne—in friendship, a real modesty, a restless seeking after good advice, a conscience severe upon himself and indulgent toward others…Depth and solidity alone were wanting in his countenance; in looking at him we felt attracted towards the man, but distrustful of the monarch.31

Lamartine’s misgivings were well placed. Charles’ naïveté, though well intentioned in many respects, only served to spark a resurgence of Revolutionary sentiments. Just three years later, Lamartine would write, “Republicanism, which I thought dead, is germinating again amongst the younger men.”32 The new generation longed for a more immediate, but perhaps equally unrealistic, past.

Growing liberal tendencies confirmed this development. Student demonstrations were common, anti government groups proliferated, and the number of journals with liberal leanings continued to grow. In 1827, Charles reviewed the National Guard, the militia formed by Lafayette during the Revolution to restore order to the streets of Paris, long a symbol of Republican values. During the ceremony, a number of guards and onlookers hurled barbs of criticism at Charles for his supposed subservience to the Vatican, including angry cries of “down with the Jesuits!” As a result of pressure from conservative factions of government, Charles responded to this incident by dissolving the National Guard after the incident, to shock and disapproval from the public.33 Later that year, the liberals regained their majority in the Chamber of Deputies. The new centrist government under Jean-Baptiste de Martignac passed


33 Beach, Charles X, p. 242.
legislation loosening restrictions on the press and tightening those on the Jesuits, so Charles dismissed Martignac and placed his hopes in a new minister, his close friend Jules de Polignac.

Charles hoped Polignac would unify the center and far right to form a conservative majority in parliament, but he could not have chosen a more polarizing figure. The son of a favorite of Marie Antoinette, Polignac shared Charles’ idealized view of France’s monarchical past. He detested the reforms of the Napoleonic era, believing that “societies governed by charters will be unhappy and unstable,” and embraced the status quo of social hierarchy: “Inequality has always existed and will continue to exist.”

Like Charles, Polignac had spent most of his life in Britain as an exile, and failed to understand the momentous changes that had forever altered his homeland. His close friendship with the Duke of Wellington only helped to increase accusations of Charles’ lack of patriotism. At Polignac’s criminal trial following the Revolution of 1830, the judges would level the following harsh verdict: “Despotism, superstition, and privileges stifling national interests were the principal traits that defined the reign of Charles X in 1830.”

Polignac and his cabinet considered the press to be their biggest obstacle, and in April 1828, he declared the liberal press to be the sole source of unrest in the nation. Journals such as Le Globe, the Saint-Simonian Le Producteur, and the Republican Le Constitutionnel consistently criticized Charles and his government, distorting, in Polignac’s view, public views of the monarchy. These journals found a receptive audience, since poor harvests in 1828 and

34 Ibid, p. 295.
35 Mansel, Paris Between Empires, p. 231.
1829 had plunged France from a recession into a depression. Unemployment increased, while wages for factory workers decreased. Grain shortages were common, and riots broke out with increasing frequency. It was amidst this growing unrest that Charles and Polignac decided to take drastic measures to preserve what they considered the only legitimate, divinely sanctioned form of government.

These were the ordinances of July 26, 1830, published without warning in the conservative newspaper *Le Moniteur*. They called for suspension of freedom of the press; revocation of sections of the 1814 charter; Dissolution of the newly elected Chamber of Deputies; altering the electoral law to favor conservatives (reducing the electorate by about 10,000); and ordering new elections. Charles hoped to achieve what was essentially a royal coup d’état under the cover of the recently launched conquest of Algeria, but the public outcry was immediate. Fighting broke out in the streets of Paris during the Three Glorious Days of July 27, 28, and 29, with troops brought in to disperse crowds. The revolutionaries retaliated with gunfire from upper storey windows, supported by many citizens (although wealthier ones in ground floor apartments offered shelter to troops).

The majority of revolutionaries were skilled workers who were negatively impacted by the July ordinances, and were nostalgic for the era of Bonaparte and empire. As scholar Edgar Newman puts it, “What the crowd wanted in the French Revolution of 1830 were these two things: dignity for themselves and glory for France.” David Pinkney, author of the first major study of the revolution, has convincingly shown from the records of those killed that artisans and skilled workers manned the barricades, especially printers, whose work was most directly

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affected by the July Ordinances. Artisans held themselves in higher regard than unskilled laborers; although not wealthy, they took great care in their appearance, were family oriented, engaged in wholesome entertainments, and pursued learning in what leisure time remained.

At the same time, the common perception of the revolution as a bourgeois struggle against the aristocracy is essentially false. The historical consensus is that the bourgeoisie had already started to enter the upper class in the late eighteenth century, a movement that continued in the Napoleonic era, when an ambitious young generation was able to secure titles that had once been only attainable by birthright. The Restoration provided new opportunities for bourgeois advancement, with capitalists and careerists capable of attaining positions of power. A distinction continued to be drawn between noble families of the ancien régime, and those who had attained such status post-Revolution, but the line became increasingly blurry. As Philip Mansel points out, some fashioned titles for themselves, while others would seek to downplay their noble origins. Charles attempted to mitigate this disturbing trend towards a meritocracy by resurrecting the feudal practice of primogeniture, but to no avail. While titles remained (and for some, remain) a coveted badge of honor in France, the aristocracy was gradually subsumed into a larger bourgeois elite.

Thus, the phenomena often so attributed to the July Revolution had already begun in the preceding decade. By the 1830s, the fundamental division in French society was not privileged

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41 Bertier de Sauvigny, The Bourbon Restoration, p. 251.
43 Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution, p. 183.
44 Mansel, Paris Between Empires, p. 205.
nobles and clergy pitted against commoners, but between a privileged bourgeoisie and laborers, artisans, and peasants. The victors of the July Revolution were both the bourgeoisie and the aristocrats, who maintained their power by convincing Republican revolutionaries to accept the replacement of one monarch with another. The Duc d’Orléans, who had fought for the Revolution in the 1790s, had enough of a Republican pedigree to be a convincing candidate. The crucial moment arrived when he appeared on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville with the Marquis de Lafayette, waving the tricolor flag to the ecstatic revolutionaries below. As Lamartine would later remark, “The republican kiss of Lafayette had made a king.”

III: Results of the July Revolution

Both Tocqueville and Marx viewed the July Revolution as a victory of the bourgeoisie over the people, establishing the misleading view that persists today. For Marx, it empowered “bankers, stock exchange kings, railway kings, owners of coal and ironworks and forests, a section of landed proprietors that rallied around them—the so-called financial aristocracy.” He saw this as a natural step in a Hegelian teleology, in which an increasing gap between rich and poor in highly industrialized societies would ultimately result in a successful revolution of workers. Of course, history has proven Marx wrong, since it was in less developed, agrarian societies that Communism would most succeed in the twentieth century. No, the July Revolution was not an inevitable step towards a new society, and was not essential to the bourgeoisie, because their position was already secure.

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Still, there were some undeniable changes in France. Under a new charter, the percentage of nobles in the chamber of deputies sank from 41% to 24%, and the franchise was extended from 200,000 to 300,000 men.\(^{48}\) Catholicism was no longer officially declared the religion of the state, but simply the most popular Christian denomination. The Duc d’Orléans, who took the throne as Louis Philippe, was certainly more abstemious than his predecessor, requesting only half the annuity that Charles had received.\(^{49}\) As the “Citizen King,” he was King of the French, not King of France, an important distinction. His coronation was a civil affair in a legislative hall, not an anachronistic medieval rite in a gothic cathedral. He sang “La Marseillaise” enthusiastically, addressed National Guardsmen as “my comrades,” and took walks in public parks in the clothes of a civilian.\(^{50}\)

What is most striking, though, is how much remained the same. The king remained the supreme executive, who, according to the charter, “alone sanctions and promulgates the laws.” While Louis-Philippe did have genuine republican sympathies, he was a pragmatist more than anything else. When other revolutions broke out in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Poland—proving Metternich’s adage that “when France sneezes, Europe catches cold”—he condemned them along with the very rebellion that had put him in power.\(^{51}\) As John Merriman has pointed out, the very dominance of Paris in French politics that facilitated Revolution also increased the likelihood of a centralized, authoritarian regime, and the July Monarchy held true to this

\(^{48}\) Mansel, Paris Between Empires, p. 262.


\(^{50}\) Mansel, Paris Between Empires, p. 266.

\(^{51}\) Ibid, p. 275.
historical tendency. By 1835 censorship of the press had returned, and the word “republican” was taboo once more. Public opinion quickly turned against the new monarchy. After attempts were made on his life, Louis Philippe no longer took walks in public. Several insurrections in Paris—most notably one in 1832 that left 70 soldiers dead—led to defensive plans in the capital to prevent further uprisings. Delacroix’s “Liberty leading the people,” the famous commemoration of the 1830 uprising, went from proud display to a storage room in 1832. Meanwhile, Louis-Philippe was caricatured in the press to an even greater degree than Charles had been. Sandy Petrey reads the famous Philippon cartoon of Louis-Philippe morphing into a pear as a commentary on the illusory nature of his rule. According to Petrey, that Louis Philippe did not really resemble a pear was precisely the point, highlighting the disparity between his image and reality. How could a man be both a citizen and a king? How could a revolution produce a monarchy?

Meanwhile, under Louis Philippe the income gap between rich and poor widened, and the government did little to alleviate the conditions of workers. There was little effort to ensure fair wages, and it was clear that the government sided with the factory owners and industrialists. Most land remained in the hands of nobles, and the number of nobles in parliament started to grow once more. These were but indicators of a broader historical trend, whereby the old


53 Pilbeam, Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France, p. 149.


55 Sandy Petrey, In the Court of the Pear King (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 98.

56 Ibid, p. 38.

hierarchical impulses that had long governed Europe persisted in some form or other in every country.

In sum, the July Revolution was not much of a revolution at all. The white flag of the Bourbons was replaced by the Tricolor, and there was a general reduction of ceremonial pomp, but otherwise the political situation was not greatly altered. The biggest change was one of tone brought about by the mobilization of the people. The government under Louis Philippe was more acutely aware of the need to mollify public concerns, a consideration Charles X had so foolishly ignored. That said, Louis Philippe also neglected the needs of the poorer classes, and it was this injustice, once again exacerbated by an economic downturn, that would lead to his overthrow in 1848.

Fascinating though these political events are, what significance do they hold for understanding Liszt’s development? Certainly he came from a world steeped in the traditional social hierarchy. His father had been a servant to the Esterházys, and Liszt had been a beneficiary of the patronage system, which paid for his education with Czerny in Vienna. When he left for Paris, he carried with him a letter of introduction to Ferdinand Paër from Metternich himself. Installing themselves at the Hotel d’Angleterre on Rue de Mail, just opposite the Maison Erard, the Liszts were more concerned with establishing Liszt as a fixture at this and other salons in Paris, notably the aristocratic ones of Faubourg St.-Germain and St.-Honoré. Hailed as the “Nouveau Mozart,” he appeared at the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique, the Theatre des Italiens, and at the Palais-Royal, where he met Louis-Philippe in 1824. The rest of his time was occupied in giving piano lessons—often from eight in the morning until ten at night—so it is unlikely that he was actively involved in any political movements.

At some point, though, Liszt developed a degree of antipathy towards the ruling classes. The late 1820s were difficult years for Liszt, with the death of his father in 1827, and the end of his first romance in 1828, when the father of his pupil Caroline Saint-Cricq refused Liszt’s petition to marry his daughter. The Comte de Saint-Cricq was the Minister of Commerce in the Polignac government, and both Victor Seroff and Klára Hamburger speculate that it was Saint-Cricq’s brusque dismissal of Liszt that first awakened his feelings of resentment towards the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{59} What is certain is that the July Revolution marks the first definite proof of these new sentiments.

By July 1830, Liszt was living at 7 Rue Montholon with his mother Anna. This was one of the areas of Paris that fell into the hands of the insurgents, and Liszt witnessed the fighting from his apartment.\textsuperscript{60} His response was to begin work on a “Revolutionary” Symphony, only a fragment of which exists today, on which appears in Liszt’s own hand the words “Symphonie, 27, 28, 29 Juillet—Paris.”\textsuperscript{61} Notes scribbled by the 19-year-old Liszt indicate “indignation, vengeance, terreur, liberté! Désordre, cris confus (vague, bizarrerie), fureur…refus, marche de la garde royale, doute, incertitude, parties croisantes…8 parties différentes, attaque bataille..marche de la garde nationale enthousiasme, enthousiasme, enthousiasme !...fragment de Vive Henri IV dispersé. Combiner ‘Allons enfants de la patrie’.” According to Lina Ramann—whose testimony cannot always be trusted—Liszt joined the crowd in supporting Lafayette, which would explain the “enthousiasme, enthousiasme, enthousiasme!” when the march of the National


\textsuperscript{60} Walker, \textit{Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years}, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{61} Manuscript A21 in the Goethe-Schiller Archive.
Guard appears. The factionalism of the Revolution, with its “8 parties différentes,” culminating in the triumph of the National Guard, makes plain Liszt’s Republican loyalties.62

Fragmentary though this piece is, it hints at ideas that only intensified after Liszt’s interactions with the mentors at the heart of this study. In addition to such French political anthems as “La Marseillaise,” “Vive Henri IV,” and the march of the National Guard, Liszt also intended to quote a number of other melodies with broader political and religious resonances: a Hussiten Lied, Luther’s “Ein feste Burg,” the Rákoczi March, and various plainchant elements. Already, then, Liszt had grandiose ideas about a future society grounded in universal ideals of faith and brotherhood.

As Paul Merrick points out, the Revolution’s disappointing outcome explains Liszt’s failure to complete the piece, and he retained a sense of bitterness that inspired him to resurrect portions of the piece in his symphonic poem “Héroïde funèbre” of 1849, commemorating the failed Hungarian uprising begun the previous year.63 In 1844, Liszt encountered Louis-Philippe during a visit to the Érard workshops, twenty years after he had first met him. The king remarked, “Do you still remember that you played at my house when you were a boy and I was still the Duke of Orléans? Much has changed since then,” to which Liszt brazenly replied, “Yes, Sire, but not for the better.” As Alan Walker relates, Louis-Philippe personally struck Liszt’s name off the list of candidates for the Legion of Honor in retaliation.64

Nevertheless, the July Revolution served to galvanize Liszt’s political liberalism, so significant in the coming years. It brought him out of the two-year malaise in which he had

62 Merrick, Revolution and Religion, p. 3.

63 Ibid.

64 Walker, Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, p. 146.
withdrawn from society and the concert stage: as Anna Liszt put it, “It was the cannon that cured him!” Beginning in August, Liszt began attending meetings of the socialist Saint-Simonian movement in, as he later described it, a “kleinen Häuschen der Rue Tarane.” He remained at these gatherings as late as November 1831, not long before the movement came to an end. Liszt never became an official member, and publicly distanced himself from the movement when it became outlawed, but as Ralph Locke convincingly argues, he maintained a lasting affinity for its ideals of a utopia based on brotherly love, with artist-priests mediating between God and the people.

While the July Revolution may have done little to alter the status quo, it was of pivotal importance in awakening Liszt’s engagement with social issues, and jolting him out of his self-imposed isolation. As he noted in a journal entry on December 14, 1831, “My childhood is no more; it is dead, so to speak, though I still live.” Unlike his contemporaries, Liszt directly engaged with issues of social import in his music, a practice that began with the “Revolutionary” Symphony. A fitting contrast can be found in Chopin’s “Revolutionary” Etude of the same year. Though ostensibly an outpouring of grief following the failure of the November Uprising in Poland, Chopin himself never explicitly connected the work with politics, and the piece’s nickname did not originate with him. With his programmatic titles and use of musical topics such as marches, workers’ songs, and politically loaded religious hymns, it is fair to say that Liszt was the most socially engaged composer of his generation, and it is in 1830 that this first becomes apparent.

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67 “mon enfance n’est plus; elle est morte, pour ainsi dire, quoique je vive encore.”
This, then, is the significance of the political situation in 1820s and 30s Paris with regard to Liszt. It was an era of monarchy that, though constitutional, routinely ignored the plight of the working classes in an increasingly industrialized Europe. French society remained divided in the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era. The aristocracy remained, but in a modified form that seamlessly blended with the bourgeoisie to create a unified ruling class. Though this was the same class that continued to support him and to make his career possible, Liszt increasingly embraced liberal ideals, looking towards a new, more egalitarian society. However, as we shall soon see, he was also returning with renewed vigor to the Catholic faith of his childhood. Given the Church’s traditional alliance with the conservative monarchy, how is one to reconcile this seeming paradox? The answer lies in a growing movement of Catholic liberalism, one area where the events of July 1830 were indeed significant.

IV: The Restoration and the Church

In addition to political upheavals, France also underwent dramatic societal changes in the first decades of the nineteenth century. For one thing, the population was growing rapidly, in Paris most of all. Between 1815 and 1830 the total number of French would increase from 30 to 32.4 million, while in Paris the numbers leapt from about 600,000 to 800,000 people in the same amount of time, increasing by one third.68 This was largely attributable to an influx of people from the countryside, drawn by the increase in industrialized labor that would define the nineteenth century. It was a young population, mostly under 40, older generations having been decimated by war and low birth rates during an era of weakening family structures. The general population suffered from poor hygiene,69 nutrition, and a low literacy rate, the product of an


69 The average person bathed only twice a year. See Bertier de Sauvigny, The Bourbon Restoration, p. 241.
inadequate educational system. Jobs and housing were unable to keep pace with the flood of people into the capital, resulting in high poverty, crime, homicide, and suicide rates.\textsuperscript{70} Despite the austere environment of Restoration France, prostitution was licensed by the state, and it is estimated that one in three births in Paris was illegitimate.\textsuperscript{71}

Historian Ralph Gibson traces this breakdown of sexual morality to the anticlericalism of the Republic.\textsuperscript{72} France became officially secular, and it is at this point that the institution of marriage precipitously declined. Even before the Revolution, though, the enormous control that the Church had long enjoyed in France was already starting to slip, a change that became apparent in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The numbers of men and women taking holy orders noticeably declined, as did church attendance, the consumption of religious books, and of course adherence to traditional sexual mores.\textsuperscript{73} Gibson mostly faults the French Catholic church, which was promoting a form of Christianity he characterizes as “a difficult and demanding religion, a religion by and for a small urban elite, which could only be imposed on the population at large by immense effort and systematic intimidation.”\textsuperscript{74} His is not the standard argument that the church was corrupt and hypocritical, but rather that it was overly austere and aloof. C.S. Phillips similarly faults the church for complacency and intellectual mediocrity, and shares

\textsuperscript{71} Bertier de Sauvigny, \textit{The Bourbon Restoration}, 243.
\textsuperscript{72} See Ralph Gibson, \textit{A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914} (London: Routledge, 1989).
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, p. 15.
Gibson’s view of what appears to have been a widespread superiority complex among the clergy.\textsuperscript{75}

At the same time, the French Enlightenment carried with it an unusually strong streak of anticlericalism. As Furet points out, this was a marked quality of the French Enlightenment, not found to the same degree in countries where the power of the church was less pronounced. As an example, Furet contrasts the writings of David Hume with those of Voltaire. Hume was arguably the more atheistic of the two (Voltaire was more receptive to the existence of God), but saw the social value of religion, whereas Voltaire launched a steady stream of invective towards the church.\textsuperscript{76} The Christian belief in divine revelation and the fallen nature of man was at odds with the Enlightenment faith in reason and the basic goodness of man. For one, life was an unearned and eternal privilege, bought at a price; for the other, it was an innate right to pursue happiness in a finite existence.

The eighteenth century also saw the rise of Jansenism, a “French-style belated Protestantism” as described by Furet,\textsuperscript{77} or “the Puritans of the Catholic Church” according to R.R. Palmer.\textsuperscript{78} Its adherents believed in salvation through divine Grace rather than the Church, and by 1739 the movement was widespread throughout Paris.\textsuperscript{79} While adherents still considered themselves Catholic, Jansenism shed light on the pivotal issue of Gallican versus Ultramontanist allegiances. France was becoming increasingly independent of papal authority, most notably in


\textsuperscript{76} Furet, \textit{Revolutionary France}, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.


the 1761 expulsion of the Jesuits from the country. As the state sought to establish its
hegemony, even the increasingly Gallican church was sapped of its influence. In 1765 the Paris
parliament condemned attempts by the clergy to curb heretical writings of the philosophes, and
in 1787 Protestantism was allowed back into the country.\(^80\)

With the revolution of 1789, the new government adopted an even more antagonistic
position towards the Catholic Church. Beginning in 1791, all clergy were required to take an
oath of allegiance to the Civil Constitution, an act that many refused.\(^81\) Harsh reprisals and the
disintegration of the church soon followed: thousands of clergy were brutally murdered, and
many more—an estimated 32,500—left the country, most removed by force.\(^82\) Year II of the
Revolutionary calendar (1793-1794) marked the height of efforts to eradicate Catholicism.
Churches were closed en masse, crosses and other Christian symbols were removed from public
view, and place names were changed to remove references to saints and other holy figures.\(^83\)

Such an abrupt, extreme disruption of the established order was doomed to fail. Many
resisted the state’s strongarm tactics, resenting such intrusiveness. Enduring support of the
Church cut across all lines of social class, with a decisive majority of people in western France
remaining devout. Evidently, not all priests were detestably aloof, and many must have been
close enough to their flocks to enjoy their support in such dangerous times.\(^84\) It must be said that
what the Jacobins offered in Catholicism’s stead was not terribly appealing. The Cult of the

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\(^{80}\) Palmer, *Catholics and Unbelievers*, p. 10.


\(^{82}\) Ibid, p. 52.


\(^{84}\) Phillips, *The Church in France*, p. 4.
Supreme Being failed to inspire any sense of communion with the divine, people had no intention of calling sacred place names anything different from what they knew, and workers were none too pleased by the adoption of a ten-day week. Ultimately, the chaos of the Reign of Terror and resultant political turmoil gave lie to the notion that a society built solely on reason was possible or desirable. As N.T. Wright puts it, “The Enlightenment failed to deliver the goods. People not only didn’t stop fighting one another, but the lands of the Enlightenment became themselves embroiled in internecine conflict.” Similar is the viewpoint of R.R. Palmer, writing on the brink of war in 1939 (although he obviously does not take the religious side either): “…to our disillusioned age the dark forebodings of the orthodox, the prophecies of chaos to follow on the decay of religion, seem to have contained about as much truth as the vision of the philosophers, who looked forward to indefinite progress in the paths of reason.” Frank Tallett argues that the Revolution was a profoundly irrational time, and a rational Creator did not offer the same comforts as one with mystical qualities.

Nevertheless, the events of the Revolution make it necessary to address the persistent issue of dechristianization in France. Undoubtedly, it was here that the continuing trend of secularization began, but the situation is more complicated than one of constant decline. As Gibson puts it, “The old image of linear dechristianization needs most definitely to be consigned to the rubbish-heap of history.” In the short term, the Republic succeeded in confiscating a great deal of church wealth, while the mass emigration of priests deprived many parishes of a religious leader. However, this also had long-term consequences, as for the first time in a

86 Palmer, Catholics and Unbelievers, p. 222.
88 Gibson, A Social History of French Catholicism, p. 227.
thousand years, a whole French generation would grow up without Catholicism at the center of their lives. As ground zero of the Revolution, Paris became one of the most markedly secular areas of the country, in contrast with many of the western provinces, which remain the most devout areas in France to this day.

It was with Napoleon’s efforts, pragmatic though they were, that Catholicism began to regain its foothold on French soil. The Concordat of 1801 returned Catholicism to France, but under heavy state control. As in the Revolution, clergy were required to take an oath of fidelity to the government, and it was Napoleon, not the Pope, who named new bishops. Later in his reign, when Napoleon failed to receive the obeisance from the Vatican he considered his due—largely due to the Pope’s refusal to join with France in combating England—he had the Pope imprisoned. His reign, then, marked a continuation of the Gallican principles of the previous century.

It was clear, then, that the Church had its work cut out for it when Louis XVIII first took power in 1814. While parishes had recovered some lost ground under Napoleon, their numbers were still well below pre-Revolution levels. Among the priesthood, 13,000 posts remained unfilled, while Paris continued to be the most irreligious city in France.\footnote{Pamela Pilbeam, \textit{Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century France}, p. 100.} Between 1789 and 1814, the number of operating churches in Paris had dropped from 290 to 39, and the number of priests from 6,000 to 689.\footnote{Mansel, \textit{Paris Between Empires}, p. 210.} Few bourgeois households practiced their religion apart from such old habits of fish on Friday, while as late as 1826 a Papal Nuncio estimated only an eighth of
Parisians were practicing Christians, mostly women.\textsuperscript{91} Well into the 1820s, only about half of all children were baptized.

With the Restoration, the church once again put its faith in the monarchy, “a prisoner,” as Furet puts it, “of the tyranny of memories.”\textsuperscript{92} Both threatened institutions, the monarchy and church forged an alliance to a degree not seen since the middle of the eighteenth century. Secret orders such as the Knights of the Faith, the Congregation, and the Chambre Introuvable were created to further Catholic aims in France.\textsuperscript{93} The new clergy came largely, though not exclusively, from old noble families.\textsuperscript{94} Louis sought to overturn the Concordat of 1801, tainted as it was by the ideals of the Revolution, with the more conservative Coencordat of 1817, which his government voted down. Missions and parochial schools returned in a major effort to restore Catholicism in the country, bringing with them strong criticism from liberals for their overt monarchist indoctrination.\textsuperscript{95} Finally, the crown allowed the Jesuits back into the country for the first time in over half a century.

Not surprisingly, this trend intensified under Charles X. Between 1815 and 1830, the number of nuns in the country doubled to 25,000,\textsuperscript{96} while ordinations to the priesthood reached an annual high of almost 2400 in 1828, a number France has never equaled since.\textsuperscript{97} While the 1814 charter granted freedom of worship, Charles increasingly sought to place Catholicism at the

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\item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid, p. 211.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Furet, \textit{Revolutionary France}, p. 296.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Bertier de Sauvigny, \textit{The Bourbon Restoration}, p. 301.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid, p. 306.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid, p. 321.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p. 312.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Gibson, \textit{A Social History of French Catholicism}, p. 66.
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center of French life once more. In 1826, he enacted laws to protect the sanctity of the Catholic Mass. Most notably, desecration of the Host was now considered a capital offense, a law that was mercifully never enforced.

This overview gives us a particular view of Catholicism in Restoration France, one that helps to explain its divisiveness. In assessing the long term effects of the Revolution on religion, Gibson sees the most important as “the end of quasi-universal religious practice…French people were no longer automatically Catholic, simply by the fact of being French.” Similarly, Nigel Aston identifies an enduring “tepid attitude to the Catholic faith that thereafter made it marginal in some areas.” Simultaneously, the persecution of the Revolution led beleaguered Catholics to a strong sense of solidarity, and strengthened their monarchist leanings. Given these strong conservative underpinnings, how does one explain the emergence of liberal Catholic movements in the 1830s? The answer is to be found both in new trends developing in the Church, and in growing disillusionment with the state.

V: The Rise of Catholic Liberalism in France

It is important to note that there was already a tradition of radical Catholicism in France dating to the eighteenth century. One can place the Jansenists in this party, and progressive Catholics occupied prominent positions in the Revolution of 1789. Indeed, it was a clergyman—Abbé Sieyès—who wrote the most celebrated tract of the revolution, “What is the Third Estate?” Admittedly, Sieyès was not a true believer, but Jacques Roux—one of the most violently anti-monarchical voices of the revolution who presided over the execution of Louis XVI—most certainly was. From Roux’s point of view, the Gospels were radically anti-establishment,

98 Ibid, pp. 54-55.

praising the poor and weak and censuring the rich and powerful. It is a testament to the radical potential of the Gospels that even the Jacobins found Roux’s populist rhetoric too extreme, and had him executed.

In the countryside, there had long existed a tension between the asceticism advocated by priests, and the earthier religion favored by their congregations. Ralph Gibson traces this divide to Counterreformation efforts to restore the legitimacy and majesty of Catholicism. It was a Jansenist who promoted the idea that Jesus never laughed, “but Bossuet and others readily took it up.”

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Church actively suppressed saint day celebrations in the countryside, since they entailed festivities that blurred the line between Christianity and paganism. Over the centuries, the French peasantry had grown accustomed to a manner of worship that incorporated dancing, feasts, and elaborate rituals to ensure a fruitful harvest. Gibson argues that the Tridentine stance of detachment from the cares of the world was not a viable option for peasants struggling against natural disasters and variable growing conditions. For them, religion was a means of turning to God not just for spiritual growth, but also for real material change in their lives.

Nevertheless, the efforts of the Church had succeeded in producing an increasingly Christian peasantry in the years leading up to the Revolution. It was, however, what was known as a Christianisme de la peur, focused less on the love of Jesus and more on the respect of authority under the threat of eternal damnation. In its own blunt way it was effective, and the

most Christianized areas of France were also those that retained the most loyalty to the crown. That said, the subsequent vacuum created by the mass exodus of priests allowed a new form of grassroots Catholicism to flourish. Driven underground, the laity responded by putting together their own religious services, empowering them to take a much more active role in their faith.\textsuperscript{104} One need only look at the iconography of the era to see a marked increase in devotion of the saints, a return to the mysticism of the past.\textsuperscript{105} At the same time, the new emphasis on the saints also stressed the value of individual action to change lives. Examples such as Saint Vincent de Paul—the 16\textsuperscript{th} century galley slave who went on to found the first charitable organizations—showed the value of engagement with the outside world.

With the official return of the Catholic Church at the dawn of the nineteenth century, such efforts continued among the laity, with an increasing conservative bent. The leading lay organization was the Congregation, with its largest charity the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Founded by a former Jesuit in 1801, the Congregation was a target for liberal critics, who accused it of unpatriotically professing total allegiance to the Pope.\textsuperscript{106} Societies were created to encourage the reading of religious books among the literate population, another form of religious education that was criticized by the left as a form of indoctrination. Even so, these organizations were also a product of post-Revolution empowering of the laity, signs of a more active form of Catholicism. As Ferdinand de Bertier, founder of the Knights of the Faith, put it in 1820, “priests can no longer be the most effective apostles.”\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} Tallett, “Dechristianizing France,” p. 18. As we will see, Lamennais was very much a product of these new circumstances.

\textsuperscript{105} For numerous examples of these images, see Jacques le Goff and René Rémond, \textit{Histoire de la France religieuse} (Paris: Seuil, 1991).

\textsuperscript{106} Bertier de Sauvigny, \textit{The Bourbon Restoration}, p. 316.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, p. 314.
With the widespread reopening of seminaries, convents, and parochial schools in the Restoration period, the Church continued to reassert its position in French society. At the same time, the persistent negative image of the Church in this period is highly lopsided. The most vivid and scathing portrayal is that found in Stendhal’s *Le Rouge et le Noir*, written on the eve of the July Revolution. As Stendhal puts it:

…the Church of France seems to have realized that books are its true enemies. It is heartfelt submission that is everything in its eyes. Success in studies, even in sacred studies, is suspect, and with good reason. What is to prevent the superior man from going over to the other side, like Sieyès or Grégoire? The trembling Church clings to the Pope as to her sole chance of salvation. The Pope alone can attempt to paralyze private judgment, and, by the pious pomps of the ceremonies of his court, make an impression upon the sick and listless minds of men and women of the world.108

Stendhal’s idea that seminaries were dens of anti-intellectualism has some basis in truth, but remains a highly exaggerated caricature from a man who never set foot in such a place. As Gibson puts it, “it was not that the clergy did not know very much, but rather that they knew different things from what today passes for knowledge.”109 There was admittedly a circumscribed framework of acceptable knowledge, but young priests did receive a substantial education in theology, biblical exegesis, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In addition, the holy orders served an important function in society, providing education, social services, and medical care. In particular, Gibson makes the case that to be a nun was the most empowering, perhaps the only empowering, vocation available to the average woman of the time.110


110 Ibid, p. 120.
Stendhal’s cynical view that the new generation of priests was comprised of poor country boys seeking an easier life is similarly inaccurate. While the life of a priest was reasonably comfortable, he was by no means wealthy, and the wearing of the cloth could hardly be viewed as an automatic pass to privilege and power. The patterns of ordination in this period correspond strongly to the geographic areas where Catholicism had always been strongest; these were most likely young men motivated by religious fervor, not by hope of material gain. In fact, this new generation of priests was frequently at odds with older clerics raised with a sense of allegiance to the ancien regime. The faith of these new curés had intensified during a repressive era, and they tended towards ultramontanism as a result. At the same time, the new social mobility of the priesthood also alienated bourgeois Republicans, who viewed them as dangerous radicals, bent on refashioning society.

Meanwhile, the Catholic laity continued to embrace causes for social justice in Paris and throughout the country. Founded in 1822, the Association of Saint Joseph helped workers find jobs in Christian workshops, furnished lodgings while they looked for work, and provided a social space for improved quality of life. Sponsored by the court and the aristocratic quarter of Faubourg Saint-Germain in Paris, the organization counted over a thousand industrialists and merchants and seven thousand workers among its members. More radical Christian ideas began to take root, distinctly socialist in nature. The most popular religious book of the period was the Bible des Noëls, printed by the populist publishing house Bibliothèque bleue. The book emphasized the humanity, suffering, and humble birth of Jesus. The following quote hints at the book’s subversive elements: “the bourgeois did not comfort [Jesus], and neither the well-to-do

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112 Ibid, p. 315.
farmers nor the merchants visited him.”\textsuperscript{113} Even the jaded Stendhal presents the Jansenist Abbé Pirard as a favorable role model, whom Julien Sorrel ultimately ignores: “Julien was astonished; the idea of religion was inseparably linked in his mind with that of hypocrisy, and the hope of making money…This strange incongruity, religion wedded to a love of freedom, impressed him.”\textsuperscript{114}

It was disillusionment with the monarchy that truly allowed liberal Catholicism to flourish. Many Catholics had already grown disenchanted with Charles X who, for all his piety and supposed obeisance to Rome, had no intention of deferring to the Vatican. In fact, he even disbanded the Jesuits to counter accusations of collusion with the order. The July Monarchy continued this trend of sanitizing Catholicism, disbanding lay organizations and reducing Church authority. As a result, Furet argues that Catholics were at the forefront of opposition to the government.\textsuperscript{115} In this new spirit of independence from temporal authorities, the French Church experienced a renaissance, entering, as C.S. Phillips calls it, “one of the most brilliant periods of its history.”\textsuperscript{116} Thus, a prevailing spirit of ultramontanism naturally led many Catholics to seek more receptive political avenues than the monarchy. As we will see in Chapter Two, Lamennais led the way in seeking a new alliance between Catholics and liberals.

Liszt witnessed firsthand this exciting period of rejuvenation in the Church. Just across from Liszt’s apartment, at 6 Rue Montholon, was the church of Saint Vincent de Paul, site of his first communion, and his spiritual home during the Paris years. Beginning in 1824, construction was underway on the church’s current massive edifice, located nearby at Place de Bossuet (now

\textsuperscript{113} Berenson, \textit{Populist Religion and Left-Wing Politics in France}, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{114} Stendhal, \textit{The Red and the Black}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{115} Furet, \textit{Revolutionary France}, p. 344.

\textsuperscript{116} Phillips, \textit{The Church in France}, p. viii.
renamed in honor of Liszt himself), which would not be completed until 1844, around the time Paris ceased to be Liszt’s home base. The church was a haven for young artists, and Liszt attended Mass each morning, his fervor increasing in the aftermath of the Saint-Cricq affair. It was here that he met the musician Chrétien Urhan, whose Catholic mysticism would profoundly shape his approach to music as a form of worship. In so doing, he was part of a larger phenomenon by which artists saw their role in society as akin to that of priests.

VI: The Prophetic Role of the Artist

As with Catholicism—with which it was inextricably linked—French Romanticism must be read in light of the Revolution. We are faced with a similar historical conundrum: How did an artistic movement move from a predominantly traditionalist, monarchical stance to one of political radicalism? Similarly, how is one to reconcile the Romantic sense of detachment from the world with the dawn of artistic realism and social engagement? As with the religious question, the answer is to be found in the troubled politics of the time.

Of course, French Romanticism was part of a broader international movement, and it is especially interesting to compare it to German Romanticism. In both cases we see a fascination with the medieval past, with Christianity, and with new modes of expression. The chief difference is in the much greater involvement on the part of French Romantics in public affairs. Whereas both Lamartine and Hugo played active roles in politics, we do not see a similar level of engagement on the part of the German Romantics. The idealism of the French Romantics may have hindered their efficacy in the public arena, but that of their German counterparts was so

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117 For the German Romantic fascination with art as a spiritual practice, see Bernd Aueroch’s *Die Entstehung der Kunstreligion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).
strong that they tended to forsake politics altogether. The French Romantics shared the German taste for introspection and self awareness, but one could make the case that theirs was a more self-conscious form of Romanticism, in which public reaction was always an important consideration.

The most fruitful source for understanding the emergence of a new type of French artist in this period is the scholarship of Paul Bénichou, who spent a lifetime pondering the subject. Bénichou’s central thesis is that French Romanticism was not simply a rejection of the preceding era, but was in fact a revision of Enlightenment faith in humanity, preserving the privileged status of the man of letters while imbuing it with a sacred aspect. In the post-Revolution world, poets became new prophets, their message taking on a newfound spirituality, either in conjunction with, or as a substitute for, religious faith. Artists, like all of humanity, were credited with greater agency and wisdom than ever before.

Prior to the eighteenth century, Bénichou contends, French artists occupied a subservient place in society; theirs was a profession, not a spiritual calling. The foundation of the Académie Française by Louis XIV elevated the position of writers, but they remained a mouthpiece of the state. Also, writing was a vocation that remained separate from a religious function. While Christian writers had long sought to emulate the rhetorical style of Scripture, seventeenth century

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119 Lamartine and Hugo’s carefully constructed political personae are prime examples of this phenomenon.


121 Bénichou, The Consecration of the Writer, p. 11.
classicists considered the worlds of poetry and theology to be distinct. As Boileau put it: “The terrible mysteries of a Christian’s faith are not subject to smiling ornament.”

With the Enlightenment’s elevation of the position of man, the role of writers dramatically increased in importance. The philosophes of the eighteenth century were increasingly at odds with the social order, standing outside the traditional hierarchy. Writers saw themselves not merely as aesthetes, as promoters of the established morality, but as social critics. No longer were there impermeable barriers between genres, and between poetry and politics. Voltaire established a standard by writing in virtually every genre, a feat Hugo would match in the following century, while Lamartine would view poetry and politics as inseparable, a surprising but undeniable legacy.

Despite their humanist outlook, the philosophes maintained a spiritual component in their writing. Rather than coldly rational, their thought appealed to the heart as well as the head. Their spirit of sensibility fostered a sense of communion among humanity, a leveling of the social order. Both Voltaire and Rousseau saw the value of belief in God. Voltaire famously wrote, “If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him,” while Rousseau stressed the importance of humanity looking to higher things than material gratification: “Hearts that feel these sublime truths turn away from petty human passions; and even if the great being with which they concern themselves did not exist, it would be well for them to continue so to concern themselves, so as to be more self-possessed, stronger, happier, and wiser.”

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Once again, the crucial distinction between Christian and secular Enlightenment though rested in the latter’s rejection of the doctrine of original sin and the supernatural. Rousseau professed belief in the fundamental goodness rather than the fallen nature of man, and both he and Voltaire celebrated the world rather than rejecting it. There was a radical reordering of priorities, wherein God was part of the human condition, rather than humans being absorbed into an all-encompassing creator. Bénichou quotes numerous texts by Diderot, Voltaire, and Rousseau that express metaphysical sentiments while reversing the established order of communication with the divine: “The lightning bolt leaps from earth to heaven.”

It is a strange phenomenon of Enlightenment thinkers that they preserved the moral teachings of Jesus while divesting them of divine power. Voltaire saw Jesus as a wise man but a man nonetheless, while Thomas Jefferson famously prepared a version of the Bible that excised all the miracles. This was the era of the sublime, in which man could achieve only a vague sense of transcendence from the physical world. According to Kant, there existed an unbridgeable chasm between the phenomenal and the noumenal. The curtain separating man from God in the Temple of Solomon, torn at the moment of Christ’s death, was being sewn back together.

Nevertheless, as we have already seen, there was profound religiosity in this era of anti-religion. Deists worshipped creation, nature, and the world. The Revolution attempted to supplant Catholicism with faith in the Supreme Being, a religion with its own rituals and dogma. Ironically, the Jacobins ultimately condemned the very writers whose ideas had led to the Revolution, since the values of free thought and reason they espoused were incompatible with submission to the state. The cult of the Revolution superseded the ideas that spawned it, rejecting both Christianity and reason. As Stendhal characterized the era: “in 1794 we had no

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126 Ibid, p. 20.
religion whatsoever; our inner, solemn sentiment was completely summed up in this idea: *to be useful to the fatherland...this was our only religion.* As Bénichou argues, “…it is clear that it is only because these cults respond to the same need as religion that they presume to replace it.”

It is no surprise that the Revolutionary era failed to produce great art. A totalitarian desire to promote the state as the highest good, while invaluable to military success, is often anathema to thoughtful artistic creation. This conformity intensified with the cult of Napoleon, so it is ultimately logical that the Restoration, conservative though it was, sparked a renewal of intellectual activity. Significantly more books were written in this period, and a wide array of journals were published, representative of many walks of life and political points of view. Guillaume Bertier de Sauvigny attributes this resurgence to three factors: increased freedom of speech, newfound peace, and new ideas from foreign influence. Gone was the imperial preoccupation with conquest and nationalism, and for the first time in twenty years, the direction of interaction with the rest of Europe was reversed. A rapid influx of expatriates to Paris brought new blood to the artistic community. The era saw a homegrown crop of unusually brilliant artists come of age: Thierry, Vigny, Thiers, Michelet, Comte, Cournot, Hugo, Leroux, Delacroix, Balzac, the list goes on. Bertier de Sauvigny offers the following summary of the era, polemical but compelling nonetheless:

Liberal history, a victim of its own antimonarchical prejudices, may depict it as an age of obscurantism. It is not certain that even today Frenchmen have a sufficient realization of the real greatness of the period which produced both works and men as diverse and as influential as Fresnel and Ampère, as Lamarck and Cuvier, as

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127 Quoted in Ibid, p. 42.
128 Ibid.
Burnouf and Champollion, as Benjamin Constant and Bonald, as Lamennais and Chateaubriand, as Victor Hugo and Lamartine, as Delacroix and Berlioz. By their combined efforts, France resumed in just a few years that intellectual and moral leadership that she had held since the seventeenth century and which her fit of military imperialism had caused her to lose.  

A decade earlier, Chateaubriand had already begun to express dissatisfaction with the times in his *René* and *Génie du Christianisme*, calling for a return to Catholicism, tradition, and the past. The chief targets of his writings are the philosophes, whose work he contrasts with that of the seventeenth century, notably conservative theologians such as Bossuet: “The one sags, the other climbs into the heavens.” His argument for the Christian faith was largely a pragmatic one. As opposed to earlier apologetics, which claimed the excellence of the faith stemmed from its basis in divine revelation, Chateaubriand reversed the argument. According to him, Christianity was not excellent because it was true; it was true because it was excellent. In *Génie du Christianisme*, he argues that art, poetry, and literature were all greatly enriched thanks to Christianity, and lauds the beauty of Catholic ritual and tradition.

These sentiments were part of a broader critique of the cold secularism of the Enlightenment that had already begun in Germany. Consider the following quote by Novalis: “Hatred of religion turns the unending creative music of the cosmos into the monotonous rattling of a monstrous great mill, driven by the current of chance, and itself drifting on this current, a mill *per se*, without builder or miller, in truth a genuine *perpetuum mobile*, a mill that grinds itself.” In this evocative image, Novalis neatly contrasts a theistic view of the universe as a

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life-giving work of art with a secular view that mirrors the increasing dehumanization of industrialization. Science was seen as the bane of imaginative, poetic thought. As Lamartine would later explain, he wrote his breakthrough poetic collection the *Méditations* as a reaction to “the destiny that caused [him] to be born in a century of mathematics.”

Given their love of religion and the past, the conservative position of Chateaubriand and his followers is simple to understand. Victor Hugo, who at an early age considered himself destined to become the next Chateaubriand, is a perfect example of a royalist poet of the era. Although his title of Vicomte was from a Napoleonic peerage, his fondness for it reflects a love of aristocratic tradition. The poems of his adolescence and young adulthood centered on odes honoring such martyred counterrevolutionaries as the Dauphin, the monarchists of La Vendée, and the assassinated Duc de Berry. Given the early success Hugo enjoyed, such efforts were clearly advantageous to an ambitious young poet in a conservative age. However, Bénichou considers this position less about expediency and more about the realization that, by incorporating a sacred dimension into their work, poets attained significance beyond mere philosophical or material pursuits.\(^{134}\) To this end, Romantic poets turned to the poetry of Scripture as a model, hoping by emulation of its intensity to restore a lost dignity to the art. They were especially attentive to the poetry of the Bible, from the verses of Moses in the Old Testament to the hymns of Mary and Simeon in the Gospels. Of course, the Psalms were a high point, with many translations in French appearing around this time.\(^{135}\)

The religious sentiment common in French Romantic poetry is not always to be taken at face value. The youthful poetry of both Hugo and Lamartine offers fervent professions of faith

\[^{134}\text{Bénichou, *The Consecration of the Writer*, p. 264.}\]

\[^{135}\text{Ibid, p. 55.}\]
(the latter’s frequently tinged with doubt), but by the ends of their lives both men had turned away from the Church. The new sacred poetry was heterodox, adhering to no fixed tradition, and the approach to Scripture was creative, even irreverent, refashioning Biblical characters to suit individual tastes. As Bénichou puts it: “There is, in the nineteenth century, scattered through the works of poets, the draft of a Scripture revised along the lines of the romantic credo, one that has sometimes caused the original to be forgotten; Hugo’s Cain, his Boaz, are today vastly better known in France than those of the Bible.”

The challenge, then, is to determine the degree to which a given author adheres to Christian doctrine, and the degree to which he manipulates Scripture to serve his own ends. The problem is further complicated by the reality that artists, like all people, change over the course of a lifetime, and their beliefs may transform in ways that are not easily perceptible even to themselves, much less the reader. In reference to Hugo’s particular pronounced self-mythologizing, Bénichou observes, “Besides, people define themselves as much by their illusions as by their real condition.”

As Bénichou also writes, “It will be necessary for Christian poetics to free itself of the strict tutelage of doctrine and liturgy, to envisage a field of action and a ministry that are more contemporary, to accept in some degree the contagion of the new faith in humanity.”

This returns us to Bénichou’s thesis that French Romantic poetry derived its prophetic tone from the humanistic impulses of the Enlightenment. The concept of poet as prophet was already reflected in the writing of the eighteenth century. Sébastien Mercier first put forth the

137 Ibid, p. 262.
138 Ibid, p. 57.
idea of the man of letters as a martyr: “If, ungrateful men, you think that vanity alone inspires his pen, observe the persecution he endures, his exile, his wandering life, his misfortunes. What can he hope to gain from all this? What good comes to him?” This martyrdom is one rooted in social action, part of the secular ministry of the Enlightenment. To again quote Bénichou: “They herald an earthly salvation, scarcely distinguish the spiritual from the temporal, and tend to attribute to themselves a political as well as philosophical component.”

Bénichou proposes that these sentiments naturally found their way into the resurgence of belief in the nineteenth century, a synthesis of humanistic and divine worship. He finds a common thread in the sense of communion with nature and humanity found in both eras. Writing in 1835, Lamennais expressed this idea: “From the most secret depths of our bowels wells up I know not what living joy like a torrent of life uniting us to everything that feels, creating in us an expansive feeling in the heart of all creation.” According to Bénichou, “It must be allowed that this language was not commonly employed in Christian thought before the arrival of the secular Philosophes of sensibility.”

