

Mária Eckhardt:

”Liszt’s relations with the Scandinavian composers of his time”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I should like to thank the Organizational Committee for the great honour of inviting me to this exciting international Grieg conference, into the Eternal City, to speak for a most selected audience. Let me say right at the beginning that, while I am a great admirer and lover of the Scandinavian countries, especially of Norway. I am not a specialist of Scandinavian music, even less a Grieg specialist. As a Liszt scholar, however, I have dealt with the topic „Liszt’s relations with the Scandinavian composers of his time”. Ten years ago, I took part in an international conference entitled „Liszt und die Nationalitäten” (Liszt and the Nationalities) in Eisenstadt (Austria). The main topic discussed there was the importance of national cultures for Franz Liszt, their influence on his music – and, from the opposite point of view, Liszt’s importance / significance for and influence on the development of national cultures in different countries. It was evident for me that while examining the influence of national cultures on Liszt, hardly any Scandinavian country could be mentioned. But was this true in the opposite direction, too? – I asked myself. The question was all the more justified, because in Franz Liszt’s Budapest music library – now in possession of the Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum – the presence of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish composers, such as the number of Scandinavian texts and editions among the 2500 volumes was really striking for me. I also remembered having come upon several Scandinavian names in Liszt’s correspondence, and I knew that he had several students from the countries of Norse.

When I began collecting material, it has turned out that there was too much to say. Thus I restricted myself to two apparently most important countries: Denmark and Norway. It is true that Liszt had students not only from these two countries, but from Finland and Sweden as well; he knew personally such important Swedish composers as Franz Berwald and August Södermann; he often listened to Swedish and Finnish singers, for example to the Finn Johanna von Schultz, Rossini’s favourite, or the Swedish „nightingale” Jenny Lind, later wife of the composer Otto Goldschmidt, and the famous Swedish Women’s Vocal Quartet which visited and sang even in Hungary. We also know that Liszt’s music greatly influenced the development of Swedish and Finnish music, especially in the late 19th century – the intermediaries of this influence were sometimes international Liszt pupils like Sophie Menter, Alfred Reisenauer, Hans von Bülow. But the Danish and Norwegian connections were much closer and biographically much easier to document.

Now, ten years later, when I received the invitation to the present conference entitled „Grieg in Rome”, I thought that you, who certainly heard much about the relationship between Grieg and Liszt, might also be interested for this somewhat larger-scale topic. I cannot help repeating some facts, which are evident for you, but I hope to bring some new information and to cast light on well-known facts from another angle: that of Franz Liszt.

*

Of the Scandinavian countries, Franz Liszt visited only Denmark. In July 1841 he travelled from Hamburg to Copenhagen, accompanied by the composer and organist **Johann Peter Emilius Hartmann (1805-1900)**, one of the most important representatives of the Danish romanticism of the time. Hartmann was held in great esteem by Grieg, as the first to pronounce the deepest thoughts, which echoed later by a whole generation of young composers of the North. While in Copenhagen (from 14 to 26 July 1841), Liszt found the Danish Court and especially King Christian VIII very musical. I quote from one of his „Bachelier” letters: „*A king who loves and listens to music’ Truly, this is a rare phenomenon in our times...*” On his visit to the Church of Our Lady where he admired Thorvaldsen’s

statues, he was overcome by deep emotions on hearing the Danish organist **Christoph Ernst Friedrich Weyse (1774-1842)** playing Johann Sebastian Bach's music: „*he knew how to recapture the learned inspirations and enduring solemnity of Johann Sebastian! I was nearly moved to tears several times as I listened.*” Weyse belonged to an earlier generation, to the same as **Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832)** who was no more alive when Liszt visited Denmark, but his etudes are present in Liszt's library. This generation, which was still imbued with the tradition of Viennese Classicism, was the first to transfer something from the national tradition into art music. Johann Peter Emilius Hartmann went much further: he tried to compose complete „national operas”, and national elements penetrated also his ballets and incidental music. His operatic masterpiece 'Liden Kirsten' [Little Christine] written after Hans Christian Andersen's text and premiered in Copenhagen in 1846, was brought to Germany ten years later by Liszt, who was at that time court conductor in Weimar. According to Andersen's diary, Liszt's original idea was to perform Hartmann's and Andersen's earlier opera, the „Ravnen” (1832), but when a German version of „Liden Kirsten” was prepared, he decided for the latter. The first performance of „Klein Karin” on 17 January 1857 in Weimar was conducted by the second conductor, Carl Stör, as Liszt was in Vienna to conduct at the Mozart Centenary festivities.

