

LISZT IN BERLIN

BY RUDOLF VON BEYER

[The manuscript of this article forms part of the literary remains of the German poet and novelist, Rudolf von Beyer, who was in Berlin when Liszt visited the city in 1842.]

From *Vossische Zeitung*, March 22
(BERLIN LIBERAL DAILY)

LISZT was in Berlin! One concert followed close upon another in the Singakademie, in the Opera House, in the Aula, in the Hôtel de Russie, everywhere. The Berliners, especially the women, were fascinated by Liszt, went quite mad over him. Whoever could scrape up a thaler — or two thalers for an orchestra seat — simply had to go and hear the ‘Orpheus of the modern world.’ The leading salons opened their doors to the ‘King of the Empire of Tone’ and the best society took him to its heart. The most interesting women competed for his favor, the plutocracy entertained him at luxurious dinners, and in spite of it all Liszt remained the careless rich man pouring out the treasures of his genius with both hands. Cornelius was sick and longed to hear him. Liszt was quite willing to go to him and play. Bettina von Arnim, the ‘child’ of Goethe’s letters, still intellectually inclined, mothered him and took charge of his free hours. One morning he went with her to visit the sorrowing family of a great artist who had recently died. Liszt entered, serious and reserved, respecting their sorrow, a man of fine feeling through and through.

‘Well,’ said the ‘child’ suddenly, ‘are you going to keep your gloves on to-day?’

‘No, not if you wish —’ and Liszt sat down at the piano.

‘Play something cheerful now,’ whis-

pered Bettina to him, and instantly jolly waltzes were dancing from the keys, and the hands and feet and head of the virtuoso danced in time to them so merrily that joy revisited the house for the first time and every face began to wear a more cheerful aspect. Liszt did not say farewell, but promised another visit and — kept his word, *una cosa rara* with great geniuses.

Liszt’s compelling appeal lay in the unusual combination of a God-given artistry and a personal charm which did not find its least important expression in his limitless charities. Money flowed to him and he received costly gifts here in Berlin, but at the same time he was making substantial contributions to charitable purposes and giving freely to the needy who swarmed about him. For example, he made up his mind to give a concert for the benefit of the invalid fund of the University on the very morning preceding his departure, playing in the overcrowded hall of the hotel, at two thalers a person. At one concert every ticket had been taken. Two students who had come from Leipzig to hear him went to Liszt to see whether he could get them tickets. Liszt explained regretfully that all business arrangements were in the hands of his secretary and that he could do nothing for them.

‘But if you have an hour to spare,’ said the artist pleasantly, ‘just sit down and I ’ll play for you here, so that

you may not have come to Berlin in vain.'

Pictures of the musician were sold on every hand. One boy selling plaster casts was advised to go to the Hôtel de Russie, where he would dispose of a good many. On the steps he met a gentleman with flowing locks. 'Won't you buy a Liszt?'

'What do they cost?'

'Two and a half Silbergroschen.'

'Am I as cheap as all that?' laughed Liszt and gave him a thaler.

The piano-movers got four thalers every time they worked for him and received in all nearly one hundred and thirty. It soon became known that he never replied to a begging letter under a thaler. The managers of an organization for poor relief, the *Fons Caritatis*, appealed to him and the master consented to give them a concert. He played like a magician. Poems and laurel wreaths filled the air. Liszt took up the laurels and laid them on Beethoven's *Sinfonie*. . . .

Immediately after the first concert some ladies were very anxious to steal the broken strings of the piano. Gentle hands embroidered him a pillow and slippers. People tried to get possession of his gloves, or a line, or a signature. I have before me a clever comic paper depicting in caricatures the Liszt madness among the ladies. It has the titles: 'A Liszt Fantasy,' 'Melody,' and 'Three Riders Were Riding.' The first picture shows a four-horse team drawing a coach — Liszt's 'cash wagon.' The coachman is feeding his horses with laurel wreaths. Underneath are the words: —

*Der Wagen ist mit Geld gefüllt,
Mit Lorbeer der Kutscher die Pferde stillt.
Er braucht kein Heu zu kaufen fürs Vieh,
Sein Herr hat Kränze genug für sie!*

(With gold the coach is loaded down.
The coachman to his horses feeds,
Instead of hay, a laurel crown —
The master has plenty for his steeds).