But is this fair to say? Bénichou seems to be arguing that Christians did not experience or express the transporting joy of communing with nature before the Enlightenment. Surely this is incorrect, as the sense of wonder in contemplating creation is at the very heart of the faith, from the Psalms of David to the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. It is similarly untenable that Christian writers were unconcerned with social issues prior to this point. A prime example is Dante, one of Liszt’s most beloved authors, railing against Florentine political injustice. It is true

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139 Quoted in Ibid, p. 16.
140 Ibid, p. 29.
141 Ibid, p. 22.
that a detached asceticism had long been wed to Catholicism, one that discouraged taking enjoyment in the material world. As we have already seen, this *Christianisme de la peur* came to a head in the eighteenth century, and it is certainly true that a contemporaneous contrast could be found in the Enlightenment contemplation of nature and engagement with the world. The problem lies in Bénichou’s anti-religious bias, reflected in the following passage: “A mind less easily satisfied [with a sense of communion with an immense universe] will conclude the ecstatic revery with the poison of Christian scruples.”

Bénichou fails to acknowledge the long history of religious faith allied with earthly engagement, but the brilliance of his thesis is no less compelling. Romantic artists, Catholic or not, shared a new sense of purpose tantamount to a consecration. For some, the divine was to be found outside the corruption and hypocrisy of the church, a continuation of Enlightenment sensibility. Balzac was one of these, believing that those sensing the grandeur of love and beauty “never need proofs in order to believe in God…God lives in their sensibility as if he were sensibility itself.” For others, Catholicism was a vital part of the equation, but this was the new, actively engaged faith that emerged after the Revolution.

As with that faith, the political allegiances of Romantics began to shift towards the end of the Restoration. In part, the shift reflected their increasingly rebellious aesthetic stance. In the 1820s, the principal artistic conflict was between Classicism and Romanticism. Proponents of both tended to be monarchists, but Louis XVIII advocated the former as appropriate to his pragmatic, rational government, a preference reflected by the writers inducted in the Academie

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142 Ibid.
143 Quoted in Ibid.
Romantics derided this antiquated style; as Lamartine—no stranger to Classical
convention himself, as we will see—put it, “You had to have a mythological dictionary under
your pillow if you wanted to dream up verses.” In his famous preface to the 1827 play
*Cromwell*, Victor Hugo set forth the guiding principles of Romanticism, crediting Christianity as
the source of all drama, with its juxtaposition of the sublime and the grotesque, its tension
between an all-loving God and sinful man.

For Hugo, it was censorship of *Cromwell* that served to turn him against the monarchy,
but such disillusion was widespread among Romantics by the late 1820s. Chateaubriand, who
had long been a politician, joined the liberal opposition, himself a victim of censorship. By
1830, the Romantics had established themselves as a force with which to be reckoned. In April
of that year, Lamartine was admitted to the Academie Française, while Hugo’s play *Hernani*
struck a blow for Romantic freedom with its free treatment of poetic structure and flouting of
classical convention. As with *Cromwell*, *Hernani* was accompanied by a lengthy preface, a
manifesto not only of Romanticism, but also of liberal ideals, and freedom from authority.

As with radical Catholicism, the disappointing outcome of the July Revolution only
rallied Romantics and intensified their rebellious stance. They openly expressed their antipathy
towards the drab, unromantic atmosphere of the July Monarchy. As Lamartine described Louis
Philippe, “one could say that nature and art have endowed him with all the qualities which make
a king popular with one exception: grandeur.” The revolution that had stumbled in politics

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146 Kelly, *The Young Romantics*, p. 50.
continued in the arts. At the same time, Romantics, like their spiritual father Chateaubriand, saw involvement in politics as a logical continuation of their artistic work. In an 1831 letter to Lamartine, Hugo wrote: “…there is no way for a man to shield himself from effects of the outside world; the contagion is in the air, it will reach you in spite of everything: a man takes part in politics, just as he breathes…we [artists] also are concerned with liberty, ours is also a revolution…it marches solidly beside its sister, politics. Revolutions, like wolves, do not devour each other.”

Unfortunately, as Eric Hobsbawm puts it, “Precise social analysis was never the romantic forte.”

Their crusading instinct, while laudable, was often misplaced. Lord Byron, a favorite of the French Romantics, was praised for his sacrifice in joining the Greeks in their fight for independence. The example of Byron and other English volunteers in this struggle perfectly illustrates the Romantic tendency towards idealized distortion. Hoping to find the modern-day descendants of Alexander’s fierce Macedonians, they instead encountered a poorly disciplined and pusillanimous fighting force. Similarly, Lamartine and Hugo entered French politics with visions of a utopian future that would inevitably be thwarted. Lamartine briefly led the country after the Revolution of 1848, only to see dreams of a republic evaporate with the rise to power of Napoleon III. Hugo’s reaction to this coup was to write a steady barrage of criticism against Napoleon from exile, to little effect.

The political absurdities of the era did spawn a more jaundiced sort of artist in the birth of Realism, considered by Sandy Petrey to have been inaugurated by the publication of Stendhal’s

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Le Rouge et Le Noir in 1830.\textsuperscript{152} Stendhal’s book confronted life with little of the sentimentality that fogged the vision of the Romantics. As Petrey puts it, “The year’s most important political event was the establishment of a monarchy with none of the attributes required for monarchy to make any sense. The year’s most important literary event was the narration of a march to the priesthood by a man with none of the attributes required for priesthood to make sense.”\textsuperscript{153} Throughout Le Rouge et le Noir, the protagonist Julien Sorel presents himself as a model of piety, soon establishing a promising career as a young cure. In fact, he possesses no real faith, and his knowledge of Scripture does not appear to extend beyond the admittedly impressive feat of having memorized the Vulgate Bible. In the second half of the novel, Stendhal mercilessly exposes all the hypocrisies of Restoration Paris, a world of less matter and more art.

While Romanticism prized emotional truth and idealism, Realism acknowledged the inherent elusiveness of truth, exposing the paradoxes one encounters every day. Still, are these two movements mutually exclusive? Jacques Barzun makes the case that Romanticism was also a realism of sorts, one that came to grips with important aspects of the human experience: “Romanticism had to reabsorb the realities which the preceding two centuries had quite literally put out of court—wild nature, passion, superstition, myth, history, and “foreign parts”…romanticism was a comprehensive realism.”\textsuperscript{154} In this sense, the Romantic obsession with the grotesque, with the past, and with myth, for all its exaggeration, actually aims at a richer engagement with life than restrained Classicism.

One might further argue that Romanticism and Realism were two sides of the same coin. Both represented a break with polite convention in the quest for artistic truth. The chief

\textsuperscript{152} Petrey, In the Court of the Pear King, p. x.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, p. 119.

difference was that Romantics sought to see things as they might be, while Realists saw them for what they were. Cynicism about human nature caused them to doubt everyone’s motives, particularly those who seemed suspiciously noble; Heine’s disdain of Liszt can be explained along these lines. In both cases, though, artists in Paris were seriously and self-consciously addressing social issues in a manner never before seen.

To conclude this initial inquiry, the Paris in which Liszt came of age was a unique breeding ground for the radical political, religious, and artistic views he would ultimately adopt. Like the rest of Europe, France was plunged into a new era of conservatism following the Congress of Vienna. Still, the revolutionary impulse was very much alive in Paris, something Liszt would not have encountered to any significant degree had he remained in Vienna, the city of Metternich. Similarly, only in France could Liszt maintain the Catholic faith of his childhood, while tapping into an established progressive community within the Church. Such impulses, while present elsewhere in Europe, were nowhere else so pronounced. Finally, nowhere were Romantic artists more attuned to social issues, and more inclined to infuse their work with a prophetic—specifically Catholic—sentiment than in Paris.

To a degree unmatched by any other composer of his generation, Liszt consistently embraced the Liberal, Catholic, and Romantic ideals of the period. From his dissatisfaction with the injustices of the July Monarchy, to his desire for a new era of glory for the Church, to his proclamation of Romantic iconoclasm, he drew upon a current of thought that brought him into contact with some of the most important political, religious, and artistic figures of 1830s Paris. Three in particular—Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan—would shape his artistic development to a remarkable degree.
Chapter Two: Liszt, Lamennais and Liberal French Catholicism

Of the many prominent figures Liszt encountered during the early 1830s, none exerted so profound an influence over his deepest convictions as Félicité Lamennais (1782-1854). During an extended stay at Lamennais’ Brittany home La Chênaie in 1834, Liszt either composed (De Profundis and the Apparitions) or likely revised (the Harmonies poétiques et religieuses) the core pieces of this study. Together, these three works constitute Liszt’s first truly groundbreaking compositions, and anticipate many of the harmonic and formal innovations most associated with the composer’s Weimar years.

However, Lamennais’ significance extends far beyond that of catalyst for these early works. As the father of Liberal French Catholicism, Lamennais served as the chief model for Liszt’s own politically charged faith. At the same time, Lamennais helped to define Liszt’s sense of artistic mission, reconciling Liszt’s deeper artistic aspirations with a spirit of social activism. In his aesthetics, Lamennais uniquely calls for art to be useful and beneficial to society, but without compromising the highest artistic ideals. Indeed, it is this seemingly paradoxical hybridism—between radical politics and traditional faith, innovation and respect for the past, the worldly and the divine—that is at the heart of Liszt’s interactions with Lamartine and Urhan as well as Lamennais.

How did Lamennais—the champion of traditional, monarchist Catholicism—end his life as its most vociferous opponent? How did a disgraced political radical retain his traditional faith, at least during this period of closest interaction with Liszt? How did an outspoken populist maintain a devotion to the most serious musical compositions? The tribulations of Lamennais’ life seem to prefigure Liszt’s own ordeals as a scorned, misunderstood, and marginalized figure.
I will chronicle in detail the nature of Lamennais’ friendship with Liszt during 1834-35, drawing upon their accounts as well as those of their closest associates. I will focus on two chief outcomes of Liszt’s retreat at La Chênaie: the *De Profundis* and the series of essays, “De la situation des artistes et de leur condition dans la société,” Liszt’s first of many published writings on music. In both cases, a socio-religious element combined with the highest artistic standards points to the influence of Lamennais. To strengthen this claim, I will weigh Lamennais’ beliefs against those of two similar philosophies Liszt encountered during this time: that of Pierre-Simon Ballanche and that of the Saint-Simonians.

### I: Lamennais’ Early Life

Hugues Félicité Robert de la Mennais was born on June 19th (not, as the Catholic Encyclopedia has it, the 29th), 1782 in Saint-Malô, Brittany, not far from Chateaubriand’s birthplace fourteen years before.\(^{155}\) In his memoirs, Alexandre Dumas offers a colorful description of Lamennais’ upbringing on the Brittany coast. “M. de la Mennais had spent his childhood near the sea, listening to the sound of the ocean, following the waves which recede to infinite horizons, and which perpetually return to break against the cliffs, just as the human wave perpetually returns to break against Fate.”\(^{156}\) This poetic image neatly illustrates a central conceit of Lamennais’ biography, that of constant defiance against unyielding forces. He was the son of a prominent naval stores contractor who, according to popular belief, “was the last

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man to be ennobled before the revolution.\textsuperscript{157} In fact, Lamennais’ father was more a progressive and less a relic of the \textit{ancien régime}: he favored a modern government built on industry, and prided himself as a moral bourgeois, selling goods at cost during times of scarcity.\textsuperscript{158} When Lamennais lost his mother at the age of five, though, his father promptly sent him to live with his uncle at La Chênaie.

It was at La Chênaie that Lamennais developed his brilliant mind. As punishment for misbehavior, Lamennais’ uncle would often lock him in his library, which housed an impressive collection of works of theology, devotionals, and the ancient classics. It was here that he began a course of study that would eventually allow him to read in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, English, and Italian with facility. However, there was one shelf set apart from the rest, marked “Hell” by his uncle and declared off limits. These were the works of the philosophes, and naturally Lamennais did read them, especially Rousseau. In fact, Marechal points out that Lamennais’ autodidactic upbringing mirrors the ideal proposed by Rousseau in his book \textit{Emile}.\textsuperscript{159} The example of Rousseau fostered a strong sense of independence and faith in humanity, situating Lamennais well within the lineage of post-Enlightenment prophets proposed by Paul Bénichou.

However, the overall tone of Lamennais’ upbringing at La Chênaie is best characterized as enlightened Catholicism. His family was sympathetic to the ideals of the Revolution, but not to its excesses. During the purges of clergy, they hid a priest, Abbé Vielle, whom Félicité assisted in administering a clandestine nocturnal Mass at the Lamennais estate. Lamennais was

\begin{footnotes}
\item 158 Ibid, 20.
\item 159 Christian Marechal, \textit{La jeunesse de La Mennais} (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1913), 16.
\end{footnotes}
also profoundly struck by the example of the philosophe La Harpe, an outspoken atheist and friend of Voltaire, who converted to Catholicism in 1797 following disillusionment with the Revolution.\footnote{Vidler, Prophecy and Papacy, p. 33.} Despite these Catholic sympathies, Lamennais remained questioning and skeptical, frequently debating Vielle on theological points, and delaying his first communion until 1804. Marechal identifies the years 1802-04 as the time of Lamennais’ spiritual conversion,\footnote{Marechal, La jeunesse de La Mennais, p. 65.} when, in his own words, he was “brought to Christianity through reading the philosophers.”\footnote{John J. Oldfield, The Problem of Tolerance and Social Existence in the Writings of Félicité de Lamennais, 1809-1831 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), p. 8.}

Armed with his newfound faith and formidable intellectual arsenal, Lamennais resolved to devote himself to restoring the status of the church he had seen treated so shabbily during his adolescence. His older brother Jean-Marie was ordained the same year as Félicité’s first communion, and the two worked together to combat a trend whereby, as Lamennais put it, nine tenths of Frenchmen were “atheists or absolutely without religion.”\footnote{Vidler, Prophecy and Papacy, p. 39.} His first book was 1808’s Réflexions sur l’état de l’Église en France pendant le dix-huitième siècle et sur sa situation actuelle, a collaboration with Jean-Marie that proposed combating the precarious position of the French Church through improved training and recruitment of clergy, and a renewed emphasis on communal living. Due to the book’s defiant attitude towards the Empire, it was banned by Napoleon and remained unpublished until 1815. While Lamennais wrote favorably about the Empire’s initial championing of the church in the Concordat of 1802, he decried Napoleon’s increasing domination of the pope that had culminated in the pontiff’s imprisonment. Lamennais began a second book directly critiquing Napoleon’s appointing of French bishops, but the
Emperor’s downfall rendered it unnecessary. The Réflexions, then, are significant in declaring Lamennais’ position as an ultramontanist, which only increased when Lamennais was forced into exile during Napoleon’s Hundred Days.

Lamennais followed the Réflexions with a translation of Le Guide spiritual ou le Miroir des âmes religieuses, a 16th century devotional written by the ascetic mystic Louis de Blois. The juxtaposition of these two works, one heavily political, the other aloof from worldly concerns, is consistent with Lamennais’ future writings. As Alec Vidler notes, “the mennaisian movement stood for an exalted standard of devotion as well as for intellectual enterprise and ecclesiastical reform,” and this synthesis of reflective piety and activism helps to explain Lamennais’ future appeal to Liszt. Indeed, Lamennais’ most successful effort in the devotional arena would be his 1824 translation and commentary of Thomas à Kempis’ Imitation of Christ, one of Liszt’s favorite books. Written in the 15th century during another era of spiritual laxity, Kempis’ book resonated with Lamennais’ advocacy of church renewal and communal living.

II: Lamennais as Monarchist and the Essay on Indifference

In a time of intellectual stagnation in the church, Lamennais stood apart as a thinker of broad scope and erudition. More than a mere restoration of the church’s temporal power, Lamennais sought a true spiritual renewal from the bottom up. As Guillaume Bertier de Sauvigny puts it, “Lamennais was the only ecclesiastic whose voice, emerging from the general mediocrity, made itself heard in the public at large.” His first great triumph emerged with his Essai sur l’indifférence en matière de religion, published in installments beginning in 1817. It was an instant success, with tens of thousands of copies sold, translations appearing in many

164 Ibid, p. 5.

165 Bertier de Sauvigny, The Bourbon Restoration, p. 310.
languages, and many spurred to conversion as a result of his arguments. According to Lacordaire, “In a single day M. de Lamennais found himself invested with the authority of Bossuet.” Lamennais’ fellow clergyman Teyserre also drew comparison to that great ancien régime priest and orator, writing that his friend had succeeded in “uniting the style of Rousseau, the reasoning of Pascal, the eloquence of Bossuet.”

“Indifference” here refers to three ways of thinking about religion that Lamennais considers untenable: as a mere political tool; as universal but lacking in revelation; and as possessing revelation in but a few central truths. His chief argument against these positions is his idea of a sort of collective reason, a “sens commun” or “raison générale.” Lamennais sees proof of the veracity of Christianity, and Catholicism in particular, growing out of human history, where he finds universal laws of morality that govern society. Furthermore, he argues that Christianity has been present in some form in all religions, and that it is true because it speaks to the most people. In his philosophy of history, Hegel praises these arguments in particular: “In an eloquent and impressive fashion, the Abbé Lamennais has reckoned it among the criteria of the true religion that it must be universal, i.e. catholic, and the oldest in point of time…”

Such views mark a radical break with the emphasis Catholicism had placed on the importance of individual reason ever since Thomas Aquinas. Instead, collective belief in God is the greatest proof in Lamennais’ system, expressed in the second part of the Essai released in


1820. These later installments did not sell as well: according to C.S. Phillips, “The skeptical world was unable to take the apologist’s argument seriously, while the Catholics resented, and felt compromised by, so radical an overturning of the approved apologetic.” As Dégert puts it, “The philosophic system of Lamennais, like his apologetics, called forth serious objections. It was pointed out that this philosophy and apologetics favored skepticism by denying the validity of individual reason. If the latter can furnish no certitude, how can we expect any from the general reason, which is but a synthesis of individual reasons?”

For all its faults, its logical leaps, and its unrealistic idealism, the *Essai* is significant in setting forth a belief in the power of collective human thought, endeavor, and most of all spirituality, which Lamennais would espouse throughout the rest of his life. Placing this at the heart of Lamennais’ beliefs helps to resolve many seeming inconsistencies with his subsequent views, and explains the power of his thought for Liszt. As J.E.S. Hayward remarks, “Despite the spectacular transition of Lamennais from reactionary priest to revolutionary philosopher and politician, from the sociological viewpoint it is the continuity of his attachment to a conception of society based upon ideological consensus that is the salient feature of his voluminous writings.” On the other hand, Dégert claims that Lamennais “cared much less for politics than for religion.” The truth is that Lamennais cared about *both* politics and religion, with the former outstripping the latter in his later years of spiritual rebellion.

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173 Dégert, "Félicité Robert de Lamennais."
The *Essai sur l'indifférence* has been regarded as a conservative document in many respects, supporting the return to the old order brought about by the Restoration monarchy. If this is the case, how is one to reconcile the drastic shift in Lamennais’ politics in the following decade? The solution is not to read the work as a political tract in the traditional sense of the term. Rather, Lamennais was concerned with spiritual, not political, power. In his view, ultimate authority rested in God, not in the state. He held to the ultramontanist view in which the Church superseded all temporal forms of government. His support of the monarchy, then, was not based on any particular love for a political system, but rather on the belief that it was under its aegis that the Church might best flourish.

Similarly, Lamennais remained committed to the ideal of communal cooperation, railing against the solipsism of individualism. In the *Essai sur l'indifférence*, he critiques Descartes’ famous “Cogito ergo sum” proof: according to Lamennais, such a statement is only possible with the use of language and thought that is necessarily conditioned by society. Such isolated thinking is not only impossible in Lamennais’ thinking, but contrary to a metaphysical conception of universal truth. Lamennais continued to evince a distrust of such Cartesian reason, equating it with personal pride and the idolatry of human thought. A quote from his commentary on *Imitation of Christ* is particularly revealing: “What does reason understand? Almost nothing: but faith embraces the infinite.” In turning now to Lamennais’ changing political views, let us bear these two constants—ultramontanism and universalism—in mind. Doing so will prevent this next phase of his life from appearing as jarring a departure as it may seem on the surface.

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III: Lamennais’ Liberal Transformation

As early as 1820, Lamennais’ hopes in the monarchy were starting to give way to disillusionment. He already foresaw the inevitability of the events of 1830: “the monarchy is now hanging by a thread, which the sword of a soldier will cut.”\textsuperscript{176} Witnessing a sea change, he concluded that the church must adapt to the times. By the end of the decade, he had shifted allegiances from the conservatives to the liberals, but the transition was a gradual one, a synthesis of pragmatism and idealism, of politics and religion. We can trace this practical streak back to Rousseau and his idea that truth and utility are connected, a view Lamennais already espoused in the \textit{Essai sur l’indifference}: “…in matter of doctrine, truth is inseparable from utility…in other words, every doctrine advantageous to mankind, and, with greater reason, every necessary doctrine is a true doctrine.”\textsuperscript{177} The influence of Chateaubriand is also clear, in comparing this to the argument in \textit{Génie du Christianisme}, which looked to the faith’s contributions to humanity as proof of its goodness. In the same vein, both authors looked back fondly on the unified Christendom of the medieval era, where they saw an all-encompassing faith providing for the greater good.

It was in adherence to this model that Lamennais initially supported a strong central government. In his “On Tolerance” of 1823 he argued in favor of state censorship, as a means of protecting the truth from scurrilous and incendiary writings. As Royalists began to lose their majority in the Chamber of Deputies, such reactionary journals as \textit{Le Conservateur} recruited Lamennais as their mouthpiece, but their goals were not the same as his. Rather, he saw them as a means to his ultimate end of religious renewal, and his later defection is therefore unsurprising,

\textsuperscript{176}“La monarchie est maintenant suspendue à un fil, que coupera l’épée d’un soldat.” Quoted in Ruth L. White, \textit{L’Avenir de La Mennais: Son rôle dans la presse de son temps} (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1974), p. 15.

\textsuperscript{177}Oldfield, \textit{The Problem of Tolerance}, p. 83.
since his allegiances had never been to them in the first place. As Lamennais made plain to a friend in 1820, he felt little affinity for political forces “founded on principles opposed to my own.”

As the decade progressed, it became clear just how opposed these principles were. Lamennais’ ultramontanism increasingly put him at odds with the government. In his 1825 work *De la religion considérée dans ses rapports avec l’ordre politique et civil*, Lamennais called for an end to the stranglehold enjoyed by Gallican bishops under the 1802 Concordat, a radical statement that won the support of the more fervent younger clergy. The government’s response was to fine Lamennais and seize all copies of the book. In it, Lamennais had still supported the stability of monarchical rule, “because an authority supreme and invariable in the religious order is incompatible with an authority which varies incessantly in the political order,” but this was soon to change under the reign of Charles X.

Despite Charles’ evident religious fanaticism, Lamennais saw him as both out of touch and obstructive to church autonomy. By the late 1820s, Lamennais had decided that the church’s best chance at success was to operate as a free agent, confident that the benefits of Christianity were self-evident and would naturally win out in the end. Unlike Charles X, Lamennais acknowledged the newness of French society: “At first [Lamennais] did look to the past, but to a more remote past; later he would abandon even this. Always he believed in the newness of the European situation and the need for radical measures to cope with it.”

Lamennais had been consistent in according primacy of place to the Church above all temporal concerns. In his commentary on *Imitation of Christ*, he writes, “God is the sole

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180 Stearns, *Priest and Revolutionary*, p. 41.
monarch, and all legitimate authority is a movement, a participation in His eternal, infinite power.”

Similarly, in Lamennais’ view the pope alone held authority on earth, rendering even Charles X beholden to him. In fact, Lamennais’ leadership of the ultra faction drove Charles to disband the Jesuits, fearful that his authority over that of the pope was being questioned. Lamennais increasingly saw the need to limit state power rather than promote it. Unlike the French monarchy and clergy, he was unwilling to subordinate his ideal of a unified church to political exigencies.

Lamennais’ belief in the virtue of association also facilitated his shift towards liberalism. Seeing that the masses shared his distaste for the state’s blunt tactics, he turned towards them as the best hope of a Catholic renaissance. In so doing he was part of the larger post-Revolution phenomenon wherein the laity played a greater role in French Catholicism than ever before. After a period of illness and seclusion in 1826, he emerged in a new mode of social engagement, switching his focus to pamphlets and newspaper articles in an effort to reach a broader audience on a more immediate basis.

In his essay “On Religion” he reversed his earlier support of censorship; according to John Oldfield, “he no longer considered such intervention to be either useful or acceptable.”

Robert A. Nisbet places Lamennais within a broader trend of nineteenth century thinkers—Tocqueville, Acton, Proudhon, and others—who “gave the problem of freedom, as inherited from the eighteenth century, a pluralist orientation that had been lacking in European

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184 Stearns, *Priest and Revolutionary*, p. 50.

thought for generations.”\textsuperscript{186} Increasingly Lamennais’ writings reflect a desire to further Enlightenment ideals, while at the same time rejecting Enlightenment individualism. In January 1831 he would write, “From equality is born independence, and from independence, isolation. As each man is circumscribed, so to speak, in his individual life, he no longer has more than his individual strength for defending himself if he is attacked; and no individual strength can offer a sufficient guarantee of security against the abuses of that incomparably greater force which is called sovereignty and from which arises the necessity of a new liberty, the liberty of association.”\textsuperscript{187}

In keeping with this philosophy of strength in numbers, Lamennais established the Congregation of St. Peter in 1829, an organization devoted to revitalizing the clergy based on these ideals of common sense and unity, and the application of Catholic doctrine to all branches of learning. Among its proponents were the poets Lamartine and Hugo, and dedicated mennaisian and future advocate of plainchant Prosper Guéranger. The organization attracted international attention: there were plans to extend the movement to North America, and the bishop of New York requested missionaries from Lamennais later that year. These plans were scrapped with the onset of the July Revolution, the catalyst for Lamennais’ total break with his former political views.

Initially, Lamennais’ reasons for supporting the Revolution seem to have been as pragmatic as were his reasons for being a monarchist. Writing an August 1830 letter, he said “I would prefer, for the tranquility of the immediate future, greater harmony in the institutions that are being established; for anything opposed to the republican spirit can neither endure nor be


\textsuperscript{187} Ibid, p. 777.
changed without new shocks which might be extremely dangerous.”188 Thus, republicanism was now the best vehicle for promoting Catholicism, a view Lamennais held ever more strongly as it became clear that the July Monarchy was more a continuation of the past regime than a departure from it. With Louis Philippe’s condemnation of the other revolutions of 1830—especially that of the Polish Catholics against Russia—Lamennais’ mind was made up: he declared, “If you are afraid of Liberalism, then Catholicize it.”189

IV: The Future and Words of a Believer

Lamennais responded to the need for his liberal Catholic platform by founding *l’Avenir* in October of 1830. With its motto of “God and Liberty,” it called upon Catholics to crusade for equality, freedom of the press, and common rights. In the second issue of October 18, Lamennais officially called for the separation of church and state, and for the right of Catholics to send their children to Catholic schools. An October 26 article pledged allegiance to the Pope, but called for suppression of the clergy budget, a means of weaning the church off of reliance upon the state.

There was something about Lamennais’ growing sense of rebellion that drew young men to his side. He was assisted in his endeavors by a coterie of youthful disciples, chief among them Henri Lacordaire and Charles de Montalembert. Born in 1802, Lacordaire was a young priest who would go on to become one of the major leaders of French Catholicism. At twenty Montalembert was even younger, and yet became Lamennais’ closest friend despite their great age difference. Together, Lacordaire and Montalembert wrote the majority of articles for the journal, but their views were very much Lamennais’, who inspired fanatical devotion among his

188 Stearns, *Priest and Revolutionary*, p. 70.

followers. At the same time, he encouraged each to develop his own talents, in keeping with his belief in the complementary nature of humanity.

The impact of *l’Avenir* was immediate. The number of subscribers only reached 1500 at its peak, but this was a respectable size for a journal in an era of high printing costs and low literacy rates. The actual number of readers was in fact much higher, as Catholic congregations circulated copies amongst themselves.\(^{190}\) It was particularly popular in poor rural congregations: one hundred Catholics in Savoy shared a subscription of twenty copies.\(^{191}\) Romantic writers were another important source of support for the journal: Hugo, Vigny, Lamartine, and Balzac contributed articles in the course of its brief tenure. There was some support from non-Catholic liberals, both those who supported the journal’s call for reform, and those who welcomed Catholicism as a force of stability in unstable times.

As a whole, though, *l’Avenir* was a source of division rather than the hoped for unity. Lamennais himself admitted poetically, “some adopt the principles with alacrity, others reject them with asperity.”\(^{192}\) Lamennais saw liberalism as the way of the future, and sought to reconcile it with Catholicism, but as Stearns posits, “Most liberals simply could not believe that Catholics really wanted liberty.”\(^{193}\) They agreed with Lamennais’ call for separation of church and state, but saw no reason to join with the church, because as a whole it remained committed to preserving its power. He was able to attract larger numbers of Catholics, but most, like liberals, were put off by Lamennais’ desire to, as Leo XII had put it, “turn the world upside down.”

Strikingly, a January 3, 1831 *l’Avenir* article declared that it was contradictory for a Catholic to

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\(^{190}\) Stearns, *Priest and Revolutionary*, p. 100.

\(^{191}\) Ibid.


\(^{193}\) Stearns, *Priest and Revolutionary*, p. 106.
shun liberal principles, a statement calculated to alarm. Elsewhere, Lamennais spoke out against complacency, writing “The question of the poor, which is not just a question of economics but a question of life or death for five-sixths of mankind, is more than ever one of those which call for a prompt solution in Europe.”

The impassioned calls for change written by Lamennais and his followers won them enemies in both the political and the religious establishment. Most European governments spoke out against the journal for its support of revolution not just in France, but also in Belgium, Ireland, and Poland. The anti-Gallican stance of the journal also placed it at odds with the bishops of French Catholicism. True, early on the journal spoke out on attacks against the church. The government seized the November 26 and 27, 1830 issues of *l’Avenir* after Lacordaire and Lamennais criticized government attempts to limit church influence. The sacking of the Church of St. Germain l’Auxerrois and the Archbishop’s palace in Paris by an anti-Catholic mob on February 14, 1831, prompted Montalembert’s famous article “The Cross,” in which he condemned all of Paris as complicit in the impious deed. In fact, *l’Avenir* called for funds to rebuild the Archbishopric, raising 1000 francs within a week. Overall, though, *l’Avenir*’s ultramontanism and liberalism trumped any subsidiary defenses of the French church as it then existed. The Archbishop himself refused to accept funds from so tainted a source, and many French bishops forbade their congregations from reading the journal.

Internal problems further assailed *l’Avenir*. Lamennais’ chronic ill health kept him from managing the journal personally in Paris, and it suffered from financial mismanagement and lack

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195 Lamennais and the Archbishop had butted heads in the press two years before, with the radical priest criticizing the pontiff for his Gallicanism. See *Première lettre et seconde lettre à Monseigneur l’Archevêque de Paris*. Housed at the Morgan Library, NYC: MA 922-923, 1828-1829.
of cohesion. Injunctions against the journal by the government and the church provided further limitations on circulation beyond the purely material. Still, as Philip Spencer puts it, “although the immediate impact [of l’Avenir] was narrow, it was deep.” In fact, “narrow” is probably too strong a word, in light of other statistics we have of public response to the journal. Over 18,000 people donated funds to defray costs of a trial brought against Lamennais and Lacordaire by the state for their articles of late November 1830, and the journal raised 80,000 francs for Irish famine victims, indicators of a significant body of supporters.

While l’Avenir functioned as the political arm of the mennaisian movement, the Agence générale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse—formed by Lamennais, Lacordaire, Montalembert, and the Comte de Coux in December 1830—was devoted to religious issues. The agency focused on the rights of religious organizations, and the resurrection of religious education. Under the July Monarchy, schools were secular by law, and were either indifferent or hostile to Catholicism; at one school, students voted on the existence of God, who won by just one vote. In April 1831 the government ordered priests in Marseille to stop free Latin lessons to choirboys, and the Agence générale responded by defiantly opening a Catholic school in Paris. The resultant highly publicized trial—in which Lacordaire and Montalembert were found guilty but fined the minimum amount—placed Lamennais’ supporters in open revolt against the government, and subscriptions to l’Avenir began to fall.

Throughout the early stages of the journal’s publication the Vatican had remained silent, placed as it was in a complicated position. On the one hand, Lamennais was adopting a dangerous tone of defiance to the established order. At the same time, though, he was speaking

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197 Stearns, Priest and Revolutionary, p. 87.
198 Ibid, p. 34.
out against Gallicanism, long a thorn in Rome’s side. In turn, Lamennais was treading a fine line between republicanism and loyalty to the Pope, apparently unwilling to recognize the degree to which the Holy See relied upon the established political order as a guarantor of its survival. When uprisings broke out in Italy in 1831, articles in *l’Avenir* expressed sympathy for both insurgents and the new Pope Gregory XVI, confident that Rome would come to embrace the new climate of reform.

In so doing, Lamennais had severely misjudged Leo XII’s successor, Gregory XVI. Having spent most of his life closed off from the world as a Benedictine monk, Gregory was highly conservative, and deeply alarmed by recent threats to the social order. Throughout Lamennais’ tenure as editor and chief contributor of *l’Avenir*, the Pope had been receiving communiqués from Metternich through the Austrian ambassador to Rome, warning him of the dangers of the rogue French priest. The Vatican began to make its disapproval of *l’Avenir* known, prompting Lamennais to suspend publication of the journal on November 15, 1831, just over a year after it had begun. With his chief lieutenants Lacordaire and Montalembert in tow, Lamennais traveled to Rome to seek an audience with the Pope, hoping to convince him of the compatibility of their efforts with Catholic beliefs.

The meeting with Gregory XVI was a bizarre one. The Pope refused to address the issue of *l’Avenir* and Lamennais’ growing political radicalism. Instead, he merely exchanged pleasantries with his guests, who remained in Rome for several months hoping for further communication, to no avail. The implicit message was that the Vatican did not wish to publicly condemn a man who had once been one of its most valued servants, but would be forced to do so if Lamennais did not drastically alter his position. When no change was forthcoming, Gregory circulated the encyclical “Mirari vos” of August 15, 1832, which condemned freedom of the

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press, liberty of conscience, recent insurrections, and attempts to reform the church. Although Lamennais was not mentioned by name, the encyclical was a clear repudiation of his views. Shocked by this turn of events, Lamennais realized he must capitulate, and retreated to La Chênaie with his followers.

The actions that brought Lamennais to this point had been either heroic or foolhardy, depending on one’s point of view. Stearns offers the following analysis: “Here is an irony. Lamennais’ opponents used nasty methods and unfair arguments; yet they were often right. They sensed in Lamennais something that Lamennais did not fully realize of himself: there were no clear limits to the innovations that Lamennais sought. The battle was not simply between bigoted reactionaries and a noble defender of the best interests of the Church. Lamennais was sure he was acting in the Church’s best interests, but he was equally sure that he was the final judge of these interests; he would brook no argument.” Ultimately, Lamennais’ intransigence cost him most of his followers. Although Montalembert remained devoted, Lacordaire left La Chênaie to return to the Catholic fold, convinced that his mentor was determined to continue in his defiance of the church.

Lacordaire’s fears were well grounded, for Lamennais’ silence was only temporary. Between February and July 1833 he drafted Paroles d’un croyant, intended as a vindication of his stance against tyranny. He refrained from publishing it initially, holding out hope for a reconciliation with the church. He continued to express radical ideas in private letters, though, some of which were intercepted by Metternich’s agents and transmitted to the pope. In May 1833 Montalembert translated Mickiewicz’s Livre des Pélerins Volonais, a book lamenting the deaths of tens of thousands of Poles and Lithuanians in Russian reprisals for the 1830

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200 Ibid, pp. 115-16.

201 Stearns, Priest and Revolutionary, p. 136.
Montalembert added a preface to his translation condemning monarchy and praising revolution. In response, the Pope wrote an open letter to the Archbishop of Toulouse, questioning the sincerity of Lamennais’ promise to refrain from public voicing of his radical views. Against Montalembert’s advice, Lamennais wrote back to the Pope, affirming his willingness to remain silent, but also maintaining his right to hold his own opinions on temporal matters. Gregory replied with another public letter, this one to the Bishop of Rennes, demanding that Lamennais adhere to the encyclical “Mirari vos.” Seeing that reconciliation would be impossible, Lamennais dissolved the group at La Chênaie.

Lamennais published *Paroles d’un croyant* anonymously on April 30, 1834, but everyone knew the identity of the work’s author. René Rémond assesses the magnitude of its significance: “It represents perhaps the most important contribution Lamennais brought to the preparation of the revolution of February: without a doubt, no other book exercised so decisive an influence on the formation of the spirit of 1848.” According to J.E.M. Latham, *Paroles d’un Croyant* “expressed a proto-liberation theology,” and marked the culmination of the form of Christian socialism he had been developing for several years.

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While Alan Walker finds *Paroles d’un croyant* to be “couched in the ringing language of the Old Testament,” Lamennais’ apocalyptic tone most closely resembles that of the Book of Revelation. As W.G. Roe puts it, the book is “an attempt to translate the atmosphere of the early years of the Church into the political situation existing eighteen centuries later.” Like the Book of Revelation, *Paroles* reads both as an indictment of the specific tyrannical injustices of its time and place, and as a broader eschatology foretelling the imminent arrival of God’s kingdom on earth. Lamennais’ cryptic tone no doubt served several purposes: avoidance of specifics that would provoke the censors and the Vatican; promotion of allegorical readings to provide the broadest possible range of applications for various political struggles across Europe; and cultivation of a poetic style that harnessed the raw power of the Bible.

Throughout *Paroles*, Lamennais relates cryptic visions of men in purple robes, serpents, black masses, and so on, using specific numbers (especially seven) in a manner similar to the Book of Revelation. Despite the air of mystery, the anti-authoritarian tone is clear and consistent. In Chapter Two, he characterizes earthly kings and princes as servants of Satan, and in the following chapter preaches unity in the face of tyranny, invoking images of the body of Christ and of sheep at the mercy of wolves. Chapter Five describes Jesus as a political prisoner, while Chapter Twenty-Six likens corrupt governments to the Pharisees. Chapter Twelve offers an eerie depiction of a Black Mass comprised of princes united against liberty, Christ, and the church: their chilling refrain is “Cursed be the Christ, who brought back Liberty to the earth!”

Brazenly, Lamennais asserts the very ideas Gregory had condemned in *Mirari vos*. He


denies the notion that the common people are incapable of making their own decisions, offering the following vindication of liberty of conscience: “And in this distress, under this oppression, what did you demand? Liberty! You reclaimed the right to obey no one but God, and to serve and adore him according to your conscience.” He states that leaders should only be obeyed if they are just, and warns that tyranny inevitably leads to rebellion. His lifelong admiration of Rousseau is evident in Chapter Eight, where he evokes a prelapsarian age where natural law and human nature were good. It was only with the introduction of work that oppression and domination came into being. According to Lamennais, governments formed to control and profit from others, perverting human activity that was intended to provide for the common good. Nationalism was but an expansion of selfishness on a larger scale, a means of dividing and conquering humanity.

The solution he proposes is a form of socialism rooted in Christian principles of justice and charity. In Chapter Twelve Lamennais declares that faith and independent thought are breaking the chains that bind workers, likening their contemporary struggle to that of the Israelites escaping from Egypt. In Chapter Thirty-Three he anticipates the last judgment of tyrants: “But the sons of Satan are numerous in the world. As they appear, God writes their names in a sealed book that will be opened and read before all at the end times.” In Chapter Thirty-Five, the most controversial of the book, Lamennais directly endorses violent insurrection. In response to the persistent refrain “Young soldier, where are you going?” a series of inflammatory statements beginning with “I go to fight” (for justice, for one’s brothers, against oppression, against the masters and tyrants) is met with the affirmation “May your arms be

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211 “Or, les fils de Satan sont nombreux dans le monde. À mesure qu’ils passent, Dieu écrit leurs noms dans un livre scellé, qui sera ouvert et lu devant tous à la fin des temps.” Ibid, 190.
blessed, young soldier!”, which crescendos to the final biblical pronouncement, “May your arm be blessed, seven times blessed, young soldier!” According to Frank Bowman, Lamennais here introduces a political and religious justification for violence not found in 1789 but widespread by 1848.

The book made a sensation upon its publication. It was translated into many languages, and sparked widespread discussion, endorsement, and condemnation. The supporters tended towards the extreme left: Anna Wheeler, the likely English translator, was a radical feminist and onetime Saint-Simonian. The book spawned numerous critiques, many of which parodied Lamennais’ prophetic tone, often wryly pointing out philosophical inconsistencies with his earlier works, especially *Essai sur l’indifférence*. Lamennais was not much concerned by this, however; in a July 12, 1834 letter to Montalembert, he cites these parodies as proof that the book had made a strong impact.

Not surprisingly, the Pope launched a second salvo that was far more pointed and severe than that of 1832. In his *Singulari nos* (subtitled “on the errors of Lamennais”) of June 25, 1834, Gregory directly engages with the text of *Paroles d’un croyant*: “…the writer transposes the power of princes, through a new and wicked idea, to the power of Satan and an omen of subterfuge, as if it were dangerous to divine law, even a work of sin.” He goes on to express annoyance with Lamennais’ adoption of the rhetoric of Scripture, seeing it as an attempt to undermine the very teachings of Catholicism under the guise of prophetic authority.

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212 Ibid, p. 206.


was particularly appalled, as were many, with the call to rebellion most explicit in Chapter Thirty-Five: “It arouses, fosters, and strengthens seditions, riots, and rebellions in the empires.”

Since it was at this critical juncture that Liszt first encountered Lamennais, it is important to determine the precise nature of the priest’s religious views at this point. Was he still a Catholic? If not, was he still a Christian? The answers have important consequences for how we read his influence on Liszt, and what this can tell us about the young composer’s own beliefs. Ultimately, our conclusions themselves must rely on a great deal of faith, since we have no special access to either man’s private thoughts or inner spiritual state. That said, the documentary evidence strongly suggests that while Lamennais would gradually adopt more secular viewpoints later in life, he remained at this point devout, and even considered himself a Catholic, albeit one that was deeply disillusioned with the state of the church at the time.

Some scholars mark *Paroles d’un croyant* as the end, or at least the beginning of the end, of Lamennais’ Christian faith. C.S. Phillips writes of *Paroles*, “there is nothing in it which reveals the writer as a Catholic,”\(^{216}\) while Philip Spencer says, “its publication advertised his loss of Catholic faith.”\(^{217}\) However, according to Louis de Guillou—the compiler of Lamennais’ correspondence who has also written the definitive book on the evolution of his religious thought—the Lamennais of *Paroles* was the same Lamennais of the late 1820s. W.G. Roe concurs, and offers the following cogent assessment:

> It would, however, be quite wrong to say that at this critical point in his development Lamennais had abandoned the firm outlines of Catholic doctrine of favor of the vague visions of a sentimentalist. On the contrary, the Paroles, at which many pious hands were raised in horror, contained much Catholic teaching, and the point of view from which it saw the world was still recognizably Catholic. The hope which Lamennais advocated was still the Christian hope. The


\(^{217}\) Spencer, *Politics of Belief*, p. 49.
happiness he promised was neither material prosperity nor vague visions of spiritual perfection: it was the vision of Christ exalted at the right hand of God.\textsuperscript{218}

In reading *Paroles*, one is undoubtedly struck by the boldness of the ideas, but at the same time they are consistent with much Christian, and specifically Catholic, teaching. To be sure, Lamennais placed himself at odds with papal authority, but the same is true of many Catholic writers before and since: Dante, another of Liszt’s personal heroes, is a perfect example. In reviewing his letters at this time, it is clear that his defiance was less a matter of pride and more a genuine conviction that the church had strayed from its mission.

Two letters from 1834 serve to confirm the constancy of Lamennais’ faith during this period. On July 5, shortly before *Singulari nos* was made public, he writes to Montalembert:

> Convinced, then, that nothing will stop the development of modern ideas, however one judges them, it seemed to me that it was important for the salvation of the people not to let them think that these ideas were opposed to Christianity on earth. I am all the more eager to fight such a damaging prejudice, since in my eyes the movement that is pulling the human race toward a new social situation, far from being contrary to the religion of Jesus Christ, is only its necessary effect, its political supplement, having been in preparation for eighteen centuries.\textsuperscript{219}

Most significantly for Liszt studies, Lamennais explicitly identifies himself as Catholic in a letter from September 9, just one day after Liszt’s arrival at La Chênaie:

> …therefore I remain Catholic in order to remain religious, in order to conserve, insofar as it depends on me, this imperishable element of human nature. But at the same time, I do not associate myself with the political system of the leaders of Catholicism, on the contrary I fight them with all my power, because I have also the most rigorous responsibilities towards humanity, and I do not at all recognize the cause of God to be that of ignorance and tyranny.\textsuperscript{220}


\textsuperscript{219} Stearns, *Priest and Revolutionary*, p. 167.

Therefore, Lamennais still considered himself Catholic when he hosted Liszt, but in a broader sense. This was, as Guillou puts it, “an enlarged Christianity, Catholic in the true sense of the term.” He ceased to say mass himself, but was still attending services at the local church, and may have gone as late as October 1836. Eventually he would break definitively with orthodox Christianity, a development that raises questions about Liszt’s continued loyalty. In 1834, though, Lamennais still very much considered himself a Catholic, and it is evident that Liszt shared this view. As Lamennais himself said after the publication of the Paroles d’un Croyant, “I have not at all broken with the Church, I have not imitated Luther and will not do so, persuaded as I am that schisms do nothing but harm.”

V: Liszt and Lamennais at La Chênaie

Having established both the reasons behind Lamennais’ turn to Catholic liberalism, and the constancy of his faith despite this political about face, let us now turn to his relationship with Liszt. The first evidence of Lamennais’ awareness of Liszt appears in a March 1833 letter he received at La Chênaie from Montalembert. Montalembert, writing from Paris, recounted his first meeting with the musician: “I was also delighted with Liszt, famous pianist since his childhood of whom you have perhaps heard. I cannot remember ever having encountered a more sincere exaltation; he has lately concentrated this exaltation entirely in our political and religious doctrines; they have brought him to a real and practical faith. The good Lord thus reserves some

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222 Roe, Lamennais and England, p. 17.

223 “Je n’ai point rompu avec l’Église, je n’ai point imité Luther, et je ne l’imiterai point, persuade que je suis que les schisms ne font que du mal.” J. Paül-Boncour, Lamennais (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1928), p. 30.
consolations for us even in the midst of our sufferings.” A year later Lamennais finally met Liszt himself in a Paris salon, and he was similarly impressed. Writing to Montalembert in April 1834, he exclaimed, “I have met Liszt, who greatly pleased me. This young man is full of soul; he will come this summer with d’Ortigues (sic) to pass some time here.”

Ultimately, Liszt arrived at La Chênaie, sans Joseph d’Ortigue, on September 8, 1834. Two years earlier, the young poet and mennaisian Maurice de Guérin (1810-1839) wrote a panegyric description of the country home:

La Chesnaie [sic] is a sort of oasis in the heart of the steppes of Brittany. In front of the house stretches a spacious garden broken by a terrace planted with lime trees, and at the bottom there is a tiny chapel. I am very fond of this little oratory where one breathes two kinds of peace, the peace of solitude and the peace of the Lord. In the spring we shall go to our prayers between two lines of flowers. To the east and a few paces from the house, there sleeps a little lake between two woods that are full of birds in the dry season; and then to the right and to the left, on every side, are woods, woods, everywhere woods. It is melancholy now that everything is bare, and the forests are rust-colored, with the Breton sky always overcast and so low that it seems to want to crush you; but, with the return of spring, the sky clears, the woods come to life again, and everything will be enchanting.

In a letter to Marie d’Agoult, Liszt describes the house as “clean, unassuming, but rather comfortably laid out,” with a dining room and salon on the first floor, and Liszt’s and Lamennais’ bedrooms on the second. This would be Liszt’s home for the next month.

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225 “J’ai fait la connaissance de Liszt, qui m’a plu beaucoup. Ce jeune homme est plein d’âme; il viendra cet été avec d’Ortigues (sic) passer quelque temps ici.” Ibid, pp. 66. It was evidently d’Ortigue, a committed mennaisian, who introduced the two.