In Liszt's Budapest library no score of Johann Peter Emilius Hartmann can be found, but there is one by Hartmann's son-in-law, **Niels Wilhelm Gade (1817-1890)**, the overture of his Singspiel „Mariotta”. Gade's name became well known all over Europe, probably because he was conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig from 1844 to 1848, first at Mendelssohn's side, later as his successor. Gade's early works show some flavour of Danish national music, but later he was much more influenced by the Mendelssohn-type German romanticism. For the younger generation, which Grieg belonged to, Gade seemed too conservative. After 1848 he played a leading role in the musical life of his country, first as leader of the Copenhagen Musical Association, then as director and professor of the Copenhagen Conservatory opened in 1866. Gade and Liszt were not tied by bonds of close friendship but by mutual esteem: Gade dedicated to Liszt his Piano Sonata Op. 28 in e minor (composed in 1840, revised and published in 1854), while Liszt conducted Gade's „Spring fantasy” and 3rd Symphony in Weimar.

Gade's brother-in-law and his successor in the post of head of the Copenhagen Musical Association was **Emil Hartmann (1836-1898)**, son of Johann Peter Emilius Hartmann. Liszt's library holds 3 scores by him: the overture „Eine nordische Heerfahrt”, his „Nordische Volkstänze” and a Trio-Serenade, all published in Berlin. Emil Hartmann's works were well received in Germany in the 1870's. According to later criticism, however, he was a Mendelssohn-epigone, and the „Nordic” element was only an outward appearance in his music. There is no knowledge of how his scores got into Liszt's library, whether as donations or as Liszt's own acquisitions.

On the other hand, we know well how Liszt got into possession of the „*Concertstück in Es für die Orgel, Componist und Herrn Abbé, Dr. Franz Liszt hochachtungsvoll gewidmet von G. Matthison-Hansen, Organist der Trinitatiskirche in Copenhagen, Op. 19*”. According to an extant correspondence from early 1878, Matthison-Hansen sent the manuscript to Liszt before its publication. Liszt suggested some improvements, extensions and the addition of registration, as well as changing the original title „Fantasy for organ”, as the piece was too regular in form to be called fantasy. Liszt also offered Matthison-Hansen the possibility to include the piece into an organ repertory he edited jointly with one of his German pupils and colleagues, the organist Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg. The Danish composer and organist, **Johan Gotfred Matthison-Hansen (1832-1909)** was an intimate friend and collaborator of Grieg and his friends, Rikard Nordraak and Emil Horneman: in 1865 they had established together the concert society „Euterpe” in Copenhagen, for the sake of supporting progressive

contemporary music. As a composer, Matthison-Hansen was not particularly bold, but he was a great fan of Wagner, Liszt and the New German School. No wonder that in 1877 he was invited to Hanover to perform his 1st Organ Fantasy Op. 15 at the 14th „Tonkünstler Versammlung” (Musicians’ Meeting) of the „Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein” (General German Musical Association). This meeting, taking place in the presence of Liszt (one of the founders and permanent life-blood of the association), was the first to be attended by several Scandinavian composers, in addition to German musicians. This tendency, much in Liszt’s spirit, was maintained in the following years.

While Liszt encouraged the talented Matthison-Hansen, he expressed very politely his negative opinion to another Danish composer, **Johan Adam Krygell (1835-1915)** whose festival symphony „Souvenir de Rome” he considered epigonous. *„Even the sublime Beethoven must not be copied; as it is necessary to continue composing music, one has to find his own ways to step forward.”*

There were, in fact, Scandinavian composers who found their way to progress in music, the most significant being **Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)**, whom Liszt did not fail to appreciate and support from the very first time as he got to know some of his music.

