

# Wagner and Liszt: Heritage of Fire

## Heritage of Fire.

From the day of her birth in 1918, Friedelind Wagner had little choice but to cope with both the legacy and the burden of being a descendant of one of the greatest musical geniuses of all time, Richard Wagner. Friedelind Wagner was Richard Wagner's independent-minded granddaughter. She was not the outcast of her family, as often claimed, but a heroic rebel. She despised her mother's adoration for Adolf Hitler and was the only member of the Wagner family who fled Germany in protest. Because of her strong opposition against the Nazis she went to England and later to New York with help of the famous conductor Arturo Toscanini. Once she arrived in New York she broadcast, lectured and published against the Nazis. Later on she would write her memoirs: *Heritage of Fire*. The history connected to Wagner is as overwhelming and ambivalent as his music. It's a world in itself full of contradictions, love, conflicts, beauty and ideals. This is in many ways reflected in the life of Friedelind Wagner.

## Leopold Godowsky, Tannhauser and Parsifal.

In terms of complete mastery of the piano, Leopold Godowsky belongs to the giants of the Romantic era and was almost completely self-taught. His approach of his 'Scenes from Tannhauser' is highly pianistic and personal and is different from most transcriptions. By adding inner voices and beautiful accompaniments in the left hand Godowsky aims for an original view on piano technique without disregarding Wagner's original score.

With my Parsifal-transcriptions I have tried to capture the magical atmosphere of this music. I took the sonority of the piano as a base in finding the right balance between the epic and the intimate.

## Franz Liszt.

The B minor Sonata is an incredible musical journey and is in many ways comparable to Wagner's grand scale music dramas. Pianist Alfred Brendel called this sonata the most powerful and intelligent after Beethoven and Schubert. The feeling of transforming throughout a piece of music is something unique in the sonata by Liszt. The final page of the piece goes from euphoria to sudden introspection and with the last bass note all tension is resolved.

Wagner/Godowsky  
Scènes from Tannhauser:

- Pilgrims chorus
- Entrance of the guests in the Wartburg
- Elisabeths Prayer

Wagner/Boomsma:  
Scènes from Parsifal:

- Kundry
- Titurel's Totenfeier
- Amfortas 'Prayer
- Redemption

Wagner/Liszt:

- Isolde's Liebestod

——intermission——

Liszt:

- Sonata in B minor