226 Vidler, Prophecy and Papacy, p. 32.

227 “fraîche, peu apparent, mais assez commodément distribuée.”
In his letter to d’Agoult, we also learn that Liszt attended Mass at the nearby church of Saint-Pierre with Lamennais. This provides confirmation that Lamennais remained a practicing Catholic at this point. Nevertheless, this remained a period of crisis for him, with the path irrevocably laid for his eventual break with Rome. *Paroles d’un croyant* received its sixth printing of 20,000 copies on September 27th, and his supporters were increasingly alarmed by his refusal to submit to the church. Even Montalembert, his most loyal supporter, would soon leave him. Montalembert had long been urging Lamennais to forge alliances with prominent Christian figures, and was discouraged by his increasing focus on political radicalism. Montalembert’s opinion of Liszt also seems to have soured earlier in the year. Writing to Lamennais on May 31, 1834—shortly after Lamennais’ first meeting with Liszt—Montalembert fulminates:

What does it matter, I ask you, that all the young people of Faubourg St-Jacques, or if you like of all the suburbs of Paris, carry your book under their arm and read it enthusiastically, if Christians, Catholics, and priests of the living God, the veritable *sons of God and brothers of Christ*, are all saddened, confounded, troubled, and despairing over it? Must genius, and Christian genius at that, now work for the crowd? And my God, what a crowd! Those that have *le Populaire* and *le Charivari* as mouthpieces! When all the Liszts, the Sainte-Beuves and all the world’s artists would shower you with love and veneration, what would there be, in the cult of all these men without faith and without humility, to make up for the loss of one Christian friend?228

What had changed to color Montalembert’s impression of Liszt? Since their first meeting Liszt had begun his relationship with Marie d’Agoult, and this coincided with his return to, as

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228 “Qu’importe, je vous prie, que tous les jeunes gens du Faubourg St-Jacques, ou si l’on veut de tous les faubourgs de Paris, portent votre livre sous le bras et le lisent avec enthousiasme, si les chrétiens, les catholiques, les prêtres du Dieu vivant, les véritables *fils de Dieu et frères du Christ*, en sont tous attristés, confondus, troublés, désespérés? Est-ce que le génie, et le génie chrétien, doit maintenant travailler pour la foule? Et quelle foule, grand Dieu! Que celle qui a pour organe *le Populaire* et *le Charivari*! Quand tous les Liszt, les Sainte-Beuve et tous les artistes du monde vous combleraient d’amour et de vénération, y aurait-il, dans le culte de tous ces hommes sans foi et sans humilité, de quoi compenser la perte d’un seul ami chrétien?”
Thérèse Marix-Spire calls it, the “whirlwind of the salons” after years of spiritual retreat. He would soon write disparagingly of this period in his life:

I have had neither sleep nor rest for more than four months…aristocracy of birth, aristocracy of talents, aristocracy of fortune, elegant coquetterie of the boudoir, serious and mephitic atmosphere of diplomatic salons, stupid tumult of the road, yawns and bravos contracted from literary and artistic salons, egoistic and insulting joys of the dance, gossip and stupidity from salon triumphs, critiques and praise from journals exaggerated in every way, artistic deception, public success, I have traversed all of this! I have felt, seen, despised, cursed, and wept.

Robert Wangermée writes of “la mauvaise conscience” of Liszt during this period. According to him, Liszt was occupied in two contradictory activities: to become the foremost virtuoso of his day, and to become a respected composer. A direct result of his stay at La Chênaie was a clearer idea of how to achieve the second goal.

VI: On the Situation of Artists and their Condition in Society

Liszt left La Chênaie for Paris in early October, filled with enthusiasm for Lamennais’ ideas. The first evidence of this is his series of essays “De la situation des artistes, et de leur condition dans la société,” which appeared between May and August of 1835 in the Gazette musicale de Paris. Liszt’s impetus for writing these articles is what he perceives to be the subservient status of artists in society. Consider the following remonstrance by Liszt: “We PRIESTS of ART, charged with a mission and a sublime teaching, instead of standing firm and


vigilant as the sentinels of the Lord who remain silent neither during the day nor at night, instead of remaining awake and praying, exhorting and acting, we bent down and miserably squatted in the gilded degradation [of well paid servitude].”

Liszt decries the July Monarchy as a government of cold commerce, with no organizations dedicated to the sponsorship of young artists. Louis Philippe, whom Liszt refers to as “sa majesté citoyenne”, comes in for particularly harsh criticism. He goes on to note the continued musical impoverishment perpetrated by the king and his government, with funding cut to such institutions as the Institution royale de musique religieuse de France.

Liszt highlights the illusory nature of the July Revolution, embodied in the case of Berlioz, whom he characterizes as “the musician of the cannons of July and of France.” His revolutionary music heralds a new era, but Berlioz is thwarted in his attempts to have his music performed: “He knocks on doors, and they close the doors on him.” Instead, the era is one of cold commerce, with no organizations dedicated to the sponsorship of young artists. The public clamors for contredanses and gallops on operatic motives, and praises popular musicians like Musard and Tolbecque, whom Liszt describes as “the Louis-Philippes, the Rothschilds and the Aguados of music.”

Liszt notes the embarrassing comparison between the arts in France and in Germany:

Beyond the Rhine, it is true, all the princelings, dukes, archdukes, kinglets and potentates hold the distinction of having a chapel and Kapellmeisters. But in France, the law being atheist, His Majesty Louis-Philippe, who attends Mass but rarely or not at all, thought with good reason that one chapel was one too many,


234 “il frappe aux portes, et on lui ferme les portes.” Ibid.

and that the chapel musicians had become sinecures. Thus, he wasted no time in his first days upon taking the throne in discharging chaplains and artists, signifying to his family that henceforth the plainchant of Saint-Roch would be music enough for them.

He goes on to note the continued musical impoverishment perpetrated by the king and his government:

Assuredly, here is one of the thousand and one disgraces of the order of things that alone sufficed to lift up our indignation. But while this was happening, the bourgeois vandalism had not arrested its course; it quickly went to work. Economic reforms rained down from right and left. The dissolution of the choir school followed soon after the dissolution of the chapel. Out of fear of being accused of Jesuitism, they sent out the door of the Tuileries Messieurs Cherubini, Plantade, and Lesueur with their masses and their requiems. After that, without further ado, they took advantage of the opportunity to strike from the civil list the moderate pension of the institution on Rue Vaugirard, the useful services of which were generally appreciated, and which—following this royal and pitiable stinginess—was to continue its work without government support.

One can draw parallels here to Lamennais’ own frustrations in attempting to open a religious school, only to encounter a hostile government more concerned with cold finances and political stability than spiritual wellbeing.

Liszt also faults the July Monarchy for the deterioration of the church in France: “[…]
the temporal power—always more or less openly in a state of hostility with the church—definitively divorced with her in July [1830]. The citizen and bourgeois royalty, economic, prudent by nature and by necessity, forced to defend its terrain foot by foot, unceasingly

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236 Here Liszt refers to the Institution royale de musique religieuse de France, located at No. 69 Rue de Vaugirard. Founded by Alexandre-Étienne Choron in 1817, the school trained many important musicians and promoted older choral works by Palestrina, Bach, Handel, and others. The school ran into serious financial difficulties when the July Monarchy cut its funding in 1830, and again in 1831.

237 “Assurément, c’est là une de ces mille et une hontes de l’ordre de choses qui suffirait à elle seule pour soulever notre indignation. Mais une fois en train, le vandalisme bourgeois ne s’arrête pas en chemin; il va vite en besogne. Les réformes économiques pleuvent de droite et de gauche. La dissolution de l’école Choron suivit de près la dissolution de la chapelle. De peur d’être accusé de jésuitisme, on mit à la porte des Tuileries MM. Chérubini, Plantade, Lesueur, avec leurs messes, leurs requiems, et cela fait, sans perdre de temps, on profita de l’occasion pour rayer de la liste civile la modique pension de l’institution de la rue de Vaugirard, dont l’utilité et les services étaient généralement appréciés, et qui, par suite de cette royale et pitoyable lésinerie, fut hors d’état de continuer ses travaux.” Liszt, “De la situation,” p. 56.
deceived, pestered, harassed in every way, this poor royalty has neither the time nor the inclination to embarrass itself with matters of worship and art.” At the same time, he blames the church itself for failing to address the needs of a changing society:

The Catholic Church, uniquely occupied in stammering her dead letter and in prolonging with ease her degrading caducity,—only knowing how to exclude and anathematize where it should bless and encourage—deprived of awareness of the profound needs that occupy the younger generations, understanding neither science nor art, and possessing nothing, capable of nothing to alleviate this hunger and thirst for justice, for liberty and for charity that torments us, the Catholic Church, such as she has done, such as one sees, attacked on both sides by kings and the people, in private rooms and in public places, this church, we say without evasiveness, has entirely alienated herself from the respect and love of the true society. People, art, life, have withdrawn from her; and it seems that her destiny will be to perish in desertion and abandonment.

This critical view of the church is consistent with Lamennais’ position at this point, and as Louis de Guillou attests, Liszt is clearly referring to the anathematizing of his spiritual mentor in this passage.

The final installment of Liszt’s essay is devoted to church music. He begins with a scathing depiction of the current state of church music in France:

Do you hear this stupid bellowing that resounds under the vault of the cathedrals? What is that? It is the song of praise and benediction that the mystical bride addresses to Jesus Christ,—it is the barbarous, heavy, ignoble psalmody of the parish choristers. How false, rough, abominable are their voices; how hideous and repulsive is this accompaniment (incorrect and irregular) of trumpet and

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238 Ibid, p. 34.

239 “L’église catholique uniquement occupée à balbutier sa lettre morte et à prolonger dans l’aisance sa dégradante caducité,—ne sachant qu’exclure et anathématiser là où il faudrait bénir et encourager,—dépourvue du sentiment des besoins profonds qui travaillent les générations nouvelles, ne comprenant rien ni à la science ni à l’art, et n’ayant rien, ne pouvant rien, pour apaiser cette faim et cette soif de justice, de liberté et de charité qui nous tourmente, l’église catholique, telle qu’elle s’est faite, telle que la voilà, souffletée à la fois sur les deux joues par les rois et les peuples, dans les antichambres et sur la place publique, cette église, disons-le sans détour, et les peuples, dans les antichambres et sur la place publique, cette église, disons-le sans détour, s’est entièrement aliénée le respect et l’amour de la société actuelle. Le peuple, l’art, la vie, se sont retirés d’elle; et il semble que sa destinée soit de périr dans le délaissement et l’abandon.” Ibid.

240 Lamennais, Correspondance, vol. 6, p. 302 n.
booming bass;—could one not say of monstrous insects buzzing within a cadaver?

And the organ,—the organ, this pope among instruments, this mystic ocean that recently washed so majestically over the altar of Christ and there deposited with its waves of harmony the prayers and lamentations of the centuries,—do you hear it now being prostituted to vaudeville tunes and even gallops? …Do you hear, at the solemn moment where the priest lifts up the holy host, do you hear this miserable organist playing variations on Di piacer mi balza il cor, or Fra Diavolo?

O shame!  O scandal!  When will you cease to repeat yourself each Sunday, each feast day in all the churches of Paris and in all the cities of the eighty-six departments of France?  When will one chase from the holy place these bands of bawling drunks? …When will we finally have religious music?²⁴¹

In contrast, Liszt proposes the resurrection of the sacred music of Palestrina, Handel, Marcello, Haydn, and Mozart. He calls for widespread music education, new, more transcendent religious music, the reopening of the royal chapel, and the reform of plainchant in all churches of Paris and France.²⁴²

Furthermore, Liszt asserts that sacred music must extend beyond the walls of the church, a statement that has important consequences for interpreting his contemporaneous work, De Profundis:

²⁴¹ “Entendez-vous ce beuglement stupide qui retentit sous la voûte des cathédrales? Qu’est-ce que cela? C’est le chant de louange et de bénédiction que l’épouse mystique adresse à Jésus-Christ,—c’est la psalmodie barbare, pesante, ignoble, des chantres de paroisse. Que leurs voix sont fausses, rauques, abominables; que cet accompagnement (à tort et à travers) de Buccin et de basse ronflante est hideux et repouissant;—ne dirait-on pas de monstrueux insectes bourdonnant dans un cadavre?

Et l’orgue,—l’orgue, ce pape des instruments, cet Océan mystique qui naguère baignait si majestueusement l’autel du Christ et y déposait avec ses flots d’harmonie les prières et les gémissements des siècles,—l’entendez-vous maintenant se prostituer à des airs de vaudeville et même à des galops? …Entendez-vous, au moment solennel où le prêtre élève l’hostie sainte, entendez-vous ce misérable organiste exécuter des variations sur Di piacer mi balza il cor, ou Fra Diavolo?


In the age when religion both expressed and satisfied the beliefs, needs, and sympathies of the people, men and women searched and found in the church an altar at which to kneel, a pulpit to nourish their spirits, and a spectacle that recreated and exalted in a saintly way their senses, religious music was confined within the mysterious walls and could content itself in serving as an accompaniment to the magnificence of the Catholic liturgy.” Today, since the altar cracks and totters, since the pulpit and religious ceremonies have become matters of doubt and mockery, art must necessarily depart the temple, that outside it may spread and accomplish its grand developments.243

Liszt anticipates a new music, religious and humanitarian, which will unite the theater and the church, “dramatic and sacred, pompous and simple, pathetic and solemn, ardent and frenzied, tempestuous and calm, serene and tender.”244

According to Dorothy Hagan, in the “De la situation” essays “Liszt’s style is an imitation of François Fourier’s socialist newspaper manner. The intention was to shock, startle, cajole and by any means to publicize: the word was becoming common. The printing of key words in block letters, the frequent capitalization, the repetition of stock phrases in the oratorical rhythm that the French revolution had insinuated into European speech, all these added up to one more dramatic act by means of which Liszt’s critics saw him attracting attention to himself.”245 Elsewhere, Hagan labels Liszt a hypocrite for his own supposed trivial art: “The fact is that throughout the 1830s and well into the 1840s, Liszt was under attack for the very transgressions

243 “A l’époque où le culte exprimait et satisfaisait à la fois les croyances, les besoins et les sympathies des peuples, alors que les hommes et les femmes cherchaient et trouvaient à l’église un autel où s’agenouiller, une chaire pour nourrir leurs esprits, et un spectacle qui récréait et exaltait saintement leurs sens, la musique religieuse n’avait qu’à se renfermer dans la mystérieuse enceinte et pouvait se contenter de servir d’accompagnement aux magnificences de la liturgie catholique. Aujourd’hui que l’autel craque et chancelle, aujourd’hui que la chaire et les cérémonies religieuses sont devenues matières à doute et à raillerie, il faut nécessairement que l’art sorte du temple, qu’il s’étende et accomplisse au dehors ses larges évolutions.” Ibid.

244 “dramatique et sacrée, pompeuse et simple, pathétique et grave, ardent et échevelée, tempêtueuse et calme, sereine et tendre.” Ibid.

245 Dorothy Veinus Hagan, French Musical Criticism Between the Revolutions (1830-1848) (PhD Diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1965), p. 70.
described in his own articles.”246 While this may be true of reviews written a few years after these articles, most reviews from this period comment on Liszt’s introspective, spiritual performances rather than showmanship. Therefore, it is fair to see these essays as a genuine call for serious music from an artist who very much practiced what he preached. Indeed, both Charles Suttoni and

**VII: Lamennais, Ballanche, and the Saint-Simonians**

Many of Lamennais’ ideas are also found in the philosophy of both Pierre-Simon Ballanche and the Saint-Simonians, confounding attempts to neatly compartmentalize the forces that shaped Liszt’s ideas on art and society. Recent scholars have, understandably, tended to focus on their areas of expertise in addressing this question. As the leading authority on the Saint-Simonians and music, Ralph Locke understandably dwells on their influence in addressing Liszt and this essay in particular.248 Similarly, leading Ballanche scholar Arthur McCalla emphasizes the importance of that thinker’s ideas in his work.249 Most recently, Nicolas Dufetel has convincingly argued for the influence of Ballanche in the “De la situation” articles, although he is more concerned with Ballanche’s impact on Liszt’s later church music.250 Compelling

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246 Ibid, p. 84.


though all these readings are, there are good reasons for granting Lamennais’ influence primacy of place, as will be shown.

One of the difficulties in pinpointing Liszt’s influences during this period is that there were so many of them. An exchange between Liszt and Heinrich Heine in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale* amusingly highlights this phenomenon. In his February 4, 1838 article, Heine notes the wide variety of doctrines Liszt has embraced in but a few short years, singling out his love of Lamennais for particular ridicule: “Now he is raving about the Catholic-Republican doctrines of Lamennais, who has planted the Jacobin cap on top of the Cross.” He concludes with what must be construed as mock admiration: “Heaven only knows in what philosophical stable he will find his next hobbyhorse. Yet it is impossible not to praise that indefatigable thirst for enlightenment and divinity which manifests itself in his predilection for sacred and religious matters.”

A bemused Liszt wrote a reply from Venice in April: “They have taken your post-prandial fantasies seriously and are here asking me for an account of the various political and philosophical phases it amused you to have me go through. One begs me to please show him my Saint-Simonian outfit; another to play the last fugue that I composed on themes from [Ballanche’s theory of] *Palingenesis*; a third is vainly taxing his wits trying to reconcile my devilishly handsome way of life with the Catholic austerity you have me raving about.” In his defense, Liszt points out that Heine was with him when he attended Saint-Simonian meetings and met with Pierre-Simon Ballanche. He also takes a swipe at Heine’s lack of Christian faith, while at the same time pointing out his shared Republican principles: “It is true that you have always managed to dispense with the Cross of Golgotha better than I have…And the “Jacobin

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252 Ibid, pp. 102-3.
cap,” what do you say about that? Isn’t it just possible that someone searching carefully could find it in your own wardrobe?” Liszt’s argument is that his seemingly scattered search for truth is a common response to the social and political chaos of the era: “...our times are sick, we are all sick along with them.”

One might be forced to conclude that it is an exercise in futility to set Lamennais’ influence apart from these other forces. According to Charles Suttoni, “The Saint-Simonians, Ballanche, and Lamennais all exerted an influence on Liszt, but he was far too eclectic by nature to be so closely identified with any one of them that we could call him a Saint-Simonian or even a Mennaisian. Each of his guides was, rather, a manifestation of the overriding humanist spirit, which was what mattered most…” Similarly, Ralph Locke claims that Liszt avoided adherence to a single school of thought in “De la situation des artistes et de leur condition dans la société”: “Throughout the article, in fact, Liszt was careful to present himself as an independent artist and thinker rather than as a disciple of the Saint-Simonians, or even of his adored Lamennais.” Nevertheless, close examination of these similar philosophies reveals some important distinctions.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Liszt attended Saint-Simonian meetings between August 1830 and November 1831, Locke has convincingly argued that Liszt remained an admirer of the sect long afterwards. He traces Liszt’s distancing from the group to the 1831 schism initiated by Père Enfantin, whose radical teachings on sexual freedom earned opprobrium from many

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253 Ibid, pp. 104-5.
quarters.\textsuperscript{256} As late as the 1860s, though, Liszt professed loyalty to their views, prefacing his thoughts in a letter to Agnes Street-Klindworth: “At the risk of again seeming quite naïve to you, I will admit that I have a better opinion of the practical utility of certain ideas that the disciples of Saint-Simon used to preach than it is customary to mention in the salons of statesmen.”\textsuperscript{257} He responded positively to the high status accorded to artists by the movement, as well as its emphasis on communal efforts. In 1833 Liszt lent a Saint-Simonian book to Agoult, who expressed admiration for many of the ideas contained within.\textsuperscript{258} Similarly, he attempted to win George Sand over to the movement towards the end of both 1835 and 1836, with little success.\textsuperscript{259} It is clear, therefore, that his interest in the group persisted after his years of direct involvement with it.

However, it is also clear that Liszt’s decision to distance himself from the Saint-Simonians stemmed from their lack of Christian spirituality, and their “systematic contempt for technique,” as Thérèse Marix-Spire puts it.\textsuperscript{260} It is difficult to reconcile Liszt’s obvious concern—expressed, certainly, in the form of severe criticism—for Catholic institutions with the Saint-Simonian view of Catholicism as an anachronism. Similarly, Liszt’s championing of Mozart, Haydn, Handel and Bach in the “De la situation” articles hardly agrees with the Saint-Simonian view of music as a political tool.\textsuperscript{261} Indeed, Locke points out how different Saint-

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid, p. 218.

\textsuperscript{257} Ibid, p. 225.

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid, p. 218.

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid, p. 219.

\textsuperscript{260} Marix-Spire, Les romantiques et la musique, p. 436.

\textsuperscript{261} For the Saint-Simonians this belief coalesced around 1830, expressed by Emile Barrault’s assertion, “One art possesses true power, and that is music.” (“un seul art garde un vrai pouvoir, c’est la musique.”) Marix-Spire, Les romantiques et la musique, p. 430.
Simonian ideas of art were from the Romantic aesthetic. In Saint-Simon’s description of art, “He seems entirely indifferent to the issue of what ‘the beautiful’ is, he is concerned not to bring pleasure but to incite people to action.”

It is also revealing to note that both the Saint-Simonians and Lamennais became highly stigmatized during Liszt’s involvement with them. Whereas he quickly distanced himself from Saint-Simonianism, he publicly endorsed Lamennais precisely at the moments when it would have been least expedient to do so. His visit to La Chênaie followed shortly after Lamennais’ papal condemnation in Singulari nos, and, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, his support of the rogue priest continued even after Lamennais’ imprisonment in 1840. While De Profundis was the first of several of his compositions either dedicated to Lamennais or inspired by his thoughts, words, and deeds, Liszt never wrote any piece that directly or even indirectly referenced Saint-Simonianism.

In contrast to the Saint-Simonians’ radicalism, I submit that Pierre-Simon Ballanche (1776-1847) was ultimately too moderate for an impetuous young man such as Liszt. Ballanche, like his contemporary Lamennais, was born into a prosperous merchant family, and suffered an isolated childhood marred by ill health. Both grew up in traditional Catholic families that were nevertheless receptive to the initial spirit of reform, but not the harsh reality, of the Revolution. Both went on to become staunch advocates for the restoration of the monarchy and church in French life, before adopting more progressive views. Although his writings never received quite the same level of attention as those of Lamennais, Ballanche was also one of the foremost French Catholic thinkers of the day. It is easy to see, then, why Liszt would have responded positively to his writings as well.

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In keeping with his practice of the time, Liszt called on Ballanche unannounced in 1833, and the two frequently socialized with one another in Paris for the next several years. Liszt and Ballanche were part of an elite group that included the Saint-Simonian Emile Barrault, George Sand, Adolphe Nourrit, and Heinrich Heine. They met frequently in a variety of settings, from cafes to the homes of Liszt, d’Agoult, and Sand. This circle also included Lamennais: On May 11, 1835, as the first installment of “De la situation” appeared in the Gazette musicale de Paris, Liszt hosted a dinner party at his Rue Provence apartment. In attendance were both Ballanche and Lamennais, who was in town to serve on the defense team in the Lyon uprising trial.

Lamennais and Ballanche had long been sympathetic to one another’s work, but by the time of “De la situation” their paths had begun to part. Ballanche had welcomed Lamennais’ turn to liberalism at the end of the 1820s, but was alarmed by the inflammatory language of Paroles d’un croyant, signaling the author’s abrupt break with the church. Just as he thought the Saint-Simonians had been too quick to jettison Catholicism, so too did Ballanche view Lamennais’ unorthodoxy as intemperate. As Michael Reardon has argued, Ballanche agreed with Lamennais’ principles, but not his means.²⁶³ The overriding principle of Ballanche’s thought was Palingénésie, or spiritual rebirth. He saw human history as one of gradual, ongoing renewal achieved through what could be considered a Hegelian dialectic of épreuves (ordeals), expiations (atonements), and finally rehabilitation. He supported change but thought it had to grow organically out of the past; having lived through the Convention’s brutal suppression of the uncooperative citizens of Lyon, Ballanche had a natural aversion to violent extremism.

It is fair to say that very little in Liszt’s essays could be considered moderate. Rather, they constitute a steady stream of invective against perceived injustices, with an immediate call

to action. In this regard it most closely resembles Lamennais’ *Paroles d’un croyant*, a book Liszt greatly admired, as will be shown later. Liszt also draws upon Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire de Musique*, which points towards Lamennais and away from Ballanche. He cites Rousseau’s observation that all the great musicians of antiquity were also great poets, philosophers, and orators: “It was necessary to have made a particular study of human passions and the language of nature.” He views the musicians of his day as little more than mindless technicians, invoking Rousseau’s three categories of performers, composers, and professors. Later he praises “the burning eloquence and the austere paradoxes of Rousseau.” Lamennais was hardly the sole proponent of Rousseau, but he would have been a likely source of transmission for these ideas. In contrast, McCalla shows how Ballanche’s attitude towards Rousseau was more critical, since Ballanche saw in Rousseau’s individualism and social contract the seeds of the Revolution.

Much of Liszt’s outrage seems to stem directly from his recent time spent at La Chênaie. There are obvious parallels between Liszt’s sense of betrayal over his unsuccessful bid for admission to the Paris Conservatoire, and Lamennais’ frosty reception by the Vatican. Liszt expresses ambivalence about this venerable musical institution. On the one hand, he praises it as the best of Europe’s small number of conservatories, due to the excellent faculty (among them such friends as Adolphe Nourrit). At the same time, he views the Conservatoire as a stodgy and backwards place, jokingly daring to critique it with “a bold and profane hand.” He relates the story of his attempt to enter the school as a humiliating experience, finding it shameful that an


267 “une main profane et téméraire.” Liszt, “De la situation,” p. 34.
“entirely revolutionary, entirely anarchical” institution founded in the spirit of the Revolution (the Conservatoire opened in 1793) should become “The personification of the ancien regime, the asylum room of mummies, the apotheosis of periwigs, etc.”\textsuperscript{268} Liszt’s position is very much analogous to that of Lamennais: both expressed shock that their respective sacred temples had strayed so far from their ideals. Just as Lamennais criticized the laxity of religious education, Liszt characterizes life for a student of the Conservatoire as a soul-sapping exercise in repetitive drudgery.

In turning from this sorry state of affairs to his own views on music, Liszt writes that he will leave a broader discussion of art to “a superior and sympathetic man who will entirely consecrate himself to a work of greater and more general importance…to him also the glory of being at the same time the architect and founder of a new temple which he has only given me a glimpse of the crossbeam materials.”\textsuperscript{269} The commentary for Liszt’s Sämtliche Schriften traces the phrase “new temple” to the Saint-Simonian text \textit{Aux Artistes}, written by Émile Barrault in 1830. However, it seems clear to me that Liszt here is referring to Lamennais, while adopting for himself a sort of subservient John the Baptist role. I believe that this is a reference to discussions between Liszt and Lamennais on aesthetics that they would have shared at La Chênaie.

Lamennais’ views on aesthetics only appeared in \textit{De l’art et du beau}—a volume in his \textit{Esquisse d’une philosophie}—in the 1840s, but a strong case can be made that he had already formulated them by the time of his meeting with Liszt. Both Thérèse Marix-Spire and Charles

\textsuperscript{268} “la personification de l’ancien régime, la salle d’asile des momies, l’apothéose des perruques, etc., etc.” Ibid.

\textsuperscript{269} “L’homme supérieur et sympathique qui se consacrera tout entière à une œuvre plus générale et plus importante…A lui aussi la gloire d’être à la fois l’architecte et le fondateur d’un temple nouveau dont il ne m’est donné que d’entrevoir les matériaux épars.” Ibid.
Suttoni consider this to be the case.\textsuperscript{270} Paul Bénichou cites an 1829 letter to d’Ortigue, in which Lamennais already establishes his idea that art should be true, beautiful, and useful.\textsuperscript{271} D’Ortigue was a frequent contributor to Lamennais’ first two journals—\textit{Le Mémorial catholique} and \textit{l’Avenir}—and d’Agoult biographer Jacques Vier goes so far as to say that d’Ortigue developed Lamennais’ musical aesthetic in his novel \textit{La sainte-baume}, released in February of 1834.\textsuperscript{272}

Anatole, the protagonist of \textit{La sainte-baume}, has variously been interpreted as representing Liszt or d’Ortigue himself. A central aspect of the novel is his mentoring by Lamennais, “This writer, so quick-tempered, so passionate, possessing boiling eloquence and speech of fire.”\textsuperscript{273} Inevitably their conversation turns towards music, and we are treated to an early instance of Lamennais—albeit his fictionalized alter ego—expounding his theories:

Music is an architecture of sounds, just as architecture is a music of stones. M. Victor Hugo has already said this. Only the expression of the second is more tranquil, more imposing, because one can take in the exterior with a single glance. That of the first is more varied, more intimate, more pressing, because it is interior and invisible, and, following the remark of Rousseau, music alone expresses—with the exception of poetry—the succession of ideas and images.\textsuperscript{274}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{270} See Marix-Spire, \textit{Les romantiques et la musique}, p. 428; and Liszt, \textit{An Artist’s Journey}, p. xx.
  \item \textsuperscript{273} Joseph d’Ortigue, \textit{La Sainte-Baume}. (Paris: Imprimerie de Dussois, 1834), p. 199.
  \item \textsuperscript{274} “La musique est une architecture de sons, comme l'architecture est une musique de pierres. M. Victor Hugo l'a déjà dit. Seulement l'expression de la seconde est plus tranquille, plus imposante, parce qu'on peut l'embrasser extérieurement d'un seul coup-d'œil. Celle de la première est plus variée, plus intime, plus pressante, parce qu'elle est intérieure et invisible, et que, suivant la remarque de Rousseau, la musique exprime seule, à l'exception de la poésie, la succession des idées et des images.” Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Thus, following Rousseau, this passage places music at the apex of the arts. That this is consistent with Lamennais’ views in *De l’art et du beau* can be ascertained by comparing passages from both works. To give just one example:

(from d’Ortigue): Music is in everything, in the air, atop the mountains, in the forests, in the clouds, in the seas and rivers, on the earth, in the animals, in the flowers, in the nightingale, in man. Every being is a melody, and nature is a great harmony. Music is the universal language.275

(from Lamennais): There exists then a music no less vast than Creation, a universal music that embraces all the sounds, all the noises, and their innumerable combinations, and their laws of all sorts; but we do not understand it, because we only know or sense a small part of Nature, the immense whole of which retreats into infinity, eluding our senses and even our thought. From the drop of water that cries on breaking upon a blade of grass, to the ocean that shakes the subterranean foundations of the earth with a mighty roar; from the reeds of the riverbank to the bird sighing in the night at the heart of the forest; from the imperceptible insect that murmurs unknown joys and sadnesses in the chalice of a flower; to man whom songs raise up from the world towards his eternal architect, each being has its voice in this divine concert.276

Such parallels abound between both works. Unlike the pragmatic Saint-Simonians, Lamennais’ aesthetics ultimately view music’s importance as rooted in beauty, not in utility. He proposes a tripartite view of human activity—Industry (Utility), Art (Beauty), and Science

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276 “Dieu est le suprême artiste, et son œuvre, c’est l’univers, au sein duquel les arts partielles, résultats pour nous de la décomposition de l’Art complet, se mélangent, se pénétrant par une sorte de puissance organique, se résolvent et se confondent dans une magnifique unité. Il existe donc une musique non moins vaste que la Création, une musique universelle qui embrasse tous les sons, tous les bruits, et leurs combinaisons innombrables, et leurs lois de tous ordres; mais nous ne la comprenons pas, parce que nous ne connaissons ni ne sentons qu’une faible partie de la Nature, dont l’ensemble immense, qui, de toutes parts, fuit dans l’infini, se dérobe à nos sens et à notre pensée même. Depuis la goutte d’eau qui gémit en se brisant sur un brin d’herbe, jusqu’à l’océan qui ébranle avec des mugissements formidables les bases souterraines de la terre; depuis le jonc des bords du fleuve jusqu’à l’oiseau qui soupire la nuit au fond des forêts; depuis l’insecte imperceptible qui murmure des tristesses ou des joies inconnues dans le calice d’une fleur, jusqu’à l’homme dont les chants s’élèvent de monde en monde vers leur éternel architecte, chaque être a sa voix dans ce concert divin.” Lamennais, *De l’Art et du Beau* (Paris: Librairie Garnier Frères, 1872), p. 78.
(Truth)—and places truth and beauty over utility as the ultimate goals of human existence.\textsuperscript{277} In Lamennais’ estimation, the ultimate goal of life must be The Good, as a life devoted solely to material usefulness reduces mankind to a highly sophisticated animal. In his 1835 articles, Liszt makes clear reference to Lamennais’ system in announcing a “\textit{new trinity of science, of industry and of art.}”\textsuperscript{278}

In contrast, McCalla argues that music is subservient in Lamennais’ aesthetics, and it must be said he does so in a rather disingenuous manner. Consider the following excerpt he cites from \textit{De l’art et du beau} as evidence of music’s subordinate role for Lamennais; he omits the italicized text in his citation:

Music, or moulded sound, if one may speak in such a way, also clothes an immaterial idea with a body, but an aerial body, which escapes the eye and seizes solely the least substantial, most delicate sense. But it moves us rather than enlightens; it does not produce the vision of spiritual reality, rather it gives the presentiment of it, in some way prepares for it by an intense aspiration. Like the indecisive glimmers of dawn, sliding over vague horizons, showing only the indistinct masses of objects whose distinct forms the sun will manifest, it announces the ideal world but does not reveal it. \textit{Poetry, which music precedes in the generation of art, and which proceeds from music because it has feeling, sound and harmonic laws, rhythm, measure, number, accent;} Poetry determines what it leaves indeterminate, specifying the ideal by speech and manifesting the pure idea. \textit{Thus, in a more elevated realm, the union of nature and its eternal type is achieved through music.}\textsuperscript{279}

Seen in this light, Lamennais’ broader point is about the complementary nature of the arts, through which they reach a higher ideal; indeed, he actually describes poetry as \textit{dependent} on and postdating music, evidence of the strong influence of Rousseau on his writing. In \textit{De l’art et du beau}, he frequently describes God as the supreme artist whose work is the universe, in which

\textsuperscript{277} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{278} “\textit{trinité nouvelle de la science, de l’industrie et de l’art.”} Liszt, “De la situation,” p. 28.

\textsuperscript{279} McCalla, “\textit{Liszt Bricoleur},” pp. 85-86.
all the individual arts are reunited. Ideas like these are fascinating in thinking about Liszt’s later efforts to reunite music with other artistic mediums.

At the same time, Lamennais insists that music must also have a practical purpose, proclaiming that “Art for art’s sake is…an absurdity.” According to McCalla, the lack of a clear social purpose in Liszt’s art later became a source of tension with Lamennais. An article in the December 30, 1836 issue of *Le Monde*—a Mennaisian journal initially edited by his disciple Victor Schoelcher and later by Lamennais himself—scolds Liszt for putting elitist art above humanitarianism. As the reviewer writes, “To think that the beautiful exists only for a small number of elect and to concern oneself with the wishes of these only, is this not to make art descend from the great humanitarian role it is called to play and to reduce it to the sterile and impotent doctrine of art for art’s sake?”

In an 1837 letter to Lamennais, Liszt adopted an apologetic tone for the frivolous nature of his concertizing: “Will my life be forever tainted with this idle uselessness which weighs upon me? Will the hour of devotion and of manly action never come? Am I condemned without respite to this trade of a Merry Andrew and to amuse in drawing-rooms?”

However, McCalla’s theory that these tensions between Lamennais and Liszt arose due to the latter’s artistic elitism reveals a misapprehension of the former’s aesthetics, and of Liszt’s biography. If anything, this was the period when Liszt turned his attention away from such avant-garde pieces as the *Apparitions*, and towards crowd-pleasing showpieces. McCalla offers

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as evidence of Liszt’s snobbery his comments on a performance of Beethoven he attended in 1836: “The Pastoral Symphony was not understood by half the hall. But as always I maintain and defend the right of artists to impose the beautiful and the superior on the masses.”

However, this was precisely the sort of music Lamennais did support, as evidenced by his astonishing appraisal of that very same work from *De l’art et du beau:*

> Some of you remember the marvelous poems of Beethoven. Each of them emanates a principal idea that determines the general form and situation. This one opens with a village fair scene. Everything is pure, serene, everything breathes the calm and freshness of nature at the dawn of day, when the large shadows cast by the mountains float on the plain like the trailing creases of a sheet of rain. A simple and gentle song is heard, and echoes repeat it from valley to valley. It is as if you have wandered onto still dew-covered grass, at the foot of the hills, while the woods, the prairies, the fields exhale as a vapor the indefinable harmony. A thousand accidents of light unfold varied scenes before your eyes: the invisible sound, strange mystery, darkens or covers itself with a lively outburst. Little by little the sun rises, the air embraces it. Joyous dances follow these suspended works. As the clouds amass, a muted, faraway sound of unknown origin announces the storm; it is not yet seen, only sensed; it builds and approaches; lightning zigzags above the horde, the thunderbolt splits it with a terrible sound. The dances cease, the terrified shepherds disperse. But soon after, the sky recovering its splendor, they assemble anew to express in a hymn—simple like their hearts, magnificent like the work of God—gratitude, adoration, love, all the sentiments that make mankind, in a sense, the interpreter of all lower beings, the innumerable beings that are summarized in us.

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285 “Rappelez-vous quelques-uns des poems merveilleux de Beethoven. Chacun d’eux émane d’une idée première qui en détermine la forme générale et la contexture. Celui-ci s’ouvre par une scène champêtre. Tout est pur, serein, tout respire le calme et la fraîcheur de la nature au lever du jour, quand les larges ombres qui tombent des montagnes flottent sur la plaine comme les plis traînants du manteau de la pluie. Un chant simple et doux se fait entendre, les échos le répéterent de vallée en vallée. Il semble que vous erriez sur l’herbe humide encore, au pied des coteaux, alors que les bois, les prairies, les champs exhalent comme une vapeur d’harmonie indéfinissable. Mille accidents de lumière déroulent sous vos yeux des tableaux variés: le son invisible, mystère étrange, s’obscurcit ou se revêt d’un vif éclat. Peu à peu le soleil monte, l’air s’embrasse. Aux travaux suspendus succèdent des danses joyeuses. Cependant les nuages s’amassent, un bruit sourd et lointain, parti on ne sait d’où, annonce l’orage; on ne le voit pas encore, on le pressent; il grossit et s’approche; l’éclair sillonnera la nuée, la foudre la déchire avec un fracas horrible. Les danses s’interrompent, les pasteurs effrayés se dispersent. Mais bientôt après, le ciel recouvrant sa splendeur, ils se rassemblent de nouveau pour exprimer dans un hymne simple comme leurs cœurs, magnifique comme l’œuvre de Dieu, la reconnaissance, l’adoration, l’amour, tous les sentiments qui font de l’homme, en quelque manière, l’interprète des êtres inférieurs, des êtres innombrables qu’il résume en soi.” Lamennais, *De l’art et du beau,* p. 79.
Thus, it is clear that Lamennais endorsed works of the utmost “magnificence.” I find it more likely that Lamennais was distressed by his acolyte’s increasing worldliness, beginning with his liaison with Marie d’Agoult, and culminating in the commercialism of the virtuoso years.

Lamennais, then, held a far more mystical, elevated view of music that went beyond mere populism. To him, music was “the sole art of our era; because it contains the vague and the mysterious, it corresponds to this rippling of souls, to this infinite suffering that we all feel.”

The following excerpt from *De l’art et du beau* encapsulates his almost pantheistic view of the spiritual power of music:

> God is the supreme artist, and his work is the universe, at the breast of which the individual arts, results of the fragmentation of the complete Art, penetrating by a sort of organic power, combine and blend into a magnificent unity. There exists then a music no less vast than Creation, a universal music that embraces all the sounds, all the noises, and their innumerable combinations, and their laws of all sorts; but we do not understand it, because we only know or sense a small part of Nature, the immense whole of which retreats into infinity, eluding our senses and even our thought. From the drop of water that cries on breaking upon a blade of grass, to the ocean that shakes the subterranean foundations of the earth with a mighty roar; from the reeds of the riverbank to the bird sighing in the night at the heart of the forest; from the imperfect insect that murmurs unknown joys and sadnesses in the chalice of a flower; to man whom songs raise up from the world towards his eternal architect, each being has its voice in this divine concert.

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287 “Dieu est le suprême artiste, et son œuvre, c’est l’univers, au sein duquel les arts partiels, résultats pour nous de la décomposition de l’Art complet, se mélangent, se pénétrant par une sorte de puissance organique, se résolvent et se confondent dans une magnifique unité. Il existe donc une musique non moins vaste que la Création, une musique universelle qui embrasse tous les sons, tous les bruits, et leurs combinaisons inombrables, et leurs lois de tous ordres; mais nous ne la comprenons pas, parce que nous ne connaissons ni ne sentons qu’une faible partie de la Nature, dont l’ensemble immense, qui, de toutes parts, fuit dans l’infini, se dérobe à nos sens et à notre pensée même. Depuis la goutte d’eau qui gémit en se brisant sur un brin d’herbe, jusqu’à l’océan qui ébranle avec des mugissements formidablest les bases souterraines de la terre; depuis le jonc des bords du fleuve jusqu’à l’oiseau qui soupire la nuit au fond des forêts; depuis l’insecte imperceptible qui murmure des tristesses ou des joies inconnues dans le calice d’une fleur, jusqu’à l’homme dont les chants s’élèvent de monde en monde vers leur éternel architecte, chaque être a sa voix dans ce concert divin.” Lamennais, *De l’art et du beau*, p. 78.
In sum, Liszt’s "De la situation" essays uniquely reflect both the radicalism and the artistic seriousness of Lamennais. Thérèse Marix-Spire argues that “De la situation des artistes, et de leur condition dans la société” was “entirely inspired by Lamennais.” Ralph Locke also concludes that the 1835 articles owe more to Lamennais than to Saint-Simonianism, stating that Liszt’s critique of the church “could almost have been dictated by the rebellious father himself.” Locke also acknowledges that Lamennais “came to exert a profound influence on Liszt’s political and social views, one that was based on a closer personal bond than apparently ever existed between Liszt and any of the Saint-Simonians.”

VIII: Lamennais and d’Agoult

There is a final, lesser difficulty to be dealt with in linking “De la situation” with the ideas of Lamennais, and this is the role Marie d’Agoult played in Liszt’s fledgling literary efforts. In 1947 Émile Haraszti famously claimed that d’Agoult was the major creative force behind most of these early writings. According to Haraszti, “she did not want the man for whom she had sacrificed her reputation to remain merely a simple pianist or composer, earning even more applause for his tours de force than for his outstanding talent; she wanted him to become, like Berlioz, a redoubtable critic.” As the older, more educated partner in their relationship, she is supposed to have dictated both in style and substance such early works as “De la situation.” Nevertheless, Haraszti concludes that these writings “were nothing more than a metaphysical hodge-podge, or verbiage innocent of all literary value.” To the extent that he

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289 Locke, “Liszt’s Saint-Simonian Adventure,” p. 221.
292 Ibid, p. 492.
does credit Liszt as a partial author, it is to offer this backhanded compliment: “Thus one of the most powerful ‘instinctive’ geniuses of the century was turned into a literary musician, even into a cerebral one, when in fact his personality, which was all impulse, does not submit to a systematic synthesis; when in reality this quality of naturalness constitutes one of the most characteristic and most original traits of his genius, and perhaps of his intrinsic worth.”

Haraszti’s theory has since been largely discredited. As Suttoni puts it, “As for the nature of their collaboration, it is generally agreed that the countess wrote a fair if undeterminable amount of the prose that actually appeared in print, but that it was Liszt who initiated the articles and was basically responsible for the ideas about music and art they express.” In the case of “De la situation des artistes,” Liszt’s authorship can be even more firmly established: Edward Waters uncovered a partial manuscript of the essay in Liszt’s own hand at the British Library.

Even had Waters not made this discovery, it would be obvious from an examination of Liszt and d’Agoult’s correspondences that she is unlikely to have taken an active role in so Mennaisian a document as “De la situation.” As will become clear in the final chapter of this dissertation, she had good reason to be ambivalent towards Lamennais, who openly disapproved of her relationship with Liszt, and attempted to prevent their elopement to Geneva in 1835. Even before this, though, d’Agoult expressed disagreement with the Abbé’s radical politics, much to Liszt’s frustration. In May 1834 Liszt received his copy of Paroles d’un croyant, and enthusiastically lent it to d’Agoult. In a May 13 letter to the Countess, he points out specific passages he wishes her to read, and seems to expect a favorable response.

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293 Ibid, p. 516.

294 Liszt, An Artist’s Life, p. x.

Judging by his letter of May 16, his expectations were misplaced:

It is understood and agreed that every line, every word of yours is dear and precious to me, yet I did not know how to accept the reproaches and advice you have addressed to me on the subject of Lamennais’ book…until now neither V. 296—who sees nothing in Paroles d’un croyant but a mediocre work in style and substance, a pastiche full of useless redundancies and empty of ideas—nor Lamartine—who had advised the noble priest against publication—nor the scurrilous articles of the Constitutionnel…nor the stupid declamations of La Quotidienne, of l’Ame de la Religion, etc., etc. Nor the wicked pleasantries of Com-Com, nor even the retractions and the dismay of the Faubourg Saint-Germain have shaken my conviction. You maliciously object that the Paroles d’un croyant are not evangelical; permit me to respond with the words of the Evangelist: “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” 297 The Son of Man has come bearing not peace but a sword. The peculiar Christianity of certain people that pretends moderation is in actuality merely a cloak for their cowardice. Christianity is in a mute and servile state, asking at most for some economic sops and decrepit forms, lying there on the ground, disemboweled, impotent and foolish in the face of the innumerable evils and atrocious iniquities of society. Oh! If the Son of Man were to return today, where do you think he would find the faith? 298

It is clear that d’Agoult objected to Lamennais’ republicanism and apparent support of insurrection, radical qualities that held enormous appeal for Liszt. Several days later, Liszt launched his final salvo on the issue, seeking to soften the extremism of Lamennais’ message:

296 Victor Hugo, based on this designation elsewhere in Liszt’s correspondence.

297 Matthew 11:12.

298 “Il est bien entendu, bien convenu, que chaque ligne, chaque mot de vous me sont chers et précieux, toutefois, je ne saurais accepter les quelques reproches et conseils que vous m’adressez au sujet du livre de Lamennais. Jusqu’ici ni le grand V. [Hugo] qui ne voit dans les Paroles d’un Croyant qu’une œuvre médiocre par le fond et la forme, un pastiche plein de redondances inutiles, totalement dépourvu d’idées, ni Lamartine qui en avait déconseillé la publication au noble prêtre, ni les grossiers articles du Constitutionnel…ni les déclamations stupides de La Quotidienne, de l’Ame de la Religion, etc., etc. Ni les mauvaises plaisanteries de Com-Com, ni même les palinodies et les effrois du noble faubourg n’ont ébranlé ma conviction. Vous m’objectez malicieusement que les Paroles d’un Croyant ne sont pas évangéliques, permettez-moi de vous répondre avec l’Evangile. “Le royaume des Cieux souffre violence, et il n’y a que les violents qui l’emportent!” [Matthew XI, 12] Le fils de l’homme n’est pas venu apporter la paix mais bien le glaive. Singulier christianisme que celui de certaines gens dont la prétendue modération n’est en définitive qu’une toilette à leur lâcheté. Christianisme à l’état de mutisme et de servilité, s’enquérant tout au plus de soupes économiques et de quelques formules décrétées, et gisant là par terre, sans entrailles, impuissant et niais en face des maux innombrables, des iniquités atroces de la Société. Oh! Si le fils de l’Homme venait maintenant où pensez-vous qu’il trouverait la foi?” Liszt, Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse d’Agoult, Daniel Ollivier, ed. (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1933), p. 77.
Again some words of polemic, these will be the last (I am obliged to quote you since you remember nothing): “It is obvious that Christ only preached war against ourselves and our passions, and violence against our corrupted nature, etc.” Do you not think that the indifference and sacrilegious neglect towards our unfortunate brothers whom we have all denuded might not also be a consequence of our corrupted nature against which we must wage violence?...Yet, as is well known, we only desire this should the cause become hopeless. We desire it neither today nor tomorrow, since the hour has not yet arrived. Les Paroles d’un croyant is but a word of warning to the brutal governments which humiliate and crush us. Before a call to arms, we will exhaust all the peaceful and progressive means. But, finally, the day will arrive when the absolute impossibility of reconciling the privileges of some with the wellbeing of the majority will be obvious to all—then we will fight if we must, we will die if we must, we will know how to die...As you can see (as is clear to me, at least), this would be an extreme and terrible consequence...but perhaps necessary.299

Liszt’s words are significant in two major respects. First, they show that, far from reading Paroles d’un croyant as anti-Christian, he interpreted it as an indictment of the failings of the modern church and a call for a return to the radical message of the earliest days of the faith. This is consistent with his defense of Lamennais and critique of French Catholicism in “De la situation.” Second, these letters remove any doubt that Liszt alone was responsible for the Mennaisian tone of the articles. While it is possible that the more refined Countess helped him in matters of literary style, it is unthinkable that she took part in so ardent a defense of a man towards whom she was at best ambivalent.