Even in recent Liszt literature (in Alan Walker’s excellent Liszt-biography) Grieg is said to have first met Liszt in 1870 when – supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Education – he got a travel grant to Rome. However, I read in John Horton’s „Grieg” monography (Master Musicians Series, 1974) that Grieg saw Liszt already in late 1865 when he made a visit to Rome („he was mildly scandalised at the sight of Liszt making sheep’s eyes at the ladies”, p. 24.) Now as at this conference we have got the Italian edition of Grieg’s Diary, and the English translation of the 1865-66 entries dealing with his stay in Rome, I find 3 very important entries concerning Liszt, which are totally new for me – and I should like to comment them.

The first entry, on December 20, 1865, is the one Horton refers to, although not quite exactly: *„Concert by Pinelli. Saw Liszt strutting about for some young ladies.”* The second entry, on January 4, 1866, is much more important: *„Went to [the name of the church is omitted] on the capitoline Hill at 3 PM and heard a piece of church music by Franz Liszt for castrata, natural male voices, and harmonium. Liszt himself led the performance. That is to say: Although someone else was conducting, Liszt led the whole affair with his black-gloved fingers that one moment were waving in the air, the next moment were busy on the organ.*

The composition – a Stabat mater dolorosa – is a sad proof of the decline of the newer German music. For it would be hard to find a more affected, pale, formless, shallow piece than this. It is unsound and untrue from beginning to end. The beginning did impress me, however; it was brilliant, mystical, and demonic – as Liszt can be in inspired passages here and there. But the whole piece remained in this underworld. All too soon it became evident that he was not capable of mastering his thoughts – indeed, that he was rather the slave of those thoughts, that he is devoid of style, that he soars for one moment only to sink all the deeper in the next. For to employ trite, highly strung, platitudinous Wagnerian opera reminiscences in a Stabat mater – that I would call to sink deep. Then comes an utterly banal Italian phrase, after that a completely trivial sequence that is not even deftly placed in the context; for one is immediately disabused of the illusion, either by some banality or other or by something boring or baroque.

This much is clear, that if we do not fight with all our might against this genre, the outlook for music in our time is very bad. It is almost as false as the vulgar Italian school – yes, perhaps even more dangerous – because it ventures into an area that is of interest to musicians, namely philosophy. But if true art – consisting in pure immediacy and sparkling poetry – is to progress, then philosophy must be abandoned, and the sooner the better, in my opinion.

The poor Germans present at the concert were very unhappy. Their eloquence vanished; they hung their heads and left the church without saying a word. Liszt looked splendid in his abbot's garb; one could see the visionary written all over him."

This passage needs commentary. First of all, let us precise the place and the programme: the church was the *Santa Maria in Ara Caeli*, and the piece in question was the *Stabat mater speciosa*, Nr. 3 of the oratorio *Christus*, the counterpart of *Stabat mater dolorosa*, Nr. 12 of the same work. The latter, from the 3rd part (*Passion and Resurrection*) is scored for soli, choir and full orchestra with organ, while the *Stabat mater speciosa*, Maria's happy song at the cradle of Infant Jesus, from the 1st part (*Christmas Oratorio*) is for mixed choir and organ; the instrument has only a secondary role. Grieg's error is understandable, since this paraphrase of the well-known hymn *Stabat mater dolorosa* had not been set into music before Liszt by renowned composers of art music. In January 1866, the oratorio *Christus* was still a „work in progress”, and the *Stabat mater dolorosa* has not been composed yet. – We also know that this was the first performance of the *Stabat mater speciosa* composed in October 1865 and put on the programme for the sake of the Franciscan father Marcellino da Civezza (the *Ara Caeli* was the church of the Franciscans), and Liszt himself was very unhappy and unsatisfied with the performance. No wonder: this piece, highly new in style needs a perfect intonation and a subtle musicality, which is hardly to imagine at the ensemble described by Grieg. In fact, even six years later when the whole *Christmas Oratorio* was performed in Vienna by renowned artists (thoroughly coached and excellently conducted by Anton Rubinstein), Liszt wrote about some difficulties in intonation – and remembered that the piece had been quasi „massacred” in the *Ara Coeli*... Here I have to quote Alan Walker's appropriate remark about composers who are „performer-proof” (like Bach or Mozart) and those who are not (Liszt belongs to the latter). If Bach or Mozart is performed poorly, people say „what a bad performer!” – whereas in case of a bad performance of a Liszt piece, they say „what a bad work!” Obviously, Grieg was no exception, and even for him, with his extreme musicality, it was impossible to appreciate Liszt's totally new musical ideas (which, in fact, have a philosophical background, but they root genuinely in music) realized in such a poor performance.