The second picture shows a lady kneeling before the artist: —

*'Meine Dam', was wollen Sie doch von mir?'
'Ach, liegen werd' ich so lang' allhier,
Bis ich geküsst die reizende Hand
Die so zu Herzen zu spielen verstand.'*

('Dear lady, what do you seek of me?'
'Oh, I will never rise from my knee
Till I have kissed those charming hands
Of him who the heartstrings understands!')

The last picture of all shows two ladies on a divan, contemplating with melancholy glances Liszt's portrait, while their maid on her knees is also gazing at the beloved features: —

*Die eine sieht links, die andere rechts;
Der Jungfer von beiden schlägt selbst das Herz.
Herr Liszt hat allen die Herzen entwandt,
Es reicht eine jede so gern ihm die Hand!
O weh, o weh, o weh!*

(One to the left and one to the right,
And both the damsels' hearts a-beating.
Herr Liszt has snared all hearts at sight,
Each lady is his for the merest greeting.
Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!)

The farewell to the idolized artist was taken in charge by the ladies and the students. He was accorded the unusual academic honor of an especially selected festival committee. A deputation of students waited upon him at the Hôtel de Russie, in the Oranienburger Strasse, where Liszt was living, and — amid unending shouts and applause from the people, the waving of handkerchiefs by elaborately dressed ladies, and a deafening fanfare from an orchestra — escorted the artist to an open coach drawn by six horses. Two students sat with the guest of honor between them and three others sat opposite him, while the coach was driven to Unter den Linden, where it met the committee and the procession. Then the parade moved toward the castle in the following order: first came a student as marshal, then gendarmes, then the 'Claudian' six-wheel wagon with a uniformed

band, then Liszt's coach completely surrounded by mounted students, and after it an endless trail of other carriages, some of them with four horses, while the post alone had ordered one hundred and twenty horses.

The *Via triumphalis* was lined with ladies in brilliant gala dresses and the fair waved their hands and sobbed in every window. Places in the windows were let at two louis d'or apiece. Liszt was kept busy returning the greetings. The procession went through Königsstrasse, Landsberger, and Frankfurter, to the Frankfurter Thor and then through the Friedrichsfeld. Baron von

Treskow, the hospitable proprietor of the castle, — in which Queen Louise had often visited, — when the students requested permission to hold a *Kommers* and farewell banquet in the castle gardens in honor of the artist, offered to entertain Herr Liszt and all the rest as his own guests, and promised five hogsheads of good red wine plus three hundred bottles of champagne. Polizeipräsident Puttkammer came in person to make the necessary arrangements. 'How shall I bring myself to say farewell to Berlin?' the virtuoso is said to have remarked, but his words were drowned amid loud hurrahs for Liszt.

OLIVE SCHREINER: A WOMAN OF GENIUS

BY G. LOWES DICKINSON

[The present article appears apropos of the recently published *Life of Olive Schreiner*, by S. C. Cronwright, her husband.]

From *The Nation and the Athenæum*, April 26
(LONDON LIBERAL WEEKLY)

It is not very likely that anyone under thirty has read anything written by Olive Schreiner; and perhaps no one, or very few, will read her in the future, for her work is of her time, not of all time. Yet, as is recorded by all who knew her, she had that unusual and powerful quality at which we fling the word 'genius.' We cannot define it; but we recognize it, although we may be hard put to it to say what it is. The word is applied to people of very different qualities; we need not here attempt to say what is the common element. Perhaps it is simply vitality.

Olive Schreiner was not a bit like

Shakespeare, or Leonardo, or Goethe. She was more like Shelley, except that she was not a poet; and she had something of Joan of Arc. Whatever her view, it was always passionately her own. She had not mere opinions, or prejudices, as most people have; nor had she wisdom like Goethe, nor comprehensiveness like Shakespeare. What she had was conviction. Here, for instance, is a characteristic scene. She was talking to Rhodes, and something was said that aroused her. Whereupon 'she broke into one of her tremendous storms; so violent was she in her utterances — which were never personal,