299 “Encore quelques mots de polémique, ce seront les derniers (je suis obligé de vous transcrire puisque vous ne vous souvenez de rien): ‘Il est évident que le Christ n’a prêché que la guerre contre nous-mêmes et nos passions, la violence faite à notre nature corrompue, etc...’ Ne pensez vous pas que cette indifférence, ce sacrilège oubli du sort de nos frères malheureux qui nous a tous desséchés ne soient aussi une conséquence de notre nature corrompue à laquelle il faille faire violence?...Toutefois, qu’on le sache bien, nous ne voulons le combat qu’en désespoir de cause. Nous ne le voulons ni aujourd’hui ni demain, car l’heure n’a pas sonné encore. Les Paroles d’un Croyant ne sont qu’un simple avis aux gouvernements brutaux qui nous humilient et nous écrasent. Avant d’en appeler aux armes, nous épuiserons tous les moyens pacifiques et progressifs. Mais, enfin, lorsque viendra le jour où il sera bien évident à tous qu’il y a impossibilité absolue de concilier les privilèges de quelques-uns avec le bien-être de la généralité—alors s’il faut combattre, nous combattrons, s’il faut mourir, nous saurons mourir...Ce n’est comme vous voyez (pour moi du moins) qu’une conséquence extrême et terrible...mais peut-être nécessaire.” Ibid, pp. 91-2.
IX: From the Depths

Having established the significant influence of Lamennais in Liszt’s first literary effort, let us now turn to the De Profundis, Psalme Instrumental for piano and orchestra, where his stamp is even more evident. The first mention we have of the piece is in a January 14, 1835 letter from Liszt to Lamennais: “[…] I shall have the honor of sending you a little work, to which I have had the audacity to tack a great name—yours. It is an instrumental De profundis. The plain-song that you like so much is preserved in it with the fauxbourdon. Perhaps this may give you a little pleasure, at any rate, I have done it in remembrance of some hours passed (I should say "lived") at La Chênaie.” In fact, this “little work” was Liszt’s most ambitious to date, a sprawling single-movement concerto with five sections connected by shared motivic content. The piece offers an early glimpse at the thematic transformation and formal innovations that are hallmarks of the composer’s mature style. Of central importance, as Liszt indicates in his letter, is a motive based on the plainchant for Psalm 130, the De profundis.

Lamennais responded on January 26, writing, “I don’t have to tell you how much I look forward to hearing your De Profundis. You must come here for that…” However, neither the piece nor Liszt arrived at La Chênaie. Alexander Main characterizes this affair as a “blunder,” arguing that Liszt awkwardly dedicated a piece to Lamennais and then left it unfinished. Based on the preliminary orchestration of the manuscript housed in Weimar’s Goethe/Schiller Archive, and other contemporaneous works for piano and orchestra, a lack of confidence in

300 “Je n’ai pas besoin d’en chercher pour vous dire combine je souhaite d’entendre votre De Profundis. Il faut pour cela que vous veniez ici…” Lamennais, Correspondance Générale, vol. 6, p. 381.


302 For the most thorough study of these pieces, see Jay Michael Rosenblatt, The concerto as crucible: Franz Liszt’s early works for piano and orchestra, (PhD Diss. The University of Chicago, 1995).
orchestration on Liszt’s part seems unlikely. Rather, it is more likely that the piece’s abandonment coincided with Liszt’s elopement with Marie d’Agoult later that year, and subsequent estrangement from Lamennais.

Whatever the case, De Profundis has endured as little more than a footnote in Liszt’s oeuvre. Keith Johns’ “De Profundis, Psaume Instrumental; an abandoned concerto for piano and orchestra by Franz Liszt” in the June 1984 Journal of the American Liszt Society is the sole article devoted to the piece.303 In it, Johns argues that it “contains the type of opposition or polarization of mood which musicologists often attribute to a central dichotomy in Liszt’s psyche: the religious versus the earthly and demonic.”304 Commenting on Liszt’s incorporation of bravura elements, and their juxtaposition with his so-called “fauxbourdon,” Johns writes:

Unfortunately, this does little to bind the composition and shows Liszt as being more concerned with the impact of the moment rather than economy of musical material. The brillliante style of writing in this section does little to convey the profundity of the chosen programme. However, in view of the diverse elements in Liszt’s psyche referred to at the outset of this paper, it is not surprising to find this type of salon-style bravura intertwined with the sacred seme. Once again the central dichotomy of Liszt’s psyche, the spiritual and the earthly, are revealed through his music.305

I take a rather different view of the piece. Rather than continuing the old Ernest Newman idea of Liszt as a “man divided against himself,”306 I interpret this blending of the sacred and secular in light of the more socially engaged Christianity advocated by Lamennais. While


304 Ibid, p. 96.

305 Ibid, p. 103.

moments of *De Profundis* undoubtedly suit a dichotomous reading of austerity versus hedonism, more often does the blending of worldly and ecclesiastical styles suggest an integrative view of these realms, consistent with views expressed by Lamennais, and by Liszt himself in “De la situation des artistes.” I agree with Johns that the piece suffers from a lack of economy, and the charge of repetitiveness that could be leveled at so many Liszt pieces is certainly applicable here. In this respect Liszt’s style owes something to Schubert, whose music Liszt began studying around this time, as we shall see in Chapter Four.

However, Liszt’s *De Profundis* may owe a great strength to Schubert as well. Far from the disjointed hodgepodge of disparate elements described by Johns, the piece is in fact built around a few main themes that Liszt constantly reworks, combines, juxtaposes, and transforms. In this imaginative treatment of a few initial materials, and in the bold use of a single movement structure, the piece bears closest resemblance to Schubert’s *Wanderer Fantasy*. It therefore presages Liszt’s better known engagements with the music, first in his arrangement of it for piano and orchestra, and most notably in the obvious debt owed to it by his B minor Sonata. Therefore, while *De Profundis* cannot be considered a polished masterpiece, it is nevertheless a harbinger of great things to come, the work of an ambitious young virtuoso who was seeking greater recognition as a composer.

The piece opens with the first theme calling out from the depths of the piano and orchestra, a unison passage in which murky chromaticism and rhythmical ambiguity effectively conveys the spiritual torment of a soul crying out to God:
Ex. 1, mm. 1-8

Despite the presence of a meter and key signature, the frequent pauses and slippery tonality all invite comparison to similar passages noted by Paul Merrick.\(^{307}\) Merrick connects such moments in Liszt’s music with ideas of nothingness, and such a desolate interpretation fits very well here, especially given the piece’s title. Psalm 130, better known as “De Profundis,” is one of the seven penitential psalms, used in liturgy for the faithful departed. In the original Hebrew, “De Profundis” is given as Sheol, a place of farthest remove from God, either for purposes of purification or punishment, translated to Hades in the Septuagint Bible. The more rhapsodic piano part seems to struggle against this motive, culminating in an orchestral outburst:

Ex. 2, mm. 87-9.

With the appearance of the “fauxbourdon” or plainchant theme in m. 170, based on the rhythm of Psalm 130’s text, the connection with “De Profundis” becomes explicit.

Ex. 3, mm. 170-73
Tellingly, Liszt labels this theme in the margin for the first orchestral statement, only superimposing the words over the piano’s subdued answer in minor.\footnote{\textsuperscript{308} Such religioso passages, so common in later Liszt pieces, amount to a sort of leitmotiv linking the three central pieces of this study.}

Ex. 4, mm. 196-9

In a sense, this is analogous to the orchestra’s preparation for the entry of the vocalists in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, and seems to link the soloist with the tormented protagonist.\footnote{\textsuperscript{309} According to Rosenblatt, “...it is likely that [Liszt] transcribed the harmonized psalm tone familiar to him from Roman Catholic churches in Paris, the changing meters reflecting the accented words of the text.” Rosenblatt, \textit{The concerto as crucible}, 396. Also, Félix Danjou, who became organist at Saint Eustache in 1834 and Notre Dame de Paris in 1840, pioneered fauxbourdon harmonization around this time, and Liszt would no doubt have been familiar with this practice. See Katherine Ellis, \textit{Interpreting the musical past: early music in nineteenth-century France} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).}

Lamennais was long a proponent of plainchant, as were a number of his disciples, including d’Ortigue—who would later collaborate with Louis Niedermeyer on a plainsong accompaniment treatise\footnote{\textsuperscript{310} Louis Niedermeyer and Joseph d’Ortigue, \textit{Gregorian Accompaniment: A Theoretical and Practical Treatise upon the Accompaniment of Plainsong}, Wallace Goodrich, trans. (New York: Novello, 1904).}—and most notably Prosper Guéranger. This surprising inclusion of plainchant elements in a concert piece ties in well with the mennaisian idea in “De la situation” of art departing the temple. Most appropriate is Lamennais’ description of plainchant in \textit{De l’art et du beau}: “Akin to a profound, pathetic cry escaping from one’s depths, these arrhythmic and essentially unmetered melodies seize, move, and penetrate, with the irresistible power of nature
As if to accentuate the connection between this plainchant and a tormented protagonist, the piece’s central cadenza features a quasi-improvisatory version of this theme:

Ex. 5, mm. 431-34

Surprisingly, Liszt follows this with a scherzo section, which Johns dismisses as a frivolous distraction from the central musical argument:

Ex. 6, mm. 475-78

In contrast to Johns’ view of this section as a distraction from the main musical argument, Rosenblatt notes that this figure is as a diminution of the plainchant rhythm, and the “De

311 “Ces melodies sans rythme et sans mesure rigoureusement déterminés, semblables au cri pathétique, profond, qui s’échappe des entrailles, saisissent, remuent, pénètrent, avec la puissance irrésistible de la nature même.” Lamennais, *De l’art et du beau*, 209.
Profundis” theme returns ominously at several points, eventually overpowering the sparkling interlude. However, both Johns and Rosenblatt fail to identify this passage as a polonaise, a dance that may hold great significance here. As Adrienne Kaczmarczyk has argued, Lamennais’ *Paroles d’un croyant* was inspired in part by Mickiewicz’s revolutionary *Livre des Pélerins* *Volonais*, familiar to him from Montalembert’s 1833 translation. The following year in Paris saw the publication of Mickiewicz’s epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* in Paris, featuring an extended discussion on the polonaise with revolutionary overtones. Given these connections, the mennaisian connection between piety and revolt seems very much at play here.

If the bellicose associations of the polonaise are open to debate, there is no mistaking the thematic transformation of the plainchant to a heroic march at the conclusion of *De Profundis*:

![Ex. 7, mm. 796-99](image)

Here the influence of Lamennais is clear, with the surprising but effective reimagining of Catholic liturgical music as a sort of militant populism. The piece concludes with a restatement

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312 Adrienne Kaczmarczyk, “The Genesis of the *Funérailles*."

of the plainchant in its original rhythm. Liszt therefore adopts a prophetic tone akin to that found both in the Psalm and in Lamennais’ *Paroles d’un Croyant*. Just as the Psalm foretells a day when the Lord will redeem Israel, Lamennais’ *Paroles* anticipates a day when the masses will rise up, with the Lord’s blessing, and fight for their own deliverance from slavery. Here, Liszt seems to be conveying the Gospel’s idea of the kingdom of heaven being taken by force.

To an even greater degree than the “De la situation” essays, then, *De Profundis* shows Liszt’s unwavering support for Lamennais’ radical Catholicism. In a style that manages to be at once populist and artistically ambitious, traditionally Catholic and brashly revolutionary, the piece can only be understood in light of the formative weeks Liszt spent at La Chênaie in the fall of 1834. We will return to Lamennais in the final chapter, considering later pieces Liszt wrote with the rogue priest in mind.
Chapter Three: Liszt, Lamartine and French Romanticism

The poet and statesman Alphonse de Lamartine is another giant of the nineteenth century who has drifted into relative obscurity, at least in the English-speaking world. In France he was well known: as Robert Sabatier put it in 1977, “Qui ne connaît par coeur des vers de Lamartine?”313 However, this knowledge is largely restricted to the secondary school classroom, and even then to only a handful of poems: “Le Lac,” “Le Vallon,” “L’Isolément,” “L’Automne.” So, while his name may live on in dimly recalled childhood memories, Gérard Unger is correct in more recently asking, “Qui connaît Lamartine?”314 As Aimée Boutin points out, most recent studies of Lamartine highlight his greatly diminished stature, and Marius-François Guyard summarizes, “Everyone thinks they know him, few read him, and no one likes him anymore.”315

But then, Lamartine was often treated dismissively in his own time. As a minor noble who in the 1820s rode a wave of panegyric monarchist verse to a Legion of Honor, a seat in the Académie française, and political positions at home and abroad, he incurred the enmity of fellow writers who viewed him as a calculating opportunist. In Flaubert’s Madame Bovary, Emma singing Lamartine’s “Le Lac” is presented as a prime example of the naïve sentimentality that distorts her view of reality.316 In his Writer’s Diary, Dostoyevsky caustically credits Lamartine with charming “trois générations de petites pensionnaires,”317 while in his 1844 novel Modeste

Mignon, Balzac skewers Lamartine in the person of Melchior de Canalis, the shallow, egoistic poet who seeks to woo the title character with his artifice:

The author of these insinuating, artless poems, full of tender sentiment, of these calm verses as clear as lake-ice, of this caressing womanish poetry, is an ambitious little man, buttoned tightly into his coat, with the air of a diplomat, dreaming of political influence, stinking of the aristocrat, scented and conceited, thirsting for a fortune that he may have an income equal to his ambitions, and already spoiled by success under two aspects—the crown of bays and the crown of myrtle.\(^{318}\)

On the other hand, Lamartine’s originality and willingness to break with convention endeared him to others. Ernest Renan wrote in praise of Lamartine’s utterly unique style, writing, “l’université aurait été incapable de former un Lamartine.”\(^{320}\) The decadent poets Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud all praised Lamartine’s formal innovations, his introspective style, and dreamlike evocations of nature. His broader influence on artists of all sorts is impossible to deny; Lamartine’s poetry spawned 127 works of art and over 300 compositions.\(^{321}\) The time has come, then, to take Lamartine seriously once more. As Omar Merzoug puts it, “The real issue is to know whether, along with the author of Meditations, we dismiss a certain kind of poetry now defunct, a singular practice and finally a certain kind of writing. This could be one reason why Lamartine has become an object of archaeological curiosity, of old-fashioned snobbery.”\(^{322}\)

\(^{318}\) Honoré de Balzac, Modeste Mignon, Clara Bell, trans. (Philadelphia: Gebbie Publishing Co., 1898), p. 55. Elsewhere, Balzac disingenuously contrasts Canalis with Lamartine in a way that ironically strengthens the comparison: “Canalis is distinguished from Lamartine, the chief of the Seraphic School, by a sort of sick-nurse blarney, a perfidious sweetness, and exquisite correctness. If the chief, with his sublime outcry, may be called an eagle, Canalis, all rose and white, is a flamingo.” Ibid, pp. 50-51.


\(^{321}\) Boutin, Maternal Echoes, p. 48.

\(^{322}\) Quoted in Ibid, p. 49.
The complex nature of Lamartine’s legacy bears many similarities to that of Liszt. First there are the similar Byronic qualities of chronic ill health, womanizing, spontaneity, accusations of poor taste and lack of subtlety. Then there are the varied activities and pursuits, the desire to excel in multiple fields. As a man of letters, Lamartine produced an eclectic corpus, ranging from elegiac to epic poetry, dramas, and ambitious non-fiction—though highly polemical—works such as his *Histoire des Girondins*. In politics he began as a diplomat in Italy, served in the Chamber of Deputies, and briefly held the highest office in the land during the 1848 Revolution. As with Liszt, this vying for polymath status was greeted with skepticism and accusations of dilettantism by many. According to Aimée Boutin, some interpreted this lack of focus as a sign of feminine weakness, similar to contemporary descriptions of Liszt.\(^{323}\) Just as Liszt’s pianism tended to overshadow his deepest ambition to be a composer, so too did Lamartine’s renown as a poet compromise his political aims. To quote Henry Whitehouse, “...Lamartine was deeply aggrieved that his contemporaries so constantly belittled, even ridiculed, his aspirations and achievements in the political arena. Here was the chosen field in which he ardently desired to shine: a statesman first, a poet in his moments of elegant leisure.”\(^{324}\)

However, far more interesting than these superficial parallels is the central role Lamartine’s poetry played in Liszt’s self-orchestrated debut as a serious composer. With the publication of a single-movement piece titled *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* in the Spring of


1835, Liszt deliberately linked his work with Lamartine’s celebrated poetic cycle of the same name, published five years before. What prompted this decision? What was Liszt’s motivation for invoking Lamartine at such a pivotal point in his career? Prior attempts to answer these questions have not sufficiently delved into the nature of Liszt’s relationship with Lamartine, and the broader significance of the poet in French Romanticism. Only by giving Lamartine his due, then, can we hope to understand his role in shaping Liszt the artist.

I: Lamartine’s Early Years

He was born Alphonse Marie Louis de Lamartine in 1790, into a provincial aristocratic family that remained loyal to the Bourbons throughout the Revolution. Lamartine received a traditional Catholic upbringing from his pious mother, to whom he remained devoted throughout his life; as he would later write, “Happy are those whom God made born into a good and holy family.”325 He attended school at the Pères de la Foi of Belley, a group of Jesuits operating covertly during their period of banishment from France. Lamartine’s boyhood, then, was unusually steeped in Catholicism for such anticlerical times.

Simultaneously, though, Lamartine received a thorough grounding in the ideas of the Enlightenment. Like Lamennais, he was a sickly, isolated youth, and also read voraciously in several languages, including German, English, and Latin. He received his first lessons from Father Dumont, a progressive young priest who admired Rousseau and Voltaire. Similarly, his father used to read Voltaire to him, and to quote Lucien Cordelier, “From his father, Lamartine received nothing from the religious point of view.”326 Throughout his life, Lamartine retained an appreciation for these writers: He wrote favorably of Voltaire in his Histoire des Girondins, and


326 “De son père, Lamartine ne reçut rien au point de vue religieux.” Ibid, p. 17.
frequently praised the reason and clarity of Rousseau, whom several see as the source of much of Lamartine’s nature worship and belief in personal religious experience. On the appearance of Lamennais’ *Essai sur l’Indifférence* in 1818, he exclaimed, “It is magnificent; the thought is worthy of M. de Maistre, the style of Rousseau.”

As he sought to establish himself as a serious poet in the early years of the Restoration, however, Lamartine took pains to emphasize his conservative, Catholic side. His early poems offer a clear repudiation of the preceding “century of mathematics,” as he termed it; he consistently blamed a misplaced faith in science for the deterioration of France’s political and artistic fortunes, and faulted the Revolution for the upheavals of the past twenty-five years. In this respect he blazed a pragmatic trail of courting aristocratic favor that an equally ambitious Victor Hugo would follow with similar success in the subsequent decade. As Unger puts it, “that which actually occupied the young Lamartine between 1815 and 1820 was the idea of success, and to be well placed. He was not really an ultramontanist, not really ‘constitutional,’ and still less liberal. He was simply…opportunist.” According to William Fortescue, even Lamartine’s marriage to Marianne Birch was a calculated bit of maneuvering, since she was a wealthy widow.

The first fruits of these early labors were the *Méditations poétiques*, which appeared in Paris on March 13, 1820. Though published anonymously, the author was known to all, and the cycle of poems was an immediate success, going through six printings within its first year.

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found a particularly receptive audience in the aristocratic circles of Paris’ Faubourg Saint-Germain, in which Lamartine had begun to move in the previous decade. In fact, it was largely at the urging of his well-placed Catholic friends that Lamartine increased the number of religious poems in the collection, and it was these—“La Foi” and “Dieu” especially—that were the most favorably reviewed.  

Louis XVIII congratulated Lamartine personally, and Sainte-Beuve hailed the work as “the century’s most dazzling stardom since Génie du christianisme.”

Lamartine’s Méditations shared more with Chateaubriand’s Génie than mere critical success, for both works mounted eloquent defenses of the Christian faith on aesthetic grounds. In “La Poésie Sacrée,” the final poem of Méditations, Lamartine cites verses from the books of Genesis, Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Luke as examples of poetic excellence. The influence of Job is particularly evident throughout the cycle and Lamartine’s career as a whole; as J.C. Ireson explains, “The Book of Job is Lamartine’s desert island disc.”

The sufferings of the man of Uz are a clear source of inspiration for “Le Désespoir,” the sixth poem of Méditations:

Without ever exhausting yourself, over all nature
You were able to diffuse in long measureless waves
  Absolute happiness.
Space, power, time costs you nothing.
Ah! My reason shivers; you could doubtless do it;
  You did not want to.

What crime have we committed to merit this birth?
Has insensible nothingness asked you for being,
  Or has it accepted it?
Are we, oh chance, the work of your caprice?
Or rather, cruel God, were our punishments necessary

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332 Cordelier, L’Évolution religieuse de Lamartine, p. 6.
333 Boutin, Maternal Echoes, p. 48.
334 Ireson, Lamartine: A Revaluation, p. 22.
For your felicity?\textsuperscript{335}

Similarly, Norman Araujo considers that man’s banishment from Eden is central to Lamartine’s thought, and “the point of departure in Lamartine’s quest for Eden is a shattering sense of man’s nothingness. No figure in human history more tragically and more meaningfully symbolizes that nothingness, in his view, than Job.”\textsuperscript{336}

According to Ireson, “Job is the embodiment of the great poet and philosopher who joins in the unity of his experience the opposed poles of revolt and resignation,”\textsuperscript{337} and this reading ties in well with Bénichou’s idea of post-Enlightenment writers identifying themselves as beleaguered prophets. A contemporary who heard Lamartine give a poetry reading wrote: “He spoke them like a prophet on his tripod: inspiration gave him some indefinable quality of the supernatural.”\textsuperscript{338} However, Lamartine’s religious poems can be read less as fervent declarations of faith, and more as appropriations of powerful sacred tropes to express essentially earthly,

\begin{quote}
Sans t’épuiser jamais, sur toute la nature
Tu pouvais à longs flots répandre sans mesure
Un bonheur absolu.
L’espace, le pouvoir, le temps, rien ne te coûte.

Ah! Ma raison frémit; tu le pouvais sans doute,
Tu ne l’as pas voulu.

Quel crime avons-nous fait pour mériter de naître?
L’insensible néant t’a-t-il demandé l’être,
Ou l’a-t-il accepté?
Sommes-nous, ô hasard, l’œuvre de tes caprices?
Ou plutôt, Dieu cruel, fallait-il nos supplices
Pour ta félicité?
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{335} Sans t’épuiser jamais, sur toute la nature
Tu pouvais à longs flots répandre sans mesure
Un bonheur absolu.
L’espace, le pouvoir, le temps, rien ne te coûte.

\textsuperscript{336} Norman Araujo, In Search of Eden: Lamartine’s Symbols of Despair and Deliverance (Brookline—Leyden: Classical Folia Editions, 1976), p. 15.

\textsuperscript{337} Ireson, Lamartine: A Reevaluation, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{338} Bénichou, The Consecration of the Writer, p. 117.
romantic longings. Of course, this conflation of divine and romantic love is found in Scriptural poetry as well—Jesus as the bridegroom, the Church as the bride, for example—but here the emphasis is reversed. Again Bénichou’s words are relevant: “The lightning bolt leaps from earth to heaven.” Mother Maria Consolata identifies this as a broader trend among French poets of the era, who identified with Christ as a Romantic archetype rather than as God incarnate.

For ultimately it was not religious fervor that chiefly inspired the Méditations, but rather Lamartine’s failed love affairs of the 1810s: that of 1811 with Graziella, and that of 1816-1817 with the married Julie-Charles, both in Naples. “Le Lac,” Lamartine’s most celebrated poem, was written in August-September of 1817, as he awaited in vain the arrival of the terminally ill Julie at Aix-les-Bains. As Laurence Porter writes, “the frequent confusion of religious and amorous sentiments in the Méditations and Nouvelles Méditations reflects and anticipates Lamartine’s final achievement of rejuvenating the elegy, by replacing it in a religious context.” Similarly, it is this blending of genres that Bénichou sees as Lamartine’s greatest achievement:

His originality is not so much in having progressively introduced the thoughts and style of the new religious sensibility into these traditional forms; it is, rather, even while working in the existing poetic genres, to have finally erased the boundaries between them, and mixed their tones in the flexible and multiform genre of the meditation. The very word tells the nature of the transformation: henceforth, poets think; they are the heirs to the philosophe and emulators of the theologian, even while speaking of their love affairs” As his publisher puts it, “He has felt

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340 See Mother Maria Consolata, Christ in the Poetry of Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo, and Musset (Bryn Mawr, 1947).

that the time of empty fictions is over; that it was in the heart of eternal Truth that poetry should henceforth seek her inspirations.  

II: Lamartine’s Beliefs

That Lamartine frequently invokes religious imagery for purely aesthetic reasons is undeniable, but it would be highly cynical, indeed untrue, to argue that this was the sole extent of his faith. In fact, his beliefs are complex and difficult to pin down, as evidenced by widely divergent modern-day opinions, even from the same author. For example, Ireson claims that “Lamartine’s thought has no enduring basis in Catholicism,” but a page later he acknowledges, “Lamartine never denies the primacy of the native climate of Christianity in which his spirit is nurtured.” Similarly, Cordelier writes, “As we have said, Lamartine is the most religious of our poets,” but considers these beliefs to be lacking in dogmatic particulars.

What is clear is that Lamartine’s beliefs gradually developed away from mainline Catholicism and towards a more universal view of God. Like Liszt, the failed romances and hardships of his young adulthood shook his faith, and the persistent tremors of this spiritual anguish are palpable throughout the Méditations. His poems often express grave doubts and frustration at the silence of God, and it is understandable that authors such as Bénichou would interpret his skepticism as evidence of absence of belief.

Just as often as he expressed doubt, though, Lamartine also professed admiration for religious belief in general, and Christianity in particular. As Cordelier puts it, “Lamartine

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344 “Lamartine est, nous l’avons dit, le plus religieux de nos poètes.” Cordelier, L’Évolution religieuse de Lamartine, p. 8.
forever held the holiest reverence for his mother’s faith…” Lamartine himself exclaimed, “I consider Christianity to be the vastest and purest emanation of divine revelation that has ever illuminated and sanctified human intelligence.” Like Chateaubriand, he responded positively to the mystical atmosphere of Catholic ritual, describing a Mass as “a sort of sacred contagion” where “one breathed a superhuman air, and left sanctified.”

In many respects, Lamartine’s religious development closely parallels that of Lamennais. He dedicated “Dieu” from Méditations to the priest, and adopts similar arguments for God’s existence and nature as those put forth in Lamennais’ then-current Essai sur l’indifférence. Like Lamennais, though, Lamartine grew increasingly dissatisfied with both the religious and political establishment during the 1820s; in their disillusionment the two authors were virtually in lockstep with one another. Just as Lamennais had written in favor of censorship in 1824, Lamartine wrote in the same year, “authority is good in matters of faith.” However, he shared Lamennais’ disappointment with the harsher strictures of Charles X’s regime, especially the anti-sacrilege laws of 1826, which prompted him to write, “I would like to see religion entirely between God and man, and outside politics. Governments profane it when they use it as a tool.” Like Lamennais, Lamartine increasingly saw the pope as more concerned with maintaining temporal power than with helping the oppressed. He penned an unflattering portrait

345 “Lamartine garde toujours la plus sainte veneration pour la foi de sa mere…” Ibid, p. 10.
347 “une espèce de contagion sacrée” where “On y respirait un air surhumain; on en sortait béatifié.” Cordelier, L’Évolution religieuse de Lamartine, p. 20.
of the Holy See in the 1831 poem “Rome,” but with characteristic prudence did not publish it.\textsuperscript{350}

Around the time of \textit{Paroles d’un croyant}, Lamartine wrote to Lamennais praising him: “You have the type of courage that the French most lack, the courage to think alone and to fully express your thoughts.”\textsuperscript{351}

As his dissatisfaction with Catholicism grew, Lamartine began to study other religious traditions. In the 1820s he turned to the Indic philosophies, and Henri Lacretelle provides us with a vivid picture of Lamartine the ascetic at home: “The poet was like an Indian in his respect and admiration for animals…During his conversation, like a disciple of Brahma, he would help himself to the vegetables, especially spinach, and pumpkin.”\textsuperscript{352}

Likewise, his travels in the Middle East during the 1830s left him with a favorable impression of Islam, and he began to adopt the teleological view of religion so in vogue at the time. In his \textit{Voyages en Orient} of 1835, he traces the development of humanity from blind instinct; to poetry; to laws and rituals; to philosophies anticipating Christianity, to monotheism and love of fellow man; to Christianity, tainted by human error; and finally to a universal religion, rational and rooted in natural law rather than the supernatural.\textsuperscript{353} \textit{Jocelyn} and \textit{La chute d’un ange} of 1836 and 1838, respectively, continue this line of thinking, and by 1837 he had formally broken his ties with the Catholic Church.


\textsuperscript{353} Cordelier, \textit{L’Évolution religieuse de Lamartine}, p. 56.
It would be a mistake, though, to equate this sequence of events with a loss of faith. True, in an 1831 letter to the secular rationalist Dargaud, Lamartine writes of his belief, “I still express it a little with my lips, but I hardly feel it in my heart.” However, Charles Lombard convincingly argues that this statement must be taken with more than a grain of salt, since Lamartine ultimately had mixed feelings about Dargaud, and may have been anticipating the latter’s negative reaction to beliefs he could not comprehend. In contrast, Lombard elsewhere points out that Lamartine admired the anticlerical eighteenth century theosophist Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, who accorded a mystical quality to human experience not found in rational Enlightenment thought. While Lamartine is sometimes critical of religion, his writings indicate an unwavering belief in the divine.

Indeed, one constant throughout Lamartine’s career is his affirmation of the value of religious belief to humanity. In a July 1, 1831 letter to Victor Hugo praising his recently published *Notre Dame de Paris*, Lamartine has but one criticism: “It is only immoral in its lack of sufficiently sensitive providence; your temple has everything, except a bit of religion: Religion, this blue heaven of all moral scenes, just as the true heaven is the foundation of all picturesque scenes.” It is clear here that Lamartine is not just making an aesthetic judgment, but views the novel’s lack of religion as a specifically moral concern. This is consistent with his broader view, so similar to Lamennais’ and, by extension, Liszt’s, of the prophetic mission of artists. To quote Cordelier, “Lamartine never professed this theory of art for art’s sake, so in


355 Lombard, “The Influence of Saint-Martin on Lamartine.”

vogue up to this day. He did not at all agree that art should be an excuse for all licentiousness of thought and immoralities of expression.\(^{357}\)

It would likewise be misleading to describe Lamartine as pantheist. True, his works increasingly promote the idea of God permeating all aspects of nature and existence. However, he himself vehemently denied the vague, impersonal connotations that the term carries. In his “Atheism and the People” of 1850, he clarifies his position on the idea:

For God, having made all things for himself alone, must have placed, upon all that he made, an impress of himself; more or less clear, more or less luminous, more or less profound, a presentiment or a remembrance of a Creator. But this faith, when it stops here, is not worthy of the name. It is a species of Pantheism, that is to say, a confused “visibility,” a physical working together into indissoluble union of something impersonal, something blind, something fatal, and something divine, which, in the elements composing the universe, we may call God. But this “visibility” can give to man no moral decision,—can give to God no worship. The Pantheism of which I am accused as a philosopher and poet, that Pantheism which I have always scorned as a contradiction and as a blasphemy, resembles entirely the reasoning of the man who should say, “I see an innumerable multitude of rays, therefore there is no sun.”\(^{358}\)

Later, he expresses an unequivocal belief in a personal God with definable characteristics:

I say to myself, then, “Who is this God? Is he a vain notion, which has no effect on the thoughts and acts of man, his creature; who inspires nothing in him; who gives him no commands; who imposes nothing upon him; who does not reward, and who does not punish?—No! God is not a mere notion, an idea, an evidence;—God is a law,—the living law, the supreme law, the universal law, the eternal law. Because God is a law on high, he is a duty on the earth; and when man says, ‘I believe in God,’ he says, at the same time, ‘I believe in my duty towards God,—I believe in my duty towards man.’ God is a government!”\(^{359}\)

\(^{357}\) “Lamartine n’a jamais professé cette théorie de l’art pour l’art, si en vogue jusqu’à ces derniers temps. Il ne croit nullement que l’art soit une excuse à tous les dévergondages de la pensée et à toutes les immoralités de l’expression.” Cordelier, L’Évolution religieuse de Lamartine, p. 48.


\(^{359}\) Ibid, pp. 15-16
We must conclude that, while Lamartine may have eventually jettisoned much of Catholic dogma, he remained rooted in the belief in a personal God on whose existence human happiness is predicated.

In sum, Lamartine’s religious views circa 1834 are best expressed as nominally Catholic, but with considerable room for doubt and receptivity to other faiths. What cannot be doubted, though, is that Lamartine considered a spiritual component to human existence of the utmost importance. He consistently rejected a cold, materialistic view of the universe that he saw as the enemy of art and of human happiness. In Lamartine, then, it is likely that Liszt would have seen a kindred spirit who, in his consecrated poetry, also saw that “art must necessarily depart the temple.”

III: Lamartine’s Poetic Style

Having given some sense of Lamartine’s religious views, let us return to the Méditations, now with the goal of understanding his poetic style. Just as Lamartine turned to Catholicism in this cycle, so too did he show his indebtedness to French classical poetry, further ensuring his success among conservative aristocratic circles. According to E.H. and A.M. Blackmore, in the Méditations “the vocabulary is eighteenth-century; indeed, whole phrases are borrowed or half-recalled from minor poets of the recent past.”

To A. Tilley, the Méditations mark the culmination of French Classicism, with their traditional structures, elevated tone, and avoidance of particulars: “If Lamartine is classical in his avoidance of the particular, he is also classical in his sober restraint, his serene equipoise and the high level at which he maintains his flight.”

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Tilley argues, “…Lamartine was no revolutionary…treading respectfully, but with discrimination, the well-worn paths of his predecessors.”³⁶²

However, more recent scholars have stressed the ways in which Lamartine departed from Classical convention. In his introduction to the cycle, Gervase Hittle sees the Méditations as an important step in the supplanting of Neo-Classicism by Romanticism, analogous to the effect Coleridge’s Lyrical Ballads had on English literature at the turn of the century: as he puts it, “in 1820 the course of French literature was irrevocably changed.”³⁶³ Similarly, William Rees writes, “Though it is possible to view him as a transitional figure, Lamartine’s place as the first Romantic poet in France seems assured by a sustained tone of unaffected pathos, by harmony of form and content, and by his thematic emphases on love and loss and on the natural as a mirror of the divine.”³⁶⁴ Bénichou sees Lamartine as straddling the line between traditionalism and experimentation, like many cagey artists during the Bourbon Restoration. The result is a poetic style that manages to be innovative without completely abandoning established norms.

One way Lamartine achieves this balance is in poetry that manages to be both classically universal and romantically particular at the same time. As Robert Denommé puts it, “The freshness of inspiration and the delicately-sustained elegiac tone [of the Méditations] elicited the enthusiasm of the advocates of change and the defenders of traditionalism alike.”³⁶⁵ The elegiac qualities of such works as “Le Lac” and “l’Automne” hearken back to Classical poetry and to the past in general. To quote Laurence Porter, “the major projet of Lamartine’s elegiac poetry, then,

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³⁶³ Lamartine, Poetical Méditations/Méditations poétiques, p. iii.


is the nurture of memory.” Lamartine, however, is distinctly Romantic in his autobiographical subject matter, his impassioned, subjective tone, and his use of dreamlike, ambiguous imagery. It was especially this last quality that would later endear him to symbolists like Verlaine. Still, such innovations are mediated by an avoidance of specifics—he only refers to his personal life obliquely—and by his appeal to accepted poetic conventions. Michael Bishop summarizes this dual stance: “Lamartine’s conception of poetry remains simultaneously immanent—plunged in the ephemeral, the corporal, the imperfect—and transcendent, because it is not only conscious of and committed to self’s higher aspirations, but also aware of the a priori, in-principle interpenetration of self and all otherness, the unity of all poiesis, all creation, all being in its infinite emergence.”

Another area in which Lamartine achieved this balance was in his approach to form, long a priority in French poetry. According to E.H. and A.M. Blackmore, “in France, as in most other parts of Europe, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries developed elaborate rules and conventions for the writing of poetry. Indeed, nowhere were the conventions more rigid and the rules more precise than in France, and nowhere, perhaps, was the poetry more impressive; no writer has ever produced fine verse within narrower and more restrictive limits than did the seventeenth-century dramatist Jean Racine.” This trend carried over into the nineteenth century, as Eric Gans explains: “Even in its richest vein, that of Victor Hugo, French romantic

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368 Six French Poets, p. xi.
poetry never attains the depth of metaphor of the great English and German poets. France has no Wordsworths or Hölderlins. What it does have, in its best moments, is *structure.*

The hallmark of French classical poetry is the Alexandrine verse, a twelve-syllable line that dates to the twelfth century. William Rees writes, “…[it] came to dominate French poetry from the middle of the seventeenth century, and classically educated Frenchmen have it in their bloodstream still today…The Alexandrine has a remarkably tenacious hold on French poets.”

Traditionally, the Alexandrine was binary, with a caesura midway through the line. In the *Méditations,* Lamartine relies heavily upon the Alexandrine, but treats it with great flexibility. He sometimes uses eight or ten instead of twelve syllables to a line, and similarly varies stanza length and rhyme scheme. Lamartine often uses two caesuras per Alexandrine line, or obscures these waypoints altogether, just as he does so with the ends of lines through enjambment.

Lamartine’s poetry is sometimes criticized for carelessness and repetition stemming from unchecked spontaneity. For example, Tilley points out one example where “flambeau” and “tombeau” appear six or seven times each in the same poem, three times rhyming with one another. However, what is most striking about Lamartine’s idiosyncratic approach to form is its deeper purpose in the service of content. As Ireson puts it, “this writer, who has often been castigated for carelessness and indifference at the technical level, seems to me to have been instinctively drawn to a form outside the codified patterns.” A prime example of this is in “Le Lac,” his most celebrated poem from the *Méditations.* Roy Lewis notes the poem’s crescendo of

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370 French Poets, p. xxix.


passion, which is reflected in the change to a more urgent, immediate meter in “O temps, suspend ton vol!”

Here, the abrupt formal change aptly conveys the arresting quality of the text. The poet’s stanzas are elegiac and Alexandrine, while Elvire’s are impassioned, metrically irregular, immediate:

Tout à coup des accents inconnus à la terre
Du rivage charmé frappèrent les échos;
Le flot fut attentif, et la voix qui m’est chère
Laissa tomber ces mots :

« Ô temps, suspends ton vol ! et vous, heures propices,
Suspendez votre cours !
Laissez-nous savourer les rapides délices
Des plus beaux de nos jours !

Lamartine is also revolutionary in the increased emphasis he places on sonority and the musicality of words. This appears to have been a preoccupation dating back to his childhood, as evidenced by his preface to the 1849 edition of the Médiations, where he reminisces on the impact of his father reading Voltaire to him: “Moreover, this cadenced language, like the dance of words in the ear; these beautiful images that make one see what one hears; these hemistiches that rest on the sound to precipitate it all the more rapidly; these consonances at the end of a line that are like repercussive echoes where the same feeling prolongs itself in the same sound…”

Elsewhere, Lamartine writes, “If I had to be reborn on the earth I would ask to be reborn with the genius of Mozart or Rossini, and with the voice of Malibran, preferring their notes to the most beautiful verses and the language of infinity to the language of words.”

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374 Boutin, Maternal Echoes, p. 96.

de littérature of 1858, he favors music over the visual arts: “One is the art of multiplying the impressions of the soul by view, through forms, through colors, through illusions of contour, shadow, and light, the tints and nuances derived from nature made on the eyes…If it was up to me, personally, I would say that I prefer music to painting.”376 Elsewhere in the *Cours familier*, he even goes so far as to say that “Music is, of all these arts, that which is nearest to words; it is often her equal and sometimes even exceeds her; because music expresses above all the inexpressible. If we had to give a definition we could say: Music is the literature of the senses and of the heart.”378

It need hardly be mentioned that many Romantic writers held music in a similarly high esteem.379 For them, it constituted a more direct form of communication with the soul, and the evanescent, elusive qualities of the art form were all the more so for these authors, most of whom had little or no musical training. Even so, the musicality of Lamartine’s poetry is particularly striking, and he displays an unusual preference for aural rather than visual descriptors. In “l’Isolement,” the first poem of the *Méditations*, sonic phenomena emanate from every stanza. The following verses give a sense of this, as well as Lamartine’s characteristic use of religious topoi in a pastoral setting:

Meanwhile emerging from the gothic spire
A religious sound pours out into the air;
The traveler stops; and the rustic bell
Mingles holy concerts with the day’s last noises.380

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378 “La musique est, de tous ces arts, celui qui se rapproche le plus de la parole ; elle l’égale souvent et parfois même elle la dépasse ; car la musique exprime surtout l’inexprimable. Si nous avions à la définir nous dirions : La musique est la littérature des sens et du coeur.” Lamartine, *Cours familier* 5, p. 281.

379 For examples of this phenomenon, see the first chapter of Marix-Spire *Les romantiques et la musique*.

380 Cependant, s’élançant de la flèche gothique,
Un son religieux se répand dans les airs,
Rather than presenting a tableau as in classical poetry, Lamartine focuses on the potent qualities of sonic memory. By studying early versions of this and other poems in the cycle, Mary Ellen Birkett makes a compelling case for the high priority Lamartine placed on the musical nature of his verse, and the pains he took to avoid making this obvious. In “Le Lac,” for example, Lamartine changed “chanta ces tristes mots” to “laissa tomber ces mots,” and similarly altered “dans les chants de tes bords” to read “dans les bruits de tes bords.” Whatever his reasons for concealing this musical connection, he renders it explicit in the *Nouvelles Méditations* of 1823, as in this stanza from the poem “Ischia”:

She sings; and her voice expires in stages,  
And, the chords of the lute more weakly strummed,  
The dull echoes deliver to zephyr,  
Nothing more than dying sighs and cut off silence!

It is these aspects, then, that most define Lamartine’s mature poetic style announced by the *Méditations poétiques*. His use of classical conventions and religious imagery endeared him to the establishment, while his emphasis on sonority, formal flexibility, and blending of sacred and elegiac styles all point to his status as an innovator. Lamartine’s poetry may not be as

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381 In his dissertation on Lamartine’s musical aesthetics, Spencer Hutchings also singles out this passage as evidence of Lamartine’s “recurring interest in the relationship between human music and the divine music of nature.” See Spencer Hutchings, “Another music of the soul”: The musical aesthetics of Alphonse de Lamartine (PhD. Diss. University of Colorado at Boulder, 2009), p. 11.


383 Elle chante ; et sa voix par intervalle expire,  
Et, des accords du luth plus faiblement frappés,  
Les échos assoupis ne livrent au zéphire  
Que des soupirs mourants, de silence coupé!
formally free as Hugo’s, for example, but it is also much more imbued with his unique brand of spirituality. In turning to Lamartine’s relationship with Liszt, it will soon become clear which of these traits most captured the young composer’s attention.

**IV: Enter Liszt**

Liszt first mentions Lamartine in his famous 1832 letter to Pierre Wolf: “Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber, are all around me.” However, the first mention of Liszt’s personal friendship with Lamartine is in a letter he wrote to the Comtesse d’Agoult in Spring 1834: “I have seen Lamartine quite often; on the whole, it has been good for me to become acquainted with men, my judgment has undergone a change and has lost its unjust severity.”

It is likely that Liszt took part in the salons organized by Lamartine’s wife Marianne on Wednesdays and Saturdays in their Rue de l’université apartment, providing him with ample opportunity to get to know the family on intimate terms. At the time of these letters, though, Liszt was staying with the conservative Haineville family at their Normany estate, and his hosts were often critical of Lamartine, as another letter to d’Agoult makes clear: “…Here I always defend the Poet-Deputy with great fervor when he is attacked, which happens often, as this poor L has suffered the fate of all moderate men: he has ultimately displeased everyone.”

These and other letters reveal both Liszt’s obvious affection for Lamartine, and a degree of ambivalence towards the poet’s middle-of-the-road politics. In an 1835 letter to Lamartine,

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385 These salons are described in William Fortescue’s *Alphonse de Lamartine: A Political Biography* (London: Croom Helm 1983), p. 89.

Liszt praises the statesman for his recent speech in the Chamber of Deputies against the Sauzet-Fieschi censorship law, proposed after an attempt on Louis-Philippe’s life.\(^{387}\) However, in a contemporaneous letter to George Sand, Liszt tellingly leavens his praise—something he does, more diplomatically, in his letter to Lamartine as well—with a swipe at Lamartine’s moderation: “His speech to the Chamber was good, save the trite exaggerations on the abuse of the freedom of the press—the too numerous comparisons of the drunken Spartan, the blood-stained robe, Caesar, etc. etc.”\(^{388}\) d’Agoult’s remembrances of her first years with Liszt fit with such a reaction: “In politics as in religion Franz detested moderation and boldly embraced extreme opinions.”\(^{389}\)

Liszt correctly identified the trait that would ultimately be his poet friend’s political downfall. From the time of his family’s opposition to the Revolution, Lamartine possessed a pathological fear of mob rule. While progressive, he consistently spoke out against violent insurrection. In a May 13, 1834 speech to the Chamber of Deputies advocating the use of force to suppress civil unrest, Lamartine said, “everything is legitimate against anarchy.”\(^{390}\) In the years leading up to the revolution of 1848, Lamartine softened his stance on the revolution of 1789. Even in his history of the Girondins—often cited as a major catalyst for the 1848 Revolution—Lamartine praises the principles and moderation of the Revolution, but condemns its violence and excesses. He would therefore always be an aristocrat among republicans, and a republican among aristocrats.


Despite Liszt’s admiration for Lamartine’s poetry, he saw in it too this element of cautiousness, echoing contemporary assessments of the poet as a calculating self-promoter. In his September 1837 “Lettre d’un Bachelier de Musique” to Louis de Ronchaud, Liszt names Lamartine the “happy poet of the age,” expressing qualified admiration: “From the moment he first appeared among us, the young man was greeted as the anointed of the Lord, as one of those rulers of the mind whose very imperfections are holy, and on the day following his first moment of fame, his place in history was assured.”

Echoing Sainte-Beuve, Liszt identifies Lamartine as the heir apparent to Chateaubriand, who “gloriously established a new literature in France. “He made an unknown or, rather, a forgotten poetry burst forth from Christianity...”

Liszt then notes how Chateaubriand’s future writings on the Americas and ancient Gaul (Atala and Les Martyrs, respectively) were too challenging for audiences, but “Lamartine, however, had the gift of knowing just how far innovation could go.” He points to those very qualities of restraint mentioned above:

By not dramatizing his feelings and by contenting himself with a meditative lyricism, Lamartine also appeals to those basically subjective readers who love to find themselves reflected in everything and can thus easily inject their own stories into the harmonious framework of his divine poetry. But later, the characters created by his imitators cheapened the open-air reverie and vaporous passions to such an extent that if Lamartine himself returned after ten years, he would have had a difficult time forcing his way through the crowd of Elvira-lovers, the forest of old oak trees, and the flood of azure lakes...And when his later words were attacked, his poet’s crown of laurel was so laden with foliage and flowers that he could well afford to lose some of its lower branches.