The third entry in Grieg's diary, on January 31, 1866, is much more positive: „*Went to Pinelli's concert in the afternoon. One of the most interesting concerts I have attended. A concerto for piano by Liszt played by Sgambati was well suited to show the composer as well as the performer in the most favorable light. This piece is the best thing I have ever heard by Liszt. Brilliant from beginning to end. He slings our colossal masses with a demonic power. But it is a pity that the modulations are confused and too frequent; if they were used more sparingly the effect would be doubled.*” Grieg does not specify, which of the two concertos (No. 1 E-flat major, or Nr. 2. A major) was played, and the Lisztian has another problem: was there an orchestra or a second piano for the accompaniment? Neither of the two concertos is known in a piano solo arrangement.

In any case, in 1865-66 there was probably no meeting of Grieg and Liszt in the mutual sense of the word: at this point, Liszt did not seem to have knowledge of Grieg's person and music. Their friendship began when Liszt wrote a letter in Rome on 29 December 1868 and sent it to Grieg in Christiania, where the composer lived in artistic isolation, without due recognition of his music (after happy years spent in Copenhagen). Liszt wrote as follows (I quote his French letter in Adrian William's translation):

„Sir, I am glad to be able to tell you of the sincere pleasure it has given me to read your Sonata (Op. 8.) It bears testimony to a vigorous, reflective, and inventive talent of excellent quality – which to achieve the heights has only to take its natural course. I am pleased to think that in your own country you are meeting with the success and encouragement you deserve. These will not be wanting elsewhere either; and if you come to Germany this winter I

cordially invite you to stop for a while in Weimar, so that we may get to know one another. I am, Sir, your most sincerely F. Liszt."

The same Adrian Williams translated Grieg's letter to his biographer Aimar Grönvold in which he acknowledges the extraordinary importance of this letter:

„Liszt's letter brought sunlight into my universe. There was at that time no one at home who cared anything at all about me as a creative artist. I had expressed my despondent feelings in a letter to a Roman friend; he had spoken of it to Liszt, who he knew was warmly interested in me, and it shows a very noble trait in Liszt that he sat down immediately at his writing table, conscious of the good he could thereby accomplish. I had thought it worthwhile to apply for a travel grant but had little hope of getting one, since I was in the black books of our conservative musicians and the rest of the ruling dilettanti. But Liszt's letter worked wonders."

According to Horton, Liszt's „generous testimonial appears to have been quite unsolicited, though perhaps prompted by some well-wisher of Grieg's among the Scandinavian community in Rome who may have brought Grieg's Sonata for Violin and Piano Op. 8. to Liszt's attention". Independently from Horton, I came to the same conclusion that Grieg's well-wisher may have been the Danish pianist and composer **Niels Ravnkilde (1823-1890)**. Liszt's Budapest music library holds 9 volumes by Ravnkilde: piano pieces, romances for voice and piano, pieces for violin and piano; among them, 6 with the composer's handwritten dedications to Liszt, from the years between 1863 and 1884. This testifies that Ravnkilde was in a continuous contact with Liszt. As for Grieg: according to the 1865-66 Diary, Ravnkilde was one of his most important friends in Rome. And when in late 1869, supported by Liszt's letter, he finally was granted the state scholarship to go to Rome and spent a longer time there, it was the same Ravnkilde, the president of the Scandinavian Association in Rome who mediated Liszt's invitation to him.

I am sure you are all familiar with the long letters Grieg wrote to his parents from Rome and, since they will probably be quoted several times during the present conference, and I will restrict myself to some important passages relating to Liszt. Before doing so, let me quote (again in William's translation) from Grieg's report to the Norwegian Government as a summary:

„The thing that has been for me personally of the greatest importance is my acquaintance and association with Franz Liszt. [...] I have learned to know in him not only the most talented of all pianists, but what is more – a phenomenon of spirit and greatness, with no limits in the domain of art. I brought him several of my compositions, he played them and it was of the greatest interest to me to observe how it was the national element in them that first startled – then roused him to enthusiasm. Such a triumph for my endeavours and my nationalist outlook is of itself worth the journey."

