

Lock Haven University
Official Release

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LHU will celebrate the 200th birthday of Franz Liszt
All-Liszt piano recital October 22

On Saturday, October 22, Dr. David Curtin of the Lock Haven University Performing Arts Department will present a recital dedicated to the works of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), whose 200th birthday will be celebrated on that day. The concert begins at 3:00 p.m. in the Price Performance Center on the LHU campus.

Curtin, a concert pianist and Steinway Artist who has played the works of Liszt and many other composers all over the world, explained the significance of Franz Liszt in music history. "First of all," says Curtin, "Liszt was undoubtedly the greatest pianist of his long lifetime, and most pianists would agree, the greatest who ever lived. Of course, 'greatest pianist' is a very subjective thing to judge, and there have been many outstanding pianists since Liszt's time. Liszt died right at the dawn of recording technology, so there are no recordings of his playing. But nonetheless, if you read contemporary accounts of his playing by people who actually heard him--some who were themselves musical geniuses and incredible pianists, like Chopin, Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Brahms, etc.--all were absolutely astounded by Liszt's way with the piano."

Curtin went on, "Liszt was a larger-than-life figure in many ways. In his younger days, he led the 19th-century equivalent of a rock-star lifestyle, with legions of fans, numerous scandalous love affairs, and three children born out of wedlock. His often demonic playing led some people to believe that he must have sold his soul to the devil. Yet he was a deeply and sincerely pious Catholic, who later in life took minor orders in the church, becoming an Abbé and a confidant of the Pope."

In summarizing Liszt's place in music history, Curtin stated, "Liszt is one of the most important composers of piano music, and a major contributor to the orchestral repertoire as well. He was extremely forward-thinking and innovative, and his later music in particular is often highly experimental, anticipating 20th-century trends like Impressionism and atonality."

Saturday's concert will begin with two of Curtin's piano students at LHU, Jessica Walizer and Rebeccah Leiby, performing a 2-piano version of Liszt's best-known piece, the Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, a piece which is often associated with Bugs Bunny, Donald Duck, Tom & Jerry, etc. Following this, Dr. Curtin will perform nine works of Liszt, briefly discussing each work. The concert is free and open to the public, and will begin at precisely 3:00 p.m.

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