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391 Suttoni, An Artist’s Journey, p. 55.
392 Ibid.
393 Ibid, p. 56.
394 Ibid, p. 57.
This is highly revealing. In language remarkably close to that Balzac would use seven years later in *Modeste mignon*, Liszt acknowledges Lamartine’s cagy ability to market himself, and expresses more than a little bemusement at the poetic clichés he has spawned and the accolades he has garnered. Liszt also notes Lamartine’s ability to create art that resonates with individuals on a personal level: “His Elvira charms without surprising us, since there is hardly a man who did not believe in his youth that he would meet an Elvira, hardly anyone who has not sometimes fancied himself a dreamer ‘in the shade of an old oak tree’ or ‘beneath the vaulted arches of a Gothic church.’” Liszt then trenchantly describes Lamartine as an artist who deftly carved out an identity for himself, and as a result ensured (so Liszt thought) his lasting fame. While he clearly admired Lamartine as a poet and statesman, Liszt was equally intrigued by his acumen in crafting his own image. It seems to me that this factor played a crucial role in Liszt’s decision to link his first major published composition to Lamartine’s *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, itself published in 1830.

**V: Lamartine’s *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses***

The 1820s were years of transition for Lamartine. In June of 1820 he married the Englishwoman Marianne Birch, and shortly thereafter became diplomatic attaché to the French embassy in Naples. His wedding had been a Catholic one, and his wife’s conversion from Protestantism led him back to his mother’s faith. As he wrote in 1821, “I have become a good Christian, as you know, and I wish to remain so in perpetuity.”

As the decade progressed, though, his political allegiances shifted, and by the 1830s he was an avowed Republican. Writing after the July Revolution, Lamartine affirmed that “the major principles of the ’89

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395 Ibid.

revolution are true, beautiful, and good; only the execution was atrocious, iniquitous, and disgusting.”

As mentioned earlier, this was also the period when Lamartine began to embrace other faiths, while still keeping one foot in the Catholic camp. The *Nouvelles méditations poétiques* of 1823 further defined his poetry as musical, religious, and formally experimental. For all these developments, though, Lamartine remained a perfectly respectable figure politically and artistically. Prime evidence of his solid reputation is his admission in 1829 to the Académie Française, long a bastion of the establishment. What better capstone to so triumphant a decade than an ambitious volume of poetry marking the culmination of all these developments?

The *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* first appeared in Paris in June 1830. They had been written over the course of the previous four years, in a variety of locations in France and Italy. In his preface, Lamartine reflects on the eclectic nature of the cycle:

...these Harmonies, taken separately, seem to have no connection with one another; considered as a group, one could find there a principle of unity in their diversity itself; since they had been destined, in the thought of the author, to reproduce a great number of impressions of nature and the life of the human spirit; impressions varied in their essence, uniform in their object, since they all deal with the contemplation of God…” (Harmonies XV)
In the *Harmonies*, Lamartine’s preoccupation with God is even more pronounced than in the *Méditations*, with sacred themes abounding in every poem. Lamartine initially intended the title to be “Modern Psalms” or “Sacred Harmonies,” and writes, “I conceived the thought of writing at random, in my hours of leisure and inspiration, a few modern canticles, like those that David has written with his tears.”

All three of these titles capture the two chief traits of Lamartine’s mature style: musicality and religion. There is a preponderance of hymns in the *Harmonies*: “Hymne de la Nuit;” “Hymne du Matin;” “Hymne de l’Enfant à son réveil;” “Hymne au Christ;” even “Encore un hymne”! According to Denommé, “the harmony which the poet sees and hears is the wordless hymn that emerges from the beauties of the whole of creation in praise of God the maker.” In Lamartine’s prologue to the 1849 edition, he explains the meaning of “harmonies” thusly:

Youth that awakens, love that dreams, the eye that contemplates, the soul that rises up, the prayer that invokes, grief that weeps, God who consoles, ecstasy that sings, reason that thinks, passion that breaks through, the tomb that closes, all the sounds of life in a sonorous heart, these are the harmonies. There are as many as there are palpitations in the infinite fiber of human emotion. I wrote some of them in verse, others in prose; thousands more exist only in my breast. If the reader listens to himself feeling and living, he will notice others more melodious and true than these here: Life is a hymn in which every soul is a voice.

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400 Quoted in Bénichou, *The Consecration of the Writer*, p. 129.


402 “la jeunesse qui s’éveille, l’amour qui rêve, l’œil qui contemple, l’âme qui s’élève, la prière qui invoque, le deuil qui pleure, le Dieu qui console, l’extase qui chante, la raison qui pense, la passion qui se brise, le tombe qui se ferme, tous les bruits de la vie dans un cœur sonore, ce sont ces harmonies. Il y en a autant qu’il y a de palpitations sur la fibre infinie de l’émotion humaine. J’en ai écrit quelques-unes en vers, d’autres en prose; des milliers d’autres n’ont jamais retenti que dans mon sein. Que le lecteur s’écoute lui-même sentir et vivre, il en notera de plus mélodieuses et de plus vraies que celles-ci: la vie est un cantique dont toute âme est un voix.”
With “Invocation,” the *Harmonies* begin with the raucous cacophony of nature’s song:

You who gave the morning bird his voice  
To sing in the sky the nascent hymn of the day;  
You who gave the spirit and sonorous throat  
To the bird who the evening hears moan of love;

You who say to the forests: respond to Zephyr!  
To the streams: Murmur harmonious chords!  
To the torrents: Groan! To the breeze: Sigh!  
To the ocean: moan dying on your shores.⁴⁰³

The musical nature of the poems only increases as the cycle progresses, reaching a high point at the end of the Third Book. In the “Cantate pour les enfants d’une maison de charité,” Lamartine structures a poem as a short musical drama, complete with recitative, soloists, and chorus.

It is easy to see the appeal Lamartine would have had for Liszt in the early 1830s. Apart from his enviable marketing capabilities, Lamartine presented in the *Harmonies* the synthesis of art forms and religion that Liszt was already seeking in his own work. That Liszt shared Lamartine’s high opinion of the Bible’s literary quality is evident from his correspondences: in a September 1833 letter to d’Agoult he quotes “Psalm 46:” “God is our refuge, our strength and our help in distress, and extremely easy to find…that is sublime too!...You know, Madame, that it is only you to whom I can talk of Art and Poetry…”

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⁴⁰³ Toi qui donnas sa voix à l’oiseau de l’aurore  
Pour chanter dans le ciel l’hymne naissant du jour;  
Toi qui donnas son âme et son gosier sonore  
A l’oiseau que le soir entend gémir d’amour;

Toi qui dis aux forêts: Répondez au zéphire!  
Aux ruisseaux: Murmurez d’harmonieux accords!  
Aux torrents: Mugissez! à la brise: Soupire!  
A l’océan: Gémis en mourant sur tes bords!
There may have been a more immediate impetus prompting Liszt to link himself with Lamartine, and that is the latter’s “Des destinées de la poésie,” an essay appearing in the *Revue des deux mondes* on March 15, 1834, and also serving as the preface to his collected works. A sort of poet’s manifesto, the article prefigures Liszt’s “De la situation des artistes” in several respects. Just as Liszt in his articles a year later calls for a higher status to be accorded to music in contemporary society, Lamartine similarly argues for poetry’s central importance as a reflection of a society’s deepest values and aspirations. He repudiates the era in which he came of age, in which the materialist ideas of the philosophes—“tous ces homes géometriques”—held sway: “An inner voice always said to me that there was something more alive, nobler, and more delicious for the soul than this life numbed by the senses, than this voluptuous softness of its music and loves.”

In arguing that poetry is the universal language of the human soul, Lamartine cites its central importance in the theocracies of ancient Egypt and Judea, the powerful regimes of Rome, Florence, and Louis XIV, and so on. This is analogous to Liszt’s arguments on music’s behalf in “De la situations des artistes,” which in turn echo Lamennais’ belief in the universality of Christianity in *Essai sur l’indifférence*.

**VI: Liszt’s Harmonies**

While Lamartine’s essay may have swayed Liszt to publish a piece in his honor, the evidence indicates that he had already begun working on his *Harmonies* in the spring of 1833.

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405 For a good summary of the proposed dating of this piece, see Tish Ann Kilgore, “Liszt’s Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude: Elements of Transcendence and Transformation in the Context of the Compositional Evolution and Musical Structure of the Harmonies poétiques et religieuses” (DMA Diss. Boston University, 2009), pp. 8-10. Michael Short notably considers the work to have been completely written by 1833. However, it is difficult to imagine that Liszt made no revisions in the many months between this point and the work’s publication.
The N6 sketchbook housed in Weimar’s Goethe-Schiller Archive shows the first sketches of the piece dating from May. In an October 30 letter to d’Agoult in that year, Liszt mentions “ma petite harmonie lamartinienne sans ton ni mesure,” a reference to the work’s lack of key signature and unbarred passages. His letters to d’Agoult over the next year show his continuing work on the piece. From May of 1834: “Now I am much—yes, much—absorbed in my profound harmonies.”406 In late June: “This morning I reviewed our famous musical harmony, poetic and religious: decidedly, it seems excellent to me.”407 Finally, towards the end of 1834: “Our harmony will be dedicated to Lamartine…later I will write half a dozen of them.”408

Based on this gradual change to “our harmony,” Serge Gut contends that the piece must have had great personal significance for Liszt and d’Agoult’s relationship.409 However, it is important to note that Liszt does not make this connection in the first letters, when their romance was still in its initial stages. Given the ambiguous, somber nature of the piece, it is difficult to think of it as a sort of musical love letter. Rather, it seems more likely that Liszt was employing a bit of artful flattery, by including d’Agoult in a project that was evidently occupying a great deal of his time and energy. It doubtless helped that d’Agoult shared Liszt’s admiration for Lamartine’s poetry, as shown by her October 5, 1833 letter to him, where she writes of “the inconceivable invasion (if you’ll permit the word) of religious sentiment in me…If it were not so

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406 “je suis bien maintenant. Oui—Bien—absorbé dans mes harmonies profondes”

407 “J’ai revu cet matin notre fameuse Harmonie musicale, poétique et religieuse: décidément, cela me paraît bien…”

408 “Notre harmonie sera dédiée à Lamartine…plus tard j’en écriterai une demi-douzaine.”

long I would here transcribe for you the harmony entitled ‘Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude.’”

Liszt’s N6 sketchbook housed in Weimar’s Goethe-Schiller Archive reveals some more details about the gestation period of this piece. The first sketches indicate that Liszt at one point conceived of the work as a concerto, suggesting grand public ambitions that were never realized. In addition, this sketch begins with a quote from Schiller, translated into French: “It was said that all the passions had agitated his heart, and that everyone having abandoned it, there remained nothing left of him but the sad and piercing gaze of a man consumed by knowledge of men, who looked intently at everything.” The most likely point of origin for this citation is from chapter five of Hugo’s early novel Han d’Islande, a work in which the pain of death is a major theme. Thus, Liszt early on associated this piece with thoughts of the dead, a significant point in linking this work to Lamartine’s poetry.

Liszt’s piece Harmonies poétiques et religieuses first appeared in the June 7, 1835 Revue et gazette musicale, several weeks after the journal published the first of his “De la situation des artistes” articles, and a week before it published Joseph d’Ortigue’s biography of the composer. Thus—despite Liszt’s unplanned elopement with Marie d’Agoult a week before—the Harmonies

410 “l’inconcevable invasion (passez-moi ce mot) du sentiment religieux en moi... si ce n’était si long je vous transcrirais ici l’harmonie intitulée: « Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude. »” Franz Liszt, Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse d’Agoult, Daniel Ollivier, ed. (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1933), p. 59. Serge Gut credits d’Agoult with introducing the Harmonies to Liszt, but given Liszt’s earlier awareness of the poet, it is unlikely that he would have been unfamiliar with one of his most acclaimed works.

411 Similarly, the later MS Z18 indicates plans to arrange the piece for piano trio, no doubt with Batta and Urhan on cello and violin.

412 “On eut dit que toutes les passions avaient agité son coeur, et que toutes l’avaient abandonné il ne lui restait rien que le coup d’œil triste et perçant d’un homme consommé dans la connaissance des hommes et qui voyait d’un regard à tendait [?] chaque chose.”

mark the apex of a carefully constructed publicity campaign, calculated to establish the young virtuoso as a serious artist. Dedicated to Lamartine, the *Harmonies* also begins with two paragraphs from the poet’s *Avertissement* to the poetic cycle:

> These verses are only intended for the few. There are meditative souls raised invincibly by solitude and contemplation towards infinite ideas, that is, towards religion; all their thoughts are expressed in enthusiasm and prayer, their entire existence is a silent hymn to the Divinity and to hope. They search within, and in the creation that surrounds them, for steps to ascend to God, for expressions and images to reveal His presence within them, and to reveal themselves to Him: May I offer something to them!

> There are hearts broken by grief, stifled by the world, that seek refuge in the world of their thoughts, in the solitude of their soul, to weep, to wait, or to adore; may they be visited by a solitary muse such as them, may they find sympathy in her chords, and say sometimes in hearing her: we pray with your words, we weep with your tears, we appeal with your songs.\(^{414}\)

The main body of this text encapsulates Lamartine’s religious and musical sensibility that so captivated Liszt, but it is the first sentence acknowledging a certain inaccessibility that seems to have most inspired the composer. Indeed, Paul Merrick describes the 1835 version of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* as Liszt’s “first really original composition. Indeed, considering its date, it is arguably the most original piano piece of the century.”\(^{415}\) While this second claim is open to debate, there is little dissent on the first point. Charles Rosen points to

\(^{414}\) Ces vers ne s’adressent qu’à un petit nombre. Il y a des âmes meditatives que la solitude et la contemplation élèvent invinciblement vers les idées infinies, c’est-à-dire vers la religion; toutes leurs pensées se convertissent en enthousiasme et en prière, toute leur existence est un hymne muet à la Divinité et à l’espérance. Elles cherchent en elles-mêmes et dans la création qui les environne des degrés pour monter à Dieu, des expressions et des images pour se le révéler à elles-mêmes, pour se révéler à lui: puisse-je leur en prêter quelques-unes!

Il y a des cœurs brisés par douleur, refoulés par le monde, qui se réfugient dans le monde de leurs pensées, dans la solitude de leur âme pour pleurer, pour attendre ou pour adorer; puissent-ils se laisser visiter par une Muse solitaire comme eux, trouver une sympathie dans ses accords, et dire quelquefois en l’écoutant: nous prions avec tes paroles, nous pleurons avec tes larmes, nous invoquons avec tes chants.

two particularly striking moments: the unresolved diminished seventh sonority at the end (Ex. 1), and the dissolution of rhythm beginning in measure eighteen (Ex. 2).

Ex. 1, mm. 122-4

R. Larry Todd also notes the piece’s radical approach to the diminished seventh, and points out an example of an augmented triad in m. 47, although he labels this as a passing chord:

Ex. 2, mm. 18-20

Ex. 3, m. 47

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417 Ibid, p. 505.
Todd provides a useful summary of the experimental style heralded by the *Harmonies*: “Among the stylistic evidence we may cite Liszt’s new flexibility in meter and rhythm, his relaxing of the rules governing dissonance treatment, his applications of enharmonic spellings, his widespread use of mediant relationships, and his immersion of the harmonic fabric into a richly hued chromatic dye.”\(^{418}\)

While Liszt’s title only refers to Lamartine’s cycle *Harmonies* as a whole, one poem in particular—“Pensée des morts”—merits special attention. As we will see in Chapter Five, Liszt eventually achieved his goal of composing a proper *Harmonies* cycle in the late 1840s and early 1850s. In so doing, he combined material from the 1835 composition and the shelved *De Profundis* to form the fourth piece in the set, also titled “Pensée des morts.” The connection is even stronger when one considers that Lamartine’s first title for “Pensée des morts” was, in fact, “De profundis.”\(^{419}\) Insofar as Liszt would have been aware of this, and given the thematic parallels in the earlier pieces pointed out by such a scholar as Adrienne Kaczmarczyk, it seems likely that Liszt had this poem in mind from the beginning.\(^{420}\)

According to his commentary for the 1849 edition of the *Harmonies*, Lamartine traces the genesis of his “Pensée des morts” to his 1826 stay at the Villa Buonvisi in Tuscany. He claims to have been inspired by the wild, untamed nature of the surrounding mountainous landscape, dotted with convents, hermitages, hamlets, shepherd’s huts, and so on. Remarkong on the beauty


\(^{419}\) Rosenblatt, *The concerto as crucible* p. 383.

\(^{420}\) Dieter Torkewitz also considers this to be the case. See his *Harmonisches Denken im Frühwerk Franz Liszts* (Munich: Musikverlag Emil Katzbiicher, 1978), p. 52.
of the day, and the tranquil state of his life, Lamartine wonders how his mind turned to thoughts of the dead:

What brought me then to this thought? I haven’t the slightest idea; I imagine that it was precisely this contrast, the embrace of voluptuousness on the heart, that presses too strongly and expresses too completely the power of enjoyment and loving, and which makes one realize that everything will end quickly, and that the final taste of the heart—this sponge that drinks and surrenders life—is a teardrop. Perhaps it was simply the view of one of the beautiful unmoving cypresses set off in black against the dazzling lapis of the sky, reminding me of the tomb.

Whatever it was, I wrote the first strophes of this harmony to the sounds of the bagpipe of a blind *pifferaro*, who accompanied the wedding dance of mountain peasants, atop a flat rock used for grinding wheat, behind the lone cottage of the fiancée; she was betrothed to a cobbler from a neighboring village, the bell tower of which one could see a bit lower in the valley, behind a hill of chestnut trees. She was the most beautiful of the young girls of the mid Alps that I had ever seen; such youthful beauty, at once ideal and embodied, I had only seen once before, in a Greek Ionian girl on the Syrian coast. The bride brought me grapes, chestnuts and chilled water for my part in her joy; I retained her image. Again, what was sad and funereal in this? Well! Thoughts of death grew out of this. Could it be because death is the foundation of every earthly scene, and that the white crown on her black hair reminded me of the white crown on her shroud? I hope that she still lives in her chalet perched on its rock, and that she still weaves mats of golden straw while watching her children play beneath the carob tree, while her husband, sewing leather at the window, sings the cobbler’s song of the Abruzzi: “For whom are you making this shoe? Is it a sandal for the monk? Are they leggings for the bandit? Is it a shoe for the hunter? It is a new sole for my fiancée, who will dance the tarantella under the arbor, to the sound of the tambourine bedecked with bells. But, before bringing them to her father’s, I will put in one nail stronger than the others, a kiss under the sole of my fiancée! I will put in a sequin more brilliant than all the others, a kiss under the shoe of my love! Work, work, *calzolaio* [cobbler].”

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421 “Qu’est-ce qui me ramena donc à cette pensée? Je n’en sais rien; j’imagine que ce fut précisément le contraste, l’étreinte de la volupté sur le cœur, qui le presse trop fort et qui en exprime trop complètement la puissance de jouir et d’aimer, et qui lui fait sentir que tout va finir promptement, et que la dernière goutte de cette éponge du cœur qui boit et qui rend la vie est une larme. Peut-être cela fut-il simplement la vue d’un de ces beaux cyprès immobiles se détachant en noir sur le lapis éclatant du ciel, et rappelant le tombeau.

Quoi qu’il en soit, j’écrivis les premières strophes de cette harmonie aux sons de la cornemuse d’un pifferaro aveugle, qui faisait danser une noce de paysans de la plus haute montagne sur un rocher aplani pour battre le blé, derrière la chaumière isolée, qu’habitait la fiancée; elle épousait un cordonnier d’un hameau voisin, dont on apercevait le clocher un peu plus bas, derrière une colline de châtaigniers. C’était la plus belle de ces jeunes filles des Alpes du Midi qui eût jamais ravi mes yeux; je n’ai retrouvé cette beauté accomplie de jeune fille, à la fois idéale et incarnée, qu’une fois dans la race grecque ionienne, sur la côte de Syrie. Elle m’apporta des raisins, des châtaignes et de l’eau glacée, pour ma part de son bonheur; je remportai, moi, son image. Encore une fois, qu’y avait-il là de triste et de funèbre? Eh bien! La pensée des morts sortit de là. N’est-ce pas parce que la mort est le fond de tout tableau terrestre, et que la couronne blanche sur ses cheveux noirs me rappela la couronne blanche sur son linceul? J’espère qu’elle vit toujours dans son chalet adossé à son rocher, et qu’elle tresse encore les nattes de
Although it is possible, even likely, that Lamartine was embellishing or even fabricating this story two decades after the fact, his commentary nevertheless lends special insight into the poet’s creative process.422 Here we see his special ability to move from the particular to the general, transforming a specific moment of inspiration into broader musings on life, death, love, God, and so on. Also of note is the profound importance he places on nature and especially music in stirring his emotions. While it is unlikely that Liszt would have been privy to this particular account when composing his own Harmonies, all these qualities are present in the poem itself, and are indeed pervasive throughout Lamartine’s cycle. However, a slavish attempt to map Lamartine’s poem onto Liszt’s music would be, I think, wrongheaded. More productive is to look for overarching similarities of form and content, which are found in abundance here.

In placing Lamartine’s “Pensée des morts” alongside Liszt’s Harmonies, several parallels immediately become apparent. Lamartine begins with a description of a barren landscape, bereft of movement, sound, and life. The text is marked by regularity and repetition; a sense of weariness hovers overhead:

Voilà les feuilles sans sève
Qui tombent sur le gazon;
Voilà le vent qui s’élève
Et gémit dans le vallon;
Voilà l’errante hirondelle
Qui rase du bout de l’aile
L’eau dormante des marais;
Voilà l’enfant des chaumières

paille dorée en regardant jouer ses enfants sous le caroubier, pendant que son mari chante, en cousant le cuir à sa fenêtre, la chanson du cordonnier des Abruzzes: « Pour qui fais-tu cette chaussure? Est-ce une sandale pour le moine? est-ce une guêtre pour le bandit? est-ce un soulier pour le chasseur? C’est une semelle pour ma fiancée, qui dansera la tarentelle sous la treille, au son du tambour orné de grelots. Mais, avant de la lui porter chez son père, j’y mettrai un clou plus fort que les autres, un baiser sous la semelle de ma fiancée! J’y mettrai une paillette plus brillante que toutes les autres, un baiser sous le soulier de mon amour! Travaille, travaille, calzolaio?»” Lamartine, Harmonies, 294.

422 Indeed, it is likely that this is the case for most if not all of Lamartine’s origin stories. See Agide Pirazzini, The Influence of Italy on the Literary Career of Alphonse de Lamartine (PhD. Diss. Columbia University, 1917), p. 132.
Qui glane sur les bruyères
Le bois tombé des forêts.

L’onde n’a plus le murmure
Dont elle enchantait les bois;
Sous des rameaux sans verdure
Les oiseaux n’ont plus de voix;
Le soir est près de l’aurore;
L’astre à peine vient d’éclore
Qu’il va terminer son tour;
Il jette par intervalle
Une heure de clarté pâle
Qu’on appelle encore un jour.

Similarly, Liszt begins his piece with an aimless, repetitive motive based around an unresolved diminished seventh, “avec un profound sentiment d’ennui:”

Ex. 4, mm. 1-2

Later in life, Liszt would explain that here “ennui” is meant in the sense intended by eighteenth century theologian Bossuet, that of profound suffering. More intriguingly, Lina Ramann claims that Liszt also intended this as a reference to Job’s crying out to God—“Why, my God, am I in conflict with you, and full of worry for myself?”—strengthening the connection with Lamartine.423

This expression of “ennui” as listless suffering is also consistent with Lamartine’s frequent use of the word “néant,” or “nothingness,” to describe the senselessness of the human condition. As Norman Araujo writes, “Lamartine employs the word in both these senses, which he sees as complementary. In his thinking, the meaninglessness of human existence, the néant of the world which we know, only creates, unless counterpoised by religious beliefs, an irrepressible urge to embrace the absolute néant, that of nonexistence.” Lamartine uses this word twice in “Pensée des morts,” and much of the poem is a meditation on the ephemeral futility of life.

To continue this parallel, Paul Merrick is drawn to two other facets of Liszt’s remarkable opening: the lack of a key signature, and the rhythmic ambiguity caused by a similar lack of time signature and the expressive marking “senza tempo”. Given that this was a deliberate choice—Liszt originally wrote the piece in G minor, only to remove the signature before publication—Merrick searches for programmatic implications. In examining the dozens of Liszt pieces with similar “keyless” sections, Merrick notes a strong connection with morbid subject matter. The absence of meter and tonality is thus, in Merrick’s view, a means of suggesting nothingness, which is certainly consistent with Lamartine’s treatment of death in his poem.

Whatever the case, the somber mood is intensified by the subsequent bare recitative beginning in measure fifteen:

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424 Araujo, In Search of Eden, p. 17.

425 Based on sketches housed in Weimar’s Goethe-Schiller Archive.

Ex. 5, mm. 15-17

According to Ben Arnold, Liszt frequently uses such austere recitatives in works dealing with ideas of death and despair, conveying the impression of the tortured, isolated Romantic individual.  Similarly, Lamartine’s poems have been likened to the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich in their frequent presentation of a solitary wanderer across a romanticized landscape. In both poem and composition, the opening effectively captures the aimless peregrinations of a lost soul.

As is common in Lamartine’s poetry, the general observations of “Pensée des morts” eventually lead to more personal musings, in this case on the presence of humanity within the broader natural cycle of life and death. Similarly, Liszt’s vague opening motive eventually becomes a full-fledged theme, in one of the earliest instances of thematic transformation in his oeuvre:

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Dieter Torkewitz points out the similarity of this theme to Beethoven’s “Lebewohl” motive, which, if deliberate on Liszt’s part, certainly fits the somber tone of the piece.\textsuperscript{429} The most characteristically Lamartinian element, of course, is this Andante religioso passage’s hymn-like character.

Having established some thematic parallels, we can next draw some similarities between Liszt and Lamartine in their subordination of formal convention to issues of expression and content. As in “Le Lac,” the stanzas of “Pensée des Morts” abruptly become shorter and more impassioned as the poet now addresses God directly, expressing all of his anguish and doubt:

Oh! To mourn you is supreme happiness  
Dearest ghosts of whoever has tears!  
To forget you is to forget ourselves:  
Are you not a fragment of our hearts?

In continuing on our dark voyage,  
The horizon is more beautiful from the sweet past;  
Our soul is split in two halves,  
And the better part belongs to the grave.

God forgive us! Their God! God of their fathers!  
You whom their mouths so often named,  
Hear for them the tears of their brothers!  
Let us pray for them, we who loved them so!\textsuperscript{430}


\textsuperscript{430} Ah! vous pleurer est le bonheur suprême,
A similar rupture occurs in Liszt’s piece, as the opening motive disintegrates in the blur of chords singled out by Rosen for their rhythmic irregularity (Ex. 2, above). While Liszt’s Harmonies maintains a quasi-improvisatory tone throughout—numerous scholars point to this piece as a prime example of Liszt’s compositional roots in improvisation—any sense of structure truly falls apart at this moment, a musical counterpart to Lamartine’s formal freedom. Indeed, Pierre Jouanne has shown how Lamartine deliberately revised his Harmonies to contain more disruptions such as these, especially when warranted by the poem’s content.

It is this formal flexibility that emerges as perhaps the strongest feature of Liszt’s first Harmonies. As Joan Backus writes in her study of the piece, “perhaps more than any other work, Harmonies poétiques et religieuses exposes the conflict between improvisatory imagination and the attempt to mold ideas into a cogent form. Here, the use of variation is the main method of elaborating the musical ideas.”

Mânes chéris de quiconque a des pleurs!
Vous oublier c’est s’oublier soit-même:
N’êtes-vous pas un débris de nos cœurs?

En avançant dans notre obscur voyage,
Du doux passé l’horizon est plus beau;
En deux moitiés notre âme se partage,
Et la meilleure appartient au tombeau.

Dieu de pardon! leur Dieu! Dieu de leurs pères!
Toi que leur bouche a si souvent nommé,
Entends pour eux les larmes de leurs frères!
Prions pour eux, nous qu’ils ont tant aimé!


material invites comparison with the methods set forth in his teacher Czerny’s treatise on improvisation, published in 1829.\textsuperscript{434} In addition to the passages shown above, Liszt also presents the central motive in numerous other forms, including an agitated version (Ex. 7) and a heroic, defiant statement that suggests another facet of Beethoven’s music (Ex. 8):

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Ex7.png}
\caption{Ex. 7, mm. 31-2}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Ex8.png}
\caption{Ex. 8, m. 48}
\end{figure}

It is difficult to ascertain the degree to which Lamartine’s influence determined such features. True, critics often praised the spontaneity of Lamartine as poet and orator, but it is safe to say that nothing in his output matches the level of freedom encountered here. I consider it likely that Liszt drew inspiration both from Lamartine’s formal experiments and—to a lesser extent here—the religious sentiments of his poetry. Perhaps equally importantly, affixing the

name of so established a figure to this work would have served to render its daring character more palatable. We will return to these possibilities with more confidence in the final chapter, primarily focusing on Liszt’s final *Harmonies* cycle of 1853.

Our knowledge of Liszt’s interactions with Lamartine prior to 1835 is too spotty to make definitive pronouncements regarding the first *Harmonies*, but a greater understanding of Lamartine’s poetic style allows us to draw some reasonable conclusions. Its key features of religious rhetoric, sonorous effects, and formal explorations must all have captured Liszt’s imagination. Likewise, Liszt’s awareness of Lamartine’s self-made status as an artistic icon made the poet an obvious choice of ally in his own creative ambitions. As both figures became even more public figures in the late 1830s and 1840s—Liszt as a virtuoso, Lamartine as a politician—their paths would continue to cross in ever more interesting and complex wa
Chapter Four: Liszt, Urhan and the Redemption of Music

With Chrétien Urhan (1790-1845) we come to the Paris mentor with whom Liszt was in closest and most prolonged contact. Seldom thought of today, Urhan is best remembered as the violist who premiered Berlioz’s *Harold in Italy*, and the viola d’amore soloist for the original production of Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*. Principal violinist at the Paris Opéra, organist at Saint Vincent de Paul church, pioneering viola d’amore performer: Urhan is one of the more fascinating musicians of the nineteenth century. While he is mentioned in most Liszt biographies, the complex nature of Urhan’s influence on Liszt has never been fully addressed. In particular, it was through Urhan that Liszt received his first serious exposure to Schubert’s music, and this must be examined in light of Urhan’s broader views of art and religion.

It is my contention that Urhan, like Lamartine and Lamennais, provided Liszt with a model for reconciling seemingly conflicting elements of his personality, particularly with regards to faith and art. This chapter will show how, for Urhan, outwardly secular music could take on a sacred bent by virtue of its higher artistic ideals, indicative of a link with the Almighty. I begin with a biographical account of Urhan’s life, and then proceed to a more focused study of his fervent Catholic faith, and the ways in which it shaped his musical ideals. By examining Urhan’s compositions, accounts of his character and performances, and his own writings, we can best understand Urhan as a serious artist seeking to imbue music with a sense of divine purpose. I next turn to Urhan’s mentoring of Liszt, arguing that their daily interactions at St. Vincent, frequent performances, and shared religious faith all left a tremendous impact on Liszt’s development. I am especially interested in the high regard Urhan held for Schubert’s music, which he frequently performed in a sacred context. I conclude with a reading of Liszt’s three
Apparitions in light of Urhan’s mentorship, granting special attention to the Fantaisie sur une valse de François Schubert.

I: Urhan: A Brief Biography

Chrétien Urhan was born in the German town of Monschau, located near the present day Belgian border. In 1794, during the Revolutionary wars, the town was incorporated into the French Republic and renamed Montjoie, but remained culturally German. The change in government did result in significant social changes, though: under French Republican law, education was secularized, while in 1801, the declaration of religious freedom by Napoleon resulted in the creation of the first Protestant church in the traditionally Catholic town. Despite these developments, Urhan’s upbringing remained staunchly Catholic.

From an early age, Urhan displayed a natural talent for music, and became skilled at several instruments, including the piano, guitar, organ, and violin.\footnote{Paul Garnault, “Chrétien Urhan (1790-1845),” Revue de Musicologie, No. 34 (May 1930), p. 99.} It was on the last of these that he most excelled, thanks to his father’s tutelage, and soon he was giving concerts to great acclaim. In 1804, Empress Josephine heard him perform and was sufficiently impressed to exempt him from conscription, and to arrange for his travel to Paris to study with Jean-François Le Sueur, master of the chapel at Tuileries.

Urhan’s biographer Ulrich Schuppener considers Le Sueur’s musical influence to have been “groundbreaking and exceptionally fruitful.”\footnote{Ulrich Schuppener, Christian Urhan (Monschau: Geschichtsverein des Monschauer Landes, 1990), p. 52.} In addition to instructing him on the violin, Le Sueur encouraged Urhan to compose, particularly sacred works. The young artist composed a “Tantum ergo” at fifteen,\footnote{According to Pierre Ricau, in a short biography found in Urhan’s dossier at the Opéra Garnier.} and in 1806 Le Sueur arranged for a vocal trio by Urhan to be
performed at Notre Dame. Under his mentor’s watch the budding musician worked tirelessly, and in return Le Sueur was like a father, feeding and clothing his young charge.

Le Sueur is an important figure in the history of French sacred music, pioneering the use of soloists and operatic style as early as the 1780s. He is better known as one of Berlioz’s composition teachers, and his experiments with stereophonic effects in large concerts at Les Invalides paved the way for Berlioz’s own use of antiphonal techniques. In his overview of French music between the Revolutions of 1789 and 1830, Jean Mongrédien gives an example of Le Sueur’s dramatic style from his third Messe Solennelle. Typical of French sacred music of the period, Le Sueur inserts new text in the Offertory, whereby King David awakens in the middle of the night to praise the Lord in the Tabernacle. A chorus of Levites, priests, and holy women join with the psalmist, adding, according to Le Sueur’s stage directions (which permeate his scores), “their prayers to the prophet king’s melancholy hymn, its religious strains heard alone through the silent night.” As Mongrédien says, “this is a true operatic scene, complete with actors and a backdrop. The above text is typical of its time: the silent night, the melancholy hymn, the religious strains seem right out of Lamartine’s Méditations or Harmonies.”

Such extravagances in sacred music generated a fair bit of controversy. The composer Ludwig Spohr, whose German background led him to expect strict, four-part counterpoint in church music, reacted negatively to an 1820 performance of a LeSueur Mass:

Still, I saw the congregation pray with fervor. How could they have a single pious thought when hearing such trivial music? Either this music has no meaning

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439 Ibid, p. 179.
440 Ibid.
to them, or they have mastered the art of shutting their ears tightly. Otherwise, this music should inevitably remind them, as it does me, of ballet scenes at the Grand Opéra, where the same three instruments are used in the same manner in the most sensual of dances.  

Mongrédien credits this extravagance to the need to attract a new generation to church, following the anti-clerical years of the Revolution. Rather than weighty, scripturally dense liturgy, there was a desire for uplifting, uncomplicated music. As he puts it:

To bring souls back to God did not necessarily mean to shake up consciences. The tendency of composers of the time was to give people what they wanted to hear. The younger generation was not in need of theologians or counterpoint specialists, it wanted to be touched and moved. People felt an ardent need for poetry in their souls. As an example, [Chateaubriand’s] *Le Génie du Christianisme*, an apologia proving the existence of the Creator through harmony and the marvels of Creation, owed much of its success at the time to these particular circumstances. Subtle quibbles were no longer convincing; it was time to please, to open the imagination to the picturesque world of dreams.

Urhan’s approach to sacred music would take a different direction from Le Sueur’s, drawing upon instrumental rather than vocal practices. Still, Urhan emulated Le Sueur in his use of secular forms, and in his eagerness to update sacred music to suit the spiritual and emotional needs of the time, a practice that Liszt would himself adopt.

It was in Urhan’s self-identification as a German that he most sharply deviated from Le Sueur. In another of many parallels with Liszt, Urhan was denied entrance to the Paris Conservatoire in 1806 due to his perceived status as a foreigner, despite Monschau’s inclusion in what was by then the French Empire. Further evidence of Urhan’s national identity can be found in a letter he wrote to his parents on his way to Paris in 1804, in which he comments on his progress made in the French language; it remained a foreign tongue to him, even though his

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442 Ibid, p. 178.
hometown had been a part of France for ten years.\textsuperscript{443} Ten years after this, Urhan was blocked from competing for the Prix de Rome, despite Le Sueur’s advocacy and training; 1814 marked the year of the allies’ entry into Paris, and once again Urhan’s outsider status worked against him.\textsuperscript{444} Finally, Urhan seems to have gravitated towards German musicians while in Paris. As early as 1804 he made contact (and possibly studied) with famed violinist and pedagogue Rodolphe Kreutzer, who was actually born in Versailles but was of German ancestry. More importantly, Urhan studied with the Austrian violinist Joseph Mayseder, whom he idolized, referring to him as a “Messiah” and quoting his music in several compositions.\textsuperscript{445}

This stands in contrast to Le Sueur, who seems to have shared a prevailing French distaste towards German music as too harsh and difficult. Emblematic of this widespread ambivalence is a review of a Méhul symphony in the journal \textit{Tablettes de Polymnie}, in which the author writes:

\begin{quote}
This is a dangerous example for musical art. The contagion of Germanic harmony seems to be creeping into the modern school of composition forming at the Conservatoire. They seem to think they can produce an effect by providing the most barbarous dissonances and by using all the instruments of the orchestra to make a din. Alas! The only effect is to break our eardrums while never once speaking to our hearts.\textsuperscript{446}
\end{quote}

Le Sueur expressed similar sentiments, most notably in exchanges with Berlioz. Upon hearing Beethoven’s 5\textsuperscript{th} Symphony, he conceded admiration for the work, but then said, “even so, one


\textsuperscript{445} Schuppener, \textit{Christian Urhan}, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{446} Mongrédién, \textit{French Music}, p. 321.
should not make music like that!” In contrast, Urhan revered Beethoven, the composer his teacher once referred to as “the antichrist of music.”

This aesthetic divide was soon followed by political events that ultimately severed ties between student and teacher. As Kapellmeister to Napoleon, Le Sueur arranged for Urhan to play in the court orchestra. Urhan initially seems to have admired the emperor, but this adulation turned to disdain when Napoleon imprisoned the Pope in 1809, and when it became clear that he was embroiling France and Europe in an endless series of costly wars. When Napoleon was ousted for the first time in 1814, Le Sueur and Urhan went their separate ways.

This break with Le Sueur coincides with Urhan’s increased interest in religious mysticism. He had already immersed himself in Christian philosophy while recovering from an illness during his adolescence, but now seemed to adopt the role of Christian musician that would define his adulthood. As biographer Paul Garnault puts it:

His character profoundly changed at this time: his existence was enveloped in peculiarity and mystery, the art of music appeared to him with a completely mystical signification; in it he embraced a ray of heavenly light, an image of the primitive beauty that comes to console humans in indicating to them the source of all that is true and good.

This mysticism was consistent throughout most of Urhan’s adulthood; in 1836, he would write to a student, expressing his desire to be first and foremost a Christian artist, and praising the “foi

447 Ibid, p. 323.
448 Schuppener, Christian Urhan, p. 56.
449 Ricau, Artist dossier.
450 “Son character se modifia dès lors profondément: son existence s’enveloppa de singularité et de mystère, l’art musical lui apparut avec une signification toute mystique; il y entreint un rayon de la lumière céleste, une image de la beauté primitive qui vient consoler les humains en leur indiquant la source de tout ce qui est vrai et bon.” Garnault, “Chrétien Urhan (1790-1845),” p. 100.
This idea is central and pervasive in Urhan’s biography; for him, music was a form of worship, a way of communicating with God. In this way he was able to reconcile his musical inclinations with his spiritual calling, two impulses that were, as with Liszt, frequently in conflict with one another. As Ernest Legouvé, one of Urhan’s violin students, put it, “Urhan had two religions: faith and music divided his love and his life.” According to Alexandre Legentil, another pupil, Urhan even briefly entered a Trappist monastery at one point in his life, although he only stayed for eight days.

This conflict between art and religion is best embodied in the manner in which Urhan approached his most prominent position in Parisian musical life, as principal violinist in the Opéra orchestra. As is well known, he received special dispensation from the Archbishop of Paris to play in the orchestra, with the stipulation that his back always be turned to the stage, so as not to be tempted by the sight of scantily clad dancers and opulent sets. Such works as Meyerbeer’s Robert le Diable, blasphemous as Urhan may have considered them to be, held a strong appeal for much of his life. Here, Legouvé’s words are helpful: “He believed in Gluck, Mozart, and Rossini almost as much as God, and he adored not only religious music, but also dramatic music.”

Urhan counterbalanced this love of the most sensuous music with a lifestyle that was profoundly ascetic. At the Opéra, Urhan’s appearance was a sight fit to rival the spectacle onstage. Once again, Legouvé offers a compelling description of his mentor:

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451 Ibid, p. 98.


454 “Il croyait en Gluck, en Mozart et en Rossini presque autant qu’en Dieu, et il adorait non seulement la musique religieuse, mais encore la musique dramatique.” Legouvé, 60 ans, p. 120.
With his piercing black eyes and immaculately shaven face, Urhan’s brow resembled the polished yellow hands of old ivory sculptures of Christ: this total absence of color could be explained by his dietary regimen [Urhan did not eat meat, and subsisted primarily on fruits and vegetables]. His body, disgraced by nature and draped in a blue cloak that showed little sign of washing, bore a head that was too large, but also imposing and noble, seat of profound thought and vast ideas, wherein burned the flame of a purely intellectual life.

If one were to follow this extraordinary man to his residence, one’s eyes would survey the room and first fall with surprise on an old church lectern supporting, next to a rosary, a magnificent German missal manuscript in red and blue gothic letters…Then, on a small iron bed adorned with meager springs and two chairs, the room’s sole furnishings; a room, in sum, resembling the cell of a cenobite, if not for a small portative organ, surrounded by a violin, violas and bass violas, in the middle of the chamber!455

Urhan maintained this monastic existence throughout his adult life, despite a considerable income from teaching, his positions at the Opéra and Saint Vincent de Paul, and other engagements. He gave money freely to charity and to his family in Monschau, and even asked that the profits from sales of his music be distributed to the poor, citing Matthew 10:8: “Freely you have received, freely give.”456 Small wonder, then, that Legouvé described Urhan as a medieval monk, transported to the Paris Opéra of the nineteenth century.457

455 “Avec des yeux noir perçants, les joues soigneusement dépouvrues de barbe, Urhan portait le front comme les mains du jaune poli des vieux Christs en ivoire: cette absence totale de couleur pourrait s’expliquer par son régime alimentaire.

Ce corps disgracié de la nature, habillé de drap bleu sans trace de linge, portait une tête trop forte, mais imposante et noble, siège d’une pensée profonde et de vastes idées, où brillait la flamme d’une vie purement intellectuelle.

Si l’on eût suivi cet homme extraordinaire dans sa demeure, les regards se fussat arrêtés avec surprise sur un vieux pupitre d’église supportant à côté d’un rosaire un magnifique missel allemand manuscrit en gothiques rouges et bleues…puis, sur un petit lit de fer garni d’un maigre sommier seul meuble, avec deux chaises, d’une chambre en tout semblable à la cellule d’un cénobite, si un petit buffet d’orgue, entouré d’étuis de violon, de violes et de basses de viole, n’eût trôné au milieu de la pièce!” Ibid.

Legouvé’s description suggests an otherworldly appearance, not unlike accounts of Urhan’s contemporary Pagani. Indeed, the two are related, in that Berlioz first wrote Harold and Italy for the latter, but it was Urhan who ended up premiering it. Given their widely divergent musical styles and personal habits, it is possible to think of them as “light” and “dark” counterparts that shaped Liszt’s musical aesthetic.

456 “Donnez gratuitement ce qui vous a été donné gratuitement.” Ernest Legouvé, Review of Urhan’s Auditions in 11/21/1835 Gazette de France.

457 Schuppener, Christian Urhan, p. 67.
There were serious consequences to this self-imposed privation. Urhan’s health frequently suffered, and later in life he was prone to bouts of depression. He grew nostalgic for the innocence and purity of his childhood in Monschau, and lamented the unnatural streets of Paris, where the buildings were so high (in truth, only five or six stories) that the sun was blotted out from the sky. According to friend Julius Stockhausen, it was this depression that finally killed Urhan. In the last year of his life he grew suicidal, began refusing food, and slipped into a pain stricken, frenzyed state. His friends’ attempts to intervene were of no avail, and at the end Urhan was no longer taking Communion, a sacrament he had observed his whole adult life. He finally died quietly in his modest apartment on November 2, 1845.

II: Urhan and the Sacred Mission of Artist

Having touched upon Urhan’s efforts to reconcile his love of music with his spiritual call to withdraw from the world, it is now necessary to examine how this conflict informed his views of music. The picture that emerges is that of an artist who viewed music in wholly spiritual terms, regardless of its nominal function. As Legouvé puts it, “in reference to [Urhan], it is very fitting to use a term that is often abused: the heaven of art; because for him art and heaven were one and the same.” Thus, Urhan drew no distinction between sacred and secular music, provided a spiritual element—as indicated by the transcendent power of the music—was evident.

The most revealing document concerning Urhan’s spiritual approach to music is his compelling review of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, published in the January 25, 1838 issue of Le Temps. In it, he praises the work’s spiritual significance, defending it against more quotidiantan

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458 Ibid, p. 75.
459 Julia Wirth, Julius Stockhausen: Der Sänger des Deutschen Liedes (Englert u. Schlosser, Frankfurt am Main, 1927), pp. 63-64.
460 Legouvé, 60 ans, p. 123.
interpretations. He begins by likening the chaotic, formless opening of the first movement to the first canto of Dante’s *Inferno*, wherein the poet wanders alone through a dark wood.\(^{461}\) Upon reaching the last movement, Urhan adopts the common position that the opening marks a rejection of the previous three movements (“O Freunde! Nicht diese Töne!”). However, what is most striking is Urhan’s description of what is rejected: “…From all that is earthly and material, to the asceticism of the old man, as Scripture says, the created fusing with the creator…What mysticism! What religious subtleties!”\(^{462}\) Urhan goes on to praise Schiller’s ode as a spiritual text, and extols Beethoven’s accompanying melodies as ethereal and religious: “it is church music, but music for the churches of heaven.”\(^{463}\) Finally, he praises the angelic qualities of the work’s creator: “In writing this piece, Beethoven is like a cherub; he is before God!”\(^{464}\)

The concluding paragraphs of Urhan’s essay are so revealing as to merit reproducing in full:

To these material proofs of the great religious thought that presides over this composition will be joined a thousand moral proofs. This work is one of Beethoven’s last, and the more advanced he became in years, the more he regarded music as a voice given by God to men of genius, so that they might speak of Him to other men. He was ceaselessly preoccupied with religious music: the study of Handel’s oratorios was his consolation. His opus 102 consists of two sonatas; well! The introduction of the first is a church piece, while the andante of the second is a chorale.

Ten years ago, Richault published Beethoven’s six religious songs. They evidently date from the end of his life, and the last composition of the set is a grand solemn mass! Thus, the works that he created as he approached eternity are stamped with such an ardent mysticism that some of his greatest admirers declared that he had gone insane! He was by this point only half of the earth;

\(^{461}\) This surely would have resonated with Liszt, who by this point had placed Dante in the pantheon of his most revered authors.

\(^{462}\) “à tout ce qui est materiel et terrestre, de dépouillement de vieil homme, comme dit l’Ecriture, la fusion créatrice avec son Créateur (find this scripture)!—Quel mysticisme ! Quelle subtilités religieuses!”

\(^{463}\) “C’est de la musique d’église, mais de la musique pour les églises du ciel.”

\(^{464}\) “Beethoven en écrivant ce morceau, est comme le chérubin ; il est devant Dieu!”
isolated from the exterior world by his deafness, he lived alone in the midst of men, and his solitary genius was exalted in his profound imprisonment! Who knows if it was not God Himself who shut the door through which the sounds of the world could reach him, in order to purify and spiritualize his thoughts; for every great man is a martyr, and every martyrdom of the great man is due to his genius.

This is what we have seen in the symphony with chorus. After the performance of this symphony the other day, we heard someone exclaim: “It’s clear! It’s clear! In this symphony, Beethoven wanted to depict freemasonry! The first three movements depict the trials of this group, and the last movement, the ode to joy, represents the exhilaration of the novice who enters the temple of Solomon!...and what reason did he give for this?...It is because, in Schiller’s ode, there is found the word “brothers”!”