In his letter of 17 February 1870, Grieg writes his parents about a planned excursion to Tivoli in company of some of his Scandinavian friends. (You know that Liszt spent much time in the Villa d'Este there, a palace used by his friend Cardinal Gustav von Hohenlohe at the time. His famous piano piece 'Les jeux d'eaux de la Villa d'Este' and the two threnodies 'Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este' were inspired by this wonderful place.) In addition to Ravnkilde, Grieg mentions another Danish musician-friend, **August Winding (1835-1899)**: he wants to get back some of his own scores from him, in order to be able to show and present them to Liszt. (Let me add in parenthesis that, according to items in Liszt's estate library, Winding also presented Liszt with four volumes of his beautiful piano pieces imbued with northern melancholy (Op. 10 and 15), one of them with following dedication: „*Herrn Abbé Franz Liszt mit der tiefsten Verehrung von Aug. Winding. Feb. 70.*") The three works Grieg took for the first encounter with Liszt were the Sonata Op. 13 in G major for violin and piano (composed in 1867), the „Funeral March for Rikard Nordraak" (EG 107) and a volume of

romances and ballades for voice and piano on texts by Andreas Munch, Op. 9. They are all extant in Liszt's Budapest library, the two latter with Grieg's handwritten dedication: „*Herrn dr. F. Liszt in Verehrung von Edv. Grieg.*”

About the first meeting with Liszt who took place, however, not in Tivoli but in Rome, in the Cloister Santa Francesca Romana where Liszt used to teach, Grieg wrote to his parents on 17 February 1870 as follows:

„He came smilingly towards me and said in the most genial way: 'We have corresponded a little, have we not?' I told him that I had his letter to thank for being where I was, which drew from him a roar of laughter like that of Ole Bull.”

Let us stop at here for a moment. It is well-known that the world-famous Norwegian violin virtuoso and composer **Ole Bull (1810-1880)** launched Grieg on his musical career when he persuaded the parents to send the talented boy to Leipzig. He was Grieg's model in idealist love and indefatigable activity for Norwegian national culture. It may be less known that the paths of Ole Bull and Franz Liszt often crossed and they made friends. They played together Beethoven's „Kreutzer-Sonate” several times and Liszt held Bull in high esteem. He wrote to Mme d'Agoult in 1840: „*He is a great artist; or, at least, has all the stuff of a great artist in him. And you know that I count barely four such in Europe. [...] He is a kind of savage, very ignorant of counterpoint and fugue, but a savage of genius who is brimming over with charming and original ideas.*”

Back to Grieg's account about his first visit at Liszt. He handed him over the scores, and Liszt „*began to turn over the leaves; that is to say, he read the first part of the sonata through cursorily, and that there was no humbug about the reading was shown by the significant nod, 'Bravo' or 'Very fine!' with which he marked the best bits. My spirits began to soar; but when he now asked me to put the whole thing together for the piano my courage altogether failed me. [...] But there was no help for it. So I began on his beautiful American grand piano [- the 1867 Chickering: it is now in the Budapest Liszt Memorial Museum] Right at the beginning, where the violin breaks in with a little baroque but national passage, he interrupted: 'Oh, how saucy! I like that. Once again, please! And when the violin the second time slips into the Adagio, he played the violin part higher up on the piano in octaves, with such beautiful expression, so remarkably true and singing, that I smiled inwardly. These were the first notes I heard from Liszt. And now we went dashing into the Allegro, he the violin, I the piano.*”

Grieg later played for Liszt the Minuet of his „Humoresques”, which Liszt reciprocated with his own „Triomphe funèbre de Tasse”, the Tasso Funeral March, a composition he had just completed, then returned to Grieg's Violin sonata and played it alone on the piano. „*And how, then, did he play? With majesty, beauty, genius beyond compare in interpretation. I believe I laughed, laughed like an idiot. And when I stammered some words of admiration, he mumbled: 'You can surely expect an old hand like me to manage a bit of sight-reading.' [...] Then finally I played the Funeral March, which was also to his taste...*”

Grieg speaks here about a composition which he wrote in memory of his early deceased Norwegian friend, **Rikard Nordraak (1842-1866)**, whom he characterized as follows: „*Through him I got to know the Norwegian folksongs and my own nature. We swore against Scandinavism enervated by Mendelssohn, and we embarked boldly and enthusiastically upon the new way on which the whole northern school continues going.*”

Nordraak left only a few numbers of compositions, but we all know that the Norwegian national hymn is among them! In Liszt's library we find his „Scherzo Capriccio” from the series „Elegante Salonstücke u. Fantasien für Pianoforte”.

To finish his first account of his encounter with Liszt to his parents, Grieg wrote that the following day „*the Italians Sgambati and Pinelli played my 1st Violin Sonata at a matinée where the whole fashionable world was present. Liszt came in the middle of the concert, just before my sonata, and that was well. For I do not put down the applause the sonata received*

to my own credit. The thing is that when Liszt claps they all clap – each louder than the other.”

On the second visit, some six weeks later, when Winding, Sgambati and others were also present, Grieg showed Liszt his Piano concerto, still in manuscript at the time. Everybody knows the scene when Liszt plays Grieg's concerto from the manuscript score instead of the author himself, and while playing „prima vista”, he even comments on some musical phrases which he likes especially.

„At the end he said with a singularly cordial accent as he handed me the volume: 'You carry on, my friend, you have the right stuff in you. And don't ever let them frighten you!' This last sentence has infinite importance for me. There is something I shall call consecrated in it. Often, when disappointment and bitterness come, I shall think of his words, and that the remembrance of this moment will have a wonderful power to sustain me in days of adversity, I firmly believe.”

As a token of his enduring gratitude, Grieg dedicated to Liszt in print the Leipzig edition of his cantata „Vor der Klosterpforte” Op. 20 ('Foran Sydens Closter' - 'Before a Southern convent' for women's voices, orchestra and organ, written in 1871), and sent him a copy of the score with an added manuscript dedication on the cover to Budapest

Johan Peter Selmer (1844-1910) was another Norwegian composer whom Liszt helped indirectly to get the Norwegian State Scholarship. As mentioned before, Liszt had a word in the festival programmes of the German Musicians' Association. Although he had a less favourable opinion of Selmer than of Grieg (he found him somewhat confuse and slightly boring), he willingly suggested to introduce him to a „Tonkünstlerfest”, in order to help the pauper composer and to encourage international tendencies of the German association. After Selmer's „Nordischer Festzug” was performed in the Erfurt festival in 1878, he also obtained the scholarship. Two volumes with his dedication can also be found in Liszt's Budapest library. An ardent partizan of Berlioz's, Wagner's and Liszt's music, Selmer is said to have been the first programme-music composer in Norway.

Back again to Grieg: after returning from Rome with strengthened self-consciousness, he established a professional Music Society in Christiania in 1871, the predecessor of the present Oslo Philharmonic. His helper and co-conductor was his friend **Johan Svendsen (1840-1911)** who is now regarded as the second most important romantic composer of Norway. It was also in 1870 that Liszt met Svendsen – though not in Rome, but in Germany, where Svendsen's Octet Op. 3 was performed on 17 May 1870 in a concert organized by the Leipzig branch of the „Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein”. From the 1870's, the German Musical Association put Svendsen's and Grieg's compositions often on its programmes.

On his part, Svendsen was interested in Liszt's national music as early as 1867: that year he orchestrated and conducted Liszt's „2nd Hungarian Rhapsody” in Norway. We have no knowledge if Liszt knew about it, It is also an undecided question whether Svendsen's „Norwegian Ballad for orchestra” which we find on the programme of the Budapest Music Lovers' Association in January 1878, got there through Liszt's recommendation. In any case, he mentions the „Rhapsodies norvégiennes” by Svendsen in a very interesting letter written to the music publisher **Carl Warmuth junior (1844-1895)** who issued many important Scandinavian publications in Christiania and sent several of his editions to Liszt in the 1870's. Among them was Svendsen's „Fest-Polonaise for Orkester” with the editor's manuscript dedication to Liszt, which survived in Liszt's Budapest library. The „Norwegian Rhapsodies” are no longer there; nevertheless it is sure that he possessed them. Here is Liszt's opinion: *„Svendsen's „Norwegian Rhapsodies” are excellent and powerful orchestral compositions, rich in ideas and well elaborated. [...] I shall not miss to recommend my friends, to pianists and conductors alike, to perform in public Svendsen's 'Norwegian Rhapsodies'.”*