We are perhaps also crazy, as crazy as that man there! But, if our explication is only a dream, is a dream of good faith, a pure dream...forgive us for it.

Thus, it is the spiritual bent of Beethoven’s late music that, in Urhan’s view, is the source of its greatness. Urhan links Beethoven’s symphony with explicitly sacred works, and argues that this is proof of the voice of God speaking through great artists. Additionally, it is clear that Urhan the ascetic is identifying with Beethoven’s martyrdom, his sense of isolation and increasing detachment from the world.

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465 “A ces preuves matérielles de la grande pensée religieuse qui préside à cette composition, viennent se joindre mille preuves morales. Cette oeuvre est une des dernières de Beethoven; et plus il a avancé dans la vie, plus il a regardé la musique comme une voix que Dieu donnait aux hommes de génie pour parler de lui aux autres hommes. La musique religieuse le préoccupait sans cesse: la lecture des oratorios de Haendel était sa consolation. Son oeuvre 102 se compose de deux sonates; eh bien! L’introduction de la première est un morceau d’église, et l’andante de la seconde est un choral.

Les six chants religieux de lui, publiés il y a dix ans chez Richault. Appartiennent evidemment à la fin de sa vie, et sa dernière composition est une grande messe solennelle! Les oeuvres qu’il a faites ainsi dans le voisinage de l’éternité sont empreintes d’un mysticisme si ardent que quelques-uns de ses grands admirateurs ont déclaré qu’il devenait fou! Il n’était plus qu’a moitié sur la terre; isolé du monde extérieur par sa surdité, il vivait tout seul au milieu des hommes et son génie solitaire s’exaltait dans sa prison profonde! Qui sait si ce n’est pas Dieu lui-même qui avait muré la porte par où les bruits du monde pouvaient lui arriver, afin épurier et de spiritualiser sa pensée; car, tout grand homme est un martyr, et tout martyre est pour ce grand homme une cause de génie.

Voilà ce que nous voyaons dans la Symphonie avec choeur. L’autre jour après l’exécution de cette symphonie, nous entendimes quelqu’un s’écrier: C’est clair! C’est clair! Beethoven a voulu peindre, dans cette symphonie, la franc-maçonnerie! Les trois premiers morceaux peignant les épreuves de tout genre, et le dernier morceau, l’hymne à la joie, représente l’ivresse du néophyte qui entre dans la temple de Salomon!...et quelle raison donnait-il pour cela? ...c’est que dans l’hymne de Schiller, il y a le mot frères!

Nous sommes peut-être fous aussi, aussi fous que cet homme-là! Mais, si notre explication n’est qu’un rêve, c’est un rêve de bonne foi, et un rêve pur...pardonnez-nous le.”
Urhan’s worshipful approach to music is reflected in anecdotes that invite comparison with similar incidents in Liszt’s biography. Legouvé relates the occasion of a performance of a Beethoven quartet, in which the noisy behavior of a duchess in the audience prompted Urhan to stop playing and stare at her, at which point no one in the audience dared make a sound. As he later explained, this was not for his own benefit, but rather to demand the highest respect he considered due to Beethoven. As Legouvé puts it, “‘never,’ [Urhan] responded to me calmly, ‘I will never allow one to dishonor a masterpiece in my presence!’” This is similar to the account of Liszt chastising a disruptive Tsar Nicholas I in the midst of one of his recitals, saying “music herself should be silent when Nicholas speaks.”

With both Liszt and Urhan, there was a clear desire for musical experiences that transcended the phenomenological and approached, or reached, the noumenal. Music was seen as a means of overcoming the limitations of speech, a common enough Romantic sentiment. Legouvé mentions a letter he received from Urhan, in which the words suddenly lapsed into musical notation. Urhan explained, “words could not render my thoughts, so I wrote to you in music.” As another example of a liminal experience, Berlioz recounts an episode in which Liszt played for a group of friends at a salon gathering, and was inspired by an accidental extinguishing of the lights to play Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata in total darkness. Urhan’s quest for similar transportation from the physical realm is a persistent theme throughout his biography, as will become clear later.

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466 “Jamais, me répondit-il avec calme, je ne souffirai, qu’on manqué de respect devant moi à un chef-d’oeuvre!” Legouvé, 60 ans, pp. 102-103.


468 “Les paroles ne pouvaient pas rendre ma pensée, alors je vous ai écrit en musique.” Legouvé, 60 ans, p. 119.

469 Alan Walker, Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, p.182.
There is no doubt of Urhan’s Catholic, rather than Protestant, identity, but it is also clear that he was accepting of the Protestant faith. Upon his second return visit to Monschau in 1812 (the first had been in 1809), he gave a concert at the Protestant church that had been established in town a decade earlier. Indeed, Urhan was friends with the Protestant clergyman’s family, even dedicating an early set of waltzes to them.\textsuperscript{470} Later, as church organist at St. Vincent de Paul in Paris, his improvisations on a *Hussitenlied*—honoring the 15\textsuperscript{th} century proto-Protestant reformer Jan Hus—caught the attention of Liszt, who wrote his own *Hussitenlieder* in 1840. In 1834, Urhan created a hymn setting to a poem by the Presbyterian theologian Samuel Rutherford, to which we will later return.\textsuperscript{471}

Ten years previously, Liszt planned to use a Hussite song in his “Revolutionary” Symphony, but it is difficult to find any evidence of the same radical political impulses in Urhan’s use of such music; indeed, the political upheavals of Urhan’s youth seemed to drive him away from worldly concerns and towards solely spiritual matters. There was a contemporary movement in German Catholicism, known as Febronianism, that sought to emulate Gallicanism, promoting a similar independence from Rome as an early attempt at nationalism.\textsuperscript{472} However, it seems unlikely that the expatriate Urhan had much interest in such concerns. Rather, his Catholicism drew strength from the unifying aspects of Christianity, rather than on divisive factionalism. A good example of Urhan’s retreat from the world is his decision to translate *Saint-Pélerinage à Jésus*, a daily devotional written by a German Franciscan hermit in the Middle Ages. The book is written as a personal address to Jesus, “present day and night for love

\textsuperscript{470} Schuppener, *Christian Urhan*, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{471} http://www.apuritansmind.com/SamuelRutherford/SamuelRutherfordHymn.htm (Accessed 8/14/2010)

\textsuperscript{472} See Michael Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
This italicized “present” resounds throughout the devotional, creating an almost trancelike effect.

The preceding paragraphs serve as a basic overview of Urhan’s spirituality, showing it as the dominating influence in his artistic endeavors. Scholars today seem a bit uncomfortable with this aspect of his character. Their choice of words is often revealing. For example, Schuppener is rather dismissive in referring to Urhan’s “blindly believing faith,” while Serge Gut claims that Urhan “exacerbated” Liszt’s mysticism. Nevertheless, faith was very much at the forefront of both Urhan’s and Liszt’s lives, and it demands our full attention if we are to attain a greater understanding of their artistic output.

III: Liszt and Urhan at St. Vincent de Paul

The church of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris’ 10e Arondissement was the primary meeting place for Urhan and Liszt. Urhan was the church’s organist and music director beginning in 1827, a position he held until his death eighteen years later. The church was in its infancy, with construction on the current edifice having begun in 1824 to accommodate a growing parish. The parish had previously been served by Saint Lazare church, and the new church’s name reflected the neighborhood’s significance as the seat of Saint Vincent de Paul’s charitable activities through his Lazarist organization in the seventeenth century.

Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) is revered among Catholics for his tireless work on behalf of the poor, and this was appropriately a focus of this parish. In his own ministry, Vincent had been quick to learn that the wealthy, although rarely eager to interact with the poor personally,

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were all too happy to give money to charitable causes, especially as a means of garnering prestige. Similarly, the clergy of Saint Vincent de Paul worked within the existing class system, seeking to attract a large contingent of aristocrats and wealthy bourgeoisie to the congregation.\footnote{L’Abbé Henri Doisy, \textit{Saint Vincent de Paul, Montholon} (Wolf: Rouen, 1942), p. 278.}

This is evident in the early years of the church, where the lists of baptisms, marriages, and confirmations show a high number of prominent nobles.\footnote{Ibid, p. 195.} The church’s Association de Charité drew upon these and other wealthy members of the parish in financing charitable activities.\footnote{Ibid, p. 305.}

Beginning with the July Revolution of 1830, this demographic began to change. Aristocrats had lost some of their prominence in Parisian society, but it was the changing landscape of the parish that, according to church historian Abbé Henri Doisy, contributed most to the exodus of the aristocratic population. The disruption caused by installation of gas lighting was viewed as an intolerable nuisance, and new municipal zoning was more geared towards crafts and manufacturing in the neighborhood, notably piano builders like Pleyel.\footnote{Ibid, p. 414.}

The decline of aristocrats in the parish was counteracted by an influx of artists, who became the most notable residents in the 1830s. The Paris Conservatoire was located within the parish boundaries, and although obviously not members of the church, Heine and Halévy lived in the neighborhood, as did Offenbach and Dumas. M. Bardin, the sacristan of the church, had an artistic and liberal sensibility that won him favor among this segment of the congregation, many of whose children he baptized.\footnote{Ibid, p. 279.} This surge in artists occurred under the watch of M. Cayla, the
curate from 1827-1851, who declared, “It is a veritable invasion; they are everywhere!”

Despite the displacement of wealthier members, Cayla oversaw significant growth of l’Association de Charité, and from 1827 to 1844, annual donations grew from about 30,000 to 50,000 francs.

Liszt’s involvement with Saint Vincent de Paul began around this same time, and the church occupies a place of considerable significance in his biography. It was here that he was confirmed as a Catholic, and long after he had left Paris, he remembered the church, encouraging his children to attend Mass there for the feast day of Saint Francis of Paola, his namesake. In the late 1820s, Liszt was living nearby at No. 7 Rue Montholon, and attended Mass each morning.

As discussed in Chapter One, the late 1820s was a time of crisis for Liszt. In August, his father died of typhoid fever while the two were on holiday in Boulogne. Earlier that year, Liszt had begun a relationship with Caroline Saint-Cricq, one of his piano students and a member of a prominent Parisian family. When Caroline’s mother—who was amenable to her daughter’s involvement with her talented instructor—died in 1828, her father, the Minister of Commerce under Charles X, dismissed Liszt from the family’s service, and arranged a marriage between Caroline and a wealthy nobleman. As a consequence of these twin upheavals, Liszt retreated from public view, giving no concerts during the 1827-1828 season. His health began to

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481 “c’est une veritable invasion, il y en a dans tous les coins!” Ibid, 391.

482 Ibid, 504.

483 Ibid, 283.

484 Ibid, 282.

deteriorate, and his self-imposed exile resulted in an erroneous obituary notice in the October 23, 1828 *Le Corsaire*.\(^{486}\)

Schuppener recounts episodes from this time of Liszt sobbing on the steps outside the church,\(^{487}\) and Liszt himself would later describe how he plunged himself into devotions: “I bowed my burning forehead on the damp flagstones of Saint Vincent de Paul.”\(^{488}\) The night of his dismissal from the Saint-Cricq household, Liszt visited Bardin, who lived three doors down from him on Rue Montholon, and begged permission to join the holy orders.\(^{489}\) Bardin was able to convince Liszt of his artistic calling, and advised him instead to seek consolation in his art.\(^{490}\) Given these twin impulses, then, it is no surprise that Liszt sought out the companionship of Urhan. The two would meet each morning after Mass and debate music and religion in a corner of the church or in the street. The mysticism of Urhan seemed to fascinate his young protégé: In one conversation, Urhan told Liszt that he had seen Jesus standing before him in his bedroom the night before, bathed in light.\(^{491}\)

Liszt soon began to emulate his spiritual and artistic mentor in his physical deportment. Both displayed uncommon piety by kneeling throughout the entire Mass; Urhan would only rise to play the organ at the appointed times. Contemporary accounts also describe Liszt as gaunt and otherworldly in appearance. As he related to his mother around this same time, “the earthly life is only a malady of the soul, an excitation that the passions sustain. Quietude is the natural


\(^{487}\) “...auf deren Stufen sich Franz ausgeweint hat.” Schuppener, *Christian Urhan*, 54.

\(^{488}\) “Mon front brûlant s’inclina sur les dalles humides de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.” Gut, *Liszt*, 25.

\(^{489}\) Doisy, *Saint Vincent de Paul*, 288.

\(^{490}\) Ibid.

\(^{491}\) Schuppener, *Christian Urhan*, 62.
state of the soul.” He began to read Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*, accounts of the Desert Fathers, and Chateaubriand’s *Génie du Christianisme*, all of which express similar themes of detachment from the world. He spent much of this period shut away in his apartment, but Urhan—who lived nearby, at 3 Rue Richer—would frequently visit him, bringing his viola d’amore in order to play duets. According to Doisy, this seems to have rejuvenated Liszt, who resumed his daily devotions at Saint Vincent.

Within a few years, Liszt had moved to Rue de Provence, outside the Saint Vincent de Paul parish, but he and Urhan continued to collaborate musically, now in public concerts. In 1834, the two performed Beethoven’s “Kreutzer” Sonata at a charity concert at Saint Vincent, a controversial choice, as will be discussed later. In 1837, they were joined by the cellist Batta in performances that included Beethoven trios, as part of a series of charity concerts benefiting Italian famine victims. Detlef Altenburg situates this concert within the broader context of French Beethoven reception as “a kind of art-religion in practice,” citing Liszt’s letter to Agoul in which he describes the audience listening with “religieuse attention.” Such concerts would of course become a prominent feature of Liszt’s performing career, and the source of some criticism. It seems probable that Urhan’s motives for such charitable endeavors were similarly called into question. His outward displays of piety were a source of derision for some, and as Legouvé writes, “I know that one could say that this charity was solely a calculating move for

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492 “La vie terrestre n’est qu’une maladie de l’âme, une excitation que les passions entretiennent. L’état naturel de l’âme, c’est la quiétude.” Doisy, *Saint Vincent de Paul*, 292. Actually, this sentiment appears in a 5/2/32 letter to Pierre Wolff.

493 Ibid, 282.

494 Ibid, 289 n.

495 Ibid.

greater success. What of it? Those who love music know the author well, and those who know him also know that for him, art is solely the beautiful used to attain the good.”

Urhan’s unique personality left its lasting mark on the young, impressionable Liszt, in the dual role of friend and mentor. Urhan was known to provide succor and guidance to other disciples, playing a similar role in the lives of his violin students Legouvé and Legentil. As Legentil—whom Urhan mentored and supported, as Le Sueur had done for him—put it: “From him I received my first consolations in my first disappointments, and we lived together as brothers.” Liszt would later display similar generosity with his own students, and also followed Urhan’s spiritual inclinations. At the tail end of his virtuoso touring years in 1848, an exhausted Liszt once again considered entering a monastery, and later in life, he would don a priestly cassock as Urhan had done so many years earlier. Having established a lineage originating in both Urhan’s surface mannerisms and deeper beliefs, let us now turn to his traits as a musician, and attempt to show how these would be of enduring significance to Liszt’s own nascent musical language.

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497 “Je sais qu’on pourra dire que cette charité n’est qu’une manière d’amorcer et un calcul pour plus de succès. Qu’importe? Ceux qui aiment la musique connaissent bien l’auteur, et ceux qui le connaissent savent que pour lui, l’art n’est que le beau employé pour arriver au bien.” The issue of charity in nineteenth century European society is a complex one, and has been treated thoughtfully by Dana Gooley in his Virtuoso Liszt. Gooley tends to regard the practice with skepticism, with charity benefits existing primarily as a means of social promotion among the elite. Of course, such has always been the case, as Saint Vincent himself well knew and exploited. While we cannot fully discount the possibility of self aggrandizement serving as a motivator for both Urhan and Liszt, their charitable activities were certainly consistent with their overall Christian beliefs. Perhaps it is easier to accept Urhan’s motivations as more sincere, since he proved more successful than Liszt in rejecting material gratification.


499 From Marie D’Agoult’s scrapbook.
IV: Making All Things New: Urhan’s Musical Style

Accounts of Urhan’s playing suggest that his fame did not primarily rest on his virtuosity; as Legouvé puts it directly, “Urhan était un virtuose de second ordre.” However, what Urhan may have lacked in technical prowess he more than made up for in the sensitivity of his playing and in his superior knowledge of diverse musical styles, especially those of the German masters. Liszt himself remarked upon this unparalleled mastery in a letter to the Comtesse d’Agoult dated February 19, 1837: “on e could say that the violinists like Lafont, Bériot, etc. are more elegant in manner, but none is superior to [Urhan] in matters of seriousness and dignity. No one understands more the great works, etc.” His was an austere style, the triumph of heavenly purity over earthly show. This interest in more introspective music is exemplified in his championing of the antique Viola d’amore, whose sympathetic strings create an uncanny sound. It was his preferred instrument, and the one that he often brought to his visits at Liszt’s apartment. Like Liszt, Urhan was also known as an excellent extemporaneous performer; to quote Reinhold Sietz, “His facility in transposing, sightreading and accompanying were admirable.”

Urhan’s musical activities at St. Vincent de Paul give a sense of his unique approach to music and spirituality. Church music in France was in a state of disarray in the 1830s, with the political instability of the preceding decades destroying any consistency or consensus. Plainchant had been corrupted, often accompanied freely with a serpent or the organ. Music in

500 Legouvé, 60 ans, p. 121.
501 Doisy, Saint Vincent de Paul, p. 291.
502 “dire que si des Violons comme Lafont, de Bériot, etc. ont plus d’élégance dans la manière, nul ne saurait lui est [sic] supérieur, sous le rapport du sérieux, et de la dignité. Nul ne comprend plus profondément les grandes œuvres, etc.”
Parisian churches consisted mostly of older works, with one notable exception: Urhan performed his own chamber quintets at St. Vincent de Paul. This was part of broader efforts on his part to incorporate contemporary music into the sacred space, which incurred a measure of controversy. Each November 22\textsuperscript{nd}, Urhan organized concerts for the feast day of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians and church music. For the 1834 concert, Urhan performed the “Kreutzer” Sonata with Liszt, a decision that annoyed some members of the congregation, according to a critic in the\textit{Gazette Musicale}:

Some people then (it is true that they were not the best placed) murmured unseemly, even scandalous, words, if my ears heard correctly: they were shocked by the presence of a piano in a church; then by the choice of piece—by the use of secular [profane] music during the celebration of the mass.

Echoing Urhan’s own sentiments, the critic goes on to defend the musicians’ decision, referring to the sonata as “la musique profondément religieuse.”

Despite the critic’s protestations, such hybrid events earned the censure of some prominent musical authorities as well. On the 1832 anniversary of Beethoven’s death, a visiting Mendelssohn heard a performance of his own Octet at Saint Vincent de Paul. Mendelssohn’s response was harshly critical: “…a mass for the dead during which they played the \textit{Scherzo}! No, it is impossible to imagine anything more insensible than the priest at the altar and my \textit{Scherzo} echoing in the vaults of the church.”\textsuperscript{504} In the November 27, 1834 \textit{La Quotidienne}, Joseph d’Ortigue commented on the Saint Cecilia concert at which Liszt and Urhan played the “Kreutzer” Sonata:

But this music is not made for a church and moreover is unsuitable for a ceremony such as the feast of Saint Cecilia. Whose fault is this? Certainly not that of MM. Liszt and Urhan. Why does religious music no longer have a shrine among us? We sometimes bring sacred music into our theaters and we introduce profane music into our temples. In many German cities—Munich, for example—

\textsuperscript{504} “une messe des morts pendant laquelle on exécutera le \textit{Scherzo}! Non, il est impossible d’imaginer de rien de plus insensé que le prêtre à l’autel et mon \textit{Scherzo} égayant les voûtes de l’église!” Bailbé, “Mendelssohn à Paris,” p. 33.
they sing each Sunday a mass of Palestrina or of some composer of the old Catholic school. Here, plainchant alternates with opera and ballet arias and our organs are handed over to pianists. 505

However, d’Ortigue had written a glowing review of the previous year’s Saint Cecilia concert in the December 4, 1833 *La Quotidienne*. In this review, he notes the uniqueness of such an event: a free concert held in a sacred space:

> If prayer was not to be found on all lips, at least a sentiment, a souvenir of the religious penetrated all hearts and, upon leaving this place, one enjoyed the sort of pleasure one would experience after performing a good deed. The door was open to all, rich and poor, great and small. There was no distinction of place or privilege. It is always in the house of God where equality reigns. The sanctity of the place commanded silence, decency, and respect, keeping at bay all hecklers. Zeal and talent were the prices of admission; a sentiment of dignity took the place of any police; the listener could not ask for anything more. Some prayed, others were moved, or rather everyone prayed, as everyone was moved. Here, once again, are the solemnities that Urhan has created and called *his concerts*. 506

Favorably noting the large audience, d’Ortigue next praises the performance of Beethoven’s *Triple Concerto*—played by Urhan, Charles Alkan, and Vaslin, with a small orchestra conducted by Habeneck—as “Imprinted with a religious sweetness,” 507 and notes the Adagio’s imitation of organ sonorities: “Yes, this is truly music fit for the feast of Saint Cecilia, virgin and martyr:

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506 “Si la prière ne se trouve pas sur toutes les lèvres, du moins un sentiment, un souvenir religieux pénètre dans tous les cœurs et, en sortant de là, on jouit du plaisir qu’on vient d’éprouver comme si l’on avait fait une bonne action. La porte est ouverte à tous, riches et pauvres, grands et petits. Il n’y a pas de distinction de places, pas de privilèges. C’est toujours la maison de Dieu où l’égalité règne. La sainteté du lieu commande le silence, la décence, le respect éloigne les perturbateurs. Le zèle et le talent font tous les frais de la séance; un sentiment de dignité tient lieu de police; l’auditoire n’a pas le droit d’exiger autre chose que ce qui lui est présenté. Les uns prient, les autres sont émus, ou plutôt tous prient, car tous sont émus. Voilà, je le répète, les solennités qu’Urhan a fondées et qu’il nomme *ses concerts*.” D’Ortigue, *Écrits*, p. 367.

507 “empreinte d’une religieuse suavité.”
chaste tones, ecstatic harmonies, full of inspiration and prayer!” He concludes his review with the hopes that Urhan will perform Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony at the upcoming March 27 Beethoven memorial:

What more majestic hymn, what song of death and of immortality more fitting to sing on the grave of Beethoven! These tones, of so vague a sort that one loses oneself as in the plenitude of the infinite and to which one listens like a mysterious voice that could reveal the mysteries of heaven, would give a sense of proximity to the tomb; and it would be suitable to the artists of the Conservatoire, after having celebrated in the sanctuary of art the glory of the great musician and poet, to come celebrate in the temple of God the glorification of the Christian.

Evidently, d’Ortigue had read Hoffmann’s famous review of this symphony, in which talk of the “infinite” permeates every page. The best explanation for the about face between this review and that of 1834 is d’Ortigue’s growing interest in the rehabilitation of plainchant. Of course, Urhan’s activities reflected a similar concern for the vitiated state of church music, different though his solution may have been. In 1836, Urhan formed an organization to rejuvenate church music, as reported by the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*: “The famous violist, M. Urhan, is at the head of an association of artists who have formed themselves under the auspices of the Pope and the Archbishop of Paris to encourage the rebirth of Catholic art.” Whatever their differences may have been, d’Ortigue’s 1833 review is significant in its identification of sacred features perceived in secular works by Beethoven, directly paralleling Urhan’s views. Most intriguingly for this study, Urhan also searched for sacred topics in the works of Schubert,

508 “Oui, c’est bien là une musique pour la fête de sainte Cécile, vierge et martyre, des accents chastes, une harmonie extatique, pleine d’inspiration et de prière!” Ibid.

509 “Quel hymne plus majesteux, quel chant de mort et d’immortalité à la fois à chanter sur le tombeau de Beethoven! Ces accents, d’un sens si vague qu’on s’y perd comme dans la plenitude de l’infini et qu’on écoute comme une voix mystérieuse qui raconterait les mystères du ciel, recevraient une signification du voisinage d’un cercueil; et il siérait aux artistes du Conservatoire, après avoir célébré dans le sanctuaire de l’art la gloire du grand musicien et du poète, de venir célébrer dans le temple de Dieu la glorification du chrétien.” Ibid, p. 368.

his other favorite composer. In the 1835 Beethoven memorial concert, he led a performance of the slow movement of Schubert’s “Death and the Maiden” quartet, giving it the title of “Prière” in the program. Urhan’s choice of so clearly funereal a piece was appropriate given the function of the concert, and the appended title clearly demonstrates a perceived spiritual element to the music.

Urhan’s St. Cecilia concerts also gave him the opportunity to premiere his own works, which also received favorable notices in the press. In a review written for the *Revue et gazette musicale*, the critic Bélanger praises the “Auditions,” first performed at the 1835 Saint Cecilia concert, as possessing a “perfume of happy originality.” Interestingly, Bélanger continues this praise of Urhan’s originality by likening him to Lamartine:

And first of all, if it is true that styles makes the man, never has this maxim of a great writer been truer than in this case: note well that here the word *style* is used in its strictest sense; because for M. Urhan music is a language that he speaks and writes out of necessity, another poetry that in a sense gives shape to the most intimate inspirations of his most poetic soul. Thus M. Urhan writes as Lamartine writes; thus should one say that, like Lamartine, he has his own style, and the style of Urhan is his whole person; it and he are one. His habitual solemnity, his serious and profound studies, his religious principles, the whole originality of this life that remains invariably mystical and entirely Christian in the midst of the world; you rediscover these great aspects of character in the music of M. Urhan.”


513 “Et d’abord, s’il est vrai que le style soit l’homme, jamais cette maxime d’un grand écrivain n’aura reçu une plus juste application: remarquez bien qu’ici le mot *style* est de toute rigueur; car pour M. Urhan la musique est une langue qu’il parle ou qu’il écrit au besoin, une autre poésie qui donne en quelque sorte un corps aux inspirations les plus intimes de son âme si poétique. Ainsi M. Urhan écrit comme écrit de Lamartine; ainsi doit-on dire dire que comme de Lamartine il a son style, et le style d’Urhan, c’est sa personne tout entier, c’est lui. Sa gravité habituelle, ses études sérieuses et profondes, ses principes religieux, l’originalité même de cette vie restée invariablement mystique et toute chrétienne au milieu du monde, vous retrouvez ces grands traits de caractère dans la musique de M. Urhan.”
As evidence of this originality, the author notes that Urhan—in a manner akin to Lamartine’s blurring of poetic syntax—ignores certain harmonic rules, such as parallel fifths, but for good reason: “The harmonic errors of M. Urhan are for effect and a grand effect it is: here you see his great fault!”

In an article on Urhan in the March 4, 1832 Revue de Paris, d’Ortigue offers similar praise of Urhan’s utter individuality. He begins by lamenting that “le Français, le Parisien surtout, n’est point artiste,” noting the city’s inordinate focus on dramatic music at the expense of chamber music. In contrast, he praises Urhan:

An artist all the more admirable for his lively and energetic faith, in the high beliefs from which all poetry, all inspiration, all beauty flow…Urhan, for whom music is a form of speech, the only proper one to express this infinite sentiment which oppresses all around and expands his heart; who envisages art (prodigy of the nineteenth century!) as a sort of priesthood; Urhan, who—at the bottom of this austere solitude in which he has buried himself amidst the seductions that surround the art he professes—says to himself: “Sing to the Lord a new hymn!” And it is in this manner that he wrote the two quintets about which I speak, which resemble nothing that has been done up until this point.

In language similar to Bélanger’s, d’Ortigue excuses Urhan’s compositional infelicities on the grounds of poetic expression and that Romantic essential, originality:

I do not claim that M. Urhan’s quintets are absolutely beyond reproach. One could comment on moments of forced harmonic motion; in the second quintet especially there are sections containing vague, incomplete, and indecisive phrases; floating ideas that seem to shy away at the apprehension of thought; accompaniments gilded in too uniform a fashion; a tendency to avoid entering

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514 “La faute harmonique de M. Urhan est à effet et à grand effet: voyez-vous ce grand coupable!”

515 The first lines of Psalms 96 and 98, found elsewhere in the Bible as well.

516 “Une artiste d’autant plus admirable que sa vive et énergique foi dans de hautes croyances d’où découlent toute poésie, toute inspiration, toute beauté…Urhan, pour qui la musique est une parole, la seule proper à exprimer ce sentiment d’infini qui oppresse tour à tour et dilate son coeur; qui envisage l’art (prodige au XIXe siècle!) comme une sorte de sacerdoce; Urhan, du fond de cette solitude austère qu’il s’est creusée au milieu des seductions qui environnent l’art qu’il professes, s’est dit: “Chantons au Seigneur un cantique nouveau!” (from the Psalms) Et c’est ainsi qu’il a écrit les deux quintettes dont j’ai à parler, qui ne ressemblent à rien de ce qu’on avait fait jusqu’ici.” D’Ortigue, Écrits, p. 260.
into his subject; but these faults disappear when one imagines that the idea of the author was instead to represent a state of ecstasy and of elevation of the soul than to make good use of a motive through the resources of music theory. One could also criticize a tendency to reproduce Tyrolean forms, even though this stems uniquely from the habits of the violinist. Despite all these observations, one cannot help but admit that there is here a most happy mélange of wildly contrasting inspirations, that one could not hope to find better evocations, from Hell to earthly joys to the most angelic expression. Here there is power, imagination, spirit, grace and well defined individuality. Now, at the point where we now stand, in the era after Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, to say individuality is no small claim...Everything in Urhan’s quintets—form, content, foundation—all is new. In the first, a chorus joins the instruments; four bassoons replaced the voices, and did so admirably. In the second, a trio of two violas and a cello produce a profound effect. This quintet ends with an organ-like sonority that Urhan obtains through a coup d’archet unique to him, employing the four strings of his instrument. Even those who were disoriented by this new path down which the composer led them confessed that they had been struck by something immense.517

With all of this in mind, let us now turn to Urhan’s Auditions, the most likely inspiration for Liszt’s Apparitions. A score of this piece has yet to be recovered, but Legouvé offers an extended description of the pieces in the November 21, 1835 Gazette de France. His review is so revealing of Urhan’s peculiar approach to music and spirituality as to merit close examination, especially since it is likely that such pieces served to inspire Liszt’s own Apparitions of 1834.

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517 "Je ne pretends pas que les quintettes de M. Urhan soient absolument irréprochables. On peut y remarquer des marches d’harmonie forcées; il y a dans le second surtout des longueurs, des phrases vagues, inarrêttées, indécises, des idées flottantes qui semblent se dérober à l’appréhension de la pensée, des accompagnements plaqués d’une manière trop uniforme, une intention d’éviter d’entrer dans son sujet; mais ce défaut disparait lorsqu’on songe que l’idée de l’auteur a été de représenter plutôt un état d’extase et d’élévation de l’âme que de tirer parti d’un motif au moyen des ressources de la science (reminiscent of other review saying he’s arrived at spontaneous style through study of musical science...Legouvé?). On peut y blâmer aussi une tendance à reproduire des formes tyroliennes, bien que ceci tienne uniquement aux habitudes du violoniste. Malgré toutes ces observations, on ne pourra s’empêcher de convenir qu’il y a ici un mélange fort heureux des inspirations les plus opposées, qu’on ne peut mieux passer des terribles suggestions de l’enfer aux jouissances terrestres et à l’expression la plus séraphique. Il y a force, imagination, esprit, grâce et une individualité bien marquée. Or, au point où nous en sommes, après Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, qui dit individualité dit tout...Tout, dans les quintettes d’Urhan, plan, forme, fond, tout est neuf. Dans le premier, un chœur se réunit aux instruments; quatre bassons remplaçaient les voix, et faisaient admirablement. Dans le second, un trio des deux violes et du violoncelle produisit un effet profond. Ce quintette se termine par un trait d’orgue qu’Urhan obtient par un coup d’archet qui lui est propre sur les quatre cordes de son instrument. Ceux-là même qui se sont égarés dans cette voie nouvelle où le compositeur les a entraînés ont avoué que quelque chose de grand les avait frappés.” Ibid, p. 261.
Urhan imparted the story behind the pieces’ genesis to Legouvé, who felt prompted to begin his review with two defenses, one artistic, one spiritual: “In all original creations of painting there is a sort of vision, and in music an audition; this is what one could call inspiration carried to the highest degree.”518 The second, spiritual defense: “We only believe in miracles that are attested to by numerous testimonies, such as those that serve as the foundation of Christian beliefs; but we know the power of the imagination and the exaltation of the ideas of artists and men of genius.”519 Referring to Urhan as a complete artist, he then feels emboldened to detail how Urhan was promenading alone in Paris’ Bois de Boulogne, when he heard a melody, “a sound that made him tremble.” Then, “it seemed that a voice changed the words to those of the angel and the child…this song was both simpler and more touching.”520 It then becomes clear that Urhan is claiming an angel or other celestial being communicated directly with him: “His head was raised to the point of delirium; and then he heard a voice that said to him—my friend, write down what I sang to you: he returned home, he wrote, he added some unheard notes to the song, completed it with two other pieces, and wrote at the head of the score the significant title: Auditions!”521

Of course, such a story is likely to spark incredulity in our day, and the same was true in Urhan’s time. According to Sietz, stories of Urhan’s divine inspiration “led to lively discussions

518 “Dans toute création originale en peinture il y a un sorte de vision, et en musique une audition ; c’est ce qu’on pourrait appeler l’inspiration portée au plus haut degré.”

519 “Nous ne croyons qu’aux miracles qui sont attestés par de nombreux témoignages, comme ceux qui servent de fondement aux croyances Chrétiennes; mais nous connaissons la puissance de l’imagination et l’exaltation des idées chez les hommes de génie et lest artistes.”

520 “Il semble qu’une voix change les paroles de l’ange et de l’enfant…cet air était bien plus simple et bien plus touchant.”

521 “Sa tête s’exalte jusqu’au délire; et alors il entend un voix qui lui dit—Mon ami, écrivez ce que je vous ai chanté: il revient, il écrit, il ajoute quelques notes inentendues à ce chant, il la complète par deux autres morceaux, et il pose en tête ce titre significatif: auditions!”
in Paris.” However, Legouvé defends Urhan, sharing his teacher’s conviction that great artists are modern day prophets, capable of communicating with the spiritual realm in ways unknown to others: “This is what it means to possess genius; it is to hear the voices that speak to you.” He then expands on the idea of an audition as an aural message received from God, rather than a creative act on the part of the hearer:

Every great work is an audition, and glory to God from whom all flows! Do you, perchance, not believe that Joan of Arc heard, truly heard, [Saint] Genevieve [patron saint and savior of Paris] say to her: Arise, young girl? She heard her, because she was worthy enough to hear her, because she had long prepared herself for the saint’s exaltations. The wheat had just pushed through the earth when she washed away the stones and thorns: divine inspirations only descend on purified hearts: would it be just if we people of this century, who devote so much to the body, would be the same as people of privations and charity? Some of the recluses of the Thebaid had other eyes and ears than ours! Life is a great duel between the body and the spirit, between man and beast. One must kill the other; we have opted for the body, but do not deny those who have chosen the soul and have therefore been visited by God.

Urhan is one of these people. For Urhan, there are only two things in the world, God and music; his is a noble and saintly life! Yes, he heard! I believe it! I believe it because he is a man of truth and talent, and every audition is a recompense; I believe it finally, because he said so. It is beautiful to have a life so lived that the sole affirmation of one’s words gives authority to things that are beyond credibility.


523 “Voilà ce que c’est que d’avoir du génie; c’est d’entendre des voix qui vous parlent.”

524 “Toute grande oeuvre est une audition; et gloire à Dieu de qui tout descend! Est-ce que par hasard vous ne croiriez pas que Jeanne d’Arc a entendu, réeelement entendue, Genevieve lui dire: Lève toi, jeune fille? Elle l’a entendu, parce qu’elle avait mérité de l’entendre, parce que son âme, en s’épurant, s’était préparée depuis longtemps aux saintes exaltations. Le blé ne pousse sur la terre que quand elle est nettoyée de pierres et de ronces: les inspirations divines ne descendent que sur les cœurs purifiés: serait-il juste que nous, hommes du siècle, nous tant dévoués au corps, nous soyions les mêmes que les hommes de privations et d’aumônes? Certes les solitaires de la Thébaïde avaient d’autres yeux, d’autres oreilles que les notres! La vie est un grand duel entre le corps et l’esprit, entre l’hommes et la brute. Il faut que l’un tue l’autre nous avons opté pour le corps, mais ne nions pas ceux qui ont choisi l’âme et que Dieu visite à cause de cela.

Urhan est un de ces hommes: pour Urhan, il n’y a que deux choses dans le monde, Dieu et la musique; c’est une noble et sainte vie que la sienne! Oui, il a entendu! Je le crois! Je le crois parce qu’il est homme de vérité et de talent, et cette audition est une récompense; je le crois enfin, parce qu’il l’a dit. Il est beau d’avoir une vie ainsi faite que la seule affirmation de votre parole donne autorité à des choses qui sont hors de la croyance.”
In this way, Legouvé counters his readers’ skepticism by associating Urhan with renowned French saints, whose prophetic acts were less likely to be doubted. In so doing, he sets Urhan apart from the rest of humanity as one who has rejected the material in favor of the spiritual realm. His argument finally rests on the ultimate authority, in his allusion to Jesus’ parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-25; Luke 8:4-18): only those who are prepared to receive God’s word—the good soil that is free of stones and thorns—will hear and obey Him.

In an article on Liszt’s latest compositions (including his three Apparitions) in the September 1835 Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, François Stoepel expresses similar sentiments regarding the higher spirituality evinced by his subject: “Mr. Liszt is one of the few happy sons of Nature, in whom the most brilliant spiritual faculties have already developed, when others primarily exist only physically, and appear to vegetate.” The remainder of the article does not delve into religious matters per se, but remains relevant in establishing another common characteristic between Liszt and Urhan: the perceived unconventional nature of their music:

Liszt is generally admired, to the point of astonishment, so long as he practices his art of piano playing within strict rules of authority that eschew strange ideas and forms; but the strongest rebukes have been leveled against him (and we cannot say entirely unjustly) as soon as he undertakes the creation of his own works of art. He must either submit himself to the strictest demands of artistic theory, or, following his genius, purge himself of every convention, which, like oppressive shackles, seem to impede his ascent towards his ideals. In both cases it is easy to explain: Creating according to fixed rules is manifestly only a sort of making, a craft; creating with clear consciousness and with lively natural feeling for the regular and the beautiful, on the other hand, that is the artistic impulse; creating without this consciousness, without this lively natural feeling that that very consciousness measures and regulates is (mere) fantastification [Phantasterei]: that is to say, producing effects that find no echo or accord in the quietly serene mind, and which may hope for justification all the less before the cold intellect.

525 One need only see the late nineteenth century murals in Paris’ Pantheon to realize that the miracles of Saints Genevieve and Joan were still presented as historical truth several decades later.

that subjects all phenomena to the painstaking process of its anatomical dissection.

If now finally the extravagant or fantastic aims of the intellectual content of the work are joined to entirely original external forms (that elude any comparison with hitherto known forms), so that the external construction mirrors the internal, and then if the execution of the work requires seeming physical impossibilities [this comment seems to refer to the Harmonies poétiques et religieuses and Grande Fantaisie di Bravura sur la Clochette de Paganini, reviewed in the same article]—how could one expect, or even hope, to find appreciative recognition from any but the most benevolent judge? There exist then only two ways. Either the despotism of convention must be overthrown, or the well trod path must be boldly followed, in the comforting hope that a time will come when art and artist will be elevated to the heights, which the precocious, lusty artist alone has already long since scaled, without finding thanks or recognition. And who could fail to genially take part in bestowing admiring recognition on him?—In our opinion, these few traits sufficiently reveal the true character of the excellent Liszt and the public’s reaction to him; there is nothing further for us to add. That here, then, the harsh hand of censure must withdraw from our critique of his newest works—which ultimately brought the feather to our hand—will everyone easily grasp. Liszt belongs only to himself and to the distant future. May he find enough strength and courage in this conviction, to follow his solitary path to the end!  

527 „Liszt ist allgemein bewundert, angestaunt worden, so lange er unter strenger Regeln Autorität, eingeschlossen in den engen Cadre fremder Ideen und Formen, seine Kunst des Piano-Spiels übte; aber der heftigste Tadel, und wir können ihn nicht unbedingt ungerecht nennen, hat sich gegen ihn erhoben, sobald er die Schöpfung eigener Kunstwerke unternahm; sei es, dass er sich den strengen Forderungen der Kunsttheorie unterwarf, oder sei es, dass er, seinem Genius folgend, sich aller Conventionen entschlug, weil sie ihm durch drückende Fesseln den Aufflug zu seinen Idealen zu erschweren schienen. Beide Fälle lassen sich leicht erklären: Schaffen nach positiven Regeln ist offenbar nur ein Machen, ein Handwerk—Schaffen aber mit dem klaren, Bewusstsein und mit dem lebendigen natürlichen Gefühle vom Regelmässigen u. Schönen, das ist Kunsttreiben—Schaffen ohne dies Bewusstsein, ohne dies lebendig natürliche Gefühl vom Regelmässigen u. Schönen, das heisst, Phantasterei, das heisst, Wirkungen hervorbringen, die keinen Wiederhall oder Anklang finden im ruhig heitern Gemüthe, und die weniger aber noch Recht fertigung hoffen dürfen vor dem kalten Verstande, der alle Erscheinungen dem minutiösen Prozess seiner anatomischen Zergliederungen unterwirft.

Wenn nun endlich zu diesem extravaganten oder phantastischen Treiben, was den intelletuellen Gehalt des Werks anlangt, sich äussere Formen gesellen, welche ganz original, sich jeder Vergleichung mit allem bisher Bekannten entziehen, sowohl ihrer innern als äussern Construction nach, deren Ausführung sich scheinbar physische Unmöglichkeiten entgegenstellen—wie könnte man fordern, ja nur hoffen, bei dem wohllwollendsten Richter selbst, wahre würdigende Anerkennung zu finden? Da gibt es dann nur zwei Wege. Entweder sich dem Despotismus der Convention zu unterwerfen, oder die betretene Bahn muthig zu verfolgen, in der tröstlichen Hoffnung, dass eine Zeit kommen werde, wo sich die Kunst u. Künstler zu der Höhe erheben, welche der zu früh gereifte rüstige Künstler allein, und ohne Dank und Anerkenntiss zu finden, schon längst erstiegen hatte. Und solchem Streben, wer möchte bewundernde Anerkennung, freundliche Theilnahme ihm versagen?—Nach unserer Ansicht haben wir in diesen wenigen Zügen die eigentliche wahre Stellung des trefflichen Liszt und die des Publikums zu ihm hinlänglich bezeichnet; mehr zu thun, kommt uns ihm gegenüber nicht zu. Dass also von einer Kritik seiner neuesten Werke, die uns eigentlich die Feder in die Hand gegeben, die Rede nicht sein kann, dass hier die rauche Hand des Tadels sich gern zurückzieht, wird Jedermann leicht begreifen. Liszt gehört nur sich an, und—der spätern Nachzeit. Möge er in dieser Ueberzeugung Kraft und Muth genug finden, den einsamen Pfad bis an’s Ende zu verfolgen!”
Despite the lack of explicit religious references, the similarities to Legouvé’s review of Urhan’s *Auditions* are unmistakable. The artist is depicted as a lone wanderer, oppressed by external forces (society, convention, privations, etc.), seeking enlightenment. Of course, such rhetoric is common in Romantic criticism. Nevertheless, in both cases here we have a particular emphasis on the greatness of the artist arising directly from his suffering and isolation, and on the *interior* life of the artist and his works. In Legouvé’s critique of the *Auditions*, he writes, “all three are distinct and yet closely linked together, flowing logically from one to the other, like the three acts of a drama; only here the drama is interior.”

Stoepel writes a very similar pronouncement on Liszt’s *Apparitions*: “The technical accomplishment of these three not terribly lengthy little works—they occupy 29 pages—offer, with a few exceptions, no undue difficulties; but the inner [italics mine] understanding—the intimate relationships of all parts, who could attempt to examine and reveal these in critical prose?”

There is no reason to suspect that Legouvé would have read Stoepel or vice versa, which makes the parallels between these accounts all the more compelling. Such similar readings from independent sources offer a better case for a stylistic link, precisely because they are unconnected. Stoepel’s characterization of Liszt as a lone prophetic figure; his description of the *Apparitions* as technically accessible but demanding inner understanding; his characterization of Liszt’s music as thematically and formally unconventional—these all closely relate to descriptions of Urhan and his music by Legouvé and others. Indeed, in his 1844 *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, François-Joseph Fétis says of Urhan: “As a composer, it is necessary

528 “Toutes trois distinctes et cependant liées étroitement entre elles, découlant logiquement l’une de l’autre, comme les trois actes d’un drame; seulement le drame est intérieur.”

529 “Die technische Ausführung dieser drei nicht sehr umfangreichen Werkchen—sie occupiren 29 Pages—bietet, mit wenigen Ausnahmen, keine ausserordentlichen Schwierigkeiten; aber das innere Verständniss—die intimen Beziehungen aller Theile, wer möchte unternehmen, sie zu erforschen und zu enthüllen in kritischer Prose?”
to remark upon the originality of his ideas, as well as the eccentric forms of his works.”\textsuperscript{530} This corresponds quite closely to Stoepel’s assessment of the joining of “extravagant or fantastic aims of the intellectual content of the work” to “entirely original external forms” in Liszt’s music, “so that the external construction mirrors the internal.” Such descriptions of Romantic Innigkei may have raised memories of a name that was invoked at the beginning of this chapter, and it is to this figure that we should now finally turn.

**V: Schubert’s Otherworldliness and Urhan’s Musical Style**

Our knowledge of Schubert reception history in Paris remains murky, but it is clear that Urhan was at the forefront of efforts to promote his music. According to an article in a volume of *The Musical Quarterly* commemorating the centenary of Schubert’s death, J.G. Prod’homme credits Urhan with bringing Schubert’s instrumental music to the French capital.\textsuperscript{531} This focus on instrumental music is striking, since, as Katharine Ellis points out, Schubert reception in Paris was primarily focused on his songs, especially those of a lighter, folksong character.\textsuperscript{532} Nevertheless, he played a pivotal role in disseminating Schubert’s Lieder as well. According to Legouvé, “it was [Urhan] who with unequalled constancy and ardor found for “The Erlking” a translator, a publisher and an audience.”\textsuperscript{533} It is not a coincidence that Richault, best known for disseminating Schubert’s music in France, was also Urhan’s publisher.

\textsuperscript{530} “Comme compositeur, il s’est fait remarquer par des idées orginales, et même par les formes excentriques de ses ouvrages.” F.J. Fétis, *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, (Brussels : Meline, Cans et compagne, 1844), Vol. 8.


\textsuperscript{533} Ibid.
The stylistic influence of Schubert’s music is evident in almost all of Urhan’s extant works, most of which are housed in Paris’ Bibliothèque Nationale. At the same time, he cultivated a distinctive style that was consistent with his ascetic and religious qualities. Urhan’s pieces tend towards simplicity—some might say banality—of harmony, texture and form. Most of his songs are strophic, and chromaticism and counterpoint are kept to a minimum. Within this framework, though, he manages to surprise with the occasional distant modulation or unexpected chord. Mostly his pieces seem designed to induce a meditative state, one that removes the listener from earthly and temporal concerns. As Benjamin Walton puts it, Urhan’s use of Schubertian stylistic features in combination with idiosyncrasies including “long note values, extreme dynamics, non-functional repetitive harmonies, odd instrumental combinations, omission of bar lines and interpolation of poetic texts between staves” results in “a frequently bizarre mixture of pious simplicity and subjective extravagance.”

In finding a precedent for Liszt’s evocation of harmonized plainchant, Urhan’s song “Celui que j’aime tant” (“Him That I So Love”) is a striking example. It is subtitled “Romance à deux notes,” and indeed the entire vocal line uses only B and A as reciting tones. Underneath these, Urhan writes a simple piano accompaniment of modal harmonies, highly suggestive of sacred music:

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A more explicit spiritual connection is found in the piano duet, *La Salutation Angelique*, in which Urhan applies the Latin text of the Hail Mary over the music, again in a reciting style. This time, though, the Primo part is a quasi-improvisatorial melody over the Secondo part.

Finally, true harmonized plainchant makes its way into one of the quintets performed at Saint Vincent, wherein voices interrupt the chamber music.

The most characteristically Schubertian feature of Urhan’s music is the modulation between parallel major-minor modes, often preserving the same or similar melody. Urhan makes use of this device in “Le Petit Limousin et son Singe,” a song about an itinerant musician from what remains one of the poorest regions of France. In the piece’s evocation of a hurdy gurdy, it invites comparison to Schubert’s *Leiermann*, although the tone is not as unremittingly bleak.
Flatted scale degrees are a common occurrence in Schubert’s music, and the flatted sixth is perhaps the strongest thumbprint of Urhan’s style, appearing in almost every piece he wrote. In his review of Urhan song settings of three Lamartine poems—“Le Soir,” “L’Hymne de l’Enfant à son Réveil,” and “L’Automne”—Berlioz calls attention to this feature in the latter song: “The alteration of the sixth note of the C major scale (the A flat) in melodic relation to the E natural at the hemistich “convient à ma douleur” is a great expressive pleasure, that again enhances the dreamlike close of the song at the third.”

Ex. 10, Urhan, *Le petit limousin et son singe*

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Ex. 11, Urhan, *l’Automne*

This melancholy flatted sixth even shows up in Urhan’s hymn setting of “Rutherford,” mentioned earlier.

Ex. 12, Urhan, *Rutherford*

The evidence suggests that, just as Urhan found a strong spiritual dimension in Beethoven’s music, so too was this the case when it came to Schubert. In the same service
commemorating Beethoven’s death in which he played the “Death and the Maiden” quartet, Urhan also performed his own quintet based on themes of Schubert—a piece that uses the same instrumentation as Schubert’s string quintet—in the church. Like the slow movement of Schubert’s quartet, Urhan’s piece begins in D minor with a funereal rhythm. Among the pieces quoted are the famous <i>Trauerwalz</i> and the <i>Variations on an Original Theme</i> for piano four hands, D. 813:

![Musical notation](image)

**Ex. 13, Urhan, String quintet (quoting Schubert’s <i>Trauerwalz</i>)**

**Ex. 14, Urhan, String quintet (quoting Schubert’s <i>Variations on an Original Theme</i>, D. 813)**

The piece’s alternation of more somber sections with dance music resembles Urhan’s alternation of sacred and secular styles in other pieces.

It is a commonplace to speak of the otherworldly qualities of Schubert’s music. Author Leo Black sees similarities in the non-rational wonder of the presence of God with the sense of transcendence often experienced in listening to Schubert.⁵³⁶ Although nominally Catholic, Schubert did not share Urhan’s degree of involvement with the church. In what appears to have been a deliberate choice, Schubert omitted sections of the liturgy that speak to specific Catholic

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⁵³⁶ Leo Black, <i>Franz Schubert: Music and Belief</i> (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2003), 5.
doctrines in his Mass settings.\textsuperscript{537} Nevertheless, the ability of Schubert’s music seemingly to exist outside time, and to speak to a higher truth, was doubtless a major source of its appeal for Urhan.

**VI: Liszt’s *Apparitions***

Liszt’s three *Apparitions* are, like the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, the work of an ambitious young composer, eager to prove himself as a serious artist. Also published in 1835, they brim with an originality that marks this music as intended primarily for connoisseurs. In his recent book on Liszt’s years in Paris, Bruno Moysan interprets Liszt’s position during this time as that of a legitimist romanticist; that is, one allied to aristocratic virtues of sophistication rather than to bourgeois commercialization.\textsuperscript{538} However much this reading may conflict with Liszt’s professed political views, Moysan aptly notes that Liszt chose to dedicate the pieces to three members of Parisian nobility. Likewise, John Rink points to the small number—just fifty—of copies in the 1835 German edition as evidence of the pieces’ limited marketability.\textsuperscript{539} This is music calculated to deepen the author’s artistic credibility, not to broaden his appeal.

The title *Apparitions* may have two sources of origin. The *Neue Liszt Ausgabe* credits Lamartine’s 1823 poem “Apparition,” a view also held by Moysan.\textsuperscript{540} In the poem, the narrator encounters the ghost of his beloved in the form of moonlight as he visits her grave at night. The themes of past meeting present, corporeal meeting spiritual, and death meeting life can all be related to Liszt’s “fantastification” in his refracted view of Schubert’s waltz. Serge Gut also posits Lamartine’s poem as the inspiration for Liszt’s title, but considers Urhan’s “Auditions” as

\textsuperscript{537} Ibid, 20.


equally likely. The latter connection seems most probable, given that Urhan’s contemporaneous cycle also consists of three pieces. Like Urhan’s pieces, Liszt here strives for a dreamlike compositional aesthetic, devoid of many of the teleological impulses that frequently govern music of the post-Beethoven era.

As evidence of this uncompromising attitude, the first “Apparition” is in the challenging key of F-sharp major, although this is unclear for the first ten bars. These first bars also establish the rhythmic ambiguities that will pervade the entire cycle, with cross rhythms that blur a clear sense of meter:

Ex. 8, Liszt, first Apparition etc.
Formally, this opening section seems to serve as an introduction to what appears to be the main theme. However, Liszt interrupts this theme with an innovative notation that creates an actual rupture between barlines:

Ex. 9, Liszt, first Apparition, mm. 15-16

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541 Gut, Liszt, p. 305.
The reiteration of this interrupted measure leads to a return to the rocking accompaniment of the introduction, the main motive of which now predominates, until the contrasting theme returns in minor:

Ex. 10, first *Apparition*, mm. 41-42

Shortly thereafter, though, Liszt reinstates the theme in its original major mode:

Ex. 10, first *Apparition*, mm. 47-48

This sets up a chain of mediant relationships that eventually stalls on a diminished seventh chord:

Ex. 11, first *Apparition*, mm. 55-56
A loose reprise of the opening material marks this as a ternary form, but one is more likely to be struck by the seamless transitions between sections; this is music in which the formal processes do not call attention to themselves. The ethereal, largely pentatonic coda contributes to the sense that this is an apparition that vanishes as mysteriously as it first appeared.

Ex. 12, Liszt, first *Apparition*, final mm.

The second *Apparition* continues the pattern of abrupt fits and starts and interesting cross rhythms found in the previous piece:

Ex. 13, Liszt, second *Apparition*

At the end of the piece, Liszt boldly recasts this passage with new harmonies:

Ex. 14, Liszt, second *Apparition*

Ultimately, this music owes much to Italian opera, with its frequent doublings at the third and sixth of the melody, its coloratura passages, and its lilting accompaniments. This is
consistent with Moysan’s reading of Liszt’s efforts in this period to garner favor with the aristocracy, devotees of the Théâtre-Italien. Any imputed connection to Urhan’s music is perforce speculative at this point, stemming from the cycle’s striking originality and title. However, the mediant relationships, modal shifts, and seemingly aimless formal meanderings of the first Apparition suggest the music of Schubert, and this connection is rendered explicit in the third Apparition, Fantaisie sur une Valse de François Schubert.

Liszt first learned of Schubert during his 1822-1823 sojourn in Vienna, while studying music theory with Salieri. His teacher would frequently praise the genius of Schubert, a former pupil of his.\(^{543}\) Although they never met, both Schubert and Liszt took part in Diabelli’s 1822 call to Austria’s musical elite for variations, which would later spawn Beethoven’s stand alone set on the same theme. It is likely that Liszt saw Schubert’s variation on Diabelli’s waltz, and waltzes would prove to be second only to Lieder as the Schubert genre that most attracted Liszt’s attention. The theory that Urhan furthered Liszt’s interest in Schubert’s music, indelibly coloring it with a mystic tinge, gains a great deal of support upon close examination of this piece in particular.

Liszt’s third Apparition takes as its departure point the 33\(^{rd}\) waltz from Schubert’s 1821 collection of 36 Originaltänze, D. 365/Op. 9, the same collection containing the “Trauerwaltz” quoted by Urhan. Moysan suggests that Liszt would have first become familiar with this piece through Richault’s 1833 publication of it as part of a collection of Schubert waltzes, so it is safe to say that both composers were drawing upon a common source at about the same time.\(^{544}\) As is often the case in Liszt’s music, this modest waltz would receive a later treatment by the


\(^{544}\) Moysan, Liszt: virtuose subversif, p. 124 n.
composer, appearing in the *Soirées de Vienne* of 1852. Barring some unconventional modulations, though, the later treatment is fairly literal, and bears little resemblance to the dreamlike exploration of Schubert’s theme as seen in the 1834 piece. In this case, the original waltz is heavily altered and fragmented.

Moysan is one of the few scholars to address this piece in any detail, and he situates it within his larger view of Liszt’s 1830s fantasies as pieces at once innovative and elitist. Moysan characterizes “the Lisztian figure” as “a strange blend of Romantic audacity and fashionable elegance,”\(^\text{545}\) and his analysis of the third *Apparition* fits well into this dialectical paradigm. Describing the piece as “a stylistic conflict between the extreme Romanticism of Liszt and the intimate classicism of Schubert,”\(^\text{546}\) he focuses on the contrast between the rhythmically irregular, improvisatory material with which Liszt begins the piece, and the orderly domesticity he sees in the Schubert waltz sections. Of course, this is to ignore the striking ways in which Liszt modifies this seemingly straightforward dance into something far more complex and multifaceted. Moysan does not consider the influence of Urhan, which I see to be most evident in one of the waltz transformations shown below.

\[XXXIII.\]

\[\text{XXXIII.}\]

\[\text{XXXIII.}\]

\[\text{XXXIII.}\]

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\(^{545}\) Ibid, p. 96.

\(^{546}\) Ibid, p. 126. “un conflit stylistique entre le romantisme extrémiste de Liszt et le classicisme intimiste de Schubert.”
Ex. 15, Schubert’s waltz in F major, D. 365/XXXIII

As in all of Schubert’s incidental dances, the F major waltz is in a straightforward binary form, with eight bar phrases. The abrupt shift to F minor in m. 13 (with a corresponding drop in dynamics), leading to a cadence on the flat mediant key of A-flat major, is characteristically Schubertian. It is this harmonic detour and the resulting flatted submediant (D-flat)—so favored by Urhan—that Liszt emphasizes in his fantasy. While in Schubert’s piece the note fits into the altered F minor framework, Liszt employs the device liberally within a major key context, resulting in a greater sense of tonal ambiguity.⁵⁴⁷

The episodic nature of Liszt’s fantasy, in which each statement of Schubert’s waltz seems to appear as an apparition from the past, invites comparison to another piece associated with Urhan, Weber’s Aufforderung zum Tanze of 1819 (published 1821).⁵⁴⁸ This was one of the pieces Urhan brought to Liszt’s apartment during the latter’s period of self-imposed isolation, in

⁵⁴⁷ Although not notated as such, it is possible to consider the sonority as another example of the augmented triad that Liszt was beginning to use during this period.

⁵⁴⁸ Von Lenz claims to have introduced this piece, and Weber in general, to Liszt during a visit to his apartment at Rue Montholon. See James Huneker, Franz Liszt (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1911), p. 205.
an arrangement for piano and viola d’amore. Like Schubert’s collections of dances, Weber’s piece unfolds as a series of uninterrupted waltzes, as would have been the practice in dance halls and private homes of the day. Strikingly, though, Weber’s piece is structured as a sort of reminiscence of an idyllic evening at a ball, bookended by fantasy-like material from which the dances emerge as if in a memory or a dream.

In order to make sense of such treatments of the waltz, it is necessary to examine the dance’s cultural significance. As Eric McKee writes in an article on the waltz in Chopin’s music, “during the first half of the nineteenth century the waltz ruled as the most popular ballroom dance in Europe. A whirling dance that, in part, developed out of German regional dances, the waltz fed the needs and passions of a growing middle class.” It was an unusually intimate dance for its time, requiring (or allowing) couples to remain locked in one another’s arms for an extended period. The dance was built out of circular patterns, and this vertiginous quality led to an association of the dance with dizzying sensual pleasure. While Liszt would later emphasize such aspects in his transcriptions of waltzes by Meyerbeer, Gounod, and others, little of this hedonism is present in his third Apparition. Rather, the piece is more concerned with the waltz’s ability to transport the listener to another time and place.

Liszt recognized the romantic, intimate connotations of the waltz, as evidenced in his later biography of Chopin, in which he speculates on his recently deceased colleague’s youthful accompaniments of waltzes in Warsaw: “He was able to discover, many times perhaps, the secrets of excited and tender hearts fleetingly disclosed in whirling rounds…” As McKee

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549 Doisy, Saint Vincent de Paul, p. 281.


551 Ibid, p. 112.
writes, “typically orchestras were the first to perform dance music at public balls. Afterward, one had only to wait a short time before the hits of the dance floor became available as musical souvenirs that allowed the performer (typically female) to recapture memories, in music, of an enchanted evening.”

Having established some possible associations for the waltz, let us now turn to Liszt’s Fantasy. As in the first *Apparition*, the beginning obscures the rhythm, initially suggesting a duple rather than a triple meter:

![Molto agitato ed appassionato](image)

**Ex. 16, Liszt, third *Apparition***

Likewise, Liszt calls for *senza tempo* here just as he does in the *Harmonies*, and once again deprives the listener of a clear tonality at the outset. We first hear an E-flat pedal in the bass, which then seems to be part of a B major (enharmonically spelled) chord. However, the entrance of the melodic line on A redefines this chord as an augmented sixth that resolves to E-flat. The first actual tonicization occurs in m. 8, and it is instead in G minor:

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552 Ibid.
Liszt ultimately does tonicize E-flat major a few bars later, but this is soon followed by a sequence of rising minor thirds, which culminates in the waltz entering on E. As the Neapolitan of E-flat, this is a fitting tribute to the source material’s composer.

This first appearance of the waltz in m. 21 also captures the sense of distant memory so often attributed to Schubert’s works. Sotto voce, minor, and unaccompanied, it seems to float onto the scene as from afar, physically and/or temporally:

Whereas Schubert only flirts with the idea of the waltz in minor, Liszt gives us a full musical period in this mode. The waltz then appears in sharper focus, in major with the proper dancelike accompaniment:
Ex. 17, Second statement of waltz, mm. 31-34

Still, though, Liszt maintains an air of obscurity with the subdued expressive markings \textit{delicatamente} and \textit{sempre dolcissimo}, and by echoing the anapest rhythm of the melody in the accompaniment. Mm. 31-62 present Schubert’s waltz in its entirety, with some telling alterations. The rubato marking in m. 39 continues the idea of the waltz as a distant memory, halting and indistinct:

Ex. 18

Mm. 51-54 differ from the source material by featuring an alternation between flat and unmodified submediant notes:
Ex. 19
Schubert hints at this idea in the striking transitional passage in m. 13 of his waltz, but Liszt capitalizes on it, flatting the submediant again in m. 59:

Ex. 20, mm. 58-59
Given that this is Urhan’s most pervasive compositional device, it is reasonable to assume that Liszt is here acknowledging his debt to his mentor as the chief transmitter of Schubert’s style to him

Liszt next repeats the waltz an octave higher, with a circular accompaniment so common to this whirling dance. The higher register and widely spaced chords continue the otherworldly character established in the first iteration of this material. The flat submediant returns in measures 68 and 85, before a steady increase of dynamics culminates in a recasting of the waltz as a mercurial scherzo, yet again with a flat submediant:
Ex. 21, mm. 105-107

With no warning, the material of the introduction returns in quasi-improvisatory form, as an uninvited guest to the dance. Having now heard the waltz, though, it is possible to reinterpret this material as a very free reworking of the salient points of the waltz, given the saturation of repeated notes and chromatic neighbor note motion. This quoting of waltz material is made explicit in mm. 128-129, and as if to emphasize the significance of the chromatic upper neighbor, Liszt repeats this whole passage a half step higher.

Ex. 22, mm. 128-129

What follows is a development-like section, an audacious sequence of upward chromatic modulations of the waltz, now in Liszt’s bravura virtuoso mode:
Ex. 23, mm. 146-150

In its fragmentation of the waltz motive and consistent use of the chromatic upper neighbor, this passage is a distillation of those same features emphasized in the previous passage. This appearance of the waltz in so many forms—as half-formed memory, as full-fledged waltz, as scherzo, as etude—is consistent with the fantasy principles imparted by Czerny to Liszt a decade before.

It is to Urhan, though, that Liszt is surely indebted for what follows, the most remarkable section of the entire piece. Liszt now presents the waltz as a chorale, complete with modal harmonies, in m. 172:

Ex 24, Schubert's waltz as chorale

Such a clear evocation of sacred music in a secular setting would become increasingly common as the decade progressed—in Liszt’s own music as well as that of Chopin and other contemporaries—but is highly unusual at this point. In its sanctifying of seemingly worldly
material, Liszt’s approach to Schubert’s music here closely resembles that of Urhan in his chamber music.

As if in confirmation of this threat, the flat submediant returns in m. 191, only to give way to a truly vertiginous presto statement of the waltz:

Ex. 25, m. 191
With the reappearance of the flat submediant in m.203, though, one is inclined to view Liszt’s *con gioja* expressive marking with skepticism.

Ex. 26, mm. 199-204
Indeed, the manner in which the introductory material reasserts itself is almost terrifying:
Finally, the waltz returns in perhaps its most dreamlike appearance yet, with a harp accompaniment that seems to whisk the dancers away to the distant memory from which they first emerged:

Ex. 27, mm. 207-208

Once again, the alternation of unaltered and flat submediants points to Urhan as the spiritual forebear of this piece.

In this remarkable early experimental piece, Liszt puts into practice principles gleaned from the tutelage of Chrétien Urhan. Liszt follows Urhan’s lead in interpreting Schubert’s music as a bridge between the sacred and the secular, between past and present, and between spiritual and corporeal. In a period of crisis, when Liszt was struggling to define himself as both a successful artist and a devout Catholic, Urhan provided a third way reconciling the two. As both
an uncompromising musician dedicated to the highest artistic ideals, and a committed Catholic
unparalleled in his religious fervor, he appeared to Liszt as a model of what the artist as prophet
should be. In turning to the music of subsequent decades, it will become clear that Liszt did not
forget his mentors of the 1830s, even if history has.
Chapter Five: Enduring Legacies

Up to this point, this study has been primarily concerned with a narrow timeframe of but a few years in the 1830s. I have sought to illuminate the ways in which Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan collectively exerted a powerful influence on Liszt during this period. However, the results of this apprenticeship were not restricted to the revolutionary compositions discussed above. Rather, it is my contention that—far from being isolated encounters—Liszt’s friendships with these figures left a lasting mark on his compositional style and outlook. The purpose of this final chapter is to revisit later Liszt pieces both familiar and unfamiliar—pieces inspired by Lamennais, subsequent versions of the Harmonies, and the Schubert arrangements—in light of these relationships. Doing so helps us to see Liszt’s biography not as a series of disruptions, but rather as a logical continuation of his youthful ideals.

Of course, Liszt’s continued contact with Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan ensured that their influence did not remain static. Momentous changes in the lives of all four individuals left their mark, and Liszt’s later pieces reflect these developments. In the case of Lamennais, his apostasy, imprisonment, and later death all impacted Liszt greatly. His Les Morts of 1860, based on a text by Lamennais, serves as a fitting farewell to his friend. Prior to this, works such as Lyon and Le Forgeron confirm Liszt’s continued public support of Lamennais’ politics, while the circumstances of their composition and performance suggest a retreat from his youthful boldness. With Lamartine, we see Liszt continuing to turn to Lamartine for both inspiration and legitimization, but again with a marked turn away from radical impulses and towards the sacred pastoral elements of his poetry. Tracing the continued impact of Urhan is trickier, but I hope to demonstrate that many of Liszt’s Schubert transcriptions suggest the otherworldliness—albeit in a more subdued way—of this mentor as well.
I: Lamennais and the Death of Rebellion

The myth of Liszt as a man divided against himself did not begin with Ernest Newman, but was already put forth by Liszt’s friend Joseph d’Ortigue in his 1835 Revue et gazette musicale biography of the composer. Writing of Liszt’s supposed loss of faith in the early 1830s, he writes:

We tend rather to think that his sudden insouciance toward everything—religion, his future, genuine feelings of love, fame even—in short, a total indifference came to him on a wind that found its way bearing the ideas of the age, though he may have been unaware of this influence. Thus, in the middle of his fervor, a sneer of self-contempt arose in his soul. As the Holy Scriptures, ancient philosophy, and modern moral philosophers all agree to put it: man is of two pieces. Liszt himself experienced this, to his grief. Alongside his own and true self he saw a second self arising, like a sinister genie, usurping the first; a mysterious, evil power which mastered and dominated him. Thus, when he reproached himself with a sardonic giggle for having believed in God, whenever he derided religion, love, freedom, and art, it was not he who laughed and spoke in that way: it was the other. In reading Pascal and the Essai sur l’Indifference, it had been he; but during this period when he read Volney, Rousseau, Dupuis, Voltaire, Byron; when he reasoned too proudly, when he mocked and hated, when his head became coldly exalted by suicide and nothingness, it was not he, but the other….this condition did not last long; impiety was not natural to him.554

Following Liszt’s return to Paris after Geneva, d’Ortigue’s fears about his friend’s worldliness resurfaced. In a December 18, 1836 concert in the Salle du Conservatoire, Liszt included Urhan’s “Audition” L’ange et l’enfant on the program, but the focus was more on ambitious showpieces: Liszt’s Niobe and Lelio fantasies (the latter for piano and orchestra), alongside his own arrangements of movements from Symphonie Fantastique and Harold en Italie. D’Ortigue’s review in the Christmas Eve La Quotidienne is favorable, but with reservations:

But to an artist such as M. Liszt, one must also, one must above all be entirely truthful. How is it that in his most recent compositions—superior though they are to the earlier ones in artistic execution—there no longer vibrates the religious chord that once resonated so powerfully in him? What has become of this contemplative impulse that drew his gaze to the heavens, and why has this

seraphic voice sometimes changed to a skeptical and ironic laugh? May M. Liszt
preciously guard and not stifle this spiritual element, so elevated within him, that
hitherto lent such life to his performances; may he not thus abdicate the better half
of his nature, and may he realize that he should resume that which he seems to
have momentarily abandoned.555

As we have seen in Chapter Two, Liszt himself recognized and agonized over this
development within himself. We can only speculate over his underlying motivations, but it is
safe to say that they included a desire for fame, the need to provide for his new family, and
growing compositional ambitions. Lamennais would have only found fault with the first of these
impulses. As we have already seen, Lamennais’ aesthetics embraced artistic excellence and not
mere populism; like his acolyte d’Ortigue, Lamennais would not have taken issue with the
sophistication of Liszt’s new pieces, but rather with their lack of religious sentiment. While
Lamennais understandably opposed Liszt’s elopement with the married Comtesse d’Agoult, he
later took an interest in ensuring the wellbeing of their children. Upon the final rupture between
the lovers in 1844-45, Lamennais made inquiries about the fate of Cosima, Daniel and Blandine,
apologizing for being “indiscreet” about “delicate matters.” Liszt replied amicably: “Oh! No,
there can never be any question of indiscretion between you and me.”556

Nevertheless, the consensus is that the years following Liszt’s visit to La Chênaie were
tense ones between master and pupil. The promised De Profundis remained only partially
complete, Liszt was largely absent from Paris, and his public appearances increasingly drifted

555 “Mais à un artiste comme M. Liszt il faut aussi, il faut surtout dire toute la vérité. D’où vient que, dans ses
dernières compositions, toutes supérieures aux précédentes pour ce qui tient aux procédés de l’art, ne vibre plus cette
corde religieuse qui résonnait en lui si puissamment? Qu’est devenu cet élan contemplatif qui portait son œil vers le
 ciel, et pourquoi cette voix séraphique s’est-elle changée quelquefois en un rire d’ironie et de scepticisme? Que M.
Liszt garde précieusement et n’étouffe pas cet élément spirituel, ce sentiment élevé qui est en lui et qui prétait
naguère tant de vie à son exécution; qu’il n’abdique pas ainsi la meilleure moitié de son être, et qu’il songe que, pour
se compléter, il n’a qu’à reprendre ce dont il semble momentanément avoir fait l’abandon.” d’Ortigue, Écrits sur la
musique, p. 517.

556 “Oh! Non, il n’y a point et il ne saurait y avoir d’indiscrétion de vous à moi.” Lamennais, Correspondance
Générale, vol. 8, 382.
towards showmanship and away from political and religious activism. It could not have helped that Liszt’s 1835 departure from Paris coincided with Lamennais’ arrival in the city to defend members of the 1834 Lyon silkworkers’ rebellion. One retreated from Catholic liberalism just as the other embraced it more fully.

Alexander Main interprets Liszt’s piece “Lyon,” dedicated to Lamennais and published as part of the *Album d’un voyageur*, as something of an olive branch intended to heal old rifts. Main argues for a later dating of the piece than that of 1833-34 provided by Ramann, based on evidence that remains inconclusive. Main’s basic premise, though—that Liszt published this piece as a conciliatory gesture to his beleaguered mentor—is sound, even if he does share McCalla’s incorrect appraisal of this rift as founded on aesthetic grounds (see Chapter Two). I am not so concerned with pinning down a specific date for “Lyon” as I am interested in better understanding its relation to Lamennais and to the city it honors.

Then as now the second largest city in France, Lyon has long been an important industrial center. By the 1830s, it had for centuries been a leader in silk production, with one quarter of its 200,000 inhabitants employed in this field. As we have seen, the July Revolution precipitated a number of similar uprisings both at home and abroad, and those of Lyon in 1831 and 1834 were by far the most significant domestically. The revolt in November 1831 cost the lives of 100 soldiers and 69 civilians, while the number of deaths in the April 1834 demonstrations were even higher: 131 and 192, respectively. The government’s harsh crackdown on the agitators

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established without a doubt that the July Monarchy had shed all revolutionary impulses that remained from 1830, and was firmly on the side of the property owners.

As with the July Revolution, the majority of rioters were skilled artisans who justifiably took pride in their work and consequently demanded better pay and treatment. Nevertheless, the press widely condemned their actions as threatening to undermine the whole societal order. Most disappointingly, the Catholic press largely failed to identify with the plight of the workers, but instead advocated a stoic response to injustice modeled after the suffering of Christ. As a writer in the Civiltà Cattolica put it, “give me, I say, a people formed in this mould and socialism will not merely be easily defeated, but impossible to be thought of.”

559 On the other hand, Catholic liberals continued to decry the July Monarchy’s focus on industrialization, which both widened the income gap and reduced workers’ rights.

560 Throughout the Lyon ordeal, Lamennais emerged as the standard bearer of this dissenting Catholic faction. He passed through Lyon when the 1831 demonstrations were in full sway, and would later write favorably of the workers in his 1836 Affaires de Rome. When the 1834 riots began on April 9, Lamennais was one of the first people to arrive in Paris to lobby on their behalf, and it was under these circumstances that he and Liszt first met in May. Their reunion the following May—their first meeting since Liszt’s time at La Chênaie—coincided with Lamennais’ return to Paris to serve on the counsel for the defense in the trial of the rebel leaders. Liszt contributed fifty francs to Lamennais’ subscription on the defendants’ behalf, and hosted a dinner party on his behalf, as mentioned in Chapter Two.


In other words, the Lyon uprising was absolutely central to Liszt’s and Lamennais’ friendship from its very beginnings. And yet, Main does not see it as the impetus behind Liszt’s Lyon, etc. but rather cites Liszt’s visit to the city in August 1837, where he performed a concert alongside fellow Mennaisian Adolphe Nourrit to benefit the silk workers. The extreme privations Liszt encountered there prompted him to write a public letter to Adolphe Pictet, published in the February 11, 1838 Gazette musicale de Paris. Main singles out the following call to action in particular:

What is art, the artist to do in these terrible times? The painters exhibit pictures and the musicians give concerts for the benefit of the poor. No doubt they do well to be concerned in this way, if only to demonstrate their ever-present desire to serve the cause of the working class. But should they really limit themselves to something as partial or as incomplete as that? For too long they have been regarded as courtiers and parasites of the palace. For too long they have celebrated the affairs of the great and the pleasure of the rich. The time has come for them to restore courage to the weak and to ease the suffering of the oppressed. Art must remind the people of the beautiful self-sacrifice, the heroic determination, the fortitude, and the humanity of their peers. The Providence of God must be announced anew to the people.  

According to Main, Liszt’s martial piece Lyon is an obvious response to this call, and therefore must have been written in the fall of 1837.

Main’s argument rests on several key points. First, the sole basis we have for the earlier date is early Liszt biographer Lina Ramann, who was mistaken on a number of other dates of composition. Second, we find no mention of Lyon in Liszt’s correspondence, particularly at opportune times: his visits to the city in the fall of 1835 and the spring of 1836, or in any of his letters to Lamennais. Finally, Main sees several features of the music as fitting better with a later dating. In his view, the triumphant final bars would seem inappropriate after the failed uprising of 1834:

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562 Liszt, An Artist’s Journey, p. 49.
Stylistically, Main attempts to draw a connection between a galloping passage in Lyon and the central motive of Schubert’s Erlkönig, which Liszt performed with Nourrit, and to which he had already added the left-hand octaves that would define his later piano transcription of the piece (Ex. 2). Let us examine each of these claims in turn.

To begin with the last argument first, Main’s Erlkönig thesis can be dismissed out of hand. Such fiery octave passages are neither distinctive nor atypical in Liszt’s pieces of this period. What similarities do exist with Schubert’s piece are mitigated by rhythmic and harmonic differences, or are so superficial as to tell us very little. That to which Main does draw attention though, is the galloping topic that is clearly at play in both instances. Thus the excitement of Liszt’s *pas de charge* intensifies with a full-fledged cavalry charge, inviting comparison with Funérailles from the 1853 Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, a kinship to which we will later return. None of this, though, has any bearing on a possible dating of the piece.
Alan Walker rejects Main’s new date on the grounds that Liszt made no correction to Ramann’s entry. While this does not mean too much—Liszt often had (selectively, at times) faulty memory—neither should we wholly discount Walker’s point. In terms of Liszt’s silence on the piece, Main himself unwittingly provides compelling explanations that corroborate the earlier date. He points to both the piece’s controversial nature, and Liszt’s desire not to repeat the “blunder” of prematurely announcing *De Profundis*, as explanations for his failure to make mention of the piece either publicly or privately. Of course, if the piece were written in 1834, these explanations would hold equally true. Just as Liszt shelved his *Symphonie Révolutionnaire* upon the failure of the July Revolution, so too might he have abandoned *Lyon* following the similarly disappointing outcome of that revolt as well. Likewise, he may well have written a large portion of *Lyon* by 1835, but learned not to repeat his mistake of announcing pieces before they were finished.

In terms of the piece’s relation to the Lyon uprisings, Main himself acknowledges that the opening motto “Vivre en travaillant ou mourir en combatant” originates from the 1831 revolt. Indeed, he cites José Vianna da Motta’s observation that these words fit both syllabically and thematically over the opening bars:

\[
\text{vi- vr’en travaillant ou mou-rir en combatant}
\]

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Ex. 3, mm. 1-3

This statement sums up the entire piece, where triumphant march sections vie with more somber, reflective passages. The first hint of tragedy occurs with a passage in which the contrasting halves of this opening motive clash with one another (Ex. 4):

Ex. 4, mm. 55-7

It is ultimately this mood that comes to dominate the coda of the piece, first in an extended pedal point (Ex. 5) and later in a reprise of the motivic clash heard earlier (Ex. 6).

Ex. 5, mm. 139-40
Thus, while the final bars may end on a proud, defiant note, the ending as a whole is consistent with the tragic outcome of the Lyon revolt.

However, this tragic material does provide support for Main’s later dating in Liszt’s persistent use of the augmented triad. Larry Todd is particularly drawn to the passages shown in Exs. 4 and 6, “where Liszt combines the two parts of the motto to produce a jarring entrance of vertical augmented triads...[the sonority’s] shrill, dissonant character effectively brought to bear on the subject of the composition.”

As Todd shows, this is the first instance where Liszt employs the augmented triad for its own sake, and not, as we saw in the Harmonies, as a passing chord. This harmonic advancement alone seems to argue for a dating later than the early 1830s.

The complications do not end here, though: Adrienne Kaczmarczyk has identified an early sketch of Lyon dated June 1833, indicating that Liszt did at least start this piece as early as Ramann indicated. I propose, then, to reconcile these views through the following possible chain of events, speculative though it is. Inspired by the events of 1831, Liszt began work on a piece paying homage to the workers of Lyon. This work no doubt intensified following the 1834 uprising and his encounters with Lamennais in the spring and fall of 1834, and the spring of

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566 Kaczmarczyk, “The Genesis of the Funérailles,” p. 387. Kaczmarczyk claims that Liszt’s theme is taken from the Saint Simonian “Chant des industriels,” arguing both for a broader interpretation of the piece, and that Liszt suppressed the piece because of this controversial connection. However, Liszt’s theme differs significantly from Rouget de Lisle’s piece, and merely resembles it and the “Marseillaise” (also by de Lisle) in a general sense. The result, then, is a stirring march that sounds familiar but does not reference any one piece in particular.
1835. Liszt returned to this material late in the 1830s as a conciliatory gesture to his estranged friend Lamennais, placing it at the head of an ambitious piano cycle. Since he rarely revisited compositions without making some adjustments, Liszt no doubt altered both the character and the harmonic language of the piece.

The example of Lyon reveals the danger inherent in attempts to pin down precise dates for Liszt compositions. Given the numerous versions of so many of his pieces, it is wrongheaded to view them as immutable entities embalmed for all time. More fruitful is to examine the underlying causes and circumstances—the “charge” and “brief” as art historian Michael Baxandall puts it—behind Liszt’s work. In this case, the evidence strongly suggests that the piece was chiefly inspired not by Liszt’s visit to Lyon, but by the revolutions of 1831 and 1834 seen through the lens of Lamennais. Liszt no doubt modified certain elements of Lyon to reflect changing circumstances and compositional developments. Nevertheless, the piece retains the revolutionary fervor that so engulfed Liszt in the early 1830s, and is a fitting tribute to Lamennais’ bold example. As we will see, this renewed support would not long endure.

As Liszt’s star began to ascend in the late 1830s, Lamennais was entering the most trying period of his life. His chief disciples Montalembert and Lacordaire had abandoned him, and his own departure from La Chênaie in May 1836 served as a symbolic farewell to his past. He sold his library, and the appearance of his book Affaires de Rome at the end of the month announced his formal break from the Church. Increasingly, he rejected central Christian dogmas such as man’s fallen nature and ultimately even the divinity of Christ. Commenting on this surprising change in views, C.S. Phillips surmises, “it was the great fault of Lamennais’ character that he

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could never bend the knee to circumstance. Having sought to achieve a certain end by certain means, when the means proved impracticable, he abandoned not the means but the end.\textsuperscript{568}

Increasingly, Lamennais’ attention turned away from the eternal and towards temporal concerns. In his \textit{Livre du peuple} of 1837 he attributes the sufferings of man to human error, and sees poverty and injustice as aberrations that are reparable through human endeavor.\textsuperscript{569} The book is still Christian in its scriptural references and appeals to God, but is critical of the Christian establishment and progressive in its views on gender equality and nationalism. Lamennais expressed these views in ever more inflammatory ways as the 1830s came to a close. In \textit{De l’esclavage moderne} of 1839 he equates working conditions under the July Monarchy to slavery, and in \textit{Le Pays et le gouvernement} of 1840 he calls for passive resistance against the government and police. This last work was deemed sufficiently dangerous to earn him a fine of 2000 francs and a year of imprisonment.

While serving out his sentence, Lamennais continued to write at an even more rapid pace, finishing \textit{Du passé et de l’avenir du peuple}, \textit{Une Voix de prison}, \textit{Discussions critiques}, and \textit{De la religion}. In all these works, Lamennais continued to rail against tyranny, speak out on behalf of the proletariat, and call for a new Christianity apart from the Church. His lifelong quest to discover a unifying system governing all existence led him to see Christianity as a synthesis of monotheism and polytheism, embodied by the Trinity.\textsuperscript{570} Similarly, Lamennais’ need to find an underlying order led him to reject the supernatural, which to him implied imperfection in God’s

\textsuperscript{568} Phillips, \textit{The Church in France}, p. 259.

\textsuperscript{569} Félicité Lamennais, \textit{Livre du Peuple} (Brussels: J. Jamar, 1838).

\textsuperscript{570} Roe, \textit{Lamennais and England}, p. 21.
original design.\footnote{Guillou, L’
évolution de la pensée religieuse de Félicité Lamennais (Paris: Librairie Armand Collin, 1966), p. 312.} This belief in progress and a unified system also comes across in his subsequent {	extit{Esquisse d’une philosophie}} (1841-1846), in which he sees the arts progressing toward their eventual reunification.

Despite these utopian ideals, Lamennais could not help being pessimistic under the circumstances of the July Monarchy. In an 1845 letter he writes, “The past is sad as reality; the future is beautiful as hope, or, if you prefer, as an illusion; the difference, if there is one, is not large.”\footnote{“Le passé est triste comme la réalité; l’avenir est beau comme l’espérance, ou, si vous le voulez, comme l’illusion; la différence, s’il y en a, n’est pas grande.” Félicité Lamennais, Lamennais, Claude Aubert, ed. (Fribourg: Egloff, 1944), p. 25.} Following the revolution of 1848 he had a minor renaissance, briefly serving in the Chamber of Deputies, unsuccessfully proposing a constitution, and founding an even more radical journal than {	extit{l’Avenir, Le peuple constituant}}. Following Napoleon III’s coup d’état in 1851, Lamennais once again retreated to La Chênaie, where he spent most of the remaining three years of his life.

Throughout this ordeal, Liszt expressed his support for Lamennais on a number of occasions. Writing to George Sand in May 1836, he affirmed his continued loyalty to the “sublime priest” and “good father” despite Lamennais’ ignominy.\footnote{Lamennais, Correspondance générale, vol. 7, p. 77.} Writing to Lamennais in 1840, Marie d’Agoult informed the priest that Liszt shared his belief in “the next fusion of the arts, inspired by Greek and Christian traditions but more integrated than both.”\footnote{Ibid, pp. 540-41.} Most overtly, Liszt wrote the following thinly veiled endorsement of Lamennais in an April 1838 “Lettre d’un bachelier:”
Once there was a man who had risen within the bosom of the Catholic Church, a man with a big heart and a marvelous mind. He was thoroughly familiar with the evil and corruption of those who call themselves the Servants of God. He knew that the Bride of Christ had prostituted herself to earthly powers and that ‘the corruption was in her bones.’ He had seen the people suffer under the domination of their godless pastors. Realizing that a new era of enlightenment was approaching, and sensing a fiery influx of limitless charity within him, he prophesied a future of more liberal rights and brotherhood to the world. Filled with the zeal that possesses such souls, he did not shrink from the accusations with which the mob enjoyed assailing the consciences of men of genius. He dared to part company with his former self. As the scriptures say, he truly stripped off the old self and put his past errors aside, just as one would discard an old coat. He disassociated himself nobly from the camp of the oppressors, who, not understanding his words, would have liked to keep him among the oppressed. Even though he had already reached middle age, that time when a man thinks only of peacefully enjoying the reputation or the power he has acquired, he had the strength to break with the brilliant past that had placed him among the great men of this earth, and, by dint of his own will, to fashion a new youth for himself. He transformed, revived, and retempered his energy in the bitter waters of calumny that the world poured over him. If he had wanted to go a step further and break with Rome and found a new church, all the young clergy, let me tell you, would have flocked to him. All the priests who had not been totally smothered or corrupted by the trappings of power and wealth would have joined him. We would have followed the prophet, and his voice would have worked miracles.

Such a public statement of support on Liszt’s part would seem to indicate that only Lamennais’ own restraint prevented his supporters from doing more on his behalf. However, while Liszt’s fealty is commendable, it clearly had its limits. Despite the prominent place accorded to Lyon at the head of the 1842 publication of Album d’un voyageur, there is no record of Liszt performing the piece in public. I share Main’s view that he would have known better

575 A reference to Chapter XIV of Paroles d’un croyant.

576 Here Liszt seems to echo Lamartine’s admiring words of this striking change: “To disown the first part of one’s life when a man has only one life to live, that is a martyrdom of which few minds are capable.” (“Renier la première partie de sa vie pour l’homme qui n’a qu’une vie à vivre, c’est un martyr dont peu d’esprits sont capables.”) Rémond, Lamennais et la Démocratie, p. 5.

577 Liszt, An Artist’s Journey, pp. 126-27.
than to do so, since its overtly revolutionary tone would find little favor with well-heeled audiences.

Similarly, the fate of Liszt’s two men’s choruses with words by Lamennais—Le Forgeron and Arbeiterchor—offers us a view of his indecision in such matters. Written in February 1845, Le Forgeron is another bold march cast in the mold of Lyon, a setting of Lamennais’ words lamenting the hardships of ironworkers. In a letter to Lamennais that April, Liszt expresses his desire to craft a larger cycle celebrating “the most poetic forms of human activity, the titles of which would be (pending your approval): Laborers, Sailors, and Soldiers.” In this same letter, Liszt tosses around the idea of a performance in Paris, but only if he can oversee rehearsals of a suitably grand chorus. While visiting Lamartine at his Château Montceau in June, Liszt played the piece through for the poet. However, this is the last account we have of the piece, which remained unpublished and unperformed until 1962. Likewise, the Arbeiterchor—which dates from sometime before 1848—did not appear in print until 1954.

When one considers that Liszt had already successfully mounted a performance of his music for male chorus in August 1844—the performance of his Les aquilons in Marseille, to be discussed later—his excuses for not performing Les Forgerons hold little weight. Instead, we should look to Liszt’s letter to his publisher Haslinger regarding the Arbeiterchor, where he advises caution against releasing such a subversive work in light of the political instability of 1848. Paul Merrick considers the revolutions of 1848 to have finally extinguished Liszt’s

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579 Lamennais and Lamartine wrote about this incident. See Lamennais, Correspondance générale, vol. 8, p. 998.

580 Merrick, Revolution and Religion, p. 31.
radical political spark, averse as he was to violence. The deaths of his friends in Hungary—most notably that of Prince Felix Lichnowsky at the hands of an angry mob—impelled Liszt to retreat from worldly affairs. In a September 1848 letter, he writes of Lichnowsky’s death: “What a sign of the times! As for myself, I return more than ever, and without cowardice or childishness in my opinion, to my point of departure, that is, Christianity.”

We can garner some sense of this new sober outlook by comparing Lyon and Funérailles, two works that perfectly reflect Liszt’s changing views towards revolution. Whereas the central march of Lyon is the pas de charge—the brisk step whereby soldiers enter battle—that of Funérailles is, appropriately enough, a funeral march. As mentioned before, Lyon features passages suggestive of a cavalry charge, and in Funérailles we find probably the most thrilling evocation of such an event in the piano literature:

Ex. 7, mm. 109-112

In Lyon, the charge culminates in a heroic restatement of the main pas de charge theme. In Funérailles, though, victory is cruelly snatched away at the last minute through the unexpected arrival of a diminished seventh chord, “a sudden cry” as Liszt described it:

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581 Ibid, pp. 33-34.
The most striking parallel between these pieces, though, occurs in their codas. It is surely not coincidental that Liszt chose to end both with an unsettling oscillation between tonic and augmented triad, conveying a sense of loss and despair. As opposed to the final promise of triumph in Lyon, the ending of Funérailles is perfunctory, austere, and unremittingly bleak:

Such pessimism is consistent with other war-themed pieces Liszt wrote after 1848. Like Funérailles, the symphonic poem Héroïde funèbre commemorates the martyrs of the Hungarian revolution. Adapted from the projected first movement of the scrapped Symphonie révolutionnaire, the piece lacks any of the saber rattling found in Liszt’s sketches for the earlier piece. In fact, the few pieces from this period that depict unabashedly triumphant battles tend to be those dealing with comfortably distant events. The Battle of the Cautalanian fields presented in Hunnenschlacht is a prime example, in which the uncontroversial victory is one of Christianity over paganism, rather than populism over tyranny. Similarly, Paul Merrick sees Liszt channeling his radical impulses in his church music. Comparing the Symphonie
révolutionnaire to the *Gran Mass*, Merrick observes, “The difference was that whereas the 18-year-old had put religion into a revolutionary work, the 44-year-old put revolution into a religious work.”\(^{582}\)

Liszt’s 1860 orchestral piece *Les morts* serves as a fitting summation of these changes. A setting of text from Lamennais’ “Oration,” Liszt wrote the piece in memory of his son Daniel, who had died the year before. However, I agree with Merrick’s conclusion that the piece is also a tribute to Lamennais in its uncompromising, world-weary atmosphere.\(^{583}\) The piece contains elements of the heroism common in Liszt’s mennaisian works from *De Profundis* onwards, but now with the note of desperation and tragedy we have come to expect. With Berliozian precision, Liszt at first calls for military drums to be muffled and played with sponge drumsticks, suggesting a distant funeral procession:

Ex. 10, mm. 1-7

Following some of the most anguished, harmonically bold music in Liszt’s output, the uncovered drums now resound with the impetuous, warlike character of the composer’s youth, preceded by Lamennais’ words, “Dieu des armées!”

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\(^{582}\) Merrick, *Revolution and Religion*, p. 34.

\(^{583}\) Ibid, p. 264.
Had Liszt written *Les morts* in the 1830s, he no doubt would have concluded with this militant Christian populism, as he did with his earlier mennaisian works. Now, however, the mature Liszt seems to see ultimate glory resting not in violent insurrection, but rather in the transcendent power of God’s love. At each recurrence of Lamennais’ refrain, “Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur” ("Happy are those who die in the Lord"), Liszt sets the text to the rising pentatonic figure that—as will be discussed in the next section—is so central to Liszt’s mature religious style:

Ex. 11, mm. 87-90

Ex. 12
As Paul Merrick writes, “Les morts is not just a piece of music, but a psychological document, a key to the understanding of Liszt as man and musician.” Here, Liszt both mourns the thwarted revolutionary dreams of the past, and places the promise of a better future in God’s hands. We can trace this paradigm shift to a variety of factors, including Liszt’s genuine abhorrence of violence, his renewed faith in the Church, and his awareness of his new role as court composer. However, the piece is not at all a repudiation of Lamennais’ progressive political goals, but rather a tacit admission that Liszt did not expect to see them fulfilled in his lifetime. Instead, Liszt is here pursuing musical, not political, progress.

From De Profundis to Les morts, then, we come full circle in Liszt’s pieces inspired by Lamennais, with a return to the spiritual. In fact, the parallels are unusually strong when we consider that Lamennais cites Psalm 130, the “De Profundis,” in his “Oration.” When Liszt added men’s voices to Les morts, in 1866, he provided an echo of the past in the ghostly repetition of this text in Latin:

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Des lieux inconnus où le fleuve se perd, deux voix s'élèvent incessamment.
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Ex. 13

Though Lamennais may have parted ways with the Church, Liszt still very much considered him as a Catholic figure, albeit a defiant one. Liszt’s mennaisian pieces also stand out in their

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584 Merrick, Revolution and Religion, 264.
challenging harmonic and formal schemata, once again countering the misapprehension that Lamennais espoused a form of banal populism in art.\textsuperscript{585}

For all the turmoil of the preceding years, then, Liszt’s attitude towards Lamennais remained remarkably consistent. From the rogue priest he learned that his Christian faith could, indeed must, join with his radical politics. As an artist, he identified with Lamennais’ call for a reunification of the arts in a universal expression of the true, the beautiful, and the good. Liszt combined these impulses in calling for art to depart the temple, and in writing concert pieces with a strong spiritual and political bent. It was only after the failed uprisings of 1848 that he retreated back into the Church, having written few overtly sacred works before this point. In turning to Liszt’s relationship with Lamartine, we will see a similar trend of continued support in a more measured way.

\textbf{II: Lamartine and the Romantic Retreat from Politics}

The 1835 release of Liszt’s \textit{Harmonies poétiques et religieuses} coincided with Lamartine’s political ascent, no doubt a factor in the composer’s decision. Following his diplomatic service in the 1810s and 1820s, Lamartine remained aloof from politics for several years. Out of the country during the July Revolution, he lost his seat in government, regaining it only in 1833. In the Chamber of Deputies, he soon made a name for himself as a contrarion: when asked whether he would sit on the right or the left upon his arrival, he replied sardonically, “on the ceiling,” and took a seat in a distant corner.\textsuperscript{586} Such affected disdain did little to endear him to his fellow politicians—as Manuèle Wasserman relates, many Deputies took out


newspapers when Lamartine began one of his lengthy speeches— but the public responded favorably to such supposed incorruptibility, filling the gallery whenever he spoke.