The Norwegian folksongs and dances arranged in Swendsen's rhapsody we have just listened to, derive – as almost all national melodies used by the romantic composers in Norway – from the collections of **Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812-1887)**. This organist, music teacher and composer had greatly influenced the Scandinavian music life, most of all by means of his collections. The first of them („Norske fjeldmelodier harmonisk bearbejdede”, 'Norwegian mountain melodies harmonically arranged') was published as early as 1841. His most important collection, however, was the „Ældre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier" ('Older and newer Norwegian mountain melodies') containing folksongs, folk dances, religious folk melodies with original texts and melodies in Lindeman's very simple harmonization, and with source data. The 1st volume was published in 1853, the 2nd in 1867 – both can be found in Liszt's Budapest library. Liszt thanked Warmuth for this precious present with the following words:

„I have read over with lively interest the two volumes of the national collection „Norwegian folksongs and folk dances”. Ludvig M. Lindeman deserves praise and thanks for his masterly work. These two volumes, 'collected' and artistically elaborated by him, [...] are of lasting value. By the way, I remark that the 'Springdans' in ¾ is a relative of the Mazurka; and the 'Halling' in 2/4 is related to the Krakowiak – nay, with the Csárdás itself..'

The importance of Ludvig Mathias Lindeman's folkloristic collections cannot be stressed enough. There is probably no Norwegian composer whom the national melodies he published, did not influence directly or indirectly. They appear, at least stylized, even in such „drawing-room pieces” as the „Caprice” of **Halfdan Kjerulf (1815-1868)**, which I found among this composer's five small volumes in Liszt's library. According to Horton, the shy and modest Kjerulf greatly influenced the development of the young Grieg's musical style, which is generally overshadowed, by the influence of Nordraak. Kjerulf was a very good piano teacher as well. Liszt's only Norwegian pupil, the pianist and composer **Agathe Backer (1847-1907)**, after her marriage known as Agathe Backer-Grøndahl), was first the pupil of Kjerulf, later a pupil of Kullak and Bülow, finally she completed her studies with Liszt and became a concert pianist of European fame. As a composer, she is best known for her songs and piano pieces. Her song series Op. 1 and 2 can be found in Liszt's library. Some of them were recorded by a wonderful Norwegian singer, Randi Helseth in the 1950's. The song cycle Op. 1 was dedicated in print to Nina Grieg. Agathe Backer added a handwritten dedication to Liszt on the title page.

With growing age, Liszt's interest in the music of upcoming national schools did not diminish – just the opposite! The scene describing his last Budapest stay in February 1886, some five months before his death, is characteristic. Liszt, whose eyes were deteriorating, asked his pupils to play new works to him, among them a concerto by the Danish composer **Ludvig Schytte (1848-1909)**, he sent a praising and encouraging letter to. He called this work „a massage of the ear” – probably because of its modern sonorities. Unfortunately we do not have a recording of Schytte's concerto, and since we are in a Grieg conference, I should like to finish my lecture with Grieg's music. His „Ballad on a Norwegian folksong, Op. 24” can be found, among others, in Liszt's Budapest library with the composer's handwritten dedication to Liszt. This wonderful piece, my favourite in Grieg's piano music, can also have been a „massage for Liszt's ear”. He must have enjoyed the chromatic harmonisation of the simple folksong taken from Lindeman's collection, and the series of the magnificent variations which remind me sometimes of Schumann, sometimes of Chopin, and even of Liszt himself, especially of his „Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen” variations. (No wonder: Grieg wrote it after the death of his parents, just like Liszt did his „Weinen, Klagen” after the loss of his elder daughter Blandine). Nevertheless, the Ballad is most original and unmistakably Norwegian, belonging to the best of Edvard Grieg.