In certain respects, Lamartine’s turn to politics was a natural progression from his talent as a poet. The same spontaneity that endeared Liszt to his poetry also defined his speeches, many of which he improvised on the spot. By 1837, Lamartine was dismissing his career as a poet as "but a slight affair," seeing his true calling in politics. In this same letter, he writes, “Consider the immense superiority of the statesman over the poet. The one racks and exhausts his brain in marshalling and harmonizing sounds, the other is the real word, that is, the thought, the word, the act, in one. He makes real what the poet only dreams; sees all that is great and good converted into facts, beneficent facts, which not only benefit the present generation, but often extend into distant posterity. Do you know what it means to be a great statesman? He is a poet in the act of transferring words into deeds." By 1857, Lamartine looked back on his poetic career as but a substitute for his true calling: “My sensitivity and imagination, which pushed me violently to action in all its form, had been repressed in me, and had exploded forth in some great poetic works…I was born more for action rather than for poetry.”

Lamartine’s ideals were seemingly far removed from his youthful dismissal of the rights of man as “illusions” and the social contract as “an absurdity.” Instead, he embraced such progressive causes as workers’ rights, freedom of the press, and universal suffrage. Even the

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590 “Ma sensibilité et mon imagination, qui me poussaient violemment à l’action sous toutes les formes, auraient été refoulées en moi, et elles auraient fait explosion par quelque grande œuvre poétique…j’étais né bien plutôt pour l’action que pour la poésie.” Ireson (trans. his), *Lamartine*, p. 8.
conservative leader Guizot expressed admiration for the eloquence with which he did so: “Lamartine possessed not only a rich and seductive flow of language, his mind was singularly rich, broad, sagacious without subtlety and combining grace with grandeur. Overflowing with ideas generally lofty and ingenious, often profound, he paints with a broad brush…marshalling exalted arguments in support of unworthy causes.”

A good example of Lamartine’s skillful oratory is in this defense of his position against slavery:

I sometimes bring before this tribunal certain truths that are called advanced and idealistic, or perhaps perturbing, when in fact they are, in my view, eminently conservative; for I know nothing so revolutionary than an abuse that is allowed to endure, nothing more revolutionary than immorality and iniquity that could be corrected and is instead consecrated into law.

Of course, Guizot’s statement and Lamartine’s rhetorical sleight of hand both hint at the vagueness and equivocation that so many, including Liszt, saw in the poet-statesman’s constantly shifting views. He officially expressed his opposition to the July government in 1843, but did not take a seat in the left wing of the Chamber. Instead, the following year he published an article titled “Why M. de Lamartine is alone” in Le Bien Public, a progressive journal he founded. He often spoke of forming his own “parti social,” but little came of this endeavor. He adopted increasingly liberal positions, to the extent that he alienated his friend Ballanche, who had once seen him as the best political hope of his longed-for palingenesis.

And yet, perhaps the cautious Ballanche need not have worried. Lamartine’s genteel, aristocratic classicism was still very much alive. Despite his growing Liberalism, Lamartine

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592 Flenley, Makers of Nineteenth-Century Europe, p. 71.

593 “J’apporte parfois à cette tribune quelques vérités qu’on appelle avancées, qu’on appelle idéales, qu’on appelle peut-être pertubatrices, et qui, selon moi, sont éminemment conservatrices; car je ne connais rien au monde de si révolutionnaire qu’une immoralité, qu’une iniquité qu’on peut corriger et qu’on laisse consacrer dans la loi.” Whitehouse, The Life of Lamartine, vol. II, p. 11.

594 George, Lamartine and Romantic Unanism, p. 137.
retained his youthful fear of anarchy and mob rule. Unlike Liszt, he reacted to Lamennais’ *Paroles d’un croyant* with alarm, not favor, writing, “It is, in two words, the Gospel of insurrection, Babeuf made divine. It causes great harm to me and my future party [the *parti social*], for nothing kills an idea like exaggeration...It horrifies everybody and renders youth fanatic.” He remained, as he put it, both “l’homme de coeur” and “l’homme de bon sens,” unable to countenance dangerous disruptions to the social order. As William Fortescue summarizes the nature of Lamartine’s political position in the years leading up to the 1848 Revolution: “…Between 1843 and February 1848 he developed a new relationship with the French Left, a relationship to which he brought his idiosyncratic mixture of fear of popular violence combined with revolutionary idealism, and of social and economic conservatism combined with Christian humanitarianism.”

Whatever his misgivings towards Lamartine’s politics, Liszt continued to harbor ambitions of expanding his 1835 *Harmonies* into a true cycle of his own. Following his departure to Switzerland, he wrote to his mother in July asking her to send his score from Paris, and noted that of the books he had packed, only Lamartine’s *Harmonies* and *Imitation of Christ* emerged unscathed, “thanks to the precaution I had taken to cover them in very strong paper and to wrap them in linen.” Later that year, he had his pupil Hermann Cohen deliver the piece to Lamartine, writing to the poet that he had been “reading and rereading” his *Harmonies*. His letter seems to allude to a conversation wherein Lamartine offered to send him poetry to set to music: “I should like above all that they might recall to you the hope you had one day given me...”

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597 Ibid, p.103.

598 Liszt, *Selected Letters*, p.43.
of making me the depositary of some one of those songs ravished from the angels, which you too rarely let fall from your lyre. Do I need to tell you, sir, that I shall receive them with devout gratitude."

As Alexander Main notes, Lamartine’s reply makes no mention of Liszt’s requests, attributing this omission to the poet’s belief—later expressed in his *Cours familier de literature* essays of 1856-69—that the arts should remain separate. Assuming that he already held these views in 1835, this could well be the case. However, Lamartine’s silence might also be explained by the inaccessible nature of Liszt’s *Harmonies*, its difficulties winning few supporters. In a review in Gustav Schilling’s “Universalexikon der Tonkunst” of 1835-1838, the authors remark that the *Harmonies* have been received with “perplexity” by the public: “All once marveled at the astounding Liszt, so long as he adhered to stronger rules of authority, as he only should have done in his newer works. Here, though, the poetry is of such a peculiar sort, that we could well understand the criticism that he has had to endure from many quarters.”

Liszt acknowledged the failure of these early works in Paris, where the public had found them “bizarre, incomprehensible and disturbing.” By 1837, Liszt himself expressed dissatisfaction

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600 For further evidence of Lamartine’s attitude see Hutchings, “Another music of the soul,” p. 74.

601 “…aber die Dichtung ist so eigenthümlicher Art, daß wir den Tadel wohl begreifen konnten, den L., der allgemein bewundert, angestaunt worden war, so lange er unter strenger Regeln Autorität arbeitete, als er nur sich angehören wollte bei der Schöpfung neuer Werke, von vielen Seiten zu dulden hatte.” Quoted in Torkewitz, *Harmonisches Denken*, 78-79. Although the authors are only listed as “F. u. St.,” it is clear from the almost identical wording (compare especially the statement about rules) that the second author is François Stoepel, reviewer of the *Apparitions* in the *AMZ*.

with the *Harmonies* in particular, and even planned to destroy it. Upon salvaging the work as *Pensée des morts*, he would later refer to the earlier version as “truncated and faulty.”

Given this rocky start and Lamartine’s aversion to such experimental combinations, his uninvolvement in Liszt’s *Harmonies* project is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, their friendship continued unabated. En route to Italy in 1837, Liszt and Marie d’Agoult spent several days at Lamartine’s Château Saint-Point near Mâcon in southern France. He returned in 1844, as his relationship was coming to an end. Finally, his May 1845 visit to Lamartine’s city residence in Mâcon culminated in his rejected marriage proposal to the poet’s niece. In the following years, he maintained a correspondence—albeit more sporadic—with Lamartine, and always followed the release of his friend’s new literary works with interest.

Likewise, Liszt remained determined in his plans for a *Harmonies* cycle. In his famous autumn 1835 letter to Ferdinand Hiller, he mentions it among the works he refers to as his “ligne intérieure.” Writing from Rome in the summer of 1839, Liszt avers, “my mission, as I see it, it to be the first to introduce poetry into the music of the piano with some degree of style. The most important thing to me is my *Harmonies*; that will be my serious work, and I will sacrifice nothing in it for the sake of effect.” In the following years, Liszt worked steadily on the *Harmonies*, with sketches dating to the beginning of the 1840s. By 1846 he wrote to d’Agoult

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604 Backus, “Liszt’s ‘Harmonies,’” p. 16.


606 Liszt, *An Artist’s Journey*, p. 183 n.

607 For a thorough discussion of the lengthy gestation period of the *Harmonies*, see Adrienne Kaczmarszczk’s introduction to the NLA score of the early version. Curiously, though, Kaczmarszczk says comparatively little about the significance of Lamartine’s titles in these pieces. Franz Liszt, *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (earlier versions), Adrienne Kaczmarszczk, ed. (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 2009).
of a “volume (around two hundred pages) of poetic harmonies, of which two thirds are finished.” Finally, the first version of the Harmonies cycle existed in draft form by 1848.

In comparing the first and final version of the cycle, one immediately notes a marked reduction in pieces with titles taken from Lamartine, marked in italics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1847 version of Liszt’s Harmonies</th>
<th>1853 version of Liszt’s Harmonies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invocation</td>
<td>Invocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymne de la Nuit</td>
<td>Ave Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymne du Matin</td>
<td>Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litanies de Marie</td>
<td>Pensée des morts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Miserere d’après Palestrina]</td>
<td>Pater Noster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pater Noster</td>
<td>Hymne de l’enfant à son réveil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hymne de l’enfant à son réveil</td>
<td>Funérailles</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Pensée des morts]</td>
<td>Miserere d’après Palestrina</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Lampe du Temple</td>
<td>[Une Larme]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled Piece</td>
<td>Cantique d’amour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postlude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noticeably, the shift is more towards Catholicism, and this is consistent with Paul Merrick’s interpretation of this period as Liszt’s conscious withdrawal from earthly affairs and into the

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Similarly, Kaczmarczyk notes that the inclusion of the new prayer movements coincides with the drafting of the first version at Caroline von Sayn Wittgenstein’s country estate, whose devout influence she now sees superseding Lamartine’s. However, it is only in the final version that this shift is most obvious, so we must look elsewhere for reasons behind Liszt’s decision.

The most significant event that occurred in the interim was, of course, the 1848 revolution, in which Lamartine was a central figure. In fact, his *Histoire des girondins*—written in 1847 as a glowing tribute to the moderate faction of the 1789 revolution—has been cited as one of the major catalysts for the events of 1848. Reversing his earlier negative appraisal of the revolution, his history offers a whitewashed account praising it as “divine and universal ideal.” Lamartine seemed well aware of what the book could mean for his future ambitions and for France, writing, “it is written for the people…My duty is to prepare the people and myself, for I will be the leader in a new society.” The book was widely read, and received the most favorable press in working class journals.

Upon the outbreak of hostilities the following year, Lamartine was everywhere to be seen: drinking wine with soldiers on the Quai d’Orsay, braving gunfire during street fighting (he had a horse shot out under him), and famously defending the tricolor of the republic against the red flag of the socialists in front of the Hôtel de Ville. Lamartine himself perpetuated a story—probably exaggerated—that a beggar shielded him from bullets when discussions with an angry

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mob deteriorated.\textsuperscript{613} He gave numerous extemporized speeches in the streets—to as many as six thousand people at a time—calling for a true republic.\textsuperscript{614} His charisma and eloquence won over the crowds, ensuring a republic and preventing the unchecked anarchy that was his deepest fear. Upon the call for a provisional government in April, Lamartine won the presidency handily with two million votes, a tenfold advantage over the next candidate.\textsuperscript{615}

Lamartine’s widespread popularity had much to do with his diffuse political message, in which so many divergent groups placed their hopes. He himself wrote that “legitimists, catholics, republicans, military men, and bourgeois” all supported him.\textsuperscript{616} His success was shortlived, however, since gradually his characteristic caution returned. He presided over an almost 50% increase in taxation, intended to stabilize the economy, which had been rocked by inflation following the revolution.\textsuperscript{617} His reluctance to place this burden on the wealthy—who already distrusted the progressive impulses of his government—alienated the bourgeois and working classes alike. By the summer, Lamartine was an object of universal scorn, allowing Napoleon III to sweep in with his populist message in the fall election.

Since the 1830s, Liszt had watched Lamartine’s political influence grow with interest. By the mid-1840s, he regarded the poet-statesman as France’s greatest hope. Evidence of this support can be found in the following excerpt from a toast Liszt gave on his host’s behalf at a banquet held at Lamartine’s Château Montceau in 1845:

\textsuperscript{613} Whitehouse, \textit{The Life of Lamartine}, vol. II, p. 244.

\textsuperscript{614} Lacretelle, \textit{Lamartine and His Friends}, p. 114.

\textsuperscript{615} Wasserman, \textit{Artists in Politics}, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{616} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{617} Henry F. Wanning, \textit{The Political and Social Ideas of Lamartine} (Masters Thesis, Columbia University, 1940), p. 60.
I will not even attempt to speak of him to you since, to do him justice, I would need to borrow from him a little of his great harmonious speech, which is also a great and harmonious music. And this music—as you, Messieurs, as well as France and Europe know well, is not futile, fleeting, and without echo like mine. Oh! You do well, Sirs, to thus surround your illustrious deputy with respect, admiration and sympathy, and for my part, I consider myself fortunate and proud to be present at this table and to be able to say to him on all of our behalves, “We shall never! We will never fail to recognize in you the double consecration of genius and patriotism.”

Lamartine’s response praises the charitable enterprises of Liszt:

No! The illustrious artist whom we have the good fortune to offer our hospitality is not at all a stranger; Genius is the compatriot of all intellects and all souls that recognize it. But it is not his genius that I propose to salute, it is his goodness, his extravagance of good deeds towards the suffering classes and the people that he loves and seeks out in their infirmities and miseries to secretly bring the tithe of his talent, the tithe of his own life; for he invests his life in his talent. I ask his pardon for revealing before him the hidden acts of charity that he would like to conceal from all gazes; but sometimes modesty must suffer that virtues might be revealed, in order that it might be imitated! This toast, then, to M. Liszt! Cries of approval always precede and follow him; but the cheers that he prefers are the silent benedictions of some poor families clandestinely aided by him. It is the secret alms that he slips into the hands of the unfortunate—that God alone sees fall—that ring out in the heavens like the most beautiful notes of his concerts.

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618 “Je n’essaierai point de vous parler de lui, car, pour le faire dignement, il me faudrait pouvoir lui emprunter un peu de sa grande harmonieuse parole, qui est aussi une grande et harmonieuse musique. Et cette musique, vous le savez, Messieurs, et la France et l’Europe le savent également, n’est pas futile, passagère et sans écho comme la mienne. Oh! Vous faites bien, Messieurs, d’entourer ainsi de respect, d’admiration et de sympathie votre illustre député, et pour ma part, je me sens heureux et fier d’être convié à cette table et de pouvoir lui dire au nom de tous: ‘Jamais nous ne vous ferons défaut! Jamais il ne nous arrivera de méconnaître en vous la double consécration du génie et du patriotisme! Jamais enfin nous ne dégénérerons de l’avenir providentiel que vous nous préparez et vers lequel nous vous demandons de nous guider.’” Antoine Sallès, Le centenaire de Liszt: Liszt à Lyon (Paris: E. Fromont, 1911), p. 48.

619 Non! L’illustre artiste à qui nous avons le bonheur d’offrir l’hospitalité n’est étranger nulle part; le génie est le compatriote de toutes les intelligences et de toutes les âmes qui le sentent. Mais ce n’est pas son génie que je vous propose de saluer, c’est sa bonté, c’est sa prodigalité de bienfaisance envers les classes souffrantes de ce peuple qu’il aime et qu’il va chercher dans ses infirmités et dans ses misères pour lui porter en secret la dîme de son talent, la dîme de sa propre vie; car il met de sa vie dans son talent. Je lui demande pardon de révéler devant lui des actes de charité cachée qu’il voudrait dérober à tous les regards; mais il faut quelquefois que la modestie souffre et que les vertus soient trahies, ne fût-ce que pour être imitées! Ce toast donc à M. Liszt! Les applaudissements le précédent et le suivent toujours; mais les applaudissements qu’il préfère, ce sont les bénédictions silencieuses de quelque pauvres familles soulagées mystérieusement par lui. C’est l’aumône secrète qu’il glisse dans les mains du malheur, que Dieu seul voit tomber, et qui, retentit dans le ciel comme la plus belle note de ses concerts. Ibid, p. 49.
These pronouncements—particularly Liszt’s “double consecration,” which resonates so well with the work of Paul Bénichou—speak to the engagement with society both men expected from artists. This makes the juxtaposition of their experiences in 1848 all the more surprising, since one cannot imagine a wider gulf between Lamartine’s feverish activity in Paris and Liszt’s conspicuous absence from Hungary. Liszt must have winced a bit upon reading a letter from his friend A.F. Dingelstadt, reflecting on Lamartine’s role in the revolution: “As a poet yourself you must have quivered at the immense role taken by a poet in this great drama, which is up to now the most amazing page of history of this century.”

When the revolution began in Hungary, Liszt was acutely aware of his own inaction, as he revealed in a letter to Princess Caroline: “As someone who has always detested politics, I confess that I no longer know how to defend my position. My compatriots have taken such decisive, such Hungarian, such unanimous measures that it is impossible to refuse them a tribute of legitimate sympathy.” Rémy Stricker has theorized that Liszt envisioned himself as a Hungarian Lamartine, but he ultimately remained uninvolved in the revolution. He did not even give concerts in support of Hungarian independence, although to do so no doubt would have compromised his position in Weimar. Nevertheless, Liszt’s apparent cowardice prompted Heine to write the following scathing lines in his poem, “Im Oktober 1849”:

It was freedom’s final chance!
And Hungary bleeds to death
But the knight Liszt remained unscathed

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620 “Comme un poète vous avez dû tressaillir à l’immense part prise par un Poète dans ce grand drame, qui est jusqu’ici la plus étonnante page d’histoire de ce siècle.” Stricker, Franz Liszt, p. 39.
621 “Pour moi qui ai toujours détesté la politique, j’avoue que je ne sais plus comment m’en défendre. Mes compatriots viennent de faire une démarche si décisive, si hongroise et si unanime qu’il est impossible de leur refuser un tribut de légitime sympathie.” Rémy Stricker, Franz Liszt: Les ténèbres de la gloire (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1993), p. 41.
Like his saber, resting in the drawer.\textsuperscript{622}

Given the failure of the revolutions of 1848, and Lamartine’s precipitous political decline, Liszt may well have been secretly relieved to have remained safely in Weimar, reverting to the patronage system of the previous century. A desire to place distance between himself and a controversial figure may be one explanation for the shift in focus in Liszt’s \textit{Harmonies}. Of course, had this been his main concern, Liszt would have completely removed, and not just reduced, the connections with Lamartine’s poetry. However, Lamartine remained a respected literary figure who continued to write voluminously, driven by the need to pay off mounting debts. While his decline in fortunes may have mitigated Liszt’s enthusiasm, it was not enough to completely destroy the cachet of the poet’s name.

Instead, in the final \textit{Harmonies} cycle Liszt distances himself from those radical elements that defined the 1835 \textit{Harmonies}, symbolically excising the opening of Lamartine’s quote—“these verses are only intended for the few”—from the preface. It is also for this reason that Adrienne Kaczmarczyk thinks that Liszt removed the \textit{Hymne de la nuit} and the \textit{Hymne du matin}, with their “sweeping melodies and rhetorical gestures” dating from the Paris years, from the final version.\textsuperscript{623} The most obvious example of this trend is in the reworking of the original \textit{Harmonies} as \textit{Pensée des morts}: Liszt adds key and time signatures, smooths out rough edges, and more seamlessly connects sections with what Joan Backus aptly describes as “an almost self-conscious formalism.”\textsuperscript{624} This ties in well with David Trippett’s analysis of other Weimar reworkings, in which Liszt sought to establish himself as a polished craftsman in the Austro-

\textsuperscript{622} \textit{Es fiel der Freiheit letzte Schanze! Und Ungarn blutet sich zu Tode. Doch unversehrt blieb Ritter Franz, sein Saebel auch, er liegt in der Kommode.”}

\textsuperscript{623} Liszt, \textit{Harmonies} (Earlier Versions), p. XXXVIII. However, it is difficult to agree with Kaczmarczyk’s claim that the final version “is basically of a meditative, tranquil character.”

\textsuperscript{624} Backus, “Liszt’s ‘Harmonies,’” p. 17.
German tradition, as opposed to a spontaneous artist whose works were the unrefined products of momentary inspiration.\textsuperscript{625} It is to this newfound interest in coherence that we might also attribute such \textit{Harmonies} elements as the recurring “pendulum motive” discussed by Kaczmarczyk and Torkewitz.\textsuperscript{626}

Along with this new interest in formal cohesion, the final \textit{Harmonies} strongly emphasize the religious element that was only briefly hinted at in the 1835 version. Apart from the Catholic prayers—“Ave Maria,” “Pater Noster”, and “Miserere”—the most conspicuous instance of this is in his inclusion of the harmonized plainchant from \textit{De Profundis} in \textit{Pensée des morts}:

Ex. 14

More intriguing is how Liszt infuses the Lamartine-titled pieces with the Christian pastoralism so common to the poet’s work.\textsuperscript{627} In the case of “Hymne de l’enfant à son réveil,” Liszt mirrors the innocence of Lamartine’s text with such common pastoral signifiers as major tonality, suggestion of a drone, prevalence of thirds and sixths, compound meter, and stepwise melodic motion:

\textsuperscript{625} See David Trippett, “\textit{Après une Lecture Liszt: Virtuosity and Werktreue in the ‘Dante’ Sonata}.” \textit{19\textdegree{}-Century Music}, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (Summer, 2008), pp. 52-93.

\textsuperscript{626} It is important to note, though, that what most marks the \textit{Harmonies} as a cycle is neither a key scheme nor motivic unity, but rather the conceit of alternating titles taken from Lamartine and the Catholic liturgy.

\textsuperscript{627} The strong connections between Christianity and the pastoral are well established by Raymond Monelle in his \textit{The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 198-200.
Ex. 15

More typically Lamartinian, though, is Liszt’s use of pentatonicism—with its natural, bucolic connotations—in a manner suggesting the poet’s sacred landscapes. In *Invocation*, the opening motive eventually becomes a chorale-like theme, surrounded by cascading pentatonic scales:

Ex. 16

The rich sonorities of the piece seem to echo Lamartine’s text (see Chapter 3), in which the natural world bursts forth in song. Similarly, Lamartine’s *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* presents a host of natural sounds—birdsong, the roar of the ocean, rushing winds—which Liszt emulates in ever more rapid waves of pentatonicism:

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628 Here it is perhaps significant to quote Lamartine’s letter to Liszt as the latter established himself in Switzerland: “I am very glad to think that you will be traveling for several years; nature is our all-important book. Its inspirations are better than those of the salons. They are eternal, and the others transitory and often false.” Main, “Liszt and Lamartine,” p. 136.
Of course, such gestures are common throughout Liszt’s works. Downward *precipitato* pentatonic octaves abound in his output, the *Dante* sonata and *Norma* fantasy being but two examples among many. In his exhaustive study of pentatonicism, Jeremy Day-O’Connell posits that such gestures have their origin in luxurious harp glissandos: as Day-O’Connell puts it, these effects, “whatever their programmatic motivations, bespeak a certain infatuated celebration of
sound for its own sake.”629 This certainly seems to be the case in the ecstatic *Invocation*. However, Day-O’Connell also notes that Liszt most frequently employs pentatonicism in sacred or pastoral contexts, and frequently both simultaneously. He points to the shepherd’s music from the nativity scene in *Christus* as an example of this practice: “Clearly the blurring of boundaries between primitivism and religiosity implies and inherently reciprocal connection between the primitive pentatonic and the religious pentatonic.”630 Finally, Liszt himself acknowledged his frequent use of pentatonic motives to evoke plainchant, the ubiquitous “Crux fidelis” motive being the most obvious example. Commenting on the “Grail motif” from Wagner’s *Parsifal*—a similar rising pentatonic figure—he writes, “those intervals are very well known to me, as I have written them time and time again! … However, they are old Catholic intervals, and so even I did not invent them myself.”631

However, the most pronounced example of pastoralism in Liszt works with titles taken from Lamartine works is found in the symphonic poem, *Les Préludes*, roughly halfway through the piece:

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630 Ibid, p. 127.

Attempts to link this piece to Lamartine’s poetry are notoriously fraught with problems of chronology. Much of the thematic material of *Les Préludes* originated in Liszt’s earlier choral piece *Les Quatre Élémens*—a setting of words by the Marseilles poet Joseph Autran—and sketches reveal that the symphonic poem was more or less in its finished form long before Liszt thought to append Lamartine’s title. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Liszt chose this title arbitrarily; rather, it logically follows that he saw a correlation between this particular poem and the events of this piece. As Vera Micznik puts it, “in *Les Préludes*, the topics do not exactly correspond with the ideas in the order presented in Lamartine's poem, yet they touch musical conventions representing the 'pastoral' and 'struggle' themes generally enough to fit the poem that mentions them.”

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I would go even further than Micznik, because I do find a convincing parallel in this moment in particular, which follows on the heels of the most bellicose music of the piece, with trumpet signals emerging out of a galloping texture suggesting the heat of battle:

Ex. 21

In Lamartine’s *Les Préludes*, an extended battle scene commences with the words: “What bellicose sounds assault my ears! It is the cry of the bugle, the snort of the charger; the blood-soaked string resounds as the sword on the orb of the shield.”\(^{634}\) Liszt follows his battle scene with the harp and pastoral music quoted in Example 20, which remarkably fit Lamartine’s words that follow his battle: “A breeze caresses my lyre, like the wing of a bird, its voice expires in the heart, and the humble string sighs like a flexible reed” and, one stanza later: “Grasses interspersed with streams and shadows, antique cottage where my father, adored as a king, numbered his plump sheep returning from the pastures; Open up! Open up! It is I!”\(^{635}\) Alexander Main considers the order of events in Liszt’s poem reversed, equating the final Allegro Marziale section with Lamartine’s battle scene.\(^{636}\) Surely, though, this is music of triumph, and it is in fact the music of Example 21 that truly befits the ferocious battle Lamartine

\(^{634}\) “De quels sons belliqueux mon oreille est frappée ! C’est le cri du clairon, c’est la voix du coursier; La corde de sang trempée retentit comme l’épée sur l’orbe du bouclier.”

\(^{635}\) “Gazons entrecoupés de ruisseaux et d’ombrages, seuil antique où mon père, adoré comme un roi, comptait ses gras troupeaux rentrant des pâturages; Ouvrez-vous ! ouvrez-vous ! c’est moi.”

describes.

There are two other pieces of evidence strengthening this association which, to my knowledge, have not been acknowledged elsewhere. Lamartine was instrumental in launching Joseph Autran’s career, and the younger poet remained an ardent disciple of Lamartine; his first published poem is an ode to his famous mentor. It therefore follows that his poetry will use many of the same tropes as Lamartine’s, and sure enough, *Les Aquilons* is full of natural sounds and religious imagery. Strengthening this connection, we know that Lamartine was in attendance at the August 6th, 1844 concert where Liszt premiered his setting of *Les Aquilons*. It seems likely, then, that Liszt associated this music with Lamartine from the very beginning.

Unlike Liszt, Lamartine did not return to the Church himself, but his final decades mark a similar withdrawal from the injustices of the world. Feeling that the public had betrayed him, his later writings display a certain cynicism far removed from his earlier views. He referred to Hugo’s *Les Misérables* as “the saga of the scoundrel,” rejecting Hugo’s naïve idealism in favor of a certain Christian stoicism. Whereas he once admired Rousseau, he now regarded the Enlightenment author’s utopianism with suspicion. Likewise, he consciously rejected his earlier claim that “art for art’s sake is an absurdity.” In his fourth *Cours familier de litterature* of April 1856, he writes, “It is therefore not utility that defines poetry, but rather beauty.”

Still, what emerges most from studying Lamartine and Liszt’s views on music is how different they are from one another. As we have already seen, Lamartine, unlike Lamennais, believed the individual artistic disciplines were strongest when kept separate. Similarly, in his

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638 Antoine Sallés recounts this meeting in his *Le centenaire de Liszt: Liszt à Lyon* (Paris: E. Fromont, 1911).

639 Hutchings, “Another music of the soul,” p. 20.

640 “Ce n’est donc pas l’utile qui constitue la poésie, c’est le beau.”
Cours familier de literature, he expressed his opposition to program music, citing Fétis’ fear that it marked a regression to the mimetic pieces (characteristic symphonies and the like) of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{641} In many ways a classicist at heart, Lamartine held up Mozart and Rossini as his two musical ideals. We can begin to understand, then, why Liszt did not closely collaborate with him on his Harmonies project. Rather, we can perhaps interpret Liszt’s fusing of Catholicism and Lamartine’s poetry in light of Harold Bloom’s Anxiety of Influence.\textsuperscript{642} In this sense, Liszt deliberately misreads Lamartine the pantheist, reinterpreting him according to Liszt’s own religious and artistic mores.

Whatever their differences, the men maintained a lasting respect for one another. During the 1848 revolution Liszt admired Lamartine’s ability to minimize bloodshed, writing to Marie d’Agoult, “Lamartine’s manifesto which so eloquently advocates the fight for peace is one of the things in my life I have gained most satisfaction from…God save France! And Christ will deliver the World through love and liberty!”\textsuperscript{643} Even after Lamartine’s failure, Liszt still thought of him as one of France’s greatest political orators as late as 1855.\textsuperscript{644} He continued to react favorably to Lamartine’s literary endeavors, and frequently mentions installments of the Cours familier de literature in his correspondences.\textsuperscript{645} Finally, in 1859 Liszt writes of Lamartine as “certainly one of the finest and noblest natures God has created.”\textsuperscript{646}

\textsuperscript{641} Hutchings, “Another music,” p. 74.

\textsuperscript{642} Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

\textsuperscript{643} Merrick, Revolution and Religion, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{644} Liszt, Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{645} Interestingly, Pauline Pocknell notes Liszt’s favorable response to Lamartine’s use of a Cato quote on stoicism, suggesting a shared disillusionment with the events of 1848. See Liszt, Liszt and Agnes-Street Klindworth, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{646} Liszt, Selected Letters, p. 483.
For his part, Lamartine may have considered Rossini second only to Mozart in his pantheon of composers, but saw Liszt as existing on a higher plane with the Salzburg prodigy and Beethoven:

Liszt is a metaphysical musician, similar to his compatriots Mozart and Beethoven: he sings more the symphonies of heaven then the melodies of earth; he has nothing in common with Rossini...Beethoven and Liszt are...ethereal spirits. Rossini is more man: they are more angels.647

Lamartine frequently referred to Liszt as the Beethoven of the piano, as in this flowery quote from 1860: “Liszt, that Beethoven of the piano, launching his poetry in a shower of notes upon the ear and imagination of an audience besotted with sounds.” Even more ornate is this quotation from that same year, in which Lamartine reminisces about Liszt’s 1844 visit to Saint Point, with characteristic poetic license:

One of these artists was the young German [sic], Liszt, that Beethoven of the piano, for whom the pen of the first Beethoven was too slow, and who cast with both hands his spontaneous and supernatural symphonies to the winds, as a sky on serene summer evenings casts its electric lightning bolts without having gathered them in any hint of a cloud. Only the breeze could have written those vagabond improvisations, as wild as the handsome blond head of the Hoffmann of music. But that electric telegraph of the ear, which will one day capture the fleetingness of the Liszts and Paganinis, was not yet invented. Those notes were only recorded as impressions in our souls, when the artist improvised for hours on the drawing-room piano, in the moonlight, with the windows open, the curtains billowing, the candles snuffed. The gusts of the nocturnal breaths of the meadows wafted these ethereal melodies to the astonished echoes of the woods and the waters. In the entranced chalets on the highest mountain, young lads and girls opened their bedroom shutters, leaned out, forgot to sleep—and thought that the whole valley was transformed into a church organ, where the angels were playing airs from Paradise while the living slept.649

647 “Car Liszt est un musicien métaphysique, semblable à ses compatriotes Mozart et Beethoven : il chante plus de symphonies du ciel que de mélodies de la terre ; il n’a point de rapport avec Rossini. Rossini chante des sensations et des ivresses ; il a plus de verve que de sensibilité : c’est le Boccace de la musique. Laprade est en poésie ce que Beethoven et Liszt sont en musique : ce sont des esprits aériens. Rossini est plus homme : ils sont plus anges.” Quoted in Hutchings, “Another music,” p. 211.

648 “Liszt, ce Beethoven du clavier, jetant sa poésie a gerbes de notes dans l'oreille et dans l'imagination d'un auditoire ivre de sons.” Lamartine, Cours familier LI, p. 235.

649 Liszt, Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth, p. 94n.
However exaggerated Lamartine’s praise may be, it neatly encapsulates those elements of his own style that I have attempted to show in Liszt’s music. It is clear that he valued spontaneity, powerful sonorities, and a sense of God in nature above all else. He ultimately remains a more conservative figure than Liszt ever was, but he was nevertheless radical enough that Liszt could look to him as a role model in his early *Harmonies*. As he resumed work on this project in the 1840s and 1850s, his own compositional ambitions and retreat from the political sphere caused him to reorient his priorities around a more refined aesthetic that emphasized the sacred qualities of Lamartine’s poetry. That Liszt appropriated Lamartine’s name for reasons of expediency seems undeniable to me, and yet it is clear that his motivations extended far beyond mere pragmatism.

### III: Urhan, Schubert, and Mysticism

For a number of reasons, it is difficult to demonstrate the continued influence of Urhan on Liszt’s music. First, he appears but rarely in subsequent documents associated with Liszt. One example is in Liszt’s review of a concert organized by Berlioz in 1836, in which he offers qualified praise of Urhan’s experimental style: “Mlle. Denain, student at the Conservatoire, timidly sang a new composition by M. Urhan on Lamartine’s *une larme*, in which each strophe ends with a sort of sigh or wordless moan, an innovation that we still abstain from judging. To impose such compositional boldness on the public requires boldness of execution, such that cannot be expected from a young student.”

In early 1837, Liszt, Urhan, and Batta took part in

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a number of concerts at the Érard salons, notably including several Schubert pieces in their programming.\textsuperscript{651} After this point, there is also little evidence of continued correspondence between the two; the only relevant letter I have been able to locate is from Urhan’s pupil Ernest Legouvé. Writing in 1840, he thanks Liszt for dedicating three of his Schubert melodies to his wife, and informs him that Urhan eagerly awaits a response to a letter he has written Liszt.\textsuperscript{652} Given Urhan’s mental decline and subsequent death, it is perhaps not surprising to find the trail grow cold after this point.

A second difficulty is the wide variety of Schubert arrangements Liszt made throughout his later career. While Urhan may have been instrumental in cultivating his lifelong appreciation of the Viennese composer, it is difficult to see his influence in the more extroverted song transcriptions. For example, I have deliberately avoided discussing his *Die Rose*, which predates the *Apparitions* but shares little in common with them besides the use of a Schubert song as source material.\textsuperscript{653} Similarly, his arrangements of instrumental pieces by Schubert display little of the mysticism we would expect from a protégé of Urhan.

And yet, Urhan’s influence lingers on in subtle ways, both in Liszt’s Schubert arrangements, and in his importation of Schubertian gestures into his original compositions. Perhaps it makes the most sense to begin with the fourth *Soirée de Vienne*, since it is here that Liszt reused the Schubert waltz he had earlier incorporated into the third *Apparition*. As mentioned earlier, this later treatment of the theme is initially rather more straightforward:

\textsuperscript{651} For the programs of these concerts, see Moysan, *Liszt: virtuose subersif*, pp. 205-7.

\textsuperscript{652} Letter 59/21,24, from the Goethe-Schiller Archive.

\textsuperscript{653} On the other hand, Thomas Kabisch points out similarities in rhapsodic quality, and especially in the use of variation principles, the primary link he finds between Schubert’s and Liszt’s musical styles. See Thomas Kabisch, *Liszt und Schubert* (Munich: Musikverlag Emil Katzichler, 1984), p. 90.
Ex. 22, mm. 67-70

However, there are hints of Urhan’s otherworldly style, first in the echo of the melody in the accompaniment, as in the third *Apparition*, then in an unexpected early modulation to the mediant:

Ex. 23, mm. 221-26

Ultimately, the waltz drifts away as in a dream, with a final reprise of the other theme of the *Soirée* (the so-called “Atzenbrugger Tanz No. 3,” also from D. 365) jolts the listener out of his reverie:

Ex. 24, mm. 267-272
Such features recur throughout the *Soirées de Vienne*. In the sixth and most famous piece of the set, Liszt emulates Urhan in writing a new passage that extends the flat submediant modulation in Schubert’s original dance to a downward cycle of major thirds.\(^{654}\)

![Ex. 25, mm. 157-171](image)

Like in Schubert’s original dance collections, Liszt seamlessly strings together disparate waltzes to evoke memories of a dance, but is much more likely to do so through mediant relationships. Like the fourth *Soirée*, Liszt ends all but two of the nine pieces of the set with a quiet restatement of thematic material to suggest a fading memory. Particularly effective is the ending of the seventh piece, with its solemn chords suggestive of both Urhan’s music and, by extension, sacred music:

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\(^{654}\) The Schubert waltz in question is No. 13 from the D. 779 collection.
Inspired by Urhan’s example, Liszt pursues a similar path of tapping into latent sacred and otherworldly elements in his other Schubert transcriptions. Picking up on the dialogue between singer and accompanist in Schubert’s original, Liszt famously adds an additional strophe to his Ständchen (D. 957), in which the beloved seems to answer the lover from afar:
In Liszt’s transcription of Schubert’s other Ständchen (D. 889), the redemptive power of love transforms a lighthearted dance into the rising pentatonic figure already familiar for its sacred connotations:

Ex. 28

In his otherwise faithful edition of Schubert’s G-flat major Impromptu (which retains the first edition’s “easier” key of G major), Liszt recasts the reprise of the main theme in a similarly ethereal form, transporting the gorgeous melody back to the heavens whence it came:

Ex. 29

There are many more examples of such reimaginings in Liszt’s Schubert arrangements, highly reminiscent of Urhan’s own sacred treatments of seemingly secular pieces by the
Viennese composer. Of course, it is to be expected that Liszt would incorporate Schubertian gestures in original compositions to similar otherworldly effect. Fittingly, one example is to be found in *Pensée des morts*, a remarkable ascending whole-tone sequence based on the *De Profundis* chant, ending on the flat submediant:

Ex. 30

To my mind, Liszt must have been thinking of this phrase from “Du bist die ruh’,” one of the songs he transcribed in his first set of twelve Schubert lieder, published in 1838. The similarities are too striking to be coincidental, especially in the pervasive suspensions that lend an unmistakably religious aura:
Ex. 31

It goes without saying that the influence of Lamennais and Lamartine also extends far beyond merely those pieces where Liszt deliberately invokes their name. We can see Lamennais’ hand in Liszt’s creative appropriations of plainchant, especially in those instances where it takes on a more assertive, even warlike character. In a broader sense, Liszt’s universal idea of music departing the temple and embracing all of creation, reuniting with the other arts, and driving society forward also owes much to the priest’s aesthetics. In looking especially at the final version of Liszt’s *Harmonies*, it may be that Lamartine’s greatest legacy lay in his poetry’s emphasis on the merging of natural and sacred topoi. From the spring of water welling up to eternal life in Liszt’s *Jeux d’eau* to the birdsong and pentatonic chorale elements of the legend of St. Francis Assisi, Lamartine’s presence is felt in Liszt’s powerful evocations of the divine in nature.

However, to continue along this path is to wander into the realm of unsubstantiated conjecture. Liszt absorbed so many influences from such different directions that it is pointless
to reduce any one piece or passage in his compositional output to a single source. Rather, stylistic elements derived from Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan suffuse his works in a myriad of ways, only some of which were conscious on Liszt’s part. In one sense, then, their influence is no different from that of the many other writers, religious figures, politicians, and artists that he admired and emulated. In another sense, though, these three figures stand apart. Liszt encountered their ideas at a young and impressionable age and maintained close contact with them for a number of years. Furthermore, Lamennais, Lamartine and Urhan all sought to bridge the gaps between the sacred, political, and artistic realms to an unparalleled degree. Finally, Liszt explicitly acknowledged their influence in several of his most important works, and tacitly does so in dozens more. Thus, it is fair to say that their combination of sacred devotion and worldly engagement provided Liszt with the necessary inspiration to become a prophet himself.
Epilogue

One could say that the careers of Lamennais, Lamartine, Urhan and to a certain extent Liszt himself were largely defined by failure. Although prophetic in speaking out against the injustices of industrialization and the Church, Lamennais’ intransigence, while admirable, prevented him from having any lasting impact. In contrast, his former disciples Lacordaire and Montalembert pursued successful careers within the Church, furthering the cause of Catholic liberalism. Broken at last by the failure of the 1848 Revolution, Lamennais spent the rest of his days in self-imposed isolation at La Chênaie, translating the New Testament and Divine Comedy into French. He remained unwilling to reconcile with the Church, and chose to be buried in an unmarked grave.

Similarly, Lamartine reached his apex as an elder statesman in 1848, only to see his political career end in ignominy, derided as a naïve egoist. Like many, Alexis de Tocqueville saw Lamartine’s behavior during the Revolution as self-aggrandizing and opportunistic, even though he did turn down the dictatorship several times. Out of financial necessity he returned to writing, producing works of diminishing quality at a feverish pace. His literary reputation had already begun to decline in his lifetime, eventually fading to its current state. Of course, this is still better than his political legacy, which is even less highly esteemed. Marx makes no mention of Lamartine in his writings, apparently considering his political impact to have been negligible. Indeed, Lamartine himself ultimately turned his back on politics, writing in the year of his death, “I think that I will willingly become at the end of my days what I was at the beginning: a poet,

an adorator, a psalmist singing praises to the universe.” One cannot imagine a stronger repudiation of his 1857 claim to have been born for action rather than poetry.

Urhan’s story may be the saddest of all, shrouded as it is in mystery and isolation. While Lamennais and Lamartine maintained at least a belief in some sort of creator, Urhan’s despair seems to have been born out of nihilism. While it is no great loss that his music remains forgotten and unperformed, it is indeed tragic that so important a musician—so integral to the performance of important pieces by Berlioz and Meyerbeer, and to the dissemination of Beethoven’s and Schubert’s music in France—died neglected and remains so to this day.

Finally, Liszt himself failed to achieve many of the artistic goals he set out to accomplish. He ultimately turned his back on radical politics, unwilling to risk his life, career, and reputation writing inflammatory pieces. His views seem to have shifted noticeably to the right with age: for example, in 1867 he writes to Agnes Street-Klindworth describing Napoleon III as “Ce grand homme et très grand souverain.” In this Liszt was merely following a broader trend of disillusionment within the artistic community following the events of 1848. As Manuèle Wasserman writes: “The Revolution of 1848, in particular, an event which had marked the high-point of engagement on the part of artists, became after its disastrous failure a symbol of the shattering of the Romantic will to change the world. During the second half of the century, more and more artists abandoned politics and art for art’s sake took precedence over art engage.”

Recognizing the folly of violent insurrection, Liszt never fulfilled the promise of such earlier, politically engaged experiments as De Profundis and Lyon.

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658 Stricker, *Franz Liszt*, p. 43.

Similarly, Liszt’s sacred music still awaits a properly appreciative audience. As Paul Merrick notes, the post-1848 years mark a return to the spiritual for Liszt, culminating in his significant and singular contributions to sacred music. Much of the impulse for this later project derives from Liszt’s Paris years, particularly his interactions with Lamennais and Urhan. As Dorothy Hagan writes, “…it is to be noticed that Liszt’s oratorios of 1860 were the practical outcome of theoretical speculations that Liszt shared with his fellow Lamennaisian, Joseph d’Ortigue. Use of the fine arts in the propagation of moral principle and quest for a new musical vocabulary to articulate the sentiments of love and faith that had not been experienced before was the message also of Liszt’s “Church Music of the Future.” However, like all prophets Liszt was not accepted in his hometown, and he saw the Paris performance of his Gran Mass greeted with disdain and incomprehension. Performances of Liszt’s choral works continue to be rare events, and his sacred music receives far less attention than it deserves.

Liszt’s broader ambitions to achieve renown as a great composer also ended in frustration. He himself acknowledged the Weimar years as a failure, with hostile audiences unable or unwilling to accept his formal and harmonic innovations. He continued to receive plaudits for his pianism, but few took his compositions seriously. To a certain extent, the same is true today, with an inordinate focus on his barnstorming piano pieces, at the expense of the avant-garde works he considered his greatest contribution. Perhaps Marie d’Agoult—embittered though she was—was correct when, in her infamous novel Nélida, she described a thinly veiled Liszt (here the artist Guermann) as undisciplined and incapable of concentration, a man who “read all kinds of books, good and bad, sublime and detestable, without method or care.

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660 Hagan, French Musical Criticism, p. 44.
Disorder became his habit of mind; thirst for the impossible consumed his heart.”\textsuperscript{661} Even the most ardent supporter of Liszt would have to admit to a kernel of truth in d’Agoult’s words, faced as we are with dazzling works of genius juxtaposed against works of frustrating unevenness.

Happily, I have no intention of ending with such gloomy pronouncements, for I ultimately believe that each of these men ultimately succeeded in their mission. Though they failed to find fertile soil in his lifetime, many of the seeds scattered by Lamennais finally took root and blossomed in the future. As one of the priest’s students remarked, “the great crime of M. de La Mennais is to have been ahead of the times.”\textsuperscript{662} Writing in 1835, the author anticipates that Lamennais will be vindicated in a century, guilty only of being right too soon. Indeed, as Waldemar Gurian and Thomas Kohler have both observed, the Catholic Church ultimately followed Lamennais’ lead in breaking with state alliances, addressing broader social issues, and better responding to the needs of laypeople.\textsuperscript{663}

Similarly, Lamartine may continue to be marginalized as a poet and politician, but he was an important figure in both areas. He served as an important link between the restrained, universal order of classical poetry, and the impassioned, personal freedom of Romanticism. The spontaneous, dreamlike qualities of his poetry informed the work of the symbolists, and at his best he produced works of lasting quality. His political message may have been too incoherent to endure, but it was nonetheless motivated by noble sentiments of universal suffrage and respect


\textsuperscript{662} “Le grand crime de M. de La Mennais c’est d’avoir devancé le temps.” White, \textit{L’Avenir de La Mennais}, p. 181.

for the sanctity of life. We may never know how much his actions in 1848 helped to stave off further bloodshed, and to prevent the descent into anarchy that was his greatest fear.

Urhan deserves credit first and foremost for his role in promoting the music of Beethoven and Schubert in Paris, at a time when their works were either unknown or misunderstood. His inspired interpretations—in performance, in word, and in recomposition—of their music helped to win it an audience, and to call attention to sacred attributes that had previously gone unnoticed. His efforts to rejuvenate church music sparked Liszt’s own interest in the subject, and he helped the young composer through one of the most difficult periods of his life.

We can never fully understand the degree to which Lamennais, Lamartine, and Urhan impacted Liszt’s spiritual and compositional growth. I have tried to provide concrete evidence of instances where a clear pattern of influence is discernible, and have attempted to argue that this influence extended beyond these examples. In so doing, I have made the case that a fuller understanding of Liszt and his music must take into account both broader issues of politics, religion, and art in the society in which he lived, and a deeper awareness of the central figures with whom he interacted. Typical evaluations of Liszt’s Paris years focus on the undeniable importance of Paganini and Berlioz as role models, and for good reason. And yet, while these may be the most obvious choices from a stylistic standpoint, the relationships I have explored in this study ultimately tell us more about who Liszt was, what he believed, and how he managed to create music that continues to amaze listeners with its revolutionary fervor, its religious sentiment, and its visionary progressivism.
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